

THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL



PHOTO: RSS

Tourists enjoying stand-up paddle boards on Phewa Lake in Pokhara of Kaski district.

Health professionals' hunger strikes leave health ministry in a pickle

BY RAMAN PAUDEL
Kathmandu, Aug. 5

Intern doctor Dilli Harijan has been on a hunger strike to death in Maitighar Mandala since Tuesday, demanding the implementation of remuneration and respect for the labour of intern doctors.

Harijan said that he started the hunger strike, not due to personal interests or impulses, but to meet genuine demands that have not been addressed for four months.

According to Harijan, the intern doctors have been continuously communicating with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Medical Education Commission (MEC), parliamentarians and related bodies for the past four months, but no concrete decision has been made.

Harijan has demanded the immediate implementation of the report prepared by the task force formed under the chairmanship of the Minister of Education and Sports.

He said that the intern doctors have not demanded any additional facilities but only 'equal remuneration for equal work', respect for labour and



implementation of the recommendations of the task force.

Despite repeated discussions and requests with the Prime Minister, the Chairman of the Medical Education Commission, the Co-Chairman, the Minister of Education and Sports, the Co-Chairman, the Minister of Health, and the officials of the commission, his demands have not been given due importance, Harijan said.

He expressed concerns that the government may be ignoring the demands of intern doctors due to pressure from private medical colleges.

Supporters of Harijan's strike argue that the state's indifference threatens

the future of thousands of intern doctors and medical students.

"The government's apathy might trigger brain drain in the future. If conditions in the health education sector do not improve, a large number of skilled professionals will leave the country in the near future," said an intern doctor, showing solidarity with Harijan's fast-unto-death.

Meanwhile, various health institutions, including the Nepal Medical Association (NMA), have expressed their solidarity with Harijan's strike.

President Dr. Badri Rijal has urged the government to immediately address the demands of Dr. Harijan.

President Rijal, who met Dr. Harijan, said that it is unfortunate that an intern doctor has to launch the hunger strike due to the failure to implement the agreements reached with the Ministry of Education several times in the past.

He also appealed for solidarity and moral support from senior doctors, Nepal Medical Association (NMA), Nepal Medical Council (NMC), MBBS and BDS interns, medical students, the media, and others who love justice.

Frequent strikes in health-education sectors

The intern doctors' movement came on the heels of the hunger strike of nurse Jyoti Ranabhat, which ended with a 19-point agreement with the government.

The Ministry of Health and Food Safety expressed its commitment to implement Ranabhat's demands after her six days of continued hunger strike.

She resorted to the hunger strike to fulfill the same demands that the Sushila Karki-led government agreed to implement.

Jyoti put up various demands such as the pay of nurses' labour and the need for hospitals to treat nurses with respect.

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Govt decides to provide relief to victims of Kaptangunj incident

Dr. KC appointed UGC chair



Minister Sasmit Pokharel

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 5

The government has decided to provide relief and compensation to the victims of the Kaptangunj incident in Sunsari.

Government Spokesperson and Minister for Education and Sports Sasmit Pokharel said the decision was taken by the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday.

On the night of July 25, a dispute broke out between two groups in Kaptangunj of Sunsari district. The situation escalated into a clash, prompting security personnel to open fire.

Three people have been killed after being hit by security forces' bullets in Kaptangunj. Following the incident, tensions also escalated in Siraha, where one more person was killed in police firing.

Spokesperson Pokharel said the government had decided to provide compensation and relief to the families of those killed during the incidents in the

Tarai-Madhes region. The government will also bear the treatment expenses of those injured in the clashes, he said.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet has appointed Prof. Dr. Khadga Bahadur KC as the chairperson of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The government decided to appoint KC, a resident of Parbat district and former rector of Tribhuvan University, to the post. Following the resignation of then Vice-Chancellor of Tribhuvan University Prof. Dr. Keshar Jung Baral, KC had also briefly assumed the responsibility of Acting Vice-Chancellor.

CABINET DECISIONS

Similarly, the government has appointed Prof. Dr. Rosy Shrestha as the Secretary of the University Grants Commission. A resident of Bhojpur, Prof. Shrestha is the first Nepali to earn a PhD in Nursing.

Before being appointed as the Secretary of the Commission, she was serving as the Nursing Director at B&B Hospital. She obtained her doctoral degree in Nursing from the Institute of Medicine, Tribhuvan University. She also holds a Master of Science (MSc) degree in Medical-Surgical Nursing from Christian Medical College (CMC), Ludhiana, India, and a diploma in the related field from Kolkata. She completed her Bachelor's degree in Nursing and Proficiency Certificate Level (PCL) Nursing from Nursing Campus, Maharajgunj.

SEE PAGE 6

Rains to continue until today

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 5

The current monsoon activities are expected to remain relatively active until Thursday afternoon.

After that, the monsoon trough is forecast to shift slightly southwards, leading to a gradual weakening of monsoon activity, the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM) said.

Sanjeeb Adhikari, a meteorologist at the Meteorological Forecasting Division under the DHM, said, "From Thursday night and over the following two to three days, only normal monsoon activity is expected. We do not anticipate widespread heavy rainfall or a very high level of weather-related risk."

He said active monsoon conditions on Thursday would affect most parts of the country. Central Nepal it likely to receive the highest rainfall on

Wednesday night, while central and western Nepal are expected to receive more rainfall through Thursday afternoon.

Adhikari said there is no widespread drought across the country. However, some areas, particularly parts of the Tarai in Madhes Province and Lumbini Province, have received below-normal rainfall, while many other areas have recorded near-normal rainfall.

Earlier, the DHM had predicted below-normal rainfall across most parts of the country this monsoon. However, since the onset of the monsoon (June 19), most areas have received normal to above-normal rainfall.

Adhikari said referring to this year's seasonal outlook, rainfall has so far varied by location. "According to the records, some places have received above-normal rainfall, some below normal and others close to normal. The rainfall distribution differs from place to place. The data and reports are available on our website," he said.

House panel directs govt to seek clarification from three int'l rights institutions

RSS
Kathmandu, Aug. 5

The House of Representatives (HoR) Committee on Law, Justice and Human Rights has directed the government to seek clarification from three international human rights institutions, which issued statement on independence of Nepali judiciary.

The Committee meeting held today directed the government to seek justification from Amnesty International, the International Commission of Jurists and the Human Rights Watch over the joint statement they gave on July 24, mentioning Nepal's judiciary and judicial jurisdiction on sovereignty.

The Ministry of Women, Children, Gender and Sexual Minorities and Social Security has been asked to seek clarification along with official evidence from these international organizations.

The government has been suggested to take necessary move to ensure transparent, accountable and service-friendly judiciary which keeps in account the spirit of independent judiciary, principles of separation of power and values of good governance. The Committee meeting also decided to discuss further on this topic.

The Committee further instructed the government to make further effective the project agreements of the Ministry and the Social Welfare Council make with non-government organizations in line with Social Welfare Council Act, 2049; Social Welfare Regulation, 2049, and the existing laws.

Regular inspection, evaluation and monitoring are imperative on the projects run by the I/NGOs on whether these are enforced in line with set objectives in the agreements.

The parliamentary bodies gave such direction and suggestions after holding discussion with Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Sobita Gautam and legal experts.

Barahakshetra Dham supporting livelihoods of over 90 families

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Barahakshetra, Aug. 5

Barahakshetra Dham, located in Barahakshetra Municipality-1 in Sunsari and regarded as the world's first sacred pilgrimage sites, is not only a centre of religious faith but also an important pillar of the local economy.

For decades, the steady flow of pilgrims visiting the temple has supported the livelihoods of more than 90 households through a range of businesses.

Shops selling flowers, offerings, garlands and religious materials, along with hotels, snack outlets and guest houses, operate in and around the temple premises.

According to local hotel entrepreneur Uma Shrestha, most families in the area have been engaged in these businesses for generations. She said the local market becomes more vibrant with the arrival of pilgrims, making Barahakshetra's economic activity directly dependent on religious



tourism.

"Our ancestral occupation is the hotel business, and even today our family depends on it for our livelihood," Shrestha said. She added that pilgrims visiting the temple are their main customers. Although the number of visitors declines during the monsoon from mid-June to mid-August, business

remains strong for most of the year due to the large number of devotees visiting the shrine.

Outside the temple complex, businesses selling prayer materials, flower garlands, offerings, baskets, incense sticks and other religious items operate alongside hotels and snack outlets. In recent years, guest houses have also

been established to accommodate visitors travelling from outside the area. This has created employment and income-generating opportunities for local young people.

According to Raju Ghimire, Vice-Chairman of the Barahakshetra Temple Trust, pilgrims contribute to the local economy not only through worship but also through their spending. "Pilgrims buy prayer materials, eat in local hotels, and many stay overnight. The temple supports the businesses of nearly 100 households," he said.

Barahakshetra shrine attracts devotees every day, with larger numbers visiting during major religious festivals from various districts of Nepal as well as neighbouring India. Local business owners say their arrival has had a positive impact on trade, hospitality sector and other service industries.

Every pilgrim visiting the temple becomes a customer for local businesses, making religious tourism an increasingly important contributor to the area's economy, according to local entrepreneur Bhabin Raut.



BULLION
(Rs. per tola)

Hallmark Gold : Rs. 288,000/-
Worked Gold : NA
Silver : Rs. 4,475/-



STOCK

NEPSE : 2,667.97

Total Amount : 4,409,886,457.71

No. of Share : 10,067,732

PRICE OF GOLD SURGES BY 4,200 PER TOLA

RSS
Kathmandu, Aug. 5

The prices of gold and silver have gone up in the local market today. According to the Federation of Nepal Gold and Silver Dealers' Association, the price of hallmark gold increased by Rs 4,200 per tola (11.66 grammes) today and has reached Rs 288,000. On Tuesday, the price of gold was Rs 283,800 per tola.

Similarly, the price of silver has increased by Rs 95 per tola to reach Rs 4,475. The previous day, silver was traded at Rs 4,380 per tola.

According to international media, the price of gold is USD 4,127 per ounce and the price of silver is USD 60 per ounce in the international market today.

Indian court orders release of two Sarlahi farmers

BY JANARJAN KHATRI
Sarlahi, Aug. 5

An Indian court has ordered the release of two farmers from Sarlahi who had been detained by Indian police for a month after they crossed the border to buy fertiliser.

Suresh Prasad Singh and Nagendra Prasad Singh of Balara Municipality-5, Sarlahi, were arrested on July 2 while travelling to India to purchase fertiliser for paddy plantation. They had been kept in the custody of Dumra Police Station in Sitamarhi, India, for one month.

Suresh Prasad Singh's son, Avinash Singh, who is currently in Sitamarhi, said a local court on Wednesday ordered the release of both farmers. He said they were likely to have been freed on July 31, but the hearing was delayed as the judge was on extended leave.

No land for new industries in Nepalgunj Industrial Estate

BY SIRAJ KHAN
Nepalgunj, Aug. 5

Industrialists and entrepreneurs seeking to establish new industries in Nepalgunj have been facing difficulties due to the shortage of land in the Nepalgunj Industrial Estate.

The only industrial estate in Banke district, established in 1973, has already reached its full capacity, leaving no space available for new industries.

According to Pradeep Parajuli, Chief of the Nepalgunj Industrial Estate Management Office, the estate has the capacity to accommodate 35 industries, and all plots were allocated to industries long ago. As a result, new entrepreneurs have been unable to set up industries within the estate despite their interest.

He said the problem has become more acute because the Naubasta Industrial Estate, which has remained under construction for nearly a decade, has yet to come into operation. Although progress has been made in resolving land-related disputes, allowing construction to move forward, it is unlikely to be ready soon.

With no space available in the existing industrial estate and the new estate yet to become operational, industrialists have been compelled to purchase private land to establish their factories. They say this has significantly increased the cost of setting up industries.

Tanka Dhami, President of the Nepalgunj Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said investors from Nepalgunj



PHOTO: SIRAJ KHAN/TRN

The 53-year-old Nepalgunj Industrial Estate.

and neighbouring districts have been forced to buy expensive private land around Janaki Rural Municipality and along the Nepalgunj-Kohalpur road corridor after failing to secure plots in the industrial estate.

He added that, despite repeated requests to the relevant authorities to expedite the construction of the Naubasta Industrial Estate, little progress has been made. According to him, the lack of industrial infrastructure has made it difficult to

attract new investment to Banke.

Industrialist Krishna Prasad Shrestha also said he had been informed that no land was available when he sought to establish an industry in the Estate. He complained that private land is prohibitively expensive, making it difficult to invest in new industries even when there is strong interest.

