

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st January 2025
Subject: **Padmalaya** Monthly Update – January

Our Context in Nawalpur:

Govinda reports that owing to the cold waves and the ongoing wet fog, wild animals like the rhinoceres and elephants continue to walk into the buffer zones. Farmers in the area are therefore challenged to ensure that their crops remain unharmed. The Padmalaya team is engaged in an ongoing way to participate and give orientation at the municipal and the village development committee level when requested. The local government is engaged with representatives of the local communities, in planning and discussion on the incoming budget and programme for the new Nepali fiscal year, starting mid-April. The political parties local units are all engaged in strengthening and expanding their constituencies.

Work With the Land:



It is no surprise that work with the land and construction was even busier this month – all the more so because of the IGFF March event. These spaces need to be completed and redied to accomodate at least 500 women/men! Our Contractor, Rishi Itani is himself on site for prolonged periods to ensure that work moves correctly with speed. During 9/10th Prabal, our architect, and Dambar our Project Management Consultant made a site visit. During this time, they discussed all pending structural and technical matters. Details like the design for paving the grounds; the design for the flooring of the community hall and the exhibition hall, other details and confusions were all clarified thus facilitating the progress of the construction work. Dambar's weekly meetings have been very helpful technically – for clarifications and coordination work.

Also to anyone woking now at



Padmalaya we need to say - hats off – owing to the weather. It is cold, heavy dew in the mornings and evenings, and windy in the afternoon. In such an environment, our workers still begin work by 7am and end by 6 pm. Govinda has started serving them a mid-morning nutritious soup. In the middle of the month, owing to an important festival, the “Maghi” observed particularly by the local communities, the speed of work dwindled – owing to workers going home and not returning until a week later. the full team of labourers arrived only on the 20th, from when we once more have a strength of over 30 labourers.

However despite this, the laying of electrical lines, the roofs of the community and the

exhibition halls, the railings and the work on the flooring of these buildings have been largely complete.

Susan, Sanjeev, and I visisted 19 – 21st to witness the above. I was not prepared for this weather. One would thinks that the Tarai or the flat lands would be warmer than Kathmandu – that was not the case! During our visit, some of the major things we did were: catchup on the progress of the construction work discussing details for our understanding, and work with the Padmalaya team on defining a code of conduct as well as briefings/planning regarding the upcoming IGFF March event – which is now only 48 days away! In relation to the above, Rita worked with Bhabi our caterer, on the 20th to actually cook and demonstrate several dishes to

use for lunches and dinners during the March event. This also benefitted the kitchen team who helped me in preparatory work. One more session with Bhabi during our the following visit around mid-february will give Bhabi all he needs for our event.



Our contractors, Rishi and Sambed are comfortable in knowing that the multi-purpose community hall, the exhibition hall, the three rooms in a residential block near Padmini, and the paving work in front of the community hall – could be finished on time. But the most important task of completing the Sukarma building depended on the perfect coordination and timing of several parties, namely the Sky Light window glass suppliers; the exterior designer work; and the remaining work to be done by our contractors in relation to

masonry, steel, and electrical lines in the Sukarma. For the interior of the Sukarma building Tejita has already sent a truck load of furnitures and fixtures on the 23rd. The critical piece of work from Sky Light responsible for the glass windows for Sukarma, is now in the Kathmandu Sky Light workspace from Thailand, now the frames are being redied in Kathmandu and will be transported to Padmalaya for fixing. As of now if all goes as planned, Govinda and team can move into their new office at Sukarma 7th March!

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Programme Update:

Govinda informs us that there were 8 programmes as demanded by the teachers/student pertaining to mental health and wellbeing; common cultural heritage; food-security; and gender



and inclusion - and the related nationwide IGFF's campaign for women's inclusive and equitable participation in all State structures. Over 300 students benefited from these programmes. This month the Padmalaya team carried out 6 orientations on the Anupam Abhiyan (AA) of IGFF, and conducted 2 Yatras. Although these directly engaged 250 persons, Govinda reported that there is an interest in the larger community to learn more about the AA.



At Padmalaya, Govinda recruited 2 counselors – Ganga and Sakina Mahato; and 4 youth men: Suraj Mahato, Sushil Mahato, Suman Gurung, and Santa Bahadur Chaudhary - as apprentice to learn and helpout with all that needs doing at Padmalaya. A three-day residential

workshop and 3 day-long programmes were conducted at Padmalaya this month. Our lands in Nawalpur are filled with ripening mustard and potatoes which are growing well and soon to be harvested in mid-February.

Fundraising & Financial Update:

Despite the official closure of the **Padma-Sarthak Campaign (PSC)**, pledges are coming in. At NA, it has been agreed that we will continue to receive pledges/gifts until we are ready to put the names up at Padmalaya. In relation to this, at the request of **Padma Mukhi Meena Gurung**, on the 23rd **Irina Shrestha fulfilled her pledge and more** for the PSC by gifting us **Rs. 150,000** as did **Neelam Gurung** by giving us the remaining **Rs. 50,000** of her Rs. 100,000 pledge. Likewise, **Roopa Khadka fulfilled her pledge** of Rs. 100,000 by transferring the **remaining Rs. 70,000** to our bank this month.

Lynne Brennan informed that: *“I’m bringing another small but significant gift. My 8 year old grand-neice is sending you \$50.(Canadian dollars.) It is her (and her parents) Christmas gift to me. She wants it to be directed to help people at NA, as an honorary Christmas gift to me”*. How precious! We thank **Baily**, for her magnificent gift with a double value!

At Padmalaya Govinda collected **Rs. 3500 in the piggy bank**, primarily from the sale of the our produce from Padmalaya.

Upcoming IGFF March Convening at Padmalaya:

Susan and Rita’s visit 19 – 21st was also focused regarding the upcoming events in Padmalaya. The completion of the infrastructural work on the 3 buildings – for sure the exhibition hall and the community hall will be finished! But the completion of Sukarma as we said earlier, depends on the precise timing and overlapping work of at least 3 different sets of people. Importantly the glass windows all around, the electrical and masonry work from the contractors, and all the interior work from Tejita ji. Somehow we can only worry – we have exactly a month and 3 weeks as of now for the IGFF convening!

On the programming and the management side with NA as the main host with Tewa, Padmalaya is well versed to do all the pre-organizing work. During this visit, with the help of our kitchen team, I also worked with the caterer Bhabi in preparing some dishes to give him some conceptual idea on making a variety of salads, relishes, cooking vegetables lightly, semolina halwa, and others. The idea was to cook with less oil, less spices, and still produce delicious and healthy food. Bhabi Bhattarai felt he can begin to use some of these tips in hosting his upcoming wedding/s. Later we all enjoyed a delicious lunch! During our next trip to Padmalaya too, we will cook with Bhabi – focusing primarily on Nepali nutritious breakfast items.



Traditional Sukuls (hand-woven strawmats) are being woven and 70 have been delivered at NA's office. Luckily for us this is the perfect season for preparing the straw to weave the sukuls. Cotton mattresses, bedsheets, pillow-cases are being redied. We have also bulk ordered and bought, bath-towels, hand-towels, blankets, yoga-mats along with necessary cleaning and house-keeping accesories.

Others:

There are so many things happening in relation to NA/Padmalaya, and the Anupam Abhiyan Yatras! So far **160 Yatras have been accomplished in 50 districts** of Nepal. This is equivalent to 64 % of the districts covered so far. We are confident that if not a 100%, we will manage to cover most of our districts with at

least 1 Yatra. It is amazing that with minimum IGFF support, our sisters are mobilizing local and often personal resources ensuring that the modest cost of the Yatras are covered. Our SC member at IGFF, **Sharu Joshi went to conduct the yatra in Dhankuta (L) the eastern hills, in alliance with 13 local organizations!**

Overall Trump's policies has impacted Nepal like other countries. A recent executive orders of Trump to “pause for review” development aid, directly impacts 4 projects (agriculture, health, and education included) run by the Government of Nepal with USAID, and some 300 NGOs receiving funding support from USAID, will be affected directly for at least 3 months sending those employing scores of staff under immediate pani Susan says: *“On 25th January 2025, U.S. Department of State (Democracy, Human Rights and Labor) notified Nagarik Aawaz, that the program “Strengthening Access to Justice” has been immediately suspended with possibility of termination. This decision has affected all the work which was being implemented in 10 districts of Nepal for conflict affected women, including critical psychosocial support for those directly affected by the armed conflict. This US directive has been sent to all the countries who are receiving financial aid from the US Government”.* No transition plan, no nothing! When madness rules – doom is not too far away, I guess! How will all those who are employed, feed their families for 3 months – if at all!

Photo Courtesy: Govinda Acharya, Samed Itani, Rita Thapa

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 28th February 2025
Subject: **Padmalaya** Monthly Update – February

Our Context in Nawalpur:



In Nawalpur, farmers are busy harvesting mustard and the potatoe crop. This is also true for us at Padmalaya. The farmers all boast a bountiful crop/s – which may be owing to the alluvial soil deposited after the floods. The **flaxseed plants** are growing in a small patch of Padmalaya fields – their tiny blue flowers are smiling all hardships away. The fields are being prepared and planted with corn, and early

rice as and where they may be possible. In an around Padmalaya, farmers also grow tobacco as a cash crop which is now being harvested and put out to dry. The 4-lane highway that is being built in the past 4 years, is slightly improved and the ride to the airport from Padmalaya has been cut down by 15 minutes – by the March event, we hope this will be at least 10 minutes shorter, as two stretches of the road are being black-topped. This is a little good news!

Work With the Land:

At the very beginning of the month or right at the cusp of the new month, **Sanjeev, NA Padmalaya Coordinator**, enabled a very coordinated meeting with the Sky Light Pvt. Ltd. (aluminium frame glass windows in the Sukarma Building), and all the other technical people needing to work together for the Sukarma building in Prabal's office. Even at the very beginning during this meeting, it was felt to be possible to complete the glass windows - with over-time labourers, and dedicated logistical support from Padmalaya. **Rita visited Padmalaya on the 8th**, on her way to Rupendehi – to be updated on the progress of the construction work. Everyone was working very hard to ensure completion for the March event. In a separate meeting with **Yam ji, the technical supervisor from Sky Light**, late evening, he said that with his team of 7 technicians at the site, he would finish the job as planned in early March. He would bring in more people if he felt the need. He additionally informed me that everyone in his company's workplace was prioritizing Padmalaya's work in order to meet the deadline.



From a drone picture taken by **Sijendra, Freedom Studio**, we can see all the building in Padmalaya. Those that existed earlier, those just being completed for the IGFF event, and others which remain to be completed after March. The Sukarma building on the front left, is nearing completion with glass and net widows, louvers; painting and electric work; and interior setup of offices, stores, and the **Pahura Shop**. Just behind this is the new open **Multi-purpose Community Hall** that can seat 300 persons. The twin buildings are Padmini and Padmadhar – the residential dormitories for women and men respectively, which was in use since 2024. Between them is the newly

readied **Exhibition Hall**, and the landscaped open grounds, where the formal events will take place. The building behind the exhibition hall, where the roof is being worked on, houses 3 private bedrooms with attached baths. The space paved with red bricks, will be the stage for the event. The road is being paved, and the grass is being laid out.

On the **12 – 14th Susan and Rita** made a trip to Padmalaya with a big agenda. At the same time, **Sanjeev** came via road with **Dambar ji**, our management consultant, and NA friends - **Lynne Brennen** and **Kenrick Lui**. While Dambar ji busied himself with all the details of the construction and the necessary finishing work, we engaged in different aspects of preparation, some of which, outlined here below are the highlights of this trip:

- Catching up on all the building work being done at the site: finishing up of partial residential block, fixing doors and windows, electrical and plumbing works, flooring and painting, interior work at the Sukarma building, and importantly the laying of the aluminium window frames, louvers, and glass on all sides of the 4 floors of the **Sukarma** building,
- Planning and detailing of the three private bedrooms being completed in one of the residential blocks,
- Cooking with **Bhabi Bhattarai** (caterer designate) and the kitchen team for Nepali breakfast ideas during our IGFF event days,
- Preparing and planning with all the youths for the gift shop, we named “**Pahura Pasal**” on the 4th floor of Sukarma. What to keep in the shop as low-cost organic snacks; pickles/food items; and locally produced souvenirs for visitors to buy,
- One-to-one deep discussions, stock-taking, and planning with Susan, for and beyond the March 2025 event,



- Planning and discussions with **Govinda and Nirajan** on many aspects of hosting the IGFF event and necessary

preparations.

The technical team/s have been meeting in an ongoing way in order in Kathmandu, to coordinate and support each other in the best ways possible with Prabal, Dambar, and the key Contractor/s in particular. These meetings are primarily pulled together by Sanjeev/NA. **Dambar's weekly meetings** too have been of great help in providing us all around, timely information and cooperation. **Prabal and Dambar** visited Padmalaya for a second time again on the 25/26th and **Rita and Susan** during the 25 – 27th, arriving late night from a AA Yatra in Birgunj on the 25th and working through 26th and 27th. All these close visits has allowed for better adjustments, cooperation and understanding. The unexpected local customary practices, or a way of life grounded in agriculture does clash with our undertakings in a modern/professional way – it is inevitable. Despite this, care is taken to be caring, understanding, and to manage transitions as best as is possible – where learning for all sides is happening for the best!

Programme Update:

Despite this being such a busy month with preparations for the upcoming IGFF convening in March, **Govinda** informs us that there were altogether eleven community related programme such as: peace Initiatives on conflict transformation & Peace building; family management; child marriage prevention; safe mensuration cycle; leadership development; and Composite Heritage orientations, where all together 315 persons participated and benefited. The Padmalaya Peace Centers and the staff team also gave 11 community level orientations on psychological care and stress management where over 400 community members participated. This month there were 6 cases of individual counseling. Two persons received livelihood support providing two families with a safety net. Besides these, under a new project NA has



undertaken, "Strengthening Local Infrastructure for Peace" Padmalaya has initiated its work in 2 additional communities of the Madhya Bindu Municipality.

