

THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL



Prime Minister Balendra Shah with Indian Ambassador Naveen Srivastava (left) and Chinese Ambassador Zhang Maoming during separate meetings at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers in Singha Durbar on Monday.

GOVT SIGNS 7-POINT DEAL WITH MEHTA'S FAMILY



RSS  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

The government and the family of Rabinendra Kumar Mehta, who died in police firing at Kaptangunj of Dewangunj Rural Municipality-3 in Sunsari district on 26 July, have reached a seven-point agreement on Monday.

As per the agreement signed between the parents of Mehta and Home Minister Sudan Gurung, the government will immediately initiate process to declare Rabinendra Kumar Mehta a martyr.

Likewise, a fair and effective probe will be initiated to probe the incident that took place at Kapatangunj of Dewangunj Rural Municipality and legal action will be taken as per the laws against the perpetrators.

Similarly, legal status of Madrasa of Dewangunj-3 will be investigated immediately.

As agreed, the government will take initiatives to provide job to a qualified member of the family of the deceased.

Similarly, the final rites of the deceased will be performed after taking the mortal remains of Mehta to Dewangunj in a Nepal Army helicopter.

The government will allocate budget in the current fiscal year to build a memorial park in an appropriate location in memory of the three youths who died in the police firings in the rural municipality.

Finance Minister holds interaction with multinational companies

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

Finance Minister Dr. Swarnim Wagle has urged multinational companies operating in Nepal to increase investment, expand existing industries, introduce new technologies and create more jobs, assuring them of the government's support and protection for investments.

During the meeting with representatives of largest taxpayers' multinational companies in Nepal on Monday at the Ministry of Finance, Finance Minister Dr. Wagle said that government's priority was not merely to increase tax collection but to accelerate the cycle of production, investment, profit and reinvestment.

He said that the government views the private sector not with suspicion, but with the perspective of a partner as the success of the private sector is the foundation of Nepal's economic success.

He said that businessmen are not just profit-making representatives but also the country's largest taxpayers, employers and leading investors.

"When industries make profits, those profits are reinvested, which increases production and creates jobs. Increased employment raises incomes, expands markets and ultimately increases government revenue," he said.

He said that the relationship between government and the private sector is not a zero-sum relationship. "The success of both is linked to the success of each other."

"The government's primary responsibility is to protect legitimate investments, assets created, and profits earned in Nepal. Entrepreneurs must



be able to trust that their assets are safe, that the rules are stable, that the tax system is predictable, and that the state stands as their partner," he said.

"Without building that trust, big investments will not come. Without building that trust, industries will not expand. Without building that trust, economic transformation will not be possible. So today, I want to make a clear appeal to you."

The minister sought concrete suggestions in areas requiring immediate reform, including tax administration, regulation, land, energy, labour, infrastructure, finance, exports, legal provisions and government procedures.

He assured that the concerned ministries would coordinate within a specified timeframe to implement the issues raised at the meeting, while the Ministry of Finance would continuously monitor progress through a response desk.

Responding to the minister's call, representatives of the companies said they were moving ahead with plans to invest around Rs. 200 billion in Nepal in the near future if there was greater policy stability.

According to Minister Wagle's secretariat, senior company officials

informed the minister that they were advancing investment expansion plans in various projects in productive sectors, including hydropower, paint manufacturing, hotels and beverages.

"We are investing Rs. 200 billion in industries such as hydropower, foods, hotels and paints," the representatives of the multinational companies said.

"The government should create a conducive environment, and we are ready to expand our investments. This will contribute to both employment generation and economic growth."

The company representatives said the budget introduced by the new government had significantly boosted the confidence of foreign investors. However, they urged the government to be more flexible on certain policy and practical issues.

"With the formation of the new government, improvements have been seen in the administrative operations of the Department of Industry, Office of the Company Registrar, tax offices and customs offices," they said.

"However, further facilitation is needed in some areas of policy announcements and their practical implementation."

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PM Shah meets Indian, Chinese Ambassadors

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

Prime Minister Balendra Shah held separate meetings with the Indian and Chinese ambassadors to Nepal on Monday, marking his first individual interaction with Kathmandu-based foreign envoys since taking office.

Prime Minister Shah held one-on-one meetings with Indian Ambassador to Nepal Naveen Srivastava and Chinese Ambassador Zhang Maoming at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers in Singha Durbar.

According to the Prime Minister's Secretariat, both meetings focused on bilateral relations, mutual interests, development partnerships and areas of future cooperation.

Indian Ambassador to Nepal Srivastava first paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Balendra Shah.

During the meeting with Srivastava, the two sides discussed various aspects of Nepal-India relationship, mutual interests, development partnership and cooperation between Nepal and India.

According to the Prime Minister's Secretariat, Prime Minister Shah also stressed the need to further deepen Nepal's historic ties with India and work together in areas of mutual interest.

Ambassador Srivastava congratulated Prime Minister Shah and expressed his commitment to further strengthening mutual relations and cooperation between the two countries, the Prime Minister's Secretariat said.

Likewise, later on Monday afternoon, Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Zhang paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Shah.

During the meeting with Zhang, discussions were held on further strengthening Nepal-China relations, promoting cooperation in various areas and enhancing the development partnership between the two countries.

Prime Minister Shah stressed the need to further deepen Nepal's historic relations with China and work together in areas of mutual interest.

Ambassador Zhang congratulated Prime Minister Shah and expressed his commitment to further strengthening Nepal-China relations and cooperation.

Earlier in April, Prime Minister Shah had held a collective interaction with ambassadors representing various countries. He had previously adopted a policy of not holding separate meetings with foreign ambassadors.

However, his separate meetings with the ambassadors of India and China are being viewed as part of efforts to deepen relations with the country's two immediate neighbours and initiate a new phase of cooperation.

Govt to review bilateral treaties: Minister Khanal

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

Foreign Affairs Minister Shisir Khanal has said that the government is committed to reviewing, amending or renewing bilateral and multilateral treaties and agreements as needed, keeping Nepal's interests at the centre.

HOR MEETING

Speaking at meeting of the House of Representatives (HoR) on Monday, Minister Khanal said that the review of treaties and agreements will depend on the mutual consent and approval of the concerned party countries and international organisations in accordance with international law and diplomatic practices.

He further said that the work of reviewing the treaties and agreements falling within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Law, Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other concerned ministries is underway. Minister Khanal added that the work of advancing negotiations with the concerned party states and international organisations through diplomatic channels and finalising the mutually agreed treaties and agreements is also underway.

"As it is international law and diplomatic practice that, in accordance with the general principles of international

law on treaties, the review, amendment or renewal of any bilateral or multilateral treaty agreement depends on the mutual consent and approval of the relevant party states or international organizations, the Government of Nepal is committed to reviewing the treaty agreements at an appropriate time, in collaboration with the relevant friendly countries and organizations, as required, keeping Nepal's interests at the center," Minister Khanal said.

Meanwhile, the Lower House Monday endorsed the Bill to Revive the Existing Provisions of the Nepal Special Services Act, 2042, (2083) by a majority.

The House discussed the bill earlier. Responding to questions raised during the discussion, Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Sobita Gautam, on behalf of Prime Minister Balendra Shah, said that it would be appropriate to place the National Investigation Department under the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers instead of under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

She argued that since the country's most sensitive and intelligence-related department's work is specialised, it would be appropriate to place the department under the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers.

The lawmakers participating in the discussion on the bill are of the opinion that it would be appropriate to place the government's strategic agencies under the Prime Minister's Office.

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LMC honours high-scoring SEE students, schools

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Lalitpur, Aug. 10

Lalitpur Metropolitan City (LMC) has honoured students and schools, both institutional and community, who achieved outstanding results in the Secondary Education Examination (SEE) 2025.

Like in previous years, LMC has provided a cash award of Rs. 200,000 each to students who secured a 4.0 GPA from institutional schools and a GPA of 3.95 or above from community schools. The Metropolitan City has also honoured schools that achieved outstanding results.

At a programme organised on Monday, LMC honoured 75 students from 23 institutional schools who secured a 4.0 GPA, providing each with a cash prize of Rs. 200,000. Similarly, seven students from four community schools who secured a GPA of 3.95 or above were awarded Rs. 200,000 each.

Six community schools that achieved outstanding results were also awarded Rs. 400,000 each. Private schools were also honoured.

The Metropolitan City presented letters of appreciation and shawls to the parents and schools of the outstanding students. The city has been providing such cash awards and recognition to encourage quality education and motivate students to achieve excellent results. According to LMC, the award programme has contributed to improvements in the quality of education.

In total, 82 students from institutional and community schools of Lalitpur Metropolitan City were honoured and awarded this year. Last year, the Metropolitan City had honoured 86 students who achieved outstanding results.

Metropolitan City Mayor Chiribabu Maharjan, said the award system would continue even after he leaves office, as it has been formally included in the municipal budget and official records. Therefore, he said, whoever becomes mayor in the future would not be able to discontinue the programme.

Recalling his school days, Mayor Maharjan said, "During my school days, English subjects were taught in Nepali first, which helped us understand the lessons clearly."