Due to the shortage of industrial land, Ganapur in Ward No. 6 of Janaki Rural Municipality, adjoining

Nepalgunj, has gradually emerged as a new industrial hub in recent years. According to the Nepalgunj CCI, around 80 large industries are currently operating in the Ganapur area.

Industrialists have urged the government to expedite the completion of the Naubasta Industrial Estate and provide the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the establishment of new industries, thereby accelerating industrial development in the Nepalgunj region.

NEA launches 'DMS' and software-based billing system

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 5

Nepal Electricity Authority has formally launched the 'Document Management System (DMS)' and 'Software Based Billing System'.

The systems, developed by the Business of Development Directorate of NEA, have been put into operation with the aim of further strengthening its 'Digital NEA' concept.

Acting Managing Director of NEA Dirghayu Kumar Shrestha formally launched both the systems during a special programme organised at the NEA.

He praised the directorate's initiative towards the goal of building a digital authority and directed to continuously implement these systems as soon as possible and to refine them over time.

Speaking at the event, Director of Business Development Directorate of NEA Tharka Bahadur Thapa said that the adoption of digital technology has made the directorate more transparent and more friendly towards

Through the newly launched Document Management System (DMS), projects under construction will now be able to submit their four-monthly progress reports online, while operating projects can upload their annual reports, coordination committee minutes, and insurance documents through the same platform.

Independent Power Producers (IPPs).

He said that the new systems would facilitate the management of Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) and construction-related activities in the coming days.

Through the newly launched **Document Management System (DMS)**, projects under construction will now be able to submit their four-monthly progress reports online, while operating projects can upload their annual reports, coordination committee

minutes, and insurance documents through the same platform, according to the NEA.

In addition, IPPs will be able to conduct official correspondence with the department via the DMS. The system will also provide a unified platform containing all Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) and project-related information.

Likewise, the **Software-Based Billing System** will enable operational projects to submit **Availability Declarations (AD)** and **Revised Availability Declarations (RAD)** online and obtain approvals electronically.

Projects will also be able to submit **Joint Meter Readings (JMR)** and process their monthly electricity bills through the online system.

The billing system will initially be implemented for selected projects before being expanded gradually to all projects.

With the introduction of these new digital platforms, the NEA expects administrative and commercial operations between the Authority and private-sector energy developers to become more efficient, transparent, and technology-driven.

Craft at risk as Rambas plants vanish

BY PUSKAR BHANDARI
Dadeldhura, Aug. 5

There was a time when Rambas plants (century plant) lined field edges, terraces and sloping land across villages in Sudurpashchim Province.

Their thorny leaves protected crops from livestock and wild animals, while their strong fibres were used to make ropes for tying cattle, carrying nets for grass, firewood and fodder, fishing nets and other household items.

Today, not only is the plant disappearing, but the centuries-old skills of extracting its fibre and weaving traditional products are also gradually fading away.

Known locally as Rambas in the Doteli language, the plant's scientific name is 'Agave americana'. According to Narendra Paneru, Chief of the Agriculture Knowledge Centre in Dadeldhura, the drought-tolerant plant, which thrives even in dry, rocky soil, was once an essential part of rural life. It played an important role in supporting the self-reliant lifestyles of farming communities across Dadeldhura, Doti, Baitadi, Achham, Bajhang and Darchula districts.

In the past, most farming households kept cattle, buffaloes, goats or sheep and ropes made from Rambas fibre were considered indispensable. The plant was widely grown as a living fence around farmland, while its fibres were processed into a variety of everyday household items. Communities living



near rivers also used Rambas fibre to make fishing nets.

According to Dan Singh Bohara, an 86-year-old resident of Amargadhi Municipality-7, the process was entirely manual. The thorny edges of the leaves were first removed before the fleshy green pulp was crushed to extract the strong white fibres. The fibres were then washed, dried in the sun and twisted by hand into durable ropes.

These ropes were used to make carrying nets for grass and firewood, ropes for tethering livestock and other household necessities. The craft was not practised in workshops but in village courtyards, where older family members passed their knowledge on to children by teaching them how to extract fibres, twist ropes and weave nets. This inter-generational transfer of skills became an important part of the community's

cultural heritage.

As rural lifestyles have changed, livestock farming has declined and more agricultural land has been abandoned. Barbed-wire fencing, concrete walls and inexpensive nylon and plastic ropes have steadily replaced products made from Rambas.

As a result, fewer people now plant Rambas. Once common in almost every village, it is now found only on a handful of old terraces and hillsides. Along with the plant, an important traditional craft is also disappearing.

Many young people currently have never seen how Rambas fibres are extracted, how ropes are twisted or how traditional nets are woven. With the number of skilled elders declining and few young people learning the craft, this indigenous knowledge is now at risk of being lost.

Rambas has an unusual life cycle. It produces only leaves for many years before sending up a tall flowering stalk, usually after 10 to 30 years. After producing thousands of flowers, the main plant dies, but by then new shoots have already emerged from its base, ensuring the species continues, Paneru explained.

He added that because Rambas grows easily in dry conditions, it still has significant value for controlling soil erosion, stabilising slopes and serving as a living fence.

According to Paneru, many countries use plants from the Agave family to produce natural fibres, handicrafts and environmentally friendly products. As global efforts to reduce plastic use gain momentum, demand for natural fibres is increasing once again.

He said Nepal could also create local employment by developing small-scale industries to process Rambas fibre and produce ropes and handicrafts, while helping revive the traditional skills associated with the plant.

"Rambas is not just a thorny plant. It is a living record of the rural economy, self-reliant livelihoods, indigenous technology and traditional craftsmanship passed down through generations," Paneru

He warned that unless efforts are made now to conserve the plant, establish nurseries and document and pass on the traditional skills of rope- and net-making, both Rambas and its cultural legacy could soon exist only in history.

Cathay Pacific's profit soars by 71%

AFP
Hong Kong, Aug. 5

Hong Kong carrier Cathay Pacific reported Wednesday a 71-percent surge in net profit in the first half of the year, as demand from passengers avoiding the Middle East offset a near doubling of fuel costs caused by the Iran war.

"Our result was positively impacted by ongoing underlying demand for Cathay Pacific and Cathay Cargo, improved performance from HK Express, and stronger contributions from associates," Cathay Group chair Guy Bradley said in its earnings report.

The airline reported net profit climbed to HK\$6.2 billion (\$795 million) in the first six months of the year, while revenue increased 25.3 percent on-year to HK\$68 billion. Revenue from the passenger side of the business increased 26.3 percent to HK\$43.2 billion, driven by strong travel demand and "amplified by increased transit traffic through Hong Kong as travellers looked to other hubs due to the Middle East situation in the second quarter", the carrier said.

"Having got off to a strong start in the first quarter, we faced a more challenging second quarter due to the situation in the Middle East and the resulting significant increase in jet fuel prices," Bradley said, adding that fuel costs nearly doubled from the first quarter to the second.

NAS-IT TO ORGANISE TECH ROADSHOW IN EUROPE

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 5

The Nepal Association for Software and IT Services Companies (NAS-IT) is set to organise the Nepal Tech Roadshow Europe 2026 (in the UK and Switzerland) from September 6 to 21.

The roadshow aims to connect Nepali information technology (IT) companies with European businesses, startups, investors, innovation hubs, and the Diaspora technology community. "We want to create new opportunities for business partnerships, technology exports, and foreign investment," NAS-IT said in a statement on Wednesday.

The event is being organised with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Nepal in Business-Growth Advisors (supported by the UK International Development and implemented by DAI Global UK).

The Association had organised similar shows in Australia in 2025 and the United States in 2026.

According to Gaurav Pandey, President of NAS-IT, the roadshow will play a significant role in connecting Nepal's IT industry directly with the European market.

"Nepali IT companies have already demonstrated their capabilities in international markets. Our next priority is to strengthen direct collaboration with European businesses, investors, and the technology community," he said.

He also said that this roadshow will create opportunities for Nepali companies to access new markets, build strategic partnerships, and establish long-term business relationships. "It will also help position Nepal as a trusted global technology partner," he said.

The first phase of the roadshow will take place in the United Kingdom from September 6-12, with the flagship event scheduled for September 9 in London Heathrow. The programME will feature presentations and discussions on Nepal's growing IT industry, the capabilities of Nepali technology companies, international success stories, and opportunities for business collaboration. More than 17 NAS-IT member companies will showcase their services, innovative solutions, and technical expertise to an international audience.

Likewise, the second phase of the roadshow will take place in Switzerland from September 13-21, with the flagship event scheduled for September 16 in Zurich. During this period, participating companies will engage in business meetings, networking sessions, and discussions with European businesses, startups, innovation hubs, potential partners, and other stakeholders.

DAO Rukum West introduces token system to ensure transparent services

BY RAJU LAMICHHANE
Rukum West, Aug. 5

The District Administration Office, Rukum West, has introduced a token system to improve public service delivery and make administrative services faster, more efficient, reliable and transparent.

Chief District Officer (CDO) Nishan Raj Gautam said the token system was introduced as part of the office's service improvement and innovation programme. The system aims to make it easier for service seekers to access government services while enhancing public confidence in the administration.

According to the CDO, the token machine ensures a "first come, first served" approach, allowing citizens to receive services according to their arrival order. He said the initiative was designed to eliminate confusion among service seekers and ensure a fair and systematic service delivery process.

The CDO said the office has also prioritised services for senior citizens, pregnant women and persons with disabilities. Highlighting other innovative measures introduced at the office, he said daily services begin with the national anthem, while information about service procedures is displayed on digital boards for public awareness.

"We have been making service procedures public through display boards and publishing daily service details,"



Chief District Officer of Rukum West Nishan Raj Gautam briefing about introduction of token system.

Gautam said.

He added that the office has also launched a toll-free number, 1234, established a disaster call centre and strengthened the District Emergency Operations Centre. Complaints and requests for information related to public services are addressed through coordination and immediate action, he said.

Information Officer and Assistant Chief District Officer Keshav Prasad Oli said the implementation of the token system has increased transparency in service delivery and strengthened public trust. He said separate

token systems have been introduced for citizenship certificates, passports, national identity cards and administration-related services.

After receiving a token number for the concerned service section, citizens can wait until their number is displayed before proceeding to the respective counter, Oli said. Digital display boards have been installed at the entrance of service sections to show token numbers, while an automated computer system announces numbers when applicants' turns arrive.

The system has also helped manage

crowds at the office and reduced unnecessary waiting, he added.

Local resident Tanthabir Khadka of Tribeni Rural Municipality-4 said the token system has made it much easier for citizens to receive services. After taking a token number for his required service, he said he no longer worries about when his turn will come or whether someone might manipulate the order of files.

"The system has removed uncertainty and made the process more organised. Once my token number was called, I was able to receive the service without difficulty," Khadka said.

Ride-sharing services used for drug trade, three traffickers arrested

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 5

Drug traffickers have been found using ride-sharing services to conduct illegal transactions, according to the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Kathmandu.

The Bureau said that traffickers were making drug buyers transfer money through inDrive, and after receiving the payment, they book another inDrive ride to deliver the narcotics.

The NCB has arrested three members of the alleged drug trafficking group.

Those arrested are 34-year-old Hit Bahadur Basnet of Khiji Demba Rural Municipality-7, Okhaldhunga; 19-year-old Ram Krishna Sharma of Rajgadhi Rural Municipality-7, Saptari; and 21-year-old Dhananjaya Paswan of Janaknandini Rural Municipality-3, Dhanusha.

According to Superintendent of Police (SP) Durga Raj Regmi of the Bureau, 43 grams of brown heroin, two digital weighing machines, 11 mobile phones and cash amounting to Rs. 50,000 were recovered from them after their arrest on July 30.

During the investigation, it was revealed that the brown heroin

The Bureau said that traffickers were making drug buyers transfer money through inDrive, and after receiving the payment, they book another inDrive ride to deliver the narcotics.

had been concealed inside a sack and transported from Saptari to Kathmandu on a Hiace passenger vehicle.

The bureau said Paswan from Dhanusha had sold the heroin to Ram Krishna Sharma, who was living in a rented room in Bhaktapur. Sharma then transferred the money to Basnet through inDrive, while Basnet, staying at a guest house in Gangabu, Kathmandu, was involved in selling the drugs.

Basnet works as a school bus driver, while Paswan is an IT engineering student, according to the bureau. Investigators said that although the buyers and sellers had carried out drug transactions up to five times, they had never met each other in person.

Forest income supports livelihoods, community welfare

BY AMAR RAJ NAHARKI
Tanahun, Aug. 5

A community forest user group in Devghat Rural Municipality-5, Tanahun, has been using income generated from the forest not only for conservation but also to improve local livelihoods and support social welfare.

The Chakrabarti Community Forest User Group has distributed financial assistance worth Rs. 416,000 to 38 beneficiaries under its poverty alleviation and livelihood support programme. The initiative aims to help forest users increase their income and become self-reliant through productive activities.