Padmalaya also conducted an **Anupam Yatra** this month with around **100 participants**. Another significant event was

collaborating with the **Conflict Affected Women's Network in Nawalpur** to organize an **orientation on IGFF/AA** on the afternoon of the 13th, bringing in some 50 women cadres of various political parties. This was a huge opportunity for us to interact, understand the context, and learn as to what IGFF's Anupam Abhiyan needs to focus on, and how! Looking keenly in the picture above, we can see **Lynne Brennan** (top L) and **Kenrick Lui** (bottom far L), our visitors participating in this orientation programme in **Kawasoti**.

Fundraising & Financial Update:

After receiving the January update, our friend **Stephen Pittam** gently mentioned that he had sent us 2 gifts in 2023 and 2024 and did we by any chance receive it?! He further said: ***"I sent St£300 on 10 March 2023 and St£400 on 14 March 2024. Both donations were earmarked for the Padmalaya Centre."*** After several days of agony and scouting of the financial records, NA found the amounts in their dollar account (not the Padmalaya bank account!) – must be something to do with the bank. Merita informed us that **Rs. 46,563.94** was received on 13th March 2023; and **66,861.37** on 21st March 2024 – both gifts arrived as dollars and that is where NA financial records must have gone wrong since they were looking for Sterling Pounds. Despite this mishap, the minute we got this sorted out and Susan and I informed Stephan, he wrote: ***"I have just asked CAF to send a further £400 to Nagarik Aawaz for the Padmalaya Centre"***. We are truly sorry **Stephen** – we **apologize**. Thank you so much for all your generous gifts to Padmalaya over 3 years! Just to inform Stephan that his last gift has not yet arrived, but we are on the lookout now, and will inform him soon as we get it in the NA bank.

Susan informs me that she has received a pledge of Rs. 100,000 for Padmalaya. She will tell us when the money is received in the account. Likewise, Bikram Bajracharya has informed Susan that he will be sending his remaining pledge of Rs. 50,000 to the PSC soon.

The Padmalaya team has accumulated Rs. 4500 from selling potatoes this month.

Upcoming IGFF March Convening (23 - 24) at Padmalaya:



Has everyone been working to ensure all is in place for the IGFF March event?!!! It has been non-stop. Owing to last year's floods, there is so much loose dust from the accumulated sediments left behind as remnants. Govinda and team have worked at it time and again and will continue to do so some more! The entire Padmalaya team, this month, other than those that are absolutely

essential programme work, have busied themselves at different work in relation to the event. There just has been so much to do! The kitchen team has been preparing for the "Pahura Pasa", making organic local snacks and bottled pickles to sell. Some are engaged in producing hand-made gift items as in the Tharu culture. At other times they are ensuring that the grounds that need to be covered with grass, is completed by bringing natural grass that is cut and then spread out on the ground to be pressed in and watered several times daily for renewal. Cleaning and dusting never stops here as there's so much work going on with construction, paving the grounds, and creating spaces.

All the other detailing work, regarding the venues, the logistical requirements, the moving of offices, the planning of residential spaces have been planned meticulously. The necessary preparing, making, purchasing, and the transportation of items required, too are at the last stages of completion. With only **3 weeks to go** before the arrival date on 22 March, it is a very close call!

Others:

The IGFF Anupam Abhiyan (AA) year of the Yatras – 2024, as it comes to a closure on 15th March 2025, accomplished **210 Yatras** in **65 districts** out of the 77 districts of Nepal. Either owing to very cold mountaneous regions, or some other conditions, Yatras in 7 districts are stalled until the first half of March. This will mean that we will have 72 districts covered with at



least 1 Yatra. This is no mean feat considering that this was a part of the IGFF's 5 year campaign under the name of the Anupam Abhiyan. The Yatras have been initiated by the IGFF associates in their local districts, contributing their time, resources, and where possible receiving partial support from their local governments. This achievement in the 3rd year of the campaign may signal a nationwide women's movement in Nepal, that will be history in the making! We certainly hope so! The top picture shows one of the Yatras that took place on the 16th in **Jaleshwar of Mahottari District** led by our activist leader/s, **Seema Khan and Rita**

Shah, IGFF Associate, and Steering Committee member respectively, with the participation of the local government elected women leaders, and activist leaders of the district.

Likewise, and exceptionally, with coordination and facilitation of **Lamu Sherpa** (who used to lead Mountain Spirit at one time) and other IGFF Associates, a yatra took place in the **Gharpojhong VDC of Mustang District** on the 24th. **Mountain Spirit, Thakali Mothers Group, the Thini Mothers Group**, and local youth groups, supported this Yatra where **135 persons** participated. The IGFF Secretariat is busy sending our bags, songbooks, and banners, to different districts as per their requests for the yatras. We at IGFF are excited to see what the number of final districts covered will actually will be during AA's Yatra year!

Photo Courtesy: Govinda Acharya, Sambad Itani, Sijendra Thapa, Rita Thapa

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st March 2025
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – March

Our Context in Nawalpur:



March was made up of harvesting of potatoes (70 big bags at Padmalaya), harvesting wheat, planting early season rice, and planting corn at Padmalaya and throughout. Farmers in Nawalpur were very busy. At Padmalaya, everyone was preparing for the IGFF annual convening under the Anupan

Abhiyan where we planned for up to 500 feminists to arrive from all over the country. Completion of the necessary constructions, managing sleeping space for 300 activists within Padmalaya, and all the other logistical details of washrooms and food were no mean tasks!

At the end of the month as we continued to pat our backs owing to the successful IGFF convening, on the 28th, the streets in Kathmandu were filled with pro and anti-monarchy protesters which led to vandalization of public/private properties, looting, and mayhem. Two lives were lost – one with a gun shot from a police fire, and another, **a video journalist of Avenues Television – Suresh Rajak** – who died when the mob set fire to the building from where he was filming the unruly mob. A curfew had to be imposed until the next morning. We are still grappling with this incident at home, while simultaneously Myanmar – Thailand was rocked by a 7.7 richter scale devastating earthquake! Sadness and deep condolences!

Work With the Land:

Susan and Rita visited Padmalaya on the 6th as a day trip. This was mainly to work with the garden and landscape; with the **“Pahura Pasal”** – the Padmalaya gift shop; and interior details of the 3 private bedrooms which we were working to complete. Following this Susan and Rita once more visited during 10 – 12th for the final time before the event. This time it was to plan out the sleeping arrangements, and other logistic details for some 300 participants who would be staying at Padmalaya itself! The technical teams coordinated and met among themselves when necessary. Rita decided that the lifts for the 2 dormitories would not be installed before the event to ensure that there were no unnecessary last-minute rushes. The most challenging



aspect of the infrastructure was the completion of the Skylight's work of fitting all the glass windows in the Sukarma building – which took more time than was estimated. Even without fixing the net windows the work could only finish on the 16th. Only after this could the scaffolding on all the 4 sides of the Sukarma building be undone. This took until the 19th.

The festival of colours – Holi on the 1st, where most of the workers needed to go on home leave, did not make last minute completion work easy. There was therefore no way that the interior

designer, Tejita Amatya, could complete her assignment. Although she was ready with all the prefabricated materials and furnitures for instalation, because the electrical and the flooring work could not be finished, it was not possible for her to do the necessary layout. But just as well, since the spaces in Sukarma provided all the men and staff of Nagarik Aawaz (both Kathmandu office and Padmalaya) as dormitory space/s.

Rita, Susan, with PC and key staffs from NA reached Padmalaya for the 3rd time this month on the 20th for last minute oversight and preparations for the event. Putting up the prayer flags; setting up the stage; finishing the 3 private rooms in preparation for **our special guests: Dr. Chhatra Amatya, Dr. Bina/Jyoti Pradhan, and PC** who arrived on the nick of time; organizing the registration spaces and all other necessary tasks were managed during these couple of days before the participants began to arrive on the 22nd.

Programme Update:

The entire focus this month was on the IGFF event – both at the central office in Kathmandu, and in Padmalaya. Preparing snacks, handicraft items for the shops, and home-prepared

organic edible items in Padmalaya during the last 2 weeks before the event; cleaning and preparing the beds in the three dormitories (counting Samjhana); all the other detailing work required by such an extraordinary event; and the cleaning up of the entire premise and the newly finished buildings. It was a herculean task considering the planning, required human resources, and the ticking time. At the end of this month, Susan and Govinda felt that hosting the IGFF event in Padmalaya has not only enabled them to step up their infrastructural management requirement not only for regular residential meetings, but for large sized events that may happen in the future.



Despite these, Govinda informs us that just during March, the Padmalaya team managed to do additionally 5 Anupam Abhiyan Yatras where some 300 community members participated. Significantly, during March, Govinda and team expanded the Sadbhav programme in two additional Wards, mobilizing 12 more volunteers. Ongoing services to the community such as counseling, and interactions and meetings continued. The team also took on extra responsibility of engaging colleagues in other districts in relation to the Anupam Abhiyan Yatras.

The IGFF Anupam Abhiyan March Convening (22 - 24) at Padmalaya:

GLIMPSES OF THE 3 DAYS:

The IGFF March convening in Padmalaya took place as planned. On the 22nd participants began to arrive. It was also a day when Rita and her family organized a memorial and a cleansing “puja¹” in memory of her mother – **late Jibeshwori Basnyat**, who passed away on the same day the previous year. All who came in partook of “prasad²”. Registration of the participants - colour-coded according to their provinces took place. They were also assigned to their dormitories and were given an orientation of the facilities at Padmalaya. In the evening, one of the religious priests, gave an hour long talk on the Bhagawat Gita – focusing on the gist of Gita that emphasizes altruism, and philanthropy as the main virtues, and harming or hurting others as the main vice. The puja and related activities were coordinated and organized by Rita’s two daughters – Prativa and Riva. In the afternoon, when the “**naumati baja**³” women’s group arrived from Kathmandu, the participants danced to their hearts content and met with each other. The mood was set – one of exuberance and connectivity! By the early morning of



the 23rd we had registered 533 participants who came from 50 Districts of all the 7 Provinces, including those of us from IGFF, Tewa, and Nagarik Aawaz!

The 23rd and the 24th were the main days of the IGFF convening. On Day 1 – the 23rd, the morning began with yoga from **fitness coach, Doma Bajracharya**, as well as dancing to the tune of the naumati baja – for those who chose to do so. After breakfast,

participants assembled to view the video of the year of the Yatras prepared by the **Freedom**

¹ Puja is a Hindu religious ritual/ceremony to offer devotional homage, prayers, and offerings to one or more deities.

² Prasad is the vegetarian pure food devoid of onion and garlic, served as an offering of the deities, to all who participate.

³ Collection of 9 Nepali traditional musical instruments played in celebrations and auspicious occasions. It is only in the recent years that women have taken to playing these instruments, traditionally played only by men from the Dalit caste.

Studio (IGFF's creative partners) the link of which is attached herewith for your viewing interest:

https://freedomstudioneapal-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/personal/sijendrathapa_studiofreedom_org/EUIR0Z3IMMJModXSN9iCHKcBZOLYggCSabfmoSdbWETAwnav=eyJyZWZlcnJhbEluZm8iOncicmVmZXJyYWxBcHAIoiJPbmVEcmI2ZUZvckJ1c2luZXNzliwicmVmZXJyYWxBcHBQbGF0Zm9ybSI6IldlYiIsInJlZmVycmFsTW9kZSI6InZpZXciLCJyZWZlcnJhbFZpZXciOiJNeUZpbGVzTGlua0NvcHkifX0&e=BU0SUg

On Day 1, the 23rd, in the **opening session**, the organizers Susan & Govinda, Urmila from Tewa, one of the IGFF Co-coordinators Laxmi spoke (with Stella being sadly absent for being ill), and the Padmalaya team presented a group welcome song that they wrote and composed, as well as a closing item of cultural dance that they choreographed.

This was followed by a **panel discussion moderated by IGFF Associate, Pratima Sharma**, and was represented by the representatives of all the 7 Provinces, on the 236 Yatras taken on by all the 77 districts of Nepal. After lunch, participants did group work/s collated by designated volunteers and presented on the LED screen by the province representatives. Our IGFF Associate, Sajir posted this little video clip on Facebook which may also give us all a glimpse of the euphoric event: <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/167Bb6xE3/> Post dinner on the 23rd, **the IGFF Steering Committee introduced themselves and opened the floor where Chhatra, Bina, and several participants spoke**. It proved to be a very enriching day where the IGFF associates felt like one big community!

On Day 2, the 24th the day began with yoga as a collective-care activity with Doma, and the naumati baja playing before the formal session began. This was followed by a parade which was conducted by **IGFF SC member Yajaswi Rai** - where participants lined up in their cultural outfits according to the Provinces they represented. One by one the provinces marched past and demonstrated - shouting slogans, demonstrating with placards, and dancing! It was a sight to behold! Anyone could experience that the Anupam Abhiyan led by IGFF had built the necessary momentum, that the nation-wide feminist movement needed to build on until November 2027 arrived, when the next general elections would take place. Within those days it did feel like no political party could afford to ignore or minimize the rights guaranteed by the Constitution for the women of Nepal.

This was followed by a research presentation by **IGFF Advisor, Dr. Sucheta Pyakuryal**, who led the research in the IIDS (a Think Tank institution where Sucheta was based at the time) with the support of Tewa. This contemporary and seminal research was on women participation in the local governance.