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Govt's 5-year strategy for chhurpi production

BY MODNATH DHAKAL  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

Responding to the steady growth in demand and exports of dog chew or chhurpi (traditional hard cheese) in the international market, the government has prepared a five-year strategy to make Nepal a centre for chhurpi production and export.

The Chhurpi Export National Strategic Action Plan 2083-2088 (2026/27 to 2031/32) prepared by the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies (MoICS) aims to strengthening milk production and collection system, enhancing chhurpi production capacity and quality, promote export through policy and institutional provisions.

Chhurpi export has gone up steadily in the last couple of decades to make it one among the top 10. According to the strategy document, although chhurpi was produced for long, commercial production of dog chew in Nepal was started in 2007.

While the total export volume of dog and cat food stood at 276 tonnes in Fiscal Year 2014/15, it has reached 2,610



tonnes in 2024/25. The export value of chhurpi as dog and cat food, which was Rs. 280 million then, has reached Rs 4.51 billion two years ago.

In FY 2024/25, Nepal exported dog chews worth approximately Rs. 4.51

billion, which represents an average annual growth rate of around 19.07 per cent over the last five years. Last year, its export stood at Rs. 4.8 billion.

According to the strategy, the government will adopt a policy to promote

husbandry of better breed of cow, buffalo and yak, implement livestock insurance, disease control programmes and livestock health camps. Farmers will be supported with prompt technical consultation, artificial insemination while the pastureland will be managed.

Along with the development of infrastructure including information technology, the government will work to attract more investment in the sector and increase the entrepreneurs' access to finance.

Likewise, it aims to modernise the production technology with the transfer of latest processing machines and dryers.

The government will facilitate the producers in obtaining the certificates including GMP, HACCP, ISO, BRCS and Halal. Investment will be made in improving branding and packaging. Access to internationally accredited labs will be enhanced in order to assure the standards of Made in Nepal products.

Similarly, Nepal's rules for the product's quality, food safety and certification will be amended to create harmony with the international standards in practice.

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BULLION  
(Rs. per tola)

Hallmark Gold : Rs. 301,500/-  
Worked Gold : NA  
Silver : Rs. 4,670/-

STOCK

NEPSE : 2,641.06

Total Amount : 3,674,419,766.3

No. of Share : 10,966,745

GUHESHWORI TREATS 32.4 MILLION LITRES WATER DAILY

RSS  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

The Guheshwori Wastewater Treatment Plant, located at Guheshwori Phant is treating 32.4 million litres of wastewater daily. According to Ram Kumar Shrestha, Chief of the Plant, construction of wastewater treatment plants has begun at various locations in the Kathmandu Valley.

Construction of such treatment plants is underway at Sallaghari, Kodku, Dho-bighat, Gokarna and Hanumanghat in the Kathmandu Valley, shared Shrestha.

He argued that more wastewater treatment plants are needed to keep the rivers and environment of the Kathmandu Valley clean. Shrestha emphasized that separate pipeline systems for wastewater and rainwater are necessary to ensure the treatment plants operate at their full capacity for which, he added, that efforts are being coordinated with local governments to develop such systems.

WOMEN ACHIEVE SELF-RELIANCE THROUGH VEGETABLE FARMING

BY HARIKRISHNA AIDI  
Mugu, Aug. 10

Women in Chhayanath Rara Municipality have started becoming self-reliant by growing seasonal and off-season vegetables. Farmers said that shifting from traditional farming to vegetable cultivation as a cash crop has increased women's income and made it easier for them to meet household expenses and pay for their children's education.

Ranakala Rokaya, a farmer from Chhayanath Rara Municipality-3, said local women began producing vegetables and green leafy vegetables and selling them at the district headquarters, Gamgadhi, after finding no other viable means of meeting household expenses.

"We had no other option to meet our household expenses, so we started producing vegetables and green leafy vegetables and selling them at Gamgadhi market. As demand for locally produced vegetables has increased in the market, more women have also become interested in vegetable farming," Rokaya said.

Rajyalaxmi Sejwal, a farmer from Karkiwada in Chhayanath Rara Municipality-4, said she earns more than Rs. 300,000 a year by selling vegetables and leafy greens throughout the year.

According to her, while traditional farming produced enough food to sustain the family for only three to six months a year, vegetable farming has made it easier to meet household expenses throughout the year.

"Even after working on the land throughout the year, traditional farming produced enough food for only three to six months. Now, vegetable farming has made it easier to meet household expenses throughout the year and pay for our children's education," Sejwal said.

With demand for locally produced vegetables increasing in Gamgadhi market, women from villages including Karkiwada, Bhamwada, Phuli, and Nigale have been coming to the market early in the morning to sell vegetables and leafy greens.

Local vegetable trader Gauri Rokaya of Chhayanath Rara Municipality-2 said this has helped increase the income of local women.

Meanwhile, farmers have demanded that genuine farmers be given priority while implementing agricultural development programmes and distributing subsidies.

Balchandra Karki, proprietor of RK Organic Agriculture Farm in Chhayanath Rara Municipality-5, said that in the past, programmes such as small irrigation schemes, cold storage facilities, farmer incentives and quality seeds were implemented at the district level based on farmers' needs and assessments.

However, he complained that genuine farmers are now facing difficulties in receiving agricultural subsidies and programmes because plans are being determined and sent directly from the provincial level.

Panel formed to study Koshi Province's export potential

BY SHASHIDHAR PARAJULI  
Biratnagar, Aug. 10

The Koshi Provincial government has launched an initiative to identify exportable products and expand their access to international markets under a new economic diplomacy strategy aimed at promoting economic prosperity in the province.

The Province Planning Commission, Koshi Province has approved a 60-day action plan and mobilised a team of experts across the districts to conduct a detailed study of the export potential of locally produced goods, their production status and access to international markets.

The Province Planning Commission, which has recently begun adopting a systematic approach to policy discussions and planning, has decided to go beyond desk reports and develop evidence-based plans by reaching out directly to local producers.

A task force coordinated by Tara Nath Niraula, vice-chairperson of the Province Planning Commission, has been formed, with experts from different sectors assigned responsibility for specific products.

The task force will visit all 14 districts of the province and hold direct discussions with local stakeholders, producers and entrepreneurs.

Dr. Mohan Kumar Subedi and commission member Narayan Prasad Risal have been assigned



responsibility for studying the tea and coffee sectors.

Industrialist Rajendra Raut and agriculture expert Pashupati Dhungana will study cash crops such as large cardamom, ginger and turmeric.

Similarly, Dr. Indra Prasad Sapkota, secretary at the Ministry of Tourism, Forest and Environment, and Bishnu Prasad Koirala, secretary of the Provincial Planning Commission, will work as experts on medicinal herbs and handicrafts.

Pashupati Dhungana, secretary at the Ministry of Industry, Agriculture and Cooperatives, and Kosh Hari

Niraula, secretary at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Planning, will study dairy and meat products, while Rajeshwar Gyawali will work as an expert on industrial products.

Work schedule set with a fixed deadline

The commission has prepared a work schedule with the aim of completing the study by October 17, 2026, beginning from July 24, 2026.

As per the schedule, the first phase will involve preliminary preparations and data collection. The team will visit all 14 districts

and hold consultations with district-level stakeholders from August 17 to September 5, 2026.

The commission will hold high-level interactions with federal government agencies and stakeholders in the provincial capital to collect suggestions in mid-September, this year.

In the fourth week of September, it will prepare a draft of the economic diplomacy and export strategy and hold discussions with federal experts and stakeholders.

In particular, tea, large cardamom, coffee, ginger, rudraksha, broom

grass and medicinal herbs—regarded as signature products of Koshi Province—have been identified as major export-oriented products.

Suggestions will be sought directly from concerned stakeholders regarding their potential, existing problems and measures needed to address them, said Commission Vice-Chairperson Niraula.

Experts will also conduct an in-depth study on how agricultural products, handicrafts, mineral-based products and the service sector can be developed as sources of foreign currency earnings, he said.

The main objective of the study is to facilitate access for products from Koshi Province to markets in neighbouring countries, including India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and China.

The commission believes that the study will provide clear guidelines on removing barriers to exports through economic diplomacy and improving quality certification, branding and packaging for export products.

By implementing the guidance received after the study and the plan prepared based on it, Koshi Province is expected to devise a clear export promotion action plan for the next 5 to 10 years/

The provincial government expects the initiative to help local farmers receive fair prices for their products, reduce the country's trade deficit and make a tangible contribution to the province's gross domestic product.

NEA to sign PPAs with projects below 10 MW

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has initiated preparations to sign power purchase agreements (PPAs) with hydropower projects having an installed capacity less than 10 megawatts.

In a meeting with the Independent Power Producers' Association, Nepal (IPPAN), NEA Acting Managing Director Dirghayu Kumar Shrestha said that the process of signing PPAs for projects below 10 megawatts has already proceeded.

MD Shrestha said that the NEA had also initiated the process for extending the required commercial operation date (RCOD) of hydropower projects.

According to him, work has already begun by categorising projects into 'A' and 'B' groups based on the nature of the projects and the problems they face.

