

THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL



PHOTO: SUJAN GURUNG/TRN

People queue up to collect cooking gas outside the Nepal Gas Industry office at Balaju in Kathmandu on Sunday amid an artificial shortage. The government should take a stern action to discourage such tendencies.

ANTI-SNAKE VENOM SHORTAGE IN DANG HOSPITALS

RSS
Dang, Aug. 2

A shortage of Anti-snake venom used to treat snakebite patients has been reported in hospitals in the district.

The snakebite treatment center at the Rapti Institute of Health Sciences (Ghorahi), Lamahi Hospital (Gadhawa) has run out of anti-snake venom, while its stock is about to run out at the Rapti Provincial Hospital (Tulsipur).

According to Dr Suresh Rasaili, Director of the Rapti Institute of Health Sciences, two snakebite patients are currently being treated at the Institute. However, he said that there is a difficulty in treatment due to the shortage of the necessary anti-snake venom. A request has been made to the Rapti Provincial Hospital for assistance to that end.

Likewise, Gadhawa Rural Municipality Chair Yamanarayan Pokharel said that the snakebite treatment center in Gadhawa has run out of anti-snake venom, and that there may be a problem as the stock is also low at Rapti Provincial Hospital.

The hospital has stated that even though a request has been sent to the Lumbini Provincial Supply Center, it has not been able to receive anti-snake venom in sufficient quantity.

Heavy rain triggers road closures

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 2

Persistent rainfall, landslides and flooding have disrupted vehicular movement on several major highways and road sections across the country.

According to the latest update released by Nepal Police as of 6:00 am on Sunday, several roads have been completely blocked, while night-time travel restrictions have been imposed on others due to safety concerns.

On the BP Highway, which links Kavrepalanchok and Sindhuli, all types of vehicles have been prohibited from travelling along the Khurkot-Nepalthok-Katunjabeshi section between 6:00 pm and 4:00 am Monday because of the risk of flooding.

Similarly, traffic has been suspended on the Kanti Lokpath between 5:00 pm and 5:00 am as a precautionary measure.

In Ilam Municipality-9, the Mechi Highway has been completely closed after continuous rainfall turned the road muddy and unsafe for vehicles.

The Araniko Highway has also been fully blocked following landslides at Zero Kilo and Kodari in Bhotekoshi Rural Municipality, Sindhupalchok.

In Tamakoshi Rural Municipality-5 of Dolakha, the



Lamosanghu-Ramechhap Road has been closed after the Samakoshi River eroded part of the roadway at Kirnetar. Likewise, the Pasang Lhamu Highway at Kharle in Uttargaya Rural Municipality-5, Rasuwa, has been completely obstructed after the Trishuli River washed away a section of the road.

In Dharchhe Rural Municipality-3 of Gorkha, a landslide at Anderdanda has also blocked the Larke-Benighat earthen road, police said.

Nepal Police have urged the public to check the latest road conditions

with the relevant authorities before travelling and to exercise caution, warning that the risk of landslides, flooding and road erosion remains high during the monsoon season.

Further, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA), in the last 24 hours from Saturday 10:00 am to Sunday 10:00 am, one person was killed in a total of 34 disaster incident reports.

According to the Authority, a minor boy died by snakebite while 20 other persons were injured in different incidents.

Govt, Hindu Samrat Sena hold talks, protest called off

BY LAXMI CHAUDHARY
Janakpurdham, Aug. 2

The government talks team led by Minister for Home Affairs Sudan Gurung and Hindu Samrat Sena Nepal held talks in Janakpurdham on Sunday, prompting the organisation to withdraw all protest programmes.

The understanding was reached after six additional demands were incorporated into the 13-point memorandum previously submitted by the Joint Hindu Front to the government on Saturday.

Following the talks, Hindu Samrat Sena Nepal Vice-Chair Krishna Sanatani said the government had expressed a positive response to the group's demands and agreed to form a committee at an appropriate time to take forward the implementation process.

Under the agreement, the government committed to releasing all individuals arrested during the protests, refraining from filing cases against them, and investigating on the security personnel who

opened fire during the demonstrations. Those found responsible would face legal action in accordance with the law.

Hindu Samrat Sena Nepal announced that it had withdrawn all protest and agitation programmes after receiving the government's commitment to address its demands.

Following the agreement, Minister Gurung said the government had formally received both the earlier 13-point memorandum and the additional six-point proposal submitted on Sunday, adding that the necessary procedures would be initiated to implement the agreed provisions.

The original 13-point memorandum submitted by the Joint Hindu Front called legal action against those spreading religious and ethnic hatred through social media, a review of cases against those arrested following the Dewanganj incident in Sunsari, treatment for those injured in the incident, a review of religious commissions, verification of citizenship certificates, and an investigation into the financial sources of religious institutions.

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From pastureland to a tourist hotspot

BY KABIRAJ GHIMIRE
Hile, Aug. 2

Snow-capped mountain peaks stretch across the northern horizon, with rolling green hills below and a winding highway snaking through the landscape. To the south lie the fertile plains of the Tarai and the vast Koshi River spreading across the lowlands. Within moments, a blanket of mist covers the entire scene, only to clear again just as quickly.

This is Bhedetar, one of eastern Nepal's most popular hill stations, renowned for its breathtaking natural beauty. The weather here, which is generally cool throughout the year, changes rapidly. One moment the area is shrouded in fog, and the next it is bathed in bright sunshine.

During the summer months, thousands of domestic tourists from the Tarai visit Bhedetar to escape the scorching heat. In winter, when cold waves grip the plains, the hill station often enjoys pleasant sunshine. As a result, visitors continue to arrive throughout the year. At present, more than 1,000 tourists visit Bhedetar on holidays, while around 300 arrive on ordinary weekdays.

Situated at an altitude of about 1,420



PHOTO: TRN

Scenic view of Bhedetar, eastern Nepal's popular hill station.

metres above sea level, the hilltop destination remains a favourite among both domestic and Indian tourists.

To cater to the growing number of visitors, more than 200 small and large hotels are now operating in Bhedetar, according to Tumraj Limbu, president of the Hotel Association Bhedetar. The association estimates that investments in the local hospitality

Bodies of 4 climbers including Nirmal Purja recovered

Purja's impact goes far beyond any one nation: ACP

BY MODNATH DHAKAL
Kathmandu, Aug. 2

Bodies of four mountaineers including Nirmal Purja who went missing while climbing the Broad Peak (8,047 metre) in Pakistan have been recovered at about 5,700 m on the mountain.

The Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) informed in an Instagram post on Sunday afternoon that the bodies of Purja, Wang Zhong, Nima Sherpa and Kili Pemba Sherpa 'Kilu' were recovered while the rescuers also confirmed the presence of one additional body at a significantly higher elevation.

"Due to the extremely hazardous terrain and prevailing conditions, it is unlikely that a recovery attempt will be made at this stage," said the Club while commending the extraordinary courage and professionalism of the Pakistani and Nepali rescue team carrying out this difficult mission under some of the world's most challenging high-altitude conditions.

The dead bodies were being brought down to Camp 1 of Peak, world's 12th highest mountain, and downwards by the ground rescue team.

With this the number of bodies recovered reaches eight. However, the APC maintained that the information was preliminary field report and is subject to further confirmation.

The bodies of Nadhira Ahmed Abdullah Al Harthiy of Oman and Pur Bahadur Gurung of Nepal were recovered on Friday while Gyalu Sherpa's body was recovered on Saturday.

Quoting ACP President Irfan Arshad, Pakistan's Dawn reported that the remains believed to be of American climber Sarah Mallory Geis were also recovered. Purja was leading a 10-member team – six Nepalis and one each from China, Oman, Pakistan and the United States.

Myagdi mourns Purja's death

Our Myagdi Correspondent reported that Purja's birth place in Myagdi district is mourning his death. He was born in Dana of Annapurna Rural Municipality-3, and is being remembered across the district for his extraordinary achievements in mountaineering. In honour of his passing, Annapurna Rural Municipality has declared Monday a day of mourning.

In a condolence statement issued on Sunday, Annapurana's Chair Bharat Kumar Pun announced that all municipal offices, ward offices, health institutions and community schools under the municipality would remain closed on Monday, except for essential services.

In its statement, the municipality said Purja's contribution to taking Nepal's mountaineering sector to new heights, establishing the identity and prestige of Nepali climbers on the international stage, and setting an unparalleled



example of courage, leadership and dedication would always be remembered.

Acting Chief of the District Coordination Committee, Dil Kumari Khatri, expressed sorrow over his death, saying the district had lost one of its most talented mountaineers and the nation had lost a source of immense pride.

The 43-year-old mountaineer and former British Army personnel had set a world record by climbing all 14 mountains above 8,000 metres in the shortest time ever, in six months six days.

"His impact reached far beyond any one nation, more than the records themselves, he gave people everywhere a reason to believe that the impossible was simply something no one had dared attempt hard enough yet, inspiring dreamers and climbers across the globe to chase what once seemed unreachable," said the ACP.

It termed that Purja's death was a loss on the very mountains he so loved is a devastating blow to the global mountaineering family. "But his legacy of pushing limits, of proving that the impossible is only impossible until someone dares to do it, will endure in every climber, everywhere, who follows the trail he blazed," it said in the social media post.

'Truly saddened'

Prince William of the UK said that he was 'truly saddened' by the tragic death of Purja and those who lost their lives in the avalanche.

"Nims (Nirmal) served with distinction in the British Armed Forces before becoming one of the world's greatest mountaineers, putting Nepalese climbers on the map. His relentless pursuit of what seemed impossible, combined with his humility and selflessness, made him truly unique," he wrote in his post on X.

Earlier, on Sunday afternoon, Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) informed in a statement that the Embassy of Nepal in Islamabad is facilitating the necessary arrangements for the repatriation of the deceased climbers' remains to Nepal.

"We commend the courage and dedication of the Pakistani and Nepali mountaineering teams involved in conducting these challenging rescue efforts in the high-altitude terrain," it said.

to trade salt and other goods. The flocks were kept in what is now Bhedetar for several days to graze before continuing their journey.

Ramesh Shrestha, a local said the place came to be known as Bhedetar because sheep (bheda in Nepali) were grazed there. According to local accounts, this practice continued until around 1933, after which the area gradually became overgrown with forest.

The turning point came in 1977, when the road from Dharan reached Bhedetar. Small huts soon began appearing, serving simple snacks along with local delicacies such as dried meat (sukuti) and tongba, a traditional millet-based beverage.

Hotel entrepreneur Leelaraj Lawati said tourism began to flourish after the then Prince Charles of the United Kingdom visited Bhedetar in 1981, during the construction of the Dharan-Dhankuta Highway. After he climbed Sailung Danda and praised the area's scenic beauty, both domestic and foreign tourists started taking an interest in the destination.

Over Rs. 2.5 b invested in two decades Until around 1993, very few visitors stayed overnight in Bhedetar.

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



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

FINGER MILLET OUTPUT FALLS YEARLY IN GULMI

BY RAMESH BISHWAKARMA
Gulmi, Aug. 2

Finger millet production in Gulmi has been declining year after year, with both the cultivated area and productivity showing a downward trend, according to the Agriculture Knowledge Centre, Gulmi.

Data from the centre over the past five years show a steady decline in the area under finger millet cultivation, accompanied by lower production and productivity.

Information officer Tikaram Neupane attributed the decline mainly to outmigration, foreign employment and a shortage of agricultural labour.

According to the centre, finger millet was cultivated on 2,902 hectares in the fiscal year 2021/22, producing 3,278 metric tonnes, with an average productivity of 1.13 metric tonnes per hectare.

In FY 2022/23, cultivation expanded slightly to 2,921 hectares, producing 3,826.51 metric tonnes, while productivity increased to 1.31 metric tonnes per hectare.

In FY 2023/24, the crop was cultivated on 2,883 hectares, yielding 3,690.24 metric tonnes, with productivity of 1.28 metric tonnes per hectare. In FY 2024/25, the cultivated area declined further to 2,850 hectares, producing 3,648 metric tonnes at the same productivity level of 1.28 metric tonnes per hectare.

In FY 2025/26, production increased to 3,934 metric tonnes from 2,975 hectares, with productivity reaching 1.32 metric tonnes per hectare.

For the current fiscal year 2026/27, the centre estimates that finger millet will be planted on 2,680 hectares. Neupane said Isma, Madane, Malika, Dhurkot, Kaligandaki and Chandrakot rural municipalities are considered the district's main finger millet production pockets.

So far, about 53 per cent of the planned plantation has been completed this year. Officials estimate that production may decline again this year due to the reduced cultivation area.

Finger millet is Nepal's fourth most important cereal crop after paddy, maize and wheat. However, farmers face significant losses during seed production because of damage caused by wild animals, including wild goats and hares.

Neupane said that as finger millet cultivation continues to shrink, the Agriculture Knowledge Centre has been implementing various programmes to conserve indigenous crops, including farmer training and capacity-building initiatives on the conservation and promotion of native crop varieties.

Rs. 8.81B Amlekhgunj-Lothar pipeline planned

• Locals call for measures to minimise environmental impacts

BY RAMMANI DAHAL
Makwanpur, Aug. 2

Locals have urged the authorities to minimise environmental damage during the construction of the Amlekhgunj-Lothar petroleum pipeline project, which passes through Makwanpur district.

The concerns were raised during a public hearing recently held in Hetauda on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Amlekhgunj-Chitwan (Lothar) petroleum pipeline extension and the proposed Greenfield Terminal at Lothar.

Elected representatives and local stakeholders called for the project to be implemented in a way that minimises its impact on drinking water sources, forests, wildlife and local communities.

The public hearing was organised by Nepal Oil Corporation Limited. Participants pointed to a lack of coordination among government agencies during project implementation and stressed the need for better institutional cooperation.

They noted that the pipeline route in Makwanpur passes through areas that include a national park, drinking water sources, community forests, a protected pangolin habitat and streams supporting native aquatic species.

They urged the authorities to ensure environmental conservation while minimising damage to public infrastructure and private property.