Under the programme, 11 members received support for goat farming, 24 for pig farming, and three for purchasing and planting bamboo to expand their traditional bamboo craft businesses, including making baskets and trays.

The group also provided Rs. 11,000 in financial assistance for the medical

treatment of Mimilal Bhujel, a resident of Jaldevi Tole in Devghat-5, who has been facing serious health problems.

Speaking at the programme, Nabin Bishwakarma, chief of the Devghat Sub-Division Forest Office, said that investing community forest resources in productive and self-employment activities could make a significant contribution to the local economy.

Group chairman Dil Bahadur Gurung said the success of a community forest should not be measured solely by the number of trees it protects, but by how many families become self-reliant and improve their quality of life through its income.

Secretary Prem Thapa said the group has been giving priority to social responsibility alongside forest conservation. He added that a fixed portion of the forest income is used to improve living standards, create self-employment opportunities and support people facing difficult circumstances.

Photo caption: Beneficiaries receive financial assistance from the income generated by the community forest to support livelihood activities.

Disaster rescue equipment handed over to security personnel

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Nepalgunj, Aug. 5

Narainapur Rural Municipality of Banke has handed over essential disaster rescue equipment to the Area Police Office, Bhagawanpur.

Aiming to make ensure and relief operation more effective during floods and inundations to be caused by the Rapti River and other adjoining rivers during the monsoon, the disaster materials were distributed to the police office.

Chief of the Municipality's Disaster Management Section, Binod Chaudhary, handed over the equipment to Police Inspector Suresh Koirala of the Area Police Office.

Chaudhary said the Rural Municipality provided the materials with the objective of ensuring that security personnel involved in rescue operations have access to essential equipment, as disasters such as floods, inundation, fires and earthquakes can occur at any time.

The Rural Municipality has said that



such equipment would help security personnel carry out immediate rescue and relief operations more efficiently during emergencies.

Representatives including Arvind Kumar Yadav, secretary of the local committee of the Rastriya Swatantra Party, were present during the

Municipality hands over house to physically disabled couple



Palungtar Municipality Mayor Bibash Chintan handing over the newly constructed house to the physically disabled Gharti couple of Palungtar-4, Gorkha.

BY GUNA BAHADUR ROKA
Sulikot, Aug. 5

Ensuring the right to safe housing for a physically challenged couple, Palungtar Municipality-4 in Gorkha has handed over a newly constructed house to Jung Bahadur Gharti, a person with a complete disability under the 'A' category, amid a programme held on Wednesday.

The house ownership documents were handed over to Gharti during a ceremony organised by Palungtar Municipality in the presence of Mayor Bibash Chintan, elected representatives, municipal officials and local

residents.

According to Mayor Chintan, the one-storey house, built at a cost of Rs. 583,000, includes a bedroom, a living room, a toilet and other basic facilities. The house has a corrugated sheet roof and has been designed to provide essential amenities for the family.

Palungtar Municipality said that Jung Bahadur Gharti has a complete disability classified under the 'A' category, while his wife Sunita Gharti has a disability classified under the 'B' category.

Chief Administrative Officer of the Municipality Sher Bahadur B.C. said that the newly handed-over house would provide the couple, who had

been struggling due to the lack of safe shelter, with a dignified and secure living environment.

Speaking at the programme, Mayor Chintan said the municipality would continue such initiatives aimed at improving the living standards of people with disabilities and strengthening social security measures.

After receiving the new house, the Gharti family expressed gratitude to Mayor Chintan and the municipality, saying the support had brought new hope and confidence into their lives.

Local residents described the municipality's initiative as an example of inclusive and people-centred governance.

TWO LABOURS KILLED AS BRICK KILN WALL COLLAPSES

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Nepalgunj, Aug. 5

Two labours were killed after a wall of a brick kiln collapsed at New Kisan Brick Kiln in Bhaiyapur of Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City-19, Banke district.

According to Deputy Superintendent of Police Pratit Singh Rathour, spokesperson for the District Police Office, Banke, the incident occurred at a brick kiln owned by Rajjab Ali Sai in Nepalgunj-19, where the two workers were engaged in work when the wall suddenly collapsed.

DSP Rathour said that the incident took place at around 11:20 am on August 3. A 52-year-old worker, Barshadi Lodha, a resident of Nepalgunj-19, died on the spot, while another worker, 45-year-old Ram Pheran Kori of Paraspur, Nepalgunj, sustained serious injuries.

Kori was rushed to Bheri Hospital for treatment but died during treatment at around 3:30 am on Wednesday, DSP Rathour said.

He added that Lodha's body was handed over to his family after post-mortem examination, while Kori's body has been kept at Bheri Hospital for the post-mortem.

Police said further investigation into the incident is under way. DSP Rathour added that discussions would also be held with the brick kiln operator regarding compensation for the families of the deceased workers.

One killed in vegetable-loaded truck accident in Bhimphedi



A truck damaged in the accident at Bhimphedi, Makwanpur.

BY ANIL PARAJULI
Hetauda, Aug. 5

A person died and a truck driver was injured after a vegetable-loaded truck met with an accident at Tiltar of Bhimphedi Rural Municipality-2 along the Tribhuvan Highway in Makwanpur district.

According to the District Police Office, Makwanpur, the six-wheeler truck (Madhes Province 03-002 Kha 5095), which was heading towards Birgunj from Palung, skidded off the road due to rainfall and dense fog and plunged around 100 metres down into the Chandi River on Wednesday morning.

The accident occurred at around 2:30 am. Police said truck driver 23-year-old Ranjit Karki of Raksirang Rural Municipality-9, Makwanpur, sustained

a fracture to his right leg and injuries to various parts of his body. Only two people, including the driver, were travelling in the truck.

The driver's uncle, 36-year-old Arjun Karki, also a resident of Raksirang-9, sustained serious injuries to his head and other parts of his body in the accident. A team of police personnel, including traffic police, led by Police Inspector Sanam Malla from the Area Police Office, Bhimphedi, reached the site, rescued both injured persons and rushed them to Hetauda for treatment.

Doctors at Hetauda Hospital declared Arjun Karki dead at 9:15 am on Wednesday during treatment.

According to Deputy Superintendent of Police Madhav Prasad Kafle, information officer at the District Police Office, Makwanpur, the preliminary investigation suggests that slippery roads caused by rainfall and dense fog were the main reasons behind the accident.

EDITORIAL

Country-Specific Diplomacy

In today’s interdependent world, mutual cooperation among nations has become necessary for stability, peace and development. Relations between nations are defined by a common interest encompassing diverse areas such as diplomacy, politics, technology, economy, education, culture, defence, and trade. All countries - be it poor or rich, weak or powerful - all are in need of establishing sound ties with neighbours and friendly nations. Economic and geopolitical interests, cultural closeness, and ethnic homogeneity are some elements that impel countries to engage in international activity. Increased engagements and interactions among the nations have positive implications for the world, for they enhance understanding and reduce unnecessary tension between the countries.

However, executing effective foreign policy requires several things, the economy being the chief one. Stable government, adequate resources, competent workforce, consensus foreign policy, enabling laws and institutions are prerequisite to effectual diplomacy. The nations with economic and military muscle have many levers to expand ties and set the global agenda, amplifying their influence and boosting image in the world. But this is not possible for the nations constrained by scarce resources and incompetent diplomatic corps. For the small and least developed countries like Nepal, it has been a daunting task to secure its core national interests as geopolitics has become a primary factor in defining international relations.

Against this backdrop, Nepal has pursued economic diplomacy as one of the important components of foreign policy. Its neutral and non-aligned foreign policy has put it in a better position to execute economic diplomacy that consists of aid, grants, financing, foreign trade, and foreign direct investment. Similarly, economic diplomacy also involves the country’s participation in trade negotiation under the World Trade Organisation that settles global trade dispute and impacts labour system and investment rules. Nepal has taken various initiatives to effectively implement economic diplomacy. The other day, Minister for Foreign Affairs Shisir Khanal spoke about the need to increase the country’s participation in and benefits from international assistance and trade. While addressing a function organised by the Economic Diplomacy Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he noted that Nepal must move ahead with clearly defined priorities by aptly handling the problems arising from the current geopolitical milieu.

As an LDC, Nepal has been enjoying zero-tariff facilities in trade with the developed nations but owing to the lack of export items, it has not benefitted from such special preference as expected. Our diplomatic outreach has been constrained by the limited financial and human resources. The strategies need to be devised in a way that the country reaps the advantage with its available resources. According to a news report in this daily, the Foreign Ministry is devising country-specific strategic action plans to ensure that Nepal secures the maximum possible benefit from its relations with each respective country. The ministry requires setting its priority sectors for cooperation from individual countries and formulating strategic planning accordingly. In a similar manner, the ministry must have accurate data about the number of Nepalis living in different countries before working on the planning and strategies. Although the country is located in a sensitive location, Nepal enjoys a positive image among the nations. It must explore the comparative advantage of export items and invest in them. As a stable government is in place, it is an opportune time to execute economic diplomacy and attain desired growth.

Respecting Our Grandparents

MANJIMA DHAKAL

Over the last few decades, parenting style has changed dramatically. One of the most noticeable trends today is to give children everything on a silver platter. Both mother and father work hard to fulfill every demand of their children. This explains why many parents choose to have only one or two children. Today’s children easily get food, toys, gadgets, and other things they ask for.

But the previous generations grew up in a starkly different environment. They had more siblings, could not get everything they desired, and parents set certain boundaries for them. Rules and regulations were strictly enforced, making children learn to accept limitations and understand that not every wish could be fulfilled. They also learned the value of sharing, as siblings used to share rooms, clothes, toys and other household chores.

In sharp contrast, today’s children often enjoy greater comfort and freedom, but it seems they are missing out on some life skills they require in life’s ups and downs, as well as the valuable lessons in cooperation, sharing, and learning together with siblings. There is another important aspect in modern-day parenting: the grandparents’ role in children’s wellbeing. As father and mother are mostly busy working, grandparents have emerged as primary caregivers. Grandparents take care of their grandchildren, pick them up from school, prepare meals, and help with other daily routines.

Grandparents contribute significantly to the upbringing of grandchildren, yet many of them feel hurt when they are treated only as caretakers. Many grandparents feel unable to guide their grandchildren because their voice remains mostly unheard. On many occasions, they feel sidelined due to what is cited as a reason: a lack of modern

parenting skills. This can deeply hurt them.

Recently, I witnessed a situation that showed how grandparents can be affected by the behavior of their juniors. In a gathering of relatives, a family with a grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, and their child arrived. At one point, the grandmother gently asked her grandson to share his chocolate with other children. Instead of sharing the chocolate, the child messed up his grandmother’s hair. The relatives around them felt uncomfortable. The child’s parents did not say much to correct the behaviour; they only separated the child from the grandmother.

In the incident, the grandmother was more hurt emotionally than physically. Such moments remind us that grandparents need more respect, understanding and appreciation. Conversations with several grandparents reveal a common feeling: they love caring for their grandchildren, but they often feel excluded from important decisions regarding the children’s upbringing. They worry that their role has been reduced to that of a babysitter rather than a respected elder whose guidance matters.

Many studies show that children can benefit greatly from a strong relationship with grandparents, who can provide additional love, care and emotional support to them. They can teach patience, family values, cultural traditions, and life skills that are difficult to learn from books or screens. Their stories and experiences offer a unique perspective that enriches a child’s understanding of the world. We must acknowledge the value of grandparents. Respectful communication and mutual trust can help bridge the gap between generations. We must respect our guardians who guided us through our own childhoods. Respecting them and learning from their experience may be one of the most important lessons we can pass on to the next generation.

Mukti Rijal



I was invited to facilitate a discussion on how the dialogic spaces embedded in Nepal’s federal Constitution can strengthen the country’s federal democratic system. Participants included key dialogue practitioners and stakeholders affiliated with the Nepal Dialogue Initiative (NDI), among others, who have contributed to promoting dialogue as a tool for deliberation and relationship building in the country. NDI is a broad-based network of civil society organisations committed to promoting dialogic spaces in the public sphere. It organises national dialogue forums that bring together national and international practitioners to expand opportunities for dialogue, peace, accommodation, and harmony.

In the discussion programme, I made a presentation arguing that the constitution of Nepal owes its birth to the norms of dialogue and embodies several provisions underpinning dialogic spaces. It was authored by a 601-member constituent assembly in 2015 with recourse to participatory dialogic processes in which civil society and academic institutions were among the key stakeholders. Sufficient global knowledge and experiences were also available to draw on in the constitution-writing process.

