

SONA NEWSLETTER

SONA Newsletter | Volume 18



16th SONA Executive Committee

The 30th SONA Annual General Meet// Election

The 16th Executive Committee (EC) of the Society of Nepalese Architects (SONA) was elected on December 20, 2025, during the 30th Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at Alice Receptions, Gairidhara.

The election was conducted by the committee led by Coordinator **Ar. Binod Neupane**, with members **Ar. Rita Kafle** and **Ar. Bibek Shrestha**. Voting was held for three key positions—**President, Vice President (Professional), and Vice President (Education)**—while the remaining posts were filled uncontested.

The official handover ceremony took place on January 7, 2026, at Alice

Conference, Pulchowk. During the program, the newly elected members of the 16th EC took their oath to serve the architectural community with dedication and sincerity. The ceremony was conducted by Election Committee Coordinator **Ar. Binod Neupane** and was graced by the presence of past presidents of SONA, symbolizing continuity and collective commitment to the society's vision.

With this transition, the 16th EC embarks on its tenure, pledging to uphold the values of the profession and strengthen the role of architects in shaping Nepal's built environment.

By SONA 16th Executive Committee

16th SONA Committee Members

Ar. Iswar Lal Joshi
President

Ar. Ramita Shrestha
Vice President
(Government)

Ar. Sunish Kumar Lakhe
Vice President
(Professional)

Ar. Pranita Sharma Pandey
Vice President
(Education)

Ar. Abhishek M. Bajracharya
General Secretary

Ar. Nishaj Kunwar
Deputy General Secretary

Ar. Anil Bhattarai
Treasurer

Ar. Manish Manandhar
Member

Ar. Mahendra Raj Khatri
Member

Ar. Kusum Bista
Member

Ar. Anil Acharya
Member

Ar. Sunita Manandhar
Member

Ar. Sadichchha Shrestha
Member

Ar. Kiran Man Joshi
Member

Ar. Arjun Basnet
Ex- Officio

Message from the President

The past year has been a defining chapter for both our nation and our architectural community, marked by transformation, dialogue, and renewed aspirations for the future. It is with great pride and optimism that I present Volume 18 of the SONA Newsletter, reflecting upon a period that encouraged us to think critically, act responsibly, and contribute meaningfully toward the evolving landscape of Nepal.

Across the country, the voices of the younger generation emerged with remarkable strength and purpose. The youth-led movements and the atmosphere surrounding national discourse reflected a growing desire for accountability, progress, and meaningful change. This renewed civic spirit has inspired hope for a more inclusive and forward-thinking Nepal. As architects, our role extends beyond designing buildings; we are equally responsible for shaping environments that foster social harmony, cultural identity, and sustainable development. In times of transition, architecture carries the power to guide communities toward resilience and collective progress.

Within SONA, this year marked an important milestone with the successful completion of our organizational elections and the formation of the 16th Executive Committee. I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to all newly elected members who have stepped forward to serve the profession with fresh perspectives and renewed enthusiasm.

I am deeply honored and humbled by the trust and confidence shown by SONA members in re-electing me to serve as President for another two-year term. I sincerely thank all SONA members, including our past presidents,



Ar. Iswar Lal Joshi

P.C: Yunish B. Chhetri

senior architects, professional colleagues, academicians, and young architects, for their continued belief in my leadership. This trust carries both privilege and responsibility, and I remain committed to working tirelessly for the advancement of our profession and the welfare of architects throughout Nepal.

A major highlight of the previous term under the leadership of the 15th Executive Committee was the successful hosting of ArchBuild Expo 2024, an initiative that brought together professionals, educators, students, and industry stakeholders through a dynamic series of programs. The professional meetings encouraged engaging discussions on historical architecture, city development, and quality architectural education, fostering collaborative problem-solving and meaningful dialogue among various stakeholders. The Design Exhibition, featuring participation from students of various colleges, showcased the creativity, talent, and vision of

emerging architects, while the Construction Materials Exhibition highlighted innovations in building technologies and materials that continue to shape the future of the construction industry.

*Another significant achievement was the active participation of SONA members, architects, and students at ARCASIA ACA21 in Incheon, South Korea, under the inspiring theme “A Better Tomorrow.” The conference served as an exceptional platform for workshops, seminars, and professional exchanges among architects and students from across Asia. The presentation by Pritzker Prize Laureate **Riken Yamamoto** reinforced the transformative power of architecture in building stronger, more inclusive, and sustainable communities.*

One of the most historic achievements for our region has been the establishment of the Architect Association of South Asia (AASA), which was formally

inaugurated on 15 August 2025 in Kathmandu, Nepal. AASA was founded with the vision of bringing architects from across South Asia under a common umbrella to discuss and address shared challenges and opportunities related to architecture, heritage conservation, vernacular architecture, disaster resilience, urbanization, climate adaptation, professional practice, and architectural education.

The association aims to strengthen regional cooperation and create opportunities for architects—particularly young architects—through workshops, seminars, panel discussions, research exchanges, and collaborative initiatives. I am proud to note that SONA played a leading role as one of the founding institutions of AASA and has undertaken the responsibility of coordinating and organizing future AASA programs and events in Kathmandu. This milestone represents an important step toward creating a stronger regional voice for architects and promoting meaningful collaboration throughout South Asia.

As I reflect on the accomplishments of the previous term, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all office bearers and members of the 15th Executive Committee for their unwavering support, dedication, and teamwork. Your contributions have laid a strong foundation for the future growth of SONA.

Looking ahead, we have much more to accomplish during this new tenure. The trust placed in us by our members comes with a clear mandate to strengthen the profession and enhance the role of architects in national development.

Our key priorities will include:

- Advocating for the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive National Architecture Policy and Architecture Act.
- Lobbying for the establishment of an independent Architects Council to regulate and promote the profession.
- Creating dedicated architect groups, positions, and career pathways within all three tiers of government—federal, provincial, and local.
- Strengthening the representation and role of architects within the Nepal Engineering Council and other national institutions.
- Securing a planned and adequate permanent office space for SONA.
- Implementing and institutionalizing a Zero-Tolerance Policy on Harassment, discrimination, and unethical conduct within the profession.
- Expanding professional

development, mentorship, leadership, and employment opportunities for young architects and architecture students.

- Strengthening national and international collaboration to elevate the standing of Nepalese architects and architecture.

To achieve these ambitious goals, our members have elected an exceptionally talented, experienced, and capable team to serve on the 16th Executive Committee. I have full confidence that, working together with unity, transparency, and dedication, we will achieve significant milestones for SONA and the architectural profession during this tenure.

As we conclude this edition of the SONA Newsletter, let us move forward with confidence, determination, and collective purpose. The challenges before us are also opportunities—opportunities to shape better cities, stronger communities, and a more sustainable future. Let our work continue to reflect excellence, innovation, responsibility, and service to society.

