



HOW THE WORLD SEES BALEN'S LEADERSHIP IN NEPAL

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON
NEPAL'S NEW GOVERNMENT



NIICE

How the World Sees Balen's Leadership in Nepal

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

29 April 2026

How the World Sees Balen's Leadership in Nepal



NIICE

NEPAL INSTITUTE FOR
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ENGAGEMENT

DATE

29 APRIL 2026, Wednesday

TIME

1400-1630 hrs KATHMANDU

1345-1615 hrs DELHI

1615-1845 hrs BEIJING

0915-1145 hrs LONDON

0415-0645 hrs WASHINGTON DC

1015-1245 hrs BERLIN

1015-1245 hrs CAIRO

1715-1945 hrs TOKYO

ZOOM DETAILS

MEETING ID

857 029 1127

PASSCODE

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Kindly **join the Zoom Room 15 min before** the scheduled time. If you need any technical assistance, please contact us via WhatsApp or Direct Call- 00977-9840383300.

How the World Sees Balen's Leadership in Nepal

Moderator : **Bibek Dhoj Thapa**, *Program Coordinator and Research Associate, NIICE*

SPEAKERS:

- **Pankaj Saran**, *Convenor, NatStrat and Former Deputy National Security Advisor of India.*
 - **Zhang Jiadong (Dr.)**, *Professor, Fudan University, China.*
 - **Rob York (Dr.)**, *Director for Regional Affairs, Pacific Forum, USA.*
 - **Joëlle Hivonnet (Dr.)**, *Former Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal, based in Brussels.*
 - **Satoru Nagao (Dr.)**, *Fellow (Non Resident), Hudson Institute, Based in Japan.*
 - **Wondeuk Cho (Dr.)**, *Korea National Diplomatic Academy, Seoul.*
 - **Lulzim Pllana**, *Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo to Bangladesh.*
 - **Sahab Enam Khan (Dr.)**, *Executive Director, Bangladesh Center for Indo-Pacific Affairs, Bangladesh.*
 - **Cynthia Petrigh**, *Former UN Peace Advisor to Nepal and Distinguished Fellow, NIICE.*
 - **Barbara Kratiuk (Dr.)**, *Head, Asian Observatory Team, Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych, Poland.*
 - **George Coooke (Dr.)**, *Founder Chairman, Awarelogue Asian Institute, Colombo.*
 - **Darko Trifunovic (Dr.)**, *Founder and Director, Institute for National and International Security (INIS), Serbia.*
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- **Petro Burkovskyo**, *Executive Director, Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, Ukraine.*
 - **Tim Cupal**, *Österreichischer Rundfunk, Austria.*
 - **Hebatallah Adam (Dr.)**, *Professor at Horizon University College, UAE.*
 - **Lucas Meir**, *Senior Program Officer, German Southeast Asian Center of Excellence, Bangkok, Thailand.*
 - **Suthikorn Kingkaew (Dr.)**, *Academic Practitioner, Thailand.*
 - **Manjeev Singh Puri**, *Former Indian Ambassador to Nepal.*
 - **Khalid Abdalla Abdelwahab (Dr.)**, *International Affairs Expert from Sudan.*
 - **Hadza Min Fadhli Robby**, *Assistant Professor, Universitas Islam Indonesia, Indonesia.*
 - **Lobzang Dorji (Dr.)**, *Independent Scholar from Bhutan.*
 - **Sausan Shareef**, *International Affairs Expert from Maldives.*
 - **Aamna Khan (Dr.)**, *Independent Researcher from Pakistan.*
 - **Fernanda Vázquez-Vela (Dr.)**, *Metropolitan Autonomous University, Mexico.*
 - **Don McLain Gill**, *Department of International Studies, De La Salle University, Philippines.*
 - **Liana Dashyan**, *International Relations Expert based in Armenia.*
 - **Patricio Mateo Carmody (Dr.)**, *International Relations Expert from Argentina.*
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**PROFILE OF
PARTICIPANTS**

(In Order of Appearance or Confirmation Received)



