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SEPTEMBER 24, 2026



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By Nepal Digest - September 24, 2026 - Nepal

Shesh Ghale's life traces one of the defining movements of modern Nepal: outward migration followed by institution-building abroad. Born in Lamjung, educated on a government scholarship, trained as an engineer and later established in Australia, Ghale built a career in higher education, property and diaspora leadership alongside his wife and business partner, Jamuna Gurung. His story is not simply about becoming wealthy overseas. It is about what happens when migrant success begins creating institutions of its own—and when those institutions remain connected to

the country the migrant left behind.

By 2026, Ghale remained chief executive of the Melbourne Institute of Technology, which he and Gurung established in 1996. He also continued to lead the MIT Group Foundation, while the broader group maintained business and philanthropic interests in Australia and Nepal. Decades after leaving Nepal, his public life still moved between two places: Melbourne as the centre of his business career and Nepal as the country to which much of his philanthropy and diaspora engagement continued to return.

The partnership with Gurung is essential to understanding that trajectory. Profiles that describe Ghale alone risk reproducing a familiar business mythology in which the visible male founder receives the story while the institution was actually built by a couple. Gurung co-founded MIT, serves as its managing director and has been central to the group's operations and philanthropic work. Their career is best understood as a shared project rather than a solo ascent.

From Lamjung to Engineering

Ghale was born in Lamjung in western Nepal, far from the corporate and educational institutions that would later define his life. His early academic path was shaped by a Nepal government scholarship that allowed him to study civil engineering in the former Soviet Union. Between 1979 and 1986, he trained at the

Kharkov Automobile and Highway Institute, graduating with a master's degree in civil engineering.

That education placed him inside a generation of Nepalis whose professional formation depended partly on international scholarships during a period when advanced technical education at home was limited. The experience also gave him exposure to large-scale infrastructure and to a very different political and economic system from Nepal's. Returning home, he joined the government transport sector as a highway project engineer.

At that stage, the career looked conventional: scholarship, technical degree, public-sector employment. Nothing about it necessarily pointed toward higher education entrepreneurship in Australia. The change came through migration.

Moving to Melbourne

Ghale relocated to Melbourne in 1990, initially to pursue further education and settle his family. Migration often creates a strange reversal of status. Qualifications and experience acquired in one country do not always translate cleanly into another, and professionals may find themselves rebuilding networks from the beginning.

Ghale completed an MBA at Victoria University in 1994, adding business training to his engineering background. That combination later proved useful because higher education is not

only an academic enterprise; it is also a regulated service business involving finance, recruitment, compliance, property and long-term planning.

Australia was also entering a period in which international education was expanding rapidly. Migrants from Asia were arriving not only as workers but as students, entrepreneurs and future employers. Ghale and Gurung entered that changing environment early enough to build within it.

Founding Melbourne Institute of Technology

In 1996, Ghale and Gurung established the Melbourne Institute of Technology. The institution grew into a private higher-education provider offering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, particularly in business and information technology. MIT later expanded its operations and developed a significant international-student base.

Education is an especially revealing industry for migrant entrepreneurs. The customers are often migrants in transition, using qualifications as part of a wider plan involving work, residency and a different future. Institutions therefore operate at the intersection of education, migration policy and labour-market demand.

Ghale and Gurung had themselves experienced migration, international education and the challenge of establishing careers in a new country. That background gave them insight into the expectations and uncertainties international students carry with them.

Why Private Higher Education Is Difficult

Running a private college is not simply a matter of hiring lecturers and enrolling students. Australian higher education is heavily regulated, with requirements around course quality, governance, student support and financial sustainability. Institutions serving international students face additional scrutiny because education is tied directly to visa rules.

This makes growth more complicated than ordinary commercial expansion. A college that recruits too aggressively or allows quality to decline can damage both students and the wider sector. Reputation therefore becomes a long-term asset rather than a marketing slogan.

MIT's survival across three decades is significant because many private providers have entered and disappeared during that period. Longevity suggests that Ghale and Gurung succeeded not only in identifying demand but in building enough administrative structure to keep the institution functioning through changing regulation.