Shrestha said that the NEA was ready to establish a joint mechanism

with IPPAN to address problems faced by the private sector.

He said an institutional mechanism was necessary for regular dialogue with private-sector energy producers, identifying their problems and finding solutions. According to a press statement issued by IPPAN, the IPPAN delegation submitted a 13-point demand concerning hydropower projects during the meeting

IPPAN President Mohan Kumar Dangi urged the NEA to seriously address the problems that the private sector has been raising for a long time. He demanded that the PPA quota for the 16,000 MW projects that have already applied for PPAs be opened immediately.

"Problems faced by projects that have been unable to sign PPAs for a long time must be resolved immediately by opening the 16,000 MW quota and moving ahead with the PPA process for all eligible projects," he said.

"The suspension of PPAs has affected investment, financial management and overall project development of projects currently under study and construction."

Dhankuta district produces vegetables worth Rs. 8B

Akabare chilli alone worth over Rs. 3 billion

BY KABI RAJ GHIMIRE  
Hile, Aug. 10

Vegetables worth around Rs. 8 billion were produced in Dhankuta in the last fiscal year. According to the Agriculture Knowledge Centre, Dhankuta, around 157,000 tonnes of vegetables were produced on 5,978 hectares of land in the district in fiscal year 2025/26.

Based on the average purchase and sale prices throughout the year, the value of the produce is estimated at Rs. 7.97 billion, according to the Centre. Tomatoes accounted for the largest volume of vegetable production in Dhankuta, with 37,400 tonnes produced.

Similarly, around 19,168 tonnes of cauliflower, 15,600 tonnes of Akabare chilli, 14,960 tonnes of cabbage, 15,000 tonnes of beans, 10,200 tonnes of peas, 6,500 tonnes of mustard greens and 5,800 tonnes

of radish were produced, according to the statistics of the Agricultural Knowledge Centre, Dhankuta.

In terms of value, Akabare chilli accounted for the highest production value at around Rs. 3.12 billion. Tomato production was valued at Rs. 930 million, beans at Rs. 750 million, cauliflower at Rs. 613.3 million, chilli at Rs. 370 million, onions at Rs. 330 million, peas at Rs. 300 million, cabbage at Rs. 150 million and mustard greens at Rs. 130 million, the Centre said.

In the previous fiscal year 2024/25, around 164,218 tonnes of vegetables were produced in the district. Nagendra Bahadur Rana, chief of the Agriculture Knowledge Centre, Dhankuta, said the district's vegetable production was higher than that of the other eastern hill districts of Bhojpur, Terathum and Sankhuwasabha.

Farmers in Dhankuta commercially cultivate cabbage, cauliflower, tomatoes, radish and leafy vegetables. Rana said that farmers have increasingly

been attracted to vegetable farming due to better market access and road expansion, while some Nepalis returning from abroad have also taken up agriculture.

In addition, farmers said that modern farming technology and tunnel farming have attracted more attention in recent times. Vegetables are mainly produced in most areas of Chhathar Jorpati Rural Municipality and Mahalaxmi Municipality, as well as in parts of Dhankuta Municipality and Pakhribas Municipality.

Agricultural produce from Dhankuta is collected through around a dozen collection centres, including the Sidhuwa Multipurpose Cooperative Collection Centre in Chhathar Jorpati and the Guthitar Vegetable Collection Centre in Dhankuta.

The produce is sold in agricultural markets in Dharan, Itahari, Biratnagar, Damak and Birtamod in the eastern Tarai, as well as exported to India, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

Vanishing shepherds threaten Mustang livestock farming

BY HARI KRISHNA SHARMA  
Mustang (Muktinath), Aug. 10

When Keshab Pariyar left his home in Nisikhola Rural Municipality-6 of Baglung eight months ago, he had hoped to find work in a hotel or restaurant in Upper Mustang. Burdened by financial hardship and struggling to provide for his wife and four children, he travelled to Chhunar in Lo-Ghekar of Damodarkunda Rural Municipality-3 in search of a livelihood.

Instead, Pariyar found himself tending herds of Himalayan goats (Chyangras). A local livestock farmer offered him a monthly salary of Rs. 20,000, along with food and accommodation, persuading him to take up the demanding role of a shepherd. Since then, his days have been spent accompanying flocks of Chyangra goats across the high-altitude pastures of Upper Mustang.

Months of working in grazing lands at extreme elevations have taken a toll on his health. Repeated bouts of altitude-related illness have left him contemplating returning home, despite the financial necessity that brought him to Mustang in the first place. "After travelling to the high alpine pastures, I remained ill for a long time," Pariyar said. "Some of my colleagues have already left, saying they plan to seek employment abroad."

Like him, Akash Budha from Rolpa is also considering leaving the profession, saying the income does



PHOTO: HARIKRISHNA SHARMA/TRN

**Keshab Pariyar, a shepherd from Nisikhola Rural Municipality-6, Baglung, is herding sheep in pasture land in Upper Mustang. Pariyar, receives a monthly salary of Rs. 20,000 along with food and accommodation for his work.**

not justify the hardship involved. Over the past two years, an increasing number of shepherds have abandoned jobs in yak, mountain cattle and Chyangra farming, citing low benefits, health risks and harsh working conditions.

The growing exodus has created an acute labour shortage that is beginning to affect Mustang's livestock

sector, where herders remain indispensable for managing sheep, goats, yaks, nak (female yaks) and cattle grazing in remote alpine pastures.

**A profession few are willing to take up** Angyal Gurung, a Chyangra farmer from Chhoser in Lomanthang Rural Municipality-1, said finding shepherds has become one

of the biggest challenges facing livestock farmers. "Even when we offer attractive salaries, it is difficult to recruit shepherds," he said. "Many leave after making various excuses. The shortage of herders has become a major obstacle to expanding Chyangra farming according to our capacity."

According to Gurung, shepherds working in grazing areas near the Chinese border, situated at elevations of around 4,700 metres above sea level, are paid more than Rs. 30,000 a month, in addition to food and lodging.

A flock of around 300 sheep and goats requires at least two shepherds, while some livestock owners in Mustang keep herds exceeding 3,000 animals, significantly increasing the demand for experienced workers. The labour shortage is not the only challenge confronting livestock farmers.

According to Dr. Lal Mani Aryal, Chief of the Agriculture and Livestock Development Office, Mustang, changing climatic conditions have further complicated traditional pastoral farming. He said declining snowfall due to climate change has reduced the availability of grass in alpine grazing areas, while attacks by wild animals continue to inflict substantial losses on farmers.

"Most livestock sheds are managed by workers who come from other districts," Dr. Aryal said. "Because of the shortage of manpower, it has become difficult

to encourage further investment and expansion in livestock farming."

In Mustang's high Himalayan pastures, livestock are largely dependent on shepherds for daily management throughout the grazing season. The district's tourism industry may dominate public attention, but agriculture and livestock farming continue to rely heavily on migrant workers from across Nepal.

According to the Agriculture and Livestock Development Office, labourers regularly arrive from Myagdi, Parbat, Baglung, Rukum, Rolpa, Dolpa, Dhading and several districts in eastern Nepal to work in farms, hotels and livestock operations.

To improve working conditions, local, provincial and federal governments have supported the construction of environmentally friendly temporary shelters for shepherds. Seasonal workers are also provided with winter clothing and periodic health check-ups.

Sheep farming is concentrated mainly in Thasang and Gharaphjong rural municipalities, while sheep, Chyangra goat and yak farming remains the principal livestock activity in Baragung Mukti chhetra, Lo-Ghekar Damodarkunda and Lhomanthang rural municipalities.

Despite these efforts, farmers warn that unless more people are willing to take up shepherding, one of Mustang's oldest mountain livelihoods could face an uncertain future.



# Seven major highways come to complete halt

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
*Kathmandu, Aug. 10*

Persistent rainfall has disrupted road transportation across several parts of the country since Sunday midnight, with landslides and river erosion blocking major highways and road sections in multiple districts.

According to an update issued by Nepal Police Headquarters on Monday, road transport has been affected in Kavrepalanchowk, Sindhupalchowk, Ilam, Rasuwa, Rukum West and Lamjung, with seven major highway sections completely closed due to landslides, mudflows and flood damage.

On the BP Highway, at Pinkhali in Roshi Rural Municipality–9, Kavrepalanchowk, a mudslide carrying debris descended onto the road at around 4:00 am, completely blocking the highway. The road has since been reopened for one-way traffic from Monday afternoon, according to the update of Nepal Police.

Meanwhile, authorities have imposed night-time traffic restrictions along the BP Highway section between Khurkot–Nepalthok–Katunjabesi–Sindhuli due to the risk of flooding. All vehicles are prohibited from travelling between

According to an update issued by Nepal Police Headquarters on Monday, road transport has been affected in Kavrepalanchowk, Sindhupalchowk, Ilam, Rasuwa, Rukum West and Lamjung, with seven major highway sections completely closed due to landslides, mudflows and flood damage.

