

THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL

PRESIDENT PAUDEL CONSULTS FORMER PRESIDENT, VEEP ON MADHES INCIDENT

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 31

President Ramchandra Paudel held discussions with former President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav and former Vice President Parmananda Jha on the problems emerging in the Tarai-Madhes region.

President Paudel held the meeting with the two former office-bearers at Sheetal Niwas, the President's Office, on Friday.

According to President Paudel's Press Advisor Kiran Pokharel, the President discussed the difficult situation reported in various districts of the Tarai-Madhes, including Kaptangunj of Dewangunj Rural Municipality in Sunsari district.

During the meeting, President Paudel expressed concern over the incidents in the Tarai-Madhes and said that all sides should work to preserve the social, religious and ethnic harmony, tolerance and national unity that have existed in the country for centuries.

Former President Dr. Yadav said that the government should have the capacity to resolve the problems by taking all political parties, civil society, religious leaders and the general public on board during this difficult situation.

'RIGHT TO PROVINCE TOP PRIORITY'

RSS
Kathmandu, July 31

Prime Minister Balendra Shah has made it clear that the government he was leading had accorded top priority to the rights of provinces for their empowerment.

PM Shah said it during a meeting held at his office with the political leaders from Tarai-Madhes on Friday. The provinces are empowered once the constitution is enforced fully and effectively, he reminded in the meeting that was held in the wake of recent unrest in some Tarai-Madhes districts.

The PM further informed the leaders that federal government was working actively to devolve rights to provinces and local government so that federalism would be realized in a true sense. The budget was brought in an inclusive manner by incorporating the issues and demands of all geographical regions, communities and marginalized people, the PM said, adding that he was treating every Nepali citizen in an equal manner.

At a present sensitive situation, fundamental values of the constitution, democratic system, rule of law and nationality would not be compromised, according to him. PM Shah called on all sides to stand resolutely for national unity by maintaining restraint, and continuing dialogues that foster tolerance and harmony.

The leaders attending the meeting with PM Shah were Mahanth Thakur, Rajendra Mahato, Lal Babu Raut, Ram Kumar Sharma, Samim Minya, Prabhu Singh, Amaresh Kumar Singh, Sharat Singh Bhandari, and CK Raut, among others.

'Education arranged for children affected by squatter eviction'

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 31

Minister for Education and Sports Sasmit Pokharel has pledged to ensure that children affected by the removal of squatter settlements in the Kathmandu Valley won't face any disruption in their education.

Responding to questions raised by National Assembly members on Friday, Minister Pokharel said arrangements had been made to transfer students from the evicted settlements to different schools so that their studies could continue without interruption.

Minister Pokharel, who is also the government spokesperson, said 116 students from Shree Buddhajyoti Bal Udhyan Basic School in Balaju had been transferred to Tarun Secondary School, while 154 students from Shree Balkalyan Secondary School had been enrolled at Nepal Yubak Secondary School in Paknajok, Thamel.



Leaders from Hindu and Muslim communities, intellectuals and others participate in a rally at Kalyanpur in Saptari Municipality-7, Saptari district, on Friday. Rallies are being organised across the country to maintain social harmony.

PHOTO: RSS

One Nepali dead, Nirmal Purja feared missing

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 31

The Alpine Club of Pakistan confirmed the deaths of four climbers and said several others, including mountaineer Nirmal Purja, known as 'Nims Dai', remained missing after an avalanche struck an international climbing team on Pakistan's 8,047-metre Broad Peak in the Karakoram range on Thursday (July 30).

BROAD PEAK AVALANCHE

The information was shared on the official Instagram page of Irfan Arshad Khan, president of the Alpine Club of Pakistan.

Bodies of Nadhira Al Harthy of Oman and Pur Bahadur Gurung 'Yukta' of Nepal recovered. Nadhira's body has been recovered and is being transported by helicopter to Skardu. Arrangements for Yukta's transport are underway.

The identities of the remaining climbers will be confirmed and shared as soon as official information becomes available. "We urge everyone to await verified updates from ACP before sharing further details," Khan said in the Instagram page. Search and rescue operations continue for those still missing.

Meanwhile, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nepal issued a press statement regarding the missing individuals



on Friday afternoon. It said, "The Ministry is closely monitoring the situation following the news of avalanche on Mt. Broad Peak."

"Our Embassy in Islamabad is coordinating with all relevant authorities of Pakistan including the Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) to facilitate the swift and safe rescue of all affected mountaineers. We have been informed by the Pakistani authorities that the search and rescue operations are underway," the statement said.

According to the information received by our Embassy in Islamabad, the expedition team to Mt. Broad Peak led by veteran climber Nirmal Purja "Nims Dai" includes Pur Bahadur Gurung 'Yukta', Kili Pemba Sherpa 'Kilu', Nima Sherpa, Nawang Thindu Sherpa and Gyalu Sherpa as well as Nadhira Ahmed Abdullah Al Harthy

(Oman), Sohail Sakhi (Pakistan), Wang Zhong (China) and Mallory Geis (USA).

According to the statement, the Ministry has received assurances from the Pakistani authorities that they would mobilise all available resources for timely search and rescue operations.

Meanwhile, our Myagdi correspondent reported that concern has spread in Myagdi, the home district of mountaineer Nirmal Purja, after he was reported missing following an avalanche on Broad Peak.

Purja, who was born in Dana, Annapurna Rural Municipality-3, has gained international recognition as a record-setting mountaineer. Locals became worried after reports emerged early Friday that Purja and nine other climbers had gone missing following the avalanche.

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PM urges MPs to act as bridge of harmony

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 31

Prime Minister Balendra Shah has said that the government is working continuously and systematically to resolve the recent situation in Sunsari district and nearby areas, fully protect citizens' lives and property, and strengthen social harmony.

In a discussion held on Friday with the lawmakers of the ruling Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), representing Madhes Province at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers in Singha Durbar, PM Shah urged the citizens not to be disturbed and to exercise restraint as all organs of the state machinery have been mobilized on high alert.

PM Shah emphasised that the government's primary focus is to reach out to the affected citizens, ensure their safety, and conduct an impartial investigation into the incident.

He added that the government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy to maintain peace and security and prevent the situation from deteriorating further.



During the discussion, PM Shah urged all lawmakers to reach their constituencies with confidence and become a strong bridge of harmony between the citizens and the state.

PM Shah reminded that it is the real responsibility of the representatives to reach the doorsteps of the people in difficult times and emergencies and stand by their joys and sorrows.

According to the PM secretariat, PM Shah has conducted a series of meetings and dialogues to respond to the Madhes unrest and has been actively working to deploy concerned officials.

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Govt, Dewangunj victims' families reach 7-point deal

BY SACHIN POKHAREL
Itahari, July 31

The government and the families of two youths killed in a clash in Dewangunj Rural Municipality-3 of Sunsari have reached a seven-point agreement.

A formal agreement was signed between the Ministry of Home Affairs and the parents of Om Prakash Mehta and Jay Prakash Mehta, who died in the incident on July 26, on Thursday night in the presence of Home Minister Sudan Gurung.

As per the agreement, the government has committed to addressing various demands put forward by the victims' families.

The government has agreed to immediately initiate the process of declaring Om Prakash Mehta and Jay Prakash Mehta as martyrs and provide relief of Rs. 1 million each to their respective families. The two sides also agreed to conduct a fair and effective investigation into the incident and take prompt legal action against those

FUNERALS PERFORMED LATE FRIDAY

BY JAY KRISHNA YADAV
Inaruwa, July 31

Families have received the bodies of the two youths who died in the Kaptangunj incident in Dewangunj Rural Municipality of Sunsari district.

Although an agreement had been reached with the government to take the bodies for cremation at 2:00 pm, the families had initially refused to receive them.

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found responsible in accordance with the prevailing law.

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Red panda spotted in forest of Okhaldhunga

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Okhaldhunga, July 31

An endangered red panda, locally known as Habre, has been spotted in a forest in Patle, Khijidemba Rural Municipality-9, Okhaldhunga. Its presence in the area was confirmed after a video filmed by a local was made public.

Local Furi Sherpa filmed the red panda in the forest. Earlier, red panda droppings had been found in the area, leading locals to believe that it was a habitat of the endangered species.

However, locals said this was the first instance of a red panda being directly observed and captured on video in the area.

Ngawang Furi Sherpa, ward chairman of Khijidemba Rural Municipality-9, said the sighting was encouraging news for the district. He said the presence of the red panda confirmed the richness of the area's forests, vegetation and biodiversity, and stressed the need for greater community involvement in protecting the natural environment.

The Division Forest Office, Okhaldhunga, also welcomed the sighting. In a social media post, the office said



protecting rare wildlife such as the red panda was a shared responsibility and urged people not to chase or frighten wildlife, approach it too closely to take

photographs or videos, or disturb its natural habitat.

According to the office, red pandas are highly sensitive animals,

and increasing human activities can adversely affect their habitat and breeding. It urged people to maintain a safe distance if they encounter a red panda and inform the concerned authorities.

The red panda is a protected species in Nepal and is listed as endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

Cold, dense forests with abundant bamboo in the eastern and central hills of Nepal are considered the species' main habitat. Its survival is increasingly threatened by climate change, habitat destruction, forest fires, reckless human activities and attacks by free-roaming dogs.

The Patle area of Okhaldhunga, located at a high elevation, has long been considered suitable habitat for red pandas.

Although earlier evidence had indicated the species' presence, the video provides direct confirmation. The sighting is being viewed as an important achievement for biodiversity conservation in Okhaldhunga.

Locals expected that the first video footage of a red panda in Patle will further establish Okhaldhunga as an important habitat for rare wildlife.

BULLION
(Rs. per tola)

Hallmark Gold : Rs. 284,000/-
Worked Gold : NA
Silver : Rs. 4,310/-

STOCK

NEPSE : 2,685.54
Total Amount : 3,759,722,340.76
No. of Share : 8,851,216

ANTHROPIC AI MODELS HACKED 3 ORGANISATIONS

AP
San Francisco, July 31

Anthropic said its artificial intelligence models hacked into three other organizations during testing, just days after ChatGPT maker OpenAI raised concerns over AI controls after it disclosed its rogue models hacked another company.

Anthropic, the San Francisco-based AI company behind Claude, posted on its website Thursday that it discovered the three incidents after reviewing more than 141,000 evaluation runs.

It had launched a "large-scale" cybersecurity review which specifically looked for evidence whether its AI models were able to access the internet from within testing environments that should have been sealed off, in response to the OpenAI incident, Anthropic said.

Anthropic said the models involved in the incidents were Claude Opus 4.7, Claude Mythos 5 and an internal research test model. The earliest incidents date to April, the AI company said.

"Claude compromised the impacted organizations' infrastructure using basic techniques," Anthropic said, such as exploiting weak passwords.

In all three incidents, the AI models were tasked with a "capture the flag" cybersecurity challenge, which Anthropic said has been one of the ways it assesses a model's cyber capabilities.

The models were given a fictional scenario and told a piece of secret information, or the "flag," had been hidden on a different machine on the network with the objective of breaking in and retrieving it, it said.

It added that it had already reached out to the affected organizations, which it did not name. Two of them said they had not previously detected the activity. Anthropic said it was "continuing to reach out to the third."

Anthropic said it conducted its review with Irregular, which describes itself as the "first frontier security lab."

Korala SEZ plan left in limbo

BY HARIKRISHNA SHARMA
Muktinath (Mustang), July 31

The plan to establish a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) at the Korala border point connecting Nepal and China has remained limited to a feasibility study, with no further progress made towards its implementation.

The Ministry of Finance had conducted a feasibility study for developing the necessary infrastructure at the Korala border point.

Ojas Engineering Pvt. Ltd. carried out an on-site study during the last fiscal year 2025/26 and submitted its report to the government. However, further work for establishing the SEZ has not moved ahead.

As economic activities at the Korala border have increased, a technical team conducted a feasibility study for developing necessary physical infrastructure, including a customs office, immigration facilities and warehouses in the Nepali territory near the Dashgaja area.

Following the feasibility study, the project reached the stage of preparing a Detailed Project Report (DPR), but the process has since stalled.

Roshan Sapkota, an engineer at Ojas Pvt. Ltd., said that a study was conducted using GPS to determine the physical infrastructure that can be built on an area of 500 ropanis on the Nepali territory opposite the Chinese structure at the Korala border crossing connecting Tibet, the autonomous region of China, and the 110 ropanis of the Mustang Customs Office in Nechung.

