

THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL



Patan Durbar Square attracts tourists, offering a breathtaking view with its antique architectural magnificence. The venue is listed as the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

PHOTO: KABIN ADHIKARI/TRN

Restoring trust: The challenge facing police-public relations

BY PURUSHOTTAM P. KHATRI
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

For every citizen, Nepal Police is the state's most visible institution. Whether responding to crime, road accidents, natural disasters or other emergencies, police officers are often the first representatives of the government to reach the scene.

Their conduct, therefore, shapes not only public confidence in law enforcement but also citizens' perception of the state itself.

Yet a series of recent incidents has fuelled concerns that relations between the police and the public are becoming increasingly strained, raising broader questions about accountability, professionalism and democratic policing.

The latest controversy emerged after allegations that police detained and assaulted Gen Z campaigners Majid Ansari, Sarisma Thapa and Nagenda Khadka while they were visiting a temporary holding centre for landless settlers in Kirtipur following recent flooding.

The allegations quickly spread across social media, reigniting debate over police conduct and public trust.

The incident follows several other controversial episodes in recent years. Public frustration became particularly visible during the Gen Z protests last September, when much of the demonstrators' anger was directed at the police, intensifying concerns over confidence in country's principal law-enforcement agency.



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Security analysts say the issue has now grown beyond isolated incidents to become a wider debate about democratic governance and the rule of law.

Police perspective

Recognising the importance of public trust, Nepal Police has long promoted



community policing through initiatives such as Police, My Friend, Service with a Smile, the Community-Police Partnership (CPP), and the latest one, Our Police in the Kathmandu Valley. These programmes were designed to strengthen cooperation between police personnel and local communities.

Nepal Police Central Spokesperson and Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Abi Narayan Kafle said maintaining

public confidence begins with the behaviour of every police officer.

"Every action and interaction by police personnel must consistently reflect a positive attitude and a commitment to serving the public," Kafle said.

He said Nepal Police strictly enforces its Code of Conduct, 2020, along with its Media Policy, 2003, which guide officers' behaviour towards both the public and the media. According to him, any personnel found violating these standards face departmental action, and disciplinary measures have been taken whenever necessary.

DIG Kafle acknowledged that maintaining credibility has become even more challenging in the digital era, mainly due to social media.

"Today, every word and every action can be recorded and shared instantly. Maintaining transparency is therefore essential to building cordial relations with the public and earning their trust," he said.

Acts of professionalism and bravery are widely appreciated, he noted, but misconduct spreads equally fast through social media, increasing pressure on the organisation to demonstrate accountability and openness.

Official figures illustrate how even individual misconduct can affect the institution's reputation. During fiscal year 2082/83, disciplinary action was taken against 1,848 police personnel for offences including misconduct, lack of professionalism and breaches of police regulations. Those disciplined ranged from office assistants to officers holding the rank of Deputy Inspector General.

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State-owned industries, enterprises show signs of improvement: PM

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

Prime Minister Balendra Shah has said that signs of improvement have begun to emerge in state-owned industries and enterprises that had remained closed or operated at a loss for a long time.

In a Facebook post on Saturday morning, Prime Minister Shah said that encouraging results had begun to emerge in some national industries due to honest efforts, enforcement of the law and teamwork.

He said that after his government was formed, priority had been given to revitalising national industries and enterprises and making them competitive again.

"For years, many of our national industries have remained closed, struggled with losses and been surrounded by a sense of despair. Many people have had doubts and concerns about whether these industries could recover and stand on their own feet again, and such concerns are understandable," he wrote.

However, when intentions are sincere and there is honesty in fulfilling responsibilities, new avenues for improvement can emerge even in the most challenging circumstances, he added.

From the very beginning, the new government has prioritised continuous facilitation, encouragement and coordination to revitalise national industries and public enterprises and make them competitive again, the Prime Minister said.

"As a result of these sincere efforts, enforcement of the law and sustained teamwork, encouraging results have begun to emerge in some industries," he recounted the progress.

Nepal Drugs Limited records 30 million profits

The Prime Minister has said that Nepal Drugs Limited, which had been incurring losses for a long time, sold medicines worth Rs. 23.8 million in the past four months.

He claimed that medicine sales increased after the company obtained the World Health Organisation's Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) certification and that the company earned a profit of Rs. 30 million in the last fiscal year.

The company has set a target of selling medicines worth Rs. 300 million in the current fiscal year.

Under the government's 100-point agenda for governance reform, Prime Minister Shah said the government has set a target of producing 98 types of free medicines over the next three years.

He said that although the target is to produce 37 types of medicines this year, preparations for producing 25 types have reached the final stage, while 11 types of medicines are currently being produced.



From the very beginning, the new government has prioritised continuous facilitation, encouragement and coordination to revitalise national industries and public enterprises and make them competitive again.

Trial production begins at Hetauda Textile Industry

Prime Minister Shah said the Nepali Army has been entrusted with conducting trial production as part of efforts to reopen the Hetauda Textile Industry that remained closed for a long time.

He said trial production has already begun following the repair of the looms, and the industry has started producing a limited quantity of fabric.

He added that the plan is for the Government of Nepal to operate the industry itself after the trial production phase.

Nepal Airlines reports revenue of Rs. 627.63 million in four months

Prime Minister Shah has said the financial position of Nepal Airlines has also improved.

He said the national flag carrier generated revenue of Rs. 6.27 billion from Chait to Asar of the last fiscal year, an increase of Rs. 1.10 billion compared to the same period of the previous fiscal year.

During the period, Nepal Airlines' seat occupancy rate reached 86 per cent, which, he claimed, was six percentage points higher than in the corresponding period of the previous year.

He also said that the airline paid Rs. 1.06 billion in instalments towards loans taken from the Employees Provident Fund and the Citizen Investment Trust to purchase aircraft.

DDC reduced outstanding dues of farmers

The Prime Minister said priority has been given to clearing the outstanding payments owed to farmers by the Dairy Development Corporation (DDC).

He claimed that the payment liability, which had previously reached as high as Rs. 720 million, has now been reduced to Rs. 350 million. The payment cycle has been reduced from eight months to two to three months.

He said an additional incentive of Rs. 1 per litre had been provided to farmers for milk, while daily sales increased by 35 per cent after reform efforts were initiated.

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Transparency, skilled resource key to university reform

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

Experts and officials who participated in a two-day policy workshop on higher education reform have suggested that transparency, inclusivity and a result-oriented system are essential for faculty recruitment, development and promotion in the universities.

The workshop concluded Saturday that recruiting qualified and skilled human resources is a key foundation for university reform.

Participants emphasized the need for universities to regularly review existing policies and laws and establish evidence- and fact-based decision-making systems.

The workshop, titled "University Faculty Recruitment, Development and Promotion: Mission Alignment, Incentives and Impact," was organized by the Ministry of Education and Sports at its office in Singha Durbar.

Officials from the National Planning

Commission, University Grants Commission (UGC), Tribhuvan University Service Commission, vice-chancellors of various universities, educationists, researchers, policymakers and experts participated in the event.

During the discussion, participants emphasized policies that encourage research, quality teaching, innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration and social responsibility.

They also called for a review of existing faculty recruitment and promotion systems to strengthen knowledge production, research activities and universities' contributions to communities.

Concluding the first session, Minister for Education and Sports Sasmit Pokharel stressed the importance of exchanging good practices among universities.

He said faculty and staff appointments should be transparent, fair and based on uniform criteria. He also urged creating a student-friendly learning environment and making university administration and management technology-friendly.

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Students learn and earn through school farming

BY SHER BAHADUR SARKI
Bajura, Aug. 8

Students at Kritichaur Secondary School in Bajura have been combining classroom learning with income generation through agricultural education, turning their school into a practical learning hub.

The school, located at Kaladah in Gaumul Rural Municipality-4, introduced Crop Science for students in Grades 9 to 12 in the 2021 academic session. Since then, students have been gaining hands-on farming skills while earning from vegetable production.

Previously, students wishing to pursue technical education had to travel to urban centres, making it difficult for those from financially disadvantaged families to continue their studies. The school said it introduced agricultural technical education in the rural area to make vocational learning more accessible and help address youth unemployment.

Milan Bohara, a Grade 12 student, said he had been studying and earning simultaneously since joining the Crop Science programme in Grade 9.



Agricultural farm cultivated and managed by students of Kirtichaur Secondary School.

"If I can continue my education, that will be good. But my family's financial situation is weak. Even if I cannot study further, I can make a living by growing vegetables at home," he said.

Bohara added that securing a salaried job was not his only ambition.

"I am learning practical skills alongside my studies. After completing Grade 12 next year, I plan to return home, establish my own farm and focus entirely on commercial vegetable farming," he said.

Students enrolled in the Crop

Science course have transformed the school grounds into thriving vegetable gardens. The school has also leased more than four ropanis of nearby land, where students cultivate a wide range of vegetables, including aubergines, tomatoes, chillis, radishes, mustard greens, coriander, ginger, garlic, onions and beans.

Once operating without any income, the school now generates revenue from vegetable sales. Part of the earnings is used to purchase sports equipment and other materials required by students.

Teachers say the practical approach has significantly boosted students' confidence. Unlike previous generations, who often completed school without employable skills, even Grade 9 students now believe they can earn a livelihood through agriculture while continuing their education.

The school currently operates between six and 12 plastic tunnels for vegetable cultivation. The initiative has received financial support from the Agriculture Knowledge Centre in Bajura, while a climate change programme is assisting with tree plantation and greening activities around the school.

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Hallmark Gold : Rs. 296,900/-
Worked Gold : NA
Silver : Rs. 4,580/-



NEPSE : 2,650.09

Total Amount : 3,774,361,541.21

No. of Share : 10,313,979

HULAS FINSERV PROFIT RISES TO RS. 399M

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

Hulas Finserv Hire Purchase Limited (HFL) recorded a net profit of Rs. 398.72 million in the fiscal year 2025/26, up 84.45 per cent from Rs. 216.17 million a year earlier.

The company said in a statement that amid a challenging operating environment in Nepal's financial sector, its loan portfolio expanded 52.25 per cent year-on-year to Rs. 12.22 billion, driven mainly by growth in automobile financing.

At the same time, HFL improved its asset quality, reducing its non-performing loan (NPL) ratio to 1.87 per cent from 3.40 per cent. Total assets increased to Rs. 12.64 billion from Rs. 8.43 billion, while shareholders' equity rose to Rs. 1.89 billion from Rs. 1.49 billion.

HFL's operating performance also strengthened significantly. Net interest income more than doubled to Rs. 484.65 million from Rs. 221.01 million, while operating profit increased to Rs. 614.68 million from Rs. 335.28 million.

Bangladeshi envoy stresses collaboration in fisheries

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

Bangladesh Ambassador to Nepal Shafiqur Rahman shared his country's experience in fisheries at the inaugural session of the First Annual General Assembly and Convention of the Nepal Fisheries Development Association (NFDA) as the special guest held in Chitwan Friday.

The Ambassador highlighted Bangladesh's remarkable gains in the fisheries sector stating that Bangladesh has emerged as one of the world's leading fisheries producers through its coordinated policy approach, scientific research, private sector collaboration and the dedication of millions of fish farmers and fishers.

The Ambassador, according to a press statement of the Embassy, stressed that the country's success was driven by modern hatchery development, expansion of aquaculture, community-based management of open-water fisheries,

Paddy plantation reaches 96%

BY LAXMAN KAFLE
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

Paddy plantation across the country has reached 96 per cent of the targeted area, with transplantation nearing completion in most provinces following improved monsoon rainfall.

According to data released by the Department of Agriculture, farmers have planted paddy on around 1.31 million hectares out of the country's total paddy cultivation area of 1.37 million hectares.

The plantation progress is significantly higher than last year. During the same period last year, paddy had been planted on 91.31 per cent of the total cultivation area, meaning the current progress is 4.75 percentage points higher.

The improvement comes after plantation activities were initially delayed by inadequate rainfall at the beginning of Asar. Regular and adequate rainfall over the past month has enabled farmers to accelerate transplantation across the country.

According to Deputy Director General of the Department of Agriculture Rajendra Koirala, paddy plantation has almost been completed in all provinces.

"Although plantation progress was sluggish at the beginning of Asar due to inadequate rainfall, significant progress has been achieved due to regular and adequate rainfall across the country over the past one month," he told The Rising Nepal.