6:00 pm and 4:00 am, while traffic is permitted only from 4:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Similarly, night-time movement of all vehicles has been suspended on the Kanti Lokpath in Makwanpur because of heavy rainfall. The restriction is in effect daily from 5:00 pm until 5:00 am.

The Mechi Highway has been completely blocked at Rajduwali, Ilam Municipality–9, after thick mud accumulated on the roadway. Police have advised motorists to use alternative routes.

Several sections of the Araniko Highway in Sindhupalchowk have

also been rendered impassable. A landslide at Jiro Kilo in Bhotekoshi Rural Municipality–4 has blocked the road entirely. Traffic has also been disrupted by the Eco landslide in Kodari, while road subsidence at Liping, both in Bhotekoshi Rural Municipality–2, has further closed the highway.

In addition, another landslide at Dumre, Chautara Sangachokgadhi Municipality–9, at around 5:00 am on Monday, has completely blocked another section of the Araniko Highway.

In Rasuwa, the Trishuli–Mailing–Syafubesi unpaved road has been completely cut off after the Trishuli River eroded the roadway at Khalte in Uttargaya Rural Municipality–5.

Likewise, the Jajarkot–Dolpa section of the Bheri Corridor near Rijegard Khola in Aathbiskot Municipality–6, Rukum West, has been blocked by a landslide.

In Lamjung, a landslide near Bimire Bhanjyang in Madhya Nepal Municipality–10, has completely obstructed the Mid-Hill Highway. Travellers have been advised to take alternative routes.

Police Headquarters said efforts are under way to clear the blocked roads and restore traffic. Authorities have also urged the public to exercise extreme caution while travelling, warning that continued

rainfall could trigger further landslides and flooding.

41 disaster incidents recorded in 24 hrs

Meanwhile, a total of 41 disaster-related incidents were reported across various districts of the country in the last 24 hours, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA).

The Authority said 20 persons were injured in the incidents during the period.

The reported incidents included 20 snakebite cases, nine fires, eight landslides, one lightning strike, two incidents of heavy rainfall, and one wild animal attack. A total of 173 police personnel were deployed to assist in disaster response operations.

All 20 injuries recorded during the period were caused by snakebite incidents. The disasters are estimated to have caused property damage worth Rs. 3.8475 million. In addition, four road sections were obstructed, and one livestock was killed.

Meanwhile, from 14 April to 9 August, a total of 4,452 disaster-related incidents were recorded nationwide. The incidents claimed 205 lives, left five people missing, and injured 1,347 others. A total of 5,492 families were affected during the period.

## Local government rescues shackled man after 10 years



BY OUR CORRESPONDENT  
*Parasi, Aug. 10*

Om Prakash Rajbhar, 35, of Nawalparasi (West), who had been confined to his home with his hands and feet shackled for nearly a decade after developing mental health problems, has been rescued.

Om Prakash, from Phulbariya in Sarawal Rural Municipality–5, was rescued at the initiative of the local government and taken to the Manav Sewa Ashram in Paschim Pahuni, Tilottama Municipality–6 in Rupandehi.

According to his family, he had been working abroad around 10 years ago when a family incident caused him significant mental distress. After returning home, his mental health gradually deteriorated. As his behaviour became increasingly difficult to manage, his family reportedly kept him at home with his hands and feet shackled.

Due to their poor financial circumstances, the family had been unable to afford mental health treatment and

regular care for him. His elderly father, Bharat Rajbhar, had been supporting the family through manual labour. Family members said the condition of Om Prakash had worsened in the absence of treatment and adequate care.

The rural municipality took steps to rescue Om Prakash after Ward Chairman Laxman Chaudhary of Sarawal–5 was informed about his condition. A rescue team led by Rural Municipality Chairman Sukhadi Prasad Chaudhary reached his home.

In the presence of Chairman Chaudhary, he was taken to the Manav Sewa Ashram in an ambulance. Suraj KC, Ashram’s contact person in Nawalparasi, was also present during the rescue.

Chaudhary said local governments should play a guardian role to ensure that people with mental health problems are not deprived of treatment and protection.

“The situation in which he had to remain shackled for years has come to an end. The rural municipality will provide the necessary support and coordination for his treatment, care and eventual reunification with his family,” he said.

## Monkey raids cost farmers millions annually: Study

BY INDIRA ARYAL  
*Kathmandu, Aug. 10*

Growing conflicts with wild animals – monkeys, wild boars and porcupines – have emerged as a serious threat to agriculture and rural livelihoods in the country’s mid-hills, with rhesus macaques (species of monkey) alone causing an estimated Rs. 50 million in crop losses every year.

A study was conducted by the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) with the technical support by Central Department of Zoology, TU across 44 highly affected local units (18 municipalities and 26 rural municipalities) of Gandaki, Bagmati, Karnali, Koshi and Sudurpaschim. The study found that corn was most affected crop among cultivated crops.

According to the report, with over 104,000 monkeys roaming forest margins near agricultural fields, farming communities are suffering tens of millions of rupees in annual damages. Farmers regularly lose over 50 per cent of their annual maize production to troops of monkeys, alongside substantial destruction of rice, wheat, potatoes, and high-value cash crops like cardamom, the report said.

Monkeys alone cause an estimated annual loss of Rs. 50 million across surveyed farms. Corn is hardest hit, with farmers losing an average of 312 kg per year – over 50 per cent of total production – totaling Rs. 25 million in losses for maize alone.

Regional hotspots show catastrophic loss rates, including 90 per cent corn loss in Gandaki, 85 per cent corn loss in Karnali, and 85 to 90 per cent losses for rice and wheat in Sudurpaschim.

Despair among rural communities has reduced traditional deterrents – such as shouting, using dogs, or throwing stones – largely ineffective. In response, nearly 70 per cent of surveyed farmers believe controlled culling is the only permanent solution.

Out of frustration, locals have turned to high-voltage electrocution traps, mass drowning in lethal ponds and unsanctioned translocations. These actions explicitly violate Nepal’s National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1973, posing severe risks to human life, causing

animal cruelty, and failing to offer a long-term solution, the report said.

The report also said that standard government relief efforts remain out of reach, as 80 per cent of affected farmers report being unaware of available compensation funds. Rachana Shah, spokesperson at NTNC, said that amidst growing human-wildlife friction, local communities are urgently calling for the active management and relocation of monkeys from their settlements.

“Residents are demanding that the government deploy modern technologies and population control measures to address the issue. They are in favor of a range of solutions, including relocating the primates to other areas, implementing fertility control and along with other globally practiced population management tools,” she said.

She said the main objective of the study was to assess the economic loss and implement sustainable strategies to mitigate human-monkey, porcupine-wild boar conflicts, ensuring the safety and well-being of both humans and wildlife.

It was also to identify the population of monkeys, mainly rhesus macaque, wild boar and porcupine, she said.

The study made various recommendations including establish a National Rhesus Macaque Management Task Force under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Environment.

The task force needs to develop a national strategy ensuring coordination among federal, provincial, and local governments, academia, conservation organizations, and community forest user groups. So a priority area for monkey management will be developed after combining habitat management, community-based deterrence, selective sterilization, compensation mechanisms, and regulated culling.

It also suggested to promote plantation of monkey-preferred fruit species within forests and away from farmlands, establish buffer zones and green corridors between forests and agricultural areas, and regulate waste disposal and strictly discourage deliberate feeding near settlements, roads, and religious sites.

The study was conducted utilizing field visits, stakeholder consultations, GIS mapping, and a survey of 1,846 households.

room. She was bitten on her right ear and subsequently fell ill. She was taken to Karnali Provincial Hospital in Surkhet for treatment, Inspector Pariyar said.

Similarly, 22-year-old Kopila Mahatara of Githakot in Sani Bheri Rural Municipality–2 was bitten by a snake on Sunday evening while cutting grass in a field near her home. She was bitten on her left hand and taken to Mehelkuna Hospital in Surkhet for treatment.

On Monday night, 23-year-old Dipa BK of Chipleti in Chaurjahari Municipality–8 was bitten on her right leg by a snake while walking through farmland near her home. She is also receiving treatment at Mehelkuna Hospital in Surkhet.

## 96 vehicles penalised for illegally mining riverbed materials



BY OUR CORRESPONDENT  
*Nepalgunj, Aug. 10*

Illegal extraction and transportation of riverbed materials have increased in Banke district in recent months, according to the District Police Office.

The DPO, Banke, said 96 vehicles

involved in the illegal extraction and transportation of riverbed materials had been taken under control and penalised over the past four months. The figures indicate a significant rise in such illegal activities in the district.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Pratit Singh Rathour, information officer at the District Police Office, said authorities collected Rs.

633,970 in revenue through action taken against 96 vehicles involved in illegal extraction and transportation during the four-month period.

According to Rathour, the highest number of vehicles were penalised in mid-June, when 31 vehicles were seized and Rs. 187,000 was collected in fines. In mid-April, 29 vehicles were penalised, generating Rs. 153,000 in fines.

Similarly, 21 vehicles were taken under control in mid-March, with Rs. 150,000 collected in fines. In mid-July, action was taken against 15 vehicles, resulting in the collection of Rs. 143,970 in revenue.