"We visited the site several times, prepared the report and submitted it to the government. The report has concluded that the area is suitable for

Pvt. sector organisations call for harmony

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 31

Private-sector organisations have urged all sides to exercise restraint, maintain social and religious harmony, and resolve disputes through dialogue amid recent incidents of tension and unrest in parts of eastern Nepal.

The Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC), Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) and Independent Power Producers' Association, Nepal (IPPAN) issued separate statements expressing concern over the recent incidents, including those reported in Kaptanganj of Dewanganj Rural Municipality-3 in Sunsari and other parts of eastern Nepal.

The organisations expressed condolences to those who lost their lives in the incidents and wished those injured a speedy recovery.

Issuing a press statement, the NCC said Nepal is a nation based on the spirit of mutual respect, harmony and coexistence among different religions, cultures and communities, adding that this diversity is the country's greatest strength.

The NCC said protecting and promoting social harmony and tolerance is the



common responsibility of all citizens. It urged everyone to give priority to social harmony, tolerance and national unity in the current sensitive situation.

The Chamber also appealed to citizens to stay away from rumours, misinformation and all forms of violence. It said no disagreement or difference of opinion could be greater than human life, social harmony and national unity.

Meanwhile, the CNI appealed to all concerned to help resolve the situation that emerged in Kaptanganj and subsequently in some eastern districts. It said Nepal had a long tradition of religious tolerance, mutual unity and social harmony.

peace-building activities, including harmony rallies, in coordination with other social organisations.

Likewise, the FNCCI expressed serious concern over the tense situation and recent incidents reported in various Tarai districts, including Kaptanganj in Sunsari. The Federation expressed condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and wished those injured a speedy recovery. It urged political parties, civil society, religious leaders, media personnel and local leaders to play a constructive role in resolving the situation and promoting sustainable peace in the region.

The FNCCI said Nepal has a long

tradition of multi-ethnic, multilingual, multi-religious and multicultural harmony, with the Tarai-Madhes region representing mutual brotherhood, tolerance and social cohesion. It warned that unrest, clashes and violence could disrupt social harmony and adversely affect daily life, industry, trade and overall economic activities.

The Federation called for disputes to be resolved through peaceful dialogue and mutual understanding and urged the government and local administration to ensure security in Kaptanganj and other affected areas.

Similarly, IPPAN said social unrest, violence, vandalism, shutdowns and disruptions could directly affect the construction of power projects, weaken investor confidence, increase production costs and delay projects.

IPPAN said a peaceful, secure and harmonious environment was essential for energy development, investment promotion and sustainable economic growth. It urged the government and concerned agencies to strengthen security arrangements for industries, businesses, power projects and other development infrastructure.

IPPAN also called for greater cooperation among civil society, the private sector, local communities and social organisations to promote dialogue, public awareness, national unity and development.

Paddy plantation completed in Humla



BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Humla, July 31

The transplantation of paddy has been completed across all paddy fields in Humla district.

Paddy transplantation was done on

time this year with improved irrigation facilities in the remote areas.

Local farmer Par Bahadur Thapa of Adanchuli Rural Municipality-2, Makai, said that the transplantation of Marsi paddy had been completed in his village. He said irrigation facilities had reached almost all paddy fields in the rural municipality.

Similarly, another farmer, Rekha Shahi of Chankheli Rural Municipality-2, said that transplantation had been finished in Darma Jiula, which is known for producing the largest quantity of Marsi paddy in Humla district.

Hari Phadera of Unapani in Sarkegard Rural Municipality said paddy transplantation had been completed in almost all areas of the rural municipality, including Rip, Unapani, Dulli, Mundi, Sayan and Thaya.

Chief of the Agriculture Development Office Chudamani Panta said Marsi paddy is grown on 615 hectares of the total cultivated area of 5,020 hectares in the district.

He said paddy transplantation had been completed on 590 hectares of land this year. Irrigation facilities have reached 500 hectares of paddy fields, while the remaining areas depend on rainfall.

Timely rainfall has also supported the completion of paddy transplantation on time.

In the last fiscal year, a total of 1,120 tonnes of paddy was produced from 585 hectares of land in the district.

Indigenous varieties of paddy are grown in Humla. Paddy is cultivated in all six rural municipalities of the district except Namkha Rural Municipality.



PHOTO: RSS
A group of women selling national flags on the sidewalk at New Road, Kathmandu.

Farmers self-sufficient in fruit saplings

BY BASUDEV SHARMA
Jajarkot, July 31

Farmers in Jajarkot have started exporting fruit saplings after becoming self-sufficient in their production.

The Agriculture Development Section under local governments, the Agriculture Development Office, and the National Agriculture Modernisation Programme Implementation Unit encouraged local people who depend on farming for their livelihoods to establish commercial nurseries.

As a result, farmers in the district have started producing fruit saplings and supplying them to other districts.

Previously, government offices used to bring orange, lemon, walnut and other fruit saplings from outside the district and distribute them to farmers at subsidised rates every year in June and July.

After farmers were encouraged and supported to establish nurseries, saplings are now purchased from nurseries operated in seven local levels and distributed to farmers at subsidised rates.

Since the National Agriculture Modernisation Programme Implementation Unit started working in Jajarkot as an orange zone in fiscal year 2017/18, farmers have expanded commercial orange and other fruit cultivation.

The programme has encouraged people dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods to take up commercial fruit farming. Saplings produced by local nurseries are distributed to farmers in 26 wards of four local levels where orange cultivation has been promoted.

Krishna Prakash Oli, information officer at the National Agriculture Modernisation Programme Implementation Unit, said saplings were being distributed from nurseries established



PHOTO: BASUDEV SHARMA
Jajarkot becomes self-sufficient in citrus saplings.

in Jajarkot based on farmers' demand.

The programme has been working in 26 wards of Bheri, Chhedagad, and Nalgad municipalities, and in Kushe Rural Municipality, as an orange zone.

He said the programme had shifted its focus from distributing fruit saplings to encouraging farmers to establish nurseries.

According to Oli, saplings are purchased from around 15 nurseries in different local levels of Jajarkot and distributed to farmers according to demand. In recent years, nurseries in Jajarkot have also started supplying saplings to other districts.

Kushe Organic Nursery in Ward No.

5 of Kushe Rural Municipality, Khatri Nursery in Ward No. 12 of Chhedagad Municipality and Birendra Nursery in Ward No. 6 of Bheri Municipality have been supplying citrus saplings to farmers in the district.

Last year, around 35,000 saplings were exported outside the district at Rs. 70 each. Under the National Agriculture Modernisation Programme, the Orange Zone purchased 22,000 saplings from local nurseries and distributed them to farmers.

This year, of the 78,000 citrus saplings produced in different nurseries, 40,000 have been distributed to farmers in Jajarkot, while 38,000 have been sent

to other districts.

Vijay Kumar Mandal, chief of the National Agriculture Modernisation Programme Implementation Unit, said citrus saplings had been sent to Surkhet, Dailekh and West Rukum.

He said nurseries were established in Jajarkot because saplings brought from outside often failed to survive due to differences in climate and environmental conditions. "When saplings are brought from outside, nearly half of them are lost because they cannot adapt to the local environment. So, we are producing saplings in Jajarkot and distributing them according to farmers' demand," he said.

Madhes unrest

Long-route transport disrupted, passengers stranded

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Sarlahi, July 31

Passengers have been facing significant hardship after long-distance public transport services were suspended due to ongoing protests across several districts in Madhes and Koshi provinces.

Long-route vehicles operating to destinations including Janakpur, Birgunj, Rajbiraj, Biratnagar and Kakadbhitta remained off the roads from Friday morning, causing inconvenience to travellers with urgent commitments.

While local public transport services continued to operate normally in Sarlahi, vehicles travelling to Janakpur, Birgunj and other long-distance destinations remained suspended.

According to Jhalak Sharma, Chief of the District Traffic Police Office, Sarlahi, local-route vehicles continued operating on the East-West Highway and other internal roads, but long-distance services remained halted.

Inspector Sharma said locally operated tempos, Magic vans and freight trucks were running without disruption.

However, vehicles such as Winger vans and Hiace minibuses carrying passengers to the federal capital, Kathmandu, departed as scheduled on Friday morning. Sunil Kumar Sah, operator of the Lalbandi ticket counter, said overnight buses to Kathmandu were also operating normally.

He said that only services to eastern districts had been suspended. Passengers travelling to and from eastern Nepal were forced to return home after finding no transport available at bus parks.

The shutdown had little impact on areas along the East-West Highway in Sarlahi, including Lalbandi, Hariwan, Nayaroad, Bagmati, Nawalpur, Phuljor and Raniganj, where traffic continued to flow normally and markets remained open.

Shyam Thapa Magar, chief of the Area Police Office, Lalbandi, said the situation in Lalbandi remained normal. However, the Bayalbas market, which had remained open throughout the morning, was closed on Friday afternoon following a demonstration.

Nil Bikram Thapa, ward chair of Haripur Municipality-2, said the situation in his area was peaceful, with all communities continuing to live together harmoniously. He added that markets in Haripur remained open without disruption.



A road wears a deserted look in Lalbandhi of Sarlahi district.

PHOTO: TRN

Five protesters held

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Sarlahi, July 31

Five youths who allegedly attempted to organise a protest and enforce a market shutdown in Barahathawa, western Sarlahi, were detained by local residents on Friday morning and handed over to police.

According to police, the group, comprising individuals from Barahathawa and neighbouring local bodies, had arrived in the market riding motorcycles bearing Indian registration plates to stage a demonstration. They are currently being held at the Area Police Office, Barahathawa, said Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Gopi Krishna Subedi.

However, shops and businesses in the district headquarters, Malangwa, as well as in Bayalbas and Barahathawa, remained closed on Friday. Although commercial establishments in the two market areas were shut, pedestrian movement continued as normal.

Sarlahi's Assistant Chief District Officer, Hom Prasad Ghimire, said security had been tightened across the district to maintain law and order

DSP Subedi said the situation was briefly tense in the morning but has since returned to normal across the Barahathawa area.

Earlier on Friday, an all-party meeting was convened, bringing together elected representatives, political leaders, industrialists, business owners, security officials, local community leaders and religious representatives.

Barahathawa Mayor Kalpana Kumari Katuwal said the meeting resolved to maintain social harmony and work collectively to preserve peace.

Although many shops and businesses remained closed due to rumours of a shutdown, Mayor Katuwal said that movement in the market was otherwise largely normal.

and preserve social harmony. Apart from peaceful demonstrations in a few locations, the overall situation across the district remained normal, he said.

He added that repeated meetings involving security officials, religious leaders, political party representatives and other stakeholders had been held to appeal for the preservation of communal harmony and social cohesion.

Border entry tightened

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Jaleshwar, July 31

In view of maintaining overall peace, security and public order in the district, the Mahottari District Administration Office has decided to allow people entering Nepal through border points with neighbouring countries only after verifying their official identity documents.

Chief District Officer (CDO) of Mahottari, Indradev Yadav, said the decision was taken during a coordination meeting on social and religious harmony held at the District Administration Office on Friday morning with representatives of political parties and members of various social and religious groups.

The decision comes amid growing tensions and sensitive developments in different parts of the country following the tragic incident in Sunsari district.

The meeting also decided to appeal to all residents of Mahottari to maintain restraint and help preserve the long-standing social harmony, brotherhood and cultural unity of the district, while preventing any form of violent, confrontational or provocative activities, CDO Yadav said.

The authorities have also urged people not to circulate rumours, misleading, unverified or hateful content through social media or share such

materials. The meeting decided that anyone found involved in spreading such content would face strict action under prevailing laws.

The district administration has appealed to religious leaders and community representatives to maintain peace and harmony among people of all castes, ethnicities, languages, religions and communities by avoiding activities that could fuel misunderstanding or conflict.

It has also been decided that organisers must obtain prior approval from the local administration before conducting any religious processions, rallies, gatherings or public programmes. They have been instructed not to engage in activities that could disrupt peace and security.

Similarly, all security agencies in the district have been directed to remain on high alert, increase patrols in sensitive areas, and investigate suspicious individuals after taking them into custody if necessary to maintain law and order.

Meanwhile, several markets in Mahottari, including the district headquarters Jaleshwar, have been shut down in support of the incident in Sunsari.

Markets in Matihani, Gaushala, Samsi, Ramgopalpur, Aurahi and Pipra areas were also closed. Protesters blocked roads by burning tyres and felling trees.

CURFEW IMPOSED INDEFINITELY IN TWO MUNICIPALITIES

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Rajbiraj, July 31

The District Administration Office (DAO), Saptari, has clamped an indefinite curfew in two municipalities of the district to maintain law and order amid heightened security concerns.

