

THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL



Members participating in the meeting of the Finance Committee at the Federal Parliament Secretariat in Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, on Monday.

Cyber frauds soar: 16 scams revealed

BY PURUSHOTTAM P. KHATRI
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

Cyber-enabled fraud is increasing rapidly in the country, with criminals using at least 16 different online and electronic methods to deceive the public, according to Nepal Police. Authorities have warned that fraudsters are constantly developing new techniques, making public awareness and digital security increasingly important.

An analysis of police records shows a steady rise in cyber fraud complaints over the past three fiscal years. The Cyber Bureau received 4,255 complaints in fiscal year 2023/24, which increased to 6,740 in 2024/25. In the latest fiscal year 2025/26, a total of 7,379 victims have reported online fraud cases, with investigations underway.

Despite the growing number of incidents, police have recovered significant amounts of money from suspected fraudsters. Cyber Bureau spokesperson Superintendent of Police (SP) Dilip Kumar Giri said authorities recovered Rs. 190 million from accused individuals in fiscal year 2025/26 and returned it to victims. Similarly, police recovered Rs. 92.6 million in 2024/25 and Rs. 9.94 million in 2023/24.

During the FIFA World Cup, fraudsters exploited public enthusiasm by creating fake mobile applications claiming to provide free match streaming. Using these fake platforms, scammers cheated football fans of Rs. 23.4 million.

Multiple digital platforms exploited

Police said cybercriminals are targeting victims through various digital platforms, including social media, online banking, digital wallets and e-commerce services.

Common methods include hacking Facebook accounts, creating fake social media profiles, sending fraudulent requests to update bank or wallet details, and stealing One-Time Passwords (OTPs) to access financial accounts.

Investigators have also identified scams involving fake international courier companies, where criminals demand customs charges or additional payments for imaginary parcels. In another method, fraudsters falsely claim that relatives living abroad have died and left behind money or property, convincing victims to transfer funds to claim the fake inheritance.

The Cyber Bureau has also reported a rise in WhatsApp sextortion cases. In such scams, criminals allegedly use fake female profiles to initiate video calls, record private moments and later blackmail victims for money.

Other major fraud schemes include fake employment offers, cryptocurrency investment scams, online gambling and betting fraud, fake online shopping platforms, foreign currency trading schemes, bogus ticketing services, fraudulent online tuition programmes and fake room rental advertisements.

"Criminals are constantly adopting new techniques to deceive the public through electronic means," SP Giri said, adding that the growing variety of scams shows how quickly cybercrime is evolving.

Police have also recorded increasing cases of cyber harassment and online hate speech. SP Giri said authorities first attempt to resolve such disputes through dialogue and reconciliation, but legal action is initiated under the Electronic Transactions Act if mediation fails.

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'Manpower, tech shortages hamper cybercrime probe'

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

Secretary at the Ministry of Home Affairs Rajkumar Shrestha has said that efforts to investigate and combat cybercrime are being severely hampered by a shortage of skilled personnel, modern technology and adequate resources, making it difficult to provide timely and effective services to the public.

Addressing a discussion on cyber-security organised by the House of Representatives' Committee on Women and Social Affairs in Singha Durbar on Monday, Secretary Shrestha acknowledged that despite the government's commitment to tackling cybercrime, the authorities have been unable to respond to complaints as quickly as expected.

He said that the rapid expansion of social media use has been accompanied by a sharp rise in cyber-related offences. While the number of cybercrime cases has continued to increase every year, the agencies responsible for investigating them lack sufficient manpower, advanced technological tools and technical capacity, resulting in delays and affecting the quality of services provided to victims.

According to the Home Secretary, cybercrime investigations are inherently complex and often require considerable time because of technical

procedures and legal regulatory requirements. He said the lengthy investigative process has led to growing frustration among victims who expect faster responses from law enforcement agencies.

Sharing his own experience, Shrestha said he had personally witnessed cases where, despite the willingness of authorities to act promptly, technical processes and regulatory procedures prevented investigations from being completed within a short period. As a result, complaints about delays in service delivery have continued to rise.

He stressed that drafting laws and strengthening regulatory mechanisms alone would not be sufficient to curb cybercrime. Instead, he said, a coordinated effort involving the federal, provincial and local governments, along with educational institutions, civil society organisations and the general public, is essential to effectively address the growing threat. He observed that many social media users remain unaware of their responsibilities while exercising their rights online, contributing to the increasing number of cyber offences.

"We frequently talk about rights and remain vigilant in protecting them, but we pay less attention to our duties and responsibilities," he said. "Using social media and accessing information is a right, but users must also understand how to use these platforms responsibly."

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Dewangunj market reopens as people return for shopping

BY JAY KRISHNA YADAV
Inaruwa, Aug. 3

Markets, shops and transport services that had remained affected for a week due to a dispute between two communities in Sunsari have resumed operations.

While daily life in other parts of the district had started returning to normal from Saturday, the market and weekly haat (local market) at Kaptangunj in Dewangunj Rural Municipality-3, where the incident took place, resumed from Monday.

The daily vegetable market in Dewangunj, which had been disrupted for a week, has also reopened, allowing farmers to sell their produce and local residents to purchase essential goods easily. The market appeared to be functioning smoothly as people from both communities arrived for buying and selling.

The closure of the Dewangunj haat market during the protest had caused losses for farmers, as vegetables produced in their fields could not be sold. Consumers, meanwhile, were forced to manage without fresh vegetables. With the lifting of the curfew order, local

farmers, traders and consumers have received significant relief, said local resident Dumar Lal Mehta.

After the market reopened following a week-long closure, residents were able to shop conveniently, said Shahida Khatun of Dewangunj-2. She said that although people had lived in fear during the protests, returning to the market had brought a sense of relief.

The Dewangunj Bhatti Mod local market also resumed operation. The reopening of the market after a week has helped revive local economic activities, Mehta said, adding that consumers can now buy fresh local produce directly from farmers.

With the absence of middlemen, farmers have started receiving fair prices while consumers are getting goods at lower rates. Small traders and daily wage workers have also begun returning to their livelihoods.

Local journalist Bivek Mehta said locally produced goods have regained access to the market in Dewangunj Rural Municipality.

Farmers have expressed happiness after being able to sell vegetables and agricultural products including cucumbers, cowpeas, okra, pointed gourd, leafy greens, bottle gourd and pumpkin.

Three missing as bus knocks car into Sunkoshi River

BY BABURAM DEVKOTA
Sindhuli, Aug. 3

Three persons, including the driver, have gone missing after a private car plunged into the Sunkoshi River in Sindhuli district after being hit by a passenger bus on Monday.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) and Spokesperson for the Armed Police Force (APF) Headquarters, Halchok, Netra Bahadur Karki, said three persons were inside the car at the time of the accident. The registration number of the car has later been identified as Province 3-01-024 Cha 9573.

According to police, the accident occurred when a passenger bus (Bagmati Province 08-001 Kha 0144) struck the car that had been parked on the roadside. The impact forced the car off the road and into the river near Nawalpur of Phikkal Rural Municipality-2 in Sindhuli.

Although four people were initially reported missing after a car fell into the Sunkoshi River, police have so far confirmed that three people are unaccounted for.

According to the District Police Office, the identities of two missing persons have been established as 39-year-old car driver and construction entrepreneur Dil Kumar Lama of Jugal Rural Municipality-7 in Sindhupalchok and 28-year-old excavator



operator Ganesh Thapa of Golanjore Rural Municipality-1 in Sindhuli. The third missing person has been identified as Suraj Magar, a helper from Tinpatan Rural Municipality-9 of Sindhuli, according to Raju Baral, vice-chairperson of Phikkal Rural Municipality.

Police said Lama, the driver of the car, had been working as a contractor involved in the reconstruction of the Mid-Hill Highway at the site and was travelling as part of the project work when the accident occurred.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Bijay Shrestha said a search operation was underway to locate the missing individuals and retrieve the vehicle from the river. Police said the search and rescue operation has been hampered due to flooding in the Sunkoshi River.

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'Nepal, Mongolia need to work jointly to safeguard interests'

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

Minister for Foreign Affairs Shisir Khanal said to Mongolia that the landlocked countries should jointly raise their voice to safeguard their rights and interests.

In a meeting with Former Mongolian Prime Minister Gombojav Zandanshatar at his office in the Singha Durbar on Monday afternoon, he praised Mongolia for successfully maintaining balanced relations with its neighbouring countries while building a strong international reputation for managing strategic partnerships.

He said Nepal and Mongolia share many geopolitical similarities and noted that Nepal could learn from Mongolia's experience, informed FM Khanal's secretariat in a statement.

"Nepal is keen to expand cooperation with Mongolia in the fields of development, trade, partnership, and the preservation and promotion of

Buddhist values and traditions," he stated.

The two leaders also discussed possible measures to further strengthen bilateral and diplomatic ties.

Khanal said Nepal's new government was committed to deepening relations with Mongolia as a spiritual partner and reaffirmed Nepal's willingness to enhance cooperation across a range of sectors.

During the meeting, former Prime Minister Zandanshatar highlighted the geographical similarities between Nepal and Mongolia and said that small countries such as Nepal and Mongolia should work together in the evolving global order.

Referring to the shared Buddhist values and cultural heritage of the two nations, he described Nepal and Mongolia as each other's spiritual neighbours.

Zandanshatar also expressed Mongolia's interest in cooperating with Nepal in promoting Buddhist values and traditions, preserving cultural heritage, and supporting the development of chess in Nepal.

Zandanshatar is on a visit to Nepal.

Lives of Mugu women rooted in soil

BY HARI KRISHNA AIDI
Mugu, Aug. 3

In the remote settlements of the mountainous district of Mugu, women's lives remain deeply connected to the land. From the first light of dawn, their day begins with household chores, caring for livestock, fetching water, working in the fields and providing for their families, leaving little time for rest until evening.

According to Tulsi Rokaya of Chhayanath Rara Municipality-10, most women in Mugu spend the greater part of their lives working on farms.

"We spend the entire day toiling in the fields to support our families," she said.

She said that in most villages of Soru Rural Municipality, Mugum Karmarong Rural Municipality, Khatyad Rural Municipality and Chhayanath Rara Municipality, access to irrigation facilities and modern agricultural equipment remains limited.

As a result, women continue to rely on traditional farming methods, carrying out tasks such as ploughing, weeding, sowing seeds and harvesting



Women weeding a field at Balai village of Chhayanath Rara Municipality-6, Mugu.

crops. With increasing numbers of men leaving the district or going abroad for employment, women have shouldered most of the responsibility for farming.

Kalsa Rawal of Chhayanath Rara Municipality-8 said that although women work in the fields from morning until evening, their labour has yet to receive proper recognition. Alongside farming, they are also responsible for

household chores, childcare, caring for elderly family members and livestock.

Women's daily lives have become even more challenging because many rural settlements still lack adequate access to drinking water, healthcare, education and roads.

Locals said that in some villages, women have to walk for one to two hours just to fetch drinking water

before heading to the fields, leaving them with almost no time to rest.

According to farmer Ramdev Aidi of Chhayanath Rara Municipality-6, agriculture remains the main source of income in the mountainous district. However, traditional farming practices and a lack of irrigation have led to declining agricultural production.

Since harvests are often insufficient to feed families throughout the year, many women are compelled to collect and sell medicinal herbs, fodder, firewood and other forest products to support household expenses.

Surya Devi Malla, a women's rights activist with the Mugu branch of the Mechi-Mahakali Buhari Samyukta Awaj, said that women in remote areas sustain the rural economy by managing responsibilities both at home and on the farm.

However, she added that they still have limited access to fair recognition of their labour, modern agricultural technology, irrigation, markets and financial services.

She said that linking women with skills training, technology and markets could significantly improve their economic conditions.

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Hallmark Gold : Rs. 284,000/-
Worked Gold : NA
Silver : Rs. 4,350/-



NEPSE : 2,684.33

Total Amount : 4,572,084,231.4

No. of Share : 11,449,987

NOC RAISES FUEL PRICES

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) has once again significantly increased the prices of petroleum products.

According to a press statement issued late on Sunday evening, the price of petrol has been increased by Rs. 3 per litre, while the prices of diesel and kerosene have each risen by Rs. 5 per litre.

Similarly, the price of domestic aviation fuel has been increased by Rs. 20 per litre, while the price of international aviation fuel for flights from Kathmandu has been increased by USD 131 per kilolitre.

The corporation said the selling prices of international aviation fuel at Pokhara and Bhairahawa international airports have been fixed at the break-even point.

The new prices came into effect on Monday morning.

As per the latest revised rates, petrol in the Kathmandu Valley now costs Rs. 200 per litre, while diesel and kerosene are each priced at Rs. 200 per litre.