He said plantation is expected to reach around 98 this year, as transplantation is still continuing in Madhes and some parts of other provinces.

"The plantation progress is satisfactory this time, although there were earlier concerns that drought could affect plantation. There has been rainfall across the country, and plantation



has been carried out in a timely manner," Koirala said.

The timely completion of plantation is considered favourable for paddy production and productivity.

However, Koirala said the final output would depend largely on rainfall and other weather conditions during the remaining period of the monsoon.

He also said that no significant damage to paddy fields from floods and landslides had been reported so far, which he described as another positive matter for the agriculture sector.

The improvement has been recorded despite variations among provinces. Sudurpashchim Province has completed plantation on 100 per cent of its

targeted area, while Bagmati Province has reached around 97.82 per cent.

According to the report, paddy has been planted on 154,950 hectares of the total paddy cultivation area in Sudurpashchim Province as of August 7.

Similarly, farmers have planted paddy on 112,033 hectares out of 114,524 hectares of paddy cultivation area in Bagmati Province.

Plantation in Lumbini Province stands at 97.37 per cent, covering 293,443 hectares, followed by Karnali at 96.82 per cent, covering 41,912 hectares, and Gandaki at 95.57 per cent, covering 89,459 hectares.

Paddy plantation remains the lowest in Koshi and Madhes provinces.

Dharan budget stuck in dispute

BY NISHA RAI
Dharan, Aug. 8

Although local governments are required to present their policies, programmes and budgets for the next fiscal year to their respective assemblies by Asar 10, Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City has yet to present its budget for the fiscal year 2026/27 to the municipal assembly.

The executive meeting and municipal assembly scheduled for Friday were postponed following a dispute among elected representatives during the budget preparation process.

A meeting of the Budget Formulation Committee was also held to reach an agreement and finalise the budget, but it ended inconclusively amid disagreements.

Ward Chairperson of Dharan Sub-metropolitan City-18 Narendra Kumar Rai accused Acting Mayor Aindra Bikram Begha of putting forward a budget and plan worth around Rs. 320 million without sufficient discussion and consultation in the committee.



According to Rai, questions were raised over the allocation of Rs. 50 million for the cooperative sector, Rs. 110 million under the 'municipal pride' heading, Rs. 30 million for the mayor's vision programme and Rs. 40 million for road maintenance.

Ward Chairperson Rai said further discussion and consensus were

necessary regarding the basis and priorities for selecting projects and allocating funds.

Acting Mayor Begha, however, said while finalising the budget, Ward Chairperson Rai and Ward Chairperson of Ward No. 15 Naresh Iwaram made inappropriate and obscene remarks at him and behaved

NEPALI PRODUCTS ON DISPLAY IN BANGKOK

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

A month-long exhibition of Nepali art and handicraft products has been inaugurated in Bangkok by the Embassy of Nepal in Thailand, with the aim of promoting Nepali art and increasing exports of Nepali handicraft products. The exhibition will run at River City Bangkok until August 30.

Titled "Tiger & Torma: Timeless Tales of Nepal", the exhibition combines handicrafts reflecting Nepal's Buddhist philosophy, art, culture and traditions with products made from natural raw materials and contemporary artistic expressions, the Embassy informed in a statement.

The exhibition, features artworks produced by skilled craftspeople associated with cottage industries in different parts of Nepal, using local materials including allo (Himalayan nettle), hemp, cotton, Dhaka fabric and wool, based on designs by Thai royal artist Sakun Inthakul.

Works by Dolpa-based artist Tenzin Norbu and Dhaka textile artisan Chunu Bastola are also on display, along with carpets produced by Kumbeshwar Technical School and Nepali carpet manufacturers, paintings, floral art and other cultural artworks.

The exhibition's title refers to "Tiger" and "Torma", symbols in Himalayan Buddhist culture. "The tiger represents courage, strength, fearlessness and human potential transformed into wisdom through practice and training. Torma represents generosity, sacrifice, detachment and purification, as well as compassion towards all living beings," read the statement.

Visitors can explore four artistic experiences related to Nepal's Himalayan art, culture and spiritual traditions. These include contemporary Himalayan carpets and paintings inspired by torma, objects associated with Himalayan art and culture, floral sculptures made from allo and hemp fibres, and tiger-themed artworks created from handwoven Dhaka textiles.

Tatopani road closure hampers trade

BY CHITRA KUMAR MIJAR
Sindhupalchowk, Aug. 8

Trade through the Tatopani border point, the largest northern trading gateway between Nepal and China, has come to a complete halt after the border road remains closed for 19 consecutive days.

The road has been blocked since July 17 due to landslides at Liping near the border point, the long-standing Eco landslide along the Kodari road section, and the Daklang landslide in the Jhirpu area. As a result, imports through the Tatopani border point have been completely suspended.

The prolonged closure has been attributed to the government's failure to carry out adequate maintenance and repairs on the road.

According to Ramhari Karki, President of the Nepal Himalaya Cross-border Commerce Association, ineffective repair works have paralysed trade through the border, bringing customs revenue collection as well as import and export activities to a standstill. He urged the government to begin immediate work to reopen the road.

The Eco landslide has been disrupting traffic along the Kodari road section for years. The Bhote Koshi River has eroded the road, triggering repeated landslides while also putting settlements above the slope at risk. Similarly, the road near the Friendship Bridge



at Liping has subsided, with frequent landslides from above causing further damage. In the Daklang landslide area at Jhirpu, continued slope failures and river erosion have left the border road in a severely damaged condition.

As the road deteriorates day by day, vehicles have been unable to operate. During the monsoon, landslides from the hillside and erosion caused by the Bhote Koshi River regularly force the 26-kilometre border road to remain closed for nearly four months every year. The road has been disrupted throughout the rainy season for several years.

The recurring closure has isolated border communities and residents of

Bahrabise, making travel virtually impossible during the monsoon. Local people also face shortages of food and other essential supplies whenever the road remains blocked.

The road closure has not only halted vehicular movement, but has also prevented containers carrying goods from China from reaching the Tatopani Customs Office. Consequently, customs authorities have been unable to meet their revenue collection targets.

Every year, floods and landslides block the road for more than four months, preventing cargo containers from crossing into Nepal. Although containers carrying goods from Lhasa, Gyantse and

Nyalam reach the Chinese side of the border, they have been forced to remain there because of the damaged road.

The prolonged disruption has also begun to displace traders dependent on cross-border commerce.

"The condition of the road has become deplorable because the government has failed to make sufficient efforts to improve it," said Karki.

He also called on the government to permanently relocate settlements above the Eco landslide, the Panthali settlement above the Daklang landslide, and settlements around Liping so that the road can be upgraded on a long-term basis.

FEEN, NRN Club push Nepali goods

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

Export Entrepreneurs Federation of Nepal (EEFN) and the Non-Resident Nepali Social Club, Oman signed a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote and expand Nepali products and services in the market of Oman.

During a programme organised in Muscat on Friday, President of FEEN Govinda Prasad Ghimire, and President of the Club Suresh Khadka signed the MoU.

According to the agreement, both organisations will act as institutional intermediaries to connect Nepali exporters with local small and medium entrepreneurs, traders, and potential buyers in Oman. Kiran Kumar Dangol, Vice President of EEFN, stated that this would expand new markets and business networks for Nepali products.

Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of Nepal in Oman, Bishesh Kumar Sah, was also present at the event.

The agreement prioritises the promotion of 'Made in Nepal' products. Stalls and exhibitions will be arranged to promote Nepali products—such as Nepali tea, coffee, cardamom, various spices, handicrafts, felt, garments, carpets, herbal products, and traditional



attire—during cultural and community events organised in Oman.

Similarly, it is mentioned that the Club will provide the Federation with necessary information and guidance regarding Oman's customs procedures, import standards, quality and Halal certification, and trade policies.

Meanwhile, it has been agreed that the Federation will provide Omani importers with a list of reliable exporters in Nepal and details of the goods they produce.

The MoU also aims to expand direct contact between Nepali producers and Nepali entrepreneurs and importers based in Oman, thereby reducing unnecessary middleman costs. Ghimire expressed his expectation that this would enhance the competitiveness of Nepali products and ensure that producers receive a fair market price for their goods.

The agreement also encompasses encouraging Non-Resident Nepalis and Omani investors to invest in Nepal's processing, manufacturing, and export-oriented industries, as well as providing them with the necessary guidance.

Sangurigadhi villages at high risk of landslides

BY KABIRAJ GHIMIRE
Hile, Aug. 8

Dhadhuwa village in Sangurigadhi Rural Municipality-7, Dhankuta, is at high risk of landslides, with the landslides occurring on both sides of the settlement.

The village is home to 27 families. An old landslide on the eastern side of the village began in 1999 and has already displaced seven families. Although the landslide on the eastern side has become less active, another landslide started on the western side in 2018.

Some villagers have already been displaced by the new landslide, while others are at risk of losing their homes, said local Devendra Rai.

"There are landslides on both sides of the village. It rains throughout the year, so we always live in fear of landslides," Rai said. He said the steep terrain and streams on both sides of the village have caused the landslides to expand, putting the entire settlement at risk.

Majhuwa village in Ward No. 6 of the rural municipality is facing a similar problem. Landslides are occurring on both sides of the village, while the settlement is surrounded by landslides from the north and lower areas.

Around 10 families are at risk from the landslides, said ward chairman Dipak Magar. The road connecting the village to other areas is also at risk of being damaged by landslides, he said.

Many other villages in Sangurigadhi Rural Municipality are also at risk of landslides. The municipality, which has 10 wards, has identified more than two



A landslide near a settlement in Dhadhuwa, Sangurigadhi Rural Municipality-7, Dhankuta.

PHOTO : TRN

dozen landslide-prone locations. Landslides at more than a dozen of these sites are affecting settlements.

The problem is more serious in Ward Nos. 1, 5, 6, 7 and 10, according to municipal technician Dipak Rai. He said around 120 families across the municipality are currently at risk from landslides, while more than a dozen families have already been displaced.

The municipality, which has the highest landslide risk in the district, has been taking various measures to reduce the risk. The process of relocating families living in highly vulnerable

areas has been initiated. The municipality is also carrying out tree planting and constructing retaining walls to control landslides and soil erosion.

Rural municipality chairman Jitendra Rai said the local government has also conducted a study of vulnerable areas.

The municipality has brought in geologists to study landslide-affected areas. Experts say the risk of landslides and soil erosion has increased due to weak geological formations, steep terrain and numerous streams. Unplanned road construction in recent

years has further increased the risk.

Located in the Mahabharat mountain range in the southern part of the district, the municipality also has weaker geological formations than the higher mountainous areas, according to experts.

Rudra Devi Sharma, chief district officer of Dhankuta, said safety measures have been put in place in disaster-prone areas, while vulnerable residents are being moved to safer locations. Excavators, bulldozers and other disaster-response equipment and teams have also been kept standby.

SC orders protection for displaced children

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

The Supreme Court (SC) has issued an interim order directing the government to ensure education, healthcare, housing and other basic services for children displaced from squatter and other informal settlements.

A single bench of Justice Sapana Pradhan Malla issued the order on August 3 during a preliminary hearing on a writ petition filed by Tilotam Poudel, Chairman of Children as Zones of Peace (CZOP) Nepal, and Barun Basyal of the Bagmati Province Office of the Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC).

The Court ordered the government to identify and verify all displaced children, ensure that those already enrolled in school continue their education, and enroll out-of-school children in the nearest school free of charge by the end of Saun (mid-August).

It also instructed the authorities to provide free textbooks, school uniforms, transportation, educational materials, psychosocial counselling and necessary support services for children with disabilities.

The order further directs the government to coordinate with local governments to arrange residential education where needed and ensure a safe learning environment for children affected by displacement.

The Court observed that the displacement of families has severely disrupted children's education and could deprive many of their constitutional right to education. It noted that

The order further directs the government to coordinate with local governments to arrange residential education where needed and ensure a safe learning environment for children affected by displacement.

school-age children living in squatter settlements face a high risk of dropping out, while others may never be enrolled.

Citing the National Human Rights Commission's report and other public concerns, the Court said immediate protection of displaced children was necessary.

The interim order also instructs the government to make temporary arrangements for safe housing and essential healthcare for pregnant women, children, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and people with illnesses according to their specific needs.

According to Poudel, the writ petition was filed on behalf of CZOP Nepal on July 15. He said the order would strengthen the protection of children's rights, particularly their rights to education and health, and stressed the need for coordinated implementation by all concerned agencies.