According to a notice issued on Friday morning, the curfew came into effect in Rajbiraj Municipality from 8:00 am on Friday and will remain in force until further notice.

The restricted area covers the stretch from the Khando River in the east to the Jamuni-Thalahi section of the Hulaki Highway in the west, Basbitti on the Rupani Road in the north, and the Koshi Western Main Canal in the south.

The Administration said the decision was taken after an assessment of the prevailing security situation indicated that ongoing protests and other undesirable activities could adversely affect peace, security and public order. The curfew was enforced following a decision of the District Security Committee.

Meanwhile, an indefinite curfew has also been imposed in Bodebarsain Municipality from 10:00 pm on Thursday until further notice.

The prohibited area extends from the Khadak Bridge on the Hulaki Highway in the east to Pritampur Chowk in the west, Nengda Chowk in the north, and Manraja Chowk in the south.

The District Administration Office has urged residents to refrain from unnecessary movement and other activities within the designated curfew zones. It warned that anyone violating the order would face legal action in accordance with existing laws and called on all stakeholders to cooperate in maintaining peace, security and public order.

The curfew order was issued by Chief District Officer Shyam Krishna Thapa under the provisions of the Local Administration Act, 1971, based on a decision of the District Security Committee.

Dumping site left unused in Kalikot



BY PREM RAM SIMKHADA
Kalikot, July 31

A dumping site built by Khandachakra Municipality in Kalikot at around Rs. 2 million has been left unused and has started deteriorating, three years after its construction.

The structure, built with public funds, is now being covered by bushes. Meanwhile, waste from the market is being dumped in nearby forest areas, worsening the environmental condition. The dumping site, constructed with gabion mesh, drainage facilities and walls, remains deserted.

Although the facility was built to manage waste, it has never been used for waste collection and management. Locals have questioned the effectiveness of public spending on the project.

Local Kumma Acharya said the facility could not be brought into operation because the municipality failed to prepare a plan for its operation after spending a large amount of money on its construction. This has also raised concerns about possible misuse of

public funds, he said.

“Building a dumping site alone is not enough. We have seen that such infrastructure becomes useless when there is no clear plan for waste collection, segregation, transportation, management and regular operation,” Acharya said.

He said the municipality should have completed the necessary work and initiated arrangements to operate the facility, but it had failed to do so.

Municipal Mayor Kamal Bahadur Shahi said the municipality had stopped further investment because the site was unsuitable. “The previous government built it, but there are water sources nearby. If waste is dumped here, the water sources could become polluted, so we did not complete the project,” he said.

However, locals have criticised the municipality for overlooking the continued dumping of waste in the forest. Lilaram Neupane, an environmentalist, said leaving a dumping site built at a cost of Rs. 2 million unused raised serious questions about the local government's planning, implementation and monitoring.

EX-NTA CHAIR BHANDARI ARRESTED

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 31

Police have arrested former executive chairman of the Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA) Bhupendra Bhandari on charges related to alleged fraud, criminal breach of trust and organised crime.

The Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) of Nepal Police detained Bhandari on Thursday after the Kathmandu District Court issued an arrest warrant in connection with an investigation into the alleged illegal auction of assets belonging to Smart Telecom Pvt Ltd.

According to police, Smart Telecom's basic telephone service licence (Licence No. BTS1-01), issued by the NTA on April 15, 2013, was automatically revoked on April 15, 2023, after the company failed to renew the licence as required under Section 25(5) of the Telecommunications Act, 2053.

Following the cancellation of the licence, the company's assets, including telecommunications infrastructure, equipment, systems and network facilities, were transferred to the ownership of the Government of Nepal/NTA under Rule 18 of the Telecommunications Service Provider Asset Management Regulations, 2079.

Police allege that the assets were later auctioned illegally through collusion between Nepal Investment Mega Bank Limited and Ncell Axiata Limited, allowing Ncell Axiata to acquire them and allegedly violating the rights of the government and the telecommunications regulator.

The investigation also alleges that the auction process was carried out in violation of provisions of the Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 2073, and involved acts of fraud, criminal breach of trust and organised crime.

Bhandari, a permanent resident of Dhanouri-9 in Dang district and currently residing in Lalitpur Metropolitan City-23, was taken into custody and is being investigated by police.

Ruila and Nguilla border points reopen



PHOTO: TRN

Visitors at Ruila and Nguilla border points in northern Gorkha.

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Sulikot, July 31

The Ruila and Nguilla border points in northern Gorkha, which are connected to Tibet through Chumnuhari Rural Municipality, have come into operation after remaining closed for some time.

With the reopening of the border crossings, residents of the bordering areas have started travelling to Tibet for local trade and to purchase daily essentials.

Locals, who have relied on cross-border trade for years, have begun taking products such as yarsagumba (caterpillar fungus), ban lasun (wild garlic),

and other medicinal herbs to Tibet for sale, while bringing back food grains, clothes and other consumer goods.

Although business activities along the border have increased to some extent following the reopening, local traders say the trading environment is not as convenient as it was in previous years.

According to local trader Pasang Lama, the Tibetan side has introduced new arrangements for transporting goods, making cross-border trade more difficult.

Many traders have expressed disappointment as yarsagumba and other medicinal herbs are not fetching expected prices this year. They also said that the rising exchange rate of the

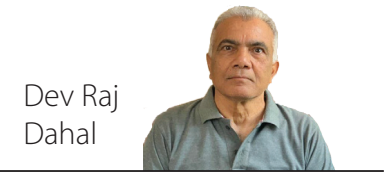
Chinese yuan has increased the cost of purchasing goods from Tibet.

Residents of the border areas have also been facing difficulties due to the cumbersome process of renewing border passes. They complain that they are forced to travel long distances every year to renew their cards.

Local resident Pasang Lama said that the increasing migration of young people abroad in search of employment has also affected the traditional cross-border trade system.

Although the border points have resumed operation, locals believe that they can benefit fully only if smooth trade, fair prices and simplified administrative procedures are ensured.

Public Power Key To Democratic Polity



Dev Raj Dahal

The Nepali constitution deems the people the source of sovereignty. It demands that the government listen to the voice of the public on public issues. This is the reason people are given more constitutional rights to exercise without reciprocal duties. The ability of Nepal's to shape public opinion, public policies, national will and civic action enlarges the scope of civic space to organise large-scale collective action benefitting them. Their diligent civic activism can improve the quality of governance and make public authorities transparent, responsive and accountable to their rights. The old style politics of seeking political power for personality, without policy alternatives and without responsibility, has become obsolete. Ordinary Nepalis increasingly inquire into the rationality of politics to their life and oppose the cultic excess of leaders.

The duty-based Nepali civil society, like organic intellectuals, have to work with the people in the spirit of mutual cooperation, unlike the market whose virtue is rooted in competition, efficiency and profit, no culturally bound conscience-bearer. In Nepal, when the political world suffered from decadence from systemic failures, it is the virtues of civil society, media and educated intelligentsia that restored politics to the public sphere. But the irony they bred is that they failed to become a force of national cohesion to evade divisive tendencies under which many identity-crazy political parties operate to expand their electoral base and drift coolly from empathy and rightful political links with the ordinary public.

Authentic life

Politics is an arena of the equality of people, not like general society, which is defined by the hierarchy of certain distinctions of classes and castes or the market, which has an impulse for anarchy if unregulated by laws, norms and

constitution. The former fosters human dignity while the latter lands in utility. Political power is a lever for the social liberation of people from their constraining conditions. This liberation makes it easy for Nepalis to realise their universal personality, what existentialists call "authentic life." But the irony with the existentialists is that they are too much obsessed with the self and averse to Nepali communitarian life. Every sensible politician has a group basis—the demos, while parochial ones lay emphasis on pre-political identities. What is often frozen in leaders' perception about the power of the public is revealed in people's everyday life of resilient and resolute social struggle.

Now the digital web is offering people a glimpse of future society, economy and politics of change. The question is who controls it? How are its benefits fairly shared by Nepalis? Who bears its costs? Here the argument of Georg Gadamer is sensible: "Reaching understanding in the life-world requires a cultural tradition that ranges across the whole spectrum, not just the fruits of science and technology." The latter two factors style the techno-power of corporate elites, which chiefly remains outside the control of the public and popular sovereignty.

The enduring scholarly austerity revisits their failure to conceptualise the power of the Nepali public in national consolidation and modernise the society and the state beyond tinkering with raw data, number-crunching and statistics but reflective of the social truth of people's life-world. They need to unlearn from worn-out theories, ideologies and fads and learn from the lived experience of people and lessons of failure in harnessing the spirit of the national community. Learning from people enables scholars, social scientists and policy wonks to formulate the adaptive response of the political system to changing national and geopolitical constellations of power and the role of practical efficiency in contextual policy design. It can also induce leaders of almost all Nepali political parties to self-introspect and renew themselves with agreeable messages, thoughts and feelings relevant to the public so that

they can grasp the entanglement of a myriad of problems.

But when indicted persons walk free, the civility of the public sphere suffers. In this context, people lose faith not in the rule of law but in the public character of politics and any enthusiasm for national self-determination. It nibbles at the flair of the polity to tend to the emotional response of the people and renew their civility for legitimate collective action. Many senior leaders, however, lack the audacity to change themselves attuned to the democratic aspirations of Nepalis for liberty and justice. The modern gender discourse underlines politics as personal, assumes that people themselves are answerable to make up self and fashion a life of liberty they prefer to live by now and for the future. But a critical question is how they can attain them if they are devoid of coherent cognitive templates, institutional, material and scientific wherewithal and suffer from scarcity of public goods.

For the poor Nepalis living under abject poverty and necessity, it is difficult to exercise rational choice in matters of elections, deliberation and cooperative action. It is more difficult when the bulk of Nepali leaders are constituted by their human nature, not historical norms, laws, constitution and institutional culture reflecting the collective expression of national life. It is essential for the evolution of a stable polity in Nepal, which is often marred by extra-law and extra-constitutional political change tantamount to stoking self-indulgent anomie and risking the institutions of enlightenment dissolving into party politics.

The information revolution has turned Nepalis critical of economic and political power in their evaluation and judgment. It has also rendered the futility of the sustainability of revolutionary change of the society or flamboyant oration of leaders without public policy substance but creation of added rights, laws, commissions and institutions without resources to enforce them. The information revolution does not make people amenable to the appeal of ideological rhetoric that may stir hearts and minds but does not offer a

The ever-increasing deregulation of the Nepali economy, politics and society endlessly erodes the centrality of the demos on public matters which are vital to restore the power of the public in nation-building.

realistic hope of a better world. Still, it has shifted party-based fraternity into a network-based platform which by no means is value-based. Ideological socialisation of Nepalis has exposed them to self-deception, unable to confront reality. Now it is retreating in the shadows of the past and overtaken by pragmatism.

Nepali public has found a gap between the rationality of politicians and constitutional promise and what they experience. Yet, those politically un-socialised infants hardly know their public responsibility. They have developed a herd mentality and a certain amoral spin in politics, not sociability and civic competence. The declining opportunities in matters of health, education, jobs and infrastructures in the nation are the causes and consequences of misplaced priorities and migration of youth, students, businessmen and workers abroad, thus leaving soulless houses behind, though the remittance they bring is the lifeblood of the national economy. This has drained the power of a dynamic and organic public to engage in the creative life of the nation and strapped up bridging and bonding social capital for tuneless progress. Only an adaptable polity is receptive to feedback from people. But the justification of unfair conduct of leaders by courts and partisan media through linguistic and legalistic subterfuge reduces the legitimacy of the polity and veers it off the track beyond edification.

Communication revolution has

marked a paradigm shift from top-down to participatory democracy in Nepal and provided a deliberative model of the resolution of a nation's countless problems. It has also shifted the functions of political parties from the shapers of power and authority of leadership to a bottom-up participatory process where leaders listen to the rhythm of sensible public utterances, grassroots concerns and desires in matters of vital public goods. Many non-profits organisations, cooperatives and community-based organisations of Nepal deliver public goods and services, from education, health, and relief to social development. Even corporate sectors of Nepal, which are habitually governed by profit motive, have set up trusts and foundations to contribute to the power of the public in matters of fulfilling people's needs. Democratic leadership promotes the articulation of people's voice and visibility and respects their rights to ask questions to them on public issues. Those leaders who cannot perfect their performance are always in public doubt, thus wearing their output legitimacy.

