"Museums Uniting a Divided World"

Summary Report of International Museum Day- 2026 Celebration in Nepal





ICOM Nepal

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2026

1. Introduction and Context

International Museum Day (IMD) 2026 was observed worldwide under the theme *"Museums Uniting a Divided World,"* emphasizing the transformative role of museums in fostering dialogue, inclusion, mutual understanding, and cultural democracy in an increasingly fragmented global context. In Nepal, ICOM Nepal led a series of coordinated programmes and collaborative initiatives in partnership with national museums, local institutions, cultural organizations, and heritage stakeholders. Through these activities, museums were positioned not only as repositories of heritage, but also as active civic spaces promoting social cohesion, intercultural dialogue, and community engagement.

As part of its strategic efforts to enhance both national visibility and international engagement, ICOM Nepal undertook several important initiatives to connect Nepal's museum sector with the global IMD movement. The IMD 2026 effort started with the official global theme translation and contextualized into Nepali in a manner that reflected the country's diverse cultural identities, social harmony, and pluralistic values and a dedicated a poster incorporating the localized theme was professionally of the global theme designed and officially shared with ICOM Paris for circulation through its international communication platforms. Furthermore, six major IMD-related activities organized across Nepal were formally registered on ICOM's worldwide interactive map, ensuring Nepal's active participation and visibility within the global museum community.

This international integration highlighted the collective efforts of Nepali museums and cultural institutions as part of a broader worldwide movement celebrating the unifying and socially responsive role of museums in contemporary society.

1.1 Key events

The series of programmes marking International Museum Day (IMD) 2026 in Nepal commenced on 10 May 2026 and concluded on 23 May 2026. Initiated by ICOM Nepal and its involvements in collaboration with various national and local partners, the events highlighted the evolving role of museums in promoting cultural dialogue, social inclusion and heritage preservation. The following are the major activities organized across Nepal to celebrate International Museum Day 2026.

- Thematic discussion on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and IMD – 10 May
- University interaction with students and faculty – 11 May
- Participation in National Museum's IMD celebrations – 18 May
- One-day national workshop on museums in challenging circumstances and book launch – 19 May
- Thematic dialogue and public announcement and dissemination of *The Museum* volume II journal at Narayanhiti Palace Museum – 23 May



These programmes were focused to translate the global theme into the Nepali context by:

- Raising public awareness about the social, cultural and educational roles of museums.
- Highlighting the relevance of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage in peacebuilding.
- Strengthening partnerships between museums, academia, local governments, communities and international organizations.

2. Overview of Programmes

Over the course of May 2026, ICOM Nepal undertook and co-organised programmes in partnership with:

- Local governments (e.g. Lalitpur Metropolitan City and Chumnubri Rural Municipality)
- Academic institutions (e.g. Tribhuvan University's Central Department of Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology and Akshaswore Traditional Buddhist Art Collegee)
- National-level museums (Hanumandhoka Durbar Museum, Narayanhiti Palace Museum)
- Heritage-focused educational institutions and community partners

3. Event Details

S.N.	Activities	Collaboration	Summary of the event
1	**10 May 2026 – Discussion on Intangible Heritage and IMD**	Lalitpur Metropolitan City, Sampada and Akseshwor Traditional Buddhist Art College, with ICOM Nepal	This programme explored the relationship between intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and museums in the context of the IMD 2026 theme, "Museums Uniting a Divided World," with participation from over 60 professionals, scholars and government authorities. Experts from the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Buddhist scholars and traditional art specialists highlighted the importance of ICH in contemporary Nepali society. On behalf of ICOM Nepal, Secretary Mr. Om Prakash Ghimire presented on strengthening museums through documentation and promotion of festivals, rituals, oral traditions and indigenous knowledge. The programme promoted museums as living cultural and community-centered spaces.
2	**11 May 2026: Academic Interaction on ICOM and IMD**	Central Department of Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology, Tribhuvan University and ICOM Nepal	This interaction programme introduced university students and academics to the history, mandate and global role of ICOM and the significance of IMD 2026 in Nepal's multicultural context. Presentations by ICOM Nepal President Mr. Ramesh Prasad Duwadi, Secretary Mr. Om Prakash Ghimire and board member Dr.Pashupati Nyaupane focused on museum development, professional opportunities and youth engagement in heritage work. Professors shared perspectives on the future of museum studies and heritage management, while students actively participated in discussions on museum reforms, digital innovation, community engagement and career pathways. The programme strengthened academic–museum collaboration and inspired future museum professionals.