The project is an extension of the existing Raxaul-Amlekhgunj petroleum



pipeline, which imports petroleum products from India. Under the expansion plan, a 60.241-kilometre pipeline will be constructed from Amlekhgunj to Lothar in Chitwan, along with a Greenfield Terminal at Lothar.

The pipeline will be built with financial support from India, while the Greenfield Terminal will be funded by Nepal Oil Corporation.

The Amlekhgunj-Lothar pipeline will begin at the Nepal Oil Corporation depot in Amlekhgunj, Jitpur Simara Sub-metropolitan City-21, Bara, and terminate at Lothar in Rapti Municipality-1, Chitwan.

In Makwanpur, the pipeline will pass by the Churiyamai Temple in Hetauda Sub-metropolitan City-15, continue through the Chure riverbed, cross the Karra and Rapti rivers, and follow the right-of-way along the East-West Highway before reaching Lothar.

Sukaram KC, ward chair of Hetauda Sub-metropolitan City-9, said the pipeline corridor overlaps with other proposed infrastructure projects, including a bypass road, high-voltage transmission line and railway, warning that inadequate inter-agency coordination could create future complications.

He urged the authorities to implement the project with minimal impact on eco-tourism.

Ward chair of Hetauda-19, Nararaj Subedi, stressed that the pipeline should not damage drinking water projects and called for efforts to preserve trees rather than cut them during construction.

Similarly, ward chair of Hetauda-11, Juna Dahal, said construction work should ensure that existing drinking water pipelines remain unaffected.

Project consultant engineer Niranjana Shrestha said no private land would be acquired for the pipeline.

Consumers urged to register purchase bills

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 2

The Inland Revenue Department (IRD) has urged consumers to participate in its Taxpayer Incentive Reward Programme by registering their purchase bills.

Issuing a public notice on Saturday, the Department requested consumers who have made purchases in cash to register their original bills through the newly launched online portal.

According to Janak Raj Sharma, Deputy Director General and Joint Secretary at the IRD, consumers who have purchased goods or services worth more than Rs. 100 in cash and obtained an original PAN or VAT invoice since Shrawan 1 are eligible to participate in the programme.

"We have launched a new website, prize.ird.gov.np, from Saturday," Sharma said. "Eligible consumers who have paid in cash and purchased goods or services worth more than Rs. 100 for personal use within Nepal can visit the website and upload their original bills."

The Department clarified that consumers making payments through QR code do not need to upload their bills, as those transactions have already been integrated into the reward system.

According to the IRD, consumers who purchase goods or services worth more than Rs. 100 using QR payments through banks or digital wallets are not required to register their bills at this stage.

They are advised, however, to download and retain the transaction record, as the transaction number has already been entered into the Department's system and will be

used to determine eligibility for the reward scheme.

The Department has, however, urged all consumers to keep their original bills safely, as they will be required to claim any prize after the winners are announced.

It also encouraged consumers to ask for original PAN or VAT invoices for every purchase and to inform the Department if a seller refuses to provide one.

The IRD is preparing to publish the results of the first 15 days of the Taxpayer Incentive Programme, which came into effect on Shrawan 1, as early as next week.

"Technically, we are ready. If no major technical issues arise, we expect to announce the results of the first 15 days next week," the Department said.

Under the programme, 15 daily winners—one for each day—will each receive Rs. 100,000, while one bumper prize winner covering the first 15-day period will receive Rs. 1 million.

In the budget for the fiscal year 2026/27, Finance Minister Dr. Swarnim Wagle announced the Taxpayer Incentive Reward Programme to encourage more people to enter the tax net and promote the culture of asking for purchase invoices.

The Ministry of Finance approved the Taxpayer Incentive Reward Programme Operation guidelines in mid-July. A per the guidelines, one consumer will receive a cash prize of Rs. 133,334. In addition, one bumper winner will be selected every fortnight (15 days) to receive a Rs. 1 million cash prize.

A 25 per cent tax on windfall gains, as stipulated under the Income Tax Act, 2002 (2058 BS), will be deducted from the prize money before payment.

Policy bottlenecks hit energy sector: Minister Shrestha

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 2

Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Biraj Bhakta Shrestha has said that the biggest challenge to the development of the energy, water resources and irrigation sectors lies not in project construction itself, but in policy and procedural bottlenecks.

Addressing the Fourth Quarterly and Annual Progress Review and the ministerial-level Development Problem Resolution Committee meeting for the fiscal year 2025/26, he said that the expected pace of development would not be possible without improving land acquisition, compensation management, resource assurance, inter-agency coordination and contract management.

Minister Shrestha said that although he had the opportunity to lead the ministry only towards the end of the fiscal year, a review of its policies, programmes and projects showed that the past year had been significant in terms of both achievements and self-assessment.

Despite various challenges, the ministry achieved satisfactory physical progress, he said.

Among the major achievements of the last fiscal year, he cited the strengthening of Nepal-India energy cooperation, progress in expanding transmission infrastructure, the decision to allow the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) to issue energy bonds, and efforts to accelerate nationally prioritised projects.

The minister said that the foundation had been laid for qualitative transformation through the expansion of electricity generation, transmission, distribution and energy trade, promotion of green energy, greater private sector



PHOTO: TRN
Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Biraj Bhakta Shrestha during a discussion with officials in his office in Singhadurbar.

participation, a stronger presence in the regional energy market, improved groundwater management and effective implementation of multipurpose projects.

"Our priority is not merely to increase budget spending, but to ensure result-oriented performance," Minister Shrestha said. "The ministry is fully committed to completing nationally significant projects on time, expanding electricity generation and transmission capacity, extending year-round irrigation facilities and removing structural obstacles affecting project implementation."

He added that as the energy, water resources and irrigation sectors form the cornerstone of Nepal's economic transformation, the ministry would focus on good governance, transparency, accountability, timely implementation and effective coordination to deliver tangible benefits to the public.

Energy Ministry spends Rs. 52.28 billion, records 71.35% physical progress

According to the progress review, the ministry spent Rs. 52.28 billion out of

He said the pipeline itself is estimated to cost Rs. 2.68 billion, while construction of the Greenfield Terminal will cost Rs. 6.13 billion, bringing the total project cost to Rs. 8.81 billion.

He said the underground pipeline will have a diameter of 10.75 inches and will be buried at a minimum depth of 1.2 metres.

Basanta Raj Gautam, forest officer at the Division Forest Office, Makwanpur, said adequate compensation should be ensured for any loss of forest resources caused by the project. Nepal Oil Corporation Deputy Director Ramhari Niraula said the project has a completion period of 54 months, of which 12 months have already passed.

He said all necessary safety measures would be adopted throughout both the construction and operational phases, using international standards and modern technology.

Deputy Manager Riniram Sharma said the pipeline-laying work is expected to be completed within 30 months of the start of construction.

He added that the existing Raxaul-Amlekhgunj pipeline has already helped save around Rs. 80-85 crore annually in transportation and related costs, and the extension is expected to ensure fuel quality while easing traffic congestion by reducing the number of fuel tankers on the roads.

The pipeline will pass through wards 14, 9, 10, 11, 12, 3 and 19 of Hetauda Sub-metropolitan City, as well as Wards 9, 8, 7 and 6 of Manahari Rural Municipality in Makwanpur before entering Lothar in Chitwan.

331 metric tonnes of seeds certified in Bagmati

BY ANIL PARAJULI
Hetauda, Aug. 2

The Bagmati Province Seed Quality Control Centre in Hetauda certified 331 metric tonnes of seeds in the fiscal year 2025/26, exceeding its target of 200 metric tonnes by 131 metric tonnes.

According to Sirmala Yonjan, crop development officer and information officer at the centre, the certified seeds included 179.48 metric tonnes of paddy, 129.29 metric tonnes of wheat, 19.9 metric tonnes of maize, 2.76 metric tonnes of finger millet, 15.6 metric tonnes of potato and 0.18 metric tonnes of mustard.

The centre certified seeds of paddy, wheat, maize, mustard, lentil, finger millet and soybean produced in Chitwan, Makwanpur, Dhading, Kavrepalanchowk, Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, Nuwakot, Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts.



PHOTO: ANIL PARAJULI/TRN
Seed samples kept at the Bagmati Province Seed Quality Control Centre in Hetauda.

Senior crop development officer Rajan Dhakal said that the volume of certified seed increased after the number of institutions licensed to produce breeder and foundation seed in Bagmati Province rose from 17 to 20.

At present, government agencies, private companies, cooperatives, farmers'

groups, non-governmental organisations and universities are involved in the production and management of foundation seed.

Yonjan said that seed certification is based on germination rate, moisture content, genetic and physical purity, field crop condition and

the incidence of pests and diseases. Seed samples are collected from production sites and tested in laboratories, with only those meeting the prescribed standards receiving certification.

During the last fiscal year, standing crop inspections were conducted on 2,076.34 hectares of farmland under various crops, while 1,000 seed samples were tested. The centre said that field inspections and laboratory testing have been prioritised to maintain seed quality, eliminate disease-infected seed and promote the production of quality seed.

Office chief Dhakal said that grow-out tests were conducted last fiscal year to analyse the purity and comparative performance of six wheat varieties and seven potato varieties.

He added that the centre also organised interactions with community seed banks, farmers' groups and cooperatives to conserve and

promote indigenous crop varieties, and provided orientation to participants from 16 institutions.

The centre has also fixed service charges for seed testing and certification. Germination tests cost Rs. 229 per sample, purity tests Rs. 174, moisture tests Rs. 154, seed health tests Rs. 351, while seed certification costs Rs. 100 per metric tonne.

Dhakal said that the production, testing and certification of quality seed would be further strengthened, as quality seed is a fundamental input for increasing agricultural production and productivity.

According to estimates, the use of quality seed contributes to a 20-25 per cent increase in crop production in Nepal.

Although the country's annual seed demand is around 45,000 metric tonnes, only about 38,000 metric tonnes are supplied. At present, only around 22 per cent of the total seed supply comes through the formal sector.

91% PADDY PLANTATION COMPLETED IN MADHES

BY AJAY SHAH
Mahottari, Aug. 2

Paddy plantation in Madhes Province has reached its final stage. With the help of monsoon rainfall and alternative irrigation arrangements, plantation has been completed on 91.55 per cent of the province's paddy fields.

According to the Madhes Province Agriculture Development Directorate, paddy has been planted on 350,118.88 hectares out of the province's total cultivable paddy area of 382,433 hectares.

Kiran Bishwokarma, horticulture officer at the Directorate, said that among the province's eight districts, Siraha has achieved the highest progress, with plantation completed on 100 per cent of its estimated 54,000 hectares of paddy cultivation area.

In Saptari, plantation has been completed on 61,200 hectares out of 68,000 hectares, representing 90 per cent progress. In Dhanusha, paddy plantation has been completed on 37,315 hectares out of the targeted 43,900 hectares, accounting for 85 per cent.

Ruined homes, unpaid debts torment Bajura migrant workers

BY SHER BAHADUR SARKI
Bajura, Aug. 2

Bajura remains one of Nepal’s least developed districts, ranking among the lowest in the Human Development Index. Poverty has remained largely unchanged for decades, forcing many locals to migrate to India in search of work simply to feed their families.

With few employment opportunities available in their villages, migration to India has become a way of life. However, while families leave in search of livelihoods, many of the houses they build back home are left unattended and gradually fall into disrepair.

Many families construct new homes by borrowing money from local lenders, but they seldom get the opportunity to live in them. Instead, they return to India to repay the loans, leaving the houses vacant for years.

As increasing numbers of people migrate abroad because of economic hardship, abandoned houses across the district are deteriorating and collapsing.

According to locals, many families first borrow money to build house and then move to India with their families to earn enough to repay the debt. As a result, the houses remain unoccupied and eventually become unsafe.

“I borrowed a few hundred thousand rupees several years ago to build my house,” said Surat Sarki of Budhiganga Municipality-10. “Before I could repay the loan, the house collapsed. Now my family has nowhere to live.”

“It is the rainy season and we no longer have a house to stay in. We cannot live outside, and I do not have the money to build another one,” he said.

Sarki appealed to the government to help arrange proper housing for families like his, saying such support would greatly ease their hardship.

Similar stories are common across Himali, Swamikartik Khapar, Jagannath, Budhinanda, Badimalika, Gaumul,



PHOTO: TRN
A house in Bajura that collapsed before its owners could repay the loan taken to build it.

Budhiganga, Triveni and Khaptad Chhededaha local levels, where many economically disadvantaged families have migrated for work.

Man Bahadur B.K of Budhinanda Municipality said poverty had forced many residents to leave their villages, resulting in abandoned and collapsing homes.

“When they are in the village, they borrow money to build a house,” he said. “Then they go back to India to repay the debt. Before they can clear the loan, the house they built begins to collapse.”

Most rural houses in Bajura are built with stone and mud and roofed with large slate slabs. Such traditional structures are particularly vulnerable to heavy rainfall and earthquakes.

According to the 2021 National Population and Housing Census, Bajura’s nine local levels have a total of 24,443 houses.

Badimalika Municipality has 3,446 houses, Triveni Rural Municipality 3,350, Budhiganga Municipality 4,277, Budhinanda Municipality 3,452, Gaumul

Rural Municipality 1,650, Himali Rural Municipality 1,722, Jagannath Rural Municipality 1,684, Swamikartik Khapar Rural Municipality 2,223 and Khaptad Chhededaha Rural Municipality 3,174.

Local authorities estimate that more than 2,000 houses across the district have now been damaged or destroyed by continuous rainfall.

Chief District Officer (CDO) Dorendra Niraula said persistent monsoon rains had caused extensive damage to settlements across Bajura.

“Previously, the District Disaster Management Committee had the authority to provide relief to families affected by floods, landslides and other disasters based on damage assessments submitted by local governments,” he said. “That authority no longer rests with the district administration.”

He explained that local governments now send detailed damage assessments to the relevant national reconstruction authority, which verifies the reports before approving reconstruction assistance for eligible households.

Four held from Valley with VoIP equipment

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 2

Police have arrested four individuals from various locations in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur for allegedly operating illegal Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) systems used to bypass international telephone calls, in violation of Section 47(5) of the Telecommunications Act, 1997.