Jamuna Gurung's Role

Gurung's contribution deserves its own place in the story. She co-founded MIT, became managing director and remained central to the executive structure. She also co-founded the MIT Group Foundation and has been active in Nepali community organisations in Australia.

This matters because family businesses often become publicly personified by one founder even when decision-making and institution-building are shared. A more accurate account recognises that business partnerships depend on division of responsibilities, trust and complementary strengths.

Ghale's public prominence—through NRNA leadership, business rankings and philanthropy—made him the more visible figure. But the institutions were built through partnership.

From Education into Property

As the education business expanded, the couple also moved into property and development. This diversification is common among successful education entrepreneurs because campuses, student accommodation and commercial property naturally connect to real-estate investment.

Property also offers a different risk profile from education. A college depends on student demand and regulation; real estate

depends on land values, financing and economic cycles.

Combining the two can strengthen a group if managed carefully.

The broader MIT Group therefore became more than one college.

It developed into a portfolio of education, property and related investments across Australia and Nepal.

Australian Citizenship and Public Roles

Ghale became an Australian citizen in 1997 and served as Nepal's Honorary Consul General in Victoria from 1997 to 2000. The role reflected his growing position between the two countries.

Diaspora leaders often occupy this hybrid space. They are citizens and businesspeople in their adopted countries while still remaining closely engaged with the social and political life of their country of origin. The relationship is rarely simple.

Ghale's later NRNA leadership would make those questions much more explicit: citizenship, investment, rights and obligations across borders.

The Non-Resident Nepali Association

Ghale was elected president of the Non-Resident Nepali Association in 2013 and served two terms, completing his tenure in 2017. The organisation represents Nepalis living outside the country across dozens of national chapters.

The NRNA exists because migration produces questions that do not disappear once a person settles abroad. What political or economic rights should non-resident Nepalis retain? How should they invest? What role should they play in national development?

These questions are emotionally charged because diaspora identity exists somewhere between departure and belonging. A person may spend decades abroad and still consider Nepal central to family, memory and responsibility.

Diaspora Capital

Nepal's economy is usually connected to migration through remittances sent by workers in the Gulf, Malaysia and other labour markets. But diaspora capital also takes another form: entrepreneurs, academics and professionals who accumulate assets and networks abroad.

Ghale represents that second form. The number of such people is much smaller than the remittance-sending labour force, but their ability to invest, create institutions and connect Nepal to global systems can be significant.

The challenge is converting individual success into structures that create value beyond the founder's own businesses.

The 2015 Earthquake

The April 2015 earthquake brought that question into immediate focus. Ghale was serving as NRNA president when Nepal faced one of the largest humanitarian crises in its modern history. Diaspora communities around the world mobilised money, volunteers and supplies.

MIT states that Ghale and Gurung donated AUD 250,000 toward relief and spent substantial time on the ground. Ghale was also appointed a special envoy for earthquake reconstruction by the Government of Nepal.

Disasters reveal both the strength and weakness of diaspora mobilisation. Money can be raised quickly; converting it into transparent, coordinated and long-term assistance is much harder.

Relief Versus Reconstruction

Emergency relief is highly visible: tents, food, medicine and immediate shelter. Reconstruction is slower, more bureaucratic and often less emotionally compelling. Yet it is the second phase that determines whether damaged communities actually recover.

Ghale's experience during the earthquake reinforced the importance of institutions. A donor can write a cheque in minutes, but rebuilding schools, homes and livelihoods requires years of coordination.

This distinction likely shaped the later evolution of the MIT Group Foundation toward longer-term programmes rather than purely one-off donations.

MIT Group Foundation

Ghale now serves as president of MIT Group Foundation and chairman of its Nepal arm. The foundation formalises the philanthropic activity connected to the family's business success.

Institutional philanthropy has advantages over personal giving because it can establish governance, budgets and multi-year commitments. It can also survive beyond one individual if the organisation is designed properly.

The risk is the same one faced by founder-led companies: the public may trust the person more than the institution. Strong governance is what converts reputation into durable social investment.