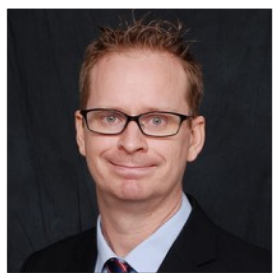
Amb. Pankaj Saran

Pankaj Saran is a former diplomat with forty years of experience in foreign, strategic and national security affairs. He has served in key positions within the Government of India in the Prime Minister's Office, the National Security Council Secretariat, Ministry of External Affairs and in several Indian Missions abroad. He has served as India's Ambassador to Russia and India's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, and as Head of the Northern Division in the Ministry of External Affairs dealing with Nepal and Bhutan. He has worked in different capacities with successive Indian Prime Ministers in the Prime Minister's Office contributing to decision making at the highest levels in a diverse range of sectors, including foreign affairs and national security. From 2018 to 2021, he served as the Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Affairs under Prime Minister Narendra Modi dealing with regional and global strategy formulation, including maritime security and Arctic affairs, neighbourhood policy and technology and economic security. Pankaj Saran is presently Convenor of NatStrat, a Delhi-based independent Centre for Research on Strategic and Security Issues. He is a Member of the National Security Advisory Board and a Distinguished Fellow of the National Maritime Foundation. He is a regular commentator and writer on foreign affairs, security and strategic issues.



Dr. Zhang Jiadong

Dr. Zhang Jiadong is a Professor of International Relations and the Director of the Center for South Asian Studies, as well as a Senior Researcher at the Center for American Studies, Fudan University, Shanghai, China. His research focuses on China-US-India relations, South Asian issues, and regional security. He serves as the Vice President of the Shanghai Institute for International Strategic Studies and the Chinese Association for South Asian Studies since 2021. Zhang has held positions as an International Visiting Scholar at the U.S. Department of State (2005) and the U.S. Department of Energy (2007), and worked as a diplomat at the Chinese Embassy in India.



Dr. Rob York

Rob York is Director for Regional Affairs at Pacific Forum. He is responsible for editing Pacific Forum publications, including the weekly PacNet series, the triannual Comparative Connections e-journal, and the in-depth Issues & Insights series. He also oversees Pacific Forum fellowships and internship programs, as well as counter-disinformation and media training. Prior to joining Pacific Forum, Rob worked as a production editor at *The South China Morning Post* in Hong Kong. In 2023 he earned his Ph.D. in Korean history at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, where he where he previously received his master's degree in Asian studies. Rob regularly contributes commentary at national and international media outlets.



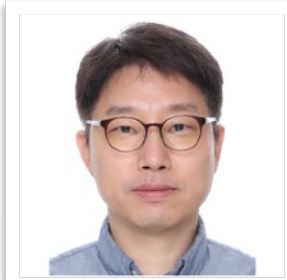
Dr. Joëlle Hivonnet

Dr. Joëlle Hivonnet served as a European official between 1992 and 2025. In the course of her career, she has represented the EU in various multilateral fora, including in New York and Geneva. She also served as Deputy Head of EU Delegation in Africa (Guinea-Bissau) and in Asia (South Korea, Nepal). She holds a PhD from Paris X University and since her retirement in early 2025, she has been working as a free lance researcher on EU policies and relations.



Dr. Satoru Nagao

Dr. Satoru Nagao is a fellow (non resident) at Hudson Institute. He holds numerous research positions at different reputed institutions around the world, including the Center for Strategic and International Studies, in Washington DC, International Security Industry Council, Japan Forum for Strategic Studies, Japan Forum on International Relations, Research Institute for Peace and Security and Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka. He was also a security analyst at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and a first lieutenant of the Japan Ground Self Defense Forces (Japanese Army). Dr. Nagao has authored numerous books and articles on security issues.



Dr. Wondeuk Cho

Dr. Wondeuk Cho is currently an assistant professor of Department of Indo-Pacific Studies at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, Korea National Diplomatic Academy. He is also a visiting professor at Yonsei University. His main research topics consist of international relations of the Indo-Pacific region-esp. Southeast Asia and South Asia including India. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a M.A. degree from Texas A&M.



H.E. Lulzim Pllana

H.E. Lulzim Pllana is Ambassador of Kosovo to Dhaka. He has served as Ambassador of Kosovo to Austria, Diplomatic Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Enver Hoxhaj, with a focus on the international recognition of Kosovo and bilateral cooperation. He then moved into a senior policy role as Director for Political Issues at Kosovo's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prishtina. He subsequently served as Counsellor at the Embassy of Kosovo in Berlin, before being appointed Ambassador to Austria. He has served as Director of the Research Center for Public Opinion at AAB University, College in Prishtina, before becoming Director of the International Relations Office at the University of Prishtina. Alongside his diplomatic work, he also served as a Lecturer at the University of Prishtina's Faculty of Philosophy, teaching Multimedia & Society, International Economy, and Internet Journalism.