Together, let us strengthen our profession, inspire future generations, and contribute to building a Nepal that is inclusive, resilient, culturally rich, and architecturally distinguished.

*Ar. Iswar Lal Joshi
President, SONA*

My Journey with SONA/from a Volunteer to General Secretary - Ar. Arjun Basnet



Ar. Arjun Basnet

P.C: Arjun Basnet

My journey with the Society of Nepalese Architects (SONA) began in 2003 when I joined as a student volunteer. Over the course of two decades, that initial involvement evolved into a leadership role as General Secretary of the 15th Executive Committee, a path that has been both deeply encouraging and immensely educational.

*My first formal role within the Executive Committee came when I was unanimously elected Treasurer of the 12th EC, serving under the presidency of **Prof. Suman Nanda Vaidya** from 2016 to 2018. In this capacity, my primary responsibilities included maintaining accurate financial records, managing funds for secretarial operations, and fostering cordial relationships with sponsors who supported SONA's activities. Recognizing my limited expertise in audits, we appointed a dedicated financial advisor whose guidance we continue to seek to this day. Working closely with both senior and junior members of the 12th EC to organize various programs provided me with a strong foundational experience, one that proved invaluable when I*

was elected unopposed as General Secretary of the 15th EC in April 2023.

*Under the clear vision of **President Ar. Iswar Lal Joshi**, our committee set out to address long-standing structural, academic, and professional gaps. We began by amending SONA's legislation to establish three separate Vice President positions, each tasked with addressing issues in the private, academic, and government sectors respectively. We also expanded the Executive Committee from 11 to 15 members by adding two additional seats to amplify younger voices. These significant reforms were duly ratified across three consecutive Special General Meetings.*

Mindful of resource constraints, we avoided expensive venues by partnering with Himalaya College of Engineering for our special assemblies and several Architect Speaks events. This collaboration deepened academic integration and led to formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with other architecture colleges. Under these

agreements, we began offering guest lectures, career counseling sessions, seminars, and other student-centric activities at regular intervals. Utilizing institutional venues for events such as Architect Speaks and exhibitions helped us reduce expenditure without compromising the quality of our activities.

We sustained discussions on policy and planning, and continued critical lobbying efforts with government agencies including the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC) and the Ministry of Urban Development. Our tenure also marked the beginning of interdisciplinary dialogues with other professional bodies to address common issues arising from the multidisciplinary nature of building projects.

*Committed to decentralizing architectural discourse beyond the Kathmandu Valley, we organized our first open-air public exhibition at Prithvi Chowk in Pokhara, led by Chapter President **Ar. Baburam Baral**. Training programs on "Energy Efficiency in Buildings" were conducted in cities including Bhairahawa, Pokhara, Chitwan, and Nepalgunj. These programs provided valuable opportunities to interact with architects practicing outside the Capital. Recognizing that much remains to be done to establish the architect's identity in the public consciousness, we continued initiating public engagement by regularly organizing exhibitions in public spaces such as Durbar Squares and Bhrikuti Mandap.*

During our tenure, we explored avenues to achieve greater financial sustainability for organizing and executing large-scale programs such as conferences, conventions, and exhibitions. To this end, we established an understanding with an event management company,

adopting a co-management model that ensured financial security for SONA while preserving technical autonomy for our team. Under this arrangement, we organized ArchBuild Expo 2025, the first event of its kind for SONA featuring expert-led panel discussions on relevant topics alongside a materials exhibition. Although no financial surplus was generated, the experience provided invaluable lessons for future collaborations of this nature.

Beyond regular activities, we initiated discourse on relevant issues with stakeholders from various sectors. During SONA Day celebrations, we introduced discussion sessions involving voices from outside the architecture fraternity, ensuring our concerns could be heard more broadly. SONA Day 2024 featured discussions with politicians and eminent professors. Following the Gen-Z protests and fire damage to important civic buildings including the Kahn-designed and planned Ministry of Health building, SONA Day 2025 organized a multidisciplinary discussion on fire safety in buildings.

During our tenure, the President and

I represented SONA at two Arcasia Congresses and one Arcasia Forum. SONA remains one of the most active and vibrant members of Arcasia. We have consistently been able to bridge our members and students to these international forums and even the UIA. Our members have presented papers, participated in various events including design competitions, cultural programs and have been recognized with awards as well.

Another milestone of our tenure was establishing communication between architectural institutes in our region to form a common body. With the primary objective of architectural collaboration, research, and regional development among nations of the South Asian region, we officially established the Architects Association of South Asia (AASA) on 25th August, 2025, in Kathmandu. This achievement was made possible thanks to the initiative of **Ar. Swarup Gurung Kone, Past President of SONA**, who worked tirelessly to materialize this collaboration. **President Iswar Lal Joshi**, who worked closely on this effort, was unanimously elected as the first Chairman of AASA. I am honored to have been sworn in as

the Honorary Secretary, a role I will serve until the end of 2027.

At the conclusion of our tenure, we launched an exhibition of “Planning and Conservation Studio” work by students from various colleges at the Department of Architecture, Pulchowk Campus. Another first of its kind, this event had students leading the program and driving their own discussions, with senior architects in the role of listeners. The continuity of such activities is expected from the 16th EC, once again led by Ar. Iswar Lal Joshi, which promises to bring together the young and the experienced alongside other stakeholders in one forum.

Although financial constraints and the challenges inherent to a volunteer-run organization occasionally tested us, we have been able to achieve a lot, thanks to our members, sponsors, and volunteers. With the overwhelming support from all, I feel that I completed my tenure as the General Secretary of the 15th EC SONA successfully. Working as a team was the key to our success. It has been quite a journey, and together, we have achieved a milestone.