Intergovernmental mechanisms

The provisions embodied in the constitution regarding intergovernmental mechanisms such as the Inter-Province Council, the National Coordination Council, and other bodies established by the relevant laws do prescribe dialogue in implicit terms as the mode of communication and deliberation among federal, provincial, and local governments. Moreover, the spirit of these provisions suggests that dialogue across all tiers of government can help build a stronger foundation for intergovernmental coordination and collaboration.

As a student of dialogue and deliberative communication, I firmly believe that intergovernmental relations can be strengthened through dialogue and deliberation. Key issues and

problems affecting the working of federalism can be resolved constructively through dialogue and deliberation. What federalism scholars like Anwar Shah stress is not merely a constitutional arrangement for distributing powers among different levels of government. It is fundamentally a system of relationships that depends on continuous dialogue, consultation, cooperation, and mutual trust.

In federal systems, constitutional provisions alone cannot guarantee harmony among federal, provincial, and local governments. The quality of dialogue, collaboration and cooperation among these institutions largely determines whether federalism succeeds or falters. Nepal enters the second decade of implementing the Constitution of Nepal, 2015. Experiences have shown that strengthening intergovernmental dialogue and relationships is as important as clarifying constitutional assignments. While the Constitution has laid down an elaborate institutional framework for intergovernmental relations, these mechanisms need to be transformed into vibrant “dialogic spaces” where governments deliberate, negotiate, build consensus, and jointly solve emerging issues and challenges.

Dialogue is not simply conversation or discussion. It is a democratic and deliberative process through which different actors listen respectfully, understand diverse perspectives, manage disagreements, and search for mutually beneficial solutions. Unlike adversarial debates aimed at winning arguments, dialogue seeks shared understanding and collaborative exploration into the issues. Philosopher Jürgen Habermas, who passed away last year in Frankfurt, Germany, described such communicative engagement as the foundation of democratic legitimacy, where public decisions emerge through reasoned dialogue.

The framers of Nepal’s Constitution clearly appreciated this philosophy. The Constitution incorporates the principles of cooperation, coexistence, and coordination as the guiding norms of federal governance. These principles recognise that governments remain interdependent in delivering services, promoting development, managing natural resources, responding to disasters, and maintaining national unity in line with the spirit of cooperative federalism.

Several constitutional institutions embody

Social Welfare Necessary For Cohesive Society



Tara Dahal

Social welfare policies are crafted to ensure the well-being of people. They involve state-sponsored universal access to education, healthcare, housing, income support, social insurance, the environment, etc. The aim is to reduce poverty, social inequality, discrimination, structural injustice, and define non-coercive social relationships. The setup of a vital social safety net fulfills everyone’s basic needs, protects from vulnerability and rectifies gross market failures. It also controls fatalistic tendencies. The directive principles and policies of Nepali state espouse welfare, safety, social inclusion, justice and social security and social protection measures. During the historical periods, Parapokar, Guthies, Dhikuti, Dharma Bhakari, temples and monasteries, etc., cared for the welfare tasks for the needy people – widows, orphan children, disabled, deserted elders and desolated ones.

Nepal’s Hindu-Buddhist philosophy prizes the concepts of dharma (virtuous conduct) and daan (giving) to earn punya (blessing) for a virtuous social order and improve from karamic chakra of life. People with strong social conscience and spiritualism still perform charity. Some social entrepreneurs have created bridges between business and social development. Nepali state, public-spirited people, and wealthy persons lent support to the victims of conflicts, earthquakes, floods, fires and human-induced catastrophes to mend the fabric of society by philanthropy, volunteer work, and relief and rescue measures. Nepal has welcomed welfare-based

organisations of the international community to work in the areas of environment, education, health, women, Dalits advocacy and social development to promote a fair and just society.

Social Welfare Council

The Social Welfare Council (SWC) was established to coordinate and promote social institutions and their delivery of basic social services. It has contributed to reduce poverty and gross inequality, maintain economic security and uphold social cohesion of diverse Nepalis. Besides, the SWC monitors, evaluates and renews the entitlement of activities of non-government, non-state organisations and civil society in Nepal and seeks the alignment of activities with local and national priorities. Its Family Welfare Division deals with mothers, new born babies and children. Self-help has regenerated the moral virtues of Nepalis to cooperate, hone altruism and empathy and mediate the social, gender and generational gaps in development.

Nepali Constitution has granted many social and economic rights and initiated corresponding policies and programmes. Moderate resources are allocated to local governments and its agencies to strengthen the social foundation of progress. Its welfare vision of collaboration among private, public and cooperative sectors for the achievement of sustainable development goals reflects the heart of Nepali culture. Besides, its redistributive measures cover basic needs, education, health, women, children and Dalits empowerment, remote area development and humanitarian response. Both official and civic measures have contributed to welfare in Nepal.

The Ministry of Women, Children and Senior citizens, several sectoral national commissions and local bodies are engaged in bridging high ideals and abject

Public consultations, community dialogues, participatory budgeting, social accountability mechanisms, and citizen feedback platforms can deepen democratic ownership while improving policy responsiveness.

this dialogic approach. Among such institutions, the Inter-Province Council, chaired by the prime minister and comprising chief ministers and federal ministers, provides a political forum for resolving disputes between the federal and provincial governments. It offers opportunities for discussing policy coordination, legislative harmonisation, administrative cooperation, and implementation challenges. Likewise, the National Coordination Council creates a broader platform where representatives of federal, provincial, and local governments can discuss matters affecting multiple levels of government.

Similarly, the National Natural Resources and Fiscal Commission (NNRFC) plays a crucial dialogic role by recommending equitable distribution of revenues, grants, and natural resources. Fiscal federalism is often the most contentious dimension of intergovernmental relations. Data-based, reliable recommendations supported by consultation and evidence can significantly reduce mistrust and political confrontation among different levels of government.

However, institutional mechanisms alone do not automatically generate meaningful dialogue. Many constitutional forums functioned largely as ceremonial bodies. Decisions have often remained inadequately implemented, while disputes over concurrent powers, administrative control, fiscal transfers, and legislation continue to surface. This demonstrates that dialogue should become a continuous governance culture rather than an

Increased welfare enhances hope for everyone and enriches their ability to aid others’ wellbeing.

conditions. NGOs like Maiti Nepal are set up to protect vulnerable women, uplift their economic condition and social respect. It rescues girls and women sold in brothels in India and other countries. The Social Welfare Association of Nepal supports the quality education and health of deprived communities. The government is providing old age allowance, pension, maternity protection allowance, food aid and livelihood support. The Gurkha Welfare Trust assists Gurkha ex-servicemen in the health sector. Peace and Beautiful Children Welfare and Milestone Youth Welfare work in diverse frontiers of youths’ lives. Coordination, collaboration and cooperative action across welfare-based NGOs are main challenges.

The SWC supplies welfare benefits to women, children, youth, destitute and disabled communities. It also supports training and grants to NGOs. Some INGOs are also involved in promoting child welfare, women’s empowerment, elderly care, disability support, poverty alleviation, disaster relief, education, training, small-scale project works, etc. Within these areas, they work with the Conflict Victims Women National Network. IOM Nepal is lending support to conflict victims by providing legal aid, counselling, economic rehabilitation and transitional justice.

National Action Plan under the rubric of the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 extends a helping hand to conflict-related sexual violence. The Centre for

occasional constitutional obligation. The need for sustained dialogue becomes even more significant in a politically diverse federal system.

Different governments may be led by different political parties pursuing varying policy priorities. Such diversity should not become a source of institutional confrontation. Instead, structured dialogue enables governments to distinguish political competition from constitutional cooperation. Dialogue also helps address one of the persistent implementation challenges of Nepal’s federalism: ambiguity in the exercise of concurrent powers. The constitutional schedules assign exclusive and concurrent competencies across federal, provincial, and local governments. Yet practical implementation often reveals overlapping responsibilities in sectors such as education, forestry, health, agriculture, and infrastructure development.

International experience

International experience offers valuable lessons in this regard. Germany’s federal system emphasises what scholars describe as “cooperative federalism.” Extensive consultations occur before major policy decisions affecting the Länder (states). The Bundesrat serves as an institutional platform where state governments participate directly in federal legislation, ensuring continuous negotiation rather than unilateral decision-making. Canada has similarly developed strong traditions of inter-ministerial meetings and intergovernmental conferences that facilitate negotiation on fiscal arrangements, healthcare, climate policy, and constitutional matters.

A dialogic culture should extend beyond governments themselves. Federalism ultimately belongs to citizens rather than institutions. Public consultations, community dialogues, participatory budgeting, social accountability mechanisms, and citizen feedback platforms can deepen democratic ownership while improving policy responsiveness. Local governments, being closest to citizens, have a particularly important role in nurturing such participatory governance.

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Mental Health and Counselling Nepal aims to reintegrate conflict victims in their own communities. IOM Nepal, Advocacy Forum Nepal, and National Network of Conflict Victims with Disabilities simultaneously provide technical support to the government to support victims, offer them legal and psychosocial support, and advocate for the rights of conflict victims.

Conflict victims

In 2006, a programme to support conflict victims was set up. It has made disappeared persons visible and given them a sense of justice. Conflict Victim Society for Justice Nepal operates in 42 districts. It ensures the rights of victims via different mechanisms like putting pressure to the government to address the issue of victims, ensuring their rights, implementing transitional justice, seeking their peaceful coexistence, and preventing the recurrence of conflict. Public welfare and social cohesion are positively linked to each other, and both cultivate the civilized character of Nepalis. Increased welfare enhances hope for everyone and enriches their ability to aid others’ wellbeing.

The good sense of diverse Nepalis and their cooperation on shared interests have made society liveable with less risk to the uncertainty of life. Solutions to problems are bubbling up from grassroots communities through local institutions, leaders and civic groups imbued with a sense of charity, empathy and the best of kindness. Still, the government requires coordinating the fragmented nature of social welfare measures into coherence, linking the cause groups and identifying various kinds of services people require across social classes and geography to make them impactful and sustainable.

(Tara Dahal holds an MA in Peace and Conflict from Otto-Von Guericke University, Germany.)

TAILPIECE

Two guys were fishing down by the Ohio River on different sides of the riverbank at night. Guy number one was catching a whole bunch of fish for his family, but guy number two hadn’t caught any and was frustrated and called out to guy number one, "How come you’ve been catching all those fish, and I haven’t caught a single one?" Guy number one replied, "I don’t know.... why don’t you come on over here?"

"I don’t know.... I don’t see a bridge, and there is no boat, and I don’t swim too well." Guy number one picks up his flashlight, turns it on, and replies, "Why don’t you walk across this here beam of light?" Guy number two was outraged and replied, "Do you think I’m stupid? When I get halfway, you’ll turn it off!!!"

Rising To Climate Challenge

There have been continuous news reports of wildfires engulfing certain parts of Canada, the US, France and Spain. As a result, air quality has deteriorated across these beautiful countries. In fact, climate change plays a big role in intensifying heatwaves and wildfires globally. Besides, there have been various reports of natural disasters like landslides and earthquakes killing numerous people the world over.

Today, people and countries are in a rush, running from pillar to post to achieve everything in life. They don’t have time to spare/spend for others. The hectic lifestyle even stops them from thinking of the Sun, the Sky, and the Earth that are the real torchbearers and creators of the world. Remember, we have only one Earth. Even a small mistake committed against Mother Earth will have a ripple effect somewhere. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each and every country to take all the possible steps towards safeguarding the Earth. Forests have always played a great role

in influencing the chances of getting rain. This apart, the forest areas have the natural appeal of “clustering the clouds together.” And all these activities will lead to good rainfall over the region. On the contrary, a forest area catching fire means something bizarre and serious. The fact is that factors like climate change and dry weather will add to the chances of wildfire. Besides this, deforestation is another strong factor behind wildfire incidents. The short message is that it is time to protect our prestigious and precious forest areas. Actions like controlling urbanisation and increasing tree/forest cover will bring in greater results in matters of balancing the environment against growing population/urbanization.

The present global economic slowdown, coupled with climate change, is a big threat to the interests of all the nations. They should come forward to resolve the issue of gas emissions that is playing havoc with the aspects of the monsoon.

P. Senthil Saravana Durai
Mumbai, India

50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

August 6, 1976

One Arrested For Idol Theft

Mugu, August 3: Bala Rama Kami of Gamariwa village has been arrested on the charge of idol theft, reports RSS.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

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Russian missile kills 17 near Kyiv

AP
Kyiv, Aug. 5

Russian missile and drone strikes on Kyiv and the surrounding region killed 17 people and wounded 44 others overnight into Wednesday, smashing business premises and a train station, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said. The targets hit included a brewing company, a warehouse for construction material, and a mail sorting office that had nothing to do with the war, Zelenskyy said. But the Russian Defense Ministry said the businesses masked ties to the military.