According to the preliminary investigation, the seized VoIP equipment and associated devices were also found to have been used in connection with online betting platforms, including NPR77casino.com, IME88.com and Khalti88.com. Police said further investigation is underway into their suspected involvement with the betting applications.

Proshesh Gurung, 22, a permanent resident of Ajirkot Rural Municipality-5 in Gorkha, currently residing in a rented room at Jaybagheshwari, Kathmandu Metropolitan City-8, were arrested on July 30, 2026 in connection with the incidents. Police recovered one 16-port SIM Box (VoIP)

device, one laptop, 22 Ncell SIM cards, one Wi-Fi router, one mobile phone and other related equipment.

The Kathmandu District Court has granted a five-day remand for further investigation, according to SSP Anupam Shumsher JB Rana of the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB), said.

Muna Shrestha, 20, originally from Shankharapur Municipality-1, Kathmandu, and currently residing at Ganeshsthan, Kathmandu Metropolitan City-7, was also arrested on July 30, 2026. Police seized one 16-port SIM Box (VoIP) device, one laptop, one router, 20 Ncell SIM cards, two mobile phones and other equipment. She has been remanded in custody for five days under an order of the Kathmandu District Court.

Jenit Jhukal, 21, a permanent resident of Krishnapur Municipality-7 in Kanchanpur, who had been living in a rented room in Suryabinayak Municipality-4, Bhaktapur, was arrested on July 31 2026. Police confiscated five 112-port SIM Box (VoIP) devices, eight batteries, one inverter, 153 Ncell SIM cards, two mobile phones and other related equipment.

CaseNo : 082-CR-0133, Section : Filing
Notice of summons issued in the name of Buddhiram Kahar, aged 66, grandson of Kuber Kahar and son of Sadhu Kahar, residing at Gram Sabha Gopalpur, Nyaya Panchayat Paradhani, Bikas Khanda Jangal Kaudiya, Tahasil Thana Kampiyargunj, Janapad Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, India (Indian Voter ID No: UP/39/190/0108022, Aadhaar Card No: 224814026574).
Based on the investigation report submitted by Investigation Officer Suresh Bhandari on behalf of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), Tangal, Kathmandu, a charge sheet was filed before this Court on 26 April 2026 against you and others in a case concerning corruption arising from the unlawful sale and transfer of land by fabricating a fictitious landowner in the name of a non-Nepali citizen, with the Government of Nepal as the plaintiff.
Therefore, you are hereby required to appear before this Court during its official hours within fifteen days from the date hereof, excluding the time required for travel. In the event of your failure to appear within the stipulated period, the matter shall proceed in accordance with law.
Done on Monday 27th July, 2026.

Case No: 082-CR-0161, Section: Filing
Notice of summons issued by the Special Court, Kathmandu, in the name of muehlbauer ID Services GmbH Company (email address: info@muehlbauer.de contact no: +4994619520) having its registered address at Josef- Muehlbauer-Platz 1, 93426 Roding, Germany.....1
As a charge sheet has been filed before this Court on 22nd June, 2026, against you, among others, in a case of corruption involving the misuse of public property, wherein the Government of Nepal is the Plaintiff and you are the Defendant, on the basis of the report submitted by Investigation Officer Balkrishna Aryal, Padam Raj Thapa, Shredhar Bhusal, Niraj Thagunna, Rabindra Mahat and Shanti Waiba among others of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), Tangal, Kathmandu, this summons has been duly issued in your name and is hereby sent accordingly.
Therefore, you are hereby required to appear before this Court during its official hours within thirty days from the date hereof, excluding the time required for travel. In the event of your failure to appear within the stipulated period, the matter shall proceed in accordance with law.
Done on Monday, 27th July 2026.

Case No: 082-CR-0161, Section: Filing
Notice of summons issued by the Special Court, Kathmandu, in the name of Veridos GmbH Company(email address: info@veridos.com) having its registered address at Prinzengentenstrasse 161 Muich, Germany.....
As a charge sheet has been filed before this Court on 22nd June, 2026, against you, among others, in a case of corruption involving the misuse of public property, wherein the Government of Nepal is the Plaintiff and you are the Defendant, on the basis of the report submitted by Investigation Officer Balkrishna Aryal, Padam Raj Thapa, Shredhar Bhusal, Niraj Thagunna, Rabindra Mahat and Shanti Waiba among others of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), Tangal, Kathmandu, this summons has been duly issued in your name and is hereby sent accordingly.
Therefore, you are hereby required to appear before this Court during its official hours within thirty days from the date hereof, excluding the time required for travel. In the event of your failure to appear within the stipulated period, the matter shall proceed in accordance with law.
Done on Monday, 27th July 2026.

(Unit No.: 5/Family Unit-5 Case No.: 082-CP-6543)
The subpoena notice issued from the Kathmandu District Court in the name of DUFOR JONATHAN, LIOC, aged 39, son of DUFOR BRUNO JEAN FERNAND, permanent resident of 1 Rue Jacqueline Auriol H23, 40100 DAX, France and presently residing at Kathmandu District Kathmandu Metropolitan City Ward No. 26 (Telephone No.: WhatsApp+33783668961, Email: dufor.jonathan@hotmail.fr...
Whereas, in the divorce case filed by Plaintiff Srijana Dhungana against you, the Defendant, repeated attempts were made to serve subpoena notice upon you, but the subpoenas were returned unserved with the report that your whereabouts could not be ascertained, this subpoena is hereby published in this newspaper. You are hereby required to appear before this Court, either in person or through your legal counsel, and file your statement of defense within twenty-one (21) days from the date of publication of this subpoena in this newspaper. Should you fail to appear and file your statement of defense within the prescribed period, the case shall proceed and be decided in accordance with the law in your absence. Thereafter, you shall not be entitled to raise any objection or grievance on the ground that you were not given an opportunity to be heard.
(Done on Monday the 3rd day of August, 2026)

Bardibas to distribute land ownership certificates

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Bardibas, Aug. 2

Bardibas Municipality has initiated a parallel process to distribute both white certificates and land ownership certificates for the first time in a bid to address the long-standing issue of informal settlements and landless residents within the municipality.

Mayor Prahlad Kshetri said the municipality had begun both processes simultaneously with the aim of providing a permanent solution to the problems faced by landless Dalits, landless squatters and informal settlers living in the municipality.

According to him, locals who have been living for decades in areas such as Kalapani, Gauridanda and Maisthan cannot immediately be provided with land ownership certificates.

Therefore, the municipality has introduced the concept of issuing white certificates to secure their occupancy rights until they become

eligible for full land ownership documents.

“Although these people have been living on the land for years, the absence of ownership documents has left them in a state of uncertainty and insecurity,” Mayor Kshetri said.

“The white certificate will establish the basis of their occupancy rights while also demonstrating the state’s recognition of their presence. The municipality has therefore launched this initiative on a war footing to resolve the issue,” he added.

Chief Administrative Officer Rammani Adhikari said the local government must first formulate the necessary laws and operational procedures before issuing the white certificates. He explained that, once the certificates are issued, plot subdivision, land transactions and record management will need to be integrated into the Land Revenue Office’s system.

As a result, completing the required legal and technical procedures will take some time.

Case No: 082-CR-0161, Section: Filing
Notice of summons issued by the Special Court, Kathmandu, in the name of M/S Florin Pacquin (email address: info@veridos.com) acting as chief of Veridos GmbH Company having its registered address at Prinzegentenstrasse 161 Muich, Germany.....
As a charge sheet has been filed before this Court on 22nd June, 2026, against you, among others, in a case of corruption involving the loss of public property, wherein the Government of Nepal is the Plaintiff and you are the Defendant, on the basis of the report submitted by Investigation Officer Balkrishna Aryal, Padam Raj Thapa, Shredhar Bhusal, Niraj Thagunna, Rabindra Mahat and Shanti Waiba among others of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), Tangal, Kathmandu, this summons has been duly issued in your name and is hereby sent accordingly.
Therefore, you are hereby required to appear before this Court during its official hours within thirty days from the date hereof, excluding the time required for travel. In the event of your failure to appear within the stipulated period, the matter shall proceed in accordance with law.
Done on Monday, 27th July 2026.

Case No: 082-CR-0161 Section: Filing
Notice of summons issued by the Special Court, Kathmandu, in the name of M/S Pavle Rakic (email address: info@muehlbauer.de Contact no: +499461952-0) acting as chief of muehlbauer ID Services GmbH Company having its registered address at Josef- Muehlbauer-Platz 1, 93426 Roding, Germany
As a charge sheet has been filed before this Court on 22nd June, 2026, against you, among others, in a case of corruption involving the misuse of public property, wherein the Government of Nepal is the Plaintiff and you are the Defendant, on the basis of the report submitted by Investigation Officer Balkrishna Aryal, Padam Raj Thapa, Shredhar Bhusal, Niraj Thagunna, Rabindra Mahat and Shanti Waiba among others of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), Tangal, Kathmandu, this summons has been duly issued in your name and is hereby sent accordingly.
Therefore, you are hereby required to appear before this Court during its official hours within thirty days from the date hereof, excluding the time required for travel. In the event of your failure to appear within the stipulated period, the matter shall proceed in accordance with law.
Done on Monday, 27th July 2026.

Case No: 082-CR-0161, Section: Filing
Notice of summons issued by the Special Court, Kathmandu, in the name of M/S Gehard Maurer (email address: info@muehlbauer.de, Contact no:+499561 952-0) acting as chief of Muehlbar ID Services GmbH Company having its registered address at Josef- Muehlbauer-Platz 1, 93426, Roding Germany.....
As a charge sheet has been filed before this Court on 22nd June, 2026, against you, among others, in a case of corruption involving the misuse of public property, wherein the Government of Nepal is the Plaintiff and you are the Defendant, on the basis of the report submitted by Investigation Officer Balkrishna Aryal, Padam Raj Thapa, Shredhar Bhusal, Niraj Thagunna, Rabindra Mahat and Shanti Waiba among others of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), Tangal, Kathmandu, this summons has been duly issued in your name and is hereby sent accordingly.
Therefore, you are hereby required to appear before this Court during its official hours within thirty days from the date hereof, excluding the time required for travel. In the event of your failure to appear within the stipulated period, the matter shall proceed in accordance with law.
Done on Monday, 27th July 2026.

Case No: 082-CR-0161, Section: Filing
Notice of summons issued by the Special Court, Kathmandu, in the name of M/S Fabiola Bellershiem (email address: info@veridos.com) acting as chief of Veridos GmbH Company having its registered address at Prinzegentenstrasse 161 Muich, Germany... /0
As a charge sheet has been filed before this Court on 22nd June, 2026, against you, among others, in a case of corruption involving the misuse of public property, wherein the Government of Nepal is the Plaintiff and you are the Defendant, on the basis of the report submitted by Investigation Officer Balkrishna Aryal, Padam Raj Thapa, Shredhar Bhusal, Niraj Thagunna, Rabindra Mahat and Shanti Waiba among others of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), Tangal, Kathmandu, this summons has been duly issued in your name and is hereby sent accordingly.
Therefore, you are hereby required to appear before this Court during its official hours within thirty days from the date hereof, excluding the time required for travel. In the event of your failure to appear within the stipulated period, the matter shall proceed in accordance with law.
Done on Monday, 27th July 2026.

Road construction resumes on cliff section of Karnali Corridor

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Humla, Aug. 2

The Nepali Army’s Development Construction Task Force has resumed work on opening the road track along the rocky cliff section between Ghatachaur and Bhukka Khola on the Khulalu–Salisalla road section of the Karnali Corridor.

Construction had been suspended after the previous fiscal year’s target for the section

was completed in May. With the budget allocation process for the new fiscal year now underway, work resumed on the project.

According to Major Suk Prasad Thakali, Chief Technical Officer of the Nepali Army’s Karnali Corridor Road Construction Task Force based at Ratadanda, the government entrusted the Army with constructing the Ghatachaur–Bhukka Khola cliff section following a recommendation from the Department of Roads.

The existing road along the

operational Karnali Corridor is comparatively longer, steeper and contains numerous sharp bends, making the new alignment necessary.

He said the Army completed its target of opening a 500-metre road track by May, after which work was temporarily halted. Construction resumed on July 19.

Of the total 11.05-kilometre road stretch from Ghatachaur through Badri Gaun to Bhukka Khola, eight kilometres of track had been completed by the end of the last fiscal

year. Work has now begun on the remaining 3.05 kilometres, with the Army aiming to complete the track by the end of the current fiscal year.

Once the four-to-five-metre-wide road track is completed, tractors and construction machinery will be able to operate on the route. The Army plans to finish opening the track during the current fiscal year and complete road widening in the fiscal year 2027/28, before handing the project over to the Department of Roads.

BOOKS DONATED TO MARK NEPAL-CHINA TIES

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 2

On the occasion of the 71st anniversary of diplomatic relations between Nepal and China, Fu Qiang, a Chinese citizen living in Nepal, together with his friends, donated books worth about Rs. 250,000 to help Nepali readers gain a better understanding of China.

The books were purchased in China, transported to Nepal, and donated to the Nepal-China Friendship Association Lumbini Library, the Faculty of Medicine of Lumbini Buddhist University, Himalaya Book Store, and the Jibaraj Ashrit Foundation.

Fu, who was appointed International Education and Cultural Exchange Ambassador of Lumbini Buddhist University in April this year, said the donation was fully funded by Chinese individuals who support Nepal-China people-to-people ties.

Most of the donated books are officially published English-language books about China, together with a smaller number of Chinese-language books.



Triveni Spinning Mills Ltd.
SALVAGE FOR SALE

Offers are invited for sale of fire damaged Stocks of fiber & Blow Room Machinery. Details of which are given below, on ‘as is where is’ basis lying at **M/s. Triveni Spinning Mills Ltd., Ward No. 9, Chhata Pipra, Jeetpur Simara, Sub Metropolitan City, Bara District Madhesh Province, Nepal**

S.No.	Items	Approx. Qty
01.	A. Blow Room Machinery	
	Lakshmi Mixing Bale Opener MBO B 3/6, 4.5 Mtr Feed Belt	2 No.
	Ventilator LAF 5/6 & LA 5/4	3 No.
	Condenser SDDC	2 No.
	Control Panel Material Feed MBO to Cards	2 No.
02.	By Pass Valves	2 No.
	Stocks	
	Fire Burnt/Water Damaged Polyester/Viscos Fiber [Before fire app. weight 159 M/T approx.]	