Based on an Interview with Anjana Basnet



16th SONA EC Committee with Election Committee

SONA 16th Executive Committee Events and Activities

S.N.	Date	Program/ Activity	Description
1.	March 1, 2026	Delegation to Ministry of Urban Development	A delegation was presented to Honorable Minister Prof. Dr. Kumar Ingnam by SONA in collaboration with DUDBC regarding the importance of having the Architect's Council in Nepal and a separate post for Architects in Lok Sewa
2.	March 3, 2026	Delegation for restoration of MOHP Building by Louis I Kahn	A SONA-led delegation met with Hon. Minister Dr. Sudha Sharma Gautam to advocate for the preservation of the MOHP Building, a modern architectural landmark designed by renowned architect Louis I. Kahn. The meeting emphasized the building's architectural and cultural significance.
3.	March 26, 2026	Introduction of SONA internship Portal in association with Architie	SONA Internship portal was launched and introduced to the TU students in a event organized by Architie. The portal is supposed to help connect the students and offices for Practicum.
4.	April 10, 2026	Delegation for Ministry Restructuring recommendation	A joint delegation of SONA, RUPSON, and DUDBC presented a concept paper to Mr. Santosh Pandey, Chief Advisor to Hon. Sunil Lamsal, emphasizing the need for a dedicated Ministry of Urban Development and Housing to address Nepal's housing, urbanization, and sustainable development challenges.
5.	April 15, 2026	Delegation for Building Act amendment	A letter recommending 9 amendments was submitted by delegation led by SONA to the Secretary at Ministry of Urban Development at Singhadurbar regarding the necessity to amend the Building Act, 2055.
6.	April 30, 2026	AASA logo design competition award	The AASA logo design competition, jointly held by AASA members, was won by Ar. Kabindra Shrestha of the Society of Nepalese Architects, Nepal.
7.	May 2, 2026	SONA Futsal Competition 2026	The SONA Futsal Tournament, organized by the 16th Executive Committee and SCYA, featured 6 men's and 2 women's teams. Team IcoNEC won the first women's match, while Goal Diggers secured the men's title.
8.	May 31, 2026	Inside Public Practice	A forum for government and private-sector architects to discuss building regulations, approval processes, and governance reforms.
9.	June 5, 2026	Delegation for inclusion of Architects under the engineering service in the current civil service structure to Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	A SONA delegation submitted a letter to the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs regarding the limited representation of architects in the civil service despite over 4,000 registered architects and around 500 annual graduates in Nepal.
10.	June 5, 2026	Delegation for Amemndment of the Building Act, 2055 to Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	A SONA-led delegation submitted a letter to the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs requesting amendments to the Building Act, 2055, to ensure Class A and B building designs are carried out only by architects and relevant engineers.

By SONA 16th Executive Committee

The SONA sub-committees under 16th Executive Committee

- 01 SONA Committee on Social Responsibility (SCSR)**
- Goals: To sensitize, aware and advocate in conservation and preservation of architecture, architecture heritage, while sensitizing and contributing to the society through various volunteer works
- Advisor: Ar. Navin Devkota
Chairperson: Ar. Rikesh Shrestha
Coordinator: Ar. Abhishek M. Bajracharya
Ar. Sadichchha Shrestha
- Members:
Ar. Pratima Shrestha
Ar. Ananda Manandhar
- Ar. Shristina Shrestha
Ar. Shristi Maharjan
Ar. Bijita Parajuli
-
- 02 SONA Committee on Professional Practice (SCPP)**
- Goals: To empower and strengthen the architecture practice and profession
- Advisor: Ar. Arun Dev Pant,
Ar. Pragya Pradhan
Chairperson: Ar. Prajwal Hada
Coordinator: Ar. Sunish Kumar Lakhe,
Ar. Manish Manandhar
- Members:
Ar. Bimal Prajapati
Ar. Anjana Tiwari
Ar. Mohit Pant
- Ar. Chabi Lal Gupta
Ar. Ujan Manandhar
-
- 03 SONA Committee on Architecture Education (SCAE)**
- Goals: To engage architectural institutes in SONA's reform initiatives and strengthen collaboration between SONA and academia
- Advisor: Ar. Sanjay Upreti,
Ar. Dilliram Sapkota
Chairperson: Ar. Sankalp Pokhrel
Coordinator: Ar. Pranita Sharma
Pandey
- Members:
Ar. Sunita Subedi (Acme)
Ar. Aakash Thapa Magar (Chitwan)
Ar. Sony Pandey (Cosmos)
Ar. Kishan Datta Bhatta (Far West)
Ar. Arjun Basnet (Himalaya)
Ar. Roji Puri (Kantipur)
Ar. Moon Singh Dongol (KEC)
Ar. Bindu Shrestha (KU)
Ar. Archana Bade Shrestha (Khwopa)
- Ar. Bhumika Shrestha (Madan Bhandari)
Ar. Sajana Lamichhane (NCIT)
Ar. Ram Prasad Suwal (NEC)
Ar. Roshani Subedi (Pokhara)
Ar. Mimang K. Rai (Pulchowk)
Ar. Milan Bhattarai (Purwanchal)
Ar. Timila Bajracharya (Thapathali)
Ar. Shreesti Raj Lohani (Universal)
-
- 04 SONA Committee on Young Architects (SCYA)**
- Goals: To engage and mentor young architects through knowledge exchange with peers and senior architects.
- Advisor: Ar. Lokendra Acharya,
Ar. Sugandha Subedi
Chairperson: Ar. Sabin Maharjan
Coordinator: Ar. Anil Acharya
Ar. Mahendra Raj Khatri
- Members:
Ar. Radhav Syangadan
Ar. Chandra Prajapati
Ar. Yugantar Paudel
- Ar. Sahasra Paudel
Ar. Bigyan Rawal
-
- 05 SONA Committee on Green and Sustainable Architecture (SCGSA)**
- Goals: To promote the green building design practices to improve the quality of life of residents and occupants.
- Advisor: Ar. Sakar Shrestha,
Ar. Ruchi Bajracharya
Chairperson: Ar. Ujjwal Man Shakya
Coordinator: Ar. Nishaj Kunwar
Ar. Anil Bhattarai
Ar. Kusum Bista
- Members:
Ar. Dibya Acharya
Ar. Jyotshna Lohani
- Ar. Dipesh Himalaya
Ar. Utsav Adhikari
Ar. Rojita Sharma
-
- 06 SONA Committee on Women in Architecture (SCWA)**
- Goals: To recognize, appreciate and motivate the contribution of Women in Architecture.
- Advisor: Ar. Uma Devi Sangachen,
Ar. Dristi Manandhar
Chairperson: Ar. Sushmita Ranjit
Coordinator: Ar. Sunita Manandhar
- Members:
Ar. Garima Nakarmi
Ar. Rachana Shrestha
- Ar. Smriti Shrestha
Ar. Saru Manandhar
-
- 07 SONA Committee on International Relationship (SCIR)**
- Goals: Maintain and Promote the relationship of SONA with International organizations, Firms and Individuals.
- Advisor: Ar. Swarup Gurung Koney
Chairperson: Ar. Inu Pradhan Salike
Coordinator: Ar. Iswar Lal Joshi
- Members:
Ar. Yunish B. Chhetri
Ar. Anjana Basnet
- Ar. Monila Shrestha
Ar. Priyanka Kaushik Chhetri