Under the new pricing structure, petrol will cost Rs. 197.50 per litre in the first-category areas—Chararali, Biratnagar, Janakpur, Amlekhgunj, Nepalgunj, Dhangadhi and Birgunj—and Rs. 199 per litre in the second-category areas, including Surkhet and Dang.

Karnali govt forms task force to study drought



A paddy field left barren due to drought in Bangad Kupinde Municipality, Salyan.

BY PRATIK ICHCHHUK SHARMA
Salyan, Aug. 3

The Karnali provincial government has formed a five-member task force to conduct a field study of drought-hit areas in Salyan and Surkhet, where paddy plantation has been severely affected due to prolonged dry weather.

The task force was formed through a secretary-level decision by the Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperatives. It will assess the situation in Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of Bangad Kupinde Municipality in Salyan and Wards 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of Simta Rural Municipality in Surkhet, where inadequate rainfall over an extended period has prevented farmers from planting paddy.

The decision follows concerns raised

by Provincial Assembly member Bhim Prakash Sharma during the zero hour of the Karnali Provincial Assembly meeting held on July 31, when he drew the government's attention to the plight of farmers in the drought-affected areas of Salyan and Surkhet who had been unable to plant paddy.

The task force is headed by Chitra Bahadur Rokaya, senior agricultural economist at the ministry. Its members include an engineer representing the Ministry of Water Resources and Energy Development, engineer representatives from the Drinking Water, Irrigation and Energy Development Offices in Surkhet and Salyan, and Bishal Khatri, horticulture development officer at the ministry.

According to the ministry, the task force will visit the affected areas and coordinate with local governments, farmers, relevant stakeholders

and government offices. It has been assigned to identify the causes of the drought, assess its impact on paddy transplantation and agricultural production, and recommend possible solutions in a report to be submitted to the ministry.

This year, insufficient rainfall has prevented paddy plantation in most fields in Bangad Kupinde Municipality of Salyan and Simta Rural Municipality of Surkhet. Farmers, who largely depend on monsoon rainfall, have expressed concern that the delayed paddy plantation will negatively affect food production.

Based on the task force's findings, the provincial government is expected to introduce relief measures for drought-affected farmers, expand alternative irrigation facilities and implement long-term solutions to address recurring water shortages.

'Quality of infrastructure depends on engineers'

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Biraj Bhakta Shrestha has said that the nation's prosperity, infrastructure development and the quality of public service depend on the role of efficient, honest and accountable engineers.

Addressing an orientation programme for newly recruited young engineers organised by the Water Resources and Energy Research Centre under the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat, Minister Shrestha said that joining government service is not merely the beginning of a career but a historic opportunity to dedicate oneself to the mission of nation-building.

He said the new recruits had entered not only as technical professionals but also as public servants, stressing that every decision, technical recommendation, signature and action they take would directly affect the lives of millions of citizens.

He urged them to perform their duties with a strong sense of responsibility.

Minister Shrestha said the history of the development, civilisation and prosperity of any nation is closely linked to the creativity, research, discipline and tireless efforts of its engineers.

He said that the construction of roads, bridges, power projects, transmission lines, reservoirs, irrigation systems, drinking water infrastructure, industrial structures, and modern cities is the result of the vision and ability of engineers.

He described engineering not merely as the application of mathematics and science but as a creative discipline that transforms problems into solutions.

The minister said Nepal is entering a new phase of expanding energy generation, promoting clean energy, advancing cross-border electricity trade, expanding irrigation, ensuring the optimum utilisation of water

resources and developing climate-resilient infrastructure.

He noted that these ambitious goals could be achieved not only through policies and budgets but also through the contribution of skilled, committed and honest technical professionals.

Stating that character is as important as knowledge in public service, Minister Shrestha said moral courage can sometimes be even more important than technical competence.

He added that when faced with a choice between what is easy and what is right, choosing the right path is the hallmark of a true public servant.

He said an engineer's greatest asset is not a certificate but the trust earned from society, urging all engineers to place transparency, accountability, impartiality and public interest at the centre of their professional conduct.

Highlighting the rapid pace of technological advancement worldwide, the minister said the nature of engineering is constantly evolving, making continuous learning, research and the adoption of emerging technologies essential for addressing future challenges.

He stressed the need to regularly update knowledge and foster an innovation-driven mindset.

Although Nepal has limited resources, he said, its thinking and creativity should never be limited.

Minister Shrestha stressed that there should be no compromise in the quality of infrastructure development.

He instructed engineers to maintain the highest standards at every stage—from design and implementation to supervision and testing—warning that even minor negligence could result in major accidents.

He called for strict adherence to technical standards and professional ethics.

He said the country expects the new generation of engineers to contribute not only technical expertise but also innovative thinking, positive energy, leadership and a results-oriented work culture.

Clear policy on chemical fertilisers stressed



Representatives of the Sugarcane Producers' Association submitting a memorandum to Chief Minister Chet Narayan Acharya over the shortage of chemical fertiliser.

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Bhairahawa, Aug. 3

Lumbini Province Chief Minister Chet Narayan Acharya has directed the Ministry of Agriculture, Land Management and Cooperatives to formulate a clear and uniform policy to ensure that subsidised chemical fertilisers are distributed in a systematic, transparent and farmer-friendly manner.

During a discussion held at the Office of the Chief Minister and Council of Ministers on Monday, Chief Minister Acharya said the fertiliser distribution guidelines should be based on farmers' actual needs, crop type and cultivated land area.

He stressed that farmers cultivating sugarcane, bananas and maize should receive equal priority alongside those growing food crops.

He also pointed out that farmers who switch to different crops often fail to receive chemical fertilisers on time, and instructed the ministry to formulate a policy that addresses the practical challenges in the current distribution system.

The guidelines, he said, should support increased agricultural production while meeting farmers' needs.

Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture, Land Management and Cooperatives, Dr. Nitu Pandit, said Nepal requires around 1.4 million metric tonnes of chemical fertiliser annually, but less than half

of that demand is currently met. She said the limited availability of fertiliser has made distribution management challenging.

She also pledged to coordinate with the federal Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development to ensure adequate supplies of chemical fertiliser for farmers cultivating sugarcane, maize and bananas.

Representatives of sugarcane farmers attending the meeting complained that existing fertiliser distribution and agricultural equipment policies do not give adequate priority to sugarcane cultivation. They demanded that sugarcane growers receive subsidies and concessions on par with food crop farmers.

Meanwhile, Rajapur Sugar and Chemicals Industries Pvt. Ltd., based in Bardiya, said a reliable supply of chemical fertiliser would be essential for the success of its upcoming sugarcane expansion programme. According to the company, around 2,000 farmers currently cultivate sugarcane on approximately 3,000 bighas of land. It aims to expand commercial sugarcane farming to about 6,000 bighas with the participation of 5,000 farmers in the next season.

The discussion was attended by CPN-UML Bardiya Chairman Saligram Adhikari, Sugarcane Producers' Committee Chairman Krishna Kumar Regmi, Rajapur Sugar and Chemicals Industries Administration chief Indra Prasad Dhakal, committee member Om Prakash Yadav and other stakeholders.

Traditional bamboo planting declines in villages

BY BABURAM KARKI
Barahakshetra, Aug. 3

The traditional practice of planting bamboo, once an integral part of the rural economy, is gradually disappearing from villages. Bamboo, which was commonly planted on barren land, embankments and field edges, is now rarely cultivated.

The widespread use of plastic products in recent years has reduced the demand for bamboo, a versatile plant once used throughout a person's life – from birth to funeral rites. As its use has declined, bamboo groves have gradually disappeared.

Krishna Prasad Nepal, 85, of Barahakshetra Municipality-10, said almost every household in the village once had its own bamboo grove.

"There used to be dense bamboo clusters everywhere. Now the groves are disappearing, and with them the greenery of our villages," he said. According to Bir Bahadur Karki, 75, of Prakashpur in Barahakshetra-10,

bamboo once played an important role in both rural and urban life, from house construction to social and religious ceremonies. "The younger generation no longer understands the importance of bamboo," he said.

Household items such as baskets, trays, grain storage bins, carrying baskets and woven bamboo mats were once commonly made from bamboo. It was also widely used in house construction. However, the demand has fallen sharply with the growing use of plastic and other modern materials, leading to a decline in bamboo planting.

Local Humarjang Basnet said the spread of concrete houses has also reduced bamboo use for pillars, roof frames, fencing and other structural purposes. "Although bamboo is used less than before, products made from it are still considered superior," he said.

He added that bamboo can be profitably grown on embankments, field edges and other less fertile land. Since it continues to produce for many years after being planted, it remains a valuable crop. However, as residential areas

expand, fewer people are planting bamboo. According to Forest Officer Devendra Chaudhary, more than 1,300 bamboo saplings have been planted in community forests in Barahakshetra Wards 1 and 2 under the Chure Conservation Programme.

He said farmers have shown little interest in commercial bamboo farming. "These days, very few farmers grow bamboo either commercially or on private land," he said.

Although sub-division forest offices under the District Forest Office continue to distribute perennial saplings, demand for bamboo seedlings remains low. Bamboo has long been regarded as an important source of rural income because of its many uses throughout a person's lifetime.

It grows well on infertile slopes, embankments and elevated land, while also helping conserve greenery and prevent soil erosion in rural areas. Despite its close connection with rural livelihoods and its ability to thrive in sandy loam soils, bamboo cultivation has continued to decline in recent years.

Millet cultivation expands in Jumla as market demand grows

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Sinja (Jumla), Aug. 3

Millet cultivation is expanding in Jumla district as rising demand for millet flour in domestic and international markets encourages farmers to increase production.

Jumla, an agriculture-based district in Karnali Province and a major centre for indigenous crop production, grows a wide range of traditional crops, with millet remaining one of its key cereal crops.

The growing popularity of millet flour has created new market opportunities for local farmers.

Last year alone, the Organic Mini Market in Jumla sold millet flour worth more than Rs. 3.5 million, reflecting increasing consumer demand.

As the demand for millet flour in the market has increased, the area of millet cultivation in Jumla has expanded.

Farmers of Jumla, who were not particularly interested in millet cultivation in the past few years, have started



cultivating millet in recent years after millet flour started getting a good price in the market.

In the fiscal year 2025/26, millet was cultivated in around 2,735 hectares of land in Jumla. Around 3,821 tonnes of millet were produced in that fiscal year. The productivity of millet was 1.4 tonnes per hectare.

Jumla also accounts for the largest share of millet production in

the province. Farmers in Jumla are currently transplanting millet. According to the Agriculture Development Office, the area under millet cultivation has increased compared to last year.

Chief of the Agriculture Development Office, Ram Bhakta Adhikari, said that an additional 2.5 hectares have been brought under millet cultivation this year.

JAPAN'S NISSAN SEES PROFIT

AP
Tokyo, Aug. 3

Nissan Motor Corp. reported Monday that it returned to profit in the first quarter of the fiscal year, helped by cost cutting measures and improved sales in some markets.

Nissan, based in the port city of Yokohama, said it recorded a 3.8 billion yen (\$24 million) net profit from April to June, a reversal from the 115.8 billion yen loss it racked up in the same period of 2025. Quarterly sales totaled 2.96 trillion yen (\$19 billion), up 9.5% from 2.7 trillion yen a year earlier.

Nissan has been in the red for the last two fiscal years, posting billions of dollars in losses, but its leadership has promised to return it to profit in this fiscal year, which ends in March 2027.

Chief Executive Ivan Espinosa told reporters cost reduction efforts were gaining momentum. But difficulties remain in some global markets like the Middle East, while sales were growing in the U.S. and Japan, he said.

"We are managing disruption where it exists, building momentum where we see opportunity," Espinosa said.

As a result, the total cultivated area has increased from 2,735 hectares last year to 2,737.5 hectares this year.

He said the growing demand for millet flour, which is considered both tasty and nutritious and is used to prepare a variety of dishes, has encouraged farmers to expand cultivation.

Adequate rainfall this season and the absence of major pest and disease outbreaks have also created favourable conditions for the crop, he said.

With the additional cultivated area and favourable weather, millet production is expected to increase this year.

Jumla is widely known for its indigenous products such as Marsi rice, apples, beans and walnuts.

However, millet—one of the district's traditional crops that is highly valued for its taste and health benefits—has received comparatively little attention. But, its importance remains significant in rural communities.

According to the Agriculture Development Office, the district produced around 24,000 tonnes of food grains last year, of which millet accounted for about 3,850 tonnes.

Security tightened along Nepal–India border

BY SIRAJ KHAN
Nepalgunj, Aug. 3

Security measures have been beefed up along the Nepal–India border in Banke district following recent incidents in Sunsari, Siraha and other parts of the country, with authorities on both sides of the frontier placing the border under heightened alert.