The offers must be in sealed cover accompanied by Earnest Money Deposit remitted by a Bank Draft/Pay Order (but not by Cheque) payable at Kathmandu/Birganj drawn in favour of **M/s. Triveni Spinning Mills Ltd.** for an amount not less than 10% of the offer value so as to reach not later than 10 days.

Inspection at the referred site from 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM between **3rd to 12th of August, 2026.** Offer to be submitted before 2.00 pm. on **13th August 2026** to **Mr. SURYA PRASAD JOSHI and VINOD SHARMA**, PO Box No.2352, Bishalnagar, 395/38, Bishalnagar Marga, Kathmandu Mobile: 9851023804; Tel. 4-527225

The company has right to accept or reject any offer in part or full without assigning any reasons what so ever.

Contact Person: Mr. Nand Kishor Singh
Mobile No. 9802922615



EDITORIAL

Adieu, Nimsdai!

“Broad Peak, I ask for nothing but safe passage up and back down. I take zero mountains for granted. Not one. The moment my foot leaves basecamp, it’s 100%. Always has been. Always will be”. These were perhaps the last words the famed climber Nirmal Purja posted on his social site before embarking to scale Broad Peak, the world’s 12th highest mountain located in Pakistan’s Karakoram, on Thursday. However, Broad Peak didn’t listen to the plea of Purja, popularly known as Nimsdai. Ten climbers, including him, perished in the womb of the mountain after an avalanche hit them as they were on their mission to conquer it.

Nimsdai, 43, who has set many records in mountaineering, had not underestimated the 8,051-metre-high snowy peak, as expressed in the post. He was as courageous as humble but this time mighty nature was not on his side to add another feat to the list of his glories. Along with Purja, Pur Bahadur Gurung ‘Yukta’, Kili Pemba Sherpa ‘Kilu’, Nima Sherpa, Nawang Thindu Sherpa, Gyalu Sherpa, Nadhira Ahmed Abdullah Al Harthy (Oman), Sohail Sakhi (Pakistan), Wang Zhong (China) and Mallory Geis (USA) died in the tragedy. They were swept down for 800 metres from a height of 6,000 metres. Their deaths have shocked the mountaineering sector globally, triggering messages of condolences and sympathy from various dignitaries, celebrities, organisations and countries.

Today, the world is exalting Nimsdai’s works and valour. His childhood was no bed of roses. He was born to a poor family at Dana village in Myagdi district. He had to fight against tuberculosis and asthma in his early life. For a person who suffered from asthma, it is almost impossible to choose mountaineering as a lifetime passion. In 2003, Purja enrolled in the British Army. He became the first Gurkha soldier to join its prestigious Special Boat Service (SBS). It was during his military service that Purja imbibed a sense of discipline, knowledge of risk management, bravery and life skills, giving him self-confidence to do something impossible. In 2012, he trekked to the Everest Base Camp. This was perhaps a moment of epiphany for him, enthusing him to commit to mountaineering. He reached the top of Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) in 2016. One year later, he summited Mt. Everest with 13 Gurkhas. This was the party to celebrate 200 years of Gurkha service in the British Army. He resigned from the British Army in 2018.

In 2019, he announced a challenging project, ‘Project Possible.’ Under this initiative, he climbed 14 over 8,000-metre peaks in six months and six days. The ascent of ‘K-2’ in the 2021 winter added another milestone in his climbing career. The mountains gave Nimsdai name and fame but they also took his life, showing human’s limitation to the unpredictable alps. But he rose to prominence with his sheer audacity and dedication. He also contributed to taking Nepal’s mountaineering to a new height. Through Nimsdai Foundation, he worked in the field of education, environment and disaster management. He established ‘Porter House’ at Lobuche of Solukhumbu to uplift the economic status of porters.

With his demise, an era of mountaineering expeditions has also come to an end. Expressing condolences upon the demise of Nepali climbers, Prime Minister Balendra Shah has said that the story of their courage, dedication, and contributions would forever remain a source of inspiration. Mountaineering is not merely a journey to reach a summit; it is the ultimate expression of courage, discipline, sacrifice, and unshakeable self-belief that challenges the bounds of human limitation, added the Prime Minister. Yes, we shall remember Nimsdai’s sacrifice and indomitable spirit forever.

Peer Pressure

GARIMA DHAKAL

We all want to fit in. Whether it is at our workplace, college, or school, the desire to be accepted by other people always exists in us. The direct or indirect influence from people in your social group is called peer pressure. Peer pressure can be positive or negative. In most cases, peer pressure leads to a positive outcome, but there are many cases where peer pressure can influence people to engage in situations that invite negative outcomes.

Peer pressure is not an obvious thing. People who get peer-pressured don’t even realise they’re being influenced by their peers until it’s too late. Usually it starts with simple words like, “Everyone is doing it,” or “It’s just a one-time thing.” And that one-time thing repeats again and again, eventually becoming a habit. Most students who engage in substance abuse don’t engage because they want to, but because they’re afraid of being left out. They want to fit into their friend group, so they may start skipping classes or spending money they cannot afford.

According to the Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS) Nepal 2015, around 6.8 per cent of school-going adolescents aged 13-17 years were current tobacco users, while 5.3 per cent had consumed alcohol in the past 30 days. Although there are many reasons behind these behaviors, studies have consistently shown that peer pressure is one of the major reasons behind these behaviors among adolescents.

The rise of social media is

another factor that is affecting people. In this age of social media, not only young people but even people of older age are being affected. People are constantly exposed to edited pictures, luxurious lifestyles, and unrealistic beauty standards. Many people feel the pressure to keep up with these trends. Capitalism thrives by influencing people to buy things. And capitalists are succeeding in influencing people. When we go out, we see people wearing similar clothes, going to trendy places just for some pictures and buying expensive things which are marketed as cute. This is creating an unhealthy competition among people, often leading to stress and low esteem. It doesn’t help one’s finances either.

In countries like Nepal, academic pressure is adding to the problem. Students compare marks with each other. Instead of celebrating each other’s success, they’re forced to choose subjects they don’t like just to keep up with their studious appearance. Parents are no help. They see other people’s children scoring higher marks and start forcing their own children to study more, comparing them to other children. This seriously affects the mental health of children, and the child can develop low self-esteem and low self-confidence in the long run.

However, peer pressure is not always a bad thing. It also influences people towards positive outcomes. A student might begin to study more when he’s with his topper friends. Friends can motivate each other to study, grow, and succeed as well. It is important to choose friends who respect our choices rather than those who force us to change.

How The Best Get Waylaid



P Kharel

TIDE OF TIMES

Reform UK’s leader Nigel Farage resigned from party leadership on July 10 in the wake of persistently intense condemnation of a five million sterling pound gift from a billionaire businessman, which critics suspected could be for influence peddling. He claimed innocence, and castigated the British press for a witch-hunting that made him blurt “enough is enough”.

Farage cited the vaunted Times daily for intimidating and attracting security risks to his daughter, who never joined political rallies and had nothing to do with his career or public activity. The British royals have in the recent past successfully moved the court against some news outlets alleged to have wrongfully intruded into their privacy or made false accusations.

In major wars over the centuries, the people in the West were waylaid by their own news media and “intellectual stalwarts”. The propaganda yard is spun in mindboggling whirlpool. The fake gets to sound like fact when the news media are compromised. In order to gain credibility, many government-supported media claim being public service outlets. The same yardstick does not apply to their counterparts that are derisively dismissed as “state-owned” radio or television.

That’s the primary reason why the audiences in the militarily and economically advanced capitalist democracies are often fed falsities as press reports. People rarely realise the ground conditions for real. Big

advertisers shell out their booking orders based also on major business interests on the sly and political pressures from “friendly” sources in high places.

That is the root cause of commercial intervention and management interference diluting professional practices in a newsroom. Biased content puts a positive spin on one side while cooking up critical comments on someone marked for mauling or even demolition. Inserting twisted versions of truth in exaggerated commendation or condemnation depends on who is the focus of coverage.

Consequences

BBC Director General Tim Davie and head of news Deborah Turness resigned a day after US President Donald Trump threatened to sue the corporation for \$1bn over charges that it distorted his statements made in January 2021. BBC later realised that the programme “did give the impression of a direct call for violent action”. Much of the world is not confident that the BBC would oblige others with similar responses under similar circumstances.

The consequences of rapid erosion in the global news media are beginning to take a heavy toll. For far too long, they refused to take the hint from the audience’s disappointment that developed into distrust. As a fallout, less than half of the people in the Anglo-Saxon world today trust their news media. With rapid expansion in the availability—or, creation—of numerous private and public platforms for information and communication, dependence on a few select media has nosedived. The global media ecosystem is in the storm of audience distrust. Partisan press polarises society both vertically and diagonally. Pervading as it does, biased press plays poison with news dissemination and platforms for diverse views.

The youth population among news audiences is rapidly thinning. The number

Independent people probe into scams and scandals, and search for hidden treasures, the downtrodden, the overlooked and the ignored.

of hours British youth spare for news is getting less and less. Britain’s Economist weekly magazine lamented in an editorial (February 7th, 2026) that “curbs on press freedom are unleashing corruption around the world... Trust in the news media has declined across the rich world, especially since the advent of social media allowed errors to be more widely reviled.” It is strange that much of mainstream media in the Western world refuses to see or hear some issues simply because they do not conform to their governments’ policies. The affected issues fall in the collective bandwagon of exclusion. Even if on rare occasions some outlets mention an issue, it generally is nothing more than curt and casual.

Media should see, hear, and speak what others might or might not be able to do. This is done through facts rather than raw opinions without the foundation of core citations to support them with substance. Otherwise, they would invite a dressing down from someone like US President Donald Trump, no matter who they represent and how big their organisations are. Trump is known to have poked fun at them and dubbed some of their questions as nasty and stupid.

Singapore’s former Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong recently said: “China is a very important player. Most countries in Asia

do not see China as the threat.” The big media refuse to pick up such statements that would shed light on an aspect of views on China. That would mean audiences not well-informed by the news media migrate to other sources of information.

Speedy shift

Asian growth, global power shift and emerging African prospects for relevant issues are discussed little or dismissed altogether by the global legacy media. As the Nepali saying goes, no palm can obstruct the sunshine. Topics ignored in one part of the globe or platform land elsewhere in the digital age. An unversed might be made to read the change but not someone pretending to be stiffly unversed.

Two centuries of colonisation, slave trade, enslavement of indigenous people, brutal economic exploitation, and domination by the technologically and militarily superior gave unscrupulous aggressive forces stupendously dubious economic advantage. The scenario is now set to change. Power has shifted from the West to Asia. Africa, too, is set to grow in influence in the foreseeable future. Competition is stiffer, historic injustice rectified.

When communication becomes con-artistry, whose perpetrators employ smear tactics in multiple guises, hell breaks loose to deceive and mislead fellow humans through horizontal and vertical capture of the media. The purpose is to manipulate public opinion, issues and institutions. Independent people probe into scams and scandals, and search for hidden treasures, the downtrodden, the overlooked and the ignored. In their sense of social responsibility, they could give voice to issues overlooked by the legacy media. That’s why people begin to cancel news media subscriptions.

(Kharel writes on int’l affairs & media.)

Why Nepal Needs Seamless Bullet Train



Pankaj Thapa

descents, economic viability, etc., may limit us to think immediately about Kathmandu-Kerung high-speed rail, but a conventional electric train with moderate speed running on a standard gauge system is satisfactory for now.

Railway master plan

The Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) in its election manifesto talked about the preparation of 50- year-railway master plan that prioritises the East-West railway as a backbone for human and goods transport and the branch railway networks that connect Kathmandu, Pokhara, Dang, Surkhet, and several cities in the Tarai, and further beyond, India and China.

Today, speed has become an integral part of human life. To commute from Mechi to Mahakali (945 km), a bullet train usually takes around 3.10 hours, whereas a conventional type electric one may take 6 to 9 hours. Maybe, at present, it seems an ambitious project for Nepal, given its budgetary constraints. But choosing the right project from the beginning will be more beneficial in the long term. For the time being, designing the conventional electric railway corridor with future high-speed upgrade capacity wouldn’t be a correct choice because project correction requires a large sum of additional money.

Tunnel construction, maintaining curves and geometry, sturdy bridges, state-of-the-art signalling, 25 kV electrification, J-slab track system, future-compatible stations, etc., are some basic requirements for high-speed rails. Integration of our railways with the high-speed railway corridor of the northern and eastern cities of India would be instrumental in tapping our potential in cultural and religious tourism. Today, in the absence of seamless and affordable cross-border

Having a vision of a 300-320 km/h capable bullet train corridor in the main transportation arteries of Nepal within a decade is logical and justifiable for development-deprived Nepali people.

connectivity, a large number of Indian tourists cannot easily travel to Nepal.

The good news, however, is that India is planning to bring its bullet train network to our proximity. The Delhi-Varanasi and the Varanasi-Siliguri routes are in surveying and planning phases. Connecting Siliguri from Kakarbhitta and Delhi from Attaria or Mahendranagar with the standard-gauge bullet train tracks will ultimately provide us access to major Indian cities.

The East-West, Kathmandu-Tarai, and Kathmandu-Pokhara corridors are principal arteries of Nepal’s transportation networks for industrial, tourism, and trade activities. Our youths are desperate for rapid development. Keeping their aspiration in focus, the government should revise and introduce high-speed rail infrastructure in the main transport corridors of Nepal. This, however, doesn’t mean that all our branch corridors should be equipped with the same facilities; based on terrain and geography, we can adopt conventional or semi-high-speed electric trains as well.