Dr. Shahab Enam Khan

Dr. Shahab Enam Khan is a Professor of International Relations at Jahangirnagar University and is currently on lien at the Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP). He also served as a Professor at the University of Delaware from 2022 to 2023. He is also the Executive Director and CEO of the Bangladesh Center for Indo-Pacific Affairs and was a U.S. Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence (2022–2023) and a UK Chevening Fellow (2009), and has earned recognition as a Distinguished Scholar by Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and as an Eminent Scholar in China. He is also an alumnus of the Near East South Asia (NESAs) Center for Strategic Studies at the U.S. National Defense University.



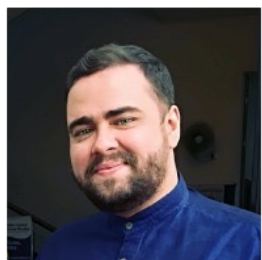
Cynthia Petrich

Cynthia Petrich is a Distinguished Fellow at NIICE. She is an international expert researching peace processes in African, Asian, and Middle Eastern settings, both in the field and in HQs, and the founder of Beyond Peace. She has advised mediation processes, armed forces, the UN and civil society, including in Asia where she served as a representative to the ceasefire monitoring mission in Mindanao, and a UN peace advisor in Nepal. A founding member of the International Contact Group for the peace talks on Mindanao, she has collaborated with the ASEAN University Network, the Harvard Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research (HPCR) and the International Institute of International Law in San Remo.



Dr. Barbara Kratiuk

Dr. Barbara Kratiuk is the head of Asian Observatory at the team of Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych. She has served as an assistant professor at the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies, University of Warsaw. She was educated at the University of Warsaw, Albert Ludwig University in Freiburg and London School of Economics. She has been a visiting scholar at universities in India, Japan and South Korea. Barbara was a junior coordinator of the joint project by Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and University of Warsaw, which established four Central Europe Centers at universities in South and East Asia (2016-2018).



Dr. George I. H. Cooke

Dr. George I. H. Cooke is Founder Chairman of Awarelogue Asian Institute and a diplomatic historian. He was recruited to the Sri Lanka Foreign Service, and served for more than a decade before leaving for an academic career. Whilst stationed at the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Paris, he was also at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). He was the Deputy Director of the BCIS and a visiting lecturer at the Sri Lanka Air Force Academy, the Defence Services Command and Staff College, the University of Colombo, and the Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training Institute. He was a Visiting Fellow at the Ubon Ratchathani University, Thailand.



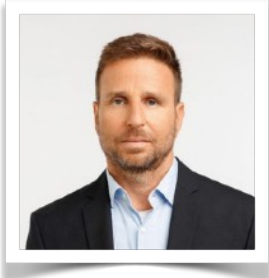
Dr. Darko Trifunović

Prof. Dr. Darko Trifunović is the Founder and Director of the Institute for National and International Security, Belgrade. He serves as Editor-in-Chief of the Security Science Journal. He holds a Doctor Honoris Causa degree awarded by the University of Public and Individual Security – Apeiron (Krakow, Poland). He is a former diplomat who served as First Secretary in the Foreign Service of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the United Nations. In 1998, he was an official delegate in Rome during the Diplomatic Conference that led to the establishment of the International Criminal Court. He received the highest military decoration of the Military Security Agency of the Republic of Serbia – the Great Golden Badge.



Petro Burkovskiy

Petro Burkovskiy is Executive Director of the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation (DIF), where he has been working since 2017. Before joining DIF, he worked at the National Institute for Strategic Studies, including as head of the Centre for Advanced Russia Studies (2019-2020) and head of the Department for Political System Development (2016-2019). He holds an MA with distinction in Political Science from the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (2004). He is an alumnus of the George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies (2007). In 2014, he participated in the High-Level Expert Program in the Federal Foreign Office of Germany.



Tim Cupal

Tim Cupal has worked for the Current Affairs Department at ORF since the 1990s and for more than a decade as a foreign correspondent, including postings in Washington and Brussels.