Security officials from Nepal and India said enhanced measures have been introduced to prevent any activities that could disrupt peace and communal harmony in the border region.

As part of the strengthened security arrangements, joint border patrols have been launched by security personnel from both countries. Harendra Kumar Mishra, Station Police Officer of the Rupaidiha Police Station in India, said the joint patrols are aimed at reinforcing border security and preventing any attempts to undermine law and order.

According to Mishra, personnel from India's Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), the Indian Police, the Nepal Police, and the Armed Police Force Nepal (APF) are conducting coordinated patrols, accompanied by trained sniffer dogs.

Banke Chief District Officer Dil Kumar Tamang said security at the border had been tightened considerably in recent days, with joint patrols continuing as part of the enhanced security measures.

He added that security agencies from both countries were



maintaining close coordination and cooperation to ensure peace and stability along the frontier.

The Armed Police Force Nepal said travellers crossing the border are now required to carry valid identification documents. Security personnel have also begun recording the names and addresses of those entering and leaving through the border checkpoint to further

strengthen surveillance.

On the Indian side, the SSB has likewise made identity documents compulsory and intensified security checks, according to the Rupaidiha Police Station.

Krishna Prasad Shrestha, coordinator of the Banke Citizens' Concern Forum, said the stricter security measures had led to a noticeable decline in unnecessary

cross-border movement.

He said that the open border had long been exploited for various illegal activities, making stronger surveillance necessary.

Curfew order lifted in Dhanusha
Meanwhile our correspondent reports from Janakpurdham: The District Administration Office (DAO) Dhanusha has lifted the prohibitory order that had

been imposed in Janakpurdham Sub-Metropolitan City and surrounding areas.

According to a notice issued by Chief District Officer Prem Prasad Luintel, the decision was taken after the protesting groups withdrew all their protest programmes, the district's security situation showed marked improvement, and life started returning to normal.

The prohibitory order, which had come into effect at 10:00 am on Saturday, was withdrawn from 5:00 am on Monday, in accordance with a decision of the District Security Committee, the administration said.

The DAO said that, following a review of the latest security situation, it had concluded that normalcy was gradually being restored, prompting the withdrawal of the restrictions. The administration has also appealed to the public to continue supporting efforts to maintain peace, security and communal harmony.

The restrictions were initially imposed after tensions between the Hindu and Muslim communities in Sunsari spilled over into parts of Madhes Province. A curfew had remained in force from August 1 to the morning of August 3, after which it was replaced by a prohibitory order.

The restrictions were lifted after Home Minister Sudan Gurung visited Dhanusha on Saturday and assured protesters that their demands would be addressed. Following the assurance, the protesting groups suspended all planned protest programmes.

MOROCCO MARKS 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF KING'S ACCESSION TO THRONE

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

The Consulate General of the Kingdom of Morocco in Nepal on Sunday organised a ceremony and a series of events in Kathmandu to mark the 25th anniversary of King Mohammed VI's accession to the throne.

The programme began with a flag-hoisting ceremony at the Consulate General's office in Thapathali. Morocco's ambassador to Nepal, Mohammed Maliki, and Honorary Consul General Megha Chaudhary jointly hoisted the national flag. Morocco observes 30 July each year as Throne Day to commemorate the accession of King Mohammed VI.

Speaking at the ceremony, said she hoped Nepal and Morocco would further expand cooperation in trade, tourism, investment and cultural exchange.

The Consulate General also organised a cultural exhibition in Lalitpur on Sunday which featured Moroccan cuisine, pottery, traditional décor, tourism information and a travel desk.

"The exhibition was intended to introduce Moroccan culture, art and tourism to the Nepali public while promoting cultural exchanges between the two countries. It was expected to support bilateral cooperation, trade and tourism," said Chaudhary.

A separate evening programme focusing on tourism and cultural cooperation between Nepal and Morocco, including the screening of a documentary on Moroccan art and culture was also organised the same day.

Asia's largest Shaligram under water again

BY TILACHAN PANDEY
Tamghas, Aug. 3

Authorities have come under criticism for failing to protect Asia's largest Shaligram stone.

Located at Setiben, the confluence of Gulmi, Syangja and Parbat districts, the sacred stone has been inundated after the Seti Khola changed its course. During the monsoon, rising water levels in the Kaligandaki River, combined with the diverted flow of the Seti Khola, have left the revered site underwater, restricting access for pilgrims.

Prakash Thapa, who travelled from Rupandehi to visit the shrine, said he had to return after offering prayers from a distance.

"Earlier, devotees could touch the Shaligram while offering prayers, but now the stream flows across the access route, making it impossible to reach the stone," he said.

Similarly, Ram Prasad Neupane of Bhirkot Municipality-2 in Syangja said he had planned the visit specifically to worship the Shaligram up close but was unable to do so because of the changed river course.

Local governments from the three adjoining districts -- Kaligandaki Rural Municipality in Gulmi, Bihadi Rural Municipality in Parbat and Galyang Municipality in Syangja -- said that the project is beyond their financial capacity and requires support from the provincial and federal governments. Although they claim to have repeatedly raised the issue, no concrete progress has been made.



The Seti Khola now flows across the access route to the Shaligram stone at Setiben.

PHOTO: TILACHAN PANDEY

Parbin Gurung, Chairperson of Bihadi Rural Municipality, said that a week ago, members of the House of Representatives representing the three districts were invited to inspect the site and were briefed on the challenges.

"They pledged to support the conservation of the Shaligram and promote the site. We are hopeful that this will lead to a solution," he said.

Bed Bahadur Thapa, Chairperson of Kaligandaki Rural Municipality, said his local government was fully committed to protecting the sacred stone but stressed that the effort required coordinated action led by the federal government.

The protective retaining wall surrounding the Shaligram has also collapsed, making it impossible for

devotees to perform the traditional ritual of circumambulating the stone. The damaged structure has also increased safety risks for visitors.

Despite the site's location at the junction of three districts and two provinces, local residents say the federal, provincial and local governments have shown little interest in its preservation.

Sagar Bhusal, a member of the House of Representatives elected from Parbat, said conservation of the Shaligram was being treated as a priority.

He said discussions with the heads of the three local governments had reinforced the need to protect and further develop the site. Studies are under way to conserve the Shaligram while promoting it as both a religious and tourist destination.

Bhusal added that efforts were also being made to develop the surrounding area as a hub for orange and kiwi farming. Although some funding has been allocated for conservation, he said the amount is insufficient and additional resources are being sought.

Local elders have expressed disappointment that the damaged retaining wall has not been rebuilt even after nearly five years, saying the prolonged neglect reflects a declining commitment to preserving religious heritage.

Setiben hosts major religious fairs during the Nepali New Year, Harishayani Ekadashi, Haribodhini Ekadashi and Makar Sankranti. The shrine also receives daily worship throughout the year.

25 tourists die of altitude sickness in Annapurna region in a year

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Lamjung, Aug. 3

A total of 25 tourists lost their lives due to altitude sickness while travelling in the world-renowned Annapurna trekking region during the fiscal year 2025/26.

Among the deceased were 12 Nepalis, nine Indians, and one each from Japan, Mexico, Spain and Singapore.

According to the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), 15 deaths occurred in Mustang, eight in Manang, one at Annapurna Base Camp and one on the Mardi Himal trekking route.

Of the Nepali victims, four were trekking guides and porters, said ACAP Chief Dr. Rabin Kadariya.

During the same period, five other tourists died in separate trekking accidents, including falls and other mishaps. An Indian tourist died during heavy snowfall while trekking in Manang.

An Australian climber died while descending after summiting Himlung Himal in Manang. A Nepali trekker and a German national also died while trekking in the Khopra Lake area of Myagdi. Altitude sickness cases are most common in the higher-altitude areas of Mustang and Manang. Many trekkers have died while travelling to Tilicho Lake in Manang.

Dr. Kadariya said Nepali and Indian pilgrims travelling by road to visit Muktinath are also particularly vulnerable to altitude sickness because they ascend too quickly without proper acclimatisation.

"When travelling in the mountains or other high-altitude areas, people should not gain altitude too rapidly. They should take adequate rest while ascending, and anyone experiencing



symptoms of altitude sickness should immediately descend to a lower elevation," he said.

Fatal trekking accidents caused by falls also occur every year. Tourism entrepreneurs recommend that trekkers avoid travelling alone on long-distance routes and instead travel in groups or hire experienced guides.

Guide Debesh Ghimire said many visitors develop altitude sickness after travelling directly by vehicle from lower elevations to high-altitude destinations such as Muktinath and Upper Manang.

"The best way to prevent altitude sickness is to acclimatise gradually by taking regular rest stops. Trekkers should avoid ascending more than 500 metres in altitude in a single day," he said.

According to ACAP, 19 tourists died of altitude sickness in the Annapurna region in the fiscal year 2024/25, while 21 deaths were recorded in 2023/24.

Joint Secretary Bhattarai arrested over alleged illegal travel permit issuance

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

Police have arrested Pushparaj Bhattarai, a Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), in connection with a case registered under the Passport Act.

Bhattarai was taken into custody by the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) on Monday afternoon. According to a CIB source, he was arrested after a case was formally filed against him at the Kathmandu District Court under the Passport Act. Investigators allege that while serving as a Section Officer, Bhattarai unlawfully issued travel permits to Tibetan refugees, thereby facilitating a human trafficking network.

According to SSP Anupam Shumsher JB Rana of the Bureau, the case involves the alleged issuance of travel permits based on forged documents in the names of Tibetan refugees residing in refugee camps in India. Rana said that Bhattarai was arrested from Kageshwori Manohara in Kathmandu. "He is accused of issuing a travel document to a person who was not eligible to obtain one," SSP Rana said.



Under Nepali law, refugees residing in Nepal may obtain a travel permit for overseas travel only after submitting an application supported by a recommendation from the Ministry of Home Affairs. However, police said the investigation found evidence that Bhattarai issued the permits without completing the required legal procedures and based on forged documents.

Based on these findings, police have proceeded with legal action against him under the Passport Act.

Only 76 % of mothers in Baitadi practise exclusive breastfeeding

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Baitadi, Aug. 3

Only 76 per cent of mothers in Baitadi practise exclusive breastfeeding, according to data released by the District Health Office.

The office stated that, of the mothers who gave birth during the last fiscal year, 24 per cent did not follow the practice of feeding their

babies only breast milk for the first six months after birth.

According to Khagendra Karki, information officer at the District Health Office, 3,540 mothers gave birth in the district during the last fiscal year.

Of them, 2,691 exclusively breastfed their babies, while the remaining 849 introduced foods or liquids other than breast milk before the babies reached six months of age.

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Government of Nepal
Ministry of Infrastructure Development
Department of Water Supply and Sewerage Management
Integrated Water Supply and Sewerage Management Project
Project Management Office
Panipokhari, Kathmandu

Notice for Financial Proposal Opening for Construction Supervision and Contract Administration Consultant (CS-01)

EOI No. : IWSSMP/CS01/2082-083
(Publication Date : Aug 4, 2026)

We hereby notify all consulting firms shortlisted for the "Construction Supervision and Contract Administration Consultant (CS-01)" assignment, who have successfully passed the technical evaluation, that the Financial Proposal opening is scheduled as follows:

- **Date :** Aug 19, 2026 1:00 PM
- **Location :** Project Management Office, Panipokhari, Kathmandu

Authorized representatives of the following technically qualified firms are invited to attend the opening session:

1. Building Design Authority (Nepal)
2. ILF Consulting Engineers (India) Pvt.Ltd.
3. Joint venture between ITECO Nepal (P) Ltd., Shah Technical Consultants Pvt.Ltd, and Total Management Services Pvt.Ltd. in association with Unique Engineering Consultancy (P) Ltd.
4. Joint venture between TAEC Consult P.Ltd. and Voyants Solutions Private Limited
5. Plush Engineers and Architects Pvt.Ltd. (Nepal)

Project Director

EDITORIAL

Resilient Highways

Persistent rainfall, landslides and flooding have disrupted vehicular movement on several major highways and road sections across the country. Each year, floods and landslides during the monsoon disrupt major highways of the country and before the roads are reconstructed, another monsoon takes a heavy toll on them. BP Highway, devastated by the 2024 flood and landslide, has not yet been repaired and reconstructed to date. Once again, the disrupted vehicular movement in major highways has highlighted fragile road infrastructure and inadequate disaster preparedness.

As per the news published in this daily, all types of vehicles have been prohibited from travelling along the Khurkot Nepalthok-Katunjabeshi section of the BP Highway from 6:00 pm to 4:00 am on Monday. Likewise, traffic has been suspended on the Kanti Lokpath between 5:00 pm and 5:00 am. 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.