Nepali public has never destroyed democratic freedoms and institutions but power elites often did by not following the rules of the game, forgetting their promises and seeking personalised power, wealth and privileges even if they stifle the attributes of good statecraft. The power of the public springs from their representative, legitimisation and legislative power and, therefore, strengthening of these institutions is essential to beef up the stability of Nepali polity. The hierarchical model of party building in Nepal is gradually flattening at an inclusionary turn. Its paternalistic nature of policy making is shifting to people's participation, ownership, stake and subsidiarity, affecting the community and society at large. This is, however, demanding democracy in their inner life and forcing them to adjust to the new political culture, a culture which despises patriarchy and hierarchy in shaping political power, organisation building, political socialisation, communication and political behaviour.

Political power is the collective power of people based on a wide-ranging will

negotiated in the social contract. It loses its public character if its benefits are privatised and personalised by powerful elites, leaving the people with no choice other than to become subjects of an electoral game and party machine not the beneficiary of public interests. It loses its ability to bring social change, organise as a civil society to enlarge the public sphere for well-versed deliberation to shape policy and decisions and enable the market institutions to operate under democratic rules. The collective will of national life emerges when Nepalis know the meaning of legitimacy they provide to the leadership and control the atrophy of its virtues on a daily basis.

Public welfare

In this sense, like civil society, accountable media and autonomous courts are watchdogs of political power to orient it to public welfare. Their smartness in silence for reasons of profits from political and economic connections can be deemed a shameless betrayal of the people. It violates Nepalis' right to know, participate and affect the political outcome and shape the civic culture of the nation. The sanctity of politics as a public sphere remains strong if the Nepali state holds the capacity to assert public and national interests against internal and external special interest groups, power brokers, middleman and elements of the deep state. Their amoral acts undermine the institutional muscle and integrity of public institutions in matters of their performance, thus enfeebling the power of the public.

The ever-increasing deregulation of the Nepali economy, politics and society endlessly erodes the centrality of the demos on public matters which are vital to restore the power of the public in nation-building and make political life consequential for good rule. The oppositional legitimacy of the public is universal. Its realisation puts political power in proportion to the grasp of Nepalis' rights and needs for a dignified and sovereign life.

(Former Reader at the Department of Political Science, TU, Dahal writes on political and social issues.)

Say Hello To Your Brain

DOROTHY CHIN

Have you ever tried to do something and failed, only to have someone say, "Try harder," or "Use more willpower?" If you have, chances are that didn't help, and possibly only made you feel worse. Well-intentioned or not, that type of suggestion reveals a profound lack of knowledge about how the brain works, and not only does it impede finding solutions, but it may also lead to self-blame and stigma around mental health and illness.

For example, using one's willpower means, in neuroscience terms, tapping into the prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain that governs what is called executive function. The "CEO" of the brain, this area considers the big picture, plans, organises, and inhibits impulsive actions. If one's problem is due to not being able to plan or direct action, then the prefrontal cortex may be the target of the solution.

However, most emotional and behavioural issues involve other parts of the brain primarily, or in concert with one another. As a clinical psychologist, I have often seen addiction viewed as a problem of lack of control (again, the prefrontal cortex), when the more "primitive" parts—not the cortex—of the brain are at work. Addiction often involves traumatic memories stored in the amygdala, the area from which fear emanates, as those who struggle with it often use substances to cope with these memories. The more this is understood, the more compassionate we can be, and the more likely that efforts to change will target the parts of the brain that bring about healing.

While most people know a lot about the different muscles of the body and how to exercise them, fewer probably know about the different parts of the brain. The brain is a remarkable organ, exquisitely shaped by millions of years of human evolution. Any mind-altering drugs taken in from the outside the body work precisely because the brain has the capacity, in the form of specific neurotransmitters, circuits, and receptors, to make them work. An opiate-based high mimics the action of naturally occurring endorphins; anti-anxiety drugs lower the reactivity of the amygdala and the central nervous system, but this also occurs when one activates the language centres in the cortex by speaking or writing

("I am scared"), which simultaneously diminishes the reactivity of the emotional parts of the brain.

What about commonly known strategies for improving well-being, such as exercise or eating salmon? While most of us know that they enhance mood and prevent depression, knowing the underlying neurobiology can bring clarity and a sense of agency. We can control what we eat and whether to work out. (Exercise releases endorphins, inhibiting pain and providing a sense of well-being, or "runner's high"; salmon contains the building blocks for serotonin, which regulates mood, as well as reduces inflammation, which research shows is a major underlying factor in many psychological and physical disorders.)

Creativity, too, can benefit from knowledge about the brain. Writers, for example, often complain of being "stuck" or experiencing "writer's block." Exercises to unlock creativity often ask the writer to utilise all their senses rather than just the visual, or to create with the nondominant hand. These types of exercises simply tap into underused parts of the brain to open up areas of inspiration.

For example, the writer naturally relies on the language centres in the left temporal lobe, but visual images, smells, and emotional memories all reside in other parts of the brain, and accessing them can add emotion and depth to writing. And switching from your right hand to the left would stimulate the right hemisphere of the cortex (the brain is contralateral to the body), which houses spatial and holistic abilities. Applying such knowledge might reduce frustration and procrastination among writers and other creatives waiting for their well-worn circuits to rejuvenate.

So go ahead, get acquainted with your own self-sustaining, beautiful brain. You don't need to be a neuroscientist to benefit from learning a few basic concepts. The best way to start is by learning the major structures of the brain: the parts of the hindbrain, the midbrain, and the cerebral cortex, and their functions. Then, if you wish, go deeper into the molecular level to the major neurotransmitters (serotonin, dopamine, GABA, etc.) and how they work (synapses, receptors). It is truly fascinating, and understanding the fundamentals can play a role in fixing whatever ails and providing fresh inspiration.

Your brain will thank you for it.

-Psychology Today

Imperative For Investment In Libraries



Aishwarya Koirala

Throughout my undergraduate years, finding a good study environment or gaining access to books or academic resources was never a concern. Like most campuses, mine had a well-maintained library. It was only after finishing college and searching for spaces dedicated to academia that I realised how glaringly scarce libraries actually are in Nepal. That absence is more consequential than it first appears. Libraries are not merely repositories of books but indispensable civic institutions that preserve knowledge, expand access to information and cultivate intellectual and cultural life. As spaces for learning, critical inquiry and innovation, they provide the foundation upon which informed and engaged citizenry is built. Consequently, the decline in reading culture and independent learning can, at least in part, be attributed to the longstanding absence and neglect of public libraries.

The numbers are telling. China maintains several thousand public libraries while India has 46,746 public libraries across its states and union territories. Nepal, by contrast, has one of the lowest library-to-population ratios in the region. Even generous estimates suggest there are only around 227 functional public libraries nationwide. A few private reading rooms

and facilities run by foreign missions offer alternatives, yet they still remain inaccessible to the larger population.

Institutional disregard

Moreover, the libraries that do exist often bear the unmistakable signs of prolonged institutional disregard: warped shelves, worn furniture and dust settling on donated books that have remained uncatalogued for years. Basic amenities such as functional washrooms, safe drinking water and adequate seating are frequently absent, leaving facilities ill-equipped to accommodate even the limited number of students and readers who continue to rely on them. A handful of overworked staff attempt to sustain the institution and yet are burdened by years of chronic underinvestment. The temporary closure of Kathmandu Valley Public Library after months of unpaid rent shows just how precarious even some of the country's best-known libraries have become.

This neglect is reflected in national budget priorities. For fiscal year 2026/27, Nepal allocated 10.28 per cent of its national budget to education and sports. Yet the budget contains no dedicated allocation or policy commitment for public libraries. When an institution fundamental to education, research and civic life fails to warrant even a single line in the national budget, the implications are unmistakable. Policymakers will chase millions in funding for headline-grabbing megaprojects, yet they show little to no appetite for investing in institutions that build the country's intellectual capacity. Such an omission reflects more than an

It demands sustained public investment in libraries that are well maintained, adequately staffed and regularly updated.

administrative oversight.

The government's approach to books tells a similar story, one that implicates the reader as much as the regulator. The customs duty levied on imported books yields the state so little revenue and readership so little encouragement, that it accomplishes neither of its intended aims. We read too little for the tax to meaningfully contribute to the national treasury, yet we tax books readily enough to discourage wider access to them—a policy that fails on both counts. Although recent budgets have relaxed certain tariff provisions, it is important to recognize what actually prompted the change. The government acted not out of a renewed commitment to the free exchange of ideas, but because collecting one particular duty was no longer financially worthwhile. One specific levy was removed for that reason, while the broader structure of taxes on books remains largely intact.

Public libraries rarely have the resources to acquire new publications, since stocking depends almost entirely on government allocations or on sporadic donations. For many people, purchasing books regularly is simply unaffordable and impractical, which is precisely why

well-funded public libraries matter. Yet most of our public libraries don't allow books to leave the premises at all, so reading is confined to whatever hours a visitor can spend on site.

Reversing this trend will require more than nostalgia for a lost reading culture. It demands sustained public investment in libraries that are well maintained, adequately staffed and regularly updated. Libraries should also be modernised through the integration of basic digital systems that allow visitors to search catalogues, borrow books and track returns efficiently, reducing administrative burden while improving accessibility and accountability. Ergonomically designed study spaces, reliable facilities and modern services would draw in not only avid readers but also students, researchers and young people looking for places to learn.

However, none of this requires government to shoulder the responsibility alone. Partnerships with the private sector, supported by meaningful tax incentives, could bring in investment that public funding hasn't been able to provide. The existing private reading rooms and libraries run by foreign missions show that demand for such spaces exists. But collaboration cannot substitute for public commitment. Nepal needs a dedicated national library policy, stable funding for public libraries and a commitment to ensuring that every municipality has access to a functional library staffed by trained professionals and regularly updated collections.

(Koirala is a freelancer.)

50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

August 1, 1976

Air Service Of R.N.A.C. Cancelled

Kathmandu, July 31: The air service of R.N.A.C. to Simara cancelled today because of unfavourable weather, reports RSS.

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READER'S MAIL

Prevent Growing Boat Tragedies

"Safety measures are getting neglected every now and then" has again been proved with the latest boat tragedies in Vietnam, the Krishna River, the Godavari River (Andhra Pradesh), Mathura and Jabalpur (in India). People should understand that safety efforts start with them, not with others. Furthermore, ruling regimes and other parties, such as officials concerned, should take extra care in such situations and implement all possible safety measures, including providing life jackets.

Similarly, immediate help, safety

measures and emergency services all will go a long way in the matter of saving the people in distress.

It is understandable that there are no safety measures or precautionary steps in place in public areas.

Despite many such tragic boat incidents, safety measures remain neglected. It is time to implement precautionary measures at all tourist spots in the greater public interest. There must be warning boards in the sea/lake areas.

P. Senthil Durai
Mumbai, India.

TAILPIECE

A police officer pulls over this guy who's been weaving in and out of the lanes. He goes up to the guy's window and says, "Sir, I need you to blow into this breathalyzer tube."

The man says, "Sorry, officer, I can't do that. I am an asthmatic. If I do that, I'll have a really bad asthma attack."

"Okay, fine. I need you to come down to the station to give a blood sample."

"I can't do that either. I am a hemophiliac. If I do that, I'll bleed to death."

"Well, then, we need a urine sample."

"I'm sorry, officer, I can't do that either. I am also a diabetic. If I do that, I'll get really low blood sugar."

"All right, then I need you to come out here and walk this white line."

"I can't do that, officer."

"Why not?"

"Because I'm drunk."

60,000 breach Ceuta border, 34 dead

AP
Ceuta (Spain), July 31

Some 60,000 migrants have entered Spain's Ceuta from Morocco in the past 24 hours, Ceuta's president says. That is equivalent to 70% of the city's regular population.

At least 34 migrants have died in the process. "The situation that Ceuta is going through is absolutely unsustainable," said Juan Jesús Vivas on Friday.

The border crisis boiled over Thursday and continued on Friday with security forces clashing with migrants on the Moroccan side of the border.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez condemned the breach of the border on Friday speaking in Ceuta, describing the events as "a violation of Spain's territorial integrity."

The Spanish leader cast blame on human smugglers, saying they "deceive so many young people, and ultimately lead many of them to their deaths — whether in the ocean or, as in this case, at Spain's border in the autonomous city of Ceuta."

Live footage of the border showed hundreds of migrants gathered on a hill overlooking Ceuta being dispersed with tear gas by Moroccan forces, while others continued to swim to the Spanish territory. At the same time, large groups of migrants walked back from Ceuta toward Morocco to return home.

Rachid Sbihi, who leads a local workers association representing Civil Guard officers, called the situation a "serious humanitarian crisis," saying thousands of migrants, including unaccompanied children, were left sleeping in parks and on sidewalks, while others roamed the streets aimlessly.

