

Your Gurkha Welfare Trust newsletter
Samachara means 'news' in Nepali

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समाचार SAMACHARA

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SUPPORTING A HERO'S WIDOW

"Sase didn't like to talk much about his time in the Army, but he did mention that he had fought in some conflicts," widow Maita Kami said about her late husband's service.

Maita and her husband, Rifleman Sase Kami, had struggled for many years after Sase was discharged from the Army in 1947. Though they had four daughters and seven sons, only two sons survived into adulthood. For many years they all shared a single room house built with mud, stones, and wood.

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"GWT was like a saviour to us. My husband was quite ill and the money we received from them helped us out a lot."

A word from our CEO



We find ourselves in the throes of economic uncertainty both here in the UK, and in Nepal where the team continues to deliver our ambitious programme apace. It's within that context that I remain continually astonished by your unwavering generosity.

Our Earthquake-Resilient Homes programme has been running since the earthquake hit in 2015. The

fact that we are able to continue building these specially-designed homes for impoverished Gurkha veterans and widows is solely down to your enduring support. As a direct result of your help, brave men and women in the hills of Nepal now go to bed at night safe in the knowledge they have a structurally sound roof over their head should the worst happen. A huge weight off their shoulders.

I would encourage you all to read Field Director Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Hing's synopsis of this year's plans on pages 6-7. We have so many ambitious plans afoot – all with the aim of improving the lives of those who deserve it most.

You will also read in this issue of the passing of Anthony Wieler, an incredible man who was

instrumental in the founding of The Gurkha Welfare Trust. Since Anthony and others began raising funds in 1969, we have made tremendous progress. Hundreds of thousands of people live better lives in Nepal as a result. We can't stop now.

Thank you, as ever, for your unerring support.

Ayo Gorkhali!

Al Howard
CEO, The Gurkha Welfare Trust



THE GURKHA WELFARE TRUST STEPS IN

One day, one of GWT's Area Welfare Officers came to Maita and Sase's remote village in the Gulmi District, asking if there were any retired Gurkha veterans needing a pension.

"GWT was like a saviour to us," Maita said. "My husband was quite ill and the money we received from them helped us out a lot."

Thousands of Gurkha veterans and widows in Nepal depend on us and the pension we deliver. Each year, we calculate the pension rate using a 'shopping basket' of basic goods such as rice, vegetables, and firewood. The pension enables them to buy the basic items they need to survive.



'OUR MEANS OF SURVIVAL'

After Maita's husband passed away in 1994, her pension from GWT became a lifeline to her and her family.

Maita now lives with her son, daughter-in-law, and two small grandchildren. The money she receives each month helps them afford food, fuel, clothing, and other essentials.

The monthly pension is currently NPR 14,500 (about £93). *"My family depends on it wholly. It is our means of survival,"* Maita said.

Many of our Gurkha pensioners still travel to their nearest Area Welfare Centre (AWC) to collect their pension in cash, have a medical check-up and collect medication.

For those who live in more remote villages we encourage them to set up a bank account for their monthly payment.

"I have now started getting paid at the bank in the town nearby. It is convenient for me now. Before I had to travel to the AWC which meant I had to stay overnight in a hotel and return the next day. The bus fare to the AWC is Rs 400 one way, now I only have to pay about Rs 35 one way to the bank and am able to return home the same day."

REPAYING OUR DEBT OF HONOUR

Because of dedicated supporters like you, the families of late veterans like Rifleman Sase Kami are able to live with dignity.

The financial support that Maita and other Gurkha pensioners receive is a repayment of our country's debt of honour to the brave soldiers who fought alongside British troops for over 200 years.

As well as a monthly pension, we also provide veterans and widows with other financial support. Our Winter Allowance ensures pensioners are equipped to endure the colder months, and our Emergency Hardship Grants are given to those who are affected by fires, floods, and landslides.