Likewise, most of the highways in Nepal, including the East-West Highway, Madan Bhandari Highway, and Siddhicharan Lok Marga, have faced partial or major obstruction in the past few weeks. Travelling within the country has become extremely dangerous during the monsoon. The landslide in the Nagayanghat-Mugling road section is a regular occurrence. The vulnerable condition of the main route for the entrance has been an eyesore to the authorities.

Nepal's economy relies heavily on transportation or movement of agricultural goods. So when the major highways get disrupted, it has far-reaching economic consequences. When the supply chain breaks, it creates a shortage of essential goods, especially in Kathmandu and other major cities and a shortage of raw materials for businesses. Blockage of major highways during monsoon has been adversely affecting tourism, one of Nepal's key economic sectors. It has been working as a major deterrent for both domestic and international tourists. It has also tarnished Nepal's reputation as a safe travel destination for international tourists.

Although the Department of Roads and security forces work relentlessly to clear roads as soon as they get blocked, this emergency response alone is not a sustainable solution. Neither is it enough. The government should seek a long-term solution by building climate-resilient road infrastructure. Proper geological assessment, construction of a proper drainage system, and slope stabilization measures are a must. Haphazard blasting during road construction has made our mountains fragile, which aggravates landslides during the monsoon.

Today, we have strengthened early warning systems and improved weather forecasting. Likewise, people can get real-time information regarding road conditions. It has allowed authorities to mobilise resources before a disaster escalates.

The 2024 incident at Jhaplekhola has prompted people to take weather forecasts seriously before travelling during the peak monsoon period. For the past few years, we have been experiencing heavy rainfall over a short period of time. This leads to floods and landslides, which cause major damage to road infrastructure. Thus, the country should invest in resilient infrastructure, meeting international standards. Strengthening disaster preparedness is also a must to ensure undisrupted connectivity.

Managing Urban Floods

KUMUD GAUTAM

Every monsoon, the same sorry show of waterlogged roads, houses submerged, vehicles stalled, drains overflowing and families waiting to be rescued is repeated in Nepal's cities. The catastrophic flood that engulfed Kathmandu in late September 2024 revealed that urban flooding is no longer an occasional inconvenience. It's a major crisis for infrastructure and public safety. Heavy rain was the trigger, but unplanned construction, shrinking river corridors, paved open land, clogged drains and weak coordination turned heavy rain into disaster.

Once upon a time, the Kathmandu Valley was a place of rivers, ponds, wetlands, agricultural fields and traditional stone spouts that stored, absorbed and slowly released water. Much of this natural system has been lost to buildings, roads and concrete surfaces as a result of rapid urbanisation. Rainwater that used to soak into the ground now rushes into undersized drains and swollen rivers. Things are no different in Lalitpur, Biratnagar, Pokhara, Butwal and other fast-growing cities.

And the answer is not simply to build bigger drains along the road. Nepal needs an integrated urban water-management system, with engineering, land-use planning and ecological restoration. First, every municipality should develop a digital stormwater master plan. Engineers can use rainfall records, topographic surveys, satellite images and hydraulic models to identify streets prone to flooding, blocked channels, and locations where new drains, culverts, pumping stations or temporary storage are needed. Drainage infrastructure should be designed for the future intensity of rainfall, not out-of-date historical averages. Wherever possible, stormwater drains should be separated from sewer lines. In heavy rain, mixed systems overflow, dumping polluted water into homes and streets.

Second, Kathmandu needs to protect the Bagmati, Bishnumati, Manohara, Nakhu and other river corridors. Floodplains should be mapped, legally defined and kept free of further construction. Public greenways and overflow

space should be restored with vegetation on riverbanks. Engineering structures can protect critical locations, but confining rivers between concrete walls can transfer flood risk downstream.

Third, cities should implement "sponge city" measures. Rain gardens, permeable pavements, detention ponds, recharge pits, rooftop harvesting and restored wetlands can all capture rain close to its point of fall. Schools, government buildings, residential colonies, shopping malls and industrial areas should be made to hold back a part of their stormwater before it is let out into the city drains. These decentralised systems are often cheaper and more flexible than relying only on huge underground pipes.

Fourth, maintenance must be a year-round municipal service. Plastic, sediment and construction waste clog even the best-designed drains and cause failure. There must be mandatory pre-monsoon inspection, mechanical cleaning, waste control and public reporting of choked drains. Utility agencies need to coordinate road digging so as not to damage or bury water channels.

Finally, engineering has to be complemented by real-time rainfall monitoring, river sensors, neighbourhood sirens, mobile alerts and clearly marked evacuation routes. Flood maps should inform decisions about building permits, emergency shelters and insurance. Local communities need to know not only that danger is coming, but where to go, and which roads are still safe. Funding should be a combination of federal grants, municipal revenues and developer contributions, with the most vulnerable settlements taking precedence. Urban flooding can't be totally wiped out, particularly when climate change means more extreme rain. But the number of deaths, damage and disruption can be greatly lessened. Nepal's cities need to stop treating each monsoon flood as an isolated natural disaster. It's an engineering and governance issue, and it's predictable. It will cost far less to prevent than to rebuild, compensate, and lose livelihoods repeatedly.

Need To Promote Garment Industry

Uttam Maharjan



The garment industry is one of the important industries in Nepal. But the industry is on the decline for several reasons. During the 1980s and 1990s, the industry was one of the leading industries. The country followed an export-based import system during the early 1980s. As a leading export-oriented industry, the annual export of garments reached USD 1.2 billion in 1994. However, after the expiration of the Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA) with the USA in 2005, the industry declined sharply, resulting in closures of most factories, huge investment losses and the displacement of workers.

Yarns, textiles and readymade garments were a major source of foreign exchange in the past. This sector witnessed a high growth rate of 12.15 per cent annually from 1994 to 2003. However, the sector witnessed a decline from 2003 to 2022. Owing to the abolition of the quota system, readymade garment exports to the US plunged further. The US share of Nepali garments was over 83 per cent in 2003, which slipped to 16.97 per cent in 2022. Now, the European Union has been the main destination with a 48 per cent share.

Misfortune

It is a matter of misfortune that no successive governments have paid heed to improving the garment industry. According to the annual foreign trade statistics

recently released by the Department of Customs, Nepal recorded a trade volume of Rs. 2,411.66 billion last fiscal year. Out of this, exports constituted Rs. 315.29 billion (13.07 per cent), while imports made up a whopping Rs. 2,096.37 billion (86.93 per cent), resulting in a trade deficit of Rs. 1,781.08 billion. Out of the total exports, the portion of ready-made garments stood at Rs. 9.28 billion.

To stimulate the garment industry, the government is all set to establish a Textile and Clothing Development Council. The Council will be set up under the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies. The motive behind this initiative is to promote the domestic production of garments using domestically produced raw materials. It may be noted that over 65 per cent of export-oriented factories depend on imported fabric from countries like India and China. It is an irony that when Nepal can produce raw materials itself, it is importing them from abroad. So the government has emphasised the use of domestic raw materials in the production of quality readymade garments.

The domestic production of raw materials and readymade garments will give a fillip to the garment industry. Nepal has been talking about promoting exports and slashing imports through import substitution for years, but no tangible results have been achieved so far. Rather, the country is facing huge trade deficits year after year. Our shopping malls are flooded with foreign-made goods, including ready-made garments. Importing goods in large amounts from abroad means sending our hard-earned foreign currency abroad.

The government has adopted the Farm to Fibre, Fibre to Fabric, Fabric to Fashion and Fashion to

It behoves the government to ink free trade agreements with our trading partners and to woo foreign direct investment.

Export objective. The concept of the green garment village has also been encapsulated in the government's policy and programmes. Such a village is planned to be established in the vicinity of the Kathmandu Valley. However, no budget has been earmarked. The government has instructed the Garment Association of Nepal (GAN) to identify a suitable site for the establishment of such a village. The main objective of the village is to enable the country to produce textiles in an eco-friendly manner.

The government is also planning to set up a high-level National Export Council. The existing cash export incentive scheme will be expanded to encourage the export trade. The government is also introducing Export Credit Insurance. Likewise, the government is planning to establish a high-level international standard exhibition and convention centre and an internationally accredited testing laboratory for the promotion of the import trade.

The government should also pay attention to new developments emerging in the trade sector. Nepal lags in e-commerce, which is considered the mainstay of modern trade. It is surmised that if obstacles to e-commerce are eliminated, the export trade could rise by 25 to 30 per cent. Similarly, lack of international payment gateways such as PayPal is acutely felt in the trade. With high postal or courier costs, complicated banking procedures

and policy ambiguity, Nepali products are facing difficulty penetrating the international market. Lack of direct access to the international market, a shortage of investment in marketing and inability to identify fashion trends in the international market are some of the stumbling blocks to the export of garments.

Technology

Nepal also lacks technology and processing centres designed to turn natural fibres such as allo (Himalayan giant nettle) and hemp into fabric. It is imperative to pay heed to quality, design and timely delivery. It is also mandatory to fulfil environmental, social and governance standards for exports to the European Union and the United Kingdom. It behoves the government to ink free trade agreements with our trading partners and to woo foreign direct investment. The absence of testing and certification facilities is an obstacle to increasing garment exports to the USA. The government should take the initiative in having such facilities in place.

The present government can do a lot to improve the trade sector. The government should take steps to clean the Augean stables left by previous governments over the past 35 years. After the collapse of the Panchayat regime, many factories were closed down, making the country dependent on imports. With industrialisation and agriculture on the decline, the country has to suffer huge trade deficits. To reverse the situation, something must be done to improve the economy. And this is the right time for the present government to show that it is a development-friendly government.

(Maharjan has been regularly writing on contemporary issues for this daily since 2000.)

The Fragrance Within, Perils Beyond

Enlightened beings

Nepal is the land of Prince Siddhartha, who became the Buddha, Rajarshi Janak (the spiritual king of Mithila to whom bodily pleasures meant nothing), and many other enlightened beings.

Storybooks like the Panchatantram mention a country where precious stones used to be sold for a pittance. And I keep wondering if we are the very people who sell such gems to meet our everyday expenses as most of us continue our search for a land where milk and honey flow.

How I want to be proved wrong! The musk deer, as they say, roams around the Himalayan woods to get to the source of the sweet fragrance, unaware that it is coming from its own navel. Sadly, the restless creature falls prey to the poacher more often than not. Apparently, as a people, we are far more restless than the musk deer itself. It is a sad fact that our search for the proverbial land of milk and honey has helped alter the political geography of South Asia.

As I keep oscillating between time-worn pages of history and a troubled present, how I yearn for some semblance of stability and predictability! Even in this ancient land of enlightened beings, why does the light continue to elude us? Here, I do not mean the kind of light that flickers inside our bulbs, fluorescent tubes, table lamps and street lamps, going off now and then, throwing ample light on the state of the government-run power utility.

The dim light transports me to

Who is using our ethnic, religious, social and political diversity as faultlines? And for what end? I hope a youthful, competent government manages to unearth the facts, address these faultlines, suture the open wounds before they fester further, and rally the country towards a new era of peace, progress and prosperity.

my village, where my sisters and I used to study with the help of flickering light coming from smoky, kerosene-fed lamps, with our Ama by our side and Baba in one or the other faraway government outpost, both of them busy with their never-ending kam ra kartavya (duties and responsibilities). Shielded from the rest of the world, I was in Darkness even then.

But I knew the darkness of my childhood. It was balmy and comforting. Several decades later, a deeper, more sinister darkness has descended, one in whose womb I often sense mysterious forces conspiring against this country and its people.

Our generation has watched one upheaval after another: the rise of a 13-year family rule that resembled

a dictatorship after the establishment of multiparty democracy with a constitutional monarchy. What followed was institutionalisation of policy-level corruption, bad governance, nepotism and a decade-long insurgency that killed thousands of Nepalis, causing infrastructural losses amounting to billions of rupees and pushing the country decades back in terms of development.

Faultlines

Perhaps that is why the shadows linger. But time never stands still. Last year's youth-led movement ended the rule of the Troika, leaving behind a trail of deaths and devastation and making way for national elections that have brought a nascent party to power. While an inexperienced government struggles to rule, let alone govern, barely past the honeymoon period, parts of the country are already in flames.

Who is needling the wounds that we have not bothered to suture, deliberately or otherwise?

Who is using our ethnic, religious, social and political diversity as faultlines? And for what end?

I hope a youthful, competent government manages to unearth the facts, address these faultlines, suture the open wounds before they fester further, and rally the country towards a new era of peace, progress and prosperity.

(The author is a freelance writer.)

50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

August 4, 1976

Evidence Bill Introduced

Kathmandu, August 3: The Education, Law and Justice Minister introduced the Evidence Bill in the Rashtriya Panchayat today, reports RSS.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

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Or send them to P.O. Box 23, Kathmandu, Nepal

READER'S MAIL

Stock Hospitals With Anti-snake Venom

This is about the news report titled "Scarcity of anti-snake venom in hospitals in Dang," which appeared in the online edition of this daily on August 2.