Next was a panel representing key political party women, who spoke about their lessons, experiences, and way forward. This illustrious panel composed of **Laxmi Pariyar** – Central Committee Member, Nepali Congress; **Dr. Binda Pandey** – Member of Federal Parliament, CPN-UML (Unified Marxist-Leninist); **Amrita Thapa Magar** – Central Committee Member, CPN-MC (Maoist Center); Coordinator, Women's Wing; **Sumana Shrestha** – Former Education Minister & Joint Secretary, Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP); and **Ranju Kumari**

Jha – Member of Federal Parliament, People's Socialist Party (PSP). This prestigious panel was moderated by no other than our feminist youth politician, **Asmita S. Manushi Yami Bhattarai** – Vice-Chairperson, Nepal Samajbadi Party (Naya Shakti). There was pin-drop silence during the panel presentations and animated discussions during the open forum.





following days until March 2026.

After lunch participants began to leave and the IGFF SC members quickly consulted to have a final session on explaining the modality of the next Anupam Abhiyan year – one of “Rajnaitik Khabardari”. This will be a year April 2025 to March 2026, of drawing attention and alerting all the political parties to ensure that women are no longer deprived of their constitutional rights. The IGFF SC members who were present collectively ran through what was written in the **Signature Campaign document**, and how this needed to be carried out during the

When the floor was open for the participants to share their views, the commitments and the trust participants felt in relation to this movement building work were clear. All present realized that a 5 year long movement building work was not going to be easy – particularly since this needed to encompass “feminists” – mostly women, but not excluding anyone who were seeking substantive equitable changes in the coming elections. There was also a realization that it was



possible to work towards a more self-reliant development model, by 1) contributing to the cause personally, and by 2) mobilizing local level resources. **The 236 Yatras undertaken throughout Nepal** had given them this sense of hope and confidence.

Looking at the past where everyone involved thought that development had to happen from external aid, this was a relatively small glimmer of light shining through the cracks, but it did shine light on what could be possible. Everyone parted with new possibilities and in solidarity with the Anupam Abhiyan movement building tasks.

PARTICIPATION: It was amazing that over **350 participants** (besides Tewa, NA, and IGFF) came from the districts. That they came bearing their own costs was amazing. All from the far west districts of Bajhang, Bajura, Dadeldhura, and Kanchanpur, took over 30 hours bus journeys changing buses in one or two places. On top of that, the expanding roads along the east-west highway, took double the time of what would have been required otherwise. Yet all who came, came with so much happiness and joy!

SPACE/S: Padmalaya provided adequate spaces and facilities. Spaces for the parades, indoor space for the panel discussions, spaces for yoga and dancing, spaces to just be, and spaces to cook and feed. Somehow the spaces just flowed into each other and stood alone as and when needed. No one felt pushed or cramped. No one complained of the dorm facilities, or bathrooms, or any discomfort with any of the spaces at Padmalaya!

FOOD & REFRESHMENTS: Having worked with the caterer Bhabi Bhattarai in advance, proved to be most useful. Everyone appreciated all the 3 main meals he and his team served. No one had to stand in long lines. Everyone sat down at a round table for their meals. All vegetarian meals were tasty, wholesome, and light. There were two stations where unlimited lemon water, water hot and cold and local bananas (tastier than the market ones) were available.

PAHURA PASAL: The Pahura Pasal is the gift shop that was planned for in advance. Anyone needing a little snack could buy healthy snacks prepared in advance in the kitchen at Padmalaya by the kitchen team led by Alisha – they were all well below Rs. 50. The gift shop also sold Tharu traditional items that were also very popular: hand woven baskets, jewelry, and earthen pots. Eventually the Pahura Pasal will be stationed on the top terrace of the Sukarma building. The idea will be that for anyone visiting Padmalaya, they can have a snack and a drink for a maximum of Rs. 50/60. For the local community too, this will be very affordable and healthy. We hope eventually this will displace expensive bottled drinks and packaged snacks.

LED SCREEN for NON-STOP VIDEOS: A LED screen we set up in the central open space enabled us to showcase ongoing videos: on the making of Padmalaya so far, and the transformative journeys of Padmalaya youths prepared by NA; and a set of 3 videos put together by the **Freedom Studio, Our creative partner at IGFF:** 1) the East-West Bus Journey taken in March 2025 before convening at Padmalaya, 2) a documentation of the IGFF Steering Committee members speaking about the value of the Anupam Abhiyan, and 3) finally a video titled **“The Year of the Yatras”**. These were played continuously with or without sound. Thankfully, technology could be managed with the help of the generators!

Funds & Finances:

The Charity Aid Foundation (CAF) wrote NA this month that *“We're pleased to let you know that one of our clients would like to send a donation to help your organisation's activities. **Stephen Pittam** wishes to donate **GBP 500”**. **Hari Devkota of Unification Nepal, Gorkha District** another longtime partner of NA, **pledged Rs. 101,111** for the Padma Sarthak Campaign. Although the campaign is closed there is no harm in receiving unsolicited gifts before all the names are written on the walls of Padmalaya!*

Taking the opportunity of the event, NA solicited for annual gifts of Rs. 50,000 or Rs. 100,000 to those who were around. **Dr. Bina Pradhan and Neeta Pradhan**, both NA life members, pledged **Rs. 100,000 and Rs. 50,000 as annual donors respectively** to Padmalaya.

During this event, 4 benches out of the 5 that were made for Padmalaya, **have been donated at Rs. 26,000 each**, by **Sita Bohra** NA partner; **Sambodh Itani** – Contractor; **Shobha Basnet**, NA Board Member, in honour of her mother-in-law, **late Heera Basnet**; and by **Surya/Shanta Singh** – parents of NA programme staff, **Sanjeev Singh**.



Also, **IGFF received a gift of Rs. 50,000 from Nepal Women Community Services Center, Dang** – a long-time partner of NA and a grantee organization of Tewa. Several other gifts were also received by IGFF on this occasion!

Conclusions:

This update, unlike others, is focused primarily on Padmalaya and NA’s key role in hosting the IGFF’s Anupam Abhiyan annual event during 22 – 24th March 2025! Our readers may find it a little too much although I made it as brief as I possibly could. The hosting of the IGFF event in Padmalaya without a glitch, provided all of us gathered so much learning while it raised the bar for all the convening we do in future!

Photo Courtesy: Govinda Acharya, Sambodh Itani, Rita Thapa, & Sijendra/Freedom Studio

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th April 2025
Subject: **Padmalaya** Monthly Update – April

Our Context in Nawalpur:



The corn is knee-high in our farm. The farms in Sehari are lush again with the early rice and corn at various stages. This means the farming community in Sehari, Nawalpur are busy. Our cucumbers and other vegetables planted in the new flower beds in Padmalaya are already bearing fruit! The temperatures have risen

sharply, but so far remain reasonable and is still manageable with fans. Govinda writes that the teachers' nationwide strike has closed all the schools in the district. There are increased activities at the party level where each party seems to be strengthening and consolidating its constituency/ies. There seems to also be increased transfer of bureaucrats at the local level. All of these have not been very helpful in terms of stability and getting things done.

Work With the Land:

Dambar is continuing with his weekly technical coordination meetings. Rishi and Sambodh have continued with the construction work with less than 15 labourers who are working in the 2 residential blocks and the mechanical block. The kitchen plan needs to be revised by the architect, Prabal, before the construction work can begin there.

Susan, Rita, Sanjeev, & PC visited Padmalaya during 16 – 17th of this month with the following main purposes:

- Debriefing on the IGFF event with Rita and PC (although Susan had done this promptly with both her teams much earlier) – listening to all at Padmalaya
- Ensure the smooth operational aspects of the running of the Sukarma, Residential building, and the Pahura Pasal



- Catching up on the way the



construction work was going to go forward to ensure that Padmalaya work could be completed within the year, and simultaneously for the Padmalaya City Office to begin, and

- To detail out the advance preparatory work for the March 2026 IGFF Convening.

The debriefing and sharing meeting was a very useful 2 hours session where everyone participated on the resounding success of the hosting of the IGFF annual event, the learning/s each had owing to this journey, and some things to consider and improve on. Furthermore, besides the entire NA team, they felt that this was a learning for all the IGFF associates coming from far flung districts on leadership, organizing, and a way of life! PC said that he observed how much stronger and clearer the Padmalaya team had become in expressing themselves in the several years since when he first met them. Govinda said that the local community and the



office bearers had not only taken good notice, but that they were making visits with their families to learn from the space Padmalaya had become. All in all, for everyone, the learning curve was very high owing to the hosting of such a big event!

Since Govinda and team were still operating from a makeshift office housed in the newly named

Smaran (exhibition hall), there was little to do with the detailing operationalizing of **Sukarma** and **Pahura Pasal**. But related topics were discussed. Also we agreed on several other aspects of the Padmalaya spaces: planting of the medicinal moringa trees (a local habitat of the area), creating a bouganvilla arbour, setting-up a permanent LED screen, and preparing the concecrating of a stone-carved stupa.

A storm during the middle of the month has made some adjustments with the construction work necessary. This will require some rectification work with the concrete in the Sukarma building, which will further delay the office layout work by Tejita and team until at least for a few more months.



At Padmalaya we also had a meeting with Rishi and Sambed Itani (our contractors) so we had detailed discussions on the construction aspects of Padmalaya. It was agreed that Susan who would be in Padmalaya during the Architect's visit during the 24 - 25th, would share all the

concerns and other necessary followup activities. We agreed on the dates for the hosting of the next IGFF annual event as 20 – 22 March 2026. As such all the building requiring completion:



kitchen/dining, 2 residential buildings (in progress), main entrance, the side entrance and guard house would need to be completed by this time. Rishi ji and Sambed were confident that these could be completed well in advance of the next IGFF convening in March 2026.

When Architect **Prabal Thapa & PMC Dambar** visited the site with Sanjeev on the 24th an initial

meeting took place with Prabal, Susan, Govinda, and Sanjeev. As per Sanjeev's report, here Susan shared all the concerns and the changes required for Padmalaya as earlier discussed by us, such as:

- Additional private rooms on the ground floor of one of the residential buildings
- Adjustment of the window designs to make them more accessible for opening latches
- The role of the PMC Dambar and how it can serve the building of Padmalaya better, and
- The timely initiation of the **Padmalaya City Office** and the estimated expenses.

Although the 2 lifts are nearing completion for installation, during this visit as Sanjeev reported, *“Prabal Thapa shared feedback from Engineer Pradeep Tamrakar regarding the installation of the two lifts. Pradeep expressed hesitation in installing a scissor-style lift due to maintenance concerns. He explained that during flood conditions, sand and mud could enter the intersection joints of the lift, leading to operational difficulties. As a result, he recommended opting for a chain-style (motorcycle-type) lift, which is more reliable in such environments”*. Further discussions will enable us to arrive at a conclusion we will need to make – but it is clear we will need to heed the advice of Pradeep ji!



Regarding the last point, **the visiting team with Susan and Govinda visited the City Office site.** As Sanjeev reports, *“It was observed that the landowner expressed willingness to sell their additional small plot to NA. Recognizing this opportunity, Prabal Thapa advised that if the neighboring land is available at a reasonable price, NA needed to consider purchasing it. This is because the current access route is relatively narrow, and acquiring the adjoining land would allow for improved space, accessibility, and*

future expansion”. The land is now filled with growing corn plants. But Prabal’s advice sounded like music to my ears! Susan already has instructed Govinda to look into the possibility of the expansion of this adjoining land, without further impinging additionally on the already estimated costs for the building of the Padmalaya City Office!

A timeline was suggested and agreed upon, beginning with the submission of the revised architectural drawings and getting the structural drawings for the tendering and official approval processes. A turnkey project completion and handing over was suggested by Prabal. If the construction could realistically begin in November 2025 as Prabal and Rishi thought possible, it could be ready for operation by the NA/Padmalaya team, latest by the middle of 2028.

Particularly after the recent storm, it was more easy for Prabal and Dambar with Rishi to see all the reinforcements and revisions necessary in the construction work. Building by building, Prabal gave all necessary inputs and suggestions. These were well taken by Rishi and the construction team and although the shifting of the office into Sukarma may take additional few months, in the long run, this will be worth the wait.



Programme Update:

Govinda reports that more than 50 saplings (ornamental, medicinal and useful) have been planted around Padmalaya this month. These were carefully selected and planted by the Padmalaya team members themselves.

Govinda further added that during 22 - 28th, 3 trainings were conducted in Padmalaya. Altogether 70 participants from various districts (comprising of conflict affected women and youth intergenerational women), as well as some Padmalaya staff were the beneficiaries of these trainings. All these happened so soon after the big

IGFF event, and the storm that happened less than 10 days back. Despite these the workshops were all very successful - where participants felt the space supported their feelings and needs and provided them the most facilitating environment. The workshops were facilitated by Dr. Susan Risal, Hari Dhami, and Antina Ranjitkar from NA. This month NA successfully established 2 Ward levels Peace Centers that can service 3 Wards. Under this 3-year programme, 15 youth women have been selected as facilitators at the community level.



After word of the IGFF March event got around, Padmalaya is receiving a stream of local visitors. All this forebodes well for the work NA is doing in Nawalpur. Padmalaya's regular work, meetings, and programme at Nawalpur are ongoing. The community level activities for

those who need them are also being diligently carried out by the motivated Padmalaya team.