The nighttime attack lasting about two hours was the latest in a series of large-scale Russian ballistic missile strikes that have become near-routine this summer.

The intensified barrages are exploiting Ukraine's critical shortage of interceptor missiles for the U.S.-made Patriot systems, the sole air defense weapon in its arsenal able to shoot down ballistic missiles. Zelenskyy has pleaded with other countries to send more of the ammunition made scarcer by the Iran war.

Supplies of air defense missiles to Ukraine during the first half of this year tumbled to one-third of the 2025 level, Zelenskyy said. "Ballistic interceptors are what could have saved the lives of those killed today," Zelenskyy said on social media. "It is very important for our partners to understand that delays in supplying them, or a reluctance to hand over anti-ballistic systems, lead directly to such horrific casualties and destruction."

With U.S.-led peace efforts apparently stalled, Ukraine has stepped up its deep strikes on key Russian targets such as oil refineries in an effort to compel Russian President Vladimir Putin to negotiate.



Firefighters put out a fire after Russian missiles hit a warehouse in Kyiv, Ukraine, Wednesday.

PHOTO: AP

Zelenskyy has accepted an unconditional ceasefire demanded by U.S. President Donald Trump but Putin has refused.

In its latest attack on logistics facilities of Wildberries, Russia's biggest online retailer, Ukrainian drones hit a warehouse in the Tula region south of Moscow, the company and the region's governor said Wednesday.

It was the 14th Wildberries warehouse to catch fire in less than three weeks, according to a Ukrainian tally. Ukraine says the company provides goods that can be used by the military. Kyiv is also keen to unsettle the Russian public with high-profile attacks.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its forces downed 475 Ukrainian drones

overnight over 16 Russian regions, as well as illegally annexed Crimea and the waters of the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea.

Russia fired 24 ballistic missiles, four other missiles identified as either hypersonic Zircos or supersonic Oniks, and 115 drones, many of them jet-powered and harder to stop due to their speed, in the attack, Ukrainian authorities said.

The Russian Defense Ministry said it struck transport, logistics and distribution centers involved in military activity. It listed four targets in Kyiv, claiming they ran war-related operations.

Serhii Beskrestnov, an adviser to Zelenskyy, said the war of attrition has

entered a new phase. "The enemy is attacking everything indiscriminately — retail warehouses, food storage facilities, logistics hubs, enterprises, building materials warehouses," he said on Facebook. It was not immediately possible to reconcile the different Russian and Ukrainian accounts of the military value of what was hit.

Mykhailo Hukov, a 40-year-old Kyiv warehouse worker, said an air raid warning that included a ballistic missile threat sounded just after midnight, prompting an immediate evacuation order. "So everyone started running," he told The Associated Press. "I turned everyone around so they wouldn't go back inside for their backpacks."

China hits back, curbs US drone exports

AP
Bangkok, Aug. 5

China announced a series of economic measures Wednesday against the United States, including controls on exports of drones to the U.S. and a ban on dealings with six American entities, in response to recent restrictions imposed by Washington.

Tensions are simmering between the world's two biggest economies ahead of an expected visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to the U.S. in September, despite signs of warming ties during his meetings with U.S. President Donald Trump in Beijing in May.

The Commerce Ministry said the sanctions are in response to recent moves from the U.S., including a ban by the U.S. Federal Communications Commission on imports of Chinese drones, and the Department of Homeland Security's decision to add 43 Chinese companies to the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act entity list to prevent imports of goods made with forced labor.

The "measures seriously violate the important consensus reached by the two heads of state and severely damage China's legitimate rights and interests. China has no choice but to take necessary countermeasures in response," the ministry said in a statement.

It emphasized that China was acting with restraint and urged the U.S. to scrap its measures against Beijing and cease

its "erroneous practices." It also warned of further sanctions if the U.S. rolls out new restrictive measures against China.

Beijing is requiring reviews on a case-by-case basis of exports of unmanned aerial vehicles, their key components and related technologies that are on a list of export-controlled dual-use items that can serve both civilian and military purposes.

Six U.S. entities, including Applied DNA Sciences, Inc. and the non-governmental group Human Rights in China, were banned from engaging in trade or other activities with entities in China.

China also banned a company called Compliance Testing LLC from engaging in business in China because it had worked with the FCC in "harming China's sovereignty and security," according to a separate statement from the Commerce Ministry. The ministry also said it was investigating the possible impact on national security of imported printing software and office equipment, but it did not name affected companies.

The State Administration for Market Regulation announced that companies in the U.S. that conduct follow-up factory inspections on behalf of Chinese entities for CCC certification can no longer provide these certifications.

CCC certifications are meant to ensure electronic products meet a basic safety standard. The new rule will oblige U.S. makers of certified electronics to hire auditors based outside of the U.S. or to rely on other non-U. S. designated bodies for such certifications.

India monsoon floods kill 100

AFP
New Delhi, Aug. 5

Floods and landslides triggered by monsoon rains have killed more than 100 people across India since July, official data showed Wednesday, with thousands forced to flee their inundated homes.

While the annual monsoon brings rainfall that farmers depend on, scientists say climate change is making the phenomenon more erratic, unpredictable and deadly across the South Asia region. India's northeastern state of Assam is among the hardest hit by the annual rains, with at least 87 people killed, according to Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

In the state's worst-affected Sivasagar district, some 47 people have been killed as several areas remain under water. State authorities have appealed for financial donations from the public to support relief and rehabilitation efforts. "The devastation here is unlike anything these areas have witnessed before," Sarma posted on X. "Material losses can be restored, but no compensation can replace a loved one." AFP images showed residents using rafts and inflated boats to reach higher ground with the help of the state's disaster response officials.

In India's southern state of Kerala, Chief Minister VD Satheesan said at least 15 people have been killed and another seven were missing after heavy rains over several days. More than 300 relief camps have been set up in the



Residents wade through a flooded street following heavy monsoon rains in Guwahati.

PHOTO: AFP

state, sheltering over 10,000 people, after rains triggered landslides and swollen rivers breached their banks.

The Himalayan territory of Jammu and Kashmir, at least 31 people been killed in several short bursts of extremely intense rainfall, according to a report by the public state broadcaster. Monsoon-related disasters are an annual occurrence across India after the region's long summers when many parts of the country face water scarcity and drought.

Neighbouring Sri Lanka has also seen unusually heavy monsoon rains that have caused flash floods and mudslides, claiming the lives of at least eight people since Monday, according

Record heat hits Japan, Korea

AP
Seoul, Aug. 5

Fans fainting at a baseball park. Lions dying at a zoo. A woman taking shelter in a car found dead. A doctor advising people to eat dog meat to promote stamina.

The scenes caused by a record heat wave in Northeast Asia illustrate how extreme temperatures have gripped South Korea, North Korea and Japan.

In most of South Korea, a major heat wave advisory was in place Wednesday as temperatures in densely populated greater Seoul, home to 20 million people, and adjacent areas soared as high as 39 degrees Celsius (102.2 degrees Fahrenheit).

North Korean authorities have issued a heat wave advisory in many areas and called for people to take safety steps to avoid heat-related health problems. Japan's anti-disaster agency reported more than 18,000 people with heat stroke symptoms were transported to hospitals during the week of July 20 to 26.

Since mid-May in South Korea, about 2,220 people have been diagnosed with heat-related illnesses and 19 have died, according to a report from Interior and Safety Ministry. About 17,140 livestock, such as chickens, ducks and pigs, and about 160,000 farmed fishes also have died.

On Sunday, the southeastern city of Yangsan saw temperatures reaching 42.5 Celsius (108.5 Fahrenheit), the highest figure recorded since weather observation began in Korea in 1904.

In a Cabinet meeting Tuesday, President Lee Jae Myung instructed officials to view the ongoing heat wave as "a national disaster" and make all-out

efforts to protect lives.

On Tuesday night, a spectator in his 20s collapsed while watching a baseball game between SSG Landers and LG Twins at a stadium in Incheon city, west of Seoul. Emergency personnel administered CPR and transported him to a hospital, halting the game for about 10 minutes.

Another fan in his 20s fell unconscious and received treatment at the stadium after the game, according to the Korea Baseball Organization, which announced Wednesday that all 10 games scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday were canceled and would be rescheduled.

Min Son Yong, deputy director of the internal medicine department at Pyongyang General Hospital, told North Korea's main Rodong Sinmun newspaper on Sunday that people should eat dog meat and fish porridge to supplement protein to beat the heat.

Euphemistically known as "dangogi," or sweet meat, dog meat has long been considered a stamina food in North Korea and is traditionally eaten during the hottest time of the year. Min also recommended watermelons, cucumbers, tomatoes, mung beans and ginger to cool down, the newspaper reported.

Dog meat also has been eaten in China, Vietnam and African countries, as well as in South Korea, which plans to formally ban slaughtering, breeding or selling dog meat for human consumption beginning next year.

Japan's Environment Ministry issued a heat stroke alert for most of the western and southern Japan on Wednesday. While temperatures in the Tokyo region temporarily fell this week, intense heat continued to hit southern Japan.

PRISM

‘Spider-Man’ screening evacuated over odour

Colombia: A screening of Spider-Man: Brand New Day at a movie theater in Colombia was evacuated when the room filled with a foul, flatulent odour.

A video recorded at the Cine Colombia cinema inside the Plaza Bocagrande shopping mall in Cartagena shows movie theater customers -- including one dressed as Spider-Man -- filling the lobby after evacuating the theater.

The cause of the odor, which witnesses compared to a fart, has not been confirmed, but theories include a patron with a medical issue passing a large amount of gas or the detonation of a stink bomb, a prank device that gives off a strong odor reminiscent of flatulence. Cine Colombia and local authorities have yet to officially comment on the incident.

Escaped pet tortoise rescued from railroad tracks

London: Railway operators teamed up in England to rescue a "trespassing tortoise" spotted wandering on the tracks near a station.

Train operating company Avanti West Coast, which appropriately has a turtle named Turbo as its mascot, said a passenger waiting on the platform at Runcorn spotted a tortoise next to the tracks near the station and reported it to officials.

Avanti coordinated with Network Rail to shut down train services at the station temporarily while a rescue plan was put into place. The rescue took about 10 minutes, and normal operations then resumed.

The tortoise, estimated to be about 50 years old, was taken to a local rescue center, where the runaway pet was later reunited with its owner.

Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

- 1901– Kiowa land in Oklahoma is opened for white settlement, effectively dissolving the contiguous reservation.
- 1914– World War I: Serbia declares war on Germany; Austria declares war on Russia.
- 1926– Gertrude Ederle becomes the first woman to swim across the English Channel.
- 1926– First public screening using the Vitaphone process[11]
- 1940– Estonia is annexed by the Soviet Union.
- 1956– After going bankrupt in 1955, the American broadcaster DuMont Television Network makes its final broadcast, a boxing match from St. Nicholas Arena in New York in the Boxing from St. Nicholas Arena series.
- 1960– Cuban Revolution: Cuba nationalizes American and foreign-owned property in the nation.
- 1962– Jamaica becomes independent from the United Kingdom.
- 1965– US President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act of 1965 into law.

AFP
Gazipur (Bangladesh), Aug. 5

Garment worker Mosammat Aklima found out in a text message that she had become one of thousands laid off in the latest wave of cuts to hit Bangladesh's once-booming export industry. The news appearing on her mobile that July evening confirmed the end of her eight years' employment at Lithe Garments factory, a major manufacturer in the country's industrial heartland.

She was among 3,000 people laid off in one go, a sign of the industry's struggle with slowing exports, weak customer demand and stiff competition from rivals India and Vietnam. "I am three months pregnant now. It is not possible to find a new job," said Aklima, 27. "I will now dip into my savings, borrow some money. I don't know what's next," she told AFP in the garment hub of Gazipur.

Aklima earned \$250 a month, roughly matching the income of her husband, who works at another garment factory. With her redundancy, their son and elderly parents must now rely on a single wage. The layoffs are part of a wider downturn in an industry that accounts for around 80 percent of Bangladesh's export earnings.

About 400 of the roughly 4,000 apparel



PHOTO: AFP

About 400 of the roughly 4,000 apparel factories in Bangladesh have shut over the past two years, eliminating tens of thousands of jobs, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association said.

factories in the country have shut over the past two years, eliminating tens of thousands of jobs, according to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association. Some of them had to shut down because they could not survive with exports declining in the "highly competitive" global market, BGMEA president Mahmudul Hasan Babu told AFP.

The closures have fuelled concern

over the future of a sector that employs more than 4.5 million people, most of them women. While US tariffs are similar for apparel exporters across Asia, analysts say Bangladesh faces a greater challenge in Europe, its largest market, where India and Vietnam have gained ground through free-trade agreements.