Krishna Prasad Shrestha, coordinator of the Citizens’ Concern Forum, Banke, said the figures for the past four months showed that illegal extraction and transportation of riverbed materials continued unabated in the district.

He said the situation was concerning despite regular monitoring and enforcement, as illegal extraction and transportation activities continued to be reported.

According to Shrestha, stones, gravel and sand have been extracted and transported without permits from various rivers and streams in Banke. The Rapti River is reportedly the main site of illegal extraction of riverbed materials at various locations across the district.

## Senior citizens’ care home set to open in Gorkha

BY GUNA BAHADUR ROKA  
*Gorkha (Sulikot), Aug. 10*

A senior citizens’ care home at Chepetar in Gorkha Municipality–10 is set to come into operation two years after its construction was completed.

The Gandaki Province government has entrusted the operation of the care home to Manav Sewa Ashram. An agreement has already been signed between the Integrated Service Office, Gorkha, and Manav Sewa Ashram, Hetauda, for a five-year period.

The facility will accommodate senior citizens aged above 60 who have no source of income, are deprived of family care or have been neglected, said Dasharath Sharma, chief of the Integrated Service Office, Gorkha.

“The care home aims to provide services including rescue, protection, safe accommodation, healthcare and family reunification,” Sharma said.

The Gandaki Province government has allocated Rs. 30 million for the operation of the care home in the current fiscal year.

According to Sharma, the budget will be channelled through Manav Sewa Ashram to cover staff, management, food, maintenance and necessary infrastructure development.



Nita KC, a central member of Manav Sewa Ashram, said work on setting up the dining hall, beds and kitchen, along with minor maintenance, would begin within a day or two, with services expected to start within a month.

Built at an estimated cost of around Rs. 45 million, the care home has 24 rooms. The facility occupies three ropanis of government land and also has a

separate building for security guards.

Electricity installation, painting, air-conditioning in some rooms and blacktopping of the road leading to the care home have already been completed.

Construction of the facility began in 2019 but was delayed due to the contractor’s sluggish pace of work. Its deadline was extended

three times before construction was finally completed in October 2024.

The facility was built as part of the government’s plan to establish at least one old-age home in each province, targeting senior citizens in Gandaki Province. The care home is now in the final stages of preparation for operation, said Pradip Kunwar, ward chair of Gorkha Municipality–10.



To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance.  
-Oscar Wilde

## EDITORIAL

# Earning And Learning

Our educational system places a lot of emphasis on theoretical knowledge, with little attention to practical knowledge and skills. We have failed to view education as anything more than a means of securing a job. Yet each year, thousands of our young graduates, full of talent, dreams and aspirations, face unemployment and migrate to other countries in search of jobs and better prospects for life. Each day, about 1,500 to 2,200 youths from Nepal leave the country for better opportunities in foreign countries. This is the data received from the formal channel; youths migrating through the informal channel could add to this statistic.

In this critical situation, integrating a 'learn and earn' approach and vocational education in the school curriculum can provide a viable solution. A degree in hand alone is not enough; our youth need practical skills to secure employment or start their own enterprises. The concept of learning while earning combines theoretical knowledge with practical skills, while creating income through school-based projects. As per a news report published in this daily, students who are studying crop science in grade 9-12 in Kirtichaur Secondary School in Bajura have turned school grounds into a thriving vegetable garden. The school has been providing hands-on experience in vegetable farming and students are able to generate income as well.

The students, equipped with skills, are in a better position to get opportunities to generate income and become self-reliant. Instead of learning agriculture only from textbook, they have been learning to cultivate vegetables, manage farms, learn the importance of team work and understand the economics of vegetable production. Likewise, the generated income is used to purchase sports equipment and other materials required by students. Students have begun to view agriculture as a viable profession instead of viewing it as a last resort if they become unable to attain any job.

Schools that integrate practical skills with formal education prepare students not only for examination but for life. Instead of grooming children to think critically, raise questions, and solve problem through practical knowledge, our education system is impelling students only to bring good grades in exams. Thus, it is important for our schools to integrate practical and vocational education in their curriculum, especially for students in agriculture, technical education, hospitality, information technology and the creative industry. Indian educational reformer Sonam Wangchuk has championed this approach, though his approach is more about practical education than learning and earning, in his Students' Education and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECML). Instead of relying on the lecture method alone, his students learn to grow vegetables and manage green house, maintain solar powered building and renewal energy system. This helps students to champion the spirit of teamwork and a problem-solving approach.

For the fiscal year 2083/84, the government has allocated Rs. 210.30 billion in the education sector, which accounts for roughly 10 per cent of the total budget. The budget allocations for education need to be increased so that students are provided with practical skills that support their lives later. Learning will only be effective if the curriculum is connected with students' lives, livelihood and environment. If the teaching-learning activity does not go beyond the textbooks, the education institutions can hardly prepare students to face real challenges. In this regard, the initiative of Kirtichaur Secondary School deserves appreciation and should be replicated by other schools as well.

# Saving It For Later

GARIMA DHAKAL

How many of us have been waiting for the right moment to use the things we own? It can be those stickers from our childhood that we never used. It can be an expensive dress that is kept away in our wardrobe waiting for that one perfect occasion. The perfume that we wait to use on special occasions. Or the chocolates that we received that we've stored away to eat later. The dishes that only make appearances to entertain the guests. I still have so many empty diaries piled up in my bookshelf because I'm afraid of writing on it and wasting it. We're very good at saving things for later but the major problem is that later never comes.

In families, especially Nepali households, it is considered a sign of responsibility to save things. From a small age, we're told not to waste. And then we follow our parents' suit, never using things for normal occasions. We keep our clothes for festive occasions, we store food for important events, and keep our best possessions untouched until there is a good enough reason to use them.

There is nothing wrong with being careful with our possessions. In fact, saving money and using them only for absolute needs is a good practice. However, sometimes these saving habits go beyond being practical. We start accepting that normal days are not important enough for the things we love.

Why is it that we need a celebration to wear a dress we

like? Why should we wait for guests to use our best dishes? Why should we require a special occasion to wear our favourite perfume? What we tend to forget is that these items can be used multiple times, and it is not the end of the day if we let ourselves indulge a little bit with the things we love.

We're mostly afraid that if we use things now, we might run out of them when we truly need them. But when have you ever truly needed that packet of stickers? Exactly. This is our main problem, we are conditioned to believe that good things need to be earned. We wait for those important events but the thing about life is that it is unpredictable.

Life surprises you with so many important events that you're unprepared for. A random Wednesday can be the best day of your life. A casual hangout with your friends might be one of the last times you see them. We spend so much time preparing for future celebrations that we end up forgetting to enjoy our present.

We often imagine happiness that we might feel in the future. We live our life in preparation. But eventually the dress goes out of fashion, the notebook gets molded, the perfume expires, and the opportunity to enjoy them disappears as well. Instead of waiting for a perfect occasion, we can save what is genuinely needed, while allowing ourselves to enjoy what we already have.

# OP-ED

# Urgency To Solve Liquidity Puzzle



Dr. Prakash Kumar Shrestha

Nepal's financial sector is currently flooded with excess liquidity, creating a liquidity conundrum. While central banks in major economies have in recent years battled tight credit conditions and elevated inflation, Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) and Nepal's banking system are struggling with the opposite: elevated liquidity. This abundant liquidity coexists with a sluggish economic growth of below 4 per cent. Total deposits across Banks and Financial Institutions (BFIs) reached Rs 8.01 trillion against total outstanding credit of Rs 6.3 trillion as of mid-June 2026. This reflects a credit-deposit ratio of 79 per cent. With the excess liquidity hovering around Rs 1.3 trillion as of the end of FY 2025/26, the banking sector finds itself "drowning in liquidity". The funds are available, but remain idle, raising serious questions about the efficacy of Nepal's financial intermediation and investment climate.

Both supply and demand side factors have contributed to this liquidity overhang. On the supply side, remittance inflows have surged dramatically. Between mid-July 2025 and mid-June 2026, Nepal received USD 14.59 billion in remittances, a 29.6 per cent increase over the previous year. The last three fiscal years have also been witnessing rapid inflows of remittances due mainly to large numbers of Nepali youth going for foreign employment after COVID-19. At the same time, depreciation of Nepali currency against the US\$ has further contributed to generate liquidity in the banking system.

**Credit demand**  
On the demand side, credit demand remains weak despite record-low interest

rates. This is the result of weak aggregate demand in the post-COVID period, decline in business confidence, sluggish government capital expenditure, and a slowdown in real estate and cooperative sector activity. Credit growth to the private sector has remained around 6 per cent in the last four fiscal years. Further, several systemic factors have dampened credit demand, such as Asset Quality Deterioration and Sluggish Business Confidence. Rising Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) across the banking system have forced banks to shift their operational focus toward loan recovery and balance sheet cleanup rather than loan supply.