3	**18 May 2026- Participation in National Museum's IMD Celebration**	**Host :** National Museum, Nepal **Venue :** Chhauni, Kathmandu	ICOM Nepal participated in the official International Museum Day programme organized by the National Museum of Nepal in the presence of the Minister and senior officials of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, the Department of Archaeology and security agencies. Government representatives emphasized the importance of museums in cultural, social and economic development and reaffirmed commitment to strengthening the museum sector. The programme also featured the launch of two heritage-related publications. ICOM Nepal's participation reinforced collaboration between national institutions and global museum principles related to ethics, heritage protection and community participation.
4	**19 May 2026- National Workshop and Book Launch at Hanumandhoka Durbar Museum**	Hanumandhoka Durbar Museum and ICOM Nepal	This major IMD 2026 activity brought together over 100 participants from Bagmati, Gandaki, Lumbini, Karnali and Koshi Provinces to discuss challenges faced by museums during adversity and local responses to these issues. Museum representatives presented papers on disaster risks, security concerns, resource limitations and community engagement, encouraging inter-provincial learning and exchange. Discussions generated practical recommendations for improving museum resilience, safety and social relevance. Workshop papers are being prepared as digital publications for wider dissemination. The programme also included the launch of a book on the intangible heritage of the Hanumandhoka Durbar area in the presence of senior government officials, reinforcing institutional support for Nepal's museum sector.

			• Representatives from five provinces (Karnali, Koshi, Bagmati, Lumbini and Gandaki) participated, enabling a rich inter-provincial exchange of experiences and good practices. • Thematic discussions, based on the papers, produced several concrete conclusions and recommendations for strengthening museum resilience and security, while expanding their social role. Outputs and follow-up: • The workshop papers are being edited into full-length articles and prepared for publication as digital resources, to be shared widely with museum professionals and policy makers. • During the closing session, a book authored by experts on the intangible heritage of the Hanumandhoka Durbar area was formally launched. The closing ceremony was attended by the Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Dr. Mukunda Prasad Niraula; Joint Secretary Dr. Suresh Suras Shrestha; the Director General of the National Archives and other senior officials, further reinforcing institutional support for the museum sector.
5	**23 May – Thematic Dialogue and Launch of *The Museum* Journal at Narayanhiti Palace Museum**	Narayanhiti Palace Museum and ICOM Nepal	This concluding programme reflected on the overall IMD 2026 celebrations while promoting dialogue on the relevance of the theme "Museums Uniting a Divided World" in Nepal's multicultural and geographically diverse society. Participants included representatives from UNESCO Kathmandu Office, Chum Nubri Rural Municipality, journalists, intangible heritage experts and creative economy practitioners. The event featured the launch and distribution of *The Museum* journal,

			jointly published by ICOM Nepal and Narayanhiti Palace Museum. Speakers discussed the future role of museums in peacebuilding, social inclusion, local development and cultural advocacy, while participants provided constructive recommendations for future initiatives and capacity-building efforts by ICOM Nepal. The programme included: • A thematic presentation on the global theme "Museums Uniting a Divided World" and its specific relevance to Nepal's multicultural, multi-lingual and geographically diverse society. • Review and formal public launch of the annual journal *The Museum*, jointly published by ICOM Nepal and Narayanhiti Palace Museum. The journal was then distributed to participants. • Sharing of experiences from various IMD activities organized in the preceding weeks, enabling cross-learning among partners. Distinguished participants, including the Head of the UNESCO Kathmandu Office, the Chairperson of Chum Nubri Rural Municipality and representatives of organizations working in intangible heritage and the creative economy, provided insightful comments on the future roles of museums in peacebuilding, social inclusion and local development and the ways in which ICOM Nepal can provide leadership in advocacy, networking and capacity building were received. The event concluded with constructive suggestions from participants regarding priority areas where ICOM Nepal should take further initiatives.

4.Other Activities

In addition to national level activities, ICOM Nepal Joined international level activities to mark the International Museum Day. On behalf of ICOM Nepal, two representatives, Mr. Suresh Man Lakhe and Mr. Om Prakash Ghimire, participated virtually in the ICOM ASPAC Symposium 2026 on 18 and 19 May 2026 and presented their papers. Suresh Man Lakhe presented "Community Engagement: Patan Museum," highlighting the museum's role in preserving Nepal's tangible and intangible heritage, empowering local communities, and promoting cultural education and festivals on the symposium.