The SONA sub-committees under 16th Executive Committee

- 08 SONA Committee on Policy and Council Advocacy (SCPCA)** *Goals: To advocate for Nepal Architect's Council while monitoring compliance of architecture practice through legal lenses.*
- Advisor: Ar. Yekraj Adhikari, Ar. Suraj Rajkarnikar
Chairperson: Ar. Prakash Aryal
Coordinator: Ar. Ramita Shrestha
- Members:
Ar. Nhasala Tuladhar
Ar. Rita Kafle
- Ar. Bhuparaj Poudel
Ar. Smriti Bhattarai
Ar. Bipin Paudel
-
- 09 SONA Committee on Communication, Outreach and Publication (SCCOP)** *Goals: To share, connect and explore dimensions of SONA within the community and beyond.*
- Advisor: Ar. Subik Kumar Shrestha, Ar. Kaushal Shrestha
Chairperson: Ar. Swasti Bhattarai
Coordinator: Ar. Kiran Man Joshi, Ar. Anil Acharya
- Members:
Ar. Yunish B. Chhetri
Ar. Anjana Basnet
- Ar. Monila Shrestha
Ar. Priyanka Kaushik Chhetri
-
- 10 SONA Committee on Architecture Research (SCAR)** *Goals: To cultivate a thriving research culture within Nepal's architectural community by building the capacity, platforms, and pathways needed to produce, share, and elevate architectural knowledge.*
- Advisor: Ar. Ram Prasad Suwal
Chairperson: Ar. Ram Shrestha
Coordinator: Ar. Sadichchha Shrestha
- Members:
Ar. Rehana Shrestha
Ar. Alok Dahal
- Ar. Sushmita Adhikari
Ar. Ojashwi Shrestha
Ar. Dikshya Aryal

Call For Participation



23rd ARCASIA FORUM
DELHI | AGRA | JAIPUR

arcasia
Architects Regional Council Asia

HOSTED & CURATED BY
THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

Registrations Are Now Open

A five-day journey of ideas,
dialogue, and design.

THEME
Bringing Back...
Vernacular Wisdom

REGISTER NOW

BOOK YOUR DELEGATE PASS

8th-12th September 2026
DELHI | AGRA | JAIPUR *Scan for registration*

Remembering Ar. Matsyendra Lal Kayastha

The architectural community of Nepal mourns the passing of **Ar. Matsyendra Lal Kayastha**, one of the pioneering architects of our nation and a respected professional whose contributions has shaped the course of architecture in Nepal for generations.

For his family, he was a binding force, a source of strength, wisdom, and unity. For the architectural fraternity, he held an equally unifying presence as a mentor, leader, and guiding figure whose commitment to the profession fostered a sense of community and shared purpose among architects across the country.

As the 3rd President of the Society of Nepalese Architects (1995 - 1998) and founder of **Mr. & Mrs. M. L. Kayastha & Associates**, **Ar. Kayastha** stood among the foremost figures responsible for defining the trajectory of modern architectural practice in Nepal. Throughout his distinguished career, he played a pivotal role in establishing professional standards, advocating for the architectural community, particularly the younger generation of architects and expanding the scope and recognition of architectural services nationwide.

His legacy is etched into Nepal's built environment through numerous landmark projects that continue to serve and inspire. Buildings such as Kathmandu Mall, Kathmandu Tourism Center, Agriculture

Development Bank central training centre complex and Department of Irrigation stand as enduring examples of his contribution to the nation's architectural landscape. These works remain not only as physical structures but also as reminders of a generation that laid the foundations of the profession as it exists today.

Perhaps more than his accomplishments, Ar. Kayastha will be remembered for his humility, integrity, and generosity. He inspired countless architects through both guidance and example, believing deeply in architecture as a service to society, balancing utility, strength, beauty, and human needs.

His passing marks the end of an important chapter in Nepal's architectural history. It is a profound loss for the profession and for all who had the privilege of knowing, learning from, and working alongside him.

We extend our deepest condolences to his family, friends, colleagues, and former students during this time of grief.

While Ar. Matsyendra Lal Kayastha is no longer with us, his legacy lives on through his buildings, institutions, and the architects he inspired.

May his soul rest in peace.

By Priyanka Kaushik Chhetri



© Pradhuma kc

"Architecture is to create art for people's use and a basic necessity."

Profile :/

- Name: Matsyendra Lal Kayastha
(1944-2025)
- Founder: Mr & Mrs M.L. Kayastha & Associates Pvt. Ltd.

Major Projects:

- Kathmandu Tourism Service Center, Bhrikhutimandap
- International Telecommunication Building, Tripureshwor
- Jomsom Airport, Jomsom
- B & B Hospital, Gwarko
- Kathmandu Business Park, Teku
- Department of Irrigation, Lalitpur



Kathmandu Business Park

Wonaw and Associates secure UNESCO 2025 Asia - Pacific Heritage Award

The Lowo Nyiphug Namrol Norbuling Monastery Conservation Project in Mustang has been awarded the Award of Merit with Special Recognition for Sustainable Development.

At the heart of this success is the thoughtful design of Wonaw and Associates. Tasked with protecting a 500-year-old earthen complex from the dual threats of recent seismic damage and climate change, Wonaw and Associates approached the project with immense cultural sensitivity. Their design artfully marries modern seismic retrofitting with traditional earthen architectural typologies.

By Yunish B. Chhetri



Principal Architect: Alex Shrestha

Crucially, the firm placed the local monastic community at the center of the physical construction, blending professional architectural expertise with indigenous knowledge. The jury highlighted this respectful collaboration, praising the intervention for remaining “deeply respectful of the site’s spiritual significance” while empowering the local community to continue their long-term stewardship.

The Architects Association of South Asia AASA - Logo Design Competition - 2026



ARCHITECTS
ASSOCIATION
OF SOUTH ASIA

The Architects Association of South Asia (AASA) is a regional body that brings together architectural institutions from across South Asia, working to foster cross-border collaboration, professional dialogue, and shared standards of architectural excellence. Its member institutions:

- Bangladesh Institute of Architects
- Institute of Architects Pakistan
- Indian Institute of Architects
- Sri Lanka Institute of Architects
- Society of Nepalese Architects
- Architects Association Maldives
- Bhutan Institute of Architects

Its inaugural Logo Design Competition invited architects across these nations to create a visual identity reflecting unity in

diversity, sustainability, and professional excellence. Among the entries, **Kabindra Shrestha of Nepal** was selected as the winner. His design will now serve as the long-term identity of AASA, representing the shared architectural vision of South Asia.

The logo draws together the distinct yet complementary identities of South Asian nations into a single cohesive mark, a visual expression of unity without uniformity. It carries within it a sensitivity toward the environment, acknowledging architecture’s responsibility to the natural world it shapes and inhabits. At the same time, it speaks the language of the profession precise, considered, and built to endure.