The government should have an in-depth analysis of its own party’s

50-year railway master plan if we are to gear up for regional mobility with speed and accuracy. For global export, even the Indian Railways is manufacturing a standard-gauge variant of the Vande Bharat, making it compatible with a widely used track gauge in Asia, Africa, and South America. However, it seems that we are still not in a position to accept broad-gauge track for the 136-km Kathmandu-Raxual route, as the project is proceeding to the DPR finalisation stage.

Path of prosperity

One country with a multiple-gauge system will surely invite various problems on their operation and maintenance. If so, then no planning or late planning is better than wrong planning. Connecting India and China with two different gauge systems against the backdrop of security, technological, or any other reason directly affects our own interests. Seamless internal connection and access to two big population corridors should be our top priority.

Therefore, choosing speed with widely accepted technology in our railway system could only lead us to the path of prosperity. Instead of accepting gift projects on this new avenue, we should demonstrate our own strength by introducing the best technology that is easy, cheap, and practical for us. Ten years down the line, countries like China, Japan, and many European countries will be in a position to roll their bullet trains up to a speed of 500 km/h. Therefore, having a vision of a 300-320 km/h capable bullet train corridor in the main transportation arteries of Nepal within a decade is logical and justifiable for development-deprived Nepali people.

(The author is a former Senior Engineer of the Nepali Army.phapa.ktm@gmail.com)

READER'S MAIL

A Star Sets In Broad Peak

This is about the news report, “Nirmal Purja, team confirmed dead in Broad Peak avalanche,” which appeared in this daily on August 2. This is indeed a heartbreaking moment for all Nepalis as well as those interested in mountaineering worldwide.

By becoming the fastest person to summit the world’s 14 highest mountains in just over six months, a record at the time, he showed the world that nothing is impossible. This inspired many to follow in his footsteps. Besides mountaineering, his involvement in social work and humanitarian aid that spanned several countries is striking.

Purja invested Rs. 50 million of his personal funds to build housing for porters in the Everest region, supporting those affected by floods and landslides in Nepal, Pakistan, and other countries. He also established an endowment fund



of Rs. 4 million to boost attendance at a community school in his birthplace, Myagdi.

But the tragic fact that he is no more with us will be deeply felt by millions for a long time globally, especially those inspired by his fearless spirit and humanitarian works. Rest in peace, Nims Dai!

Kapil Basyal
Kathmandu

TAILPIECE

When my son graduated from high school, he had to give a speech. He began by reading from his prepared text. I want to talk about my mother and the wonderful influence she has had on my life,” he told the audience.

‘She is a shining example of parenthood, and I love her more than words could ever do justice.’ At this point, he seemed to struggle for words. After a pause, he looked up with a sly grin and said, ‘Sorry, but it’s really hard to read my mother’s handwriting.’

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A Dutchman was explaining the red, white, and blue Netherlands flag to an American.

“Our flag is symbolic of our taxes. We get red when we talk about them, white when we get our tax bills, and blue after we pay them.”

The American nodded. “It’s the same in the USA only we see stars too!”

Trump says US, Israel to hold off on Iran strikes

AFP
Washington, Aug. 2

President Donald Trump said Saturday that the United States and Israel had agreed to hold off on new strikes on Iran -- provided a deal to end the months-long conflict is "rapidly" reached.

Fears had mounted that the fighting could escalate once again after Trump threatened to hit Iran "very hard" and was reportedly considering renewed heavy attacks, including against energy infrastructure.

Trump said the US was "locked and loaded and ready to go against the Islamic Republic of Iran," but added that Tehran and other Middle Eastern countries had asked him to hold off on fresh strikes.

"Based on this request, I have agreed, for the future benefit of the WORLD and, likewise, the survival of a successful and prosperous Iran, to cancel the attack, subject to being able to rapidly make a DEAL," Trump posted on his Truth Social platform.

The US president said the deal would have to include the "Immediate, Complete and Total OPENING OF THE HORMUZ STRAIT, and an end to Iran's nuclear threat."

"The Country of Israel joins me in this commitment. Get to work, everybody, and get it DONE."

After more than five months of war, which began on February 28 when the United States and Israel launched strikes on Tehran, there is seemingly no end to the conflict in sight.

A previous ceasefire deal with similar terms, including the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, fell through, and Iran has since tightened its control over the vital waterway as the two countries resumed attacks against each other in recent weeks.

The resumption of hostilities has caused global oil prices, which had dipped during the initial ceasefire, to again rise.

And the back-and-forth comes just three months before midterm elections



PHOTO: AFP
President Donald Trump said the United States and Israel had agreed to hold off on any new strikes on Iran as long as a deal was quickly reached.

in the United States that could pose a challenge for Trump's Republican Party.

US embassies in capitals across the Middle East had warned their citizens on Saturday to beware of "unforeseen escalation" in the regional conflict and urged them to be ready to leave.

CBS News said that the United States and Israel were planning joint strikes, possibly throughout the weekend, with oil refineries and power plants among possible targets.

But Trump said he ultimately decided to hold off on his threat of new attacks after requests from Gulf countries.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman called Trump on Saturday to express concerns about his strike plans, Axios reported, citing unnamed US officials.

One source with knowledge of the

call told Axios that the Saudi crown prince had "urged Trump to de-escalate and refrain from launching the strikes".

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the report.

Iran and the US resumed exchanges of fire last month after a days-long lull in fighting, although there were no reported strikes overnight Friday to Saturday.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio told Fox News earlier in the week that the US had "wiped out" much of Iran's defenses, adding that Tehran was "now willing and in some cases seem eager to do a deal on denuclearization, to do a deal on the straits."

Still, he said Iran could "still do damage."

On Wednesday, a drone struck a US-owned gas vessel moored in an Egyptian port, causing a fire. Egypt is

investigating but has not yet accused any group of launching the attack.

Meanwhile, an "unknown projectile" struck a tanker off the coast of Oman, a British maritime agency said on Saturday.

Iran has effectively maintained control over navigation through Hormuz since the outbreak of the war on February 28, requiring vessels to obtain permission and pay transit fees before using the waterway.

Maritime trade tracking firm Kpler said on Friday that traffic through the Hormuz strait has dropped "sharply".

On the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, another waterway that has gained increasing importance as a transit route for Saudi Arabian oil, the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen on Saturday denied seeking to charge ships for passage through it.

OPEC+ tipped to raise production again

AFP
London, Aug. 2

Saudi Arabia, Russia and five other members of OPEC+ are expected to raise their oil production quotas for September when they meet online Sunday as the Middle East war continues to disrupt global energy supplies.

The enlarged Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries will likely increase production by 188,000 barrels per day, following several months of similar hikes, said Jorge Leon, an analyst at Rystad Energy.

However, the September increase is likely to be the last in the current series of production adjustments, he said.

Between late 2022 and 2023, OPEC+ became concerned that oil prices were falling, and agreed to cut oil production in three separate rounds, reducing total output by nearly six million barrels per day.

But Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria, Oman and the United Arab Emirates -- before their exit from the group on May 1 -- then changed their strategy by gradually upping production starting in 2025.

A September increase would complete the unwinding of the second of the three production-cut packages introduced by OPEC+.

However, in reality, many OPEC+ members cannot produce as much oil as their official targets allow due to a "decline in production capacity", so increasing targets has become less meaningful, said Giovanni Staunovo, an analyst at UBS.

The Gulf countries have struggled to increase exports due to the near-paralysis of the Strait of Hormuz orchestrated by Iran during the war in the Middle East -- despite a brief upswing in shipping traffic after a US-Iran memorandum of understanding was signed in June.

'Difficult talks'

And in Russia, whose oil infrastructure has been repeatedly targeted by Ukrainian drone attacks, production is hovering at around nine million



PHOTO: AFP
OPEC+ nations may raise quotas again but they have little capacity to produce and export more oil as Russia's infrastructure has come under Ukrainian attack and the Strait of Hormuz remains closed to most tanker traffic.

barrels per day -- compared with a target of 9.8 million barrels per day.

It remains unclear when the group will actually be able to increase its oil volumes, but some member countries, such as Iraq, have expressed a desire to significantly boost production.

Currently, "the group is undergoing a process in setting maximum sustainable capacity levels for all member states", according to Staunovo.

OPEC+ "faces potentially difficult talks over new production quotas" starting next year following the September meeting increase, according to analysts at DNB Carnegie.

"I don't think cohesion is at risk at this very moment," said Leon, warning, however, that the UAE's withdrawal from the group in May has highlighted a weakness in this area.

Explaining the move, Abu Dhabi said it "serves our national interests and long-term strategic objectives".

The UAE had announced many projects and investments aimed at expanding its ability to pump oil in recent years, making it increasingly difficult to justify staying under strict OPEC+ production limits.

13 killed in Peru tourist plane crash



AP
Colombia, Aug 2

A plane carrying European tourists to view the famed Nazca Lines crashed into a field Saturday outside the Peruvian city of Nazca, killing 13 people, local authorities said.

Nazca's municipal government said the plane departed from the nearby city of Ica and was operated by Peruvian company Aerodiana. On its website, the airline said that it has offered scenic flights over the Nazca lines for the past 14 years using Cessna Grand Caravan planes.

The Nazca Lines are a group of extensive geoglyphs scraped into the desert around Nazca hundreds of years ago by Peru's Indigenous inhabitants.

The lines form images of animals that can only be fully appreciated from planes or viewing towers.

Among the dead were seven Italian citizens between the ages of 18 and 54, two 52-year-old Spaniards and two Germans of 77 and 78 years, Peru's Transportation Ministry said. The other two fatalities were the pilot Americo Salazar and copilot Irenka Guanilo del Carpio, it said in an official report.

President Keiko Fujimori expressed regret over the accident and said a "temporary suspension" of the airport was being considered, though the decision will be made once she receives reports from the relevant ministries.

Peruvian authorities said the accident is under investigation. Aerodiana was not immediately available for comment.

Iran's leaders united on war, split on goals

AP
Cairo, Aug. 2

With escalating attacks against U.S. bases and its allies over the past week, Iran's leaders are showing considerable unity over their war strategy: hanging tough, determined to show Iran can endure more than America and its allies can.

But within the leadership, there are sharp differences over what the end-game should be.

On one side, the ultra-hardliners who oppose any negotiations with the United States are pressing for total victory in the war. Known as the "Pay-dari" movement -- Persian for "stability" -- they are hard-core ideologues who want to enforce the Islamic Republic's control over society.

On the other, those who support President Masoud Pezeshkian and powerful parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf -- who doubles as Iran's chief negotiator -- see military pressure as a way to win a negotiated deal with the United States. This camp is also spurred by concern over the economic toll Iran is suffering from the war and the need to adapt to social change in the country.

"Negotiation is a political tool and a complement to military action to



PHOTO: AP
A woman walks past a mural depicting a portrait of the late Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed in the US and Israel strike on Feb. 28, at Azadi (Freedom) street in Tehran, Iran, Wednesday, July 29, 2026.

force the enemy to a point of compulsion and extract real concessions," an adviser to Qalibaf, Mahdi Mohammad, wrote on his Telegram channel Thursday.

The unusually open rivalry within the theocracy's leadership points to a struggle for control over Iran's postwar future. A huge question mark is where the new supreme leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, stands. Reportedly injured in the strike that killed his

father in the opening minutes of the war on Feb. 28, Khamenei remains in hiding, and both sides have claimed his support.

In a boost for Qalibaf and Pezeshkian, the ceasefire deal reached with the U.S. in April received strong backing in Iran's top leadership body, the Supreme National Security Council. Twelve of its 13 members approved it, including senior figures in the Revolutionary Guard and the military.

Heat puts Dutch dikes, German river trade at risk

AP
Netherlands, Aug. 2

Jeroen Wouda and Dirk Boom walk slowly along a Dutch dike, prodding at the bone dry surface with metal rods and scanning the parched grass for patches of green that could give away the location of a leak.

In a scene that brings to mind the fictional Dutch boy who heroically plugs a hole in a dike with his finger, the two men are hunting for cracks in the low-lying Netherlands' famed water defenses caused a drought that is gripping Europe and has fueled raging wildfires in France and Spain and sent the Danube and Rhine rivers to record low levels.



PHOTO: AP
Houseboats sit in low water on the Waal river in Nijmegen, Netherlands, Thursday, July 30, 2026, due to drought conditions.

Unlike the low-tech solution in American author Mary Mapes Dodge's 19th-century story, modern dike patrols are able to plot possible problems caused by drought in an app and send it to authorities who can then quickly carry out repairs.

In the Netherlands and neighboring Germany cargo ships that ply the Rhine and its offshoots have been forced to carry significantly less freight or risk running aground in shallow navigation channels. Farmers facing restrictions on irrigating their crops are warning of smaller fruit harvests and rising prices this season.

And for some houseboat owners, the drought has left their water-borne homes resting on sandy river bed.

Peter van Duijvendijk is a flood defense manager at the Schieland en de Krimpenerwaard water

corporation, one of 21 such organizations covering the Netherlands that are responsible for issues including flood control.

He has a team of 140 volunteers who are responsible for checking about 100 kilometers (60 miles) of dikes, reporting any problems they find. So far, this dry summer there have not discovered any major issues. But they remain alert now and likely into the fall.

The volunteers "are our eyes and ears on the dike," Van Duijvendijk told The Associated Press.

Like many inland dikes, the barrier in agricultural fields near the small town of Waddinxveen, east of The Hague, is made of peat that needs to be damp to be strong enough to hold back water. It is in one of the lowest points in the Netherlands, some 5 meters (16 feet) below sea level.

PRISM

Lost Pokémon game listed on eBay

Japan: A long-lost Pokémon game that was only available for a brief time in Japan in 2005 may have resurfaced on a Nintendo DS test cartridge for sale on eBay. The eBay listing, which is from a German seller and starts at \$9,145.66, was flagged by fans online as possibly being a surviving physical copy of Pokémon Fishing Contest DS.

The game was available as a download-only title at Japanese Pokémon Center stores from May-August 2005, and the game would delete itself from a system once it was powered off.

No playable copies of the game are known to still exist.

'Wild cat' on loose turns Savannah cat

Ohio: Ohio police dispatched on a report of a "wild cat" on the loose ended up helping to recapture a resident's escaped Savannah cat.