According to the report, the snakebite treatment centre at the Rapti Institute of Health Sciences (Ghorahi) and Lamahi Hospital (Gadhawa) have run out of anti-snake venom, while its stock is about to run out at the Rapti Provincial Hospital (Tulsipur).

As snakebite incidents start increasing with the rainy season, the hospitals have demanded that the concerned bodies immediately provide the dose in sufficient quantity.

Every year, dozens, if not hundreds, of Nepalis die of snakebite, and the



lack of timely availability of anti-snake venom is to blame. Though snakebite is entirely preventable, it's a shame that so many people have to succumb to snakebite. If this sobering reality points to anything, it is that our healthcare institutions are in shambles and are in urgent need of a revamp.

It's high time that the government sprang into action to stock hospitals with anti-snake venom.

Nikeesa Neupane Dang

TAILPIECE

A man walks into a bar and says to the bartender, "I bet you fifty dollars that I can bite my right eye." The bartender says, "Yeah, right! I've never seen anyone do that!" So the man takes out his glass eye and bites it. The angry bartender pays the man his fifty dollars and the man walks away.

He comes back half an hour later and says, "I bet you fifty dollars I can bite my left eye." Now the bartender becomes really skeptical. She says, "I just saw you walk in here -- you can't be blind!" So he takes out his fake teeth and bites his left eye. The bartender pays him his money and he walks away.

++
A man went to the police station wishing to speak with the burglar who had broken into his house the night before.

"You'll get your chance in court," said the desk sergeant.
"No, no, no!" insisted the man. "I want to know how he got into the house without waking my wife. I've been trying to do that for years!"

Iran denies US talks after Trump claim

AFP
Tehran, Aug. 3

Iran denied any negotiations were taking place with the United States after President Donald Trump said new talks would begin Monday in an effort to end their war, now in its sixth month.

The rebuttal by the Iranian foreign ministry follows Trump saying he had held off launching new strikes on the Islamic republic to allow for further diplomatic efforts, a familiar pattern in the conflict.

Washington and Tehran have been at war since February 28, when the US and Israel launched surprise strikes against Iran, though months of on-off diplomacy have led to periods of relative calm.Trump last week threatened to hit Iran "very hard", with the US leader reportedly considering renewed attacks including against energy infrastructure.

But the president pulled back from that threat Saturday, saying the "perimeters" of a deal were there.

Iran's foreign ministry however denied there were currently negotiations taking place.

"We are not currently negotiating with the United States. Our negotiations are with Oman to secure passage through the Strait of Hormuz," said foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei during a weekly press briefing.

The Hormuz shipping route is a major sticking point in efforts to end the war. Iran has obstructed vessels attempting to pass the critical trade corridor, firing on commercial ships.

Before the war, there was free passage through the strait, but Iran now insists on retaining control and charging fees, something the US rejects.

Tehran has refused to let ships travel any route other than one which hugs the Iranian coast.On Sunday, Baqaei told state television that a deal was close on managing Hormuz together with Oman, which sits on the other side of the narrow waterway.



Protesters for and against the Iran war confront each other during a rally in the US city of Boston on Sunday.

"We are now going to reach an understanding on a route acceptable to both sides -- neither the northern route nor the southern route -- but one that respects the sovereign rights of both sides and safeguards our national interests and security," he said.

But he insisted that such an agreement did not mean the reopening of the strait.On Sunday, a tanker off the coast of Oman reported hearing an explosion nearby, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) Centre reported, but the ship and crew were all reported safe.Trump told reporters on Sunday that the new talks with Iran would cover Hormuz and ultimately the denuclearisation of Iran.

The US president said at the start of the conflict that the war was necessary to deal with Iran's nuclear programme. Western nations accuse Iran of seeking a bomb, though Tehran insists the

programme is entirely civilian in nature.

"Now what we're doing is we're talking to them in the form of a negotiation. It begins tomorrow afternoon," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One on Sunday, without providing details of the venue or participants.

The president said he had been asked by Iran as well as US partners Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar to hold off on further strikes, which he claimed would have been "the biggest attack since World War II".

Iranian media denied that Tehran had asked Trump not to strike.

Trump has repeatedly claimed a settlement to end the war is near, only for fighting to resume. He has previously issued apocalyptic warnings to Tehran, only to later backtrack by saying diplomacy was underway.A previous ceasefire deal between the foes fell through last month. It was supposed to open the

Strait of Hormuz to ships carrying vital energy exports from the Gulf to feed the global economy.

Iranian lawmaker Hassan Ghashghavi, spokesman for the parliament's national security commission, said on Sunday that mediators were trying to revive the US-Iran memorandum of understanding that was agreed in June.

That agreement was not intended as a final peace deal, but as a stepping stone to negotiations on a comprehensive agreement, though it did include provisions on Hormuz.

"They know that the main issue and, in fact, the key to the matter right now is the issue of the Strait of Hormuz, so yes, there is an exchange of views," Ghashghavi said.

Posting on X, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said: "We must strive to compel the enemy to remain committed to what it has signed."

5 dead in Indonesian ferry fire

AP
Indonesia, Aug. 3

Indonesian rescuers were searching for possible missing passengers Monday after rescuing 229 people from a ferry that caught fire the previous day in waters off the main island of Java, leaving at least five people dead.

The Mutiara Sentosa 2 ferry was traveling from Indonesia's second-largest city of Surabaya in East Java to the city of Makassar in South Sulawesi, and initial reports said it was carrying 232 passengers and 39 crew members, based on the ship's manifest, when the fire broke out between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m. in waters off Sumenep regency.

However, by Monday morning officials said many more people were aboard than listed, and that the number of people still missing was unclear after 229 people were rescued and five bodies recovered. Officials are relying on reports from the families of victims and survivors in an attempt to determine the number of those missing.

It is common in Indonesia for the number of passengers on a boat or ferry to differ from the manifest. Such discrepancies can reflect overcrowding and complicate search and rescue efforts, said Nanang Sigit, who heads the Surabaya Search and Rescue Office.

The cause of the fire was not

immediately known and remained under investigation. The vessel was also loaded with 180 vehicles, mostly trucks, and an excavator.

Ahmad Abdul Karim, one of the survivors, said the fire appeared to have started from a truck on the lower vehicle deck.

"Fanned by the wind, the flames spread extremely quickly," Karim said, "In less than 30 minutes, everyone had been instructed to move to the bow of the ferry."

Search and rescue teams dispatched a rescue boat from Surabaya to the scene, about 35 kilometres (22 miles) north of Buruan Sapudi island in the Sumenep regency. Indonesian navy ships also assisted along with a number of passing vessels near the location of the incident.

The ferry was built in Japan in 1992 and operated there before being sold to Indonesia in 2015. With a length of 160 meters (525 feet), it can accommodate 689 passengers and 49 crew, along with up to 181 vehicles.

The Mutiara Sentosa 2 serves the Surabaya-Makassar route, a voyage that typically takes around 40 hours and is primarily used by domestic travellers and cargo transport between the islands of Java and Sulawesi.

Indonesia is an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands where ferries are a common method of travel. Disasters occur regularly, with weak safety enforcement often blamed.

Seoul issues first 'severe heatwave warning' under new system

AFP
Seoul, Aug. 3

South Korea's weather agency issued a "severe heatwave warning" for Seoul on Monday, the first such advisory since introducing the designation this year to alert the public about extreme temperatures.

New national heat records were set on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, with the mercury soaring up to 42.5C, leading to nearly 300 people being hospitalised, according to health authorities.

The sweltering heatwave continued on Monday, albeit without breaking the weekend's all-time record.

But the Korea Meteorological Administration issued its first "severe heatwave warning" for Seoul, saying some districts in the city of nine million people could expect more roasting temperatures to come.

The agency said Monday marked the second consecutive day when the apparent, or "feels-like", temperature in some districts reached 35C -- and forecast figures as high as 38C from 11:00 am (0200 GMT) on Tuesday.

"Outdoor activities and work should be halted or postponed as much as possible," says the heat warning. "Individuals should move to cool locations, such as



The Korea Meteorological Administration issued its first 'severe heatwave warning' for Seoul, with more roasting temperatures expected.

air-conditioned indoor spaces or designated heat relief shelters."

Pedestrian commuters in the capital snaked their way to work through patches of shade on Monday, avoiding direct sunlight even in the morning's cooler early hours.

The "severe heatwave warning" category was introduced in South Korea this year, mirroring similar designations other countries have

Suu Kyi meets Red Cross delegate

AFP
Yangon, Aug. 3

Myanmar's detained democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi met with the Red Cross representative to the country on Monday, the humanitarian group said, the first publicised meeting between her and a foreign official since she was ousted in a 2021 coup.

The military deposed Suu Kyi in February 2021, jailing the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and triggering an ongoing civil war that has killed more than 100,000 people, according to monitor ACLED.

The coup leader and former junta chief, Min Aung Hlaing, was installed as civilian president in April following highly restricted elections.

Analysts say the vote -- which did not include Suu Kyi's party -- was part of an effort to whitewash Min Aung Hlaing's rule.

Suu Kyi's son, Kim Aris, welcomed her meeting with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), describing it on Monday as "an important first step" that brought hope.

Kim Aris, a British national, has sought independently verified proof that his mother is alive after she was transferred from prison to house arrest in April following Min Aung Hlaing's change in position.

He said in a social media post he hoped the meeting would lead to "greater humanitarian access, direct contact with my mother, credible and independently verified information about her wellbeing, and ultimately her immediate and unconditional release, together with all political prisoners".

An ICRC spokesperson told AFP that its resident representative to Myanmar, Arnaud de Baecque, visited Suu Kyi on Monday.

The visit included the opportunity

to speak with Suu Kyi "in private", the ICRC said in a statement.

The Myanmar president's office earlier announced the meeting, releasing photos of Suu Kyi shaking hands and sitting with de Baecque.

The ICRC spokesperson confirmed the veracity of the two images, and said the group did not take them.

Suu Kyi, now 81, was moved to house arrest after Min Aung Hlaing said he had commuted the rest of her sentence.

She was detained on a host of charges that rights groups say were confected to sideline her and her popular National League for Democracy party.

"We are happy to see her photo like this if it's really her meeting with the ICRC. We can know now that she's alive," a veteran politician of her party told AFP on condition of anonymity before the ICRC confirmed the visit.

"However, Auntie should be released immediately as she's being detained unlawfully," the politician said.

Authorities have not disclosed the exact location of Suu Kyi's detention in the capital Naypyidaw, nor how many years of her sentence remain.

The ICRC did not share her location, nor details of her health condition, noting that under its working methods, the organisation's observations related to visits with detainees are only shared with the detaining authorities.

Myanmar has been largely ostracised by the international community since the coup, but analysts say Min Aung Hlaing is seeking to secure international legitimacy.

The 11-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has excluded member state Myanmar's leadership from high-level summits.

However, neighbour Thailand has been leading an effort to bring Myanmar back into the diplomatic fold, bilaterally and through the regional bloc.

PRISM

5 times sharks made Odd News headlines

California: The Discovery Channel's annual Shark Week programming block might be winding down, but UPI Odd News chooses to live by the sage wisdom of Tracy Jordan: "Live every week like it's Shark Week."

The oft-misunderstood fish have made frequent appearances in the headlines for being dangerous, curious, lovable or downright unusual. Kayla Ross and her paddleboarding partner went out to intentionally try to find a shark that had been spotted off the Santa Barbara, Calif., coast in June -- unaware that the shark had actually found them, instead.

Overdue library book found in fireplace

Australia: An Australian library received an unusual return when a book checked out about 150 years ago was found bricked into the fireplace of a home.

The Kiama Library in New South Wales said on social media that a family returned the book during the weekend after a home renovation projected led to it being discovered in a tea desk that had been bricked into the house's fireplace.

The book, The Antiquities of Athens, was published in 1858 and dates back to when the Kiama Public Library was housed at the old Kiama School of Arts, between 1872 and 1890. The exact date the book was borrowed has been lost to time, but officials estimate it was likely about 150 years ago.

The library said the tome would have accrued late fees of nearly \$20,000 under the bylaws at the time it was borrowed, but the library has since done away with all overdue fines.

Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

- 1701– Great Peace of Montreal between New France and First Nations is signed.
- 1789– France: abolition of feudalism by the National Constituent Assembly.
- 1791– The Treaty of Sistova is signed, ending the Ottoman-Habsburg wars.
- 1821– The Saturday Evening Post is published for the first time as a weekly newspaper.
- 1854– The Hinomaru is established as the official flag to be flown from Japanese ships.
- 1921– Bolshevik–Makhnovist conflict: Mikhail Frunze declares victory over the Makhnovshchina.
- 1924– Diplomatic relations between Mexico and the Soviet Union are established.
- 1947 – The Supreme Court of Japan is established.