He headed the ORF bureau in Tel Aviv for the past five years. He was awarded “Journalist of the Year 2023” for his reporting following the Hamas terrorist attack on October 7th.



Dr. Hebatallah Adam

Dr. Hebatallah Adam is a Professor at the Horizon University College, UAE. Previously, she served as Professor of Economics and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (Master’s Programme) at the Jindal School of International Affairs, O.P. Jindal

Global University, India. Dr. Adam has also held academic appointments at Ain Shams University, the German University in Cairo, Badr University, and the Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport. She is the founder of the Jindal Centre for the Global South, the Global South Research Foundation (GSRF), and the Africa Dialogue Forum (ADF). She earned her PhD from Ain Shams University, Egypt.



Lucas Meier

Lucas Meier is Senior Program Officer at the German Southeast Asian Center of Excellence (CPG), at the Faculty of Law at Thammasat University in Bangkok. Lucas also acts as the Deputy Editor-in-Chief and South Asia Regional Editor for CPG's "Asia in Review". Additionally, Lucas is an active member of the "Human Rights" and "ESG" working groups at the German Institute for Compliance (DICO e.V.), which unites Germany's leading compliance practitioners and scholars. He holds an MA in Cultural Studies from Goldsmiths' College, University of London, and a BA in Cultural Studies/Political Science from Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany.



Dr. Suthikorn Kingkaew

Suthikorn Kingkaew is working as an academic practitioner at leading universities in Thailand. He has PhD in Management Studies from Cambridge University. He has conducted various consulting, advisory and research projects for both public and private sectors. In addition, he has experience in policy research and policy making, working as a member of staff to the Deputy Interior Minister and Finance Minister.



Amb. Manjeev Singh Puri

Manjeev Singh Puri joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1982 and has served as Ambassador of India to the European Union, Belgium, Luxembourg, Nepal and as Ambassador/Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the UN. In addition, he has served twice in Germany (in Bonn and Berlin), in Cape Town, Muscat, Bangkok and Caracas. From 2005 to 2009, he headed the UN-Economic & Social Affairs- Division in the Ministry of External Affairs of India and led the Indian delegation for the first meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development in Brussels in July 2007 and the presentation of various reports by India at the Human Rights Council. During 2011-2012, when India served on the Security Council, he was a senior member of its delegation.



Dr. Khalid Abdalla Abdelwahab

Dr. Khalid Abdalla Abdelwahab has over 12 years of experience in Sudanese politics having worked for various organisations in Sudan as a political affairs officer such as Carter Centre. He is a political officer at British Embassy, Khartoum, Sudan. He holds his PhD from School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India.



Hadza Min Fadhli Robby

Hadza Min Fadhli Robby is an Assistant Professor at Department of International Relations, Universitas Islam Indonesia, Yogyakarta. He holds his M.Sc. degree from the Department of International Relations, Eskisehir Osmangazi University, Türkiye. He is Executive Director of Embun Kalimasada Cultural Centre, a cultural institution specifically dedicated to exhibiting artworks and publishing monographs on Indonesian Islamic culture. Hadza has contributed op-eds in several media, such as The Print, Republika (Indonesian Newspaper), The Conversation and others.



Dr. Lobzang Dorji

Dr. Lobzang Dorji has specialized in anthropology, international development, human rights, and rural development. His professional footprint spans academia, consultancy, and policy development. He has worked with organizations like DCAF Geneva, International Developmental Institute, Humber, Canada and Royal University of Bhutan, contributing to capacity-building initiatives, research, and community development. Dorji holds Ph.D. in Anthropology from Vilnius University, Lithuania, where his research explores traditional and spiritual healing practices in Bhutan.



Sausan Shareef

Sausan Shareef has served as an advocate at the Local Government Authority of the Maldives. She has also worked as an Administrative Officer at the Supreme Court of Maldives. She holds a Master of Arts in South Asian Studies, specialising in Political Science and Government, from Pondicherry

University, India, as well as a Bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management from Open University Malaysia.



Dr. Aamna Khan

Dr. Aamna Khan is currently a PhD student majoring in International Relations at SIPA, Jilin University, China. She is an independent researcher and writer for various national and international media outlets.



Bibek Dhoj Thapa

Bibek Dhoj Thapa is Program Coordinator and Research Associate at NIICE. He was a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies at Sichuan University, China. He has co-edited “Seventy Years of Nepal-China Relations: A Model for Civilizational

Friendship”.