By Yunish B. Chhetri



Ar. Kabindra Shrestha



In Conversation with Ar. Jharna Joshi

1. How did you come into architecture and especially conservation architecture?

I was always drawn to architecture because I loved drawing and maths, and even as a child I was fascinated watching a relative work with drawing boards and T-squares. I later received a government scholarship to study at Tsinghua University in China and chose architecture over environmental science, completing my bachelor's in Beijing and gaining my first professional experience in Hong Kong. When I returned to Nepal, I realized I knew very little about our own architectural heritage, and that curiosity led me towards conservation. My journey began at Sundari Chowk, where I joined a documentation project that was initially meant to last three months but continued for three years. Through the detailed hand drawings, surveying, photogrammetry, and on-site study, I developed a deep understanding of historic buildings, and that experience ultimately shaped my path into conservation architecture.

2. Do you identify yourself as a conservation purist or are you in harmony with modern intervention?

It depends on the project and context. I don't box myself into a fixed approach, as conservation, whether of monuments or urban fabric, demands flexibility and adherence to the principles each situation requires.

3. Have you gone back to the projects that were labelled as adaptive reuse, and have they really been utilized as intended?

Yes, I have gone back to some. Adaptive reuse is one approach to sustainability, but not the only one, as retaining existing buildings with minimal intervention is often more sustainable than demolition and new construction when the environmental costs of demolition/construction waste and rebuilding are fully considered.

4. Why can't we adopt an adaptive reuse approach where historic buildings are both preserved and repurposed?

We cannot fully replicate that model due to differences in architectural scale, living comfort expectations, and challenges in integrating modern amenities, but also because of a broader mindset that favors newness over reuse. While there are successful examples in Nepal, conservation here is often constrained by economics, management gaps, and limited contextual understanding of heritage. Over time, this led me to realize that conservation cannot be seen in isolation but must be understood within its broader cultural, economic, and environmental context, which is why I expanded my work into cultural resource management, tourism, and cultural landscape studies.

5. Regarding your project of the Ward 8 building, the one that was adaptively reused, is it still being monitored after



Ar. Jharna Joshi (PhD)

Dr. Jharna Joshi is an architect, educator, and conservation specialist whose career spans more than 30 years across design, tourism, planning, and academia. Her research focuses deeply on landscape aesthetics and tourism, a subject she explored during her Ph.D. at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. She holds a MSc in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania, a Master's in Cultural Landscapes from France's Université Jean Monnet Saint-Étienne, and a Bachelor of Architecture from Tsinghua University in China.

Over her career, she has built a diverse portfolio in building conservation, sustainable tourism, urban design, and community-led development. Her fieldwork is truly international, collaborating with multidisciplinary teams on projects across Nepal, the USA, Vietnam, Greece, and New Zealand.

Today, she leads the Kathmandu Institute as its Director, driving research, policy discussions, and training programs focused on heritage and sustainable growth. She also shapes the next generation of architects as an Associate Professor of Architecture at different colleges in Nepal anchoring her global insights back into Nepal's educational landscape.



© SUNDARI CHOWK, Nepalese Palace Architecture of the 17th Century, Volume II: Architectural Recording

10–20 years to check whether residents are comfortable?

Interestingly, that building is still actively used today as a unit of the ward office, but one major challenge is that students and institutions are rarely taught about load-bearing or mud mortar structures, despite these being among our oldest and most valuable traditional construction techniques.

Note: Ward 8 building in Guita was a new construction designed for the ward administration that now has its health unit (or something similar). This building is a load bearing structure with traditional architectural details using construction technology and was constructed by the ward.

6. You had once said that “The greenest buildings are the ones that already exist.” How does it differ from the usual green certification practices?

Green building ideas in Nepal, such as other recent 1 classifications, often lack contextual understanding since imported standards like LEED do not fully align with local materials and construction realities; true sustainability requires better awareness among both engineers and architects, and a more holistic approach to structure, systems, and energy efficiency rather than superficial design changes. As mentioned earlier, when you demolish an existing building, the construction waste has to be dumped somewhere. This has significant impact on the environment, especially with concrete, cement and rebar waste. The reuse of these materials also consume substantial energy and add strain on the environment, while traditional materials, such as bricks, mud and timber can be reused and upcycled.

7. Do we need a green certification of our own then, something more localized and suitable for our scenario?

A localized green certification is possible, but it first requires stronger research culture, institutional

support, and government-backed mechanisms to translate research into codes and policies, which is currently lacking in Nepal. Across architecture education and practice, there is a broader gap in research, documentation, and field-based learning, even though many initiatives and studies already exist but are rarely systematized or published. Moving forward, both education and practice need to be more research-driven, context-based, and practice-oriented, with greater emphasis on site engagement, critical thinking, and collaboration with external researchers to strengthen the field as a whole.

8. We heard about the Research Centre Kathmandu Institute. Can you tell us more about it?

It emerged from a collective vision of a group of architects aiming to bridge the gap between practitioners and educators and work toward policy-level impact through collaborative research. The seminars, exhibition, and publication were outcomes of these efforts. One of our interest areas is the under-documented period of modern architecture in Nepal that is rapidly disappearing due to urban transformation and lack of attention. It was our first attempt to start that conversation, and it is important that we continue documenting and discussing modern architecture.

9. We found that only buildings older than 100 years are regarded as heritage. What is your opinion on this?

Currently, the law only protects buildings older than 100 years, but many modern architectural works

also hold immense cultural and design value, and unless we begin studying, recognizing and discussing their importance ourselves, meaningful conservation and policy change will remain difficult.

10. Since architecture and culture go side by side, once the architecture is lost, is it inevitable that culture gets lost too?

Culture is carried by people, and its continuity depends on inclusive and connected communities; whether in Indra jatras, Laakhe nach, or even during events like the earthquake and COVID-19, it endures because communities continue to come together and sustain it despite disruption. New societies will build new structures but when historic architecture is lost, a part of history and subsequently identity gets lost. Architecture is a reflection of the society and as such, it is important to document and try to preserve the built environment.

11. What are your further goals as an educator and practitioner?

As an educator and practitioner, I did not initially see myself in teaching, but over time I realized its value through sharing experiences and learning from students. Teaching is a two-way process that constantly inspires me, alongside my interest in site work and problem-solving, which keeps me grounded in practice. It has also opened up new avenues for research and exploration. I encourage students to stay engaged beyond architecture, to remain curious, and to develop interests in other fields as well.

By Monila Shrestha



P.C: Yunish B. Chhetri

Papung Settlement : Documentation

Documentation Team:

Bibhusha Suwal, Krishma Duwal, Lasata Bajracharya, Jamuna Bamanu, Niruta Shrestha , Prashamsa Thapa, Punisha Titaju



As part of the Conservation Studio, two groups from Batch 2077 documented **Papung Village**, a rural settlement in **Thaha Municipality**, located about **36 km southwest of Kathmandu**. The village is spread across sloping terrain with views of surrounding hills and agricultural valleys. The study examined the village's settlement pattern, vernacular architecture, construction materials, community structures, lifestyle, and relationship with the surrounding landscape. The documentation aims to preserve traditional knowledge and cultural identity, provide a resource for future planning, design, and academic research, and promote sustainable, community-based development that balances growth with the conservation of Papung's vernacular character.