Debriefing on the IGFF Anupam Abhiyan March Convening (22 - 24) at Padmalaya:

Debriefing meetings took place at all levels at Padmalaya, NA Kathmandu Office, and IGFF staff level, as well as the IGFF SC meeting. Thus, allowing us all to understand the multi-faceted aspects of hosting this IGFF annual event by NA at Padmalaya. Unanimously the following highlights are worth mentioning:

- PADMALAYA as a venue worked very well for the event. There was not one single thing that seemed to be lacking (quality of the vegetarian food, the refreshments unlimited, the thought given to an inter-generational community of people, the overall organizing and management, the sleeping and toilet arrangements for over 350 persons in one venue, and the overall ambiance and the mood of care and community). There always will be ways to improve and it will be well looked into. But the Padmalaya team supported by the NA team primarily, were applauded for their attention to details and the roles that they played.
- The IGFF ASSOCIATES & INVITEES were amazing. All those 20 persons who came from the far-flung districts in Karnali and the Far West Provinces bearing their own travel expenses, bracing 2/3 days long bus journeys over challenging roads gave IGFF the confidence that the movement was meeting its objectives already of women's engagements at all levels and of self-reliant development. All at IGFF know that the **Anupam Abhiyan** 5-year long movement building work is irreversibly in place and rolling. The next 2.5 years until the next elections seemed promising.
- IGFF/Tewa/NAGARIK AAWAZ all know there is no time to waste regarding the year of the **Rajnaitik Khabardari** (drawing political attention). As such each is doing what is necessary to roll another year of the Anupam Abhiyan until March 2026. The weekly zoom meetings have well begun and the strategies for the Rajnaitik Khabardari is begun.
- All felt that from this year this kind of hosting of 500/600 people will be possible. For NA and Padmalaya too, it is a big validation of the space that has been created at Padmalaya.

Funds & Finances:

This month the savings and the sale of produce like ghee, potatoes, and vegetables, generated Rs. 55245. This has been deposited in the bank.

Others:



During 27 – 29th NA organized a 2-day workshop at the Tewa Center regarding the **Anupam Abhiyan's (AA)** 3rd year of “youth abhiyantas” (youth activists) from 21 districts to move forward the year of the “**Rajnaitik Khabardari**” (drawing political attention). This workshop was well attended by some of the IGFF SC members, NA Board Chair and members, and Tewa leadership

and staff. This will enable to initiate the signature campaign. After a thorough mapping of the district-level landscapes; reviewing contextual opportunities and risks; understanding the AA's movement building objectives and 5-year strategic approach; and designing an individual district-level strategy; participants departed knowing that they are a part of a historical movement in the making. All were aware of the politically instable and challenging environments in their own districts, but expressed that they were committed to be moving forward the Anupam Abhiyan.

Conclusions:

When I began writing this update, after the big IGFF event in March, I thought there will not be much to write for this month. But I was wrong – even just gathering the most important highlights, I have filled out 8 pages. Thank you NA and Padmalaya for your work – thank you for allowing me to be a part of this journey and process. Thank you – readers all - for your patience!

Photo Courtesy: Govinda Acharya, Sanjeev Singh, Samed Itani, Sashank Thapa, Sijendra Thapa, Rita Thapa

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st May 2025
Subject: **Padmalaya** Monthly Update – May

Our Context in Nawalpur:

This month has been a season of storms and increased heat in Nawalpur according to Govinda. He informs us that politically all parties are engaged in strengthening their constituencies - through trainings and workshops. The local governments are preparing for the new budget and are discussing it at the community levels. Corn fields and early rice fields are quickly ripening.

Work With the Land:



On the 6th Susan, Sanjeev, and I met to be updated on all aspects of the Padmalaya construction work. It was agreed that Sanjeev would follow-up with Prabal, our architect for the revised drawings for the kitchen truss; he would also communicate about the urgency of completing the drawing of the City Office no later than by early August in order to ensure all official processes; and he would also followup on the lifts – now being made in the chain-pulling style. A permanent LED screen is being looked into for Padmalaya and Sanjeev is also looking into the best option/s for such a screen. Although Susan

and I took a break and did not go to visit Padmalaya this month, we stayed in close communication with Rishi ji and Sambad our contractors, Prabal, and everyone else in the technical network as necessary. Susan with Sanjeev, and Govinda, based at Padmalaya itself made all this possible.

As advised, Sanjeev made a prompt visit to meet with Prabal Thapa on the 7th, for detailed discussions as a follow-up to our earlier meeting. Sanjeev reported that: *“Prabal Thapa shared that the conceptual architectural design for the City Office has been submitted to NA, incorporating their previous feedback. He outlined the subsequent steps required for project progression, which involve outsourcing various technical services, including: Structural Design and Building Permit (Naksa Pass); Detailed Architectural Drawings; MEP (Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing) Details; Construction Documentation; Bill of Quantities (BoQ); Cost Estimation; Contract Documentation; and Tender Documentation. To proceed with these tasks based on the approved architectural concept, a formal contract between NA and Prabal Thapa is necessary. Additionally, Prabal Thapa noted that he would need to subcontract structural related services from a third-party firm led by Manohar Lal*



Rajbhandary/son. He emphasized that approximately 3% of the total construction budget, estimated approximately as Rs. 36 - 40 lakhs needed to be allocated for the preparation for above documents up until the tender documentation phase, as is in practice.” These will help move things forward. Prabal gave other suggestions that are needing decisions from NA which Susan and Sanjeev will be following up on.

Furthermore for further clarity on the legal and fiscal processes of the City Office, Susan with Merita (Financial

Manager), and Sanjeev went to Prabal’s office for a meeting. This proved to be very helpful,

and we can be assured that activities related to all contractual work will move ahead as required. Susan and Sanjeev followed up with another important visit to Prabal on the 16th regarding legal and logistical procedures.

On the 22nd Sanjeev Singh, on behalf of NA, coordinated a visit of all technical parties comprising of **Prabal Thapa, Kundan Shekhar, Tejita Amataya, Dambar Basnet, Nim, Suraj, Nabin, and our contractors Rishi & Samed Itani and Sanjeev Singh**. Dambar Bahadur Basnet, Nim, Suraj, and Nabin met the team in Bharatpur, while the rest travelled by air. Among other buildings, the focus was on the coordinated focus of the **Sukarma** Building. As of this date, it was agreed to have a handing over of this building by the 18th June. Prabal gave instructions to the contractors for all the other ongoing work on the 2 residential blocks, boundary walling, guard house, kitchen and dining, and the mechanical building.



Sanjeev reports: “In summary, work is progressing well in both the private accommodation building blocks. The structural works and electrical installations are complete, with ongoing work on insulation on the roofs. Completing bathrooms, and the ground-floor bedrooms is also being done. All the major structural and plumbing works have been accomplished with the roofing now ready for CGI sheet installation. Slab concreting has been completed in the Mechanical/Utility Block and electrical panel drawings are awaited. The structural and foundation of the Guard-House and the boundary walls have been completed – as brick-laying work on the walls continue. The floor and fan holder rectifications are done and lighting reinstallation will follow cable tray painting in the **Sukarma** Building. The window waterproofing by

the Skylight team is also pending here.” We have learned that with construction work that requires multi-agency coordination, and adjustments according to the weather (in this case seasonal flooding and furious storms), it is difficult to proceed as initially planned and one needs to adapt accordingly, as continues to be the case at Padmalaya. All the more it is a relief to us all that a “lightening arrestor” with a coverage of 200 meters radius has been installed on the rooftop of Sukarma building. Govinda tells us that vegetables like cucumbers (**held here by our gardener Bhim**), pumpkins, bitter gourd, string beans, lady’s fingers, tomatoes, are growing well. Owing to the upcoming monsoon season, Govinda and team also planted very beneficial, moringa and neem trees. The corn plantation is also doing very well at Padmalaya and soon they will fully ripen. Vegetables in excess are being bought by the Padmalaya staff as and when available.

Programme Update:



Govinda tells us that this month Padmalaya hosted two 2-days workshops and an additional 1-day workshop with different stakeholders, increasing the overall management and logistical management experience for the entire Padmalaya team. A 3-day workshop was conducted in the nearby Sauraha, for

NA youths from Lalitpur and the Nawalpur districts, this event was supported by the Kurve Wustrow – a long-time partner, supporter of NA.

Besides these, under regular and ongoing programme Padmalaya conducted 7 programs in 4 Wards of Nawalpur led by the Padmalaya staffs, related to the needs of the local communities. All necessary team meetings, regular work in the 5 Peace Centers e.g. counseling services, observing local cultural events and international days, work with the local schools, are ongoing.

Funds & Finances:

This month Padmalaya savings from the **Pahura Pasal (shop) and the sale of vegetable produce at Padmalaya, amounted to Rs. 85,735**, which has been already deposited in the NA account.



Merita, NA Finance Manager, informed us that on 9th May, NA received a gift of **Rs. 71,490.69 (\$ 522.44)** from our friend **Stephen Pittam**. Stephen, we are so appreciative of your ongoing support for Padmalaya. thank you! This month given the special privilege to NA staffs **Govinda Acharya** deposited



his pledged Rs. 100,000 for the Padma-Sarthak Campaign.

Others:

As part of the IGFF led **Anupam Abhiyan – 2025**, a signature campaign is taking place as a part of a nationwide movement this year. In May, through the initiative of Nagarik Aawaz peace youth activists, a total of **13 events have been successfully conducted across 12 districts**. In Rupandehi district, three events were organized under the leadership of the **Namuna Integrated Development Council**. In Banke, **Fatima Foundation** led an orientation program focused on the signature campaign. Likewise, in **Rukum East**, Nagarik Aawaz peace

volunteer **Deepa Dhital** conducted an orientation program on the campaign. Nagarik Aawaz volunteer and peace activists **Hari Devkota and Himal Mahat** coordinated four district-level events in **Kavre, Ramechhap, Sindhupalchok, and Dolakha**, in collaboration with various local organizations. In **Dhading district**, **FOCUS Nepal's Ekraj Chatkuli and Tola Kumari Pathak**, organized an orientation program to support the signature campaign. In **Sindhupalchowk**, Tewa grantee group leaders and IGFF associates e.g. **Panmaya Tamang**, were further strengthened by **Himal Mahat** to conduct a Anupam Abhiyan related event. In These events, local leaders who are peace activists and IGFF associates, elected women representatives of different political parties, journalists, and Deputy Mayors and Mayors were gathered. These programmes were also inclusive in terms of intersectionality and were conducted with minimal external support, where the organizers primarily contributed their own resources. Just at the end of the month, **Direndra Shah** (another NA partner youth) of **Siraha District** reported that an orientation and a signature campaign had also taken place in Siraha. Similarly on the 29th in **Madhyabindu, Wards 1, 10, 12, of Nawalpur – Govinda**

Acharya and team conducted the signature campaign orientation, open forum discussions, and also collected signatures with participant's details. Considering all the time, energy, and organizing, these events can take – this was a very good beginning for the month of May! I will continue to inform on the Anupam Abhiyan – 2025, signature campaign as it rolls, both for documentation and because it is making history!

Conclusions:

Democracy Day on the 29th, proved to be stressful for the residents of Kathmandu valley. The pro-democracy mass led by the ruling party UML, and the pro-monarchy demonstrators met at different times and occasion. It has been difficult to capture the exact situation in terms of anticipated violence or disturbances. One does not know how much to trust social media in terms of what is the overall impact – and what the implications may be for all of us! It was peacefully executed as far as we know. Largely Nepalis continue to live in uncertainty and some level of insecurity as blatant corruptions and impunity reigns supreme among ongoing demonstrations.

Photo Courtesy: Govinda Acharya, Sambodh Itani, Sanjeev Singh, & Facebook posts from Himal, Hari, Dharendra

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th June 2025
Subject: [Padmalaya](#) Monthly Update – June

Our Context in Nawalpur:



All may not be well in Nepal or in the world for any of us in these times, but I am choosing only to focus on the rice planting season of June! Finding the variety of seeds (rice grains with husks), it is first soaked for 3/4 days. Then it is gathered together in a warm place and covered with wet jute bags overnight - which enables germination so the seeds can sprout in the earth. Next, an appropriate place for plantation of seeds is ploughed, and fully covered in several inches of water. The prepared seeds are then sowed (by skillful throwing) from all around not stepping on the prepared wet land. In several days the water dries and the rice shoots begin to appear as a carpet of green. After this, all the fine sediment covering the young shoots needs to be carefully combed off so that the saplings are not gagged with mud. The entire

process may take up to 20 days before the strong rice saplings are ready to be transplanted in the wet fields to grow and provide us all sustenance as staple food – rice in most of Nepal! Yesterday was the official rice plantation day in Nepal, where people play with wet earth, sing and eat a meal of beaten rice and yogurt after a day of hard labour.

Work With the Land:



Our contractor, Sambad Itani reports that the work is ongoing at the site. The weekly zoom meetings primarily focusing on the technical and construction aspects of Padmalaya, by the PMC, Dambar Basnet is also ongoing. On the 9th with a revision architectural plan of the **Padmalaya City Office**, architect Prabal with his co-worker Ruby came to show us a three-dimensional drawing of the City Office. Prabal had given it much thought – 1) in terms of the required official government compliance; 2) in the architectural free-flowing spaces; and in 3) the locational and environmental aspects. All who were present, Govinda, Susan, Sanjeev and Rita with the contractor Sambad, unanimously approved the drawing and NA gave the go-ahead for moving forward with the other official and contractual processes so that a smooth transition of work can happen from - now in process, Padmalaya, to the



building of the new
City Office - 2026.