Millions of Thais quit alcohol for Buddhist Lent

AFP
Thailand, Aug. 3

With her palms pressed together and her head bowed, Wassana Nak-umma vowed to give up alcohol for three months, joining millions of Thais in an abstinence campaign blending public health with spirituality.

The 42-year-old housewife, who took the pledge at a Buddhist temple in Samut Sakhon, west of Bangkok, admitted she used to be a "heavy drinker".

"I used to get so drunk that my kids had to clean up my vomit," she told AFP candidly.

But a concerned relative persuaded her to join a campaign to give up alcohol during Khao Phansa, a three-month period of reflection observed by Buddhists akin to Christian Lent.

"I still craved it. Whenever I saw people buying liquor or beer at stores, I would look at them and want to drink like them," she said.

"But I held back, telling myself it was



People gather to mark the start of Buddhist Lent at Wat Nong Song Hong Buddhist temple in Samut Sakhon province on July 30, 2026.

only three months. After that three-month period, I realised, 'Hey, I can do this! Next year, I must do it again!'

That was in 2024. Wassana went back

MADHES COMMISSION'S REPORTS PRESENTED IN NA

RSS
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

Annual reports of the Madhes Commission for the two fiscal years have been presented before the National Assembly (NA).

Minister for Law, Justice and Federal Affairs, Sobita Gautam, presented the documents for the fiscal year 2080-81 BS (2023-24) and year 2081-82 BS (2024-25) before the upper house session today.

In the meeting, President of Committee on Development, Economic Affairs, and Good Governance (National Assembly), Krishna Prasad Paudel, presented the 'Study Report on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Water Resources Management in Madhes Province, 2083 BS'.

LIST OF FOCAL PERSONS OF 260 HOSPITALS RELEASED

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

The Ministry of Health and Food Hygiene has published the contact details of service-providing hospitals and designated contact officers across the country to ensure the effective implementation of the mandatory 10 per cent free healthcare service.

Releasing the list of focal persons of 260 hospitals on Monday, the ministry said it had designated contact officers for each hospital to ensure patients' access to free hospital bed services and to facilitate prompt coordination in response to complaints.

The published list includes federal, provincial, community, teaching and private hospitals.

It provides the name and telephone number of the focal persons of the hospitals, enabling patients and service recipients to contact them directly if they encounter problems related to free treatment.

The ministry said it had strengthened monitoring and coordination to ensure the effective implementation of the provision guaranteeing 10 per cent free healthcare services in practice.

It has already launched an online portal to manage free hospital beds and has made it mandatory for hospitals to regularly update information on reserved beds.

The ministry has urged service recipients to use the published contact details to obtain information on free treatment, lodge complaints if they encounter difficulties, and seek coordination in accessing the service.

Cyber frauds soar: 16...

Police urge caution

Kathmandu District Police Range's Superintendent of Police (SP) Dan Bahadur Thapa advised the public to remain highly cautious while making online purchases, saying many people fall victim to fraud after paying advance amounts to unverified sellers.

"Consumers should choose the 'Cash on Delivery' option whenever possible, as paying only after receiving goods reduces the risk of fraud," SP Thapa said.

He urged consumers to verify online shopping platforms before making payments and remain alert to unusually cheap offers.

"If an offer appears unrealistically cheaper than the market price, it should immediately raise suspicion," he said.

SP Thapa also warned people against pressure tactics used by online sellers and advised them not to trust unsolicited calls from individuals claiming to represent banks or digital

'Manpower,...

The Home Secretary warned that if social media platforms continue to be poorly managed and inadequately regulated, the challenges to country's national security will become increasingly serious. Emphasising that cybersecurity is emerging as one of the country's most complex security concerns, he called for greater investment in institutional capacity, technological advancement, skilled human resources and effective regulatory measures to strengthen national cyber resilience.



Lawmakers attending the meeting of the National Assembly at Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, on Monday.

KMC, AEPC ink deal to revive biogas plant

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) and the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC) have signed an agreement to bring the biogas plant at Teku back into operation.

The agreement was signed on Monday in the presence of Acting Mayor Sunita Dangol by KMC Chief Administrative Officer (CDO) Saroj Guragain and AEPC Executive Director Nawa Raj Dhakal.

According to KMC, the initiative aims to modernise and improve the management of the city's organic waste through the use of appropriate technology.

Following the signing ceremony, Acting Mayor Dangol said the agreement reflected the city's commitment to promoting technology-based, sustainable management of organic waste.

Dangol, said, "I hope the work will be completed within the stipulated timeframe."

"Restoring the plant alone will not be enough. Ensuring its sustainable operation and expanding it as a learning model will be the real achievement. We remain committed to establishing a sustainable system for managing the organic waste generated in the city," she assured.

AEPC Executive Director Dhakal said the centre would supply the necessary equipment, materials and technical services required to make the plant operational. After monitoring and supervision, the facility will be handed over to KMC.

He added that KMC and AEPC could



also collaborate on projects supported under the Green Climate Fund.

The biogas plant was constructed under KMC's Integrated Sustainable Waste Management Project. Construction began in 2015 and the plant came into operation in 2018.

When fully operational, the facility is designed to process three metric tonnes of organic waste daily, generating 14 kilowatts of electricity, 300 kilograms of organic fertiliser and 13,500 litres of treated water each day. KMC and the European Union jointly invested Rs. 18.2 million in the project.

The plant later ceased operation due to technical problems. Under the new agreement, KMC will allocate the budget required for its long-term operation and maintenance.

It will also appoint qualified personnel or an operator to run the facility under a commercial model, assume full ownership after rehabilitation and ensure its environmentally friendly operation.

KMC will also use organic waste as a resource to produce biogas and organic fertiliser, contributing to the development of a circular economy.

Three missing...

Chief District Officer of Sindhuli, Scheme Shrestha, said a team of divers from the Armed Police Force's Khurkot Base Camp, along with Nepal Police personnel and other security agencies, had been deployed at the site with necessary equipment to carry out the search and rescue operation.

Likewise, an APF diving team has been mobilised to search for the missing passengers. DIG Karki said a rescue team from the Disaster Management Base in Khurkot, equipped with divers, was dispatched immediately after receiving information about the incident.

An APF team led by Inspector Nirendra Gurung, along with divers and personnel from Nepal Police, has been deployed for the search and rescue operation, according to the APF.

Meanwhile, according to our district correspondent Baburam Devkota from Sindhuli, the search and rescue operation for the missing passengers and the car has faced difficulty due to flooding in the River.

market access and quality healthcare services.

Despite the harsh mountainous terrain, widespread hardship and limited resources, the women of Mugu have never abandoned their bond with the soil.

The soil on their hands symbolises not only agriculture but also family livelihoods, self-reliance and the foundation of the rural economy.

Their relentless labour keeps the fields green and sustains life in the district's remote settlements.

Meanwhile, AEPC will conduct a detailed feasibility study for the plant's restoration, procure and install the required equipment, carry out testing and hand the rehabilitated facility over to KMC.

Officials from KMC's environment management department and AEPC had held a series of discussions to define their respective responsibilities before signing the agreement.

On July 30, Acting Mayor Dangol and Biraj Bhakta Shrestha also discussed intergovernmental coordination and cooperation, including collaboration on the waste-to-energy project.

KMC plans to develop the project not only as a waste management facility but also as a commercially viable public-private partnership.

The metropolitan city believes the project will increase the use of technology in managing biodegradable waste, reduce the volume of waste transported to the Banchare Danda landfill site, generate additional revenue from waste, and contribute to urban cleanliness and environmental sustainability through the production of renewable energy and organic fertiliser.

Left alliance, NC claim to form government in Bagmati Province

BY RAMMANI DAHAL
Makawanpur, Aug. 3

An all-party meeting was held in Bagmati Province on Monday to discuss a way forward for the formation of a new provincial government.

The meeting, attended by representatives of the five parties represented in the Bagmati Provincial Assembly, called for creating a conducive environment for the formation of a new government.

Convened by Bagmati Province Chief Minister (CM) Indra Bahadur Baniya, the meeting saw the left alliance urge the Chief Minister to pave the way for the formation of a new government.

Ratna Prasad Dhakal, chief whip of the Nepali Communist Party (NCP) parliamentary party in Bagmati Province, said the alliance had asked the CM to facilitate the government formation process. "We told the CM either to resign or seek a vote of confidence," Dhakal said.

"The province should not be kept in a state of uncertainty. If the government secures the required numbers and wins a vote of confidence, we will accept that," he added.

He said it was inappropriate for the government to continue in office after losing its majority.

CM Baniya, however, told the meeting that he would resign if the opposition could demonstrate a clear majority.

According to Dhakal, Baniya

NEW NATIONAL TRANSPORT POLICY UNVEILED

RSS
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

The government has issued the National Transport Policy, 2083 by replacing the provisions that had remained unchanged for nearly 25 years.

The Ministry of Infrastructure Development stated that the new policy aims to ensure a sustainable, accessible, safe, green and technology-friendly transportation system through the development of an integrated transport network.

Govt should discuss foreign policy with opposition: UML

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

Chief of Foreign Affairs Department (FAD) of the CPN-UML and former Foreign Minister Pradeep Gyawali has said that the government must hold discussions on foreign policy and affairs with the opposition parties.

"There should be a uniform voice in the matters of foreign affairs. But the government has not formally talked with opposition regarding such matters," he said to the journalists at an interaction organised by the Department.

Stating that the country must be clear on the opportunities and risks of both the bilateral and multilateral relations, he said that Nepal must not have

MINISTER TIMILSINA URGES GORKHAPATRA TO MAINTAIN EDITORIAL EXCELLENCE

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

Minister for Information and Communication Dr. Bikram Timilsina has urged Gorkhapatra Corporation (GC) to ensure that its publications reflect the prestige and legacy of the country's oldest media institution by maintaining highest standards of credibility and quality.

Addressing a meeting with the Corporation's management and publication heads at the Ministry in Singha Durbar on Monday, Minister Dr. Timilsina said the institution's 126-year history placed a great responsibility on its journalists and editors to produce reliable, readable and convincing content.

He stressed that Gorkhapatra personnel should adapt to changing times rather than remain bound by outdated practices.

"Gorkhapatra staff must decide whether to follow the path dictated by the times or the path of personal preference. Only by embracing the changing times can Gorkhapatra continue to fulfill its role," said Minister Timilsina.

Calling for the formulation of a clear editorial policy, Minister Timilsina emphasised the effective utilisation of existing human resources.

The Minister also directed the corporation to establish a unified integrated newsroom combining Gorkhapatra Daily, The Rising Nepal Daily, gorkhapatraonline.com, and risingnepaldaily.com to improve coordination and editorial efficiency.

General Manager of the Corporation Hikmat Bahadur Rawal said efforts to establish an integrated newsroom were under way since he assumed office. He also pledged to make Gorkhapatra Online more competitive in the digital media landscape.



Participants at the all-party meeting convened by Bagmati Province Chief Minister Indra Bahadur Baniya to discuss the formation of a new provincial government.

responded by saying that the left alliance did not have the required numbers and instead asked them to support his government.

The left alliance, formed between the NCP and the CPN-UML at both the federal and provincial levels, urged the Chief Minister to clear the way for a new government.

Dhakal said Baniya maintained that the NCP and the UML lacked a majority and therefore should support his administration instead.

NCP parliamentary party leader Shalikram Jamkattel and UML parliamentary party leader Jagannath Thapaliya also called on the CM to facilitate the formation of a new government.

They argued that since the government had fallen into a minority, it should either resign or seek a vote of confidence if it believed it still commanded majority support.

Former CM Bahadur Singh Lama Tamang, who also attended the meeting, said his party had asked the left alliance to present a credible basis for claiming that the current government was in the minority.

Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) parliamentary party leader Uddhav Thapa said his party would proceed in accordance with its official decision.

Surendra Raj Gosain of the Nepal Workers and Peasants Party and Shailendra Bajracharya of the Hamro Nepali Party stressed that the issue of government formation should be resolved without delay.

The Baniya-led government lost its majority after the CPN-UML withdrew its support.

The NCP and the UML have reached an agreement that, if the left alliance forms the next government in Bagmati Province, the UML will lead it.

Govt promotes original films, says Minister Timilsina



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

The government held discussions with stakeholders on the draft Guidelines on the Grant Programme for the Production of Films of Cultural and National Importance, 2083.

According to a press release issued by the Secretariat for the Minister for Communications and Information Technology on Monday, the guidelines

aim to encourage the production of films based on Nepal's culture and subjects of national importance.