"I am very happy," said Maita when asked about the financial support she receives. *"Blessings and 'dhanyabad' (thank you)."*

Over the next year we will provide a pension to over 3,400 Gurkha veterans and widows. For many this is their only source of income.

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A HARD LIFE IN THE HILLS

With no stable income in Nepal, Maita and Sase had made the difficult decision to leave their homeland and move to India to try and find work.

"We worked in Punjab, India for almost 19 years until my husband couldn't work anymore," Maita remembered. When Sase was sadly diagnosed with cancer, life became very hard for the couple. *"He struggled for almost 12 years until his death. We had borrowed a lot of money to cover his treatment."*

The couple eventually returned to Nepal, moving to a remote village in the hills and finding work wherever they could.

"Before we found out about The Gurkha Welfare Trust, I would work in the fields growing millet and corn and do manual labour whenever offers came," Maita said.

IN MEMORY OF ANTHONY WIELER, 1937 - 2022

Anthony Wieler sadly died on April 12, aged 84.

Anthony was instrumental in the founding of The Gurkha Welfare Trust and in organising the Trust's very first appeal – to raise £1m from the British public in 1969.

The initial campaign, spearheaded by an advert in The Times, was an overwhelming success and raised over £1.5m (the equivalent of almost £28m in today's money). On the back of that appeal, The Gurkha Welfare Trust was established and continues to support impoverished veterans across Nepal.

Anthony served his National Service with 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles (7GR) in the early 1960's and was incredibly well-respected both here in the UK and in Nepal. When asked in 2013 what it was he loved so much about Nepal, he commented:

“There are so many things, most importantly the people of Nepal [...] Many retired colonels, generals, brigadiers and current generals and brigadiers of the Nepal Army used to visit my home in London whenever they came for training.”



Following a successful career in finance, Anthony served as President and Chairman of the Britain-Nepal Chamber of Commerce before becoming a permanent advisor to them.

He remained a fervent supporter of Nepal, the Gurkhas and The Gurkha Welfare Trust cause well into his retirement. He was awarded The Most Puissant Order of the Gorkha Dakshina Bahu (an order of Knighthood) by the King of Nepal in 1998.



LEADING THE WAY IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:
RISH MAYA'S STORY

When The Gurkha Welfare Trust begins a project to provide clean water to a remote Nepali village, we seek to involve everyone in the community.

We provide training for those in the village so that they can educate others on the importance of clean water, sanitation, and hand hygiene.

We also set up a Water Users Committee to empower the local community to take responsibility for their water project, regularly testing water quality and carrying out routine maintenance.

This ensures its sustainability for years to come.

Along with installing infrastructure to provide clean, safe water, one of our goals is to uplift and empower women in the village.

Rish Maya Gurung, aged 46, became involved with our water project for her community in Lapsibot, a village in the Lamjung District. Once she received training from GWT, she shared what she had learned with others in her community and became a role model for the village's youth.

After she showed great leadership on the Water Project Committee, she was appointed as a Chairperson

of the village's School Management Committee.

“I was so happy that I was appointed as Chairperson of Lapsibot's School Management Committee,” Rish Maya said.

“I did not go to school when I was young due to difficult circumstances, but I always wanted to be educated. So, I joined informal education. Following that, I became a support teacher and taught villagers.

“Now, my family is proud of my achievements. We as women should have the confidence to make wise decisions which can help us move forward in our lives.”



THANKS TO YOU SHE HAS A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE

A huge thank you to everyone who donated to our latest appeal to help build earthquake-resilient homes for our most vulnerable Gurkhas.

Thammaya Rai is just one of the many grateful veterans and widows who have been given the keys to a beautiful new home this year.

Next year, 75 Gurkha veterans and

widows will receive safe homes like Thammaya's.

Every home includes a kitchen and toilet block, and we install ramps and handrails for elderly pensioners who have mobility problems.

With your support we are ensuring these veterans and widows can live their later years in comfort and with dignity.