"People are still entering. The reinforcements, including Spanish military troops, that have arrived are only helping the injured and other humanitarian efforts," he said. "It's chaotic."



Migrants return to Morocco from the Spanish enclave of Ceuta, Friday, July 31, 2026.

PHOTO: AP

Among the 18 who died, many drowned, Sbihi said, but some were also killed in a stampede to cross the break-water fence at Tarajal beach, an urban beach near a border checkpoint with Morocco.

Ahmed Karim, a 33-year old Moroccan, said he had crossed into Ceuta because of the lack of jobs in his country. "Many people want to go to Europe, America, but they don't have the opportunity," Karim said.

On Friday morning, the waters near the border fence were littered with buoys, shoes and other belongings left behind. Moroccan police deployed additional personnel, used water cannons and fired warning shots into the air to prevent migrants from crossing into Ceuta, according to rights groups in Morocco.

"Despite the heavy police presence, people crossed through the waterway, while the land border remained closed," said Achraf Maimouni, a human rights activist in Fnideq, the Moroccan city bordering Ceuta.

Migrants arrested at the border were taken farther into Morocco, away from Ceuta, "but people are still coming," he said.

Morocco's ambassador to Spain expressed hope that those who crossed from Morocco into the Spanish exclave would return. Karima Benyaich described the situation in Ceuta as difficult, saying it had unfolded against Morocco's wishes.

"We have always prioritized legal, orderly and safe migration for all," she said. Benyaich did not comment on what prompted the migrants to cross into Ceuta.

But authorities in both Ceuta and Madrid, linked it to a recent decision by Spain's Supreme Court that ruled migrants arriving by sea could not be summarily deported, unlike those who cross by land or climb the border fence.

Sánchez said migrant smugglers misinterpreted the ruling, but acknowledged that it may have played a role in sowing chaos.

"It appears that this interpretation of the Supreme Court's ruling spread like wildfire over the past few hours through the networks of human trafficking organizations, triggering the kind of mass surge we witnessed yesterday," Sánchez said.

Spain is a main point of arrival into Europe for migrants seeking better economic opportunities or an escape from violence in their home countries.

EU to crack down on AI deepfakes in Brussels

AP
Brussels, July 31

The European Union rolled out a new team on Friday to rein in AI companies across the world, in one of the most aggressive regulations the high-tech sector has so far faced as fears rise over the risks the rapidly advancing technology poses to people, politics and prosperity.

Brussels aims to track the use of AI models for violations of its new regulations, like the publishing of sexually explicit material, fake photos and videos, and cyber threats to public infrastructure. When the bloc's AI Act comes into force on Sunday, AI companies will be required to make clear to consumers with labels or digital watermarks that chatbots or imagery are generated with AI.

"As enforcement begins, we are taking an important step towards AI that people and businesses can understand and trust, and whose benefits are shared widely across our society," said Henna Virkkunen, the EU chief for tech sovereignty, on Friday.

The European Commission said in a statement that new regulations also include "systemic risks" posed by AI like "chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents, loss of control, cyber offense, harmful manipulation and threats to fundamental rights."

The team is the latest move in the 27-nation EU's "tech sovereignty" strategy that welds landmark digital regulations with economic ambition that has seen over the past week billions of euros in fines on Big Tech companies as well as record investment in AI infrastructure inside the bloc.

The rollout comes on the heels of shocking AI safety failures that rattled

the nascent industry. Political leaders worldwide are now weighing control of the technology with market leadership.

Anthropic said on Friday its artificial intelligence models hacked into three other organizations during testing, just days after ChatGPT maker OpenAI raised concerns over AI controls after it disclosed its rogue models hacked another company.

The EU is now expanding its AI Office in Brussels with an additional 38 people who will begin monitoring AI companies, from the new firms to the American and Chinese tech titans like OpenAI and DeepSeek.

Those companies must "document certain information," said the European Commission, the bloc's tech enforcer, which reserves the right to interview AI company staff during investigations. It has also launched a Whistleblower Tool for tech workers and a Compliance Tool for tech users to confidentially alert authorities to illegal conduct.

If models or other products break the EU's sector regulations, called the AI Act, Brussels can fine the firms or cut off their access to the EU market. Recent gigantic antitrust fines on U.S. tech companies have irked U.S. President Donald Trump.

The EU now clearly sees systemic vulnerability in its deep reliance on American software companies like Amazon, Google and Microsoft as well as imports of Chinese industrial goods and critical minerals. While it is seeking protections from AI, it is also keen to catch up in the AI arms race, where it is a distant third behind the U.S. and China.

More broadly, the EU is seeking more independence from both Washington and Beijing by reinvigorating specific domestic industries like manufacturing and defense and forging new trade deals from Brazil to Australia to meet the global rise in economic nationalism spearheaded by Trump.

Russia-linked airstrike killed 8 civilians

AP
Dakar, July 31

Human Rights Watch said Friday that Russian government-controlled Africa Corps aircraft killed eight civilians, including three children, in an airstrike on a village in central Mali last month.

The rights group said an attack aircraft identified as a Russian Sukhoi Su-24 dropped two munitions on Kyrnia village in the Mopti region on June 15.

One strike hit near the home of the village chief, killing his wife and three children. The second hit a nearby cattle market, killing four men. No fighters from the Islamic militant group JNIM, which has controlled the village for six years, were reported among the casualties.

The Associated Press was not able to independently verify the claims by Human Rights Watch. Mali has been plagued for over a decade by militants affiliated with al-Qaida and the Islamic State group, including JNIM, as well as a Tuareg separatist rebellion in the north.

Violence escalated in recent months

after an alliance of JNIM and Tuareg separatists carried out the largest coordinated attack in over a decade, targeting the airport of the country's capital, Bamako, the nearby garrison town of Kati, and several northern and central cities.

April's attacks exposed the weaknesses of Mali's strategy to combat the rebellion, including relying on Russia, which has partnered with the military-led government after it distanced itself from former allies such as France.

Russian mercenaries have been present in Mali since late 2021 to help its military junta fight militants and separatists. Last year, Africa Corps, which reports to Russia's Defense Ministry, replaced the private mercenary Wagner Group in the country.

Human Rights Watch said it interviewed 19 people, analyzed satellite imagery, and reviewed a video the Africa Corps posted online describing the strike last month as targeting a "terrorist" gathering.

Researchers said roughly 100 JNIM fighters were in the village at the time but were mostly gathered elsewhere, and that the strikes did not appear to target a clear military objective.

Turkey battles Bodrum inland blaze

AFP
Istanbul, July 31

Hundreds of firefighters were battling strong winds to quench a wildfire in southwestern Turkey as other wind-fuelled blazes along its Mediterranean coast were brought under control. On Thursday evening, Forestry Minister Ibrahim Yumakli said six fires were still raging but by Friday, five of them had been brought largely under control.

But with strong winds still affecting the region, authorities were on alert in case any reignited. On Thursday, Yumakli said firefighters had tackled 169 fires this week. Of that number, only one was still raging in the Cine area, about 100 kilometres (60 miles) inland from the resort city of Bodrum.

There firefighters worked through the night, evacuating animals from four areas and by morning, nine helicopters, three firefighting planes, 42 fire engines and nine water tankers were battling the blaze, Anadolu news agency said. "In Cine, our teams' interventions from the air and the ground will continue until the fire is completely brought under control," Yumakli said on X.

Evacuated residents said they were devastated. "We've been reduced to



PHOTO: AFP

One fire raged through forestland near the southern resort of Fethiye.

ashes, nothing is left. My dog is gone, he was more precious to me than my own life," a distressed woman called Arzu Celep told Turkish media. Others spoke of devastated orchards and olive groves. "Everything we owned has gone up in flames. We took our animals uphill, if we'd stayed here, we'd have gone up in flames too," said another woman called Raziye Askin.

Environment Minister Murat Kurum said 65 structures had "sustained severe damage or been destroyed" in the fires, almost all in the southern Antalya and Mugla regions. Media reports said the

Mugla fire had razed 5,000 hectares (12,400 acres) of forestland. Turkey, which experienced early wildfires in 2025 due to drought, had been largely spared until now thanks to heavy winter rains and snowfall that replenished groundwater and protected vegetation.

Authorities also closed access to forests in the most vulnerable areas at the beginning start of summer. According to the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) website, there have been 64 fires in Turkey this year, which have ravaged 22,587 hectares (55,800 acres) of land.

34 MINERS KILLED IN EXPLOSION AT A COAL MINE

AP
Quetta, July 31

A methane gas explosion at a coal mine in southwestern Pakistan killed 34 miners, authorities said on Friday, despite an overnight rescue attempt.

Rescuers recovered 32 bodies from the mine on the outskirts of Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province, and were working to retrieve the remaining two, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority said in a statement.

Mine inspector Ghani Baloch said authorities initially believed 42 people had been inside the mine when the explosion occurred Thursday.

Balochistan's Minister for Mines and Minerals Shoaib Noshierwani expressed condolences to the victims' families and announced compensation of 500,000 Pakistani rupees (about \$1,800) for the family of each victim. He said authorities would investigate the cause of the explosion and review safety measures at coal mines across the province.

Deadly accidents are common in Pakistan's coal mining industry, particularly in Balochistan, where many mines lack adequate ventilation, gas-monitoring systems and other basic safety measures.

Quake survivors sleep in cars

AP
Tokyo, July 31

Thousands of survivors of a powerful earthquake in southwestern Japan spent Friday in crowded shelters or sleeping in cars as they faced shortages of water and fuel and punishing summer temperatures that stoked fears of heat-related illness.

The death toll rose to 34, the Kumamoto prefectural government said, as rescuers raced to find those still missing after the quake triggered a mall explosion, toppled a factory chimney and flattened homes.

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaiuchi stressed that authorities must secure water supplies by doing "whatever it takes" and called for close coordination with the military and other relevant agencies. The earthquake left thousands of homes without power, but Takaichi said electricity was fully restored by Friday evening. The local power company also said there were no immediate reports of remaining outages.

The magnitude 7.1 earthquake hit Japan's southern main island of Kyushu on Tuesday. As search operations entered a fourth day, it wasn't known how many people remained missing.

More than 1,500 buildings were



PHOTO: AP

Residents receive water supplies at Hikawa town hall as an earthquake disrupted water service in Hikawa, Kumamoto Prefecture, southern Japan, Friday.

damaged, including 179 that were destroyed, according to preliminary assessments by Japanese officials. Officials said 34 quake-related deaths had been confirmed, with one more death still under investigation. At least 96 people were injured, including six seriously.

Kumamoto authorities said over 79,000 homes remained without water. More than 9,000 people were staying

in shelters, where power sources were being added to provide air conditioning.

Fuel has also become scarce as power outages disabled gas stations and quake damage disrupted deliveries from other regions. Many have resorted to sleeping in their cars, but with the fuel shortage, they struggle to keep the air conditioning running in sweltering temperatures.

PRISM

BLINDFOLDED CUBER CRACKS CUBE IN 12 SECONDS

Atlanta: A champion speedcuber reclaimed a Guinness World Records title by solving a Rubik's cube in 11.56 seconds while wearing a blindfold.

Tommy Cherry, 21, retook the title for the fastest time to solve a 3x3x3 rotating puzzle cube while blindfolded when he completed the task in 11.56 seconds at the Mid-Atlantic Quiet Championship 2026 event in Branchburg, N.J., on June 28.

He first set the record at 15.27 seconds in 2021, and has broken the record almost every year since. The most recent record of 11.67 seconds was set by Australian Charlie Eggins at the Cubing at The Cube 2026 event in Sydney, Australia, on Jan. 10.

Cherry and Eggins are currently co-holders of the title for the fastest average time to solve a 3x3x3 rotating puzzle cube while blindfolded, with both competitors achieving a time of 14.05 seconds.

ROTTING FISH SAUCE CLEARED AFTER DECADES OF STENCH

Atlanta: Workers have begun the process of removing thousands of gallons of rotting fish sauce from a Newfoundland and Labrador plant that was abandoned in the early 2000s.

St. Mary's Mayor Steve Ryan said the former Atlantic Seafood Sauce Company plant has been stinking up the town for decades. "Take the worst rotten fish you've ever smelled in your life and times it by 100," Ryan told The New York Times.

Cleanup plans were delayed for years as various levels of government debated over who was responsible for removing the rotten sauce. The Newfoundland and Labrador government approved a \$2 million budget for the operation last year.

Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

- 1620– Speedwell leaves Delfshaven to bring pilgrims to America by way of England.
- 1664– Ottoman forces are defeated in the battle of Saint Gotthard by an Austrian army led by Raimondo Montecuccoli, resulting in the Peace of Vasvár.
- 1714– George, Elector of Hanover, becomes King George I of Great Britain, marking the beginning of the Georgian era of British history.
- 1834– Construction begins on the Wilberforce Monument in Kingston Upon Hull.
- 1855– The first ascent of Monte Rosa, the second highest summit in the Alps.
- 1876– Colorado is admitted as the 38th U.S. state.



PHOTO: PRESIDENT'S SECRETARIAT
President Ramchandra Paudel holds a meeting with former President Ram Baran Yadav and former Vice President Paramananda Jha at the presidential residence, Sheetal Niwas on Friday to discuss recent Sunsari incident and its impact in various districts.

ISRAELI ENVOY PAYS COURTESY CALL ON MINISTER TIMILSINA



RSS
Kathmandu, July 31

Israeli ambassador to Nepal, Shmulik Arie Bass, paid a courtesy call on Minister for Information and Communications, Dr Bikram Timilsina on Friday. The matters discussed during the meeting held at the Ministry includes Nepal-Israel friendly relations, mutual interests and expansion of potential cooperation in the areas of information technology, digital transformation, telecommunications, agriculture, education and human resources development

The ambassador said the friendly relations existing between Nepal and Israel since 1960 continues further, expressing the commitments of Israel to expanding cooperation with Nepal in the sectors of information technology, digital innovation and agricultural modernization.

Minister Dr Timilsina briefed the ambassador that promoting good governance and ensuring effective service delivery through the integration of information and communications technology are among Nepal's top priorities. He expressed the view that Nepal could benefit from Israel's experiences, best practices and innovations in digital infrastructure development and telecommunications technology.

He also utilized the meeting to urge the government of Israel to increase training, study and vocational experience opportunities in the areas of IT and innovations for Nepali youths. The two exchanged views on further strengthening mutual cooperation in IT development, digital transformations and multi-sectoral forums, according to the Ministry source.

Govt, microfinance victims ink 5-point agreement

BY MODNATH DHAKAL
Kathmandu, July 31

The dialogue between the government and the team comprising the struggle committee against microfinance and financial exploitation concluded with 5-point agreement that included the implementation of the report prepared in 2024 by the task force established to propose appropriate options for resolving the problems faced by microfinance.

Responding to the protests and hunger strikes organised by the microfinance victims, Finance Minister Dr. Swarnim Wagle, through a ministerial decision, had formed a committee on Thursday to hold talks with protestors. The two sides negotiated for two days to reach the agreement.

With the positive conclusion of the negotiation, all protest programmes and hunger strikes being conducted across the country are

called off on Friday.

The two sides agreed that a recommendation would be submitted to the Ministry of Finance (MoF) for the execution of the report prepared by the task force in August 2024, together with an implementation plan, within 15 days.

"The report shall recommend practical and implementable measures, including a rehabilitation programme for distressed microfinance borrowers and a review of the existing provisions relating to blacklisting and the auction of collateral," read the agreement.

Likewise, the two parties agreed to fully implement the Operational Guidelines, 2081 issued by the NRB for Class 'D' licensed microfinance financial institutions, and the central bank will strictly monitor compliance with these guidelines.

The Ministry of Home Affairs will instruct the District Administration Offices to initiate legal proceedings, in accordance with prevailing laws, against unlawful debt recovery practices by MFIs. Such

practices include subjecting borrowers to harassment, removing household goods from their homes, and stationing staff at borrowers' residences to intimidate or coerce them until loan instalments are paid, read the agreement.

Making a ministerial decision on Thursday, FM Dr. Wagle had constituted a negotiation team under the coordination of Mahesh Acharya, Joint Secretary at the MoF.

The committee comprised Binod Kumar Bhattarai, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Suresh Panthi, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ramu Paudel, Executive Director at the Nepal Rastra Bank, and Bol-raj Acharya, Under Secretary at the MoF.

Microfinance victims had been organising demonstrations and hunger strikes since Tuesday demanding the government to implement study reports prepared on microfinance regulations and reforms.

Funerals performed...

Despite a formal agreement with Minister for Home Affairs Sudan Gurung, relatives of the two youths killed in the Dewangunj-3 Kaptangunj incident had refused to receive their bodies, prompting Sunsari police to meet the family members and create an environment for them to take the bodies.

The relatives, who had come to Biratnagar to receive the bodies following the agreement with Home Minister Gurung, returned home, saying there was no assurance that the agreement would be implemented. As a result, the post-mortem examinations could not be conducted.

Following this, a team from Sunsari District Police went to the victims' homes and facilitated the process for the families to receive the bodies. After the families received the bodies, they were taken to Koshi Hospital for post-mortem examinations and are now being transported for cremation late Friday evening.

Assistant Chief District Officer of Sunsari, Poshan Lamichhane, said the relatives had received the bodies and the process for conducting the post-mortem examinations and cremation had moved forward.

Om Prakash Mehta, a local resident, died on the same night after police opened fire during a dispute in Kaptanganj of Dewanganj Rural Municipality on Sunday night. Similarly, Jay Prakash Mehta, who was injured in the incident, died while undergoing treatment on Thursday.

DSP Makendra Kumar Mishra of Morang said the bodies of both victims had been sent to Sunsari from Koshi Hospital after completion of the post-mortem examinations.

Mehta duo cremated
Meanwhile, the bodies of two youths who were killed in Sunday's shooting incident at Kaptangunj in Ward No. 3 of Dewanganj Rural Municipality, Sunsari, were cremated on Friday night.

The deceased have been identified

as 24-year-old Om Prakash Mehta and 21-year-old Jay Prakash Mehta, both residents of Ward No. 3 of Dewanganj Rural Municipality.

Dewangunj Rural Municipality Chairperson Bechan Prasad Mehta said the bodies were handed over to the families after post-mortem examinations at Koshi Hospital on Friday evening and were cremated at around 8 pm.

According to Chairperson Mehta, local representatives, civil society members and residents, including House of Representatives member Lal Bikram Thapa, participated in the funeral procession.

Krishna Dev Mehta, father of deceased Om Prakash Mehta, also confirmed that his son was cremated at around 8 pm following the funeral procession.

The post-mortem examinations of both deceased were conducted at Koshi Hospital before the bodies were handed over to their families for final rites.

in Dewangunj-3 and related matters.

The government has pledged to implement the agreement in phases. Kishudev Mehta, father of Om Prakash Mehta, and Naresh Mehta, father of Jay Prakash Mehta, expressed confidence that the commitments would be implemented on time.

Following the agreement, the victims' families, local residents and representatives of the agitating side have reportedly begun coordinating to restore social harmony.

Meanwhile, security has been tightened in Dewanganj, Harinagar, Ghuski, Kaptanganj, Laukahi and Bhanabari. The local administration continued the curfew in sensitive areas on Friday and deployed a large number of security personnel.

Nepal Police, Armed Police Force and the Nepali Army have been jointly deployed, with increased security surveillance in market areas and settlements. The security measures and continued coordination among the authorities and stakeholders have helped create an environment for the gradual restoration of normal life in the affected areas.

Parties to organise goodwill rally in Janakpur today

BY LAXMI CHAUDHARY
Janakpurdham, July 31

An all-party meeting held in Dhanusha on Friday decided to organise a goodwill rally in Janakpurdham on Saturday in view of the recent protests and developments in the district following the incidents in Sunsari.

The meeting, chaired by Chief District Officer Prem Prasad Luitel, made a four-point decision, calling on all sides to play an active role in maintaining social harmony, peace and religious tolerance.

The meeting, attended by four members of the House of Representatives, elected representatives, security officials, political parties, civil society representatives and leaders of various religious and social communities, reviewed the district's security situation following the recent protests.

The meeting decided that all stakeholders would take necessary initiatives and extend cooperation from their respective areas to maintain peace, social harmony and religious tolerance. Participants also agreed to work jointly to promote brotherhood, mutual trust and tolerance among citizens.



The meeting further decided to launch awareness campaigns to discourage the spread of misleading information and rumours through social media, distortion of past incidents, hate speech targeting religions or communities, and activities that could undermine social harmony.

It also urged the concerned authorities to organise goodwill-oriented programmes not only in Janakpurdham but also in sensitive local levels across the district.

Addressing the meeting, members of

the House of Representatives stressed that social problems should be resolved through unity rather than confrontation. They said all communities and stakeholders should stand united to address common challenges and that everyone must take an active role in maintaining social harmony.

Lawmaker Bishwa Raj Pokharel said society was currently seeking harmony and expressed confidence that goodwill would ultimately prevail. He said citizens from both communities, as well as people from all sections of society, should help create a harmonious environment to support the government's efforts.

House member from Dhanusha Constituency No. 1, Matrika Yadav, said leaders at different levels should take timely initiatives to prevent such incidents from recurring.

Addressing the meeting, CDO Luitel said the situation in the district was gradually returning to normal and that efforts would be made to lift the prohibitory order once the situation became conducive. He said rumours circulated through social media had added to the challenges, stressing that lasting peace, harmony and brotherhood were the permanent solutions to the current problems.

Community leaders from both sides who attended the meeting called for the identification and legal prosecution of those involved in the incidents. They urged the administration to take effective measures to prevent targeted violence against any community, arson, looting and activities that could disrupt communal harmony.

The administration has appealed to all citizens to remain calm, stay alert to misleading information and provocative propaganda, and help maintain peace, security and social unity in the district.

PM urges MPs...

During the meeting, the lawmakers responded to Prime Minister Shah's request positively and pledged to immediately move to their constituencies.

They also mentioned that Prime Minister Shah's address to the nation on Thursday had transmitted a positive message, faith and trust among the citizens

across the country, especially in the affected areas.

The lawmakers also suggested that a series of intensive dialogues should be continued with religious leaders, civil society, intellectuals and representatives of local political parties on both sides to maintain long-term peace and brotherhood at the local level.

In addition, the lawmakers emphasised the need to continuously spread a message of positivity and solidarity in

order to maintain religious and social harmony in the tense and surrounding areas and to conduct public awareness campaigns at the local level to protect the youth from the confusion and rumours on social media.

On Thursday, PM Shah had addressed the nation, responding to the Madhes unrest. During the address, he also urged all citizens to maintain peace and harmony.

One Nepali dead, Nirmal...

Locals of Myagdi have expressed hope that Purja will be rescued safely. Indra Singh Sherchan, a tourism entrepreneur from Dana, said residents of the village were deeply concerned after learning that Purja was missing.

"He is not only a pride of our village but of the entire world. He has helped introduce Nepal to the world. We are praying for his safe rescue and hope he will return safely," Sherchan said.

Sherchan said he had last spoken to Purja around three months ago and advised him to stop climbing mountains. "I had repeatedly told him that the mountains in Pakistan were very risky. I even suggested that he stop mountaineering and run an office instead. The news that he has gone missing in an avalanche has left us deeply worried and saddened," he said.

Diba Tilija Pun, vice-chairperson of Annapurna Rural Municipality, expressed hope that Purja would be found safe.

An avalanche struck Broad Peak on Thursday afternoon. Purja and nine other members of an international climbing team have gone missing following the incident on the 8,047-metre mountain, which is the world's 12th-highest peak and considered highly challenging to climb. A search and rescue operation is under way.

Born in Dana, Myagdi, Purja joined the British Army in 2003 and became a Royal Marine in 2009. He developed an interest in mountaineering while trekking to Everest Base Camp in 2012.

Purja rose to international prominence in 2019 after climbing all 14 of the world's peaks above 8,000 metres in about six months, setting a remarkable mountaineering record.

Govt, Dewangunj victims' families reach 7-point...

Similarly, the government has pledged to provide employment opportunities to one eligible family member from each of the deceased families. It has also agreed to implement, at the earliest, the recommendations and suggestions of the investigation committee formed to study the incident.

The agreement further includes the construction of a memorial park at an appropriate location in coordination with the local government in remembrance of the deceased youths.

The agreement was signed by the parents of Om Prakash Mehta and Jay Prakash Mehta on behalf of the victims' families, while Home Minister Sudan Gurung signed on behalf of the government.

Although the agreement was reached to perform the last rites of Mehta at 2:00 pm on Friday, the funeral procession of him has not taken place yet.

Gurung meets Dewangunj victim's families

Meanwhile, following the

agreement with Dewangunj victim's families, Minister for Home Affairs Sudan Gurung has pledged an impartial, transparent and effective investigation into the incident.