The persistent surplus of liquidity has created several macroeconomic distortions. Excessive supply of lendable funds relative to demand has driven interest rates toward the bottom of NRB's interest rate corridor, thereby penalising depositors with a negative real interest rate. Despite of lower borrowing costs for business, real economic activity remains unresponsive due to low confidence, along with a lack of a congenial investment environment coupled with rising insecurity on private property. The liquidity glut shows both an economic weakness and a massive opportunity. Left unused, excessive idle liquidity depresses deposit yields, squeezes bank interest margins, risks creating speculative bubbles and encourages capital flight. In contrast, if strategically mobilised, this excess liquidity can fund domestic infrastructure, accelerate energy transitions, and power private sector growth.

To prevent short-term money market rates from collapsing to zero, NRB has been absorbing surplus liquidity following the interest rate corridor mechanism. Through tools like the Standing Deposit Facility, deposit collection auctions, and NRB bonds, NRB has absorbed over Rs 1.3 trillion from the banking system. While these measures stabilise

short-term money markets and contribute to financial stability, paying interest on absorbed liquidity creates an interest burden for NRB.

Solving the liquidity conundrum requires coordinated action from the government, private sector, and central bank. The government should accelerate capital expenditure. Expediting project implementation through procurement reforms and timely fund transfers in a "mission mode" approach would absorb liquidity and, at the same time, build productive assets. The government should issue long-term project-linked domestic bonds. In addition, the government can encourage public enterprises to increase investment by utilising the available liquidity through reforming and making them more professional. It is the right time to buy some airplanes, construct transmission lines and complete irrigation and strategic road projects.

More importantly, the government must explicitly recognise the private sector as a partner in development by stopping harassing them. Reforms to personal guarantee provisions, banking blacklist criteria, and loan restructuring mechanisms as mentioned in the monetary policy should be implemented swiftly. The government should also expedite economic reforms as proposed in the budget for the current fiscal year. To help the banking system clear NPLs and restore credit appetite, the government must expedite the establishment of a specialized Asset Management Company, strengthen Debt Recovery Tribunals (DRTs) and operationalise a credit scoring mechanism.

Domestic banks must move away from exclusive reliance on collateral-based lending. By utilizing AI and social media data, the banking sector should develop a new model or way to safely provide credit to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). For this, regulatory support is also needed. On the other hand, large corporations should reduce reliance on

short-term bank loans by issuing long-term corporate bonds, debentures, and commercial paper. Security Board of Nepal should work on developing the bond market in Nepal. Commercial banks should deploy capital into green assets, including commercial solar farms, EV charging infrastructure, logistics, and high-value agricultural processing activities.

**Targeted relief**  
NRB should recalibrate its regulations, offering targeted relief for credit directed toward export-oriented manufacturing, high-yield agriculture, hydropower, and IT exports. NRB should continuously refine working capital guidelines to ensure that genuine, productive businesses receive adequate operational credit lines while maintaining prudent systemic risk limits. Regulatory reforms should be carried out to make regulatory provisions more sector-specific.

The private sector must develop a pipeline of investment-ready projects in renewable energy, tourism infrastructure, digital services, and light manufacturing that can absorb available liquidity. Sectoral business and industrial associations should collaborate with financial institutions to develop viable and bankable proposals, as well as new entrepreneurs. The current situation presents an extraordinary opportunity for the private sector to invest in technology upgrades, workforce training, and productivity-enhancing equipment. In the end, all stakeholders, such as the government, the banking sector and the private sector, should work together to resolve this situation of liquidity conundrum, taking as an opportunity the availability of abundant financial resources. Nepali economy, in fact, needs huge investment in physical infrastructure and expediting production in agriculture, tourism, and hydropower.

(The author is former vice-chairman of the National Planning Commission.)

# Nepal's Trans-Himalayan Connectivity



Dr. Upendra Gautam

Standing in Bishkek, where the ancient Silk Road once connected merchants, civilizations, and ideas across Eurasia, one is reminded that geography becomes history only when people transform it into cooperation. The Kyrgyz saying that "the road reveals both the traveler and the destination" resonates deeply with Nepal's own wisdom, Ek ra Ek Agharah Huncha — one and one become eleven. Both remind us that shared effort creates value far beyond individual capacity.

The Shanghai Spirit of mutual trust, mutual benefit and equality respects diversity and pursue common development. For Nepal, an SCO Dialogue Partner and a Himalayan country situated between two major Asian economies, this spirit offers a practical pathway to transform its traditional identity as a landlocked country into that of a genuinely land-linked nation.

**Connectivity**  
It is not measured merely by the scale if the infrastructure. Its true value lies in whether it generates productive employment, expands market opportunities, reduces regional inequalities, and improves the quality of life of common people. Infrastructure without institutions becomes underutilised; investment without fairness widens disparities. Therefore, Nepal's trans-Himalayan connectivity agenda should operationally pursue two inseparable objectives: commercial viability and social fairness.

The Himalayas should no longer be

viewed as barriers separating regions but as high lands connecting South Asia, Central Asia, East Asia, and beyond. Modern transport corridors, digital connectivity, cross-border energy cooperation, resilient supply chains, and ecological partnerships can transform Nepal into a reliable transit partner within the wider Eurasian landscape. Such connectivity would benefit not only Nepal but also strengthen regional resilience by diversifying routes, expanding markets, and encouraging sustainable trade.

Equally important is institutional connectivity. Nepal can contribute by strengthening cooperation among think tanks, universities, media institutions, chambers of commerce, research organisations, and local governments. These institutions generate ideas, build trust, train future leaders, and translate diplomatic goodwill into implementable projects. The SCO provides an ideal platform for such cooperation. Dialogue Partners, though differing in size and economic capacity, collectively represent valuable hinge linking regions, markets, cultures, and development experiences. Their comparative advantages should not be viewed through the lens of competition but of complementarity.

Cooperation works when partners complement distinct capabilities rather than compete on identical grounds. Central Asia contributes strategic connectivity and logistics expertise. Major SCO economies provide industrial technology, finance, digital innovation, and manufacturing capacity. West Asian partners expand opportunities in energy, finance, and investment. Nepal and the Himalayan region contribute globally significant experience in mountain ecology, hydropower, climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, sustainable tourism, and community-based development.

This complementarity becomes particularly meaningful when translated into operational programmers. Nepal should

prioritise three intergenerational productive forces: students, farmers, and young professionals. These groups are capable of transforming infrastructure into enterprise, technology into innovation, and connectivity into inclusive growth. Investment in their institutional capacities will ensure that trans-Himalayan connectivity produces long-term economic dividends rather than short-lived construction projects.

Equally important is governance. Commercial viability cannot be sustained without public confidence. Fairness cannot exist where corruption distorts public investment and weakens institutions. Nepal can draw valuable lessons from the governance and development experiences of several SCO member states, particularly their emphasis on long-term planning, disciplined implementation, industrial application of technology, and people-centred administration.

In this regard, President Xi Jinping's uncompromising emphasis on combating corruption through people-centred governance deserves careful study, not as a model for imitation, but as an experience from which Nepal can honestly learn. Effective governance ensures that development benefits reach communities rather than narrow interests. It strengthens public trust, encourages investment, lowers transaction costs, and enables infrastructure to generate productive economic activity. For Nepal, international cooperation should therefore not replace indigenous capacity. Rather, it should replenish and strengthen it. External finance, technology, and expertise are most valuable when they reinforce local institutions, community organisations, entrepreneurs, researchers, and public administrators. Development becomes sustainable only when local ownership remains at its centre.

This approach also offers a critical perspective for the Global South. It should never take modernisation for sheer

westernization, which erodes indigenous institutions, local knowledge, or community, economic, social and geographic unity. Economic-social transformation becomes more resilient when it grows from local strengths while embracing international cooperation. Nepal's own experience of community-based development demonstrates that durable progress is achieved when people themselves become active participants rather than passive beneficiaries.

**Cooperation platform**  
The next phase of Nepal's engagement with the SCO should therefore move beyond dialogue toward implementation. A dedicated cooperation platform involving governments, think tanks, universities, media organisations, business communities, and research institutions could systematically identify collaborative projects, match comparative advantages, mobilize investment, and monitor practical outcomes. Such an institutional mechanism would transform policy discussions into measurable development results.

As Bishkek reminds us through its enduring Silk Road heritage, connectivity succeeds when it connects not only places but also people, institutions, and opportunities. Likewise, Nepal's aspiration to become land-linked will be realised not simply through geography, but through governance, productive institutions, commercially viable investments, and fair development that leaves no community behind. When the Shanghai Spirit is translated into practical cooperation, trans-Himalayan connectivity becomes more than an infrastructure agenda. It becomes a people-centred strategy for shared prosperity—one that links mountains with markets, ideas with innovation, and national development with a more connected and inclusive Eurasian future.

(Dr. Upendra Gautam is general secretary of China Study Centre Nepal.)

## 50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

August 11, 1976

## Ghee Price Decreases

**Banepa, August 10:** Price of ghee has come down from Rs. 34.50 to 33.50 per dharni, reports RSS.

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## READER'S MAIL

## Become Self-reliant In Raw Materials

This is in response to a news report published entitled "Hetauda Textile begins text production". The trial production of Hetauda Textile Industry Limited by the current government is encouraging as it offers hope for reviving the country's domestic manufacturing sector. The operation of the old state-owned industry will not only encourage the private sector to become more competitive but also help reduce garment imports to meet national demand in the coming days.