Don McLian Gill

Don McLain Gill is lecturer at the Department of International Studies, De La Salle University (DLSU). He is also a non-resident fellow at the Stratbase ADR Institute, a visiting senior fellow at the Impact and Policy Research Institute (IMPRI), and a non-resident fellow at the USANAS Foundation. Don specializes in Philippine foreign policy, Indo-Pacific maritime security co-operation, and India-Southeast Asian relations. He has published extensive and regularly appear on media.



Dr. Fernanda Vázquez-Vela

Dr. Fernanda Vázquez-Vela is lecturer at the Metropolitan Autonomous University-Cuajimalpa in Mexico City. Her lines of research engage Modern and Contemporary Indian History. The projects in which she works at the moment are: “The experience of violence: memory, identity and gender in India”, “Commissions and Committees of Inquiry in India”, “Mexico and India bilateral relations” and the “South Asian migration in Mexico”.



Liana Dashyan

Liana Dashyan is International Relations Expert based in Armenia. She holds Masters in Politics with specialization in International Relations from School of International Relations, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. She specializes in human rights, democracy and non-formal education for young people and she

has developed research in Caucasus Institute, a think tank based in Armenia.



Dr. Patricio Mateo Carmody

Dr. Patricio Mateo Carmody is an international relations specialist with a multidisciplinary background. He completed doctoral studies in International Relations and Diplomacy at École des Hautes Études Internationales, Paris. He

has also undertaken advanced postgraduate training in international trade and public finance at Harvard Kennedy School and through Columbia SIPA in collaboration with the World Bank. Dr. Carmody spent over two decades at PepsiCo, serving in senior leadership roles including Vice President Global (New York), Vice President Asia-Pacific (Bangkok), and Vice President Brazil (São Paulo), alongside executive assignments across the United States, Europe, and Latin America. He is the author of “Foreign Affairs at the End of the World and Looking for Consensus at the End of the World.”

CONFERENCE TEAM



Manila Prajapati
Research Associate
NIICE



Shalini Tripathi
Research Intern
NIICE



Niharika Khanal
Research Intern
NIICE



Avipsha Ban
Research Intern
NIICE

ABOUT NIICE

The Nepal Institute for International Cooperation and Engagement (NIICE) is an independent, apolitical, and non-partisan think tank based in Nepal. It was established in February 2016 under the Companies Act 2006 of Nepal.

NIICE is committed to promoting policy-oriented research, fostering strategic dialogue, and enhancing Nepal's engagement with the regional and global powers. Its major focus is international affairs, security and issues of development.

RESEARCH

NIICE has four Research Centers:

- 1.Center for China Studies
- 2.Center for Neighbourhood Studies
- 3.Center for Indo-Pacific Affairs
- 4.Center for Non-Traditional Security Studies

NIICE has Eight major Research Topics

- 1.Border and Transboundary Water Politics
- 2.China's Belt and Road Initiative
- 3.Climate Change and Energy
- 4.Defence and Security
- 5.Disaster Management
- 6.Global Governance, Sustainable Development, and Smart Cities
- 7.International Economy and Development
- 8.Refugee and Migration

NIICE regularly publishes Research Commentaries, Research Papers, Books and Book Reviews on foreign policy, security issues and issues of development.

FLAGSHIP EVENTS

NIICE has hosted some of the major events which has attracted global attention.

- Water and Peace Summit - 60 Speakers
- Indo-Pacific Future Forum - 150 Speakers
- NIICE Global Conclave – 220 Speakers
- Dialogue on Border Security - 35 Speakers
- International Studies Convention – 330 Speakers
- Understanding Nepal's Foreign Policy – 150 Speakers
- International Women's Summit – 80 Speakers
- Understanding International Migration – 70 Speakers

ENGAGEMENT

NIICE has partnership with hundreds of reputed think tanks and universities that focuses on NIICE's Research topics.

It also offers different ways for scholars and policy makers to engage with NIICE through:

- Internship Programme
- Visiting Fellowship.

MEDIA AND QUERIES

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Nepal Institute for International Cooperation and Engagement is an independent, apolitical and non-partisan think tank which believes in freedom, democracy and a world free from conflict. We envision a world, where sources of insecurity are identified and understood, conflicts are prevented or resolved, and peace is advocated.

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