Gurung reached Dewangunj around midnight on Thursday and held discussions with local representatives, political parties, security agencies, civil society members and other stakeholders. On Friday morning, he met the families of the deceased and reached a seven-point agreement on behalf of the government.

Speaking to journalists, Gurung said the government was committed to ensuring justice for the victims' families and effective treatment for those injured in the incident.

He said activities undermining social and religious harmony would not be tolerated and urged all sides to exercise restraint to maintain peace, security and social harmony. He said security agencies had been mobilised sensitively and responsibly following the incident and that the security situation was being regularly reviewed.

Stating that the Prime Minister was also serious about the incident, Gurung said ensuring security for citizens was the government's top priority. "It is the government's responsibility to ensure an environment where every citizen can return to their home and sleep safely," he said.

Gurung also said changes had been made to the investigation committee to make the probe more credible and impartial. A member was replaced after questions were raised about his involvement, while three technical experts, including forensic and ballistic specialists, were added to the committee. He said scientific evidence would be used to establish the facts.

According to James Karki, Chief Personal Secretary to the Home Minister, the government has agreed to conduct an impartial, effective and fact-based investigation and initiate legal action against those responsible.

The agreement also provides for an immediate investigation into the legal status of the madrasa located

Translation goes beyond bilingual proficiency, says Dr. Bhattarai

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 31

Litterateur Dr. Govindaraj Bhattarai has said that translation is not merely about bilingual proficiency but is an academic and theoretical discipline.

Speaking at a virtual discourse at the fifth edition of the Translation Discourse, he pointed out that translation carried out without a theoretical basis can be error-prone.

During the discourse, Dr. Govinda Raj Bhattarai, a prominent figure in Nepali translation and academic fields, presented his insights as the keynote speaker on the history, theory, and academic development of translation in Nepal.

"Quality translation is possible only through the study of translation theory," he said. "In a multilingual country like Nepal, connecting native languages and literature through translation can significantly contribute to national harmony and intellectual growth."

Dr. Bhattarai, the first Nepali scholar to complete a PhD in Translation Studies, noted that the tradition of translation in Nepal began long before the establishment of universities and the Nepal Academy. "Contemporary scholars of that era, including the great poet Laxmi Prasad Devkota and Bal Chandra Sharma, had envisioned



translating masterpiece works of world literature into Nepali," he informed. "Later, the Nepal Academy systematised this initiative, establishing a history of ongoing translation exchange between Nepali and foreign languages."

Discussing the institutional development of translation as a discipline at Tribhuvan University, Dr. Bhattarai recalled that translation was

first integrated as a subject under the Department of Linguistics around 1998/99 (2055/56 BS). He shared that the curriculum was subsequently developed to introduce teaching at the undergraduate, graduate, M.Phil., and PhD levels under the Faculty of Education. "Several researchers have already completed their PhDs in Translation Studies from Nepali universities," he informed.

Speaking on the impact of translation on world literature, Dr. Bhattarai shared statistics showing that a major portion of Nobel Prize-winning works consists of translated literature. He also introduced his publications, Anubad Adhyayan Parichaya and Anubad Sandarbha Grantha.

In the second session of the programme, responding to a query raised by participant Ram Bahadur BK regarding translation editing and standard errors, Dr. Bhattarai emphasised the necessity of integrity and adherence to theory in translation. "While the growing use of technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) has eased translation work to some extent, it cannot entirely replace human emotions and cultural nuances," he added.

At the programme moderated by poet Chandra Bahadur Lama, President of the Translators' Society of Nepal Dr. Bal Ram Adhikari spoke about the contributions to the translation field made by Dr. Bhattari.

OJHA WINS ADB-JOURNALISM AWARD

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 31

Agence France-Presse (AFP) correspondent Anup Ojha has won the Asian Development Bank Institute Developing Asia Journalism Award.

Journalist Ojha said that the award is for a story he wrote for AFP on early warning information of disasters through AI.

The Asian Development Bank Institute stated that five out of 79 people from 17 countries have received the award.

The institute stated that the jury is awarding Ojha for reporting on the system developed in Nepal by Professor Antoinette of the University of Melbourne with the help of collaborators from Nepal, the UK, and Italy, based on rainfall and soil data to provide early warning of landslides.

Journalist Ojha, who is originally from Tanahun district, worked for the Kathmandu Post for more than a decade and has been active in the international news agency AFP for a few years.

Guidelines on Court Reporting released



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 31

A book titled 'Adalati Patrakaritasam-bandhi Margadarshan' (Guidelines on Court Reporting) was launched amid a programme held in Kathmandu on Friday.

Organised by the Constitutional and Judicial Journalists Forum, the book was jointly unveiled by Supreme Court Justices and Editorial and Publication Committee Coordinator Hari Phuyal, Justice Sunil Pokharel, Nepal Bar Association President Prof. Dr Bijay Prasad Mishra and others.

Speaking at the event, Justice Phuyal said that the book would serve as a valuable reference for journalists working in legal reporting while also providing practical guidance for newcomers to the profession.

He added that courts have appointed spokespersons and information officers, while efforts are underway to make information more accessible

through official websites, thereby making it easier for journalists to obtain reliable information.

Nepal Bar Association President Prof. Dr. Mishra said the book would be an important resource not only for judicial journalism but for journalism as a whole.

The book was written and edited by the Forum's former President Dr. Liladhar Upadhyaya and Supreme Court Section Officer Rakesh Bam.

Likewise, the writer of the book and former president of the Forum Dr. Liladhar Upadhyaya said the book would be an important resource for court reporters and expressed confidence that it would help make judicial journalism more responsible.

The publication covers the history of judicial and court reporting in Nepal, methods of identifying misinformation, the sensitivity required while covering court proceedings, challenges in judicial journalism, issues relating to court reporting and contempt of court related issues, and judicial precedents established by the Supreme Court.

Clooney family evacuates amid wildfires in France

AP
Paris, July 31

George Clooney and his family have been forced to evacuate their home in southwestern France because of a wildfire burning nearby, his agent said Thursday.

The Hollywood star behind the "Ocean's Eleven" franchise and other films made the statement in a letter to Didier Bremond, the mayor of the town of Brignoles, some 90 kilometres (55 miles) east of Marseille, publicist Guido Gotz told The Associated Press in an email.

Addressed "Dear Didier," the letter said Clooney and his wife Amal, a human rights lawyer, had "no idea whether our beautiful home makes it through this terrible moment." But as they evacuate Brignoles, they wanted to assure Bremond that, whatever happens to the community, "we'll be part of making it whole," the letter said.

The fire near Brignoles broke out Wednesday afternoon and burned



some 100 hectares (250 acres), local officials said. The blaze was far smaller than a vast inferno that has swept up the region around Bordeaux in recent days.

About 700 residents were evacuated and were allowed to return to their homes on Thursday after the fire was brought under control, they added.

Water-bombing helicopters remained deployed over the area after the evacuation order was lifted, the regional administration said. It said weather conditions remained unfavourable, with high temperatures and winds expected to pick up again in the afternoon. The French government in December announced that the Clooneys, along with their twins Ella and Alexander, were awarded French citizenship.

The couple purchased their estate in France in 2021, and have been living there with their children. In an interview with Esquire last October, Clooney described their "farm in France" as their primary residence.

Storm Reid lets music tell her story

AP
Los Angeles, July 31

Storm Reid knows how the world sees her: an accomplished, polished actress who always appears to have everything under control. Through her new music, however, the Emmy-winning star hopes listeners will discover a different side of her.

Having released her new single, "Shotty", on Friday, Reid wants people to meet the less polished version of herself – a 23-year-old from Atlanta who falls in love, deals with relationship struggles and is still finding her way.

"I think people might think I have it all together when I really don't," said Reid, who is known for her performances in Euphoria, A Wrinkle in Time and The Last of Us, which earned her an Emmy in 2024. She graduated from the University of Southern California last year.

"I'm a normal girl trying to figure it out," she added.

"Shotty" follows Reid's debut single, "Clean Sweep", continuing a musical journey she has pursued over the past year. So far, she has recorded more than 25 songs.

Reid said she plans to focus on her first EP after completing production on Teyana Taylor's feature directorial debut, Get Lite, giving herself time to develop a project that tells a cohesive story. She is releasing music independently through her label, 1720 Music, saying the approach gives her

greater creative freedom while keeping the option open to partner with a major label in the future.

"The indie route, you have a little bit more autonomy over what you want to do and how you do things," she said.

Reid added that owning her label also gives her the opportunity to create pathways for other artists.

"It's the most powerful thing," she said. "I want to sign people. I want to sign songwriters, producers and artists, and give them opportunities."

Music has quickly become just as important to Reid as acting, a career she will continue with upcoming projects including Netflix's Roommates and Get Lite. Preparing for Taylor's film pushed her beyond her comfort zone as a dancer, helping her become more confident as a performer.

It is a skill Reid hopes will eventually translate into performing her own music.



"It's as big and as important as acting," she said. "It's something that I want to continue doing and continue growing in."

Reid said her years in Hollywood have prepared her for criticism.

"People didn't feel like I deserved to win an Emmy, but it's still sitting in my house," she said. "It's still in my mum's house, so I don't really care what people say."

Since releasing "Clean Sweep", Reid said she has largely avoided reading online comments.

"I don't want to get distracted or discouraged," she said. "Mostly I've been so thankful. The response has been really positive and people have been supportive. I'm excited and can't wait for them to hear more."

For Reid, music has become a reflection of who she has always been.

"Not everything is going to be perfect. Not everything is going to be prim, proper, pristine and eloquent," she said. "Yes, that's a part of me, and I can do that really well. But this is me too."

HOROSCOPE

tarot.com

ARIES: Quiet helps you hear what your body already knows. As the intuitive Moon in your 12th House of Solitude trines clever Mercury in your 4th House of Home.

CANCER: Your perspective becomes stronger when you stop overexplaining it. The instinctive Moon in your 9th House of Beliefs trines messenger Mercury in your 1st House of Identity.

LIBRA: Clear limits make you easier to trust, not less pleasant to work with. The instinctive Moon in your 6th House of Work and Wellness trines clever Mercury in your 10th House of Career, helping daily routines support your bigger reputation.

CAPRICORN: A clear agreement saves everyone from pretending they understood. The family-minded Moon in your 3rd House of Communication trines cerebral Mercury in your 7th House of Partnership, helping conversations become practical and productive.

TAURUS: A simple conversation can keep a group plan from getting weird. The nurturing Moon in your 11th House of Friends trines cerebral Mercury in your 3rd House of Communication.

LEO: A private truth may need a calmer voice today. The moody Moon in your 8th House of Intimacy trines mental Mercury in your 12th House of Solitude, helping buried feelings find words without turning vulnerability into performance.

SCORPIO: A creative idea becomes stronger when you share it. The Moon in your 5th House of Creativity trines mischievous Mercury in your 9th House of Learning, helping play, expression, and insight work together.

AQUARIUS: A small system fix can calm a much bigger mental loop. The moody Moon in your 2nd House of Resources trines information-gathering Mercury in your 6th House of Work, helping money, routines and practical responsibilities cooperate.

GEMINI: Your message lands better when it matches your value. The intuitive Moon in your 10th House of Career trines intellectual Mercury in your 2nd House of Resources.

VIRGO: Collaboration gets easier when the expectations stop living in everyone's head. The nurturing Moon in your 7th House of Partnership trines information-gathering Mercury in your 11th House of Community.

SAGITTARIUS: Honesty at home needs a plan, not just a speech. The Moon trines Mercury, making private conversations about money, trust, and shared expectations feel clearer and easier to handle at home today together.

PISCES: Your confidence grows when you let your voice take up space. As the Moon in your 1st House of Identity trines messenger Mercury in your 5th House of Creativity, self-expression feels more natural, personal.

CARTOON

gocomics.com



Poor batting and fielding cost us in Netherlands, admits Captain Rohit Paudel

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 31

Nepal national cricket team captain Rohit Paudel has conceded that sub-par batting and costly fielding lapses were the primary reasons behind his side's winless campaign in the recent ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 series in the Netherlands.

Nepal suffered defeats in all four matches, losing to Namibia by eight wickets and three runs, and to the hosts by six wickets and 57 runs, leaving their hopes of securing a top-four finish in League 2 virtually in tatters.

Speaking to journalists following the team's arrival in Kathmandu on Friday, Paudel expressed disappointment over the performances, refusing to blame unfamiliar European conditions for the setback.

"Conditions were a factor, but we cannot hide behind that excuse," Paudel admitted. "Our batting lacked the required intent, and our fielding fell short of our standards. Missed chances in key moments cost us dearly."