The pressure could intensify as Bangladesh is set to lose the duty-free preferential market access it enjoys in

Europe and other countries because its status as a least-developed country is scheduled to expire in 2029. "If Bangladesh fails to strike free-trade agreements after the end of the preferential trade regime, the country may risk losing competitiveness," said Dhaka University professor Selim Raihan.

European Union apparel imports fell during the first five months of the year, with those from Bangladesh recording the sharpest decline among major suppliers, Eurostat data shows. Experts point to weak consumer demand linked to conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, but also blame structural weaknesses in the South Asian nation of 170 million people.

The industry remains focused on low-margin products such as T-shirts and jeans, while rivals have moved into higher-value segments made with synthetic fibre. Bangladesh, which earned about \$39 billion from garment exports in 2025, relies heavily on imported cotton and other fibres, raising production costs. "We have expanded without planning and without consolidating the infrastructure," said Mohiuddin Rubel, founder and chief executive of Apparel Voice, a research and advocacy group.

"We got stuck with basic products," he said, adding that Bangladesh had not fully tapped opportunities in

military uniforms and medical apparel. Research also remains limited, while automation is reshaping production lines elsewhere.

A recent World Bank study found that most garment factories in Bangladesh still rely on semi-automated labour-intensive processes, while rivals such as Vietnam are moving rapidly towards advanced manufacturing.

At the same time, labour advocates worry that technological advances can have an impact on employment numbers. "We have not seen any integrated government policy to manage this transition in manufacturing," said Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed, executive director of the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies. Government adviser Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir said authorities were focusing on training to help workers adapt to changing industrial needs.

For workers, however, long-term plans offer little immediate comfort. Begum, who did not give her first name, told AFP she had been turned away by many factories in Gazipur despite having experience in sewing and hemming. She had to go back to her native village in the country's north to bring back rice and other essentials to feed her family. "I don't know what will come next."



The newly constructed building of Martyr Dasharath Chand University of Health Sciences at Godawari Municipality-5 in Kailali district.

PHOTO: RSS

Fertiliser shortage hits farmers in Tarai

BY JANARJAN KHATRI /DHIRENDRA PRASAD SHAH
Sarlahi/Rajbiraj, Aug. 5

Farmers have been facing severe hardship due to a shortage of fertiliser needed for their paddy crops.

In several districts of Madhes province, farmers who have yet to plant paddy are struggling to obtain DAP fertiliser, while those who have already planted their crop are desperately seeking urea. The government has been finding it increasingly difficult to supply fertiliser to cooperatives and authorised dealers through the Agriculture Inputs Company Limited (AICL) and the Salt Trading Corporation (STC).

Farmers have started queuing before dawn in the hope of obtaining fertiliser. On Wednesday, farmers in Jamuniya, Ward No. 6 of Kabilasi Municipality, staged a protest outside the ward office after failing to obtain urea for their paddy fields.

The farmers said they had waited in line for hours to collect fertiliser supplied to the ward but returned empty-handed, prompting them to surround the office. Ward chairperson Purushottam Rai said that while all farmers required fertiliser, the quantity allocated to the ward was far too small to meet demand.

"We receive only 148 sacks of fertiliser, while hundreds of farmers here need it. Under such circumstances, it is impossible to distribute it fairly. Due to the tension, we have been unable to distribute 50 sacks and have kept them locked at the dealer's premises," he said.

Rai added that although farmers had been requested to collect fertiliser on a rotational basis, many had refused.

Similarly, on Tuesday afternoon, an



Farmers queue at the Mahila Sana Kisan Agriculture Cooperative in Gharibathan of Sarlahi to collect urea fertiliser.

PHOTO: JANARDAN KHATRI/TRN

overwhelming crowd gathered at the Mahila Sana Kisan Agriculture Cooperative in Gharibathan, Ward No. 12 of Ishworpur Municipality, to collect urea.

Local farmer Ramsharan Khadka said that only a small quantity of fertiliser had arrived, while the number of farmers in the queue was far greater. As a result, a few farmers managed to obtain only half a sack each, while many others returned home empty-handed.

"Those who managed to get to the front of the queue received half a sack, but many others had to return home without any fertiliser," he said.

Khadka said the problem had become more acute this year because sufficient rainfall had enabled most farmers to transplant paddy at around the same time, creating simultaneous demand for fertiliser. DAP is generally applied during transplanting, while urea is applied afterwards.

Unable to obtain subsidised fertiliser from authorised dealers, many farmers

have been forced to purchase the same subsidised fertiliser through the black market or buy Indian fertiliser at inflated prices. Sanjay Mahato, a farmer from Jirayat in Ward No. 3 of Bagmati Municipality, said he had to pay Rs. 2,500 for a sack of fertiliser that normally costs Rs. 1,000.

Dealers appointed by the AICL and STC have also been struggling to distribute subsidised fertiliser. Whenever information spreads that fertiliser has arrived for distribution, large crowds of farmers rush to the distribution centres, often leading to scuffles. The situation has become so tense that police have had to be deployed during distribution.

Saroj Khanal, chief of the AICL office in Nawalpur, Sarlahi, said his office had also been receiving numerous complaints about the shortage.

Although fertiliser had arrived at the company's Birgunj office, transportation to the district had taken time, worsening the shortage. "The fertiliser we

received has already been billed out to dealers and completely sold. Once additional supplies arrive, we will begin distributing a new quota," he said. Khanal expressed hope that the shortage would gradually ease once more fertiliser reached the district from Birgunj within the next two or three days.

Meanwhile, following complaints from farmers over the shortage of chemical fertiliser, the Saptari District Administration Office inspected the supply and distribution systems of the AICL and STC in Rajbiraj.

A team led by Chief District Officer Shyam Krishna Thapa, accompanied by Administrative Officer Santosh Kumar Rai, inspected on Wednesday morning, and instructed both organisations to make their distribution systems more systematic, transparent, properly documented and free from complaints.

Following the inspection, Thapa said the team had also examined fertiliser stocks in the district. According to him, the shortage had arisen because supplies had fallen far short of farmers' demand.

"We requested 20,000 sacks of fertiliser for the district, but only 4,500 sacks have been received so far, creating supply problems," he said while adding that all fertiliser received in the district was being distributed to farmers immediately after completing the required procedures.

According to Thapa, both the AICL and STC in Rajbiraj currently have stocks of DAP and urea, and these are being distributed to farmers.

He warned that individuals or organisations found creating an artificial shortage, engaging in black marketing or committing irregularities in fertiliser distribution would face strict legal action. He added that covert monitoring had been intensified to detect such activities.

MoIC moves to recover dues from ISPs

Minister Timilsina rules out concessions on legally payable dues

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 5

The government has stepped up efforts to resolve the long-running dispute over outstanding dues owed by internet service providers (ISPs), including telecommunications service charges, royalty payments and contributions to the Rural Telecommunications Development Fund (RTDF).

The Ministry of Information and Communication (MoIC) has intensified consultations with stakeholders to settle issues related to unpaid liabilities, tax assessments and licence renewals.

During a meeting with representatives of the Internet Service Providers' Association of Nepal (ISPAN) on Wednesday, Minister for Information and Communication Dr. Bikram Timilsina said the government would recover all taxes and fees that are legally payable.

Minister Dr. Timilsina said that if any tax or fee had been imposed unfairly or contrary to existing laws, the government was prepared to review the matter.

However, he stressed that companies could not indefinitely delay payments that are legally required.

"The government is ready to address legitimate concerns, but the process of recovering outstanding dues will move forward where payments are due under the law," he said.

Minister Timilsina said the current fiscal year had been designated as a year of reform for Nepal's telecommunications sector, with the government committed to resolving long-standing policy and administrative issues. He

also urged ISPAN to submit written recommendations outlining the challenges faced by service providers and reforms expected from the government.

The Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA) has maintained that it cannot renew the licences of ISPs until all outstanding payments are cleared. The minister reiterated that companies should not expect licence renewals or continued operations without meeting their legal financial obligations.

ISPAN, however, told the Minister that many service providers were under severe financial pressure and were unable to clear up to five years of accumulated dues in a single payment. The association requested that royalty and RTDF liabilities be settled through an instalment payment scheme.

According to ISPAN, the telecommunications regulator's decision not to renew the licences of companies with unpaid dues has disrupted business operations, affecting service expansion, banking transactions and overall business continuity.

The association also called for a review of the telecommunications service charge (TSC) framework and requested an opportunity for reassessment of tax liabilities determined by the Large Taxpayers Office. Service providers argued that they were required to pay taxes on revenue that had never actually been collected from customers.

Most ISPs still owe 4 per cent of their gross revenue in royalty payments to the Ministry of Information and Communication and an additional 2 per cent contribution to the RTDF through the telecommunications regulator, apart from their regular tax obligations.

The Office of the Auditor General has repeatedly highlighted these unpaid liabilities in its annual reports and has urged the government to recover the outstanding amounts.

National Agriculture Policy, 2083 issued

RSS
Kathmandu, Aug. 5

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forest and Environment has issued National Agriculture Policy, 2083, with an objective of making Nepal's agro sector modern, commercial, competitive and self-dependent.

The policy, prepared as per federal governance system, has put food safety, food sovereignty, income growth of farmers, agro production growth, and import substitution and promotion of agro export on top priority.

Expressing the views on the policy, Minister for Agriculture, Forest and

Environment, Gita Chaudhary, mentioned that the ministry introduced the policy with a purpose of building sustainable and production-oriented agriculture system, dealing with the existing challenges of agriculture sector.

The policy has made clear policy-level arrangement to resolve problems like land fragmentation, increasing barren land, lack of irrigation and storage infrastructures, brain drain of youths, impacts of climate change, low productivity and growing import dependency.

Achieving self-reliance in basic foods, promoting agriculture commercialization and industrialization, and expanding Nepali produces in international market branding them are also mentioned in the policy.

Bhaktapur in action to conserve rich heritage

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug 5

Three districts of the Kathmandu Valley are recognised as living, each with a distinct identity reflected in their museum in heritage, art, music, traditional dances and national and local festivals.

Among them, Bhaktapur has earned a reputation as a living museum and hub of traditional dance and music.

Aiming to promote its rich cultural heritage at both national and international levels, Bhaktapur Municipality has prioritised the conservation and promotion of historical sites, documentation of cultural practices and support for traditional architecture.

The reconstruction and restoration works are set to begin on major heritage sites, including Thanthu Durbar, excavation of the historical 99 courtyards and Navadurga Dyochhen.

Under the theme 'Heritage Conservation, Respect for Culture and Identity for Future Generations', the municipality has unveiled a series of initiatives aimed at safeguarding both tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

According to the municipality's policy and programme, legal and administrative measures will be pursued to establish Bhaktapur as a recognised cultural city.

Traditional musical instruments, Dapha devotional hymns, festival and other cultural practices will be documented and preserved to ensure their transmission to young generations.

The municipality has given priority to the reconstruction of Thanthu Durbar; it has allocated Rs. 15 million for the completion of the project, the restoration of Navadurga Dyochhen

and Dahi Binayak and the excavation, identification and conservation of the historic 99 courtyards in the Bhaktapur Square area.

Budget has been allocated for the restoration of historic ghats, falchas (traditional public rest shelters), satals (pilgrims' rest houses), temples and other heritage structures.

To promote tourism, the municipality plans to organise regular cultural performances and devotional programmes at traditional public spaces. It will also improve lighting and install CCTV cameras in heritage areas to encourage night-time tourism and enhance visitor safety.

The municipality has also pledged to continue providing financial incentives to residents who construct or renovate their homes using traditional architectural styles.

In addition, technical assistance and policy support will be extended for the conservation and restoration of historically significant privately owned buildings.

The municipality has initiated the process of securing national and international recognition for Bhaktapur's unique traditional products, including Juju Dhau, Bhadgaule Topi, Kwacha Pyakha and cultural traditions.

A mobile application and QR code system featuring brief introductions, videos, and historical information about the city's major heritage sites will be developed.

Temples, shrines, monasteries, courtyards, alleys, traditional rest houses and stone spouts will be digitally documented and preserved for future generations.

The municipality has allocated a total budget of Rs. 79 million for heritage reconstruction and cultural conservation programmes for the current fiscal year.

Health professionals' hunger...

An interesting coincidence is that just a few days before Jyoti's hunger strike began, renowned physician Dr. Govinda KC's hunger strike came to an end with an agreement with the government.

The government and Dr. KC reached a seven-point agreement in Dhangadhi.

This series of protests has raised concerns about whether individuals should initiate a hunger strike against the government to meet their demands.

The concerned authorities have expressed concern about protests directed against the government. Dr. Manohar Pradhan, advisor to the Minister of Health and Food Safety, emphasised that not all demands necessitated a hunger strike. "Since the government is always open to dialogue, there is no need to stage hunger strikes," he said.