Om Prakash Ghimire presented the country report of ICOM Nepal on 19 May 2026 covering membership status, key projects, International Museum Day 2026 celebrations, and future.

Together, their presentations showcased Nepal's museum achievements and community-centered initiatives, strengthening regional collaboration and knowledge sharing among Asia-Pacific Museum professionals.

To extend the impact of IMD 2026 beyond events, ICOM Nepal make other interventions;

- Shared news and visual documentation of activities through official Facebook and YouTube channels, ensuring open public access to photos, videos and key messages.
- Prepared summary reports and uploaded them to relevant web platforms, contributing to transparency and institutional memory.
- Facilitated media coverage of major events in national Nepali and English-language newspapers and online portals, helping to disseminate the significance of the theme and the contributions of Nepali museums to a broader audience.
- Participated virtually in the symposium and assembly of ICOM ASPAC (Asia-Pacific Alliance), where outgoing ICOM Nepal President Mr. Suresh Man Lakhe and current Secretary Mr. Om Prakash Ghimire presented on Nepal's experiences and initiatives related to IMD 2026.

These communication efforts helped position Nepal as an active and engaged member of the global museum community.

5. Key Outcomes

Across all activities, several overarching outcomes emerged:

- **Enhanced Public and Professional Awareness:** IMD 2026 introduced a wider range of stakeholder's students, local governments, community leaders, media and the public to the idea of museums as agents of social cohesion, not merely custodians of objects.
- **Strengthened Partnerships:** Collaboration among national museums, academic institutions, local governments and community organizations was significantly reinforced. These partnerships are expected to continue beyond IMD.
- **Knowledge Production and Documentation:** The preparation of digital articles based on workshop papers, the publication of books on intangible heritage, and the launch of the annual journal *The Museum* have collectively contributed to building an authoritative knowledge base for the museum sector in Nepal.
- **Policy and Practice Reflections:** Discussions with government officials highlighted the necessity of prioritizing museums within national cultural policy, including resource allocation, security, digitization and community engagement.
- The theme “Museums Uniting a Divided World” provided a powerful lens through which to examine issues of inclusion, representation of marginalized communities and the role of museums in addressing historical injustices.
- **Youth and Community Engagement:** The university interaction and community-oriented events showed strong interest from young people and local stakeholders, indicating significant potential for future volunteerism, research and co-creation of museum programmes.

6. Recommendations and Way Forward

Although International Museum Day 2026 was successfully celebrated, challenges remain, including limited financial and technical resources, lack of capacity building in digital

documentation and disaster preparedness, and weak community participation mechanisms in museum planning and exhibitions. These issues highlight the need for sustained follow-up, stronger collaboration, and long-term institutional support for museums in Nepal.

Based on the year's activities and stakeholder feedback, ICOM Nepal proposes the following key directions:

- **Institutionalizing IMD as a Year-Round Process:** Use IMD as a focal point within a broader annual programme of training, outreach and collaborative projects rather than as a one-day celebration.
- **Strengthening Capacity and Research:** Develop regular workshops and short courses on community engagement, intangible heritage documentation, digital tools and emergency preparedness for museum professionals across all provinces.
- **Expand Knowledge Platforms:** Continue and expand *The Museum* journal as a peer-reviewed platform for museum studies, case studies and policy debates, including English-language abstracts to reach regional and global audiences.
- **Deepen Collaboration with Government and International Partners:** Work closely with the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, the Department of Archaeology, UNESCO and ICOM ASPAC to mobilize resources, share best practices and align Nepal's museum development with international standards.
- **Promote Inclusive and Participatory Museums:** Prioritize representation of marginalized, indigenous and local communities in exhibitions and programming, ensuring that museums reflect the full diversity of Nepal's cultural heritage.

7. Conclusion

International Museum Day 2026 was celebrated in Nepal in a substantive, inclusive and strategically oriented manner. Through a series of dialogues, workshops, academic interactions, book and journal launches, and active engagement with national and international partners, ICOM Nepal successfully carried the message that museums can and must play a vital role in uniting a divided world.