Senior advocate Raju Prasad Chapagain and advocates Gaurav Baral and Hemanta Raj Pahari represented the petitioners.

Madhes launches drive to develop 24 model schools

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Mahottari, (Gaushala), Aug. 8

The Madhes Province government has launched a multi-year initiative to develop 24 community schools into model institutions in a bid to restore parents' confidence in public education and make government schools more competitive, attractive and quality-oriented.

Under the programme, which begins in the current fiscal year, three community schools from each of the province's eight districts have been selected for infrastructure development, human resource management and educational improvement.

The provincial government has allocated Rs. 320 million for the programme in the current fiscal year as part of its priority to improve the quality of public education.

According to Minister for Education and Culture Manoj Kumar Singh, each selected school will receive an average of around Rs. 15 million. The budget will be utilised for infrastructure construction, educational materials and improving the learning environment based on each school's needs and action plan.

Minister Singh said that head teachers of all 24 selected schools had already been called to the ministry for

orientation and detailed instructions on implementing the programme. He added that the provincial government would provide support for physical infrastructure, required human resources and other essential needs.

However, he stressed that the primary responsibility for improving educational quality rests with school administrations, teachers and school management committees.

The Minister urged teachers to focus on improving students' learning outcomes, ensuring regular classroom teaching, maintaining discipline and creating a more creative learning environment. School management committees have also been instructed to play a more active and accountable role in the overall improvement of their schools.

Madhes Province currently has 3,484 community schools. The provincial government said that most of these schools still require improvements in physical infrastructure, skilled human resources, educational materials and learning outcomes. It plans to gradually expand quality improvement programmes to all community schools across the province.

Acknowledging that the education sector still requires significant reforms, Minister Singh said regular monitoring, evaluation and accountability mechanisms would be further strengthened to improve public education.

Besides physical infrastructure, teaching and learning processes, students' academic performance, teachers' effectiveness and school management will also be regularly assessed.

The provincial government considers the model school programme a foundation for long-term educational reform. It believes the initiative will encourage other community schools to pursue similar improvements while fostering healthy competition among schools and raising the overall standard of public education.

At the same time, the province has accelerated preparations to declare Madhes a fully literate province.

According to Minister Singh, local governments that meet the required criteria are being declared literate municipalities in phases. Once all local levels fulfil the prescribed standards, the province aims to declare Madhes a fully literate province.

Education experts say that alongside improving school infrastructure, ensuring competent teachers, effective educational leadership, regular monitoring and active community participation will be essential to achieving meaningful improvements in public education. They believe that if implemented successfully, the model school initiative could bring significant positive changes to the community education system in Madhes Province.

2026 cohort of USYC launched



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

The US Embassy in Nepal hosted the launch session for the new 2026 cohort of USYC Nepal, a talented group of 55 young leaders selected from more than 1,600 applicants across Nepal, on Friday.

Chargé d'Affaires Scott Urbom congratulated the participants and highlighted the important role these leaders will play in driving innovation, economic growth, and positive change in their communities.

During their one-year tenure, cohort members will also build leadership skills, connect with peers and industry experts, and prepare for future opportunities to benefit Nepal.

"As the United States marks 250 years of independence, programmes like USYC Nepal demonstrate our longstanding commitment to working with Nepal's newest leaders across a wide range of professional fields," the Embassy said in a statement.

It further added that a more prosperous Nepal creates new opportunities for trade, innovation, and long-term cooperation that benefit both the United States and Nepal.

Stray dog attacks spread to villages in Khotang

BY RAJ KUMAR BHATTARAI
Khotang, Aug. 8

Stray dog attacks have spread to villages in Khotang, where locals are worried as groups of dogs have started killing goats, piglets and chickens.

Locals of Kartike village in Halesi Tuwachung Municipality-7, Mahadevsthan, said stray dogs have been causing problems in the area for the past two months. During this period, the dogs have killed 12 goats, six piglets and numerous chickens, according to local resident Dipak Rai. One of Rai's goats was killed by the dogs just three days ago.

Rai said he found seven stray dogs attacking and eating a goat tied inside a shed at around 5 am on August 6. He also found dogs attacking a male goat tied in the shed of Milan Rai. As the dogs were spotted in time, the goat sustained injuries but survived.

Locals said groups of around seven to eight dogs attack animals



at once, biting them around the neck and other parts of the body before killing them.

According to residents, the group of stray dogs that stays around Halesi Bazaar during the day

enters nearby villages after dark and prey on livestock and poultry.

Locals said the dogs have killed one goat each belonging to Dipak Rai, Tulsi Rai, Siwan Rai and Devana Rai, and four goats

each belonging to Rajendra Rai and Indra Kumari Rai in Kartike village.

Rajendra Rai said he has also seen the dogs killing a piglet during the day. He said the dogs, which have become accustomed to killing and eating goats at night, have occasionally started entering the village during the daytime as well.

About a month ago, the dogs killed four of his goats. The other goats inside the shed remained unharmed, while the four goats kept outside were attacked at night. Two were found dead after being eaten and the other two were found being attacked by the dogs, he said.

The growing presence of stray dogs in the village has left residents frightened. Locals said children could also be at risk of being attacked and have urged the concerned authorities to take necessary measures to control and manage the stray dog population.

Stray dogs have long been a problem in market areas including Diktel and Halesi. There have also been incidents in which several people were bitten by dogs in a single day.

Floodwaters ravage homes and paddy fields in Sarlahi

BY JANARJAN KHATRI
Sarlahi, Aug. 8

Dozens of homes and cattle sheds, along with hundreds of bighas of paddy fields in Malangawa Municipality and Kaudena Rural Municipality, have remained inundated for the past four days after floodwaters from the Lakhandehi River breached an embankment.

The flooding occurred after eight hours of heavy rainfall in the northern part of the district on Monday caused the river to overflow. The swollen river breached the embankment at Chhapkaiya in Kaudena Rural Municipality-5, sending floodwaters into nearby settlements and paddy fields.

According to local farmers, around 800 bighas of paddy fields in Chhapkaiya, 300 bighas in Bhadsar of Malangawa-5, and 500 bighas in Khutauna of Malangawa-6 have been submerged.

Homes, cattle sheds, shops, schools, madrasas, health posts, Dharamshalas

and telecommunications towers have remained under water for four consecutive days.

Shyam Rai Yadav of Khutauna, Malangawa-6, said that both settlements and paddy fields had been inundated every monsoon for the past 15 years.

Yadav said he had relocated to Khutauna after selling his farmland in Shivnagar of Kaudena Rural Municipality due to persistent flooding there, only to face the same problem again.

"The water has risen to chest level, making it impossible for us to leave our homes," he said. "We have endured this ordeal for the past 15 years, yet no one has paid any attention."

Jamsaid Miya of Bhadsar said floodwaters had caused his mud-built house to collapse. "Our home has been submerged for four days. The walls have given way, and we no longer have any shelter," he said.

Bhadsar and Khutauna are both villages situated along the Nepal-India border. Water has remained trapped in the flooded settlements and agricultural land, with no proper drainage outlet.

It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.
- Epictetus

EDITORIAL

Save Health Insurance

The Health Insurance Board (HIB) is the government entity that oversees the process of enrolling beneficiaries, collecting premiums, claims management and payments to the health institutions. Formed to provide affordable health care services, the HIB is currently a very important institution to achieve the goal of universal health care coverage. The new chairman of the HIB is taking office at a time when the health insurance scheme in Nepal is facing serious challenges considering financial liability and late payment for hospitals. The scheme, which was intended to shield citizens from financial burden, has itself become a financially challenged scheme. It is therefore high time the government took steps to reform the health insurance scheme.

The proposal for the integration of various programmes into a one-door system is an important step. The inclusion of schemes related to civil servants, Nepali Army and Nepal Police, Ama Surakshya and all other government-sponsored schemes of health provision within the domain of HIB will result in avoiding any duplication and making government spending more visible and manageable. But one door may not mean quality service. As long as financial control is weak, the management of the claims will be substandard and hospitals will have to wait for reimbursement for months. It is quite obvious that by concentrating various schemes within one organisation, all problems associated with weak financial management can be overcome.

Also, the proposal towards the development of a contribution-based insurance scheme is praiseworthy. Within the framework of this programme, wealthy and middle-class citizens will be expected to contribute to the scheme proportionally to their earnings, whereas the government will continue subsidy of the premium payments for poor households, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and Dalits. However, it is challenging to adopt such a system as many people are involved in the informal sector, which creates a problem in ascertaining their income. If there is any imbalance in the assessment of contribution levels, then the system may either suffer losses or impose extra burdens. Therefore, the government needs to come up with an equitable mechanism of determining contributions.

It is a very important task of the government to settle the financial link between hospitals and the insurance scheme. An insured citizen cannot benefit from the scheme if the hospital does not offer him/her services simply because the government has not settled its claims. The government could increase the financial resources by using the allocated portion of taxes collected from the sale of alcohol and tobacco products. A digital health insurance system and a four-digit hotline will make it easier for citizens to monitor their services, file complaints, and receive information. But still, the introduction of the digital system cannot solve the problems associated with lack of funds, weak control and low accountability.

The goal of the government is to provide insurance to 90 per cent of the population in three years. The authorities should also work on providing quality services through insurance. Health insurance means that a patient gets quality treatment in time without any bureaucratic issues. The success of the HIB will depend on the viability of the system. The government should make the scheme easy in hospital wards where people can feel the real change. The country requires a scheme that is financially responsible, socially accountable, and answerable to its constituents.

Sunny Sunday

NABIN GODAR

Government offices are currently closed on Saturdays and Sundays. This has also been applied to government schools. In addition, there is a government directive that private schools must also give two days off. As a result, most schools are closed on Saturdays and Sundays. This arrangement has eliminated the 'book-free Friday,' and it is reported that it has burdened working and urban parents. It is certainly not the government's intention to burden the people. Constitutionally, the authority to manage local education belongs to the local levels. Some local levels have already decided to keep schools open on Sundays. This issue extends beyond schools, educators and parents; it directly concerns the future of Nepal. If parents and schools are truly suffering, then some alternatives should be sought.

If parents cannot look after their children on Sundays and want to send them to school, that should not be considered unnatural. This is so because we lack amusement parks, libraries and any other public facilities. On the other hand, due to safety concerns, parents may not feel confident leaving their children at home while going to work. In such circumstances, schools can occupy children through extracurricular activities.

They could learn to stage plays, be involved in art and drawing or public speaking, and also could be involved in various sports activities. Also, showing films, taking to theatres could be done. Inviting authors for reading sessions or story, poetry workshop activities should be held. Or, art-and-craft workshops should be run. Visiting museums or taking trips to tourist sites are additional activities. Children can be engaged in planting vegetables or flowers in the school garden.

Likewise, to address recent concerns regarding children becoming inactive in urban areas, they can certainly be involved in household activities such as washing clothes, doing dishes, cooking and cleaning. After all, there are only 52 Sundays in a year, and considering festival holidays, seasonal breaks and term breaks, planning should be focused for about 40 Sundays only.

If we cannot find alternatives to textbook and classroom-centred educational activities for those 40 Sundays, then we must admit that we are weak in orienting children. We should think about how to fix that. Though we keep talking about additional activities, we lack the capacity and competence to carry them out, which was already exposed by book-free Friday. Now, the Sunday holiday indicates that we are not able to think beyond rote learning from textbooks.

But extracurricular activities require investment; municipalities can provide some support. In some cases, parents might be enthusiastic. However, municipalities will not simply come in handy. If schools initiate an effective programme, then they can press municipalities for support. Therefore, the school must first take the initiative. And, civil society facilitates that good results may follow.

An anecdote tells that when instant-noodle companies first arrived in Nepal, they had to orient people about the product and its prospects. Later-established companies didn't need to do that. Now, we have an opportunity to show that school is not merely a place for learning and teaching, but also a space for creative engagement. After all, without lessons, without homework, without the pressure to read textbooks, going to school will be delightful. It is said that humans learn much when they enjoy themselves. We have been allowed to enjoy a sunny Sunday in school. But, who will take the lead ?