Olmsted Township Police said officers responded to a report of a "wild cat" in a residential area on Thursday.

"Upon further investigation, it was determined the animal was a domesticated Savannah cat that had escaped from its owner," police said in a news release. Savannah cats are hybrids of domestic cats and African servals.

The feline fled into a wooded area in Lorain County and was located by its owner, who as accompanied by police and sheriff's deputies.

-Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

- 1492– Christopher Columbus sets sail from Palos de la Frontera, Spain.
- 1678– Robert LaSalle builds the Le Griffon, the first known ship built on the Great Lakes.
- 1859– The American Dental Association is founded in Niagara Falls, New York.
- 1900– The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company is founded.
- 1914– World War I: Germany declares war against France, while Romania declares its neutrality.
- 1940– World War II: Italian forces begin the invasion of British Somaliland.
- 1960– Niger gains independence from France.
- 1972– The United States Senate ratifies the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.



A shopkeeper churns milk to make kurauni (a form porridge made from milk) at Chuchchekhola in Hetauda Municipality, Makawanpur. The kurauni prepared in Chuchchekhola is famous throughout the city.

Curfew lifted in Rajbiraj, prohibitory order remains

BY BINAY KARNA
Kalyanpur (Saptari), Aug. 2

Normalcy has gradually begun to return to Rajbiraj, the district headquarters of Saptari, after residents endured three days under curfew.

Following a temporary relaxation of the curfew for a few hours on Sunday morning, two peaceful rallies of contrasting nature were held in the town. Shortly afterwards, the District Administration Office lifted the curfew and imposed a prohibitory order.

The administration had enforced a continuous three-day curfew in Rajbiraj Municipality and Bodebarsain Municipality in response to heightened tensions following violent incidents in Sunsari and Siraha. On Sunday, the curfew was eased until 11:00 am to allow residents to purchase essential daily necessities.

During the relaxation period, the Professional Network for Peace and Democracy (PAPAD) Saptari organised a large peace and harmony rally, which began from the local Shiva Temple at 9:00 am. The procession was attended by leaders from both the Hindu and Muslim communities, representatives of political parties, members of civil society, legal professionals, journalists and representatives of various organisations.

Among those participating were Member of the House of Representatives Dr. Ankita Thakur, Chief of the District Coordination Committee Shiv Narayan Sah, and Acting Mayor of Rajbiraj Municipality Israt Parvin. Residents standing along the roadside applauded the procession as it moved through the town.

An hour later, at 10:00 am, the Hindu Santani Society Saptari led a mourning rally from the local Ram Temple.

Participants carried banners displaying photographs of the three people who lost their lives in the incidents in Sunsari and Siraha. They demanded legal action against those responsible and raised slogans calling for the restoration of Nepal as a Hindu state.

Both rallies were conducted peacefully with prior permission from the local administration under tight security arrangements. Personnel from the Nepal Police, the Armed Police Force and other security agencies were deployed to prevent any untoward incidents.

Chief District Officer Shyam Krishna Thapa said the district's security situation was gradually returning to normal. Acting on the recommendation of the District Security Committee, the administration lifted the curfew at 11:00 am and imposed a prohibitory order in Rajbiraj and Bodebarsain municipalities to facilitate the return of normal public life.

Govt, Hindu Samrat Sena hold talks...

Earlier, representatives of Hindu Samrat Sena Nepal had walked out of the talks, claiming that their demands had not been adequately addressed.

The government delegation, led by Home Minister Gurung, had travelled to Janakpurdam to help resolve the religious and communal tensions that emerged in Madhes Province following the Dewanagunj incident in Sunsari.

The first two rounds of talks, held on Saturday, were attended by representatives of the Madhes Province Government, Dhanusha Chief District Officer Prem Prasad Luintel, heads of security agencies, and representatives of the Joint Hindu Front.

Sunday's meeting was attended by Home Minister Gurung, senior security officials, Chief District Officer Luintel, and office-bearers of Hindu Samrat Sena Nepal.

From pastureland to a tourist...

Seeing its potential, Bishnu Raj Shrestha, who had been running a hotel business in Kathmandu, decided to invest in his home district. In 1993, he established one of the area's first lodges with accommodation facilities.

"Having worked at Hotel Annapurna in Kathmandu, I understood the kind of food and environment tourists preferred. I was confident a lodge here would succeed," Shrestha recalled.

Tourist arrivals gradually increased, and hotel businesses flourished particularly between 1995 and 2001. Following the end of Nepal's armed conflict, investment in the hospitality sector accelerated significantly.

According to Hotel Association President Tumraj Limbu, more than Rs. 2.5 billion has been invested in Bhedetar's hotel industry over the past two decades. The growth has also encouraged investment in nearby destinations such as Namje, Debithan and Namaste Waterfall.

Today, Bhedetar and its surrounding areas can accommodate around 1,500 tourists overnight, he said.

New attractions continue to emerge. Bhedetar has continued to expand its tourism offerings in recent years.

A short distance uphill from the market lies Thumki and the picturesque village of Namje. A few years ago, the American news network CNN,

included Namje among its 12 recommended travel destinations, attracting increasing numbers of both domestic and international visitors.

At the top of Thumki stands the Atma Ghar (Soul House), another emerging attraction. The structure was built by architects from the United States and several other countries using stones collected from 231 abandoned graves that once occupied the hilltop.

Around six kilometres from Bhedetar, the Okhre View Tower offers panoramic views of both the Tarai plains and the surrounding hills, drawing a growing number of visitors each day.

Eight kilometres towards Dhankuta lies Namaste Waterfall, another popular destination. Nearby are the historic Sangurigadhi Fort and the revered Pathibhara Temple.

Bhedetar has also developed into a hub for adventure tourism. A skywalk has been constructed at Sailung Danda near the town centre, attracting thrill-seekers. Other adventure activities, including a zipline, free-fall jump and giant swing, are also in operation, according to Sangurigadhi Rural Municipality chairperson Jitendra Rai.

"Bhedetar is no longer just a place to enjoy cool weather," Rai said. "It is gradually emerging as a centre for adventure tourism as well."

FNJ Global Conference concludes

RSS
Kathmandu, Aug. 2

The 'FNJ Global Media Conference-2026' held in Tokyo, Japan ended with a nine-point 'Tokyo Declaration' covering issues including protection of press and freedom of expression, implementation of the rights of working journalists, institutional strengthening of overseas journalism.

The Declaration of the Media Conference held on July 25 in Tokyo was made public by issuing a press release by the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) here today. The event was organized by the FNJ Japan chapter and co-organized by all foreign chapters of the Federation in Europe, the UK, Belgium, Kuwait, Qatar, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates and India on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of Nepal-Japan diplomatic relations.

UML, NCP move to form provincial govts

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 2

Following a three-point agreement between the CPN-UML and Nepali Communist Party (NCP), the effort to form a provincial government gained momentum.

Under the agreement, the UML will lead the provincial government in Koshi, Bagmati and Lumbini, while the NCP will lead Karnali and Sudurpaschim. The leadership of the government in Madhes and Gandaki provinces will be decided later through consultations.

UML and NCP, the two parties have a clear majority in Koshi, Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces. In Bagmati, they fall three seats short of the majority threshold and require the support of either the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), the Nepal Workers and Peasants Party or the Hmaro Nepali Party. In Lumbini and Gandaki, the alliance is one seat short of a majority each.

Likewise, in Madhes, the coalition remains 12 seats short of the required majority, meaning broader negotiations with other parties will be necessary before a government can be formed. In the 92-member Koshi Provincial Assembly (PA), 47 seats are required for a majority. The UML and NCP together hold 57 seats, giving the alliance a comfortable majority.

In the 104-member Bagmati Provincial Assembly, 53 seats are needed to form a government. The UML and NCP together hold 50 seats, excluding the Speaker, leaving them three seats short of the majority mark.

In Lumbini, the 83-member Provincial Assembly requires 42 seats for a majority. The UML-NCP alliance holds 41 seats, leaving it one seat short.

In the 40-member Karnali Provincial Assembly, 21 seats are required for a majority. Together, the UML and NCP command 22 seats, enabling them to form the government comfortably.

In Sudurpaschim Province, the 51-member Provincial Assembly requires 26 seats for a majority. The UML-NCP alliance holds 31 seats, giving it a clear majority.

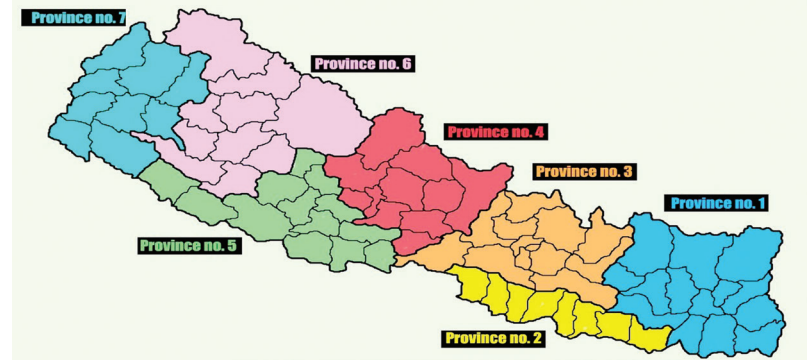
In Madhes Province, the 101-member Provincial Assembly requires 51 seats for a majority. The UML and the NCP together have 39 seats, leaving the alliance 12 seats short of the majority threshold.

Similarly, in the 59-member Gandaki Provincial Assembly, 30 seats are required for a majority. The UML-NCP alliance has 29 seats, falling just one seat short of the number required to form the government.

Bagmati: UML pushes to form new provincial government

The UML has begun efforts to form a new government in Bagmati province after withdrawing its support from the Nepali Congress-led government.

UML and NCP have agreed to jointly form a government in Bagmati with UML



leading. Both parties are short of two seats to secure a majority.

According to our Makwanpur correspondent Rammani Dahal, both parties are holding talks with other political forces, including Rastriya Prajanatra Party (RPP). If the parties succeed in securing required support, UML parliamentary leader Jagannath Thapaliya is expected to become the next Chief Minister.

Koshi: UML rift deepens deadlock in Koshi

Although the ruling coalition parties at the centre have agreed to form a new provincial government, the political deadlock in Koshi Province has become even more entrenched.

According to our Biratnagar Correspondent, Sashidhar Parajuli, internal divisions within the UML, Chief Minister Hikmat Kumar Karki's refusal to step down, and conditions set by the NCP have made an immediate change of government unlikely.

UML Koshi in-charge Sherdhan Rai said formal discussions had begun within the party and with the NCP, and that the process of forming a new government would move forward within a few days. CM Karki, maintains that he enjoys the personal support of provincial assembly members and will not resign simply to make way for another UML leader.

A member of the CM's secretariat said, "As long as the CM is from the UML, there will be no change."

Meanwhile, NCP parliamentary party leader Indra Bahadur Angbo said there was no environment for his party to join the government until the UML resolved its internal deadlock.

He insisted that the NCP would not support or sign any no-confidence motion tabled by the UML.

CM Yadav rules out immediate change in Madhes govt

The three-party coalition government in Madhes, led by the NC, is not likely to change in the immediate future. According to our Janakpur correspondent, Laxmi Chaudhary, CM Krishna Prasad Yadav has shared that the current three-party coalition government (NC, UML and NCP) in the province will continue.

The Yadav-led government has the support of NCP, Janata Samajwadi Party,

Bhandari urges for restraint to preserve national unity

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 2

Former president Bidya Devi Bhandari urged all Nepalis to play a responsible role in strengthening national unity and rule of law by dismissing rumours, hatred and any attempts to create division.

Addressing a programme organised by the Tulsilal Memorial Foundation in Chhyasal, Lalitpur on Sunday, to mark the 29th memorial day of Tulsilal Amatya, former president Bhandari said democratic values must be strengthened by embracing the ideals of veteran political leaders.

Bhandari stated that Nepal's democratic achievements had been secured through the long struggle, sacrifice and dedication of senior leaders such as Amatya.

"Late Amatya devoted his entire life to ideology, principles and public service," added the former president.

Remembering him was not merely about recalling history but also about putting his ideals and values into practice, she said.

She expressed confidence that his sacrifice, integrity and commitment to serving the people would continue to inspire both present and future generations.

She further said that deals of veteran political leaders must be embraced in order to strengthen democratic values, ethics, good governance and public accountability.

Bhandari also expressed serious concern over the recent tensions and violent incidents in Sunsari and several other districts of the eastern Terai.

She stressed that, as Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multilingual, multi-religious and multicultural nation,



everyone must exercise restraint to preserve unity in diversity, mutual respect, tolerance and social harmony.

During the event, Madhav Kumar Nepal, a founding chairman of the Foundation and co-coordinator of the Nepali Communist Party, and former chairman Keshav Prasad Badal were honoured.

Addressing the event, former prime minister Nepal said that although Amatya had the opportunity to lead a comfortable and distinguished life, he instead chose the difficult path of fighting for the rights of farmers, workers and oppressed communities.

He said that democracy in Nepal had been established through the sacrifice and dedication of many leaders, including Amatya.

He further stated that the party remained firmly committed to preserving Amatya's significant contributions, from the founding of the Nepali Communist Party to strengthening the party, expanding the farmers movement, defending democratic rights, and resisting exploitation and feudal oppression.

next provincial government. So far, no formal initiative has been taken to establish a new administration.

NC Chief Whip Prakash Baral says the current government will remain in office. "The NC will make every possible effort to keep the government intact."

Lumbini cabinet to reshuffle by Monday as Acharya retains CM's post

The ruling coalition has agreed to retain Chet Narayan Acharya of UML as CM of Lumbini for the time being, with the cabinet set to be reshuffled by Monday.

According to our Dang Correspondent, Gokarna Paudel, he had been assured of continuing as CM following discussions with senior UML leaders.

According to him, preparations are under way to complete the cabinet reshuffle and give full shape to the government by Monday.

The agreement was reached during a meeting in Bhaktapur on Thursday attended by UML chairman K. P. Sharma Oli, UML vice-chairman Bishnu Paudel, general secretary Shankar Pokharel, CM Acharya and former CM Lila Giri. The leaders agreed to move forward with the provincial government under the new political alliance.