On the 20th, Susan and Rita visited Padmalaya, taking with them **Jenny Hodgson (above), the ED of the Global Fund for Community Foundations.**

Sanjeev drove a day earlier to join us in this trip. While Susan showed Jenny around Padmalaya, Rita went around with

Rishi ji and Sambed (our contractors) to inspect the construction work currently being done – the guard house, boundary walls on the 2 sides, the finishing on the 2 residential buildings, and the kitchen/dining block with the adjacent main entrance and continuing on the same line, the unility and the generator blocks. In consultation with Susan and Govinda later, Rita suggested the changes seen to be necessary from the users point of view in the Kitchen block – these were also echoed by Susan and Govinda. The wall along the western boundary is almost complete and the Guard House and walls on the eastern boundary is being made. The residential buildings now have a roof on them (as seen above), electric work and plastering work is being done, and all plumbing and drainage related work is ongoing. Repair work in Padmadhar and Padmini is also being done. The Kitchen and Dining area is being prepared for the roof work by installing iron beams. There are 15/17 labourers at present on the site working from the side of the contractors. Tejita made a site visit to check on the quality of the interior designing work and the furniture made by Metal Wood in the Sukarma building. A complete handover was



made on the 23rd by Metal Wood to the responsible Padmalaya staff.

Owing to the rains the weather was mild making our stay very pleasant. All of us also listened to our Padmalaya team as arranged/facilitated by Govinda. Rita did simultaneous translation for Jenny. The most inspiring part of their sharing was the ownership

each of the staff felt for the work they were doing at Padmalaya – even those who had been at Padmalaya, for less than 5 months! Therefore, each of them individually are owning the IGFF - Anupam Abhiyan's signature campaign so much that they are individually taking it to their homes and neighbourhoods individually and independently – on their weekends! Little wonder that this month Padmalaya has led/accomplished over 20 signature campaigns! They see it as their responsibility and contribution to the change they wish to see in Nepal.

NA PO, Coordinator for the technical aspects of Padmalaya, **Sanjeev Singh** announced that he is leaving to settle down in the USA with his family, and will terminate his work at NA from mid-July. Thus Sanjeev is working hard to finish some of the responsibilities he has undertaken with us at NA/Padmalaya e.g. installing locally made lift/s to make Padmadhar and Padmini dorm buildings accessible, Solar system/s, installing the LDC screen and some other coordination work with the technical team. Sanjeev will be greatly missed as a part of our team - as we offer our best wishes to him and his family settling down in the new land! We will now have to see how to fill in Sanjeev's role.

This being the monsoons, it has enabled our builders to see how to best manage the drainage system and leakages, and how to enable the torrential rains at times to not be damaging to our buildings and landscape.



Programme Update:

At Padmalaya corn was harvested this month, and rice is being planted as of now. Padmalaya is harvesting 12/15 kgs of vegetables e.g. different kinds of greens, cucumbers, gourds, brinjals, chilies, varieties of beans, pumpkin, and tomatoes, on a daily basis. This makes Padmalaya self-sufficient in vegetables for



daily staff lunches, residential workshops/meetings, and the surplus, when possible, is bought by the staff.

On the 1st Govinda shared that a review, reflection, and a team-building exercise at Padmalaya had been conducted – this is an ongoing periodic event at NA and enables thoughtful and deep understanding of the work done by NA. Finally, after many trials and extended wait owing to many technical and environmental glitches, **Govinda** and the **Padmalaya team** moved their temporary office in the Exhibition Hall to the newly set-up offices on the **Sukarma** building on the 25th. The interiors (all five floors including the ground floor) were designed by **Tejita Amatya Vaidya** of the **Conception Interior Pvt. Ltd.** and executed by **Metal Wood**. The Sukarma holds a community recreation space on the ground floor; 2 office floors including executive office spaces for Govinda and Susan; 1 floor dedicated to storage/office for housekeeping and the kitchen teams; and the rooftop dedicated to the **Pahura Pasal** and the **Tea Shop** - providing excellent view of the Narayani River and the lush greens of the Chitwan National Park for viewing pleasure. The **Sukarma** building was thoroughly cleaned for 3 days by the Padmalaya team after the handing-over took place, before moving in. **On the 25th of June, at 9.30am the Padmalaya team after lighting auspicious lamps, went to their respective office spaces** with a commitment for personal and professional growth, a commitment to fulfill all due responsibilities that their jobs entailed, and to move forward in cooperation and harmony with each other. Led by **Govinda**, the Padmalaya team expressed happiness and contentment in moving to their brand-new office space. Govinda said that they were all very appreciative of the vision and execution of Rita and Susan in enabling the beautiful office space in the **Sukarma** building!

Two two-days residential workshops took place in Padmalaya this month. Both the review workshops focusing on community peace building work by youths and income-generation activities by the conflict-affected women, showed very good results. This was evident in not just the economic gains the participants had made, but in terms of the improvements in their mental wellbeing – such as self-confidence and a sense of contentment.

In June Govinda also reports that they carried out 41 programmes at the level of the local communities, the six Peace Centers Padmalaya operates in Nawalpur district, and the multiple IGFF signature campaigns that were being carried out. More than 1025 participants gained from these interactions. All these have lent to collective care, love, solidarity and community harmony. Padmalaya's ongoing activities like team meetings, counseling services, and follow-up activities have also been ongoing.

Funds & Finances:

Rs. 1,895 have been collected in Padmalaya through the sale of vegetables and items from the Pahura Pasal (Padmalaya shop).

Others:

This month we will focus on the IGFF's Anupam Abhiyan – year 3 of **Rajnaitik Khabardari** (meaning alerting the political parties). Under this the following activities are being undertaken:

- Nationwide signature campaign/s
- Periodic submission of the signatures to all party offices at all levels, and
- A weekly educational zoom meeting bringing experts on all the various aspects of politics and political parties.

Starting from May, so far IGFF has cumulatively managed to conduct **132 signature campaigns** (gathering hundreds of thousands of signatures) have been undertaken in **31**



districts of Nepal. in Nawalpur alone, the Padmalaya team have conducted 22 signature campaigns collecting 600 signatures. With NA and Tewa holding some orientations and mobilizing their volunteers and grantees – the mode of the signature campaigns have been innovative and inspiring, building on the local contexts of what has been possible for each group of associates involved in these campaigns. For instance, in the most remote western **Bajura district** the signature campaign was built into the community rice planting activities (see above), where

the local government representatives and community learders also participated. The **Anupam Campaign** being a nation-wide movement, each one is doing these activities mobilizing necessary resources at the local and individual level/s and improvising along the way. It has been a very inspiring process to say the least!

Conclusions:

It has been interesting to focus on a part of the 5-year long IGFF's Anupam Abhiyan for all of us. In my opinion, this has enabled us to stay focused on reaching our goals and staying positive and creative as we go along and inspiring one another. As I report periodically on this I hope it will also inspire each one of you.

Most importantly, this year the moving the office space for the Padmalaya team to a permanent beautiful location has been the highlight for all of us who have been working towards this! I will be sharing some office pictures next update for sure. Also NA has been conducting team focused discussions both in Kathmandu and Padmalaya during the very last days of June in preparation for a workshop being conducted in Pokhara 4/5 July, to think through in an all-rounded way the being of Padmalaya in the larger peace-building world - regional and global; in and within Nepal; and what it means for NA, and who are associated with it!

Photo Courtesy: Govinda Acharya, Samed Itani, Sanjeev Singh, & Facebook posts from Hari, Dhami

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st July 2025
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – July

Our Context in Nawalpur:

Govinda reports that even as the farmers have been finishing their rice planting, strong sun without adequate rains have got the farmers worried in terms of reduced harvest owing to dryness. Owing to the rains the now under-construction highway roads continue to be treacherous making it very difficult for travelers plying this road. Despite this the rice plantation in Padmalaya's two plots are growing satisfactorily and seasonal vegetables are also adequate for self-consumption despite the rains.

Work With the Land:



On the 11 – 12th, Prabal, Dambar, Rishi and Sambod visited the site at Padmalaya. We are informed that all technical details have been pointed out and discussed between the architect team and the contractors so that all remaining snags can be worked at to make necessary corrections and improvements. Visiting the site during the hot and lush monsoon month, certainly gave us an ace picture that is an ode to our Architect, Prabal S. Thapa (see L)!

This month, I visited the stone carver for the chaitya “stupa” that is being made for



Nawalpur. I made a few requests which Anil, the carver, fulfilled before Sanjeev helped bring it to Padmalaya when he made a road trip for our meeting on the 14th. Before he leaves NA, Sanjeev is also following up on the two lifts and the LCD screen to be installed in Padmalaya – the LCD area person came for a site visit on the 15th morning as organized by Sanjeev. Susan and I also made a trip to Padmalaya during the 14 - 15 June. Meeting up with Sambed at the site to discuss the remaining construction work, going over what has been accomplished, and visiting the office set-up in the Sukarma building, were some of our key doings. Also, we had organized to

meet up with Ayus Satyal of Quality Kitchen Equipment Pvt. Ltd., who specializes in outfitting kitchens - to do our kitchen at Padmalaya. Along with Sambed, we also met with Ayus who arrived on the 15th – this gave him an opportunity to design the kitchen in the best way possible given our space. We now await his proposed design, so that he and Sambed can coordinate for all the necessary doings. We estimate now that we will have a completed kitchen at Padmalaya within the next 3 months.

Sambed and Rishi ji are still confident that we will finish all we need to do at Padmalaya within this month. Remaining buildings partially completed are the two residential blocks; guard house/s; kitchen/dining unit; and the main entrance. Dambar is continuing his weekly technical meetings with related and responsible people – although Susan and I are unable to participate in these meetings now, Sanjeev does, and he is also responsible to follow-up at least until the end of July after NA extended his contract for a further 15 days. Construction work is moving but

not at top speed, until the kitchen details are made available and the contract is signed with the Quality Kitchen Equipment Pvt. Ltd. Sanjeev in his last Padmalaya report writes: *“In the kitchen/dining area and the main entrance block all structural and metal work including roofing, electrical wiring and flush pointing are completed. NA is closely working with Quality Kitchen Equipment Pvt. Ltd. for the final layout and design. The residential block has completed its entire structure, wiring, roofing, flooring, and partitions for the three new rooms with only the installation of fixtures remaining. The other residential block too has completed all structural work, roofing, plumbing and electrical work while fixture remain pending. The mechanical and utility block has completed its slab formwork, steelwork/concreting, and is awaiting the electric panel drawings for completion. The guard house has completed its foundation and walling, and the western boundary wall is completed. On the recommendations of Prabal S. Thapa, Solar Consultant, Ajay Narsingh Rana has been hired by NA, to oversee the installation of a PV solar system at Padmalaya which is expected to be completed by next month”.*

Programme Update:

On the 4/5 the key NA/Padmalaya programme staff met in Pokhara, Kaski district for a one and only reflection/review meeting, to think through what NA/Padmalaya continues to be in terms of their being/work. Six members of the Board including the Chair, Dr. Chhatra Amatya joined on the final day – to listen and provide their thoughtful inputs. Eight key Padmalaya staff, including Govinda were present. The selected venue for this most important work was the legendary Fishtail Lodge. Rita and Susan conceptualized and designed the workshop. Although the initial idea before the actual workshop was to primarily think through for Padmalaya (as the construction work was finishing up), the alarming and challenging current global and national state of affairs, made it necessary to look at the large picture and to locate NA/Padmalaya within that. The workshop was a resounding success where all felt that life and work could not be separated in compartments, that they needed to be in compliment with one another, and that working collectively for the larger good gave the most meaning to life! Dr. Chhatra Amatya gave precious life lessons and Rita and Susan both gave inspirational inputs to a group of already motivated inspiring staff team!





On return, Govinda took a day out to sit with his entire team to share all that was gathered from the Pokhara workshop and think through how Padmalaya could be sustained and move forward to do its good work in these

globally/nationally instable and challenging times. After a full day of deep discussions on the previous day, the Padmalaya team informed us when we arrived on the 14th the key conclusions they drew as following:

1. How can

each/collectively expand/extent the concept of care and loving kindness to themselves and all around,

2. How owing to the space at Padmalaya – they have each found their own voice and power – how to ensure that they use it for the betterment and wellbeing of their communities, and how they need to constantly ensure that this is handed over generationally at Padmalaya, and
3. How can they work to ensure economic/resource sustainability of the work they do and Padmalaya – by contributing their own money, skills, and time as well as engaging their communities in these practices.

During this sharing, rising to the occasion, Lamsal announced that he would be making a monthly gift Rs. 100 from June 2025 onwards to Padmalaya even after he retired from Padmalaya until death! All the Padmalaya staff team will likewise be pledging whatever they can starting July 2025 – these moneys are now pledged for the sustainability of Padmalaya.

Govinda reported that this month, Padmalaya conducted four one-day workshops. Owing to the heat it was not advisable to conduct residential workshops which have been postponed for now. Sushil visiting from NA/Kathmandu, Nirajan, and Sangita conducted two community level consultations on peace-building work and the responsibilities that this work demands. During July some 46 ward-level community-based programme and interactions were conducted - pertaining to health and nutrition, counseling, inclusion/integration of diversity and



engendering our work, food security, and hygiene/self-care. over 1150 community members benefited directly from these programmes. All these ongoing and timely

interactions/orientations enables community harmony, love, and security. Additionally, some 25 IGFF signature campaigns were conducted by Padmalaya alone where more than 700 signatures have been collected.

Funds & Finances:

This month Padmalaya could only save Rs. 1764 mostly through the sale of vegetables which has been duly deposited in the NA account. **But beginning with Lamsal, now Padmalaya's 31 staff, will collectively give a minimum gift of Rs. 2705 monthly, for Padmalaya's long-term sustainability!** They hope this will also inspire their local communities in all they do.