THE RISING NEPAL

OP-ED

NC Infighting Resurfaces In Court



Ritu Raj Subedi

With the Supreme Court's decision to review petitions regarding the official status of the Nepali Congress (NC), the raging conflict within the NC has taken a new turn. Once on the defensive, the anti-establishment faction has now become emboldened after a full bench of Chief Justice Dr. Manoj Kumar Sharma and Justices Nitya Nand Pandey and Shree Kant Paudel last Thursday allowed a fresh hearing on the legitimacy of NC's leadership. Former president Sher Bahadur Deuba and vice-president Purna Bahadur Khadka filed the petitions, seeking the SC's permission to review its decision to recognise the Gagan Thapa-led faction as the legitimate party. However, this does not mean that the SC will overturn the legitimacy of NC's Special Convention that elected the then party general secretary Thapa as new president in January this year. The SC will examine the legal basis of the earlier decision and give a final verdict on the party's official status.

What is more interesting is that the SC's decision came at a critical time. The NC dissidents are going to hold their national gathering on August 14 to challenge the establishment. Former president Deuba is returning home from Hong Kong on August 13 and will probably participate in the national jamboree organised by his supporters. Five months ago, he went to Singapore for 'medical treatment.' But at home, he is being

investigated by the Department of Money Laundering Investigation (DMLI) and the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) of Nepal Police on charge of amassing wealth disproportionate to his income. After an SC order blocked his possible arrest, Deuba decided to return to Nepal.

Strategic move

The dissidents' gathering is seen as a strategic move to up the ante in its tussle with the establishment that is busy doing necessary preparations for its 15th general convention slated for September 24-26 this year. The SC's decision to review the petitions has put both sides on wait-and-watch mode. However, it has averted the immediate split of the party. Prior to this decision, the dissidents had even threatened to form a new party if the establishment refused to be flexible enough to meet their demands. Now they even hope that the SC will reverse its earlier decision to recognise the Thapa-led faction.

The dissidents, led by a bunch of old generation leaders, are firing on all cylinders to make their meeting successful. They formed a 52-member main organising committee under former general secretary Shashank Koirala. Behind choosing Koirala as the coordinator of the committee, they have their shrewd gambit to cash in on the legacy of the Koirala family that played the key role in the 1951 revolution. Shashank is the youngest son of late NC founder BP Koirala, the first democratically elected prime minister of Nepal. The dissidents have planned to form the new party under Koirala's leadership if the unity between the two sides comes to a cropper.

However, critics insist that junior Koirala lacks the flair and leadership charisma of his legendary father. In case he leads an NC splinter, his position may not

With the special convention, the NC leadership transferred to the young generation but the party is still divided emotionally and organisationally.

be stronger and will probably disappear from the national political scene because the party cadres and leaders have a tendency to go with the mainstream. Some even argue that dissidents are using him as a pawn against the establishment by comparing him with Matrika Prasad Koirala, the elder brother of his father. In 1952, party president BP Koirala and prime minister Matrika Prasad Koirala clashed over party policy and jurisdiction over the government. The bitter dispute resulted in the expulsion of Matrika from the party. The latter formed the Rastriya Praja Party in 1953 but it failed to take root in the masses and eventually reunited with the NC three years later. However, Matrika Prasad Koirala lost his relevance in central politics since then.

The ongoing dispute between the establishment and anti-establishment is related to the digital update of party active membership and merger of the central committee elected in the 14th convention. The establishment side has asked the party members to update their membership online for the 15th convention, though they have already renewed their membership. But anti-establishment side has demanded that the digital update must not be made mandatory, as many members are not versed in digital

skills and lack access to the internet. The establishment side argues that the party should embrace digital technology as per the need of the time.

Unity drive

The dissidents have been demanding that the organising committee of the 15th convention be formed by merging the central committee elected by the 14th convention and the central committee elected by the special convention. Now there are 111 leaders who were elected by the 14th convention but not included in the current central committee. However, the establishment side has argued that the party statute does not allow them to induct in the current central body. It is not ready to amend the statute to accommodate the dissenters in the central wing. There are also NC leaders and cadres active to unite the party but their campaigns have not drawn much attention from both camps.

In the aftermath of the Gen Z movement, the old parties are in the transition phase marked by intense bickering and leadership infighting. Their humiliating defeat in the March 5 election has accelerated their internal crisis. The emerging situation has demanded leadership transfer to new generation, reorganisation of parties and robust inner-party democracy. With the special convention, the NC leadership transferred to the young generation but the party is still divided emotionally and organisationally. Now both the factions are on the edge after the apex court decided to review its earlier verdict on the party legitimacy of NC. Let's see whether the court's review will unite the NC or push it into the quagmire of endless bickering.

(The author is the Managing Editor of this daily.)

Adequate, Sound Sleep For Healthier Life



Dr. Shyam P Lohani

Modern life warrants considerable time every day for work, and oftentimes people under-value the importance of adequate and sound sleep. In today's world, most people are engaged for long working hours, spend considerable time for social media scrolling, and are under constant pressure due to academic activities. All these activities lead to less and inadequate sleep. For a healthy and productive life, adequate and sound sleep becomes imperative. Physical health, mental well-being, and overall quality of life depend on this important biological need. It is, therefore, important to value sleep in order to remain healthy and productive.

Sleep is a fundamental necessity to recondition our body during which the brain processes information, stores memories, and regulates hormones that not only influence metabolism and the immune system but also overall growth. Sleep may appear an inactive time, but the reality is different, as our body performs maintenance activities during sleep. Deprivation of sleep, even for a few nights, takes its toll with immediate and lasting effects on health. Besides, the use of caffeine, energy drinks, or sheer willpower to remain active for long hours has additional negative consequences.

Physical health

The physical health demands sound and adequate sleep. Numerous studies

have shown that people getting adequate and quality sleep are more energetic, have better immune systems, and are less likely to develop non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and obesity. Sleep regulates appetite and people having sound sleep crave less for unhealthy and high-calorie foods. Poor sleep, in the long run, is responsible for serious medical conditions that place a heavy burden on already overstretched healthcare systems, particularly in developing countries.

Mental health is equally affected by sleep. Adequate rest is of paramount importance for our brain to function effectively. Adequate and quality sleep is essential for better concentration, creativity, and decision-making. In academia, students with adequate sleep perform better in comparison to those with poor sleep. For workers, better performance with fewer workplace errors is consistent with adequate sleep.

Sleep deprivation takes its toll on cognitive performance also. Insufficient sleep reduces attention span and slows reaction time while driving and working with heavy machineries that may lead to preventable accidents. It is, therefore, even more important for those people who work in transportation, manufacturing, and healthcare. Fatigue due to insufficient sleep may lead to accidents, injuries, and even death. Sleep, thus, is not merely a personal choice but also a matter of public safety at large.

There is a strong correlation between sleep and emotional well-being. Sleep-deprived people are more irritable, worried, irascible, and aggressive. Minor incidents may feel overwhelming for sleep-deprived people, and in the long run, it leads to depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions. Therefore, adequate sleep is necessary for emotional resilience and for coping with life events, both positive and

Sleep should not be seen as a waste of time; rather, it should be treated as a cost-effective long-term investment for better physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

negative. Moreover, healthier relationships with peers, family, and colleagues are observed among people who get adequate sleep.

Children and teenagers need more sleep than adults because their brains and bodies are still developing. Students with insufficient sleep completing assignments and examinations are less successful academically. Their growth, emotional well-being, and social interaction suffer dramatically. Thus, all stakeholders, from educators and policy makers to parents, should work together to make academic endeavours more enjoyable but less stressful to encourage healthy sleep habits among students.

In recent times, technology has also contributed to insufficient sleep. Considerable time spent on computers and smartphones for scrolling through different social media during evenings has also affected our sleep time. There is a strong correlation between blue light emitted by screens and a reduction in the secretion of the sleep hormone, melatonin. Also, stimulating and negative content can affect our brain and make it more active. It is, therefore, essential to make a habit to make technology-free bedtime for both the quality and duration of sleep.

It is important to note that sacrificing sleep does negative effect on productivity. Fatigued people due to inadequate sleep, in fact, are less attentive, make more errors, have less concentration,

and require longer time to complete tasks. Thus, in order to have greater efficiency at work, adequate and quality sleep. Workplaces and institutions have an important role to play. Reasonable working hours and flexible schedules, in fact, benefit overall productivity. Academic institutions should educate their students about the importance of sound and adequate sleep, besides healthy foods and physical activity. It is, therefore, essential to have a large-scale public campaign to make the public aware of the importance of sleep.

Improving Habits

Improving sleep habits is simple. Developing a sleep schedule, ensuring a comfortable and quiet sleeping place, reducing usage of social media at bedtime, and limiting the use of caffeine before bed are a few strategies that are effective for better sleep. Besides, regular physical activity, light, and a healthy evening meal help improve quality sleep. It is important to note that these simple yet effective lifestyle habits improve sleep quality and general health.

Sleep should not be seen as a waste of time; rather, it should be treated as a cost-effective long-term investment for better physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Sufficient sleep for people of all age categories is important for reconditioning our mind and body. It is a simple yet effective investment for both immediate as well as long-term well-being. Healthy sleep habits not only benefit individuals but also families, communities, and the nation at large. In conclusion, ensuring sufficient and quality sleep makes us healthier, communities safer, and productivity better.

(Dr. Lohani is the clinical director at the Nepal Poison Information Centre. lohanis@gmail.com)

50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

August 9, 1976

Patients Admitted To Teku Hospital

Bhaktpur, Aug. 8: Three patients suffering from gastritis have been admitted to the Teku infectious disease unit of Bir Hospital in Kathmandu, reports RSS.

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READER'S MAIL

Prevent Snakebite Deaths

This is about the news report headlined "As monsoon peaks, snakebites claim 56 lives since mid-April," which appeared in this daily on August 9. According to the report, at least 768 snakebite cases were reported in 64 districts between April 14 and August 4 this year. Of these, 56 people died and 719 were injured, with those disproportionately affected being poor people, farmers, and children.

Experts have stressed that public awareness and precautionary measures are the most effective ways to reduce deaths and injuries caused by snakebites. The report has also revealed that nearly 80 per cent of snakebite deaths occur because victims do not reach hospitals or treatment centres in time.



That said, what if snakebite victims are brought to hospitals, only to be turned away for the lack of anti-snakebite venom? This has been the case many times in hospitals, mostly in rural areas. The report has grossly missed mentioning this aspect. Many such deaths can be prevented by stocking hospitals with such venom. The government must ensure this.

Rochak Neupane
Bara

TAILPIECE

A proud and confident genius makes a bet with an idiot.

The genius says, "Hey, idiot, every question I ask you that you don't know the answer to, you have to give me \$5. And if you ask me a question and I can't answer yours, I will give you \$5,000."

The idiot says, "Okay."

The genius then asks, "How many continents are there in the world?" The idiot doesn't know and hands over the \$5.

The idiot says, "Now me ask: what animal stands with two legs but sleeps with three?"

The genius tries and searches very hard for the answer but gives up and hands over the \$5,000.

The genius says, "Dang it, I lost. By the way, what was the answer to your question?" The idiot hands over \$5.

Cockroach protest keeps Modi under pressure

AFP
New Delhi, Aug. 8

Two weeks after youth-led protests forced India's education minister to resign, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is grappling with the fallout from one of its toughest political challenges in years.

Led by the online Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), the demonstrations spread from New Delhi to other cities, broadening from anger over exam irregularities into a wider movement over unemployment, opportunities for young people and what critics describe as Modi's increasingly authoritarian rule.

While demonstrations are largely over after achieving key demands, AFP looks at what the protests revealed -- and what could come next. The resignation of the education minister on July 25 marked a rare climbdown for a prime minister who has spent more than a decade cultivating an image of unwavering resolve.

The authorities have since attempted to woo the youth, and parliament has hiked penalties for leaking exam papers. Police have withdrawn cases against protestors in several cities after criticism over the excessive use of force.

The protests also exposed a rapidly changing digital landscape, with protesters using social media to spread their message. Modi, a keen user of X, has turned to Instagram -- issuing his first vertical videos to tap into the youth medium of choice.

The protests exposed how authorities are using AI-powered camera technology to monitor and identify demonstrators. Many women say they have been receiving rape threats and abusive messages online after their videos during



FILE PHOTO: AFP

Protests triggered by exam irregularities left behind a youth movement with millions of followers online.

the demonstrations went viral.

Internet shutdown around the main protest site in New Delhi disrupted communication, forcing youngsters to find new ways to stay in touch. India ranked second worldwide in internet shutdowns last year, according to Access Now monitor, including localised blackouts during protests, conflict and communal violence.