However, reopening the industry should not be limited to repairing old machinery and conducting trial production. The government should focus on adopting new technologies, producing textiles based on market analysis and increasing investment to ensure sustainable operation. Modern,

energy-efficient technology, skilled human resources and efficient management will be essential for sustainable operation.

Besides, farmers and concerned agencies should be encouraged to produce raw materials in potential areas across the country. This would help make the industry self-reliant in raw materials and make its products more competitive. If operated smoothly, the industry could reduce dependence on imported textiles, create jobs and strengthen domestic production.

Urmila Thapa Banepa

## TAILPIECE

After church, little Johnny and his brother go ice fishing. Little Johnny starts drilling on the ice when a voice from above says, "Young man, there's no fish down there." Little Johnny asks his brother, "Who is that?"

His brother replies, "I don't know." So little Johnny starts to drill again and the voice says again, "For the second time, there's no fish down there."

"Little Johnny asks his brother, "Could that be God?" His brother replies again, "I don't know."

Little Johnny starts drilling again and the voice says once more, "Young man, for the last time, I'm telling you there's no fish down there."

"Johnny looks up and asks, "Is that you, God?" The voice says, "No, I'm the manager and the rink's closed."



# UK, France prepare for another heat wave

AP  
Paris, Aug. 10

The U.K. and France are bracing for the fifth heat wave of the season, adding to an intense stretch of hot weather that has repeatedly sent temperatures soaring across Europe since May.

National weather agency Météo-France is warning about temperatures approaching 40 C (104 F) from Tuesday onward in south-eastern France. And in the U.K., an amber heat health alert for most of England will be in place beginning Tuesday as temperatures are forecast to climb to 36 C (96.8 F) later this week.

Across Europe, the extreme heat began in May and has contributed to major wildfires, prolonged drought and new national temperature records, as well as thousands of projected heat-related deaths.

Globally, so far this is the third-hottest year, behind 2024 and 2025, climate statistics show. But 2026 still has time to catch up. Thanks to the one-two punch of accelerated human-caused global warming and a supersized El Niño — a periodic warming of parts of the Pacific that leads to temperature variations around the globe — there's an increasing chance that by the end of the year, 2026 could become the hottest year on record, scientists said.

Last month saw the highest average sea surface temperature ever recorded for July across the extra polar oceans, or the oceans free of seasonal sea ice, according to the European climate agency Copernicus.

That was partially fuelled by developing El Niño conditions in the equatorial Pacific, the service said. The new average record for July is 20.96 degrees Celsius (69.73 degrees Fahrenheit), which



PHOTO: AP  
Vehicles cross the Rhine bridge on the A48 highway with a view of the low water levels on the Rhine, near Bendorf, Germany, Sunday, Aug. 9, 2026.

beat the 2023 record of 20.89 C (69.60 F).

But last month's average surface air temperature globally was 16.90 C (62.42 F), making it only the joint second warmest July on record, tied with July 2024, Copernicus reported.

In Western Europe, meanwhile, the average temperature record for the June-July period hit 21.62 C (70.92 F), Copernicus said, topping the 2022 record.

"Persistent high-pressure systems trapped heat over western Europe, the extreme temperatures also amplified widespread drought. As soils dry out, they lose their ability to provide natural cooling, allowing heat to build more readily," said Samantha Burgess, strategic lead for climate at the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts.

"This is a clear example of how

climate change is intensifying heat extremes, with heat and drought increasingly reinforcing one another."

In France alone, heat wave alerts were issued for the first time on record in May, when more than half the country recorded new monthly temperature highs. The heat intensified in June, a period during which at least 5,700 more deaths than usual were recorded, according to France's public health agency.

# Bangladesh hopes India will expedite Hasina extradition

AGENCY  
Bangladesh, Aug. 10

Bangladesh on Monday expressed "hope" that India will expedite the extradition process of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was ousted in 2024, during a meeting between Indian High Commissioner Dinesh Trivedi and Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.

Trivedi, who was appointed as India's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, paid a courtesy call on Tarique Rahman at the Prime Minister's Office in the Cabinet Division at the Bangladesh Secretariat.

The meeting assumes significance amid recent diplomatic tensions between Dhaka and New Delhi following Sheikh Hasina's public remarks from India, who has been in India since she was ousted from the country after a student-led uprising in 2024.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Bangladesh Prime Minister welcomed the Indian envoy, who also shared his experience of serving in Dhaka over the past two months. According to a statement issued by the Bangladesh Prime Minister's Office, "Bangladesh expressed hope that India will expedite the extradition process of Sheikh Hasina."

Dhaka also reiterated its request to New Delhi for the return of individuals it alleges were involved in the murder of Shahid Osman Hadi, one of the prominent figures behind the July uprising, who was shot at close range on December 12, 2025.

"At the same time, Bangladesh reiterated its request to India to return the killers involved in the murder of Shahid Osman Hadi," the statement added.

The two sides discussed key bilateral issues during the meeting, with Tarique Rahman emphasising the need to create a suitable environment for taking forward relations between Bangladesh and India. Bangladesh Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman, Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humayun Kabir and other relevant officials were also present during the meeting.

The meeting came a day after Trivedi held a one-on-one meeting with Foreign Minister Rahman ahead of his scheduled interaction with the Bangladesh Prime Minister.

The High Commissioner's meeting with Bangladesh's top leadership assumes significance as Dhaka and New Delhi have recently witnessed diplomatic friction over former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's public remarks from India.

The diplomatic dialogue comes against the backdrop of a virtual press interaction by former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in New Delhi on August 5, organised by the Foreign Correspondents' Club of South Asia to mark the second anniversary of her ouster following the 2024 student-led uprising, an event that drew strong objections from Dhaka.

During her address, Hasina stated that she remains resolute about returning to her homeland in December to put the nation on the "right track" by restoring democracy, despite acknowledging the risk of imprisonment or a death sentence upon her return.

In a swift response, Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs registered a strong protest and condemned the statements, noting that the incident impacted public sentiment and complicated efforts to enhance bilateral cooperation.

# Final Kashmir poll phase begins despite boycott call

AP  
Pakistan, Aug. 10

Voters went to the polls Monday in the final phase of elections for the legislative assembly in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, following weeks of violent protests and clashes with security forces that overshadowed campaigning in the disputed Himalayan region, officials said.

Men and women began lining up early at polling stations in Poonch district in the disputed Himalayan region, where four assembly seats were being contested.

Raja Shakeel, a spokesperson for the regional election commission, said voting was underway in four constituencies despite a boycott call by the outlawed Joint Awami Action Committee, or JAAC, which had urged residents not to participate in the election.

Pakistan's ruling Pakistan Muslim League-N party has already secured a majority and is expected to form the regional government for the first time in a decade after winning 24 of the 34 seats decided in the first two phases of voting.

Security was tightened around polling stations as voters cast ballots to choose their representatives in Kashmir, which is divided between Pakistan and India.

Both countries claim the Himalayan region in its entirety. They have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir since gaining independence from British colonial rule in 1947.

Several high-profile politicians are competing in the latest round of voting. Regional Prime Minister Faisal Rathore is seeking a seat from Haveli, while former Prime Ministers Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan and Mushtaq Minhas, a senior vice president of the PML-N, are also among the candidates.

Rana Sanaullah, a political affairs adviser to Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, predicted the PML-N would secure a two-thirds majority and form the next government in Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

A PML-N victory would return the party to power in Pakistan-administered Kashmir after a decade.

Election officials say voting for seats yet to be decided is being conducted in phases because of security concerns and the electoral process is expected to be completed this month. Newly elected lawmakers will then be sworn in and choose the region's next prime minister.

The election campaign has been overshadowed by weeks of protests led by the JAAC, which has urged residents to boycott the vote. The regional government recently banned the group, citing security and public-order concerns.

# Typhoon Dolphin weakens but disrupts travel in east China

AFP  
Beijing, Aug. 10

The weakening Typhoon Dolphin brought heavy rain and grounded hundreds of flights on Monday in eastern China, where authorities said more than a million people have been evacuated over the past few days.

The weather system has lost power after making two landfalls along the coast of Zhejiang province on Sunday, with China's National Meteorological Centre (NMC) issuing its least severe typhoon alert on Monday morning.

However, the NMC warned that parts of east and central China would continue to receive heavy rain for the next day. Authorities issued their most severe flash flood alert for parts of eastern and southern Zhejiang on Monday, state broadcaster CCTV said.

Shanghai's two main passenger airports saw 943 flights cancelled, the airport authority said in an online post.

Public transport services, including many local trains, have been suspended in the financial hub. Some eastern Chinese cities, however, started to restore transportation services. Zhejiang's Ningbo international airport resumed flight operations from midday (0400 GMT) but warned that some journeys may still be delayed or cancelled since the effects of the typhoon have "not yet completely dissipated". Provincial capital Hangzhou resumed subway



PHOTO: AFP  
People visit the Bund in Shanghai in heavy rain, a day after Typhoon Dolphin made landfall in Shanghai, on August 10, 2026.

services on Monday morning, after halting some train operations on Sunday.