Others:

On the 16th NA/Hari Dhami and Anjeela brought together all the 19 youths from their respective districts in a zoom meeting during 11 – 1 pm. All spoke about the **Anupam Abhiyan and the Signature Campaign** programme that they had undertaken. Despite the rains, rice-planting season, torrential rains in some places to the extent bridges have been swept away, difficult roads and transportation, every youth in every districts conducted orientations and signature campaigns. It made all the participants who were listening in, further motivated and inspired. So far IGFF Secretariat informs us that **13150 signature have been collected in 255 events in 45 districts!**

On the 25th over 150 of us IGFF SC members/Advisor, associates in two groups led by **Co-coordinators, Stella Tamang and Laxmi Ghalan, handed over over 8000 signatures in 7 key political parties offices.** This was done with great fanfare as the associates in 2 clusters in two buses - went with music, singing our songs, and Freedom Studio videographers. Stopping 100 meters ahead of the party offices our associated got down from the busses, cars and motor bykes and went in a procession/s that was eye catching. They were well received by Party leaders we pledged they would give election tickets to women (we have heard this before!). doing this is half a day required great coordination work from the Secretariat staff and

volunteers – which was done timely and efficiently. A vedio clip of this event is posted here for your viewing pleasure:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1RfToTUfuJ/>

Conclusions:

IGFF's Anupam Abhiyan has been the key focus of all of us this month – especially for NA – Hari, Susan, and Rita. But I will not expand on that – it is the sum total that counts and thank you for listening to us. All the work we have done all organizations everywhere in the past seems to be converging to make this 5-year long campaign a success. For equitable justice!

Photo Courtesy: Govinda, & Rita, Sijendra/FS

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st August 2025
Subject: [Padmalaya](#) Monthly Update – August

Our Context in Nawalpur:

This has been a month of many festivals e.g. Naag Panchami (worshiping the snake god/s), Gai Jatra (the commemoration of the dead and a day of fun and satire), the holy day for Hindus - Krishna's Birthday, Father's Day – Kuse Aunsi, Haritalika Teej/Rishi Panchami (when women

pray to Lord Shiva and fast for their husband's long life), and Ganesh Chaturthi.

However, some of these are more celebrated in the valley – and therefore there has never been a dull day especially in the Kathmandu valley!

Govinda reports that in Nawalpur the political parties are strengthening their parties at the local level. The farmers are content with the rice crops as they grow. They have been busy weeding rice this month. Although the local budgets have been passed, not much work has moved forward owing to the monsoon rains.

Work With the Land:





Owing to excessive rains throughout this month, the construction work continues to move slowly. Some necessary reinforcement and repair work has been ongoing during this time. Therefore as the rains began to taper off recently, Ajay N. Rana – our consultant for the solar backup lights has just begun to organize work at the site with the loading off of the necessary equipments and solar panels.

Sambodh Itani our contractor/engineer now helping me with the site reporting writes: *“All the boundary walls have been completed. In the*

*guard house, laying the truss on the roof has begun. The final work with plumbing and electric works as well as the fixing of fixtures in both the residential buildings remain. Regarding the kitchen, dining and the adjoining main entrance, all the structural components, CSEB block walls, structural metal works and metal work for roofing are completed. The electrical pipe laying and wire pulling in the dining and entrance areas have been completed. Kitchen area will be done once the drawing is received from the **Quality Kitchen** to whom the work has been commissioned. Flush pointing has also been completed. The recent work has focused on:*

- 1. Ramp and boundary wall section towards the north side, which has been completed.*
- 2. All the metal roof structures are completed with full welding finished.*
- 3. Extension of platform at the front of kitchen and hand washing areas, structure is completed.*
- 4. Some required modifications are also done. These are the demolition of the slab in the dining hall, and the internal walls of the kitchen block are finished.*
- 5. New kitchen layout is finalized and the equipment/s required for kitchen is finalized and is in the production right now.*



6. The MEP



- (Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing) drawing is provided to the contractor by the Quality Kitchen people. And the,*
7. *Tiles for the kitchen floors are to be finalized. Following this the work will begin as soon as possible”.*

Not that I understand all the technical terms he mentions, but we can see there is so much of detailing that is required. Thank you very much Sambed!



Architect Prabal S. Thapa and PMC Dambar Basnet made an impromptu visit to the site on the 26th – this helped provide necessary inputs and feedback to the site engineers, carefully weighing out the best options and back-up for the roofing materials. But a picture sent to us by Govinda, impresses me on the level of minute/detailed inspection that was done. Knowing that Prabal had some serious back problem this month, this picture to me was a bit alarming! But their going to the site showed Prabal's commitment to the project and all he does! I am also happy

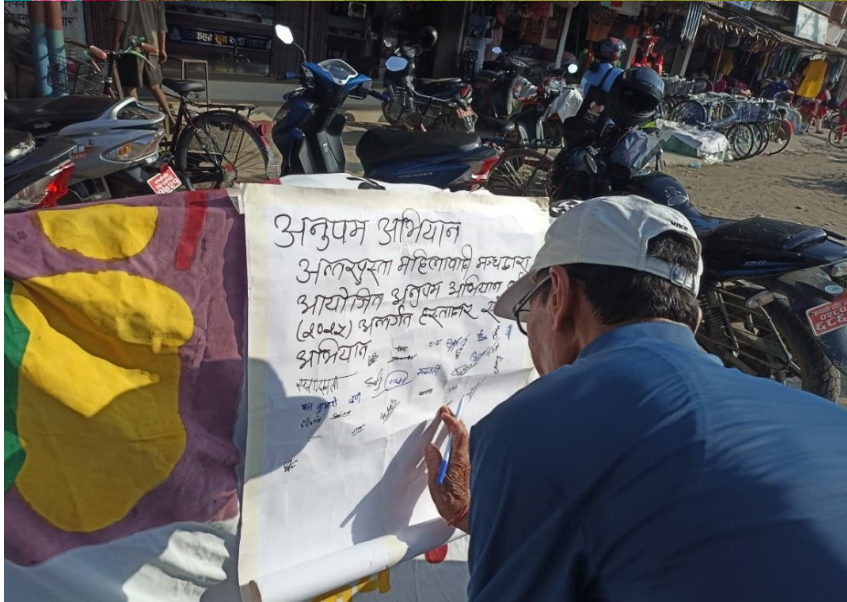
to share a couple of beautiful pictures (page 2 & 3) he took at the site which he shared with us!

Govinda also reports that the necessary landscaping work, plantation and harvesting of seasonal vegetables has been ongoing work at Padmalaya! Many lotus plants have been planted by our gardener Bhim, in the water-body around the Sukarma and the Multi-purpose Hall buildings.

Programme Update:

This month, Padmalaya hosted 3 residential workshops for the youths and the stakeholders, and several smaller day-long interaction programmes. These workshops/interactions enabled in generating knowledge/learning and in the sustenance of Padmalaya itself. Increasingly, NA's work in Nawalpur is strengthening its outreach in collaboration and support with/for the local government and the local communities. The seven Peace Centers based in Nawalpur continue to provide counseling services, orientations for facilitating the day to day living for the local community - focusing on school-going children, adolescents, youths, and the conflict affected persons. These collaborative work with the government, has enabled in getting up to 30% Municipal support for the ongoing programmes of the Peace Centers.

Funds & Finances:



Govinda shared that this month the monthly tithing of Rs 50 or more has enabled to gather **Rs. 2685** from the staff of Padmalaya. This has been duly deposited in the savings. Importantly we received the **previously pledged Rs. 100,000** each from my friends **Ninu Satyal** and **Mukta Shrestha** for the Padma Sarthak Campaign (PSC). We are truly grateful and feel honored to receive their support and trust for the work of NA/Padmalaya.

Others:

The year of the signature campaign of the Anupam Abhiyan (AA) of the IGFF is ongoing! So far since May this year 347 events have taken place in 49 districts out of a total of 77 districts of Nepal. The Padmalaya team in Nawalpur district alone have accomplished

108 signature campaign events! Women with the support of feminist men have increasingly created a lot of pressure for the political leadership of all the parties – the forthcoming elections at the end of 2027 will have to be more equitable and just in terms of gender representation at all levels. On the 31st the IGFF Steering Committee had a mid-term review of the Anupam Abhiyan. It was collectively deduced that without major funding or staff, infrastructural support at the district levels, the AA has voluntarily and spontaneously gathered more momentum than what could have been possible. This year before IGFF Associates meet in Padmalaya in March 2026, there are at least 4/5 working months left, and we have no doubt that all the districts will be well covered. Likewise, Hari/Anjeela Rayamajhi – NA, report that through their Community Safety Net Network alone they conducted 94 events in 16 districts gathering over 4800 signatures for the Anupam Abhiyan of IGFF. Just this month in Padmalaya, 36 two-hour long signature campaigns were conducted under the Anupam Abhiyan/IGFF. Over 2100 community members participated and supported these signature campaigns.

Conclusions:

This month a momentous undertaking for NA/Padmalaya, is the plan for the documentation, memorialization, and the archiving of all the learnings at NA over the 25 year period until the end of 2026. More on this next month!

Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Prabal, Samed, & Rita

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th September 2025
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – September

A Glimpse of Our Context in Nepal/Nawalpur:

Impacting the whole country, on the 4th, The Kathmandu Post stated: *“The government has imposed a ban on Facebook and other major social media platforms that failed to register with the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology within the given deadline”*. This became the igniter for the mass protest of the GenZs who began with “nepo-babies” and an anti-corruption mass protest that spilled onto the streets of Kathmandu on the 8th. As the initially creative peaceful march turned violent, the day ended with the gunning down of 19 GenZ activists (many children) who were trying to break into the Parliament premise and the torching of the homes of corrupt politicians. The following day was sheer mayhem on the streets where almost all government offices relating to State government, judiciary, tourism and local government was torched down. Eventually the Nepal Army took control imposing curfew as was necessary and facilitated the process with the GenZ leadership in installing an interim government with **Sushila Karki – the first woman PM of Nepal** – as Prime Minister. So far, the PM has expanded her interim cabinet to 8 – choosing people (all men so far) who have a proven track record in their respective fields and are credible. Their priority mandate is to conduct the parliamentary elections on 4th March 2026; investigate into the recent carnage; spare no one in receiving their due punishments; and zero tolerance for corruption.

With growing injustice, impunity, apathy, heightened politicization/s on the part of the politicians, and the many faultlines (geographic, religious, political, and identities to name a few) – something like this could/have been anticipated. By today, 74 persons have died and hundreds are in our hospitals; 12000 guns and pistols and more than 100000 amunitions have been stolen from the police and the armed police forces; out of some 12000 inmates who escaped from the jails – majority of them are still on our streets (while some surrenders), the morale of the security forces have never been this low; our overarching governance seems to be at the level of infancy (lack of knowledge/skills) – we have never before in our history arrived at this critically low level of multiple security risks for the nation and the public (*picking some data from Sushant Pradhan’s podcast with Chiran Jung Thapa*). These pose critical risk factors for Nepalis as we move forward towards enabling a fair election within the next six months to form a stable government!

Govinda reports that on 9th September - Nawalpur too suffered from the aftermath of the GenZ demonstrations. Here too, 50 infrastructures, and 43 vehicles - all belonging to the government and elected leaders, were reduced to ashes. Leaving but one or two districts, this carnage took place simultaneously in all the other districts of Nepal. Owing to all these happenings, cases of theft, rape, vandalism, political discord have escalated. Although the farming conditions remain stable, people are suffering from fear and insecurities. Furthermore, owing to major landslides on the highways, people are facing travel challenges, but particularly for those going home during the festival times.

Work With the Land:



On the 1st – 2nd, I visited Padmalaya with a visitor. It was a pleasure to see how well Sukarma had been put to use. The working spaces as well as the house-keeping department store and the space for the kitchen staff were organized as it could best be. After moving all the stuff for some years in many different locations as the building work demanded, this provided an organized and an efficient space. All the staff felt that they had a rare special space to work from. On asking to raise both hands if they were very very happy and one hand if they were very happy – this is the visible outcome. They said their working space was safe, loving, creative (could look out on the stunning beauty of a body of water circling the buildings, farms and forest), and was very inspiring whenever there was a drop in anyone's energy. They only had to look out of the french windows on all sides! Witnessing this



personally was the highlight of my visit. Govinda shared that the team later expressed happiness that they received Dasain treats – almost like from their guardians, during this visit.

Construction work has not yet picked up for obvious reasons. Currently there are only 8 labourers working at the site. According to Sambed, the roofing work on the guard house is just completed and the

kitchen area is being done. An excerpt from Sambed's report for the kitchen and main entrance block is pasted here below for your detailed technical view:

- “All the Structural components, CSEB block walls, structural metal works and metal work for the roofing have been completed
- Electrical pipe laying and wire pulling on dining and entrance area are completed, the kitchen area is awaiting the drawings from Quality Kitchen
- Flush-pointing is completed
- Ramp and boundary walls section towards north side is completed
- All the metal roof structures are completed with full welding
- Extension of platform at the front of kitchen and hand wash structure have been completed
- Some requiring modifications are done. Such as demolition of the dining slab, internal walls of the kitchen block have also been completed
- The revised kitchen layout is finalized and the required equipment for the kitchen has been finalized and is currently in production
- The MEP (Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing) drawings have also been provided to the contractors by Quality kitchen, and
- Once the floor tiles are finalized by the architects, the work will begin after the holidays.”

Sambed also informed that the order for the diesel generator with the capacity of 62.5 KVA has been placed. It is expected to be delivered soon after the Dasain holidays. The electrical main panel board for the solar heating has also been given for manufacturing.



The only solace now is that the Padmalaya's rice plantation is growing satisfactorily, and arriving to the end of this month, it feels like we will not face flooding during this monsoon season. Seasonal vegetables are being harvested and planted as is required at Padmalaya.