The activities and outputs generated during IMD 2026 have created a strong foundation for future initiatives, offering both a record of current practice and a roadmap for advancing the museum sector in Nepal. ICOM Nepal remains committed to working with all partners to transform museums into dynamic, community-centered institutions that foster understanding, solidarity and sustainable peace.

Representative Photos of IMD Events 2026







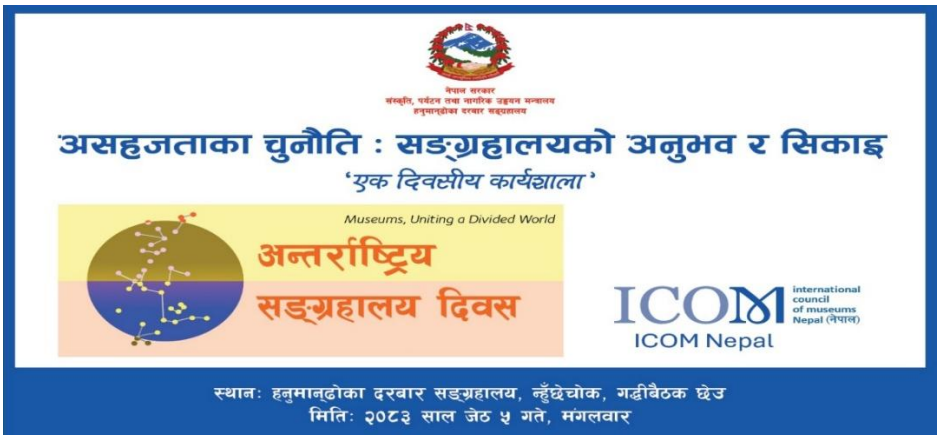

सम्पदा
The Heritage
Inventory: A Tool for Safeguarding of the Intangible cultural Heritage
(Nepali Context)
विषयक छलफल कार्यक्रम
Date: Sunday, May 10, 2026
2083/01/27 B.S
(Nepal Sambat 1146, Ashtami)
Time: 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM
Venue: Aksheswar Mahavihar, Pulchowk, Lalitpur
आर्थिक सहयोग:
ललितपुर महानगरपालिका
उद्योग पर्यटन तथा संस्कृति संरक्षण समिति
Organised by:
Sampada "The Heritage" in association with Aksheswar Traditional Buddhist Art College and ICOM Nepal


Relevance of "Museums Uniting a Divided World" in Nepal
International Museum Day
11th May 2026


ICOM
ICOM Nepal
Relevance of "Museums Uniting a Divided World" in Nepal
International Museum Day
11th May 2026




AUDITORIUM
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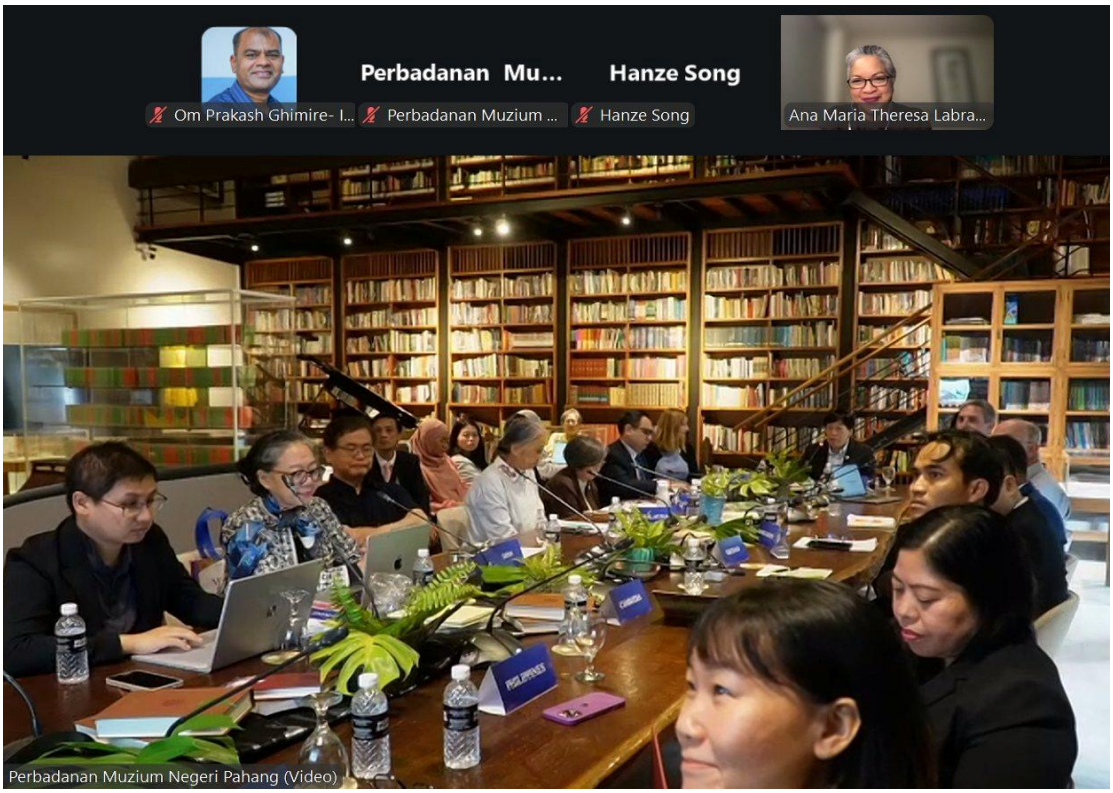