The ministry sought suggestions from stakeholders to prepare clear and practical guidelines for the proper use of the Rs. 35 million allocated for the grant programme in the current fiscal year 2026/27.

Speaking at the programme, Minister for Communications and Information Technology Dr. Bikram Timilsina said that clear and practical guidelines were necessary to ensure systematic

government support for the film industry.

He said the procedures for distributing grants and financial assistance should be transparent, effective and well managed.

Minister Dr. Bikram Timilsina said the government's objective was to promote original, realistic and high-quality films that reflect Nepal's culture and national identity.

He stressed that the grant distribution process should be transparent and accountable.

He added that films produced with public funding should present Nepal's history, culture, national identity, social values and contemporary realities in a meaningful way.

During the interaction, film professionals welcomed the government's decision to provide direct support to the film sector. However, they stressed that the grant distribution process should be fair and transparent, with clear criteria to prevent misuse, according to the press release.

Participants suggested that the guidelines should clearly explain the objectives of the grant programme.

They also called for clear eligibility criteria, stating which types of films would qualify for grants and which would not. They said the government's priority areas should be clearly defined and the evaluation process should be objective and transparent.

Stakeholders also suggested that the guidelines should give greater priority to new and emerging filmmakers rather than only established producers.

They recommended giving preference to films that promote tourism, preserve Nepali art and culture, strengthen national unity and social harmony, and address issues affecting women, children, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and marginalised communities.

The ministry said the draft guidelines would be finalised after incorporating the suggestions received during the consultation.

Once approved, the Rs. 35 million allocated for the current fiscal year will be used to provide grants for the production of outstanding films of cultural and national importance.

Singh's Lokatantra Ko Asmita released



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

Poet Mani Raj Singh has brought out his eighth poetry collection, Lokatantra Ko Asmita (The Identity of Democracy).

Poets Tulsi Diwas, Shailendra Sakar, Bishnu Bibhu Ghimire, Ramesh Shubhechchu and others jointly unveiled the book in the capital recently.

Tulasi Diwas shared his insights on the literary importance, democratic consciousness, and contemporary relevance of the collection. "Singh is a conscious poet who carries a flame of thought", he said.

He further noted that Singh brought poetry out of the luxury of private rooms and connected it to the reality of the streets and the heartbeat of public life.

Shailendra Sakar remarked that Mani Raj Singh's poems carry strong voices of subtle sensitivity and aesthetic consciousness, calling him a bright and exemplary poet in the realm of Nepali poetry.

Bharat Kumar Bhattarai presented a critical commentary on the work, stating that the book is extremely powerful and outstanding in terms of imagery,

symbols, and metaphors. "Despite health challenges, Singh has remained continuously active in literary creation, institutional management, and service to literature, making this work one of his finest achievements," he noted.

Former Vice-Chancellor of the Nepal Academy, Bishnu Bibhu Ghimire, said that Singh writes intellectual poems characterised by image-centric styles and continues to inspire not only himself but also the younger generation into literary pursuits.

Ramesh Subhechchu highlighted the fierce poetic power within Singh, stating that the work stands at a high standard in terms of thought, language, and style.

Tulasi Bhattarai commended Singh for remaining continuously active in creative writing, institutional leadership, and guiding new creators despite his physical illness.

During the event, Usha, Sunita Adhikari, Yogaj Rajan Kabiraj, Rachita Dahal, Kalpana Marasini, and Buddhiham Maharjan each recited a poem from the newly released book.

On the occasion, Rama Oli, publisher and editor of the monthly magazine Nepali Sarokar, and Ghana Narayan Shrestha, Chairman of Grishma Graphic Press, were honoured.

Pleo for cultural preservation

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

Writer Shailendra Adhikari has come up with his third novel, 'Tejas.'

In an event held in the capital on Saturday, Bhikkhu Kondanya of Buddha Bihar, Kathmandu, journalist Basanta Basnet, cultural activist Nani Hera Shakya, politician Milan Pandey, and poet Rupak Alankar jointly unveiled the book.

Speaking at the event, Bhikkhu Kondanya stated that Tejas encompasses the historical suppression of the Buddhist community during the Rana regime, the exile of monks, and their return to the homeland during the Panchayat era. "The novel delivers a powerful message about the preservation of language, traditions, and culture," he noted.

Remarking that aspects of Vipassana and Buddhist philosophy are effectively integrated into the story, he described the novel as compelling and highly comprehensible.

Journalist Basanta Basnet remarked that Tejas is an exceptionally useful literary work for understanding the geography and history of Kathmandu. Mentioning that the story is narrated from the perspective of a white khyak (a mythical spirit), which adds an element of mystery to the novel, he highlighted how the book deeply exposes the neglect and oppression inflicted

upon Buddhism by the state across various historical periods.

"This book serves as a tour guide to the geography and history of Kantipur," he said. "The book serves as a documented account of how the state persecuted Buddhists when they worked individually rather than forming an organisation."

Leader Pandey noted that the book incorporates many lesser-known stories related to Asan, Basantapur, the Newar community, and the khyak, stating that the novel transformed his perspective on viewing the heritage of Kathmandu.

Culture expert Nani Hera Shakya shared that the novel vividly portrays the environment of Kantipur, Basantapur, and the Kumari Ghar during the Nepal Mandala era. While praising its sensitive presentation of how the Newar community was gradually marginalised, she also pointed out some minor errors regarding certain Nepal Bhasa words.

Poet Rupak Alankar lauded Adhikari as a studious writer, stating that Tejas is not merely the story of a single character, but rather a narrative about the transformation of Kathmandu, Newari culture, and Buddhism alongside changing times. "The novel effectively illustrates the impact of Shah-era and subsequent political changes on Kathmandu and Buddhist traditions," Alankar said.

Author Adhikari shared that the history of Buddhist monks being exiled from Nepal deeply moved him while writing the novel.

Poets promote communal harmony

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 3

A literary gathering focused on religious harmony and humanism was jointly organised by the Bartaman Kabita Samuha and Nepali Folk Musical Instrument Museum in the capital on Sunday evening.

Held at the tranquil premises of the Nepali Folk Musical Instrument Museum at Teku, the event brought together a diverse group of poets, writers, and singers who utilised the power of creative expression to advocate for peace, unity, and mutual understanding.

The poetry recitation session featured a wide range of literary voices, each addressing the central themes of peace and humanism through distinct perspectives. Deepak Chaulagain opened the readings with 'Manisko Khoji', which depicted communal hatred as a destructive wildfire fanned by vested interests and highlighted the common person as the primary victim. Following him, Chachu Dungana recited 'Nara' (Slogan), drawing on his integrated upbringing to emphasise that sacred texts across faiths direct humanity towards honest duty rather than divisive political slogans.

Bina Nemkul presented 'Kalpanako Basti', using the non-discriminatory nature of air and earth to envision a society free



from caste and creed. Prajwal Adhikari's 'Khelauna' offered a metaphorical critique of adult societal divides.

Further examining the fragile nature of life, Harihar Timilsina presented 'Malai Thaha Bhayeko Kura' (The Things I Know), reminding the audience of the irreplaceable value of life and the equal right of all beings to coexist. Ishwara Shiwa's 'Iswar-ko Hisab' argued that holy scriptures do not advocate violence, emphasising that true faith is measured by love and compassion rather than physical monuments. Highlighting selfless empathy, Avaya Shrestha's narrative poem 'Bhikshuni Ra Rogi Yuvak' (The Nun and the Sick Young Man) portrayed a protagonist assisting an ill youth across a river despite societal judgment, symbolising

unconditional compassion.

Ram Gopal Ashutosh delivered 'Aagolai Aago Hun Kasaiko Jarurat Pardaina' (Fire Doesn't Need Anyone to Be Fire), warning leaders and citizens against spreading hatred. Pramod Snehi's 'Dharma Ra Yuddha' reflected on a society currently clouded by mistrust, expressing a yearning for hope.

Tirtharaj Bhatta recited 'Ke Hama Puna Buddha Banna Sakchhau', questioning artificial divisions and urging a return to non-violence. Radhika Kalpit presented 'Marga Anek, Gantabya Ek', illustrating that while rituals across different faiths differ, they all share a singular destination of human service and peace. Rajani Mila's 'Kaha Chha Iswar? Jagau Aafubhitra' criticised external searches for divinity, calling

on individuals to cultivate internal tolerance and active compassion. Singer and composer Shishir Yogi then provided a musical interlude, performing Laxmi Prasad Devkota's socially conscious piece 'Damai Dai' and the acoustic song 'Lahar ko Boli' to reinforce the gathering's humanistic focus.

Chandra Bahadur Lama's 'Sahisnukata Shaswat Niyam' (The Eternal Rule of Tolerance), which urged the audience to look beyond sectarian spaces to find shared empathy in the pure faith of daily life. The session host, poet Rami Priya, presented 'Manis Ra Dharma', illustrating nature's inherent equality and suggesting that sages historically treated natural elements as their mentors to connect humanity.

Bishwa Sigdel discussed the social responsibility of a writer, stating that history eventually questions what poets were doing during times of national crisis and whether they failed to address the challenges of their era. He concluded the poetry segment with 'Ma Je Bannuparne Thiyo', discussing a writer's historical responsibility and narrating a protagonist's realisation that adopting multiple religious labels is meaningless if one fails to remain a basic human being.

On behalf of the museum, Ram Prasad Kandel presented historical examples of interfaith cooperation, sharing a memory of spiritual leaders resolving a communal land dispute in Gorakhpur, India.

HOROSCOPE

tarot.com

- **ARIES:** Your immediate response may not be the best message. The instinctive Moon in your 1st House of Self squares chatty Mercury in your 4th House of Home, so feelings could rush ahead in family talks, texts, or morning logistics.
- **CANCER:** Your public message needs a calmer filter today. The Aries Moon in your 10th House of Career squares Mercury in Cancer, so professional pressure may make your words sharper, moodier, or more personal than intended.
- **LIBRA:** A relationship conversation may need fewer assumptions and clearer terms. The Aries Moon in your 7th House of Partnership squares Mercury in your 10th House of Career, making expectations clash over availability responsibilities.
- **CAPRICORN:** Home tension needs a softer approach and a clearer plan. The Aries Moon in your 4th House of Home squares Mercury in your 7th House of Partnership, so family needs, household logistics, or old emotional patterns may complicate conversations.

- **TAURUS:** Your body may have stronger opinions than your schedule today. Early tension could make private stress harder to hide, especially if errands, conversations, or family plans keep pushing you past your limits.
- **LEO:** A bigger vision needs proof it can hold up in real life. The Aries Moon in your 9th House of Beliefs squares Mercury in your private 12th house, so impatience, assumptions, or quiet anxiety could distort the plan.
- **SCORPIO:** A practical problem needs practical solutions, not philosophical debate. The Aries Moon in your 6th House of Work and Wellness squares Mercury in your 9th House of Perspective, so daily tasks may clash with beliefs, travel, or advice.
- **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.

- **GEMINI:** Fun with friends gets less fun when you ignore the cost. The Aries Moon in your 11th House of Friends squares Mercury in your 2nd House of Resources, so group excitement could bump into budget reality.
- **VIRGO:** A shared concern needs facts before it becomes a spiral. The Aries Moon in your 8th House of Shared Resources squares Mercury in your 11th House of Friends, so money, trust, or emotional expectations could get tangled in a group conversation.
- **SAGITTARIUS:** Fun works best with a little breathing room. The Aries Moon in your 5th House of Creativity squares Mercury in your 8th House of Shared Resources, so romance, creativity, or pleasure may clash with money, caregiving, or emotional expectations.
- **PISCES:** That impulse buy may be trying to solve a feeling. The Aries Moon in your 2nd House of Resources squares Mercury in your 5th House of Pleasure, so money, desire, creativity, or romance may pull you in competing directions today.

CARTOON

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NOT-SO-WISE GURU

8-3

NVA to host four int'l volleyball events



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 3

The Nepal Volleyball Association (NVA) released its official calendar for the 2026/27 season on Monday, featuring 19 events, including four international tournaments to be hosted in the country.

Announcing the schedule at a press conference in Kathmandu, the NVA confirmed that Nepal will host three Central Asian Volleyball Association (CAVA) events alongside the Three Nations Cup.

The CAVA Women's Champions League is scheduled to take place in Kathmandu from 1-7 November. Nepal previously hosted the tournament in both 2024 and 2026.

Similarly, the men's CAVA Volleyball Championship and CAVA Challenge Cup are slated to be held in Kathmandu, although exact dates are yet to be confirmed.

Beyond hosting domestic international fixtures, Nepal's women's team will feature in the volleyball tournament at the 20th Asian Games in Japan this September.

Additionally, Nepal has confirmed its entry into the CAVA U-16 Volleyball Championship. The country's men's and women's national sides will also

compete in the CAVA Beach Volleyball Tour, with the first leg scheduled for September in Bhutan and the second leg to be hosted by the Maldives.