“Women should not just stay at home and do household chores. We can achieve anything if we set our hearts on it.

“Now, I am confident enough to give my opinions and recommendations. I used to lower my voice in front of men, but now I can speak openly. We need courage and we need to take leadership so that we can move forward.”

MY FIRST YEAR OF PLANS IN NEPAL



Matthew Hing, Field Director,
The Gurkha Welfare Trust

I am Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Hing and after spending over 30 years in various postings around the world, I was honoured to be selected as Field Director for The Gurkha Welfare Trust at the end of 2021.

My first nine months in post has showed me just how much enthusiasm, passion and pride there is amongst my team of over 500. Rightly so, given the incredible support they deliver to Gurkha veterans, their families and wider communities across the country.

We have an ambitious calendar of work this year and one which I am extremely proud to oversee. The financial year in Nepal runs from 1 July – 30 June, so the following plans relate to that time period.

In developing the workplan for our year with my team, the sheer scale of the Trust's operation in Nepal became even more apparent. I am always conscious that none of it could be delivered without the support of the British Public. The affection that the UK has for the Gurkhas and the country of Nepal is special and, in my humble opinion, richly deserved.

As a valued supporter of the Trust, I thought it only right that I share our plans with you for the year ahead and how we aim to ensure that our veterans can live with dignity.

SUPPORTING IMPOVERISHED VETERANS AND WIDOWS

First, I am delighted to say that we are increasing all of the financial grants that we award to our most impoverished Gurkha veterans and widows. These are often the people most in need and there are still over 3,400 of them.

This increase will also carry across to the grants we pay to the disabled children of veterans, as well as the Home Carer's Allowance – paid to those who are unable to work due to the care they give to elderly Gurkha pensioners.

This year we will build another 75 Homes

Thanks to the overwhelming response we have had to our Earthquake-Resilient Homes appeal, we aim to build a further 75 homes for those living in unsafe conditions. Back in 2015 after the earthquake had struck and these homes were designed, the team here never could have dreamed that we'd be building over 1,500 homes, transforming the lives of so many.



We deliver a first class medical service

The medical service we offer to all Gurkha veterans and their families in Nepal (some 20,000+) will continue to improve across all of our dedicated clinics, at our bespoke Medical Camps in the hills, and through the mobile Medical Practitioners we employ. In fact, we hope to bring ten new team members on board this year to help deliver this incredible service.

Honouring our brave pensioners

There are a few smaller activities we will trial this year. The first is an extra grant to those celebrating their 100th birthday. It's such an honour when I get the chance to meet these men and women. To provide them with a little extra gift (5,000NPR – approx. £32) shows them we're always thinking about those who have served our country so bravely.

We're also trialling some new storage boxes for those living in remote conditions – to avoid medication and valuables getting damaged by rain or rodents. Such simple things can make a big difference.

Financial aid for those in crisis

Of course, it's all well and good us having these plans for activities across the year but you will know, as supporters of the Trust, that Nepal is one of the most unpredictable environments on earth. It's not an easy place to operate, that's for sure!

As a result we have set up an 'Emergency Hardship' fund – this year we have approx. NPR 32m (approx. £227k) to spend supporting those who find themselves in crisis. For some elderly veterans that might be flood, fire, landslide, earthquakes or urgent improvements needed to homes for other reasons.

The fund also allows us to provide funeral grants to families who have lost their loved ones – so that Gurkha veterans and widows get the send-off they deserve.



IMPROVING THE LIVES OF GURKHA COMMUNITIES

We don't just support Gurkha veterans in Nepal. We also deliver services that benefit the wider community in areas where the British Army recruit new Gurkha soldiers each year.



Over 16,000 children will benefit from our Schools programme

Our schools programme, which improves access to education for youngsters across Nepal, has another ambitious year ahead. No less than 70 schools will receive 'minor refurbishments' – things like new desks, repairs to roofs and windows – and 18 will receive extensions to their classroom blocks.