Exam leaks were the spark, but the anger quickly spread to deeper frustrations among young Indians over jobs, economic opportunities and a lack of faith in institutions. For many protesters, the prospect of uncertain employment after years of study and highly competitive examinations has become a symbol of a wider struggle for economic security.

That gives the movement a potential staying power beyond the original dispute. Even if the government addresses exam cheating, it cannot easily resolve the broader grievances that brought young people onto the streets.

The protests have left behind a youth movement with millions of followers online, but that does not guarantee lasting political influence. The CJP has said it will organise a "nationwide listening tour" to hear the concerns of young Indians, while continuing to back protests over exam irregularities.

Demonstrations are still taking place in the eastern state of Jharkhand, suggesting the anger that fuelled the protests that began in the capital has not disappeared. CJP founder, Abhijeet Dipke, has called for "a public movement to restore trust

and neutrality in public institutions". "The public has become very frustrated and tired of these things. That is why our movement got such massive support," he said.

But "for now, the CJP will function as a pressure group", Dipke added, rather than a political party. The protests could force India's political parties to focus on the needs and demands of young voters. Young Indians make up a huge potential electoral constituency, but turning protest energy into votes is another matter.

With nearly three years to go before the next national polls, both Modi's ruling party and the opposition may try and harness the anger and frustration expressed by young people for electoral gain.

Yemen strikes Houthis, Turkey okays Kurdish bill

AP
Dubai, Aug. 8

The UAE said one of its ships was targeted by an Iranian missile, Yemen's military has attacked Houthi rebels as the United Nations warns that fighting could escalate, and Turkey's Kurdish peace bill wins approval in parliament.

A vessel owned by Abu Dhabi's state-owned ADNOC oil and gas company was attacked on Saturday while transiting through the Strait of Hormuz, Emirati authorities said. The UAE's Foreign Ministry said the missile was fired by Iran as part of attacks on commercial shipping.

ADNOC said in a statement that there had been no casualties following the attack in the early hours of Saturday. The company said that over a dozen of its vessels have been attacked by missiles and drones while passing through the Strait since the United States and Israel launched the war on Iran in February.

One crew member has been killed and 20 others wounded, it said. ADNOC did not immediately respond to AP questions about the latest attack.

The attacks were in response to the Houthis' recent strikes in central and eastern Yemen. Col. Majed al-Nazili, spokesperson for Yemen's military, said the attacks targeted the rebels' "sites and capabilities" on multiple front lines, without elaborating further.

He said the attacks were aimed at defending the military's security, marking a major escalation since a truce in 2022 largely halted fighting. The country's civil war pits the Iran-backed Houthis against a Saudi-led coalition allied with Yemen's internationally recognised government.

On Friday, United Nations envoy Hans Grundberg urged the parties to exercise restraint. "Yemen today faces a greater risk of renewed large-scale conflict than at any point since the UN-brokered truce of April 2022," he said in a statement.

A Turkish draft law aimed at advancing a peace effort with Kurdish militants passed its first hurdle in parliament on Saturday, with a parliamentary committee approving the measure that includes a conditional pardon-like mechanism for thousands of former fighters.

Last year, the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, declared its decision to disarm and disband as part of the peace initiative aimed at ending the decades-long conflict with the Turkish state.

The draft legislation, expected to be debated and approved in the general assembly early next week, defines the procedures for the group's disarmament and the rehabilitation of some PKK members. It would suspend some prison sentences for people convicted of membership in the group and postpone the prosecution of others.

Senate passes funding, averts shutdown

AP
Washington, Aug. 8

The Senate in an overnight vote Saturday approved a short-term measure to fund federal agencies into early December and avoid a potentially chaotic government shutdown during the middle of campaign season.

The late-summer action on a funding fix is unusual. Normally, Congress waits until the final days or hours of a funding deadline to pass short-term patches, but this time senators acted nearly two months before the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30.

The 90-6 vote showed lawmakers are still smarting from the two historic shutdowns that occurred this past year and want to avoid another before voters go to the polls.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune wanted the funding dealt with before senators went home for the next five weeks to focus on their reelection campaigns and other matters.

It got caught up with other issues that pushed votes into the night, but the bill had broad bipartisan support. The House will also have to approve the measure when members return from their August recess before it can go to President Donald Trump's desk for his signature.

The bill generally funds the federal government at current levels though Dec. 11, but includes a variety of exceptions that senators negotiated with the White House.

Democrats secured language to ensure no money could be transferred



to the Border Patrol. They also rejected the White House's request of \$1 billion for early work on a new "Trump-class" battleship that the administration announced on Dec. 22.

"The only person who wants these golden ships is Donald Trump so he can slap his name on them," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said.

The bill also includes language delaying a national ban on most intoxicating hemp products. That one-month delay prompted outrage from some Senate Republicans who say that too many such products are falling into the hands of often unsuspecting children. The packaging of the products often relies on bright colors and intentionally mimics popular snack brands to attract consumers.

Russian attacks kill 4 in Kyiv

AP
Kyiv, Aug. 8

Four people, including a child, were killed in Russian attacks on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, and the surrounding region, local officials said Saturday, as Ukraine hit another oil refinery in Russia.

Residents endure regular drone and missile barrages that Kyiv's depleted air defenses are struggling to counter amid Moscow's 4-year-old full-scale invasion, while repeated Ukrainian strikes on oil facilities have caused fuel shortages and rattled Russians.

Two grandparents and their 3-year-old grandson were killed after multiple Russian drones destroyed their home in the Brovary district of Kyiv region, northeast of the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, early Saturday.

Three other members of the same family and a neighbor who came to their aid were hospitalized, local authorities said. The attack reduced the house to rubble and wrecked outbuildings and cars.

In the city of Kyiv, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said at least one other person died in a "strike involving six ballistic missiles against civilian infrastructure."

In its daily report, Ukraine's air force said it had downed or intercepted 135 of 151 drones launched by Russia overnight. The attack also involved six ballistic missiles and other guided missiles. Russia has relentlessly pounded civilian areas of Ukraine, even though Moscow insists its forces target only military facilities.

Moscow is exploiting Ukraine's critical shortage of interceptors 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, especially the U.S., to send more of the ammunition made scarcer by the Iran war. Failing that, he wants to make Patriot ammunition in Ukraine or win permission from Elon Musk to use his Starlink satellite communications system to guide strikes inside Russia that can hit its missile launchers.

Following the latest attacks, Zelenskyy appealed on X for more sanctions to "prevent the production of these ballistic missiles," along with "anti-ballistic capabilities" and "interceptor missiles."

Ukraine's air defenses shot down around 5,300 drones and missiles last month, Ukraine's defense ministry said Friday, just under 60% of the around 9,000 attack drones and missiles Russia fired in the same period.

In Russia, six people were wounded when a fire broke out at the Ilsky Oil Refinery in the southern Krasnodar region due to debris from a falling drone, local officials said. Ukraine's General Staff said Ukrainian forces struck the refinery in Krasnodar, along with the Syzran Oil Refinery in the Samara region, more than 800 kilometers (500 miles) inside Russia.

The governor of Russia's Samara region, Vyacheslav Fedorishchev, said drones hit an "industrial enterprise," but he did not mention the refinery.

Ukraine's almost daily long-range drone and missile strikes using domestically developed weapons have battered Russian oil facilities for months. The operation has brought a fuel crisis that is embarrassing the Kremlin.

The latest attacks came hours after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy arrived Friday for his first official visit to Serbia, one of the few European countries that have maintained friendly relations with Russia despite its invasion of Ukraine.

PRISM

Horse rescued from creek in Georgia

Georgia: Fire departments in Georgia teamed up to rescue a 1,600-pound horse found trapped on its side in a creek at the back of its owner's property.

The Forsyth County Fire Department said on social media that its Rescue 12 crew was summoned to the property on Tuesday when the horse was found unable to stand up in the creek. The crew summoned assistance from the Cherokee County Fire Department's Technical Large Animal Rescue Team.

"Both departments worked together over 5 hours trying different strategies to help the animal up," the post said. "Ultimately, we used Cherokee's large animal tripod to lift the horse to its feet." The horse was examined by a veterinarian at the scene and was able to walk back to its stable after regaining feeling in its legs.

Cat, kittens found under police cruiser

Ontario: The Ontario Provincial Police teamed up with animal groups to rescue a mother cat and six kittens that were found to have made their home underneath a police cruiser.

The OPP North East Region said on social media that a member of the Forensic Unit in North Bay spotted the feline family taking shelter in the undercarriage of a police cruiser parked outside the station. The kittens were estimated to be only about 5 days old.

Police teamed with Pet Save, the local Humane Society and PAWS to launch a two-day operation to remove the mother and kittens and take them to the Ontario SPCA. "All seven animals are reported to be in good health and are expected to be available for adoption in the coming months," the post said.

Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

- 1610- The First Anglo-Powhatan War begins in colonial Virginia.
- 1638- An army under Bernard of Saxe-Weimar defeats imperial troops at the battle of Wittenweier.
- 1810- Napoleon annexes Westphalia as part of the First French Empire.
- 1814- American Indian Wars: The Creek sign the Treaty of Fort Jackson, giving up huge parts of Alabama and Georgia.
- 1830- Louis Philippe becomes the king of the French following abdication of Charles X.
- 1842- The Webster-Ashburton Treaty is signed, establishing the United States-Canada border east of the Rocky Mountains.
- 1854- American Transcendentalist philosopher Henry David Thoreau publishes his memoir Walden.

'COFFEE FROG' DISCOVERED IN COSTA RICA

AFP
Costa Rica, Aug. 8

A tiny greenish, nocturnal frog that thrives in coffee plantations has been discovered in the Costa Rica's central Pacific region, where it also faces risks from agrochemicals used in farming.

Measuring less than four centimeters and known as the "spring frog," AFP reporters observed the dark green-spotted amphibians in San Lorenzo de Tarrazu. "It's a new species of tree frog for science, and endemic to Costa Rica," researcher Wagner Chaves-Acuña told AFP, per the findings of colleagues from the University of Costa Rica and Argentina's National Council for Scientific and Technical Research.

Also nicknamed the 'coffee frog,' the species has another distinctive trait: males have a translucent throat that inflates with their short, high-pitched call.

Families retrieve bodies after Bangkok shooting

AP
Bangkok, Aug. 8

Relatives of victims of the shooting at a high school and a home outside Bangkok retrieved the bodies of their loved ones Saturday, a day after the gunman killed at least seven people.

A 14-year-old schoolboy opened fire at around 10 a.m. Friday at Debsirin Nonthaburi School in Nonthaburi province northwest of Bangkok before taking his own life. He also appeared to have killed his two grandparents at the family home earlier in the morning, officials said.

Sixteen people remain hospitalized, with seven of them in critical condition on Saturday, according to the Health Ministry. Most of those wounded were between 12 and 14 years old.

All eight bodies -- five school staff members, the alleged shooter and his grandparents -- were collected by early Saturday afternoon from Bangkok's Institute of Forensic Medicine. Emergency workers brought out a coffin and



PHOTO: AP

A relative sits near a coffin containing the body of a victim of Friday's shooting at the Debsirin Nonthaburi School, inside an ambulance at a police hospital in Bangkok, Thailand, Saturday.

loaded it onto an ambulance, which will transport them to their hometown for funeral rites.

Wiroon Supasingsiripreecha, head of the institute, said most of the victims suffered a single fatal gunshot wound to

a vital area, including the chest or head.

He said the gunshot wound found on the alleged shooter was consistent with the weapon he had used. More detailed forensic findings, including toxicology results, are expected later, he said.

148 DEPOSITORS OF THREE TROUBLED COOPERATIVES GET REFUNDS

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

The Problematic Cooperative Management Committee has refunded deposits to 148 small depositors of three troubled cooperatives.

According to the committee, savings deposited with Gorkha, Pashupati and Kantipur cooperatives have been returned to small depositors.

The government has clarified that the amount received from the recovery of loans from troubled cooperatives has been returned to the affected savers.

The committee said that, in the first phase, refunds were made to depositors with small savings. In this way, the amount will be returned gradually by classifying the savers based on their savings amount.

The committee said the process of refunding deposits to depositors of troubled cooperatives, using funds recovered through loan recovery and asset management, is being carried out continuously in accordance with prevailing laws.



An artisan carefully carves intricate woodwork at a workshop in Jamunakharka, Beni Municipality-6 of Myagdi district.