On the domestic circuit, the NVA will organise the 35th National Men's and 25th National Women's Volleyball Championships in Surkhet.

Kathmandu will stage the 10th NVA Men's and Women's Volleyball Championship, while venues for the 11th Prime Minister Cup NVA Volleyball Tournament and the 7th Women's and 8th Men's Beach Volleyball Championships are yet to be decided.

The association's developmental schedule includes the U-19 National Volleyball Tournament, the U-18 Inter-School Volleyball Competition, international friendly matches, and national-level coaching and refereeing courses.

The season will culminate in Kathmandu with the country's flagship franchise competitions: the Everest Volleyball League for women and the Nepal Volleyball League for men.

Although the calendar has been released, dates for several competitions remain unconfirmed. Jitendra Bahadur Chand, President of the Nepal Volleyball Association, explained that schedule adjustments may be required, which is why specific dates have not yet been finalised for every event.

UEFA warns FIFA of legal action

AP
Nyon, Aug. 3

European soccer body UEFA has threatened FIFA with legal action over Gianni Infantino's failed plan to sell a stake in future World Cup profits to private investors, and said any potential evidence should not be destroyed.

Infantino's secretive proposal to raise \$4.2 billion from investors including the New York investment firm of Joshua Kushner was dropped early Saturday, days after the revelation in media reports provoked a global furor.

UEFA led the backlash and on Thursday its 55 member federations met to agree boycotting all FIFA events and competitions while the proposal was active.

Now lawyers for UEFA have informed FIFA that the European body is "actively considering legal action, arbitration, and/or regulatory complaints ... arising out of and in connection with the FFE (FIFA Forward Enterprise) plan proposed by FIFA and all related matters."

The letter dated Friday from the legal firm Dechert in New York was seen Monday by The Associated Press.

The letter named 18 FIFA executives who it said should retain data, documents and electronic messages as potential evidence.

"UEFA puts you on formal notice that any destruction, deletion, alteration, concealment, or loss of relevant materials following receipt of this notice — or following any earlier date on which you were, or reasonably should have been, aware that proceedings were anticipated — may constitute spoliation of evidence," the letter said.

On Saturday, UEFA signaled it wants to end Infantino's decade-long presidency, saying he had lost the confidence of world soccer and that "no option should be off the table."

Hours earlier, Infantino withdrew the divisive proposal that offered FIFA's 211 member federations one-off payments of \$20 million each with a mid-September deadline to accept.



FILE PHOTO:AP
FIFA President Gianni Infantino, right, talks to UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin during the FIFA 75th Congress at the Conmebol Convention Center in Luque, Paraguay, May 15.

The FFE spin-off valued by FIFA at \$20 billion would have taken control of the soccer body's money-making commercial and tournament operations. The 211 members already effectively own the Zurich-based not-for-profit governing body.

It was the project of just one man, FIFA's chief operating officer Kevin Lamour said in a stinging statement Friday to the AP which said staff felt deceived by their boss Infantino.

Legal proceedings are "reasonably anticipated," UEFA's lawyer Andrew J. Levander wrote, citing the belief of soccer stakeholders that the plan was "fundamentally incompatible with the proper governance of football."

Opposition to Infantino
UEFA has been most outspoken

against its former employee Infantino while the Asian Football Confederation and CONCACAF, the North and Central American and Caribbean soccer body, also have made strong statements to oppose Infantino's plan.

Infantino has most support from his traditional base in Africa, while South America's CONMEBOL is relying on him to expand the 2030 World Cup to 64 teams from 48. That would give more hosting games to Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, the home country of CONMEBOL president Alejandro Dominguez.

The private equity plan has provoked a stunning turnaround in fortunes for Infantino who left New York after the World Cup final two weeks ago seemingly a lock to be re-elected unopposed

next March for a fourth and final term in office through 2031. The spin-off operation could have created a commissioner-like role for him beyond 2031 paying much more than his current \$6 million annual salary and bonus deal as president.

FIFA briefed at the World Cup that Infantino had got pledged letters of support from about 200 of the 211 member federations.

Those letters are now likely being withdrawn across Europe with the Wales federation the first to announce its reversal.

The candidate deadline is Nov. 18 for an election exactly four months later in Morocco, one of Infantino's strongest allies and a co-host of the 2030 tournament with Spain and Portugal.

SNIPPETS

Line-Up complete for Grand Masters Snooker quarterfinals

Kathmandu (TRN): The quarter-final line-up for the 1st Kathmandu Khelmandal (NRT) Nepal Top 16 Grand Masters Snooker Championship has been finalised following the conclusion of the group stage on Monday. Som Lama and Phurba Dorje Sherpa secured the remaining two spots in the last eight with victories at the NRT's snooker club in Tripureshwor.

On the final day of group fixtures, played in a best-of-seven-frame format, Lama defeated Nitesh Khandwal 4-2, while Sherpa swept past Rajan Lama 4-0. The pair join Nepal's top-ranked player, Wangchu Tamang, alongside Rohit Chhetri, Rajan Gurung, Akash Gajmer, Bikas Maharjan, and Sabin Tamang in the quarterfinals. In Tuesday's opening quarterfinal, Chhetri will face Maharjan, while Gajmer takes on Sabin Tamang for a place in the semi-finals. All quarterfinal matches will be played over a best-of-nine-frame format.

Silver for Bhattarai
Kathmandu (TRN): Nepal's Sabina Bhattarai claimed a silver medal at the 8th Asian Indonesia Open Taekwondo Championship (G-2) held in Jakarta, Indonesia. Bhattarai finished as runner-up in the women's under-40 individual poomsae event on Sunday, according to Kabiraj Negi Lama, a board member of the Nepal Taekwondo Association. The team was coached by Kabiraj Khadgi.

Greaves steadies Windies in second Test against Pakistan

AFP
Port of Spain, Aug. 3

Justin Greaves made an unbeaten 64 to steer West Indies to 239-5 at stumps on a rain-shortened opening day of the second and final Test against Pakistan in Trinidad on Sunday.

After a match-winning display with the ball in the first Test last week, Greaves displayed what has now become his trademark ease and composure at the crease in a battling knock at Queen's Park Oval.

His only error of judgement came just after reaching the half-century mark when opposing captain Babar Azam put down a straightforward chance at leg-slip off spinner Sajid Khan.

Greaves at that time was almost hobbling after a left leg injury sustained while completing a sharp run that necessitated lengthy treatment on the field.

His sixth-wicket partnership with Roston Chase (36 not out) was worth 66 runs at the close of play and Greaves will be hoping for a return to his usual athletic mobility when he resumes the innings with his captain on the second morning.

He had come to the crease in mid-afternoon at 91 for three as Kavem Hodge became Khan's first wicket. When Amir Jangoo fell to a leg-side catch to give debutant pacer Ubaid Shah his first Test wicket with the first ball of a new spell, Pakistan



PHOTO: AFP
Justin Greaves struck an unbeaten half century as West Indies made a steady start to the second Test against Pakistan.

sensed the chance to break the back of the West Indies resistance.

However Greaves and Shai Hope provided a measure of stability in a 53-run stand until seamer Mohammad Ali, the most impressive of the bowlers on the day, bowled Hope off the inside-edge for 29 to leave the innings in the balance at 173 for five.

Pakistan omit Abbas
Earlier, Pakistan's bewildering decision-making - on and off the field of

play - highlighted a rain-affected morning session.

Mohammad Abbas, the tourists' best bowler by some distance from the 90-run defeat in the first Test, was dropped despite a match haul of eight for 85, including five for 22 in the second innings.

A second Pakistani debutant, Awais Zafar, got his chance due to the finger injury sustained by former captain Shan Masood while compiling a determined century in

the first Test.

Pakistan's think-tank seemed convinced of the wisdom of playing an additional slow bowler on a surface devoid of grass, drafting in Khan as an off-spinning option alongside left-arm orthodox bowler Ali Usman, who went wicketless on debut in the first Test.

Khan's first notable act in the match was to take the catch at long-leg which sent Tagenarine Chanderpaul to the pavilion for 15 as he failed to control a hook shot off Mohammad Ali after a brisk opening stand of 49 with Brandon King.

"We needed those partnerships at the end of the day and it was good to see those guys (Greaves, Hope and Chase) making those contributions," said King in summing up the day's effort.

"It would be nice if we get more of the same from them tomorrow and Justin and Roston can go on to get hundreds."

As easily as the runs flowed, especially off King's bat, in the early exchanges after Chase opted to bat first, both could have been dismissed earlier with more attacking tactics as they each benefited from edges at catchable height through the vacant third slip position.

Mohammad Ali was even pleading with Babar for additional support in the slip cordon following the third of those fortunate escapes.

King's luck ran out though following the 90-minute rain break as Usman snared him for his first Test wicket, leg-before for 46.

Barco joins Chelsea rebuild from Strasbourg

AFP
London, Aug. 3

Valentin Barco became Chelsea's seventh signing of the transfer window on Sunday after joining from sister club Strasbourg on a seven-year deal.

Barco is the second player to join the Blues from the Ligue 1 club this window after Emmanuel Emegha and it is the 13th deal between the two clubs, who share an ownership group, since the start of last season.

The 22-year-old was part of the Argentina squad that reached the World Cup final and was involved in an angry exchange with Jude Bellingham for

his exuberant celebrations in front of England players during the semi-final.

Capable of operating at both left-back and in midfield, Barco had a brief spell in the Premier League previously with Brighton three seasons ago.

He moved to Strasbourg initially on loan from the Seagulls in 2024, but signed permanently a year later having helped the club to qualify for the Conference League.

Barco's arrival continues a busy summer in the transfer market for Chelsea as they look to remodel under new boss Xabi Alonso.

On Saturday the Blues confirmed the signing of veteran striker Danny Welbeck from Brighton, following the arrivals of Crystal Palace's Maxence Lacroix

and Morgan Rogers from Aston Villa.

Marco Palestra, Emegha and Geovany Quenda have also been signed.

Dortmund sign Greek teenager Karetzas

Borussia Dortmund on Monday announced the signing of teenage Greek forward Konstantinos Karetzas from Belgian side Genk on a five-year deal, for a reported fee of 30 million euros (\$34 million) plus bonuses.

The 18-year-old, who already has three goals in 10 appearances for Greece, laid on 11 assists in the Belgian top flight last season.

Dortmund were looking for more creativity after the departure of the long-serving Julian Brandt, who left on a free transfer.

"Borussia Dortmund is a special club and I am incredibly proud to now be able to wear the black and yellow jersey," Karetzas said in a statement.

Sporting director Ole Book said: "(Karetzas) will enrich our team with his creativity and intelligence. He is technically very skilled and possesses the ability to find quick solutions in tight spaces, especially in the final third."

The former European champions have also been linked with Cologne's teenage Germany forward Said El Mala as they continue their summer business after finishing second behind champions Bayern Munich last season.



WIMBLEDON CHAMP NOSKOVA READY FOR 'NEW OPPORTUNITY'

AFP
Toronto, Aug. 3

Wimbledon champion Linda Noskova is eager to get back to work at the WTA 1000 hard court tournament in Toronto after the whirlwind that followed her first Grand Slam title.

"Obviously the last couple of weeks have been nothing more but crazy and chaos, so I'm glad I can kind of start over," said the 21-year-old, who was feted by Czech President Petr Pavel amid a welter of media appearances in her homeland before squeezing out a little holiday time in Italy.

Noskova sounded almost relieved as she spoke to reporters on Sunday that another tournament had rolled around. "It's a new week, new tournament, new surface, it's all the changes at the same time," she said. "I'll have to get used to it as fast as possible, but it's a new opportunity for me to work on my tennis and get better."

Noskova, who moved to her current career-high seventh in the world after beating fellow Czech Karolina Muchova in the Wimbledon final, said it took a while for the achievement to sink in -- if it actually has.

"Maybe I will not realize it a hundred percent, you know, it's always just one of those big things that actually happen and you're not preparing yourself for that, it's kind of like a big shocker," Noskova said.

The key thing, she said, was making sure she didn't treat the achievement of such a long-cherished goal as an ending but as a beginning.

"I had to tell myself that it is not the end of the world," Noskova said. "My career is not ending here, it is hopefully only starting. Winning a Grand Slam is an unreal thing. But at the same time, I'm still 21, I feel like since I accomplished this so soon, I feel like it's even a bigger motivation for me to keep going."

Noskova is in the bottom half of the draw anchored by second-seeded Australian Open champion Elena Rybakina, with fourth-seeded Coco Gauff looming in her quarter.

She'll face either qualifier Tatjana Maria or Caty McNally in her second-round opener and could come up against rising Philippines talent Alexandra Eala in the third round.