On top of that we plan on rebuilding two schools and replacing buildings which are no longer safe to learn in.

Providing access to clean safe water

Finally, in partnership with UK Aid, we will continue to help communities to prepare for disasters and provide clean water to communities who are still relying on unsafe water sources. Plans for this year's builds remain in discussion but to give you an idea of the scale, since the Trust began installing rural water systems, over 500,000 people now have access to safe and drinkable water.

THANK YOU



It's an ambitious programme and the brief description above only touches upon the expert work happening here. There's so much within each of our services which warrants a special mention – rehabilitation work, our two Residential Homes, our Pensioner Support Teams and much more. It really is development aid on a military scale.

By the time the year comes to an end we will have spent almost £22m on these activities – a phenomenal figure and one which can't be achieved without your support. Rest assured that my team will continue to ensure that every penny you donate is spent as effectively as possible in Nepal – supporting the bravest of the brave to live with dignity.

A MAJOR SCHOOL BUILD: CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES APACE AT SHREE JANAPRIYA

“EVERYTHING WAS DESTROYED”

Shree Janapriya Secondary School is the oldest school in Myagdi District, established in the town of Dharbang in 1951. The original school buildings were on a site very close to the riverbank. In 2001 heavy rainfall caused a flash flood in the river, the riverbank collapsed and the main school buildings were swept away.

Headteacher Diwakar Subedi remembers the disaster: “Everything was destroyed. There was nowhere for the school to go.”

With the help of the local Government and with contributions from the local community, they built a temporary school in the town. But as student numbers increased to over 600, the school became cramped and overcrowded.

With only ten serviceable classrooms, children were taught in two sessions, only attending for a morning or afternoon, halving the time they could spend learning.

“We have a shortage of classrooms, and worse than that, all the classrooms are very crowded and congested.



“There is not enough room for the students to study. Also there are no open spaces, no playground, nothing here. So it is kind of like a prison place for our children! A new school is desperately needed.”

The local roads are in such poor condition that it's not possible to get a bus to the school site. This is the only school in this remote location which covers four municipalities, so some children have a long distance to travel every day. With no other means of transport, pupils have to walk. For some of them it's up to a two-hour journey each way, navigating steep and rocky footpaths.

The school owned a suitable plot of land by the river and in 2019 put in an application to GWT for a new school build on the site. The project site was assessed by a qualified engineer and

project manager. The risk of further flooding and landslides has been taken into consideration in the site and location of the buildings.

The build will be finished by July 2022 and includes 16 new classrooms, a library, gender- separate toilet blocks, including a menstrual hygiene facility, hand-washing stations, water supply and waste management system. All the buildings are constructed to earthquake-resilient standards.

Throughout the project, the community, local Government and teachers have been engaged and supportive of the build.

Diwaki said: “Really thank you for your help, the people here... we are so grateful that we are having such a fantastic school in the near future.”



LIFE-CHANGING TREATMENT AT DIKTEL MEDICAL CAMP

The Gurkha Welfare Trust's free Medical Camps are highly regarded in Nepal, with some villagers in remote communities travelling for days to access vital medical treatment.

At our recent Medical Camp in Diktel we treated 610 patients, providing medical check-ups and physiotherapy, as well as specialist treatments such as cataract operations, hearing aid fitment, and prosthesis fitting.

Helping young Sandip walk again

Thirteen-year-old Sandip Rai is from a remote village called Khotelang. When Sandip was a baby, a tragic accident resulted in the amputation of his leg. He came to the Medical Camp to be fitted for a new prosthetic, so he can walk freely and better enjoy his childhood.

“I study in class six at Pancha Secondary School,” Sandip said. “My leg was burnt when I was five or six months old.



“They took the measurements for my leg today. They also gave me a new set of crutches. When I get the new leg, I want to travel all over!”

Restoring Nabin's sight

Nabin Rai spent years working overseas to earn a living. When he returned to Nepal a few years ago, he developed a white spot in his right eye.