Programme Update:



Govinda shared that in early September, Padmalaya conducted/hosted a 2 day long annual Peace Table for the conflict affected women. There was a lot of inbuilt healing activities like dancing, singing, storytelling, and yoga. Padmalaya also conducted two 2-day residential

programme/s for the youths, and the conflict affected women. Each workshop hosted some 25 persons, enabling some income for Padmalaya. Particularly post GenZ happenings, these workshops enabled post event reflections and better understanding allowing a healing space for all. On the IPD – the 21st of September, Govinda and team celebrated the day by lighting peace lamps and by processing the impacts of the GenZ demonstrations and its aftermath. Participants said it helped them better understand the context and reduce personal anxiety and fear.

This month through the peace centers Padmalaya conducted 14 community level interactions and programmes where over 550 persons benefitted. Through one of its extended programmes,



Padmalaya is in the process of selecting 10 peace volunteers, one from every ward in the Nawalpur district. The necessary coordination with the local government is also being carried out. Besides these, other ongoing services and programme to benefit the local communities have been ongoing. Govinda says that the regular orientations, counseling services, and team meetings have been ongoing as always.

Funds & Finances:

Over Rs. 3000 has been gathered this month, primarily from the monthly payroll contributions of the Padmalaya staff.

Others:

*“Over the years I would learn that sharing money with love and in solidarity is a delicate process, far more difficult than hoarding it.
But until we live in a more equal world,
sharing (responsibly) is the best you can do.”*

Pg. 236 – Mother Mary Comes to Me – Arundhati Roy

At a special day-long reflection meeting of the IGFF hosted by Urmila/Tewa, we had to think through our changed context post the GenZ protests and the aftermath. Following that, on the 17th which was also marked as the national mourning day, the IGFF Steering Committee agreed to initiate the time-bound (within the 6 months time-frame of the interim government) **Anupam Peace Reconstruction Fund (APRF)**. It was also agreed that this fund will be devolved at the level of the districts, where the local IGFF Associates can similarly initiate. For

transparency and accountability, Susan/NA Board took the responsibility of hosting this fund at Nagarik Aawaz. For any of you who wish to make a contribution to the APRF, please make your deposits and transfers directly to the following account:

Account name - Nagarik Aawaz (Surakshya Kosh)

Account number – 08001010006424

Bank name - Global IME Bank Ltd.

Bank Branch - Pulchowk, Lalitpur

SWIFT Code – GLBBNPKA

All the money generated will be handed over to the PM at a time agreed upon by the SC members. I will be open for any queries any of you may have. Thank you very much!

Conclusions:

It is with such mixed feelings that I write this update. We have Nepal's first woman Prime Minister! Each day so much is happening that to keep up with all that is happening and make some coherent sense out of this is very difficult. We do not know if we will have a safe landing through all of this. All we know is that each of us will need to sincerely do what we can and hold on to enabling and facilitating peace at our levels. We can call on a higher presence - we can pray! I for one am lighting butter lamps and praying to my Gurus as much as I can! I so love the earth that held my ancestors, me, and the generation of the GenZs and thereafter. May Mount Everest and Lord Buddha smile on us all!

Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Samed, & Rita

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st October 2025
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – October

Our Context Now:

Even as an extended monsoon was tapering off at the end of September, we received a red alert for 20 central/eastern districts of Nepal with Kathmandu being at the center of it all. Owing to incessant rains during 4 – 6 October, while the festival was at its peak, traffic & transportations were curbed, the Dasain holidays was extended by 2 days, and rescue and emergency preparedness was on high alert. All domestic flights were stalled, although some international flights continued. And now at the very end of the month with a tornado (never heard of it in Nepal) that is once more creating havoc in our daily lives, we haven't even been able to



assimilate the loss and damage this time. On the third week Nepalis also celebrated the other major Tihar festival and the Chhat Parba which is celebrated mostly in Madhes.

Although the earlier rains in Kathmandu receded after 24 hours, a modest mention of the outcome involved over 52 loss of lives (39 of these in Ilam district itself), over 500 households and affected and families displaced, 1500 meters of embankments were swept away and tremendous damage to infrastructures like, roads, bridges, micro-hydro, and dams were recorded. Luckily there was no flooding at Padmalaya this year – this has been a

huge relief to all of us! Rice fields are lush and this has been a huge gift – as the Padmalaya team harvests and threshing is being done! But the latter rains happening now, will surely damage rice crops ready to be harvested in areas that are affected.

Govinda reports that Nawalpur is reeling from the aftermath of post GenZ demonstrations. On top of these, natural disasters, big festivals, and harvest time all collapsed into each other leaving people in a coping mode rather than in celebratory moods. Incidences of increased theft, rape, and local level brawls at the level of the party cadres has created ongoing tensions. Arms and ammunition and those who torched and looted the local elected leader's homes are also being recovered and tracked. Owing to all of these, Govinda informs us that the local security situation is not yet satisfactory.

Work With the Land:



On the 6th Susan and Rita met with Samed (Contractor). This was to basically request him to give us a revised timeline (at the earliest) under the current circumstances, in consultation with Rishi ji. Also we fore-warned him, that should a mishap occur in the country, that they gather all construction materials that is needed to importantly complete the kitchen/dining block, the 2 residential blocks, mechanical block with the generator, and other minor things construction wise. Even as we talked, the generator arrived at Padmalaya and was

hauled up on the roof of the mechanical block – anticipating a risk-free environment during times of flooding/s.

A major happening in Padmalaya, this month is the safe birthing of **PadmaRaj 2 by his mother Padmavati on the 21st at 10am**. This being the day of “gai (cow) tihar” during the Tihar festival, the birth of PadmaRaj 2 holds significance. This picture sent by Govinda is taken 2 hours after the birth of PadmaRaj. Govinda says that by now Padmavati who is being milked twice a day, is already giving 5 liters of milk after feeding Padmaraj 2. All is well there!

Sambodh informs us that after the electrical conduits and wire pulling work had been completed in the Kitchen area, the rough cement floor punning is also completed awaiting the choice of the floor tiles to be laid on top. The metal structure and roofing truss have been completed and is awaiting further work on the roof with the arrivals of the labourers. On the dormitory block 2, carpenters are making window shutters, and the bathroom fixture work will begin soon. The guard house is nearing completion. Sambodh informs us that owing to the festivals the labourers will begin to reach the site from today itself. Next month according to Sambodh, progress is anticipated to be excellent. During his recent site visit, Rishi ji – contractor senior, is planning to be at the site for an extended period to ensure timely and quality finish.

Our technical team is meeting regularly and moving things forward as is best possible!

Through a hired local consultant Engineer Arjun Chowdhary, Padmalaya has initiated the official work for the approval of the **City Office in Nawalpur**. It will take a mandatory 15 days of notice time after which the blueprint will be passed. Work can begin simultaneously within December 2025 if NA is ready, after the legal procedure of the “Tender Call” also finishes.

Programme Update:



Govinda and team have been very busy in follow-up activities post the GenZ demonstrations. They have had consultation meetings at many different levels of the communities that they serve through the 5 peace centers. This was in order to have a direct understanding of their experiences and impacts. Besides these, all their ongoing programme of celebrating marked International Days, national festivals, ongoing delivery of services, and responding to emerging needs has been ongoing. 22 conflict affected women received support for income generation, health and medicine, and education for their children, that has helped lighten their mental burdens considerably as Govinda reports. Besides, 2 non-residential workshops were conducted in Padmalaya, this month.

national festivals, ongoing delivery of services, and responding to emerging needs has been ongoing. 22 conflict affected women received support for income generation, health and medicine, and education for their children, that has helped lighten their mental burdens considerably as Govinda reports. Besides, 2 non-residential workshops were conducted in Padmalaya, this month.



On the 26th key Padmalaya team members came over to join Susan and her team in Kathmandu to map out the current situation and chart out a response for the immediate time to better lend to peace building work in the current changed context of Nepal.

At NA, the joint team made a context analysis and agreed on some conclusive actions NA can take. Susan in her words told me that NA will henceforth be making an effort in: *“1) Inviting security personnel to participate in the steering committees at each peace center to build rapport and strengthen community trust; 2) they will engage with local representatives (whose confidence and morale is very low now), to help them recognize that they can play a crucial role in upholding peace in their communities; and 3) NA will facilitate a series of conversation/s with their local community/ies about 8-9 September incidents to understand how their vision for peace is defined . These feedback/s will guide NA in re-designing our program/s to better respond to local priorities”*. Susan shared that NA will also continue to host regular discussion program and podcast to address the current scenario, promote dialogue, and support larger ongoing peacebuilding efforts.

Funds & Finances:



Padmalaya accumulated its monthly gift of over Rs. 3000 as staff contributions. Also, for the Anupam Peace Reconstruction Fund (APRF), the Padmalaya team has raised over Rs. 85,000 in cash this month, which they will expand and hand over to the local district government hopefully by the end of November.



Others:

Susan also shared that: “During 11–18 October, Founder Rita Thapa and CEO Susan Risal PhD, travelled to Nairobi, Kenya to participate in the *Peace Connect Conference* organized by **Peace Direct, UK**. Our conference costs were covered by the **Global Fund for Community Foundation (GFCF)** where Rita previously served as Chair of the Board. Peace Direct has been active in the field of peacebuilding for over 20 years, and NA has been connected with them since 2018, when NA was honoured as one of the runners-up in the *Tomorrow’s Peacebuilders Award*. The *Peace Connect Conference* was the first global gathering of its kind, bringing together over **550 local peacebuilders** from

90 countries, alongside representatives from foundations and the donor community in one platform”.

Not to forget that IGFF is aiming to handover **the accumulated APRF to the PM by the end of November** - the funds raised in the Bagmati District, to contribute to the government fund for reconstruction. Hopefully, IGFF associates in other Districts/Provinces will also work at raising funds from among themselves to contribute to the government reconstruction fund. NA is hosting this fund until withdrawal date to ensure transparency and legal accountability since IGFF is not independently legally registered - as a women's movement. If you are interested to contribute, please make a deposit to the following account at NA while informing me/us in advance so we can track your gift/s:

Account name - Nagarik Aawaz (Surakshya Kosh)

Account number – 08001010006424

Bank name - Global IME Bank Ltd.

Bank Branch - Pulchowk, Lalitpur

SWIFT Code – GLBBNPKA

Conclusions:

There is so much that is up in the air for all of us - everywhere for that matter. Be it environmental, political and economic, the conflicts (in more than 60 countries of our world), the suffering/s – be it human or created, that in these times it is difficult to hold on to our own sanity let alone to live in grace. But it is precisely in this difficult age of the advancing “kali yuga”, that we need to stay calm and use our good energies for the benefit of all sentient beings. It is only in the gifting of our good energies and strengths for the larger good that we may also be individually sustained – as has been my experience!

In writing this update, I have been gifted to reveal a speck of the good work that all of us are doing just at NA/Padmalaya. This reminds and reassures me that so much good is collectively and cumulatively happening in our world even as of now! All that each of us needs to do is to uphold and support the good that is happening now - moment to moment...

I so appreciate all your kind listening – for sometimes I don't know what I write...

Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Samed, & Rita

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 30th November 2025
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – November

Our Context Now:



In Nawalpur farming activities with preparing the fields for potato, red lentils, mustard, and linseed planting/sowing are happening now. In Nawalpur too like Kathmandu, the political activities and confusion within those, go hand in hand with farming responsibilities. In Nawalpur fields are already

turning yellow and green with flowering mustard and potatoe crops as it is also happening in Padmalaya.

Political environment is still unstable and there is fear lurking in unspoken words throughout Nepal. Politically the Maoists banded with 9 smaller parties while some key Maoists leaders who were guerrilla commanders earlier opted out to initiate their own parties. Eighty parties (new and old) have registered with the Election Commission. Among these, all including the largest Congress Party said they were committed to the elections and registered. But creating disruptions and confusions until the last minute the UML (who probably had the broadest base of community voters), too registered but only at the last minute. The good thing is that we have registered over 800,000 new voters through the hard work of the Election Commission and all who were engaged in enabling this, in a record short time.

Work With the Land:

The weekly meetings organized by PMC Dambar are ongoing! Also, the contractors have begun to mobilize workers and necessary materials for Padmalaya. Sambod has been going between the architect and me to finalize the floor tiles for the kitchen/dining area. We have agreed on a good choice made with Prabal's good eyes. Likewise, in early November Govinda informed us that he now has the official stamp of approval for the construction of the first phase

for the **Padmalaya – City Office**, which is located 1 km inroads from the highway in the Kawasoti Municipality of Nawalpur district.



On the 12th Architect Prabal and PMC Dambar visited the site for a monitoring visit which is always very helpful. On the 13th Susan and Rita visited Padmalaya. During this visit, **Rita and Susan honoured Ain Kumari who takes care of Padmavati – all through her pregnancy and the baby Padmaraj – 3 weeks old at the time.** Both mother and calf were doing very well with the care from Ain Kumari and Nim. A check-in session on the Padmalaya team's personal and professional status was also conducted. Even after the political destruction and chaos, personally they all felt safe and secure because of working at Padmalaya – even their families felt the same way. This was not the same for those who had family members working in security forces, hospitals, or places where they needed to commute during late hours. Professionally too, they felt lucky to be



People felt that the government had not done anything for them. Our staff and youths were very surprised and saddened by this.



total of 22 labourers – most of whom had arrived after the holidays and the Indian Elections.