Acharya said discussions were continuing on the allocation of ministerial portfolios, ministers' responsibilities and a common programme for the coalition partners. He added that, as the restructuring of ministries had already been completed, talks had entered the final stage on which party would receive which ministry.

Sudurpaschim

NCP have said that the formation of a new government in Sudurpaschim has been delayed because caretaker CM Kamal Bahadur Shah has not stepped aside, despite the province operating without a budget.

Rejecting claims that internal rivalry within the party over the chief ministerial post was responsible for the delay, NCP leaders insisted the only obstacle was the incumbent Chief Minister's refusal to pave the way for a new administration.

According to our Sudurpaschim Correspondent, Abinash Chaudhary, NCP leaders argued that Shah, whose government has lost its majority, has neither sought a vote of confidence nor demonstrated the political convention of resigning. "The delay in forming a new government is not because of us, nor is there any internal power struggle within the party," Provincial Assembly member of NCP Om Bikram Bhat 'Sara' said.

Bhat dismissed the reports, saying parliamentary party leader Khagraj Bhat is the undisputed choice for CM.

"There is absolutely no internal dispute over the CM's post. Khagraj Bhatt is the next Chief Minister. He has made significant sacrifices and contributions to the party and has never held a position of power. There is no alternative to him for the post."

Tanku Chaudari, guardian of Tharu culture



Tanku Chaudari playing the flute in his original attire.

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Dang, Aug. 2

Tanku Chaudari, the resident of Bijauri, Tulsipur, has reached the age of 70. Despite his age, the resident still

has the same passion and enthusiasm for the flute and his indigenous culture as he did in his youth. The traditional culture, original costumes, and musical instruments of the villages are being lost due to the influence of modernity. Chaudary has been continuously working to preserve the

original identity of the Tharu community with the melodious tune of the flute. Due to this dedication, the locals warmly call him 'Basuri Baje'. Locals said that wherever cultural programme are held, the melody of his flute spreads the message of Tharu culture. Tanku said that he started playing the small flute, popular among the Tharu community, about five decades ago, at the age of 20. Even now, he is specially invited to cultural and social events in the village. He added, "I do not charge any fee for this. Playing the flute is not a means of earning a living but a passion for our culture and spiritual satisfaction. Playing the flute brings joy to the mind," he said, "that is why I have continued it till today." He expressed concern that the costumes of the Tharu community have been gradually disappearing in recent years. Therefore, he said that he makes it a point to wear traditional Tharu costumes wherever he goes to play the flute. He added that the new generation should also work to preserve their indigenous costumes and culture. Chaudari, who has been playing the flute for five decades and working to preserve the original Tharu attire while culture is in crisis due to the impact of market-oriented culture. The modern lifestyle has become a source of inspiration for the local community.

UPADHYAY RECEIVES PREM PRAKASH MALLA MEMORIAL AWARD



PHOTO: SIRAJ KHAN

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Nepalgunj, Aug. 2

Senior litterateur and former member secretary of Nepal Academy, Professor Jagat Prasad Upadhyay 'Prekshit', has been awarded this year's Late Prem Prakash Malla Madhukar Memorial Award and Honour-2083. The award, along with a cash prize of Rs 51,111, was presented to Upadhyay on the day of the 91st birth anniversary of the late Prem Prakash Malla Madhukar, a famous singer and writer from Nepalgunj. Vice Chancellor Dr. Rajan Suwal stated that the songs and literary works of the late Malla are invaluable assets of Nepali society and that his works are equally popular and relevant today. After receiving the award, Professor Upadhyay said that receiving the award established in the name of a distinguished writer like the late Prem Prakash Malla was a significant achievement in his literary life.

Pension Patta team embarks on district tour

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Lamjung, Aug. 2

The production team of the Nepali film Pension Patta, which is scheduled for nationwide release on September 11, has begun a district promotional tour. During a press meet held in Lamjung, the team said the film artistically portrays family relationships, struggle and rural life. Writer and director Maotse Gurung said the film is based on the lives of Nepal's long-established 'Lahure' (British Gurkha pensioner) community, depicting family, love, sacrifice and the social realities associated with the pensioner culture. He said that the film is set to be released simultaneously in around 70 cinemas across Nepal. Director Gurung said the film attempts to present the realities of Nepali society through an entertaining yet meaningful narrative. He expressed confidence that audiences would appreciate the film's subject matter,

presentation and performances, and urged viewers to watch it in cinemas. Actress Monika Gurung said she was delighted to have had the opportunity to act alongside actor Dayahang Rai in Pension Patta. Produced under the Maotse Gurung Films banner by DB Gurung, the film has been produced by Min Konme Gurung, Bhoj Bahadur Gurung and Sapana Gurung. The cast includes Dayahang Rai, Gaumaya Gurung, Monika Gurung, Buddhi Tamang, Wilson Bikram Rai, Pashupati Rai, Pushkar Gurung, Sunil Thapa, Sol Gurung, Manoj Gurung, among others. The film is written and directed by Maotse Gurung. Cinematography is by Sushan Prajapati, while editing has been handled by Ker D. Koich Linuch. In addition to its domestic release, Pension Patta will also be released in Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The film is scheduled to hit cinemas nationwide on September 11, coinciding with the Hartalika Teej festival.



Met exhibit focuses on Galliano

AP
Los Angeles, Aug. 2

The next Met Gala fashion exhibit will be devoted to a designer famed for both his singular talent and the scandal that lost him one of the top posts in all of fashion: John Galliano. The British designer was creative director at Christian Dior for nearly 15 years, the very pinnacle of the fashion world, before he made a series of antisemitic and racist comments in 2010 and 2011 that went viral, leading to his conviction in an antisemitism trial. Dropped by Dior, he spent several years involved in public and private efforts to rehabilitate. He made a comeback in 2014 when he was hired by Paris fashion house Maison Margiela, where he remained for a decade. Now, he'll become only the third living designer to be the subject of a solo show at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Long a red carpet favourite for his flamboyant, even fantastical style, Galliano and his creations should make for an intensely watched carpet at next May's Met Gala — which every year launches the spring exhibit at the Costume Institute. Not surprisingly, the museum is taking pains to emphasise that the exhibit will not shy away from the problematic aspects of Galliano's history. "Alongside Galliano's extraordinary creative accomplishments, the



exhibition will address the derogatory conduct that fundamentally altered his career and public reception," said a statement issued by the museum on Friday. "In doing so, the exhibition will consider how artistic achievement should be understood alongside ethical accountability." The show's main curator, Andrew Bolton, who curates nearly all the Met's big fashion exhibits, noted that the exhibit "considers both how Galliano has remapped the world through fashion and how his conduct, its consequences, and changing cultural values have reshaped our understanding of his work." Even so, organisers had to tread carefully when planning the show. Preparation included meetings with Jewish community leaders in New York to gauge their feelings, the museum said, confirming a report in The New York Times. Those meetings included Bolton, Galliano and Anna Wintour, the Vogue editor who masterminds the Met Gala every year. The show will be organised into three parts, the museum said.

Sharma's role in literary journalism hailed

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 2

A memorial service was held in the capital to honour the life and contributions of senior literary journalist and writer Nagendra Raj Sharma. Most speakers at the gathering shed light on Sharma's remarkable personality and invaluable contributions to literature. Recalling unforgettable moments shared with Sharma, veteran literary journalist and Editor-in-Chief of Rachana literary magazine Rochak Ghimire noted that the two of them were often perceived as a symbolic literary duo. "We had received several awards and honours jointly," he recalled. Describing Sharma and the literary magazine Abhivyakti as inseparable complements to one another, Ghimire said, "We shared an exceptionally close bond. While I had to suspend the publication of Rachana for four years due to political changes, he continued publishing Abhivyakti without interruption. Ensuring the continuity of Abhivyakti is the truest tribute we can pay to him." He also appealed to everyone to support the ongoing publication of the magazine. Ram Prasad Pant, President of the Daitwa Bangmaya Pratishthan, stated that any amount of writing about Sharma would fall short, remembering him as a broad-minded and warm-hearted individual. Mohan Duwal, President of the Literary Journalists Association of Nepal and Editor-in-Chief



of Janamat, remembered Sharma as a personality who lives on through Abhivyakti. Shree Om Shrestha 'Rodan', President of the Nepal Srashta Samaj and a NARASH member, remarked, "To ensure Sharma is never forgotten, following in the footsteps of his good deeds would be the ultimate tribute to him." He emphasised that everyone must pull together to sustain the publication of Abhivyakti. Radheshyam Lekali, President of the Literary Journalists Association,

recalled old memories with Sharma and portrayed him as a person so dear "he wouldn't hurt even if kept in one's eyes." Poet Bidhan Acharya stressed that everyone should emulate Sharma's virtues, expressing that Sharma lived a beautiful and exemplary life. During the programme, senior writers Kishore Pahadi, Gyanuwakar Poudel, Navaraj Rijal, Sharma's son Pranaya Raj Sharma, Tribhuvan Chandra Wagle, Shukadev Upadhyaya, and Tara Subedi, among others, shared their

experiences, reflections, and insights into Sharma's character. Jointly organised by the Nepal Srasta Samaj and the Abhivyakti Family, the event was chaired by Pawan Alok, Editor-in-Chief of Abhivyakti and Chairman of the Nagendra Raj Sharma Literary Journalism Award Fund. Devika Timilsina, Secretary of the Award Fund and Treasurer Shankar Bharti also spoke on Sharma's contribution. Nagendra Raj Sharma passed away on Asar 31 at the age of 89.

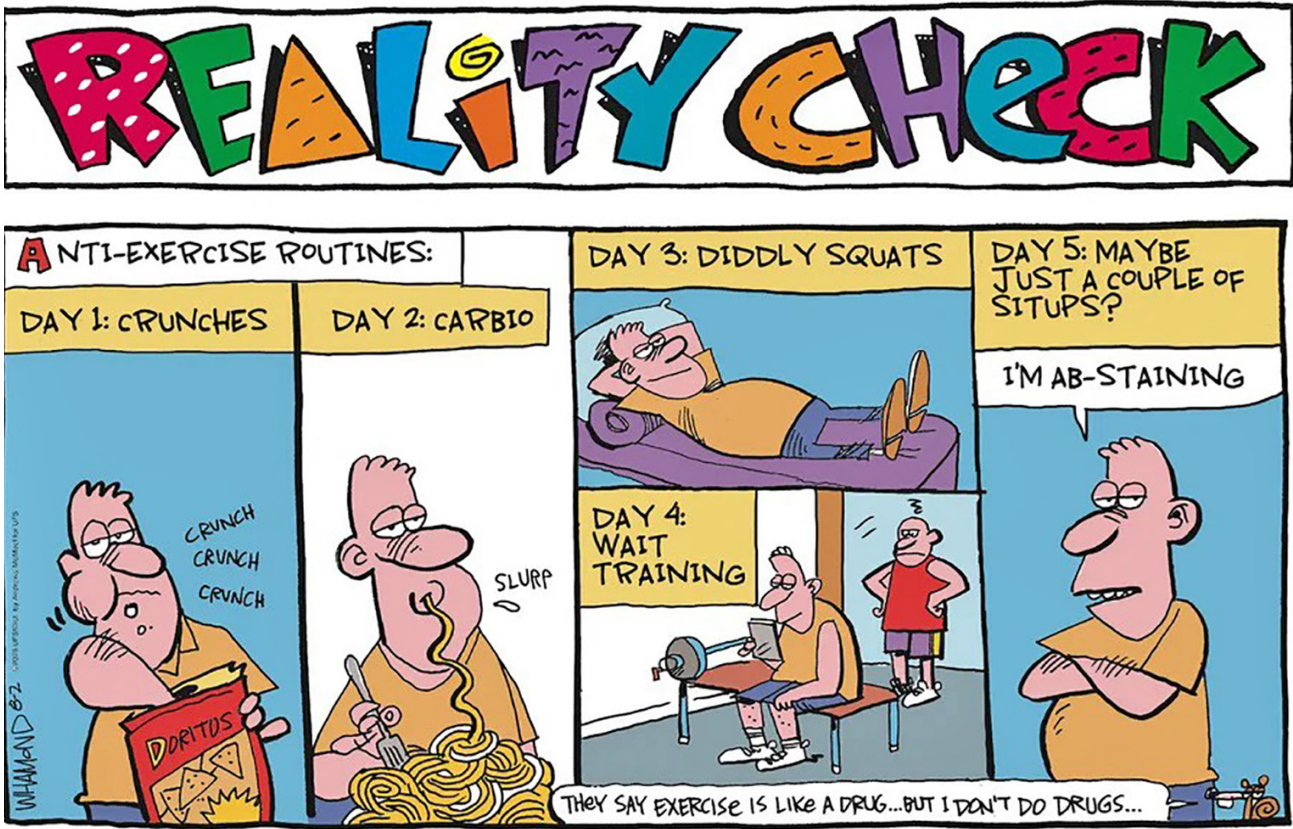
HOROSCOPE

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- ARIES:** Security improves when you stop letting outside validation set your price. Chiron turns retrograde in your 2nd House of Resources, bringing up sensitivity around money, value, or whether your efforts are being fairly recognised.
- TAURUS:** Self-worth gets real when you stop negotiating with yourself. As Chiron turns retrograde in Taurus and your 1st House of Self, an old story about your body, confidence, or right to take up space may resurface.
- GEMINI :** Private thoughts get louder as you slow down and reflect on them. Chiron turns retrograde in your 12th House of Solitude, stirring old fears, unfinished grief, or habits you usually keep tucked behind movement and noise.
- CANCER:** Your role in a group may need a cleaner limit. Chiron turns retrograde in your 11th House of Friends, bringing up old sensitivity around belonging, loyalty, or being the one who keeps everyone emotionally fed.
- LEO:** A career sore spot may be ready for a smarter response. Chiron turns retrograde in your 10th House of Career, stirring old sensitivity around criticism, authority, reputation, or whether your work is being seen clearly.
- VIRGO:** An old belief may be limiting your next move. Chiron turns retrograde in your 9th House of Beliefs, Travel, and Learning, asking you to revisit a story about what you are allowed to want, study, explore, or outgrow.
- LIBRA:** A tender trust issue may need plain terms. Chiron turns retrograde in your 8th House of Intimacy and Shared Resources, stirring old sensitivity around money, vulnerability, debt, desire, or who gets access to what.
- SCORPIO:** Partnership patterns may reveal where trust got bruised. Chiron turns retrograde in your 7th House of Partnership, bringing up sensitivity around reliability, reciprocity, or whether someone can meet you without trying to manage you.
- SAGITTARIUS:** Your body may reject the schedule your ambition keeps defending. As Chiron turns retrograde in your 6th House of Work and Wellness, old wounds around productivity and overwork resurface, urging you to slow down, restore balance, and prioritise wellbeing.
- CAPRICORN:** Perfection may be taking the fun hostage. Chiron turns retrograde in your 5th House of Creativity, Pleasure, and Self-Expression, bringing up old sensitivity around being seen, judged, or allowed to enjoy something before it becomes impressive.
- AQUARIUS:** Something at home may need to change so you can feel safe. Chiron turns retrograde in your 4th House of Home and Family, stirring sensitivity around emotional safety, roots, or whether your private life supports who you are becoming.
- PISCES:** Your words may reveal where being misunderstood still hurts. As Chiron turns retrograde in your 3rd House of Communication, old sensitivities around speaking honestly, asking questions, interruptions, or expressing emotions before you're ready may resurface.