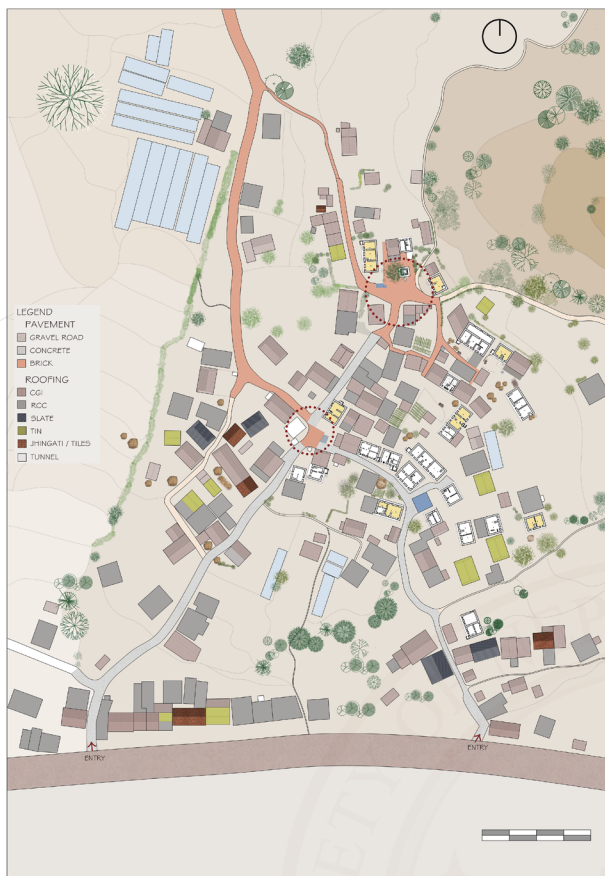
Tutors

Ar. Mohan Moorti Pant

Ar. Rashish Lal Shrestha

Ar. Krishna Gopal Prajapati

Papung Settlement : Documentation



Papung Village is a traditional rural hill settlement in **Makwanpur** district. The settlement is one of the many settlements located in this region which served as **old walking route** to the Kathmandu valley. Like any traditional Newari settlement, the houses of Paplung are **closely built, forming narrow lanes and built with bricks with slope roof**. The orientation and placement of the buildings seem to have evolved organically in response to topography which is **sloping southwards** and social hierarchy. The village is predominantly inhabited by **Newar ethnicity** primarily of **Balami, Maharjan, Shrestha and Joshi** caste group. The primary spoken language among the residents is **Nepal Bhasa**.

OPEN SPACE

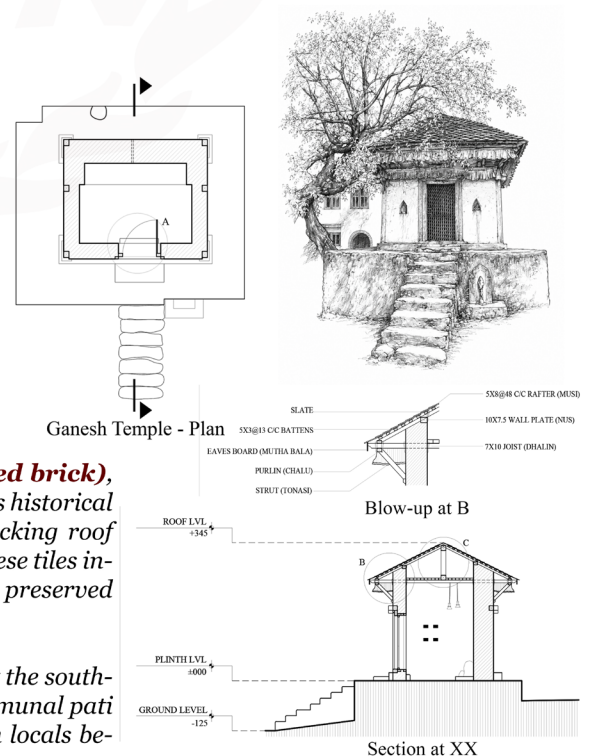
Communal spaces play an important role in the village structure. Traditional elements such as **patis** and temples serve as focal points for gathering, rituals and everyday interaction. Two important communal nodes within the settlement are **Lachi Chowk** and **Ganesh Chowk**. Papung holds significant cultural and spiritual value for its community.



Open Space

The majority of houses in Papung are built using **Kachi Appa (sundried brick)**, and many are believed to be **over 100 years old**. Evidence of the village's historical depth can be seen in traditional architectural elements, such as interlocking roof tiles dating back to the era of **Shree III Chandra Shumsher Rana**. These tiles indicate the longstanding heritage and traditional construction techniques preserved in the area.

The **Gauri Ganesh Temple**, believed to be over 100 years old, stands at the southern edge of the village as a symbol of its spiritual heritage. A former communal **pati** located beside the temple was destroyed by a sacred Banyan tree, which locals believe is inhabited by a **Nāg (serpent deity)**.