"We faced a series of hunger strikes in a short period, caused by decisions and actions from the previous governments. However, we have learned one important lesson: we are serious and sensitive about these issues. The Minister is also concerned about them. It is necessary to address not only individual cases but also to find a comprehensive solution. The ministry is preparing to address all types of health issues," said Dr. Pradhan.

Dr. Pradhan expressed concern that hunger strikes, viewed as a last option of protest, may be misused.

Dr. Bikash Devkota, secretary at the Ministry, stated that the government is always liberal and open to dialogue to deal with necessary issues.

"The Ministry is committed to addressing genuine demands. I made an effort to meet with my friend Jyoti Ranabhat at Bir Hospital late at night to initiate a conversation. Ultimately, we have reached a peaceful resolution regarding her demands. We are serious about addressing genuine

concerns," Dr. Devkota said.

However, some other officials and experts argue that a series of protests in the health and education sector arose as the government gave low priority to these sectors.

Pawan Thapa, a young activist and member of Dr. Govinda KC's negotiation team, argued that the previous government's tendency to agree with the demands of agitating parties without implementing them could pose a challenge for the new government as well.

"It has been stated that the new government must avoid repeating the mistakes of the previous administrations. However, health workers have continually protested due to the failure to implement previous agreements. This issue has also been exacerbated by the lack of accountability for private hospitals. If the government does not address the problems in the health sector comprehensively this time, the general public will become increasingly disillusioned, adding even more challenges," Thapa said.

After a seven-point agreement was reached between the government and Dr. Govinda KC.

As per the agreement, the government has committed to operating the Shaheed Dashrath Chand University of Health Sciences, Kailali at full capacity. The agreement states that the university will immediately proceed with the process to operate a teaching hospital with at least 300 beds, and that the Ministry of Health and Food Safety and the Ministry of Education and Sports will provide necessary coordination and facilitation.

However, Dr. KC does not seem optimistic that his demands will be addressed. He warned in a statement on Tuesday that if the government violates the points of the agreement and doesn't investigate and take action, he will be forced to resume

the 24th Satyagraha along with the adjourned movement.

Similarly, the government also reached a five-point agreement with the agitating doctors last week after the attack on doctors at Narayani Hospital in Birgunj. The government had committed to taking forward legal reforms related to doctor safety. A task force has been formed for this incident.

To address the various demands and recent dissatisfaction, it is clear that neither the Ministry of Health and Food Safety nor the Ministry of Education and Sports has the sole responsibility or capability to resolve these issues.

Instead, the entire government, including the Prime Minister's office, needs to thoroughly tackle these challenges.

A senior officer at the Health Ministry stated that unless the Prime Minister and Finance Minister prioritise the health sector, no solution is possible.

Health Minister Nisha Mehta, who is also a former nurse, expressed her concern over the hunger strike of Jyoti Ranabhat, stating that the ministry is ready to respond to her demands.

Despite her positive attitude, a bitter reality besets the health sector. The government's 100-point reform agenda lists the Health sector at point 85 of 100, which includes ambitious plans such as making treatment easier for the poor, a digital health information system, making service delivery in hospitals citizen-friendly and accountable, and providing treatment for burn patients at subsidised rates. However, most of these plans do not appear to have been implemented.

The new government has allocated only half, or 5 per cent, of the budget suggested by the World Health Organization (WHO) for the health sector in its current annual budget.

Govt decides to...

The Cabinet also appointed Yangki Ukyab as the Chief Executive Officer of the Investment Board Nepal. Ukyab, a resident of Kathmandu, is a development economist and specialises in public policy. She holds a Master of Public Policy (MPP) from the University of Oxford. Her past roles include Senior Policy Adviser at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Regional Office.

The first decision of the Cabinet was the approval of the Statistics (First Amendment) Regulations, 2083. As per the decision, the amendment has made changes and additions to five different rules and schedules of the Statistics Regulations-2080.

The fees charged for providing micro-level raw data and census area maps have also been revised. Under the new provision, the fee for students of schools, colleges and universities in Nepal under the census category has been reduced from Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 2,000. Similarly, the fee charged to such students under the survey category has been reduced from Rs. 2,500 to Rs. 1,200.

In addition, a new category titled "Census Area Map" has been introduced, with a fee of Rs. 200 for institutions and Rs. 300 for international non-governmental organisations.

Furthermore, Rule 17 of the original regulations has been amended to add a provision requiring offices to conduct training covering both theoretical and practical aspects in accordance with the training guidelines issued by the office before deploying human resources for data collection.

Likewise, the Cabinet decided to dissolve Nepal Intermodal Transport Development Board Formation Order, 2054 and approved the merger of the Nepal Intermodal Transport Development Board with the Nepal Transit and Warehousing Company Limited.

The government has also decided to implement the Animal Slaughterhouse and Meat Inspection Act, 2055 across Nepal in phases.

The Cabinet meeting further approved the decision to table the Children-related (First Amendment) Bill, 2083 in the Federal Parliament.

Tharu musical instruments on the verge of disappearance



PHOTO: TRN

Tharu women perform a traditional dance with the Kastar instrument during a programme in Ghorahi.

BY SANTOSH DAHIT
Dang, Aug. 5

Traditional musical instruments that once echoed through Tharu festivals and cultural dances are gradually disappearing. Different instruments were traditionally played for different dances, and this practice was regarded as an

important part of Tharu culture. However, due to the shortage of instrument makers, the younger generation's declining interest, and a lack of conservation efforts, these unique instruments are now on the verge of disappearing. Surmani Chaudhary of Hekuli, Dangisharan Rural Municipality-3, recalled carrying the traditional Jhali and Kastar instruments during festivals and cultural programmes. She no

longer uses them because the instruments made by her ancestors have become worn out. "After the instruments were damaged, we could not replace them. They are not available in the market, and there is no one to make them," she said. "In the past, every dance group carried these traditional instruments." Mohan Chaudhary of the same village was once well known for playing Chhatkhauli, Dap and Pilaru. However,

he has stopped playing because those instruments have almost disappeared. "I am getting old, and I no longer have the energy to make new instruments," he said. "Young people today are not interested in learning or playing these traditional instruments."

According to him, almost every village once used traditional musical instruments during festivals and cultural performances. Today, except for the Madal, it has become difficult to find other traditional instruments in many villages.

According to Anglal Chaudhary of Dadachis, Dangisharan Rural Municipality-5, traditional Tharu dances such as Chhokra and Hurdugya were performed with instruments including Jhali, Kastar, Basya, Chhatkhauli and Pilaru.

"These instruments are an important part of the Tharu community's cultural identity, but as their use continues to decline, they are disappearing one by one," said Chaudhary.

He said the main traditional instruments of the Tharu community include the Madal, Dhawal, Manjaura, Jhali, Kastar, Basya, Chhatkhauli, Pilaru and Dap. Different instruments were played depending on the type of festival, song and dance.

Local elders said that as these traditional instruments disappear, the Tharu community's musical heritage and cultural identity are also under threat.

They stress the need to preserve instrument-making skills, provide training to the younger generation, and encourage the compulsory use of traditional instruments at cultural programmes.

Tharu community leaders said immediate action is needed to preserve these instruments and pass the tradition on to future generations.

Arun to play Hari Bansha in 'Ma Madan Krishna'



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 5

Actor Arun Chhetri is set to play the role of famous comedian Hari Bansha Acharya in the biographical film 'Ma Madan Krishna,' based on the life of another veteran comedian Madan Krishna Shrestha.

In professional life, Hari Bansha Acharya has been Madan Krishna's long-time partner, and Chhetri will now bring that role to the silver screen.

The actor is currently enjoying the success of the blockbuster Gauthali, which is enjoying a successful run in cinemas.

Director Milan Chams said Chhetri has also signed on to play Hari Bansha Acharya in a separate biographical film based on the comedian's life, which the same production team plans to develop as a companion project.

"We have cast Arun as Hari Bansha in 'Ma Madan Krishna.' At the same time, we have also signed him to portray Hari Bansha Acharya in his own biographical film," said Chams.

The biopic, announced earlier this month, will chronicle the life of Madan Krishna Shrestha, highlighting his personal struggles, achievements and remarkable artistic journey.

The film will be directed by Chams, who last year helmed Anjila, the biographical film based on the life of Nepal women's national football team captain and goalkeeper Anjila Tum-bapo Subba.

Actor Mahesh Tripathi has been cast in the title role as Madan Krishna Shrestha, while actress Keki Adhikari will play his wife, Yashoda.

The film will depict key chapters of Madan Krishna's life, including his childhood, career as a government employee, artistic partnership with Hari Bansha Acharya, and his inter-caste marriage.

The cast also includes Rajaram Poudel, Kiran KC, Rusha Neupane, Yaman Shrestha and Deshbhakta Khanal.

Presented by Vintage Motion Pictures, 'Ma Madan Krishna' will be produced by Rajkumar Shrestha.

According to the production team, shooting is scheduled to begin in the first week of September.



PHOTO: SAGAR BASNET

Actresses Keki Adhikari and Aanchal Sharma attend the trailer launch of the film Jingedau-2 in Lalitpur on Wednesday. Both star as the lead actresses in the film.

PRADEEP RAWAT PASSES AWAY

AGENCIES
Mumbai, Aug. 5

Actor Pradeep Rawat, best known for his memorable performances in Aamir Khan-starrer Lagaan and Ghajini, died on Tuesday after a battle with cancer. He was 74.

Rawat's Lagaan co-star, Yashpal Sharma, confirmed the news of his death with a heartfelt tribute on social media. "Pradeep Rawat, Ghajini... our Deva of Lagaan. RIP," Sharma wrote.

Rawat first gained widespread recognition for his portrayal of Ashwathama in the television epic Mahabharat. He later built a distinguished career across Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Nepali cinema.

His notable television credits include Tehkikaat, Chandrakanta and Yug, while his filmography features acclaimed films such as Meri Jung, Sarfarosh, The Hero: Story of a Spy, Lagaan, Ghajini and Chhaava.

Rawat also had close ties with the Nepali film industry. He appeared alongside actress Bipana Thapa in the Nepali films Hrashva Deerga, Aabaat Aama and Aabaat Aama-2, earning appreciation from Nepali audiences for his performances.

DiCaprio, Bezos launch \$200M wildlife fund

AP
Los Angeles, Aug. 5

Foundations funded and co-funded by Leonardo DiCaprio and Jeff Bezos have launched an initiative committing \$200 million to revive 100 of Earth's most threatened species, including endangered lemurs, salamanders, pangolins, pigs and echidnas.

DiCaprio's Re: wild and the Bezos Earth Fund are leading the Phoenix Species Project, the groups announced Tuesday. They call it the largest single fund in history dedicated exclusively to recovering critically endangered species.

DiCaprio has for years been developing the idea of a major concerted effort to help species whose habitats and future existence are threatened by climate change.

In 2021, he and Re: wild co-founder Wes Sechrest, a biologist who serves as the organisation's CEO, met with the Amazon-founding mega-billionaire Bezos and his wife, former TV news reporter and host Lauren Sánchez Bezos. He serves as chair and she as



vice chair of the Bezos Earth Fund.

The meeting led to a series of conversations with local governments, environmental groups and Indigenous people on how best to reverse the decline of their most vulnerable species. Those conversations eventually led to the Phoenix Species Project.

Among the animals expected to benefit from the project are the golden-crowned sifaka, a rare lemur found only in Madagascar, the Hickory Nut Gorge green salamander from North

Carolina in the United States, and the Visayan warty pig, which is native to islands in the Philippines. Other species include Mexico's Cozumel harvest mouse, the pink land iguana from the Galápagos Islands, the Malayan pangolin of South-East Asia, Tanzania's pancake tortoise, Colombia's starry night harlequin toad and Attenborough's long-beaked echidna from New Guinea. The project's goals include giving long-term sustenance to successful but fleeting smaller efforts.

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. 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

gocomics.com



Liverpool icon Mohamed Salah set for Trabzonspor move

AP
Manchester, Aug. 5

Mohamed Salah was greeted by cheering Trabzonspor fans in Istanbul on Wednesday as he closed in on a move to the Turkish club.

The Liverpool icon wore the team's blue and burgundy striped shirt after flying in on a private jet to complete the deal.

Earlier he was filmed aboard the jet pulling on his new jersey.

"Trabzon are you ready? I can hear you. See you very soon," Salah said in a video message posted on the club's official X channel.

Turkish TV showed still images of Salah wearing a shirt with No. 61 on it as he arrived in Istanbul, where hundreds of chanting fans waited to greet him. NTV also broadcast the Egyptian signing a Trabzon shirt and said his official signing ceremony would be held Thursday in the Black Sea city.



