



नेपाल विकास अनुसन्धान प्रतिष्ठान
Nepal Development Research Institute

NDRI is an independent, non-partisan, and non-profit institution dedicated to addressing contemporary and emerging policy challenges and to influencing public policy through research.

HEADLINES FEATURED IN THIS EDITION

- NDRI Observes World Cancer Day 2026 with Awareness Program.
- Field Visit to Understand Nepal's Large Cardamom Value Chain.
- NDRI attends UNDP's launch of Regional AI Report.
- NDRI Bids a Warm Farewell to Ms. Ashma Aryal.

WEEKLY ECHOES OF



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NDRI Observes World Cancer Day 2026 with Awareness Program



Glimpses of the Series of Activities During the Program

On 4th February, as part of its School Health Program on World Cancer Day, Nepal Development Research Institute (NDRI), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Population Nepal (MoHP) and Cancer Research UK, organized a World Cancer Awareness Program at Tika Vidyashram Secondary School, in coordination with Ward-02, Sanepa embracing this year's theme, "United by

Unique," and reinforcing our shared responsibility in the fight against cancer. The program began with an introductory talk and presentation by Dr. Jaya Kumar Gurung, lead of the Tobacco Control Program, joined by school representatives. This was followed by a technology-integrated quiz designed to actively engage students while reinforcing key cancer awareness messages

facilitated by Researchers of NDRI, Mr. Parashar Khadka and Ms. Sarya Thapa Magar. The program then moved into prize distribution and reflection, A key highlight was the establishment of an Anti-Tobacco Youth Ambassador initiative, promoting youth leadership and long-term advocacy. The session concluded with closing remarks, after which students participated in a pledge wall activity.

Field Visit to Understand Nepal's Large Cardamom Value Chain

Nepal Development Research Institute (NDRI) completed a week-long exploratory field visit to Jhapa and Ilam between January 28 and February 3 as part of its ongoing project titled “Empowering Farmers in Chainpur, Sankhuwasabha for Direct Export and Sustainable Production of Large Cardamom (Alainchi)” funded by the Australian Embassy, Nepal.



A large cardamom sapling after 32 months

NDRI researchers Daya Shrestha and Muna Thapa conducted key informant interviews with numerous private and institutional value chain actors, enablers, and stakeholders, including local collectors, traders, exporters, and other representatives of the large cardamom trade association in Birtamode, Jhapa. They also consulted with the provincial representatives of the Directorate for Agriculture Development of Koshi Province in Biratnagar, officials at the Mechi Customs Office, officials of a large cardamom production zone as part of the National Agriculture Modernization Program in Ilam, and practitioners at the Cardamom Development Center in Fikkal, Ilam. Despite being the country's largest agricultural export by value, it is primarily exported as a raw commodity to India for processing,

limiting economic opportunities for Nepalese farmers and preventing Nepal's Alainchi from achieving an international profile. Over the years, private entrepreneurs and exporters have taken up processing activities in Birtamode, the national trade hub of Nepal's large cardamom, but their market is still dictated by Indian buyers. Over 95% of Nepal's large cardamom exports go through India in order to reach end-markets in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and the Middle East.



Research Associate Daya Shrestha with officials at the Cardamom Development Center in Fikkal, Ilam



As a follow-up to this visit, a further exploratory visit to the Sikkim area is planned in the coming days to understand what happens to Nepal's large cardamom exports once it goes across the border and how the Indian large cardamom market dictates prices and activities in Nepal. These visits, as part of the first phase of the project, are designed to provide a thorough understanding of how Nepal's large cardamom sector operates post-harvest. Learnings from them will complement ongoing desk research about how the global large cardamom market operates and how prices are determined. The overall findings will be translated to local farmers in the project's study area, with the aim of reducing information asymmetries between buyers and sellers, and enabling them to capture a greater share of the market value without dependence on costly middlemen.

NDRI attends UNDP's launch of Regional AI Report

Krishna Pahari, Lead of the Livelihoods and Food Security, attended the UNDP event to launch their regional AI report entitled "The Next Great Divergence: why AI may widen inequality between countries" at Hotel Himalaya on 4th February 2026. The report was jointly unveiled by Kyoko Yokosuko, UNDP Resident Representative in Nepal, and Laxmi Basnet, Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology. Highlights of the report were presented by Maneet Dhungel, UNDP Policy Specialist. The key points included 1) Why the conversation on AI and development needs a reframe, 2) Past patterns ran from a 'Great Divergence' (most of the time), to a 'Great Convergence' (that only great for some, 3) How AI shapes development pathways,

4) Internet access has expanded rapidly across Asia though large gaps remain between countries, 5) What actions can steer AIT toward convergence, not divergence.



This was followed by brief presentations on selected AI related platforms in Nepal. These included Kanoon AI (an AI platform supporting easy access to legal matters) by Pranjali Timilsina, Euta Sathi (AI health assistant for rural Nepal) by Jagriti Srivastav, Skill Intel Nepal (an AI powered labour market platform to unlock Nepal's youth employment crisis) by Priyanka Pathak, SeedSure AI (an AI platform for farmers for optimal decision making) by Skshyam Banjade, SuryaEk (Digital health platform) by Sakshyam Banjade. Finally, there was a panel discussion on Nepal's AI priorities in 2026 and beyond. The panellists included Adesh Khadka (Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Communication), Dr. Suresh Manandhar (CEO, Wiseyak inc), Dr. Dovan Rai (ED, Body an Data), Ankur Sharma (Leapfrog technologies).

NDRI Bids a Warm Farewell to Ms. Ashma Aryal



Honoring Ms. Aryal for Her Valuable Contributions to NDRI

On February 6, 2026, NDRI family gathered to bid a warm farewell to Ms. Ashma Aryal, who has been serving in the role of Outreach and Communication Officer, celebrated three years of commitment and invaluable contributions to the organization. During the program, NDRI staff shared fond memories and reflected on the meaningful role Ms. Ashma played in the growth and development of NDRI

throughout her time with us. Her commitment, professionalism, and positive spirit have left a lasting impact on both the staff and the organization. The farewell concluded with a heartfelt speech from Ms. Ashma, where she expressed her gratitude to the NDRI family and shared her best wishes as she embarked on the next chapter of her journey.

Headlines & Happenings



Water bird numbers fall sharply across Nepal



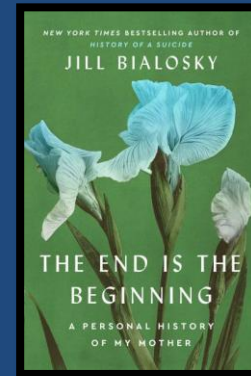
State-run hospitals to launch child mental health clinics

Thought of the Week

There are two ways to be. One is at war with reality and the other is at peace.

-Byron Katie

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