“It took about four hours by bus to get here. I came to know about the camp from the village health post.

“I used to work as a welder overseas and a metal object had lodged into my eye. The object was taken out two days later after an operation. I think it is the reason for my current situation. The doctors have told me that it needs to be operated on again.”

The day after his operation, we checked in on Nabin to see how he was feeling. He was thrilled to be able to see clearly again.

“I am really happy. I hope that I am able to see like this in the future. I want to thank The Gurkha Welfare Trust for bringing back my vision. I hope you will continue to help people like me in the coming days as well.”



Gurkha residents from our home in Kaski have fun on a summer trip to the Belaka Beach resort!



An Everest Adventure in aid of Gurkha veterans



Trekking to Everest Basecamp is a massive feat – made all the more impressive when the adventure is used to fundraise for charity!

That's exactly what some of our supporters did earlier this year. While Ellie, Naomi, Alison, and Leah were training for their ascent to Everest Basecamp, they were also raising funds for our vital work in Nepal.

Ellie, Naomi, and Alison took on their charity challenge through tour company Discover Adventure, while 13-year-old Leah and her father planned their own trip to Nepal.

Their combined activities have raised an incredible £4,670 for GWT.

After they returned from Nepal, we asked our intrepid supporters about their experience.

What inspired you to fundraise for The Gurkha Welfare Trust?

Alison: We wanted to support a charity that had a connection



between the UK and Nepal. As the Gurkhas have strong links with the UK, we felt it was right to support them and their communities.

How did you feel in the days leading up to your trip to Nepal? What training did you do?

Naomi: We felt nothing but excitement that our trip to Nepal was eventually going ahead, particularly after the delays presented by the pandemic. Luckily, we both have underlying fitness which we relied on. We kept up with our usual activities, and maybe threw in a few longer walks. It's hard to train for altitude when you live at sea level!

What were your favourite moments from the hike to Everest Base Camp?

Alison: There were so many favourite moments and memories. Washing our hair in the glacier runoff water at Dingboche felt fantastic! The flight into Lukla, a beer at Namche, playing with the local children with



their families looking on and laughing at the excitement...everything was amazing, and even the most challenging moments were part of the achievement.

How did you feel when you finally reached Base Camp and stood on the famed boulder?

Leah: It felt amazing! I was so proud I'd achieved my mission, but I was even more ecstatic that all the generous donations and support I'd received was really going to make a difference. Life can be tough in Nepal. Some people there had so little but appeared so happy.

Do you have any advice for others who want to take on an Everest Base Camp fundraising challenge?

Ellie: My advice to anyone who is thinking of doing this, do it! You can't truly understand the beauty of the country until you have been there, and you will fall in love.

UPCOMING RUNS & CHALLENGES

TRAILWALKER

23-25 September 2022

LONDON MARATHON

2 October 2022

Cheer on our amazing runners at this iconic marathon!

THE ROYAL PARKS HALF MARATHON

9 October 2022

Join over 16,000 runners on one of London's largest half marathons taking in four of the famous Royal Parks.

More details at www.gwt.org.uk/events

OUR NEW CORPORATE PARTNERS

PLATINUM LEVEL:



SILVER LEVEL:



A warm welcome and thank you to our new corporate partners. There are many benefits of joining our Business Club, including opportunities for event sponsorship and volunteering. To find out more contact info@gwt.org.uk.

THE GWT PLATINUM JUBILEE TEAM TAKES ON TRAILWALKER 22!



Piers Lawson

Major Dillikumar Rai



Ed Flanagan

Heather Hitchins



Trailwalker is the ultimate endurance event.

A 100km route across the stunning South Downs, finishing on Brighton Racecourse. Teams have 30 hours to complete the course, with the fastest runners expecting to finish in under 11 hours.

This year we have a GWT team taking on this mighty challenge! Piers and Heather from the GWT office and two amazing supporters Ed and Dilli. Ably assisted by our Support Crew and their trusty LandRover!