नेपाल सरकार
संस्कृति, पर्यटन तथा नागरिक उड्डयन मन्त्रालय
हनुमान्ढोका दरबार सङ्ग्रहालय
असहजताका चुनौति : सङ्ग्रहालयको अनुभव र सिकाइ
'एक दिवसीय कार्यशाला'
Museums, Uniting a Divided World
अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय
सङ्ग्रहालय दिवस
ICOM
international council of museums
Nepal (नेपाल)
ICOM Nepal
स्थान: हनुमान्ढोका दरबार सङ्ग्रहालय, न्हुँछेचोक, गद्दीबैठक छेउ
मिति: २०८३ साल जेठ ५ गते, मंगलवार




विमोचन कार्यक्रम
हनुमानढोका दरबार संग्रहालय
बसन्तपुर, काठमाडौं ।






Perbadanan Mu...
Hanze Song
Om Prakash Ghimire- I...
Perbadanan Muzium ...
Hanze Song
Ana Maria Theresa Labra...
Perbadanan Muzium Negeri Pahang (Video)


ICOM ASPAC
ICOM Malaysia
MUZIUM PAHANG
ASPAC 2026
ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM
19 MAY 2026 | PAHANG, MALAYSIA
Uniting Multicultural Asia Pacific Through Museums:
Diversity as Rich Heritage Assets in the Region
Royal Address
Her Royal Highness Tengku Ampuan of Pahang
Keynote Address
Ms. Deborah Tout-Smith
Senior Curator, Museums Victoria & ICOM Executive Board Member
From Definition to Practice: The Impact of the 2022 ICOM Museum Definition in Central Visayas
Audrey Dawn TOMADA & Mary Mae Edgilez YBURAN
National Museum of the Philippines-Cebu / ICOM Philippines
From Physical to Virtual: Reimagining Museums in Pakistan for Regional Cultural Exchange
Sana DURRANI
Walled City Lahore Authority / ICOM Pakistan
Reimagining Museums in Bangladesh: Diversity, Climate Vulnerability, and Community-Centered Practice
Md. Serajul ISLAM
Bangladesh National Museum / ICOM Bangladesh
Living Museums, Living Communities: Rethinking Museum Models for Tribal Heritage in Northeast India
Tina DULOM
Indian Institute of Heritage/ ICOM India
Community Engagement: Patan Museum
Suresh Man LAKHE
Patan Museum / ICOM Nepal
Engaging Difficult Pasts: Museum Practice, Dialogue, and Reconciliation in Contemporary India
Aakanksha TATED
Cipla Ltd / ICOM India
Museums as Communication Systems: Negotiating Multicultural Identity in Asia-Pacific
Dr. Ciwuk Musiana YUDHAWASTHI
Bhayangkara University of Jakarta Raya / ICOM Indonesia
Digital Readiness and the Evolving Museum Role: Evidence from Malaysian Museums in the Asia Pacific Context
Dr. Rajabi Abdul RAZAK
International Islamic University Malaysia / ICOM Malaysia
Scan the QR Code to register for the symposium..
For more information, please contact Mr. Hanze Song, Assistant Secretary to ASPAC
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