PHOTO: RSS

Dhorpatan’s natural beauty draws tourists

BY NABARAJ NEPALI
Baglung (Galkot), Aug. 8

Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve, country’s only hunting reserve, is a unique blend of natural beauty, rare wildlife, biodiversity and Himalayan culture.

Dhorpatan, adorned with various flowers that bloom during the monsoon, is a major attraction for visitors. The eight-kilometre-long Dhorpatan Valley is covered with red, white and yellow flowers during the rainy season, making it particularly attractive to tourists.

The colourful flowers, lush greenery and expansive grasslands have been drawing both domestic and foreign tourists. Dhorpatan Valley, the famous Dhor Barahi Temple, the museum of the Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve, Niseledhor, Jaljala and Bukipatan are among the major attractions in the area.

While tourism activities in many other destinations remain almost dormant during the monsoon, Dhorpatan in Baglung has been bustling with visitors.

Located in Dhorpatan Municipality-9 of Baglung district, the area has become increasingly popular among domestic and foreign tourists in recent years, leading to a significant rise in tourism activities. Snow-covered mountains in winter, colourful wildflowers blooming in the highland pastures during the monsoon and vast open meadows are among its major attractions.

Lush forests, vast highland pastures, the gently flowing Uttar Ganga River, spectacular views of the Himalayan range and the tranquil surroundings bring visitors closer to nature.

Because of these natural attractions,



PHOTO: NAVARAJ NEPALI/TRN

Dhorpatan area covered with colourful flowers and lush green vegetation.

Dhorpatan is increasingly becoming a popular destination for nature lovers, trekkers, photographers and researchers, rather than remaining merely a hunting reserve.

Locals said that the number of visitors has increased, particularly because of the luxurious green pastures after the monsoon, clear weather in autumn and Himalayan views in winter.

The growing promotion of Dhorpatan through social media has also encouraged more young domestic tourists to visit the area. The production of films and music videos in recent years has further contributed to promoting the destination.

The growing tourist activity has also had a positive impact on local businesses. Hotel and homestay operators, transport providers and traders of local products have seen their businesses grow, creating new employment and income opportunities for local residents,

said local hotel entrepreneur Shiva Raj Kandel.

However, the increasing popularity of Dhorpatan has brought another challenge –waste management. Locals complain that the growing practice of leaving plastic bottles, instant noodle packets, beverage cans and other waste inside the reserve and along trekking trails is beginning to affect the area’s natural beauty.

According to local Ramita Pun said those who come to enjoy nature should also take responsibility for protecting it. She suggested that effective waste management should be introduced through coordination among tourists, local communities and concerned authorities.

"With the growth of social media, promotion of Dhorpatan has increased and the area has become an attractive tourism destination. However, the growing number of visitors has also increased

the negative impact on the environment, with more waste being left along the roads. The local community has not yet become as aware as it should be. Policy-level measures are needed to manage the problem," Pun said.

Dhan Bahadur Kayat (Kalyan), acting mayor of Dhorpatan Municipality, said long-term tourism development would be possible only by preserving the area’s distinct identity. He said tourist arrivals could increase further if Dhorpatan is developed as a destination that preserves its cultural character and natural environment.

Tourists from 165 countries visit Annapurna region

Meanwhile, our Lamjung correspondent Nabin Raj Kuinkel adds: The Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) attracted around 1.1 million tourists last year, including 600,000 domestic tourists and 508,476 foreign visitors. The number of foreign visitors was the highest recorded so far.

More than 500,000 foreign tourists who visited the Annapurna region in the fiscal year 2025/26 were from 165 countries, according to Dr. Rabin Kadariya, chief of the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP).

"People from 165 countries visited the Annapurna region in a single year. The trekking trails have connected the region with the world. At the same time, the trails here have been promoted across the globe," Kadariya said.

ACAP said the arrival of visitors from such a large number of countries last year demonstrated that the Annapurna region had established itself as a destination within the reach of international tourism.

Industry Minister inspects gas depots, companies

RSS
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

The government has intensified the on-site inspection of industries and depots to address the problem seen in the sale and distribution of cooking gas in various parts of the country, including Kathmandu Valley.

LPG SHORTAGE

Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Gauri Kumari, inspected gas industries and depots in Kathmandu today, as part of the government’s initiative to address the complaints of the general public that LPG is not easily available, despite the claims of Nepal Oil Corporation that gas is being imported in larger quantities than usual.

Minister Gauri Kumari visited the Nepal Gas Industry in Balaju and inquired about the statistics on the import, bottling and sale and distribution. She also visited the depot located at the NOC office in Teku, according to Minister’s personal secretariat.

During the monitoring, the Industry Minister directed the concerned to sell cooking gas by giving priority to students, daily wage labourers and citizens in distress. It may be



noted that following the gas shortage, Nepal Gas, HP, Everest, Sugam and Shreeram Gas Industries have been selling and distributing LPG cylinders from Teku from the NOC office premises.

The NOC is facilitating the sale and distribution of cooking gas by forming a Quick Response Team’ to address consumer complaints. NOC statistics show that around 40,000 cylinders of LP gas are being sold in the Valley alone in a day.

Director of the Corporation’s LP Gas Department, Binimani Upadhyay, said that gas imports have become regular while efforts are being made to increase the import quota in the coming days.

Farmer brothers detained in India return home finally

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Sarlahi, Aug. 8

Two farmers from Sarlahi, who were detained in India when they had gone to buy chemical fertilisers have returned home after 38 days.

Nagendra Prasad Singh, 64, and his younger brother Suresh Prasad Singh, 62, permanent residents of Arnaha in Balara Municipality-5, Sarlahi, currently residing in Malangawa Municipality-10, were arrested while returning from India after purchasing the fertiliser.

As per the order of the Sitamarhi Court, they were released from custody after depositing a bail of 10 thousand Indian rupees each and returned home on Friday evening.

After returning to Nepal, elder brother Nagendra Prasad left for their village in Balara early Saturday morning for farming, while Suresh Prasad remained at their home in Malangawa.

Suresh Prasad said they were arrested on July 1 after they were returning from Sonbarsa in India on bicycle, carrying one sack of urea fertiliser each.

He said they were detained by a patrol of the Indian Sashastra Seema

Bal (SSB) and handed over to the Dumra police station.

He said although they told the SSB personnel that they were farmers who had gone to purchase a sack of fertiliser each for paddy cultivation, they were allegedly manhandled and taken to the police station.

Suresh Prasad said they were kept in custody for 38 days on charges of smuggling.

He said that although they had been carrying only two sacks of fertiliser, six additional sacks of DAP fertiliser were allegedly added to the case when the charges were filed.

He said they had been instructed to appear before the court for a hearing once every month.

According to Kaushal Kishor Singh, chairman of the Sarlahi District Coordination Committee and a resident of Balara Municipality, many farmers in the border areas have been secretly crossing into Indian markets to purchase fertiliser because the subsidised fertiliser supplied by the government is insufficient.

He said other farmers were also worried that they could face arrest like the Singh brothers while bringing fertiliser from India because of increased restrictions along the border.

State-owned...

Average daily revenue collection has increased from Rs. 6 million to Rs. 9 million, he added. The Prime Minister also said that around Rs. 30 million has been saved annually by cutting benefits of ghee and milk that had been distributed to employees for years in violation of the law.

He said the DDC is preparing to export ghee to Gulf countries, butter to China and chhurpi to international markets, while preparations are under way to resume cheese production at its Nagarkot centre.

Singha Durbar Vaidyakhana moves towards self-sufficiency

Prime Minister Shah said that the Singha Durbar Vaidyakhana Development Committee had produced and marketed Ayurvedic medicines worth Rs. 111.6 million since the formation of the government. He claimed that the Vaidyakhana’s medicine business reached around Rs. 130 million in the last fiscal year, four times higher than in the previous fiscal year.

The Vaidyakhana currently produces 105 types of Ayurvedic medicines and has set a target of increasing the number to 150 in the current fiscal year.

He also said the institution was moving towards self-sufficiency in producing 35 types of medicines distributed free of charge.

The Vaidyakhana has also set a target of obtaining Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) certification for the production of powder and tablet medicines and establishing a processing centre for herbs and pharmaceutical raw materials within the current fiscal year.

Restoring trust: The challenge...

Beyond isolated incidents

Despite these challenges, Kafle believes isolated incidents should not define the relationship between police and citizens.

"Apart from a few isolated incidents that attract public attention, our relationship with citizens has always been built on mutual trust," he said.

DIG Kafle argued that rebuilding confidence requires a shift in policing philosophy.

"The emphasis should be on dialogue rather than confrontation, cooperation rather than control, and building trust rather than merely taking punitive action. Only then can the gap between the police and the public be narrowed."

Referring to the aftermath of the Gen Z movement, Kafle said public support demonstrated that confidence in the institution remains strong.

"The very people we serve helped repair and even repaint police offices damaged during acts of arson. What we need most is the public's trust, support and cooperation," he added.

Experts weigh in

Political analyst Saugat Gautam says police-public relations are inherently reciprocal. "The relationship is a two-way process. There have been occasions when citizens have not received the support they expected from police during urgent situations, while there have also been instances where police have not received the cooperation of the public," he said.

According to Gautam, policing can earn lasting public confidence only

when it moves beyond a culture of authority and becomes firmly rooted in public service.

Former Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kuber Singh Rana believes many disputes stem from the nature of policing itself.

"As the agency responsible for enforcing the law, police must ensure legal compliance. Some people perceive enforcement as unfair, which often leads to confrontation," Rana said.

He pointed to a widely discussed incident beneath Kathmandu’s Sundhara overhead pedestrian bridge, where traffic police officers were seen assaulting members of the public. An internal investigation found the officers at fault, leading to the transfer of four personnel.

Nevertheless, Rana argued that policing standards have improved significantly over the years.

"Police professionalism and behaviour have improved considerably compared with the past. It would be unfair to judge the entire organisation based on isolated incidents."

He added that both citizens and police must acknowledge their own shortcomings if similar confrontations are to be reduced.

Security expert and former Armed Police Force chief Sanat Kumar Basnet said rebuilding trust requires more than awareness campaigns and attractive slogans.

According to Basnet, meaningful reform must be reflected in day-to-day policing through greater respect for human rights, improved communication, restraint during crowd

management, stronger community engagement and impartial investigations into allegations of misconduct.

He also stressed that citizens have an equal responsibility to regard police not as adversaries but as partners in ensuring public safety and security.

Rebuilding public confidence

The challenges confronting Nepal Police should not be overlooked. Officers routinely work long hours with limited manpower and resources while facing political pressure, rising public expectations and increasingly complex security threats. Their responsibilities extend well beyond crime investigation to include disaster response, rescue operations, crowd management, road accidents, fires and emergency relief. Many have risked their lives during floods, landslides and other disasters.

The recent controversy surrounding the Kirtipur Holding Centre has therefore evolved into far more than a debate over a single alleged incident. It has become part of a broader national conversation about trust in state institutions and the future of democratic policing in Nepal.

Experts agree that while police must remain firm in enforcing the law, authority should always be exercised with professionalism, respect for human dignity and adherence to human rights. Ultimately, a safe and democratic society depends not on confrontation between citizens and the police but on a relationship founded on mutual respect, accountability and cooperation.

Transparency, skilled...

Chief Advisor to the Minister, Shailendra Jha, while concluding the second session, said the workshop was significant for advancing higher education reform. He said it could help narrow the gap between universities and the ministry while promoting consistency in policymaking and improving educational quality.

Jha said the ministry was committed to necessary policy and legal reforms to develop universities as competent and quality institutions. He also emphasized timely reviews of policies and laws and evidence-based decision-making.

National Planning Commission member Reshu Aryal Dhungana said university officials and policymakers should work together to formulate a national strategy for higher education. She also stressed the need to create an

Students learn and earn...

Kritichaur Secondary School also runs a Himalayan residential programme, where 78 students live on campus. According to Headteacher Man Bahadur Baduwal, part of the vegetables produced by Crop Science students is supplied to the residential students.

The school currently has 513 students, including 253 girls and 260 boys. Of these, 90 are enrolled in the Crop Science programme, with 18 students each in Grades 9 and 10, 26 in Grade 11 and 28 in Grade 12.

Baduwal said vegetable production declines during winter because of the harsh cold in the Himalayan

environment that encourages young people to build their future in Nepal. Commission member Prof. Dr. Sudan Jha emphasized effective implementation of the academic calendar alongside improvements in academic quality.