CARTOON

gocomics.com



Ambitious Arsenal won’t sit still this summer: Arteta



BBC
Girona, Aug. 2

Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta says the Gunners will not "sit still" and are looking to bolster squad competition with "ambitious" transfer plans this summer.

The Spaniard led the London club to their first Premier League title in 22 years last season and is aiming to "improve and evolve" his squad as they aim to defend their crown.

Arsenal have added goalkeeper Illan Meslier and forward Christos Tzolis to their ranks this summer, while turning

defender Piero Hincapie's loan move into a permanent switch.

They are expected to sign Brazil midfielder Bruno Guimaraes from Newcastle United, while the Gunners have also been linked with a move for Real Madrid winger Vinicius Jr.

"We expect to have movements in the next few weeks, obviously," said Arteta after his side's 4-1 pre-season win over Girona.

"We want to get better like anybody else, and you can see the transfer market and our opponents... We won't sit still and we are very ambitious with what we are doing.

"The margins are very small.

Because we want to get better and the level is going to increase. We need to increase the competition internally. We need to make sure we identify the things that we don't have in the team."

Arsenal will play Manchester City in the Community Shield on Sunday, 16 August before starting their 2026-27 campaign at home to Premier League newcomers Coventry City on Friday, 21 August.

Tzolis showed Arsenal fans a glimpse of what may be to come as he scored on his first Gunners appearance in their opening pre-season win over Girona.

Signed to replace Leandro Trossard after his transfer to Besiktas, the Greece international made the switch to north London in a £34m transfer from Belgian side Club Brugge.

Tzolis, 24, skipped beyond Arnau Martinez before firing a low effort into the bottom of the net via the help of a slight deflection in the 30th minute.

But it was German forward Kai Havertz who slotted Arteta's side into the lead 14 minutes earlier.

Sixteen-year-old Max Dowman threaded a fine pass through for Havertz to calmly finish when one-on-one with Girona goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga.

Four minutes after the break, Martinez climbed highest from the Girona corner to halve the deficit before Dowman reinstated Arsenal's two-goal lead three minutes later.

The flurry of goals was not over there as Gabriel Jesus made it three goals in five minutes to fire the Gunners into a 4-1 lead.

Arteta named a strong starting XI in Spain with Viktor Gyokeres, Havertz and Hincapie each playing 30 minutes after their return from the World Cup.

Arsenal will travel to Dublin for their second pre-season game when they take on Real Betis at the Aviva Stadium on 5 August.

TAMANG, MAHARJAN, GAJMER ADVANCE



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 2

Nepal's number one player, Wangchu Tamang, has reached the quarter-finals of the 1st Kathmandu Sports Club (NRT) Nepal Top 16 Grand Masters Snooker Championship with back-to-back victories on Sunday.

On the fifth day of the tournament, held at the club's premises, Tamang defeated Sabin Tamang 4-1 in a best-of-seven match. Earlier, he had overcome Binod Shrestha.

Similarly, Bikash Maharjan also advanced to the quarterfinals after beating Ayush Gautam 4-2 in his final group-stage match.

Maharjan had lost his opening game to Rajan Gurung but bounced back with a win over Aman Karki on Saturday.

Akash Gajmer progressed to the knockout stage by winning all three of his group matches.

In his final group game, he defeated Jay Maharjan 4-1.

The championship features Nepal's top 15 players along with one player from the organising club, making a total of 16 participants.

They have been divided into four groups, with the top two players from each group qualifying for the quarterfinals.

Messi returns to MLS action after World Cup duty



AFP
Miami, Aug. 2

Lionel Messi returned to Major League Soccer action after World Cup duty on Saturday, coming on in the second half as his Inter Miami side drew 2-2 with Columbus Crew.

Two weeks after Argentina's loss to Spain in the World Cup final, Messi was back on the pitch, entering in the 53rd minute to the delight of fans at Miami's Nu Stadium.

But Messi could not mark his return with a goal, twice shooting wide.

Uruguayan Luis Suarez scored his seventh goal in his last four games to put Miami 1-0 up in the 16th minute.

Miami's former Manchester United and Real Madrid midfielder Casemiro scored an own goal in the 34th minute which drew Columbus level at 1-1.

Suarez provided the assist for Noah Allen to head Miami into a 2-1 half-time lead

But midfielder Brais Mendez, making his Columbus debut after arriving from Real Sociedad in Spain, curled in a second equalizer from an 84th-minute free-kick.

The result ended Miami's six-match winning streak and kept them in second place in the Eastern Conference behind Nashville, who drew 2-2 at DC United.

Los Angeles FC and Vancouver Whitecaps remain level at the top of the Western Conference after they drew 1-1 at Vancouver's BC Place.

Son Heung-min extended his scoring streak since the MLS resumed after the World Cup to four goals in four matches as he put Los Angeles ahead in the 37th minute.

But Vancouver's German star Thomas Mueller converted a 76th-minute penalty.

The former Tottenham star Son, who had shouldered much of the blame for South Korea's failure to make it to the knockout rounds of the World Cup, also earned MVP honors in the MLS All-Star Game on Wednesday.

SNIPPETS

NOM to showcase Nepali sporting history

Kathmandu (TRN): The Nepal Olympic Museum (NOM) is set to organize the country's first sports-related exhibition, showcasing Nepal's sporting history, achievements, and heritage in one place. Titled "Beyond Medals: Preserving Nepal's Sports History", the exhibition will run from August 4-6 at the Nepal Art Council in Babarmahal. To mark its 33rd anniversary, NOM is hosting the event. Over three days, selected items from nearly 500,000 rare and historic photographs, along with medals, trophies, sports gear, and memorabilia from different eras, will be on display. Recognized as Nepal's only sports museum and South Asia's first Olympic museum, NOM has long been preserving and archiving rare photographs, medals, trophies, sports equipment, and other historic artifacts related to athletes and competitions. The exhibition also honors the contributions of its late founder, senior sports journalist Kshitiz Arun Shrestha, and South Asian Games taekwondo medalist Manju Tuladhar.

NVA to host CAVA Championship

Kathmandu (TRN): Nepal Volleyball Association (NVA) has decided to hold the CAVA Championship Women League Volleyball from 1-7 November. The 14th plenary meeting of the Association decided to host the tournament. The meeting also endorsed the annual calendar for 2026/27 and resolved to celebrate the Association's Golden Jubilee marking its 50th anniversary. The meeting also decided to restructure districts and provinces as well as select central representatives by 1 October in preparation for the upcoming 13th electoral general assembly.

SAFF Championship draw revealed

Kathmandu (TRN): The draw for the upcoming SAFF Championship football tournament, scheduled to be held in Bangladesh this November, has been announced. The South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) released the draw on Saturday evening for six teams, excluding Nepal. The All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) has been barred from participation due to FIFA's suspension. The championship, which will run from November 4 to 17, has divided the participating teams into two groups. Group A features hosts Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan, while Group B consists of defending champions India, Pakistan, and the Maldives. SAFF has, however, indicated that Nepal could be included in Group A if FIFA lifts the suspension before the event, specifically by September 1.

Chelsea sign Brighton striker Welbeck

AFP
London, Aug. 2

Chelsea signed Brighton's veteran striker Danny Welbeck in a deal worth a reported £5 million (\$6.7 million) on Saturday.

Welbeck agreed a two-year contract with the Blues and will link up with Xabi Alonso's squad on their pre-season tour.

The 35-year-old's move to Stamford Bridge is a break from Chelsea's habit of signing younger players with the potential to be developed into stars or sold at a profit.

It is the first time Chelsea have paid a transfer fee for a player over the age of 26 since they signed Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang from Barcelona in 2022 when the striker was 33.

"When you hear of the interest from Chelsea, it's something that fills you with such immense pride. Knowing the history of Chelsea, it's a club that wants to win trophies and is pushing to do that every single season," Welbeck said.

"I'm really honoured to come to a club of this stature at what feels like a really exciting time. I know a few of the boys already and I've had fantastic conversations with the manager and already feel that connection.



"I've got that fire in my belly and I'm ready to give it everything for this club to make everyone at Chelsea, and the supporters, proud."

New Chelsea manager Alonso was keen to add experience to his squad after last season's disappointing 10th-place finish in the Premier League.

Welbeck's arrival in west London will raise questions about the future of Chelsea striker Liam Delap, who flopped last season after signing from Ipswich, as well as fellow forwards Nicolas Jackson and Marc Guiu.

Welbeck is the latest player to move from Brighton to Chelsea in recent years after Joao Pedro, Moises Caicedo, Robert Sanchez and Marc Cucurella, who joined Real Madrid earlier this summer.

The Blues spent a British record £117 million to sign England forward Morgan Rogers, 24, from Aston Villa in July.

They also landed France defender Maxence Lacroix, 26, from Crystal Palace for £52 million earlier this week and signed Atalanta defender Marco Paestra, 21, for £43 million.

Chelsea have also been linked with a move for Brentford's 36-year-old England midfielder Jordan Henderson.

Welbeck spent six years at Brighton after joining from Watford in 2020, scoring 51 goals and contributing 18 assists, while becoming the Seagulls' all-time leading top-flight goalscorer.

"Danny has made an incredible contribution to Brighton. His performances, goals and experience played a key role in some of the most important moments in our recent history, while his character and leadership made him a hugely respected figure within the club," Brighton chairman Tony Bloom said.

Tottenham manager De Zerbi 'happy' with pre-season progress

AFP
Sydney, Aug. 2

Tottenham manager Roberto De Zerbi said he was "happy for a lot of things" as they return to London unbeaten in three pre-season games after a 2-1 win over Chelsea in Sydney.

The Italian spent more a week in New Zealand and Australia with his squad as he builds towards the new Premier League campaign where they aim to do better than their 17th place last season.

They head home after beating Auckland FC 2-0, recording a shootout win after a 1-1 draw with Sydney FC and a gutsy victory over their London rivals on Saturday despite playing most of the second half with 10 men.

"I'm happy for a lot of things. First of all, because we have spent a very important 10 days together. We worked very well," he said. "I'm happy to work with these players. I'm looking forward

to work with the other players who are in London -- (Rodrigo) Bentancur, Pape Matar Sarr, (Marcos) Senesi, (Mohammed) Kudus. "

Bentancur, Matar Sarr and Senesi all played at the World Cup while Kudus is recovering from an injury.

The tour gave De Zerbi an opportunity to give game time to a host of promising youngsters, as well as new signings Sandro Tonali, Andy Robertson and Marco Paestra.

He highlighted the importance of Tonali, Archie Gray, Ben Davies, Robertson and Lucas Bergvall, who all played a big part in the Chelsea victory which was sealed by Richarlison's 90th minute winner.

But the Italian also pinpointed several future prospects.

"I am so happy for the young players because Malachi (Hardy), Rio (Kyere-maten), Tye (Hall), Kota (Takai), they have been in this period very important for us, very good players."

De Zerbi was particularly pleased



with the way Spurs kept their composure when defender Kevin Danso was sent off for a reckless challenge three minutes into the second half against Chelsea. He wants to see similar fight when Spurs kick off their Premier League campaign against Brentford on August 22. "It's important to change the habits, because our habits in the

last two seasons have been not good in terms of results," he said.

"It's important for us to win the game, to win the duels, to win the second ball and to play well in every position of the pitch. But yes, a very good 10 days."

Spurs play back-to-back friendlies against German side TSG Hoffenheim at home before the season starts.

He, however, was unsure whether Richarlison will stay at the club, saying the Brazilian forward "sometimes" wants to leave.

The 29-year-old Richarlison reinforced his importance with a last-minute winner as 10-man Spurs beat Chelsea 2-1 on their pre-season tour in Sydney on Saturday.

He also scored in their 2-0 win over Auckland FC last weekend.

Richarlison's fate has come into focus after Tottenham's aggressive summer of spending to boost their fortunes after avoiding the drop by coming 17th in the Premier League last season. Tottenham have yet to recruit a striker, but De Zerbi

has made clear he is not finished in the transfer market yet with Manchester City forward Savinho among those reportedly in his sights. "I don't know," De Zerbi said when asked about Richarlison's future after the Chelsea match.

"As a player, as a guy, it is unbelievable his attitude and behaviour, but at the end we have to respect what he wants to do. "For me he is still an important player because it is not so easy to find another striker as Richarlison, because Richarlison scores goals and he knows the way."

Pressed on whether he would leave, De Zerbi said: "I don't know, I didn't understand well, because sometimes he said to stay, sometimes he leaves. "We have to speak anyway, there is not any problem. He is a lovely guy."

"All of us love him, the teammates, the club, the staff, because he works hard every day, seriously every day, and we can't say anything else," Richarlison, who is entering the final year of his contract, scored 12 goals last season.