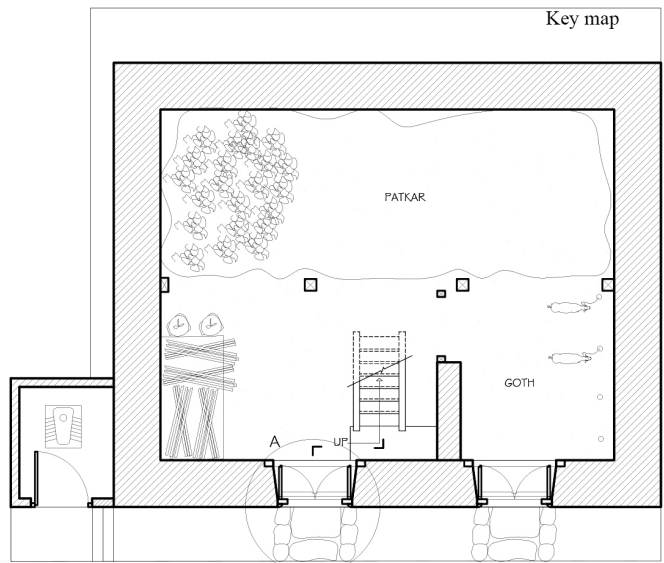
Papung Settlement : Documentation



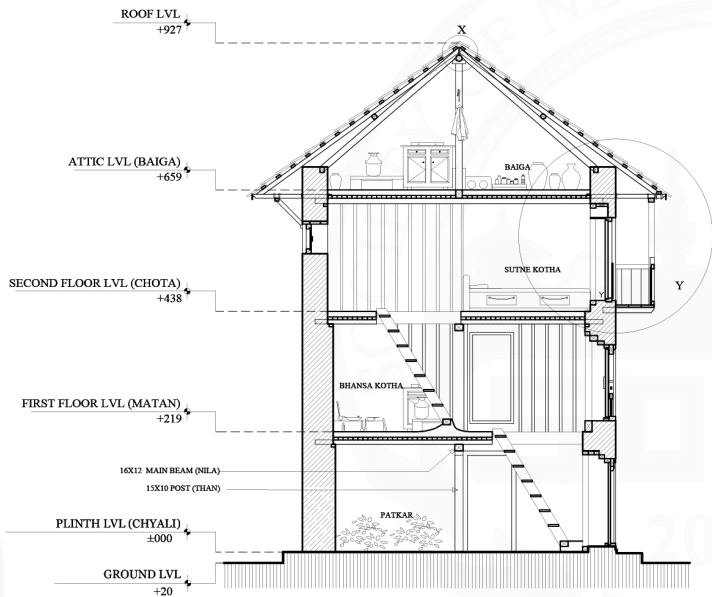
X|P

The documented house is the residence of **Mr. Raghu Ram Maharajan (62)**, who is engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry. Among the seven houses surveyed, it is distinguished by its **extended balcony**, a prominent architectural feature that enhances the building's facade. The house retains traditional construction materials, including **Mangalore roof tiles** dating back to the reign of Chandra Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana.

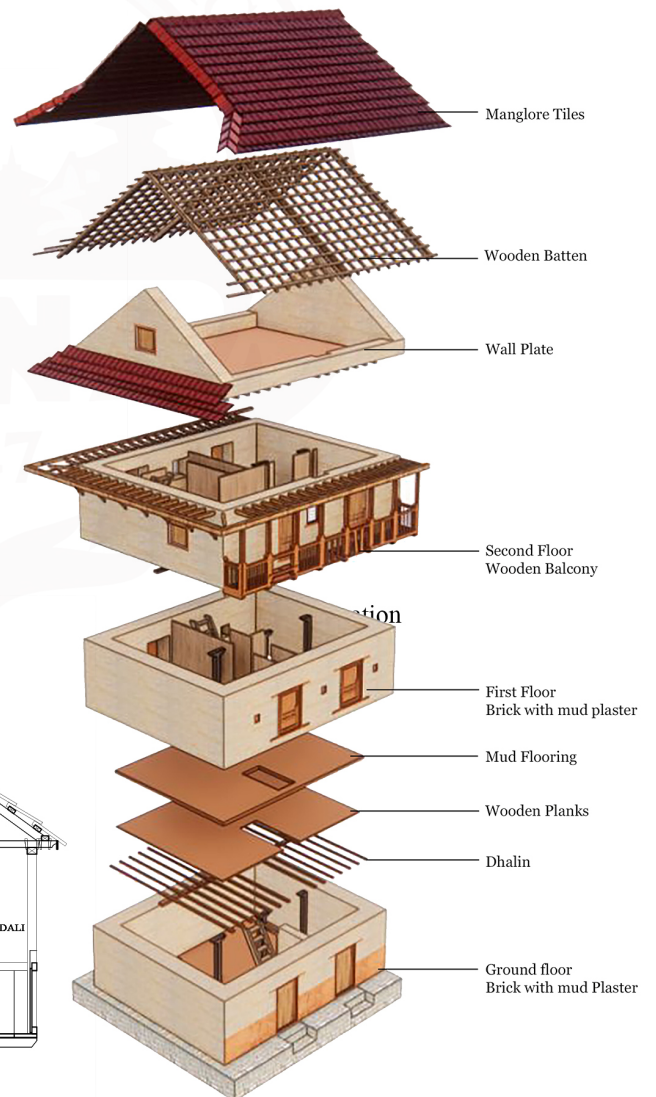
The internal layout reflects the traditional **Newari residential typology**. The **Chyali (attic)** is used as *patkar*, a storage space for dry vegetation and timber. The **Matan** functions as both a kitchen and sleeping area, while the **Chota** serves as a living and sleeping space and contains the *Duku Room*, a private room traditionally inaccessible to outsiders. The **Baiga**, located on the uppermost floor, functions as the main kitchen, in accordance with customary Newari house planning principles.



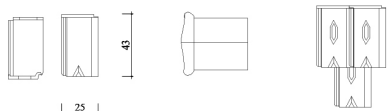
X|P
Ground Floor Plan



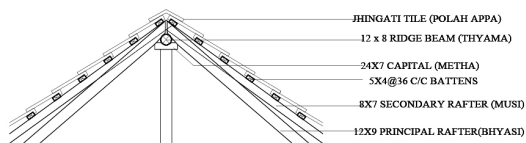
Section at X-X



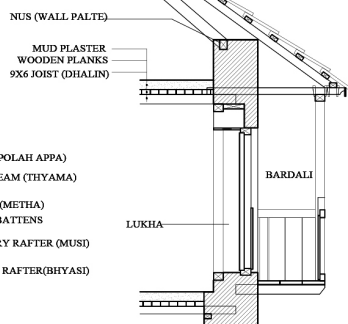
Axonometric of house



Manglore Tiles



BLOW UP AT X



BLOW UP AT Y

By Pujya Shrestha

ARCASIA 2025 from a Students Perspective - along with archbuild

The 21st Asian Congress of Architects (ACA21), organized by ARCASIA, was held in Incheon from September 8–12, 2025 under the theme “A Better Tomorrow.” The congress brought together architects, students, and organizations from across Asia to discuss the future of architecture through sustainability, education, professional practice, and social responsibility. Key committee sessions explored topics including digital innovation in architectural education, AI integration in practice, climate-responsive design, inclusivity, disaster recovery, and opportunities for emerging architects. The event also featured the ARCASIA Awards for Architecture, exhibitions showcasing award-winning and student projects, and cultural exchange programs celebrating ARCASIA’s spirit of “One Family,” concluding with a Friendship Night that highlighted regional collaboration and unity.