Similarly, UGC Chairman Prof. Dr. Khadga Bahadur KC said the workshop would contribute to policy formulation and academic quality enhancement, while Tribhuvan University Service Commission Chairman Kishor Thapa called for stronger coordination between universities and the ministry.

The workshop also discussed best practices, mission-based incentives, inter-university learning and long-term policy reforms. Professor Shyam Sharma of Stony Brook University served as the main facilitator, with other academics and experts facilitating thematic sessions.

district. However, from May to October, the school produces vegetables in abundance.

According to Lal Bahadur Bista, Information Officer at the Education Development and Coordination Unit, Bajura, four schools in the district currently offer agricultural education. Bhanodaya Secondary School in Budhiganga Rural Municipality-5 and Dhuralsain Secondary School in Budhiganga-2 teach Animal Science, while Dasharath Chandra Secondary School in Khaptad Chhededaha Rural Municipality-7 and Kritichaur Secondary School in Gaumul Rural Municipality-4 offer Crop Science.

Nepal-Russia Sambandhaka Pataharu released

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

Writer Ram Bindu Shrestha has published a book on Nepal-Russia relations. The book titled ‘Nepal-Russia: Sambandhaka Pataharu’ (Facets of Nepal-Russia Relations) was released in the capital on Friday.

Minister Counsellor of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Nepal, Rinchen Rakshaev; Former Ambassador of Nepal to the Russian Federation, Milan Raj Tuladhar; Chancellor of Nepal Bhasha Academy, Malla K. Sundar; Counsellor of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Nepal and Head of the Russian House in Kathmandu, Anastasia Khokhlova; Former Ambassador of Nepal to the Russian Federation, Hiranya Lal Shrestha; Vice President of Nepal Russia Literary Society (NRLS), Chandra Kanta Acharya; and author Shrestha himself jointly launched the book amid an event organised by Nepal Russia Literary Society.

Dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Nepal-Russia diplomatic ties, speakers noted that the book attempts to reflect centuries of diplomatic, economic, cultural, literary, and civilisational exchanges between the two nations.

During the launch, author Shrestha said that the Soviet Union had built the major factories, hospitals, and transportation infrastructure in Nepal. “The 70th anniversary does not come often,” he said. “We have been



connected since ancient times through Buddha and Buddhist philosophy.”

According to him, a majority of the country’s engineers and doctors were educated in Russia. “This book is an expression of gratitude towards those historical eras,” he clarified.

In the event chaired by Bishnu

Bahadur Singh, President of the Nepal-Russia Literary Society, Bhawana Neupane of the Russian House and Chandra Kanta Acharya, Vice President of the NRLS, also spoke about the book.

The book has been published in both Nepali and Russian languages. Another highlight of the programme

was the presentation of certificates of appreciation to the authors of ‘Motherland and Love,’ a bilingual poetry anthology featuring contemporary female poets from Russia and Nepal. The appreciation certificates were issued by the Russia-Nepal Cooperation and Friendship Society, Moscow.

Arijit loses interest in film music



AGENCIES
New Delhi, Aug. 8

Earlier this year, fans were left stunned when playback singer Arijit Singh announced that he was stepping away from playback singing. The decision was unexpected, and soon, social media was filled with an overwhelming sense of sadness. After all, over the last decade, Arijit had done more than lend his voice to Hindi film songs, he had become a defining voice of an entire generation.

For many, the announcement felt like the end of an era. But music composer Amaal Mallik, who has worked extensively with Arijit over the years and has also collaborated with him on the upcoming Awarapan 2, believes the decision was neither sudden nor forced. In a recent conversation with Pinkvilla, Amaal revealed that those who had worked closely with Arijit

had sensed his growing disinterest in film music much before he made the announcement public.

“I don’t think anyone forced him in any way. He made this decision himself. In fact, when he announced it publicly, all of us who had worked with him had already realised one or two years earlier that he had lost interest in this kind of film music.” Amaal also spoke about the changing nature of the Hindi film music industry and how the presence of a celebrated singer can sometimes become a commercial proposition in itself.

“Even in film music, once you become a big artist, you have the freedom to choose your projects. The industry is so driven by money that people often think, ‘Just pay whatever it takes, make the song, and get Arijit to sing it.’ That’s because having Arijit Singh on a song increases the chances of it becoming a hit, or at least getting noticed. But even Arijit later realised that what truly matters is how good the song itself is.”

Adnan Sami recalls dramatic weight loss journey



AGENCIES
New Delhi, Aug. 8

Singer and composer Adnan Sami has opened up about the terrifying health scare that transformed his life, recalling the moment a doctor warned him that he had only six months to live because of his weight.

Speaking to Zoom, the Padma Shri awardee said the diagnosis became even more devastating because his father was sitting beside him when the doctor delivered the news. It was that emotional moment, he revealed, that ultimately pushed him to embark on one of the most remarkable weight-loss journeys in Indian entertainment.

Looking back at the difficult moment, Sami said he was initially

upset that the doctor had delivered such grim news in front of his father.

“It was a huge jolt. What made it even worse was that my father was sitting next to me when the doctor said it. I was more upset that he said it in front of my father because your loved ones react far more emotionally than you do. They love you and care for you.”

The singer admitted that his first instinct was to dismiss the doctor’s warning. Watching his father react emotionally became the turning point.

“My father became so emotional that I promised him, ‘I’ll fix it. I’ll fix this.’ That promise set everything in motion. It was a Herculean task, and I never imagined I’d end up losing so much weight.”

Sami also addressed the long-standing rumours that his dramatic physical transformation was the result of weight-loss surgery.

Kennedy's Cannes premiere was a mistake: Anurag Kashyap

AGENCIES
New Delhi, Aug. 8

After years of waiting, Anurag Kashyap’s Kennedy finally got an official release in India earlier this year. Starring Rahul Bhat and Sunny Leone, the film chronicles the journey of a hitman navigating pandemic-hit Mumbai. It was first premiered at the Cannes Film Festival three years ago, where it was screened in the Midnight Screenings section and received a standing ovation. However, Kashyap recently revealed that the Cannes premiere was, in fact, one of the most difficult screenings of his career.

‘One of our worst screenings’

In a conversation with Creative Stew, the filmmaker opened up about what went wrong during the screening and how the experience affected him. “It was one of our worst screenings. Actually, because whatever the video might say about the standing ovation, which is a regular thing at Cannes. Every film gets it. Some films get it more, some films get it less. Ours was a midnight film. Midnight fans are much stronger, so their standing ovations obviously will be much more than competition.”

Kashyap explained that while the response on the surface appeared enthusiastic, he personally felt something was off with the screening, particularly with its sound. “So, that notwithstanding, I felt a dip because the whole film for me is like an opera. And we felt something was wrong technically,” he said. Recalling the



moment, he added, “So the first person to walk out of the screening in Cannes was me. I stepped out because I needed to go to the washroom and just wash my face, and I was dealing with it. And then Kunal, who works with me, he just said, ‘We need to remix the film.’”

‘Lowest point was the premiere screening’

The filmmaker also reflected on the initial response to Kennedy at Cannes and admitted that, in hindsight, he felt the

film may not have been suited for such a high-profile international premiere. According to Kashyap, the audience largely approached the film expecting a conventional genre thriller and did not have the political context necessary to understand what the film was attempting to say.

“And then, when the response came out from Cannes, we also realised it’s not a film that should have premiered at such a big venue internationally. Obviously, the

festival selection committee knows politically what’s going on in India. But the genre film audience doesn’t understand that. They don’t know that. They have come to see a horror or a thriller. They thought we were making a John Wick, an Indian John Wick. They had no political reference point for the film. They didn’t understand the politics of it. They didn’t get it, or they don’t care about it simply because they have come to see a genre film. So that was very heartbreaking.”

HOROSCOPE

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ARIES: A creative idea is ready for you to share. Mercury enters Leo and your 5th House of Creativity, Romance, and Self-Expression, helping you speak with more play, confidence, and personal flair. This is excellent energy for pitching, performing, or sharing something that feels like you.
- 

CANCER: Now is the time to communicate your value. Mercury enters Leo and your 2nd House of Money and Self-Worth, bringing confidence to financial conversations, pricing, purchases, and the way you speak about your skills.
- 

LIBRA: Your voice gets warmer and more influential. Mercury enters Leo and your 11th House of Friends, Community, and Future Plans, helping you speak up in groups, organize people, and share ideas that gather momentum.
- 

CAPRICORN: A private topic may need clearer and braver language. Mercury enters Leo and your 8th House of Intimacy and Shared Resources, bringing attention to money, trust, emotional stakes, desire, and the terms behind close bonds.

- 

TAURUS: A conversation close to home needs your warmth and confidence. Mercury enters Leo and your 4th House of Home and Family, bringing attention to private talks, household decisions, and the emotional tone of your space.
- 

LEO: Your voice carries extra presence today. Mercury enters Leo and your 1st House of Self, sharpening your ideas, confidence, humor, and ability to make a memorable impression. People may understand you more quickly because your message sounds more like you.
- 

SCORPIO: You are leading with confidence and precision. Mercury enters Leo and your 10th House of Career, bringing attention to your reputation, goals, leadership, and how you communicate authority momentum.
- 

AQUARIUS: Partnership conversations get louder, clearer, and more important. Mercury enters Leo and your 7th House of Partnership, bringing more focus to one-on-one communication, negotiation, collaboration, and the way people mirror your ideas back to you.

- 

GEMINI: Your words are bold and memorable today. Mercury enters Leo and your 3rd House of Communication, sharpening your voice, timing, and everyday message. This is strong energy for writing, pitches, errands, or saying the thing people actually need to hear.
- 

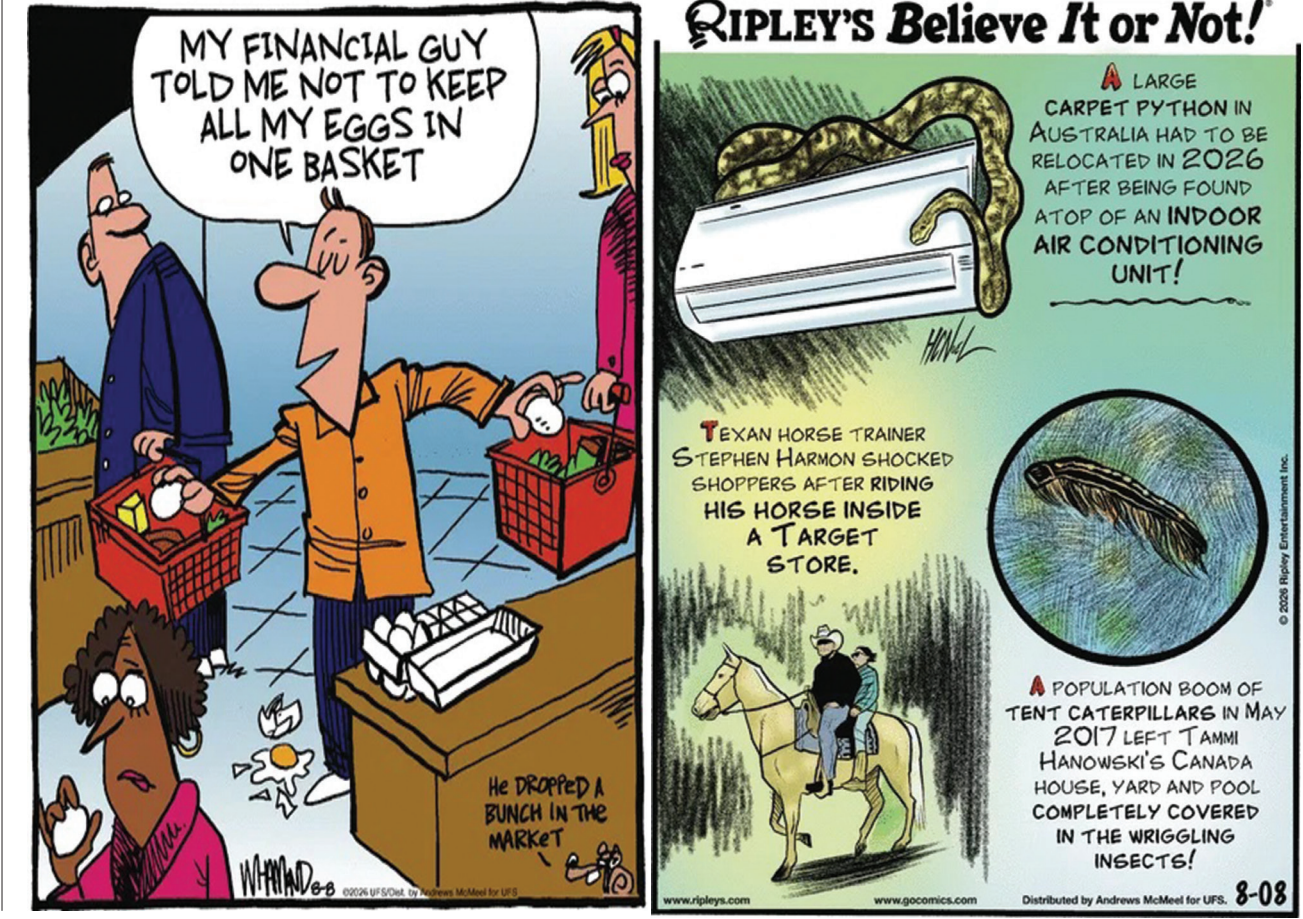
VIRGO: A private realization may need space before it becomes a plan. Mercury enters Leo and your 12th House of Solitude, turning your attention toward hidden thoughts, old scripts, dreams, and the conversations you are still having with yourself.
- 

SAGITTARIUS: A bigger idea may be ready for a brighter platform. Mercury enters Leo and your 9th House of Travel, Learning, Publishing, and Beliefs, helping you speak with more confidence about what you know, where you are going, and what you want to explore.
- 

PISCES: Your daily routine may need a more confident message. Mercury enters Leo and your 6th House of Work and Wellness, bringing attention to tasks, schedules, health habits, coworkers, and the way you explain what support you need.