On Saturday 24th September we'll be setting off early in the morning, walking on through the night and aiming to complete the course in under 24 hours.

Most importantly, the team aims to raise an incredible £20,000 for The Gurkha Welfare Trust!

Find out more about our intrepid walkers or make a donation here:

www.gwt.org.uk/gwt-team



Buy tickets at www.gwt.org.uk/events

BAND OF THE BRIGADE OF GURKHAS

Friday 21 Oct - St Pauls' Church, Salisbury

Monday 28 Nov - The Garden Rooms at Tennants, Leyburn

Prepare for a night of incredible music from the famous Gurkha Band, with a choice of two venues this year. The evening will include a lively mix of Nepali and Western tunes, and music of the Pipes and Drums.

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Wednesday 14 Dec - St Marylebone Parish Church

Join us for an enchanting celebration of Christmas in this beautiful church in central London.

THE FOLLOWING ADVERT IS ON BEHALF OF THE GURKHA MUSEUM, WINCHESTER

Christmas Cards
A selection of six different designs.

Christmas decorations,
gift wrap, calendars and diaries.

REQUEST A BROCHURE FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS CARDS & GIFTS

To order online visit www.thegurkhamuseum.co.uk, or call 01962 842 832 to request a brochure.

**WIN AN EXCLUSIVE
FACTORY TOUR**



OUR ANNUAL ONLINE AUCTION RETURNS FROM 22-28 AUGUST.

Last year our online auction was a great success, raising vital funds for our work in Nepal.

This year, as our headline item, we are delighted to offer an exclusive tour behind the scenes at F1 team Williams Racing's factory in Oxfordshire.

We have an amazing selection of gifts and experiences on offer this year - visit our auction site to preview the items and place your bids.

Don't miss out on winning one of these great prizes - **bidding starts on 22 August**

www.gwt.org.uk/auction

THANK YOU MR HARRISON

Mr Patrick Harrison was a long-standing supporter of The Gurkha Welfare Trust. He sadly passed away in 2021 and very generously left us a gift in his Will. Patrick joined the British Army in 1943 and served in Europe, Scandinavia and the Far East, including the Malayan campaign in 1949. He served in the 12th Royal Lancers and from 1950 to 1952, with the 13th/18th Royal Hussars in Malaya and then Hong Kong.

After leaving the Army, Patrick spent the remainder of his career on Aid projects in places such as Ethiopia, the Congo, and Somalia, including a seven-year assignment as resident director of a project in the Blue Nile Province in Sudan.

He had the greatest admiration and respect for the Gurkhas and the gift he left in his Will was in thanks for the treatment he received in the Gurkha Brigade Hospital in Malaya.

If you would like to find out how a gift in your Will could help us in the same way as Patrick's, providing financial, medical and development aid to proud Gurkha veterans and their families in Nepal, please contact Carolyn Derryman, Legacy Officer on 01722 343110 or carolynderryman@gwt.org.uk



NEWS FROM THE BRIGADE

Over May and June this year, Gurkhas from the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment (QOGLR) had the honour of serving as the ceremonial Queen's Guard.

Having passed their 'Fit For Role' Inspection and conducting their first Guard Mounts at Buckingham Palace, St James' Palace, Windsor Castle and the Tower of London they then had the responsibility of guarding Her Majesty The Queen during her Platinum Jubilee Weekend.

"For many of our soldiers, even in Nepal it is a childhood dream to one day guard the Queen outside her palaces, and now that dream is coming true. The Platinum Jubilee is a once in a lifetime opportunity, and the Gurkhas are both proud and happy to be able to be involved."

*Lieutenant Fred Dickson - Troop Commander, 1 Squadron,
10 Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment*



10 Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment is based in Aldershot. The Regiment's primary role is as a Theatre Logistic Regiment, sustaining 3 (UK) Division.