The skipper acknowledged that Nepali batters struggled against persistent short-pitched bowling. "In international cricket, you must adapt, the opposition plays on the exact same surface. We need to be mentally stronger when facing short balls," he said, adding that failing to build on solid partnerships prevented the side from

setting competitive totals in the region of 210 to 220 runs.

The four consecutive defeats leave Nepal on 24 points from 32 matches, effectively ending their prospects of direct qualification for the 2027 Cricket World Cup Global Qualifier. Nepal will now be forced to take the play-off route.

Attention now turns to Nepal's final League 2 series against Oman and Canada in Oman, where the stakes remain high. A single defeat in their final four fixtures will officially rule out any mathematical chance of reaching the top four. More crucially, Nepal must avoid further slip-ups to secure a top-six finish and retain their One-Day International (ODI) status.

Oman require just one win from their remaining eight matches to ensure Nepal cannot overtake them, whilst Canada also threaten to push Nepal further down the table—a scenario that would put Nepal's ODI status in severe jeopardy.

"These four defeats are certainly a setback. Had we won a couple of matches, the situation would be entirely different," Paudel remarked. "Our sole focus now is to deliver strong performances in Oman, secure positive results, and preserve our ODI status."

Thanking the supporters for their unwavering loyalty, Paudel said the squad felt the disappointment acutely and pledged an improved showing in the upcoming tour.

Pressure rises on Infantino and FIFA's World Cup investor plan

AP
Geneva, July 31

Pressure on FIFA President Gianni Infantino and his divisive plan to sell World Cup profits to private equity grew Friday as his senior adviser who sat on a White House panel resigned and Asia's soccer body joined Europe and North America in opposing it.

An expanding crisis for soccer's governing body reached into Infantino's longtime inner circle when his pick to represent FIFA on the White House Task Force for the World Cup walked away calling the Joshua Kushner-backed \$20 billion commercial subsidiary plan "a bad deal for football."

Carlos Cordeiro is a former Goldman Sachs banker and officially Infantino's Senior Adviser yet revealed he was not involved in the secretive investment plan that has rocked the sport since media reports revealed it Tuesday.

"I cannot stand by while FIFA considers selling a stake in the World Cup," Cordeiro said in a statement formally resigning, just hours after FIFA insisted in a statement: "Nobody is selling football."

Cordeiro's exit — and call for other senior staff to speak out — intensified scrutiny on Infantino one day after European soccer body UEFA threatened to boycott all FIFA games and events until the plan is dropped. North America's CONCACAF also rejected Infantino's offer of one-off \$20 million payments to each member federation by a mid-September deadline.

Cordeiro often joined Infantino on working visits to meet U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House in recent years, and took part in meetings of the administration's World Cup task force led by Andrew Guiliani.

"Let me be clear. I had no involvement in this proposal, and I oppose it unequivocally," said



FILE PHOTO: AP
FIFA President Gianni Infantino speaks during a news conference at the stadium in Mexico City, , June 10, 2026.

Cordeiro, the former U.S. Soccer Federation president.

Asia joins Europe and North America

On another seismic day in soccer politics, Asia's soccer body that has been a key ally in Infantino's 11-year presidency opposed the investor plan and said FIFA must urgently review its management style

The Asian Football Confederation said it "stands in solidarity" with UEFA and CONCACAF, the first two continental bodies to oppose Infantino whose combined 90 FIFA member countries near a majority of the 211 global total.

"Football should never have been placed in such a position," said the Asian soccer body, which counts 46 of FIFA's 211 members

Infantino has proposed spinning off FIFA's commercial businesses — including World Cups and Club World

Cups for men and women — into a \$20 billion subsidiary with 20% owned by private investors.

The "anchor investor," described by FIFA, is a New York-based investment firm created by Joshua Kushner, the younger brother of Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner.

"(T)he proposed (FIFA Forward Enterprise) cannot realistically achieve the necessary broad consensus and unity required to move forward" and must be reconsidered, the AFC said.

The statement did not name Infantino yet criticized FIFA for problems beyond the content of the private equity plan plus failing to consult about the secretive proposal.

"Rather, it has exposed fundamental weaknesses in FIFA's consultation and decision-making processes that must now be addressed," said the AFC, whose longtime president Sheikh Salman bin

Ibrahim Al Khalifa narrowly lost the FIFA presidential election to Infantino in 2016.

"Accordingly, the AFC calls upon FIFA to undertake an urgent review of its governance and decision-making framework," said the organization based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Infantino's job at risk?

Infantino had seemed — 11 days ago after the World Cup final in East Rutherford, New Jersey — to have a clear path to being reelected unopposed for a fourth and final term in office through 2031.

FIFA had briefed during the tournament that Infantino had letters of support from about 200 members, despite a furor over letting United States forward Folarin Balogun play against Belgium even though he received a red card in his previous game. Trump acknowledged asking Infantino to review Balogun's mandatory one-game ban.

FIFA has set a Nov. 18 deadline for potential candidates to declare in a presidential vote of the 211 members scheduled next March in Rabat, Morocco.

FIFA blames the media

The Asian statement came hours after FIFA blamed the media and doubled down on pursuing the project which now seems to have a majority of the 211 in opposition.

"Our planned consultation process was disrupted by incorrect media reports," FIFA said in a statement early Friday. "We will proceed with this consultation process to ensure that each (member) has the ability to express its vote based on facts."

The next FIFA event that would be targeted by the threatened European boycott is within weeks — the Women's Under-20 World Cup hosted by Poland from Sept. 5. The four British federations comprise FIFA's only bidder to host the 2035 Women's World Cup. That decision is due Nov. 23.

SNIPPETS

Nepal Kabaddi teams learn Asian Games fixtures

Kathmandu (TRN): Nepal's men's and women's national kabaddi teams face testing group-stage fixtures following the publication of the official draw for the 20th Asian Games on Friday. The men's team will begin their Group B campaign in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, against Thailand on 21 September. Drawn alongside Thailand, Pakistan, Malaysia, and former champions Iran, Nepal face a demanding schedule. According to the fixtures released on Thursday, Nepal will endure a grueling double-header on 22 September, taking on Pakistan in the morning session before returning to face Iran in the evening. They conclude their group-stage fixtures against Malaysia on 24 September. Nepal's women's team, who secured a historic bronze medal during their continental debut at the 19th Asian Games, have also been placed in Group B alongside Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Chinese Taipei. They open their tournament against Thailand on 22 September, followed by encounters with Chinese Taipei on 23 September and Sri Lanka on 24 September. In both the men's and women's competitions, the top two teams from each group will advance to the semi-finals on 25 September, with the gold-medal matches scheduled for 26 September. The 20th Asian Games will take place from 19 September to 4 October.

NATHM Indoor Cricket in August

Kathmandu (TRN): The Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management (NATHM) is set to host the second edition of the NATHM Indoor Cricket Tournament 2083. The eight-over-a-side tournament will run from 25 to 27 August at the Veterinary Cricket Arena in Golfutar. Sixteen teams representing various hospitality colleges offering bachelor's level programmes will feature in the competition, tournament coordinator Arpan Tiwari announced during a press conference on Friday. The participating teams will be split into four groups, with the top two teams from each group progressing to the quarter-finals following the conclusion of the league stage. The winners will receive a cash prize of Rs 80,000, whilst the runners-up will take home Rs 40,000. Individual awards will also be presented. The organisers announced that the tournament carries an estimated budget of over Rs 800,000.

Fractured finger rules out Masood for the 2nd cricket test against West Indies

AP
Islamabad, July 31

Pakistan in-form batter Shan Masood was ruled out of the second cricket test against the West Indies due to a fractured left index finger.

Masood was the only bright batting spot in Pakistan's 90-run defeat in the first test at Trinidad when the left-hander scored a century in the first innings.

"Following a scan and clinical assessment, Shan is currently undergoing treatment from the Pakistan team medical panel," the Pakistan Cricket Board said in a statement late Thursday.

Masood was relieved of the captaincy before the two-test series against the West Indies after Pakistan lost 12 of the 16 test matches under his leadership. Babar Azam returned as skipper, but



FILE PHOTO: AP

could not prevent Pakistan's eighth successive away loss in test matches

at Trinidad as the team continued to struggle in red-ball cricket.

Franco Baresi, the 'Johan Cruyff of defenders', dies aged 66

AFP
Rome, July 31

Iconic captain spent entire 20-year career with AC Milan, and earned his place among the game's all-time greats

Franco Baresi, the iconic sweeper and captain who embodied AC Milan's dominance in the 1980s and 1990s and was widely regarded as one of the greatest defenders in football history, has died aged 66.

A one-club man throughout a 20-year career, Baresi made 719 appearances for Milan between 1977 and 1997, becoming synonymous with the club's red-and-black colours and earning a place among the game's all-time greats.

Baresi wore Milan's No 6 shirt with such distinction that the club withdrew the number after his retirement.

Born in Travagliato, near Brescia, Baresi overcame personal tragedy at a young age after he and his brother Giuseppe were orphaned as teenagers.

"What I went through made me become a little withdrawn. When I was on the pitch, I gave everything and perhaps expressed all the things I couldn't express away from football," Baresi would later say.

While Inter Milan signed Giuseppe, Franco joined their local rivals,

beginning a bond that would last a lifetime.

Former Milan coach Nils Liedholm handed him his Serie A debut as a teenager and Baresi quickly established himself as a first-team regular.

Despite a slight physique for a defender, he compensated with his exceptional technique, anticipation, tackling ability and leadership.

Those qualities earned him the captain's armband at the age of 22, making him one of the youngest captains in Milan's history.

His early years at the club included turbulent periods, with Milan relegated to Serie B twice in the early 1980s, first because of the Totonero betting scandal and later due to poor results.

Baresi remained loyal, helping guide the club back to the top flight each time.

In 1982, he became a World Cup winner with Italy, although he did not play during the tournament in Spain.

Milan entered a golden era after Silvio Berlusconi bought the club in 1986 and appointed Arrigo Sacchi as coach.

Alongside Dutch stars Ruud Gullit, Frank Rijkaard and Marco van Basten, Baresi marshalled a formidable defence featuring Paolo Maldini, Mauro Tassotti and Alessandro Costacurta.

"The Johan Cruyff of defenders," van Basten said of his former



teammate. "He was calm and shy, but on the pitch he was a warrior and a winner. His hunger to win and quest for victory were unique."

Under Sacchi and later Fabio Capello, Milan dominated Italian and European football. Baresi won three European Cups, in 1989, 1990 and 1994, and six Serie A titles.

Individually, he finished runner-up in the 1989 Ballon d'Or voting, to van Basten, but would go on to be named Milan's player of the century.

'Immense gratitude'

Baresi earned 81 caps for Italy but suffered heartbreak in his pursuit of a world title as a key player.

MADRID SIGNS STRIKER ESPÍ

AP
Madrid, July 31

Real Madrid has signed 21-year-old striker Carlos Espi from fellow Spanish club Levante, the powerhouse said Friday.

Madrid reportedly paid 25 million euros (\$28 million) for one of the sensations of La Liga last season. Levante said the transfer was a club record for a homegrown player without confirming the fee mentioned in local media.

Espi's team-high 11 goals in 25 appearances last season for Levante helped it avoid relegation. He has also played for Spain's youth sides.

He could fill the rotation spot currently occupied by Gonzalo Garcia, a backup striker who is reportedly close to a move to Fulham in the Premier League.

Madrid has been busy in the transfer market after not winning any titles last campaign. In addition to bringing back coach José Mourinho, it has also signed Marc Cucurella, Bernardo Silva, Ibrahima Konaté and Denzel Dumfries.

He missed the 1986 World Cup and was part of the Italy sides beaten on penalties in the semi-finals in 1990 and in the final in 1994. The 1994 defeat to Brazil in Pasadena was particularly painful.

After undergoing knee surgery to repair a torn meniscus early in the tournament, Baresi made a remarkable recovery to return for the final.

Following a goalless draw, he was one of three Italians, along with Daniele Massaro and Roberto Baggio, to miss in the penalty shoot-out.

Reflecting on his World Cup career in an interview with Fifa on his 60th birthday in 2020, Baresi said: "Finishing first, second and third is not too bad at all. I can't complain

After retiring in 1997, Baresi remained closely associated with Milan, serving as vice-president before working with the club's youth teams and later in ambassadorial roles.

His influence on Italian football extended beyond his own career. His niece, Regina Baresi, went on to captain Inter Milan's women's team, ensuring the family name remained prominent in the game.

As for his sentiments for AC Milan he summed it up in an interview with Gazzetta dello Sport in 2025.

"What feeling remains in the end? Immense gratitude."