ARCASIA Student Jamboree:

Held alongside the 21st Asian Congress of Architects (ACA21), the ARCASIA Student Jamboree 2025 brought together architecture students from across Asia in Incheon, South Korea, from 8–12 September 2025 under the theme “A Better Tomorrow.” Organized by the Architects Regional Council Asia (ARCASIA) in collaboration with the Korea Institute of Registered Architects (KIRA), the jamboree

served as a platform for young architects to engage in cross-cultural dialogue, collaborative workshops, architectural explorations, and critical discussions on the future of the built environment. The event comprised the following,

- 7 Sep 2025 – Arrival of Students
- 8 Sep 2025 – Orientation, Special Lecture and Workshop Group Activities
- 9 Sep 2025 – Workshop Group Activities
- 10 Sep 2025 – Workshop Group Presentations & Discussion
- 11 Sep 2025 – Architectural Exploration, ACA21 Opening Ceremony,
- 12 Sep 2025 – ACA21 Lecture, Architecture Exploration, ACA21 Friendship Night
- 13 Sep 2025 – Departure of Students

Student Experience:

Participating in the ARCASIA Student Jamboree in South Korea became far more than an academic opportunity; it was an immersion into architecture as a cultural, political, and deeply human practice. Surrounded by students from 21 countries, I realized how architecture changes meaning across contexts, shaped not only by climate or technology, but also by memory, conflict, identity, and collective behavior. The experience pushed me to think beyond buildings as isolated



Riken Yamamoto

Listening to Riken Yamamoto at ARCASIA 2025 felt less like attending an architectural lecture and more like reflecting on society itself. The 2024 Pritzker Prize laureate, renowned for his exploration of architecture and community, presented a philosophy grounded not in spectacle but in human connection.

Throughout the lecture, Yamamoto argued that contemporary architecture often normalizes isolation through spaces designed for separation rather than interaction. His projects respond by introducing shared thresholds, visible circulation, and spatial arrangements that encourage encounter without imposing it. Corridors, balconies, and transparency were discussed not as formal devices but as social instruments.

Equally compelling was his willingness to leave tensions unresolved. Can architecture genuinely foster trust in increasingly fragmented cities, or does it merely reflect existing social conditions?

What lingered after the presentation was a reminder that architecture is fundamentally about relationships. While it cannot solve social fragmentation alone, it can either reinforce isolation or gently resist it. Yamamoto consistently chooses the latter.



P.C: Reeti Shrestha

objects and understand architecture as something inseparable from larger social realities.

Representing Nepal alongside five other students also revealed the less visible realities attached to opportunities beyond borders. From the exhausting visa process to navigating unfamiliar systems and environments, the journey itself demanded resilience long before the workshop began. Arriving in South Korea carried both uncertainty and responsibility, particularly while representing a country whose architectural discourse is

still developing within broader international conversations.

Our workshop focused on reimagining Camp Market in Bupyeong, a former military installation layered with histories of occupation, military control, post-war logistics, and environmental contamination. Despite language barriers and severe time constraints, our group developed a shared design language through sketches, gestures, and discussion, proving that architectural communication often transcends words. Beyond the studio, experiencing Incheon's

walkability and public transport systems made me reflect critically on Kathmandu and the consequences of fragmented urban growth.

One of the most emotional moments came during Friendship Night, when we chose to sing "Sambodhan" in solidarity during a difficult moment for Nepal. The empathy we received from students across Asia reminded me that beyond drawings and buildings, architecture ultimately exists to serve people and sustain human connection.

By Reeti Shrestha



P.C: Reeti Shrestha

Guide to newly started SONA Internship Portal

Finding a mandatory architecture internship has long been a game of chance and timing. While some firms are routinely overwhelmed by hundreds of applications long after their quotas are full, smaller studios missed by the student radar struggle to find fresh talent. To streamline this chaotic process, the Society of Nepalese Architects (SONA), in active collaboration with Nepal's architectural colleges, is introducing a unified digital bridge: the SONA Internship Portal.

This platform intends to act as a bridge between college, students and firms making it easier for students to find interested firms and vice versa. This list is maintained by Society of Nepalese Architects (SONA) in active collaboration with Internship coordinators from Architectural Colleges of Nepal.

Benefits of the Portal:

- **For Students:** Instantly discover which practices are actively seeking interns, view real-time vacancy statuses, and prioritize target firms based on proximity.
- **For Offices:** Clearly communicate specific internship requirements and structural quotas. By showcasing live enrollment data, the portal naturally reduces unwanted emails, calls, and duplicate applications once slots are filled.
- **For Colleges/Coordinators:** Eliminates the grueling administrative burden of manually maintaining and updating static office list. The portal provides faculty with immediate access to a live roster, while location-based listings make assigning academic supervisors significantly more efficient.

How it Works

The portal is continuously updated by internship coordinators from participating architectural colleges, ensuring student enrollments and filled quotas are reflected in real time. Students can check live availability before applying, while architectural firms can register directly through the portal. At the start of each academic intake period, SONA will circulate the registration link through email, professional social media platforms, and dedicated WhatsApp networks to maintain a comprehensive and updated database.

By Kiran ManJoshi



SONA Internship Portal
Bridging Students & Offices
sites.google.com/view/sonaintern



© Yunish B. Chhetri

SONA Futsal Competition 2026

The SONA Futsal Tournament 2026, organized under the 16th SONA Executive Committee in **Dhanyentari Futsal**, brought together young architects and students for a sporting event focused on participation, teamwork, and professional interaction beyond the studio environment. The tournament created an opportunity for members of the architectural community to engage with one another through friendly competition while strengthening connections within the profession.

The event saw enthusiastic participation from multiple teams in both the Men's and Women's categories. In the Men's division, **Goal Diggers** secured first position,

followed by **Daju Bhai United** in second place and Grid Line in third place. In the Women's division, **IcoNec** secured first position, while **Hajmola** finished as runners-up.

The tournament was supported by **Panchakanya Group** as the main event sponsor. Additional support was provided by **Asia Pacific Trade Concern** and **Monster Meal** as food sponsors, contributing to the overall management and hospitality of the event.

The tournament was successfully conducted by the **SONA Committee on Young Architects (SCYA)** under the 16th SONA Executive Committee, with support from organizers, participants, and student volunteers.

By Yunish B. Chhetri

Newsletter by SONA Committee on Communication, Outreach and Publication

Chief Editor

Ar. Yunish B. Chhetri

Editors:

Ar. Swasti Bhattarai
Ar. Kiran Man Joshi
Ar. Anil Acharya

Contributors

Ar. Reeti Shrestha
Ar. Abhishek Subedi
Ar. Anjana Basnet
Ar. Monila Shrestha
Ar. Priyanka K. Chhetri
Puja Shrestha

Architie- A digital Platform for Students



Architie is a Nepal-based Architecture media and tech platform connecting architectural education, public discourse, and industry awareness. Through educational content, collaborations, and creative initiatives, it has built a community of 1000+ students across Nepal while promoting interdisciplinary exploration in architecture, media, and design. Architie aims to create a stronger and more connected architectural community in Nepal and beyond.

By Abhishek Subedi



Society of Nepalese Architects (SONA)

Churchil Complex, Chinatown, Top floor
Baghdurbar, Kathmandu
Telephone: 01-5362252
Email: info@sona.org.np, sona2047@gmail.com