PHOTO: AP
Egypt's Mohamed Salah wearing his new Trabzonspor team jersey gestures to supporters as he arrives at the airport in Istanbul, Turkey.

Salah is a free agent after leaving Liverpool at the end of last season. There was speculation the 34-year-old Egypt international would end his career

in Saudi Arabia, but it emerged this week that Trabzonspor was leading the race to sign him. "We've started transfer talks with

Mohamed Salah, he's coming to Istanbul!" the club said.

The official announcement of negotiations to the Istanbul stock market saw Trabzonspor shares rise 6.5%.

Salah established himself as a Premier League great with Liverpool where he won two league titles and the Champions League among eight major honors.

He scored 257 goals in 442 appearances for the Merseyside club and is regarded as one of its greatest players of all time.

But he endured a disappointing end to his time at Anfield with a dramatic drop off in form last season and a public falling out with then-coach Arne Slot.

He only scored 12 goals in all competitions, having scored 34 in the previous campaign.

He announced in March that he would leave the club at the end of the season, despite having a year to run on the contract he signed in 2025.

Trabzonspor is a seven-time Turkish champion and finished third last season.

NSC confirms 136 athletes for Asiad

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 5

The National Sports Council (NSC) confirmed on Wednesday that a total of 136 athletes will represent Nepal at the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan.

Issuing a press release, the apex sporting body stated that Nepal will compete across 22 disciplines.

According to Saroj Kumar Pokharel, Chief of the Sports Development Department under the NSC, the contingent will comprise 80 male and 56 female athletes, accompanied by 32 coaches.

The official announcement also confirmed the exclusion of Esports from Nepal's contingent. Nepali gamers had previously secured qualification slots for the Games in PUBG Mobile (Asian version), Honor of Kings, Mobile Legends: Bang Bang, and eFootball.

Affected players have been demanding a written explanation from the NSC regarding their omission. The Council

has maintained that the qualified gamers were omitted because their names were not submitted by the NSC-recognised Esports Association of Nepal. The players had instead competed in the Asian Games Qualifiers under the internationally recognised Nepal Esports Association.

Nepal will field two athletes in archery, six in athletics, four in badminton, seven in boxing, two in canoe slalom, 15 in men's cricket, two in cycling, one in dance sport, four in golf, six in judo, 24 in kabaddi, eight in karate, two in skateboarding, four in soft tennis, two in squash, five in swimming, six in table tennis, two in taekwondo, five in tennis, 12 in women's volleyball, six in wrestling, and 11 in wushu.

At the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, Nepal fielded a 253-member contingent (126 men and 127 women) across 29 disciplines.

Nepal registered a historic performance in Hangzhou by winning one silver and one bronze medal, with Erika Gurung securing silver in karate and the women's kabaddi team clinching bronze. Both achieved the feat on their Asian Games debut.

SNIPPETS

Shamsuddin set for Asian Weightlifting duty

Kathmandu (TRN): Siddiqu Shamsuddin will represent Nepal as an International Technical Official at the 2026 Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championship, scheduled to take place in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, from 7 to 14 August. The Nepal Olympic Committee (NOC) hosted a farewell ceremony for Shamsuddin on Wednesday. Bidding him farewell, NOC President Jeevan Ram Shrestha offered his best wishes for a successful assignment and underscored the essential contribution of technical staff to the sporting ecosystem. "While athletes naturally draw the primary focus, technical officials, referees, coaches, and managers serve as crucial pillars for the successful execution and long-term growth of sports," Shrestha remarked during the event. The NOC President also commended Ram Krishna Shrestha, President of the Nepal Weightlifting Association, for his organisation's sustained commitment to producing world-class technical officials. He expressed confidence that such efforts would continue to raise Nepal's profile across the international sporting arena.



Nepal's Top End T20 fixtures confirmed

Kathmandu (TRN): The Nepali men's national cricket team will open their campaign at the Top End T20 Series in Australia against hosts Northern Territory (NT) Strike. According to the fixture list released by NT Cricket on Wednesday, Nepal will play six league-stage matches in what will be their second appearance at the tournament, held from 21 to 30 August in Darwin. The Rhinos will face NT Strike in their opening fixture on 21 August. They will play their second match against Bangladesh High-Performance (HP) on 22 August, followed by a clash against the Hobart Hurricanes on 24 August. Nepal's fourth outing will be against ACT Comets on 26 August, before they take on the Melbourne Renegades (Kingsmen) on 27 August. They will wrap up the league stage against Victoria on 28 August. During their tournament debut last year, Nepal recorded two wins and four defeats across six matches.

Pakistan close on series-levelling win

AFP
Port of Spain, Aug. 5

Pakistan's spinners put their team on course for a series-levelling victory as the West Indies stumbled to 103 for six -- a lead of just 60 runs -- on an eventful third day of the second and final Test in Trinidad on Tuesday.

Abdullah Shafique's unbeaten 160 ensured the visitors did not completely squander an excellent overnight platform in eventually getting to a first-innings total of 387.

Sajid Khan then made his second meaningful contribution of the day in taking four second-innings wickets, while Ali Usman claimed two, including home captain Roston Chase caught-and-bowled off the final ball of the day.

First-innings top-scorer Justin Greaves will carry the fight for the West Indies into the fourth morning with uncertainty over the availability to bat of regular opener Brandon King.

On a deteriorating pitch offering sharp turn and variable bounce, West Indies left-arm spinner Jomel Warrican was as much in his element as 18 months earlier against these same opponents in Multan.

Here, his haul of six for 112, including three wickets in four balls to wrap up the Pakistan innings on the stroke of tea, would have been a portent of things to come.

Yet having started the day in the comfortable position of 266 for two and within sight of the West Indies first-innings total of 344, it took an error of judgement from Pakistan



PHOTO: AFP
Bowler Ali Usman (R) of Pakistan celebrates after he caught and bowled batter Roston Chase (unseen) of West Indies during the third day of the second Test match at Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain.

captain Babar Azam to trigger a gradual slide as the visitors' last eight wickets fell for 106 runs.

Having put the West Indies bowlers to the sword with delightful, confident strokeplay on the second afternoon, Babar was a picture of strokeless paralysis at the start of the day, as if the prospect of a first Test century in almost four years had gotten the better of him.

He managed to eke out a couple of runs to add to his overnight 86 before taking off for a non-existent single and, sent back by Shafique, dived desperately but in vain as the direct hit at the striker's end by King from point found Babar short of his ground.

West Indian delight at Babar's dismissal was transformed to concern over the welfare of King, who remained prone on the outfield after effecting the dismissal.

After several minutes of assessment of his situation he was stretched off with what was later diagnosed to be back spasms.

That unexpected breakthrough triggered a mini-slide as three wickets fell for five runs, fast bowler Shamar Joseph and Warrican claiming a wicket each.

Khan offered a measure of stability with Shafique, the pair putting on 59 for the seventh wicket before another pacer, Jayden Seales, removed the lower-order batsman for 30.

With the door open to a vulnerable tail, Warrican wasted no time in wrapping up the innings, taking three wickets in four balls with Shafique stranded at the non-striker's end and leaving Pakistan to rue opportunities missed to earn a much more significant lead.

Shafique's innings occupied

more than seven-and-a-half hours during which he faced 323 deliveries, striking 15 fours and three sixes.

Khan was at his most rampant in the final session, accounting for Tagenarine Chanderpaul and Amir Jangoo swiftly before adding Shai Hope and nightwatchman Seales to his list of victims.

Chase surveyed the carnage from the other end only to succumb to the constant pressure himself, the reaction of the home skipper to his demise almost a mirror of Babar's disconsolate trek to the pavilion more than seven hours earlier.

Usman also posed a constant threat the left-arm spinner having earlier removed Kavem Hodge, whose 34 is the top score so far in an innings in danger of going into complete freefall.

FIFA boss Infantino's problems mount as key FIFA allies turn on him

AFP
Geneva, Aug. 5

Pressure on FIFA president Gianni Infantino intensified on Tuesday, with opposition emerging from within world football's governing body as well as from external critics over his since-abandoned proposal to open the World Cup to private investment.

Former Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, appointed in 2019 by Infantino as FIFA's chief of global football development, said in a statement on Tuesday that "the decision to withdraw the project was absolutely necessary and beyond question".

His remarks followed hot on the heels of an extraordinary internal email to FIFA staff, seen by AFP, in which secretary-general Mattias Grafstrom appeared to distance himself from Infantino on the issue.

Previously seen as close to Infantino, Grafstrom describes the fiasco surrounding the plan as "a sad and reproachable series of events".

He adds: "Individuals, unstable moments and unfortunate episodes come and go. The institution, its mission and its responsibility towards world football continue."

FIFA had floated the plan last Tuesday, saying it could raise up to \$4.2 billion based on a valuation of \$20 billion for a new commercial subsidiary, called the FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE), which it proposed would run events such as the World Cup and Club World Cup.

By Saturday it was dead in the water

as Infantino announced the humiliating climbdown after widespread condemnation, as UEFA wielded the nuclear option of boycotting all FIFA competitions, including the World Cup.

Far from calming the waters or shoring up his presidency, Infantino has been swamped with criticism of his style of leadership and a previously smooth path to being re-elected unopposed to a fourth and final term next March in Rabat now looks a very rocky one indeed.

'Take immediate steps'

That is a problem down the road. For now, he has others to confront.

Even though he had withdrawn the scheme, UEFA issued a letter through their lawyers in the US threatening legal action over what they had scathingly described as a "shabby, backroom, opaque deal".

Both Grafstrom and Wenger as well as chief operating officer Kevin Lamour, who had slammed the plan on Friday, are mentioned in the letter as being knowledgeable about the FFE and instructed to keep all "relevant materials".

"Dear Mr Infantino. UEFA hereby gives formal notice that it is actively considering legal action, arbitration, and/or regulatory complaints (together, the 'Proceedings') arising out of and in connection with the FFE plan proposed by FIFA and all related matters as further described below," their lawyer Andrew Levander said in the letter sent last Friday and seen by AFP.

"You and FIFA are required to take immediate steps to identify, locate, and preserve all documents and

electronically stored information described in this Notice that are in your or FIFA's possession, custody, or control. "These obligations arise independently of any internal retention policy you or your organization maintain and supersede any routine document destruction or deletion policies that would otherwise apply."

Several of UEFA's member associations -- Wales, Finland, Sweden and Serbia -- have withdrawn their letters of support for Infantino and the English FA is strongly rumoured to be on the verge of also joining them.

The scant comfort for Infantino came from a handful of supporters, including 2030 World Cup co-hosts Morocco, as well as Kuwait, Qatar, where he has a house, and Lebanon, which granted him honorary citizenship in February.

However, it is the damning remarks by both Wenger and Grafstrom -- who shadowed Infantino throughout the World Cup -- that will twist the knife further. Their criticism only adds to the impression that Infantino has lost

the confidence of even his closest FIFA collaborators.

One of the most devastating blows to Infantino's plan was the resignation on Friday of his special advisor Carlos Cordeiro, who is also close to US President Donald Trump.

Despite what UEFA's lawyer wrote regarding keeping material pertinent to FFE, Wenger



US World Cup host cities seek millions in unpaid FIFA funding

AFP
New York, Aug. 5

Multiple US cities that hosted World Cup matches are seeking millions of dollars they believe world soccer's governing body FIFA promised them, The Athletic reported on Tuesday.

Four executives from World Cup cities, speaking anonymously, told the outlet that FIFA management told them they would each receive \$1 million in "legacy" funds to build football-related infrastructure and support "social projects".

The Athletic reported that officials from the cities had requested the payments after Gianni Infantino, head of global football's governing body, announced such payments to host cities of the 2026 Club World Cup in the United States.

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claims to have only learned about it through the media.

"I was not involved in this strategic plan," the 76-year-old Frenchman said.

Grafstrom, for his part, tried to cheer up the staff by congratulating them on their work while admitting it

advertisement tracking and audience measurement.

"According to four executives at US host city committees, all of whom asked to remain anonymous to protect relationships, FIFA management repeatedly assured the cities they would receive the same \$1 million contribution towards legacy, despite no public statement ever being made by the organisation," The Athletic wrote.

"The four executives said this promise was made verbally by members of FIFA's senior management, and reiterated to cities in meetings, but it has not been paid, meaning several cities are now asking FIFA staff for updates on the payments."

The US cities of Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Dallas, Kansas City, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Miami, Boston and New York/New Jersey were among the host venues for the World Cup held in the US, Canada and Mexico.

had been "an extraordinary and challenging week".

For Infantino, the challenge threatens to grow, and his stated purpose when he ditched the plan, to unite football, seems unlikely to be realised while he remains president.