On the 14th NA office bearers and executive staff team led by **Dr. Chattra Amatya** (Chair), officially opened the submissions for the Tender Call for the **Padmalaya – City Office**. All 3 aspiring construction company representatives, Prabal, Dambar, Santa, with key technical persons were present. Susan in her report wrote that: *“After an in-depth discussion with the bidders, the Technical Team, together with representatives from Nagarik Aawaz, decided to select **Khadka Nirman Sewa Pvt. Ltd.** based on their quoted price and an additional 2% discount they offered at the meeting. Their capacity to execute the project, including timelines, milestones, specific tasks, bank guarantees, and CVs of site engineers, were also thoroughly assessed. The decision was made in full alignment with Nagarik Aawaz’s procurement policies and procedures, with the support of the Technical Committee from IFID, Prabal Thapa our architect, Dambar, the Project Management Consultant, and in the presence of the **Procurement Committee**, led by Dr. Chhatra Amatya as well as the NA executive team. We extend our sincere appreciation to all members involved in the process. It was also decided that*

able to be doing such beneficial work for their communities. Their commitments to their work seemed to have only deepened. But the Padmalaya team were all surprised how difficult it was to fundraise for the **Anupam Peace Reconstruction Fund** (APRF).

Susan and Rita visited Padmalaya once more during 25/26th with **PC and his friends Del and Stephanie from the USA**. From there the visitors headed off to Bhairahawa the next morning. Even in less than 2 weeks since our previous visit, there was much progress at the site with a

*Nagarik Aawaz will send the acceptance letter for the award of the contract to **Khadka Nirman Sewa Pvt. Ltd.**”*

During the second visit Rita and Susan reviewed the construction work carefully giving some small but valuable inputs. Sambod showed us his design for putting up the LCD screen in the premise. Besides, he also assured us he would followup on the instalment of the two locally made lifts which was delayed due to some technical issues earlier. The work on the entrance, the partial accomodation adjoining the mechanical block, the guard house and the resting place, were all progressing well.

Programme Update:





On the 17th the Core Group – NA Board and Advisors, backstopping the building of Padmalaya came together for a meeting. Susan briefed them on all the progress made in construction and programme. They also spoke about the need for registering Padmalaya separately as a not-for-profit company - according to the Nepali law, since VAT bills are now essential for any

transaction/s. Also, the members spoke about celebrating the completion of NA's 25th Year around June 2026.

This month Govinda being away on an extended home leave, Nirajan sent me this report, which is in his own words: *"In November, Padmalaya organized a two-day non-residential training for youth, and marginalized/conflict-affected women. We also conducted two residential trainings – 1) a storytelling workshop with 20 conflict-affected women, and 2) a two-day residential collective therapy session, also with the conflict-affected men. This month, through our 7 Peace Centers in Nawalpur, Padmalaya facilitated 60 community-level interactions and other programs related with our work. Through its extended programs, Padmalaya selected the peace volunteers, one each from all the wards of Madhya Bindu Municipality. After the selection process was over, Padmalaya conducted an introduction and an orientation program, where staff and new volunteers were introduced to one another. They received an overview of the organization and the work of NA. In addition to these activities, other ongoing services and programs for the benefit of local communities continue as usual. These include regular orientations, the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign, counseling services, the setup of a psychosocial counseling room in a community school, and regular team meetings. Furthermore, seven conflict-affected women received support for income generation activities and for the education of their children."*

Funds & Finances:

Nirajan informs me that they have **Rs. 10445 from the savings and Rs. 3000 from the sale of farm produce**. Besides this they have collected over Rs. 100,000 for the APRF while their efforts at fundraising will continue until the handing over date is confirmed.

Others:



On the 18th, NA held its bi-monthly discussion series titled “**Shaping Representation: Women, Minorities, and the 2026 Elections**” by **Dr./Professor Sucheta Pyakuryal** in the open garden venue of Café Cheeno. Some 70 persons attended the talk programme followed with some animated discussions. The other significant

happening was the regional **Kamla Bhasin Award – 2025** event that was hosted by **Tewa at its center Deep Yogini**. This award was **instituted by Ipartner, the National Foundation of India, and the Azad Foundation** (all based in India). Tewa’s open air theater the **Rangamanch**, was packed by close to 600 persons – regional and National dignitaries, invitees representing key civil societies, the four Kamla Bhasin – 2025 awardees (who were one each from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal) and affiliates/associates of Sangat & Sangat Nepal! **Chandni Joshi, noted South Asian development expert/Tewa Advisor, gave a powerful/poignant keynote address**. The 3 of the awardees who physically attended were all awe inspiring!

As shared earlier IGFF is preparing to hand over the 20 lakhs (2 million) raised for the APRF as and when we get time from the PM. May be next month, as district level associates are also working hard to raise funds for the APRF to hand over to their local governments.

Conclusions:

It just feels like we are running against time this month. Post the major holidays, prolonged rains, and the unrest/aftermath of the Gen Z demonstrations of the 8/9th September, all the work we have to make up and the additional emerging activities that we need to undertake makes all our lives over stretched. We continue to be in the coping mode - at least until the parliamentary elections in March 2026. But if we can maintain our balance and the elections can/do happen, we are hopeful that Nepal will step into a fast-track transformatory era. Now all we can do is the best we can and keep HOPE alive!

Photo Courtesy: Nirajan, Sambed, Prabal, Freedom Studio for Tewa, Ganga, Rita

To: All
From: Rita
Date: 31st December 2025
Subject: Padmalaya Monthly Update – December

Our Context Now:

So much happening on the political front! Rastriya Swatantra Party & Bibeksheel Sajha Party (founded by the Late **Ujjwal Thapa**), announced a merger this month. Former Maoists and the other progressives too united – led by Janardan Sharma, Dalit Feminist/Activist – **Durga Sob**, and youth politician/academic **Manushi Yami** are in the central committee – we need to watch them. It is interesting that while the progressive parties consolidated their strengths, the conservatives remain divided. Investigations of former persons of power abusing their authorities and positions are ongoing, major and humongous corruption cases like the building of the Pokhara Airport is surfacing; the party depoliticization of the educational institutions is remarkable if implemented; and reconstituting and reinventing of the parties are also ongoing. A recent add on has been the **release of Rabi Lamichhane** on bail, and the **Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP)** inducting an overwhelming number of notable persons and forming new and stronger alliances with other parties. A seven-point agreement between **Rabi and Balen Sah** (Kathmandu Mayor) has been just signed behind closed doors agreeing primarily on Rabi being Party Chair of RSP and proposing Balen as the PM in the upcoming elections. On the 11th the Gen Zs signed a pending blueprint for reforms naming the 8/9 September event People's Movement; providing due recognition, relief, long-term reparation to the dead and the hurt; inclusive, free/fair, and fear-free, elections; restructuring of State agencies to ensure effective/efficient services free of corruption; and a review of the constitution for necessary reform. Furthermore, a Gen Z Council has been announced to advise, backstop, and ensure monitoring of a corruption-free Nepal and to ensure that all that has been agreed upon in this blueprint, is addressed in a timely manner.

Work With the Land:



Our farm at Padmalaya is now turning green with growing potato plants, and the **City Office plot is all yellow with mustard** which will ripen for harvest in about 2 weeks time. Owing to this the contractors are delaying the preparatory work at the new site – but within this coming January, they will

begin the preparatory work for the construction of the City Office – Padmalaya!

Dambar's weekly meetings are keeping us all updated on the detailing of the technical/construction aspects of Padmalaya. Rishi ji and Sambed have visited and supervised



the site as per requirements. On the 17th afternoon the team of IFID, Contractor Khadga Nirman Seva, and NA responsible people e.g. the Chair of the Board, Dr. Chhatra Amatya, CEO Susan, and Finance Manager Merita, gathered to sign the official contract for the construction of the City Office. With support from Santaji and team from IFID, the drawing out of the legally official contractual documents were ready for the signing of the documents by Chhatra diju on behalf of NA and Tek Bahadur Khadga representing the Contractors including Rishi ji and Sambed. After the signing of the contract, another historic moment for NA, PC and Rita were also requested to give their remarks.

During the 26 – 27 Susan and Rita also visited Padmalaya. Navaraj Thakur (who does all our wrought iron furniture) and Sambed also accompanied us in this trip. Rishi ji our main contractor was already supervising at Padmalaya from some time back. PC being present in a



recreational capacity also accompanied us during this visit. At the time of this visit, NA was conducting a four-day residential training on overall capability building on peace for 40 persons representing their district level partners. It was wonderful to see how the Padmalaya

housekeeping and kitchen teams were coping very well with all the management aspects of this 4-day residential training. All the food served were from the Padmalaya gardens. **Rita, after a long time took time during these days to teach the kitchen team some salads, soup and medicinal tea recipe.** Susan and Rita had a review and reflection meeting with the house keeping staff. Noteworthy was the fact that they had now come to their own, and most importantly they coordinated and cooperated with each other very well and were very happy in the work they now did at Padmalaya.



Rita and Susan after getting the overview of the construction work being carried out in Padmalaya, and seeing for themselves the work progress, worked with Navaraj regarding the work that was expected of him for the new rooms in terms of necessary bathroom stools, curtain rods, storeroom/s for the new kitchen, additional beds, writing tables, and clothes hanging

spaces, that he had earlier made for Padmalaya. He was also briefed on the way the names for the Padma Sarthak Campaign needed to be laid out.

To us it appeared that work was moving forward in good speed, and yet much of the detailing work remained. In the picture above, the solar panels are installed on the far-right roof, the far-left residential block, and the entrance kitchen dining area now have roofs. Flooring is also almost all done. Rita with Susan and Govinda worked with the contractors on all the remaining details of the arbour, entrance, the residential blocks, the kitchen-dining and the store area. **Susan reminded that they also needed to think of and build the dedicated memorial space at Padmalaya initially flagged.** For this Rita proposed a concept that if agreeable to the NA Board and team, would be executed within April 2026, when NA is planning a national level convening for the conflict affected youths and women, they have worked with over the years!

Programme Update:



A one day long cross learning programme which was participated by all the women, youths engaged in all the 7 NA Peace Centers in Nawalpur, and representatives of the local government consisting of 85 participants in total. Beside this, Padmalaya hosted three capability building programme where over 20/22 participants each were involved. These focused on topics like power and patriarchy, gender, dignity, and conflict transformation and peace building. Each of these trainings were 3-day long. A one-

day peace dialogue was also conducted for the local stakeholders where 24 participants were present.

From the 7 Peace Centers in Nawalpur district, this month alone, 52 peace initiatives at the community levels were undertaken where the IGFF related topics regarding the upcoming elections – March 2026 and November 2027; Anupam Peace Reconstruction Fund (APRF) campaign (post the Gen Z movement), and the signature campaigns were also incorporated.

Nawalpur district also bore witness to Nagarik Aawaz awareness raising programme during the annual **16 Days of Activism on VAW**. These awareness-raising programme/s took the form of drama, dialogue, rally, and interactions. Ongoing livelihood support programme in the form of goats went out to 9 families. Medical support to 7 conflict affected women were also gifted this month. Padmalaya carried out a 2-day residential annual team review reflection meeting which will be also incorporated in the NA central office annual team.

Eleven persons are benefitting from the ongoing socio-psychological support extended this month. These cases are owing to growing anxiety, domestic violence, drug abuse, and depression. Padmalaya is conducting its regular programme and meetings, besides entertaining drop-by visitors and frequent flow of guests.

Funds & Finances:

This month from the regular **monthly contributions of staff over Rs. 3500** was saved. Additionally, from the **sale of saplings, and sale of produce from the farm over Rs. 7000** has been saved. Lo And behold! We are happy to announce that unexpectedly, Our NA/IGFF ally **Hari Devkota with his wife Reena Thapa sent us Rs. 100,000 for the Padma Sarthak Campaign!** We will honour their gift and include **Reena and Hari** as our campaign donors! Thank you very much for your generosity, Reena and Hari!

Others:



The “**Peace for Nepal**” titled annual house tea/sale hosted in **Lynne Brennan’s** home with **Elizabeth Wickwire** accumulated a whopping sale/donation gift of **Can \$ 9000** – included here was a gift of **Can \$ 1000** from **Michael Cooke and Juliet Huntly**. This is the 20th tea that Lynne

and Liz have painstakingly hosted for NA – the communities of peace builders are held together year after year across the globe, by people who appreciate the work being done by NA and who constantly help sustain it. This is an example all of us can emulate – thank you very much Lynne and Liz especially and all who have participated!

NA bi-weekly Discussion Forum on the 12th had **three Gen Z leaders, Anjali, Pema, and Amrita** speak on “**Our Revolution – Our Truth**”. The panel was moderated by NA/CEO **Susan**, in the Café Cheeno gardens. Attended by some 70 participants, the open forum



discussions provided further information and clarifications for our increased understanding on the September Gen Z 8/9th movement and following happenings.

The IGFF work with holding our movement – the Anupam Abhiyan in the best way possible given our cirmumstances, continues! This month the Steering Committee had a day-long physical meeting at Café Cheeno/Patan Dhoka on the occasion of the upcoming New Year 2026. A major happening was bringing in our **incoming Co-coordinators – Saloni Singh and Amuda Mishra.** But considering the upcoming elections **Stella and Laxmi will hand over at the 2026 March 24 – 26 convening at PADMALAYA!**

While reviewing, reinventing, and strategizing for the Anupam Abhiyan, we took time to enjoy

a meal in the sunny gardens of Café Cheeno counting our gifts and appreciating what we have been able to achieve so far!

Conclusions:

More than a conclusion, I take opportunity in wishing all of you and each of us, season's best greetings and a very **Happy New Year – 2026!** How quickly has a whole year gone by! I on behalf of **Board Chair, Chhatra diju, Susan/NA, and Govinda/Padmalaya team**, pray that all may live in peace and good health. We/I are in gratitude to each one of you for your listening, support, and the love we have received all of 2025, and we look forward to our ongoing associations. Also this year Padmalaya is largely finished and already running well with Govinda at the helm and his team! **We bow in humble gratitude to PC (Patrick Cheung) for enabling the Padmalaya space for us as well as for the generations of peace builders to come in the future!**

Photo Courtesy: Govinda, Samed, Rita, Susan, & Sashank