Flood Relief and Long-Term Support

In September 2026, MIT Group Foundation announced a programme connected to the Bhotekoshi flood, focusing on educational support for children who had lost one or both parents. The plan was designed around support through Grade 12 rather than only immediate relief.

This represents an important difference in philanthropic strategy. Emergency cash helps families survive the first weeks of disaster; education support attempts to prevent one tragedy from producing years of secondary disadvantage.

Long-term programmes are harder to administer, but they are also easier to evaluate because commitments have clear duration and outcomes.

Education as the Connecting Theme

Education links Ghale's commercial and philanthropic identities. MIT built a business around higher education, while the foundation increasingly uses education as a route toward social support.

This overlap can be strategically useful because organisations are most effective when philanthropy draws on expertise they already possess. An education group understands student systems, scholarships and institutional partnerships better than it understands every possible development sector.

The danger is using philanthropy primarily as corporate branding. Credibility depends on whether programmes continue after publicity fades.

Wealth and Public Expectations

Ghale and Gurung became highly visible within the Nepali diaspora partly because of their business success and wealth. Public wealth creates expectations that private individuals should contribute to national causes, especially in countries with weak public systems.

That expectation can be both reasonable and problematic. Philanthropy can address urgent gaps, but it cannot replace democratic public institutions or become a substitute for taxation.

The more useful question is whether private capital can complement state capacity through transparent, well-governed projects.

The Politics of NRNA

NRNA leadership also exposed Ghale to the internal politics of diaspora representation. The organisation has faced debates over elections, factions, legal disputes and the basic question of who legitimately speaks for Nepalis abroad.

This is not unusual. Large diaspora organisations contain people with different citizenships, economic positions and relationships to Nepal. Unity is easier as a slogan than as governance.

Ghale's tenure belongs to an earlier phase of that institutional development, when the organisation was expanding rapidly and trying to convert global chapters into coherent influence.

What Nepal Owes the Diaspora

Diaspora politics frequently emphasises what Nepalis abroad can do for Nepal, but the relationship is reciprocal. People who invest or maintain long-term ties often seek predictable laws, property rights, citizenship arrangements and respect for their contribution.

Governments have historically moved slowly on these issues, producing frustration among non-resident communities.

Ghale's advocacy through NRNA reflected this institutional negotiation rather than simple nostalgia for home.

The Limits of Diaspora Hero Narratives

Stories about wealthy migrants can easily become moral lessons suggesting that anyone who works hard enough will succeed abroad. This ignores luck, access to education, timing and the structural advantages that allow some migrants to build capital while others remain in low-paid labour.

Ghale's story is therefore exceptional rather than representative. Most Nepalis abroad will not build higher-education institutions or

property portfolios.

Its value lies not in offering a formula for individual success but in showing one pathway through which migration can produce institution-building.

Migration and Reinvention

Ghale's transition from government engineer to education entrepreneur illustrates how migration can loosen professional identity. In Nepal, his career path was tied to engineering. Australia forced him to learn new systems and created space to move into business.

This kind of reinvention is common among migrants because the old résumé does not always dictate the new economy. Skills transfer in unexpected ways.

Engineering provided systems thinking; the MBA provided business vocabulary; migration provided the market context in which those abilities could be recombined.

Institution-Building as Legacy

Entrepreneurial wealth can be temporary if it remains tied to one person's decisions. Institutions create a different kind of legacy because they can employ people, educate students and allocate resources long after the founder leaves daily management.

MIT, the broader group and the foundation are all attempts to create this durability. Their eventual value will depend on whether they survive changes in leadership without losing quality or purpose.

This is the same institutional test faced by every founder-led organisation.

Two Countries, One Career

By 2026, Ghale's life could not be described accurately as either Australian or Nepali alone. His business base, citizenship and professional institutions are in Australia, while his diaspora leadership, philanthropy and many investments remain connected to Nepal.

This duality is increasingly normal in a globalised Nepali population. Millions of people live lives in which family, money, identity and responsibility cross borders continuously.

Ghale's career simply makes that condition unusually visible.