CARTOON

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Minister Pokharel urges Asian Games athletes to give their best

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

Minister for Education and Sports, Sasmit Pokharel, has urged athletes bound for the 20th Asian Games to strive for their best performance at the continental summer event.

During a visit to the training camp, the minister said he wished to understand the athletes' preparations and assured them of full support.

On Friday evening he met members of the Nepali contingent at Pashupati Boutique in Gaushala, where part of the squad is accommodated.

Pokharel emphasised that sport and education are not sectors where investment yields immediate results, but that long-term commitment will bring success.

He pledged to address challenges facing athletes and the wider sporting sector, and confirmed that the 10th National Games will be held later this year.

Tennis player Pradeep Khadka described it as an honour to be part of the national team's closed training and thanked the minister for



engaging directly with athletes.

Asian Games silver medallist Arika Gurung said preparations under "Mission 2026" had greatly benefited athletes, who were determined to deliver strong results.

Volleyball head coach Jagadish Bhatt stressed that only highly skilled coaches can produce top players, calling for greater attention to developing coaching expertise.

The programme was attended by

National Sports Council vice-chair Bishal Shrestha, the minister's chief adviser Siddhi Byanjankar, adviser Raju Singh, and executive committee member Sikka Suwal Shrestha, among others.

Nepal takes on Saudi Arabia in ACC Premier Cup opener

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) has announced the fixtures for the ACC Men's Premier Cup 2026, to be held in Malaysia from 30 August to 12 September.

Nepal has been drawn in Group B alongside hosts Malaysia, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong. Group A features Oman, the UAE, Singapore, Kuwait and Qatar.

Nepal will open their 50-over campaign on 1 September against Saudi Arabia at Bayuemas Cricket Oval, Kuala Lumpur. They will face Bahrain on 3 September at YSD UKM Oval, Bangi, before meeting Malaysia at the same venue on 5 September. The Rhinos return to Bayuemas to play Hong Kong on 7 September, completing their group stage fixtures.

The top two teams from each group will progress to the semi-finals on 10 September. The final and third-place play-off are scheduled for 12 September.

Nepal won the inaugural edition in 2023 at TU Cricket Ground, Kirtipur, defeating the UAE by seven wickets in the final. The second edition, played in T20 format in Oman in 2024, saw the UAE beat the

hosts by 55 runs. Nepal lost to the UAE in the semi-finals and were defeated by Hong Kong in the third-place play-off.

Before the Premier Cup, Nepal will compete in the Northern Territory (NT) Top End Series in Darwin, Australia, from 21 to 30 August. However, with the Premier Cup schedule now confirmed, Nepal's planned 50-over practice match against New Zealand A on 6 September has become uncertain due to a clash of dates.

With the date clashed, it is expected that Cricket Association of Nepal will field Nepal A to the Top End T20 and senior squad in ACC Premier Cup.

Moreover, the tournament is also a qualifier for the 2027 Asia Cup to be held in Bangladesh, more important than Top End series.

Nepal recently had a forgettable outing in the Netherlands as they lost all of their four matches in their penultimate Tri-series of ICC Cricket World Cup League-2 Series. Nepal is struggling to save their ODI status after being dropped to seventh position in the League-2 standings, with Canada overtaking by one points. Nepal have 24 points from 32 matches and four matches left to play of the League-2 against Oman and Canada. Oman is at fourth place with 38 points.

AFGHANISTAN THRASH IRELAND

AFP
London, Aug. 8

Rashid Khan took six wickets as Afghanistan hammered Ireland by 92 runs in the second one-day international on Friday.

Victory saw Afghanistan take a 1-0 lead in the five-match series after the first ODI was washed out.

Ireland lost seven wickets for 63 runs as they were bowled out for 207 chasing a target of 300 at Bready Cricket Club in the Northern Irish village of Magheramason.

Khan, one of the outstanding leg-spinners of his generation, took four of the last seven wickets to fall as he finished with impressive figures of 6-34 -- his third 'six for' in ODI cricket. Rashid struck two early blows, firstly having Andy Balbirnie caught behind to end a promising stand of 72 with Cade Carmichael.

Next over he also had Harry Tector caught behind.

Ireland, in a match reduced by rain to 47 overs per side, needed 156 runs from 137 balls with seven wickets in hand when their collapse truly started with the freak dismissal of Lorcan Tucker.

Mohammed Saleem appealed for lbw against Tucker was turned down. But with Tucker attempting a run, Sediqullah Atal, who was at point, ran the batsman out with a direct hit.

Taekwondo player Swastika Tamang secures Asian Games berth

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

Swastika Tamang has become the third taekwondo player from Nepal to qualify for the 20th Asian Games, to be held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan.

The Nepal Taekwondo Association (NTA) announced her selection on Saturday through its social media channels.

"Huge congratulations to Swastika Tamang [Individual Poomsae Female U-30 Years] on being selected for the 20th Asian Games Aichi-Nagoya 2026 in Japan. We, the taekwondo family, extend our best wishes for your preparation and participation in the upcoming Asian Games," the NTA stated on Facebook.

According to NTA General Secretary Hemant Dangi, Tamang gained entry through a replacement quota.

"The Asian Taekwondo Union informed NTA on Friday evening about Tamang's qualification for the Asian Games from replacement quota," he said.

She will compete in the poomsae event in the female under-30 category. A gold medallist at the 13th South Asian Games, Tamang will be making her second consecutive Asian Games appearance, having also competed in the 19th edition in China.



Tamang joins Yubraj Rana, who will contest the poomsae male under-30 category, and Abhishek Baral in the kyorugi male under-80kg division. Both Rana and Baral qualified through wild cards.

With Tamang's inclusion, Nepal's contingent for the Asian Games has risen to 137 athletes (56 men and 81 women).

Paralympian bronze medallist Palesha Goverdhan (K-44 women under-57kg) and Renuka Tamang (K-44 women under-47kg) will represent Nepal in para-taekwondo at the 5th Asian Para Games.

Harmeet Singh named Janakpur Bolts captain for NPL-3

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

American all-rounder Harmeet Singh will represent Janakpur Bolts in the third season of the Nepal Premier League (NPL). The franchise confirmed his signing on Saturday via its social media platforms.

Singh, a left-arm spin all-rounder widely regarded as one of the most influential players in associate cricket, has also been appointed captain. He played a central role in guiding Sudurpaschim Royals to runner-up finishes in the first two seasons. The Bolts, champions of the inaugural campaign, expressed their enthusiasm at securing his services.

Janakpur won the first season under Anil Sah's leadership. In the second, captaincy duties were shared between Sah, South Africa's Wayne Parnell and Namibia's Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton.

Singh took eight wickets and scored 28 runs in five matches during the opening season. In the second, he contributed 133 runs at a strike rate above 166 and claimed 12 wickets at an economy rate of 6.18 across nine matches. For the United States, he has collected 39 wickets in 29 one-day internationals and 31 wickets in 29 T20 internationals.

Janakpur Bolts chief executive Niroj Khatrivada said the franchise had



resolve. We have entrusted Harmeet Singh with this responsibility. His all-round ability, discipline, maturity and commitment make him a natural choice. He embodies the spirit of struggle, unity and resilience that defines our team."

FIFA chief Infantino gets backing of South American football

AFP
Cali, Aug. 8

FIFA president Gianni Infantino on Friday received support from several leading South American football figures as he visited Colombia amidst the crisis engulfing world football's governing body.

Infantino arrived early on Friday in the Colombian city of Cali to attend hard-right president Abelardo de la Espriella's inauguration.

Photos released by the Colombian Football Federation show a smiling Infantino standing alongside South American Football Confederation (CONMEBOL) president Alejandro Dominguez and the president of the Colombian federation, Ramon Jesurun.

The visit to Colombia comes as the head of world football has been embroiled in a storm following a much-criticised and ultimately abandoned plan to open the World Cup to private investment.

The 56-year-old Italian-Swiss lawyer, who has been in office since 2016, declined to answer a question from an AFP journalist about whether he considered FIFA's woes to be over.

Later, while attending a children's soccer festival at a sports complex in



Cali, he spoke of his "happiness" at being at the event.

"It is a joy to be here today," the FIFA boss told dozens of children kitted out in football gear at an event in the southwestern city. "Football is joy, football is happiness, football is unity," he said, adding that "so many champions" were born "in this part of the world, in this part of Colombia."

'Not necessary to always agree'

Infantino, who will seek a fourth and final term in the presidential election in

Rabat next March, is facing criticism, notably from European body UEFA, which on Thursday maintained its threat to boycott the World Cup despite FIFA's withdrawal of the private investment proposal.

CONMEBOL, which has only 10 FIFA-affiliated members but includes iconic federations such as Argentina and Brazil, had on Thursday expressed its "concern regarding the repeated unilateral actions taken" by FIFA.

However, when asked by a Colombian media outlet on Friday, the CONMEBOL

president stated that "one cannot ignore the great work" done by Infantino. "We must continue working for football through dialogue; it is not necessary to always agree," Dominguez added.

Following the powerful Argentine Football Association (AFA) and the Paraguayan federation on Thursday, Infantino also received support on Friday from two other South American federations -- Venezuela and Ecuador.

In line with their confederation's statement, they welcomed the withdrawal of the controversial plan to create a commercial entity open to private investors known as the FIFA Forward Enterprise. In a letter to the FIFA chief, Ecuadorian federation president Francisco Egas Larreategui added that he had confidence in Infantino "as well as in those currently leading football to continue working for the good of our sport".

Close to figures on the right of politics, such as US President Donald Trump, Infantino attended De la Espriella's presidential inauguration ceremony later on Friday.

Colombia's incoming leader has broken with tradition by choosing to hold the ceremony in Cali, considered the capital of salsa, rather than before Congress in Bogota.

Tamang wins snooker title



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 8

Sabin Tamang claimed the title at the inaugural Kathmandu Khelmandal (NRT) Nepal Top-16 Grand Masters Snooker Championship on Saturday. He comfortably defeated Rohit Kshetri 6-1 in the final, held at the NRT clubhouse in Tripureshwor, Kathmandu.

In the best-of-eleven frames, Tamang prevailed 59-32, 1-70, 73-52,

59-41, 74-22, 68-13 and 67-17. This was Tamang's third victory over Kshetri, who suffered his second successive defeat in a final. In the previous Nepal Masters Snooker Championship, Kshetri had lost to Som Lama.

As champion, Tamang received a trophy and a cash prize of Rs 111,111. Runner-up Kshetri collected Rs 51,000 and a trophy, while semi-finalists Wangchu Tamang and Rajan Gurung were each awarded Rs 25,000 and a trophy. The tournament, which began on 28 July, was organised by NRT, one of the nation's oldest clubs.