What the Next Generation Inherits

First-generation migrants often build institutions through personal sacrifice and direct control. The next generation inherits something different: organisations that already exist, reputations already formed and the responsibility to maintain or transform

them.

The long-term test for the Ghale-Gurung institutions will therefore come through succession. Can MIT, its businesses and philanthropic projects continue successfully when leadership is no longer concentrated in the founding couple?

If the answer is yes, their legacy will have moved beyond entrepreneurship into institution-building in the strongest sense.

From Lamjung to Melbourne and Back Again

Shesh Ghale's life began in rural Nepal, passed through Soviet engineering education and government service, and then shifted decisively in Melbourne. Each stage added a different kind of capital: technical knowledge, business skill, networks and eventually wealth.

What makes the story particularly relevant to Nepal is what happened afterward. The relationship with home did not end when migration succeeded.

The Business of International Education

The sector that made Ghale prominent is itself inseparable from migration. International students do not purchase only lectures; many are buying access to a new labour market, professional

network and possible long-term future. This makes private higher education unusually sensitive to visa policy, employment conditions and the reputation of the destination country.

Institutions therefore have to survive regulatory change as well as educational competition. A shift in student-visa rules or post-study work rights can alter demand rapidly. MIT's longevity suggests that the group learned to operate through several cycles rather than depending on one favourable policy environment.

For Ghale, this also meant that education could never be treated as a static product. Courses, student support and governance had to evolve as technology and labour-market demand changed.

What Diaspora Leadership Can and Cannot Do

NRNA leadership exposed Ghale to a recurring expectation that wealthy or well-connected non-resident Nepalis should somehow compensate for weak institutions at home. Diaspora networks can mobilise money and expertise quickly, but they cannot substitute for accountable government.

The more realistic role is complementary. Diaspora organisations can connect investors, universities, health professionals and emergency support to Nepal, while elected institutions retain responsibility for law, public finance and equitable national policy.

Ghale's career is strongest when seen through this division rather than through the idea that successful migrants should "save" the country they left.

Philanthropy After the Founder

The MIT Group Foundation now faces the same institutional question as the businesses that financed it: can purpose survive succession? Founder-led philanthropy often depends heavily on the judgement and personal relationships of the people who created it.

A durable foundation needs transparent grant criteria, independent oversight and programmes that can continue even when the founders are no longer personally supervising them. This is especially important when philanthropic work crosses borders and operates through local partners.

If those systems remain strong, the foundation can outlast the biography that originally gave it visibility.

What Wealth Means in a Diaspora Story

Ghale's success is sometimes presented as a simple migrant success story, but wealth changes the social meaning of migration. The person who once navigated a new country as an outsider can eventually become an employer, property owner and donor with institutional power.

This transformation can produce admiration, but it also deserves scrutiny. The more influence private individuals accumulate, the more important transparency and governance become around the institutions they control.

That is not a criticism unique to Ghale. It is the normal responsibility that follows large-scale success.

What Institution-Building Looks Like Across Generations

The next test for Ghale and Gurung's work is generational rather than entrepreneurial. Founders can carry an organisation through force of personality, relationships and accumulated judgement, but institutions become durable only when those capabilities are transferred into boards, policies and professional leadership. A college, business group or foundation that still depends entirely on its founders decades later has not completed that transition.

This is particularly important for diaspora institutions because they often carry emotional expectations from more than one country. Australia provides the regulatory and commercial environment in which the businesses operate, while Nepal remains a source of identity, philanthropy and public expectation. Balancing those relationships requires governance strong enough to outlive the founders' personal networks.

Ghale's longer legacy will therefore be measured less by the scale of assets attached to his name than by whether the organisations he helped create can continue generating value when the story is no longer centred on him.

Ghale's career is one answer to a question millions of Nepalis abroad now negotiate in their own ways: after building a life somewhere else, what remains connected to Nepal? In his case, the answer became colleges, businesses, diaspora organisations and philanthropic institutions stretched across two countries.

Originally published by Nepal Digest - <https://nepaldigest.com/shesh-ghale-lamjung-melbourne-nepali-diaspora/>