Beijing districts on alert

Northern China is also set for extreme weather this week, with five districts in Beijing issuing red alerts for heavy rain on Monday, with some warning of landslide and flooding risks.

Typhoon Dolphin triggered a top-level alert over the weekend, prompting over 1,000 flight cancellations and over a million evacuations.

The port city of Wenzhou in Zhejiang relocated more than 900,000 people, CCTV said Monday. More than 1,500

emergency shelters were opened in the city, it added. Authorities also evacuated more than 150,000 people in Fujian province and more than 200,000 people in Shanghai, Xinhua news agency reported.

Typhoon Dolphin came two weeks after Typhoon Noul struck southern Guangdong province, with authorities saying at the time that it was the strongest storm to hit China this year.

Extreme weather also wreaked havoc on southern and central China last month, with 39 people killed when Typhoon Maysak triggered devastating floods in the southern Guangxi region.

# From Solar corona to human emotions

AGENCY  
Spain, Aug. 10

Total solar eclipse (2/4) A total solar eclipse will sweep across northern Spain on August 12 in one of Europe's most anticipated astronomical events of the decade. From the Sun's corona to animal behaviour and human emotions, these rare celestial events continue to provide scientists with valuable insights more than two millennia after they were first observed.

Eclipses tell the story of humanity's relationship with knowledge. Once seen as dire omens, they have become open-air laboratories, feared for centuries and now closely studied by scientists in a continuity stretching back to the earliest observations of Antiquity.

One of the earliest traces of an eclipse observation may be a clay tablet discovered in the city of Ugarit, in present-day Syria, dating back to 1223 BCE.

In ancient civilisations, the sight of the sun vanishing in broad daylight inspired both wonder and dread.



In ancient China, the phenomenon was seen as a sign that a dragon was devouring the Sun because of humanity's misconduct on Earth. Drums were beaten to frighten the beast away and bring back daylight.

In South America, the Incas interpreted eclipses as a sign of the sun god's anger. Their leaders would try to guess the cause and appease it with a sacrifice.

A solar eclipse over the Greek island of Paros in 648 BCE inspired the following words from the poet Archilochus: "Nothing in the world can surprise me any longer. For Zeus, father of the Olympians, has plunged midday into black night by blotting out the light of the rising sun, and a dark terror now hangs over men. Anything can happen." Beyond myth, eclipses also helped

advance knowledge from very early on. As far back as Antiquity, observing them helped people better understand the movements of celestial bodies and predict their return.

This scientific role only grew stronger over the centuries, eventually enabling some of the most significant discoveries in modern astronomy.

That was the case in 1868, when helium – named after the Greek "helios", meaning Sun – was discovered in the Sun's spectrum before it was even identified on Earth.

The solar eclipse of May 29, 1919, visible from central Brazil to East Africa, also left its mark on science, having made it possible to prove Einstein's theory of general relativity through measurements of the deflection of starlight by the Sun.

Understanding of the solar corona itself identified in 1842 as part of the Sun, not the Moon as had previously been believed – the solar wind and the phenomena behind space weather has improved accordingly.

At a time when satellites monitor the Sun continuously, eclipses might seem

to have been relegated to the status of curiosities. Yet they remain valuable natural laboratories, still allowing scientists to make observations impossible to obtain otherwise, in both life sciences and humanities.

Instruments now exist coronagraphs that create artificial eclipses by blotting out the central portion of the star as seen through a telescope. But they remain less effective than the Moon at masking the solar disk.

"An eclipse is a natural way of masking the Sun, which is extremely bright," said astrophysicist Antoine Strugarek, who added that the Sun's brightness makes it difficult to observe its edges and structure.

"It's a bit like trying to watch a fly buzzing next to a car headlight," he told AFP.

Studying the structure surrounding the Sun is therefore essential.

"Everything that happens in Earth's magnetosphere, in the ionosphere, and that affects conditions for our satellites, our astronauts, our flight crews aboard aircraft ... all of that comes from the Sun," Strugarek said.

## PRISM

### Trash company recovers \$1.15M lottery ticket

Italy: A waste collection company in Italy came to the assistance of a Bitonto resident who mistakenly threw away a lottery ticket worth \$1.15 million.

Roberto Nicola Toscano, director of waste collection company Sanb, said the resident had bought a MillionDay ticket for the July 31 drawing with their usual set of numbers: 2-4-8-10-51. The person had scanned the ticket at a store and received a message that the ticket was "non-payable," leading them to toss it in the trash.

Toscano said the person only later discovered that their numbers had come up in the drawing, and the "non-payable" message referred to the fact that the prize was too large to collect at the store. The player's family rushed back to the store, only to discover the trash had already been collected.

### Raccoon named Mayonesia rescued

Dallas: Animal services workers in Dallas came to the rescue of a raccoon seen wandering a neighborhood for several days with a mayonnaise jar stuck over its head.

The raccoon, dubbed Mayonesia by locals, had been repeatedly spotted over the course of multiple days in a residential area, but managed to evade capture attempts.

A pair of Dallas Animal Services officers located Mayonesia in a tree near an abandoned house on Monday morning and waited at the base of the tree for the raccoon to come down. Mayonesia eventually descended the tree, and an officer was able to approach her from behind and safely capture her.

Agencies

## TODAY IN HISTORY

- 117– Hadrian is proclaimed Roman emperor; two days after Trajan's death.
- 923– The Qarmatians of Bahrayn capture and pillage the city of Basra.
- 1804– Francis II assumes the title of first Emperor of Austria.
- 1812– Peninsular War: French troops engage British-Portuguese forces in the Battle of Majadahonda.
- 1813– In Colombia, Juan del Corral declares the independence of Antioquia.
- 1918– World War I: The Battle of Amiens ends.
- 1919– Germany's Weimar Constitution is signed into law.
- 1960– Chad declares independence from France.
- 2012– At least 306 people are killed and 3,000 others injured in a pair of earthquakes near Tabriz, Iran.





Devotees throng Pashupatinath Temple to worship Lord Shiva on the occasion of last Monday of the holy month of Saun.

PHOTO: KABITA THAPA/TRN

## FORMER MINISTER KARKI RELEASED ON BAIL

RSS  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

The Special Court Kathmandu has ordered the release of former Finance Minister Gyanendra Bahadur Karki from judicial custody.

A joint bench of Justices Narayan Prasad Poudel, Dilli Ratna Shrestha and Umesh Koirala today ordered the release of Karki, a leader of the Nepali Congress, on a bail of Rs 1.5 million.

Leader Karki was produced in court for extension of his judicial custody in a corruption case.

The Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) had filed a corruption case against leader Karki and the defendants in the Special Court, claiming corruption and irregularities during the construction of the Pokhara International Airport.

Also today, the Supreme Court issued an interim order not to immediately implement the decision to remove the elected office-bearers of Nepal Scouts. A single bench of Justice Bal Krishna Dhakal issued a temporary interim order today not to implement the decision to remove the elected officials.

Rabi Khanal and others had filed a writ petition to stop the decision to remove the elected officials of Nepal Scouts, arguing that since they were elected to various positions in the National Council and Provincial Council of the Scouts for four years, they cannot be removed before completion of their full term.

Meanwhile, the court has invited both parties for a discussion on the matter for coming August 19.

## 47 dead after 7.4-magnitude quake shakes western Colombia

AP  
Colombia, Aug. 10

A powerful 7.4 magnitude earthquake struck western Colombia on Monday, killing at least 47 people, trapping residents under debris of collapsed buildings and forcing people to evacuate their homes as far as the capital of Bogota.

The epicenter was in San Jose Del Palmar, a community of about 4,800 people in the Choco region about 250 miles (400 kilometers) west of Bogota, the U.S. Geological Survey and Colombia's counterpart reported.

The USGS said it struck at a depth of 66 miles (107 kilometers). The quake also was felt in neighboring Ecuador and Panama, though minimal damage was reported there.

Local officials confirmed that at least 18 people had been killed in the city of Pereira, two in the city of Manizales, and 27 people in the Valle del Cauca department, where Colombia's third-biggest city, Cali, is located. At least three killed in Valle del Cauca were children, the governor reported.

The quake left cities across the west of the country — Pereira, Quibdo, Cali and Manizales — ravaged. A mix of residents and search teams picked through the rubble of collapsed buildings amid concerns by authorities of aftershocks. Colombia's interior minister said more than 20 municipalities across the country had been hit.

Jorge Moncayo, a 64-year-old taxi driver in Cali, said he saw plumes of



dust shoot up across the city from his home in hills of the city as buildings collapsed. Residents in the city and rescue workers were searching the rubble for survivors.

"My entire house shook. I've never lived through such a powerful earthquake," he said. "We're thanking god we're alive."

Colombia's Geological Service said Monday that it had been "the highest magnitude earthquake registered in Colombia in the last decade" and that it had been followed by two 2.8 and 4.8 magnitude aftershocks.

Authorities also reported that flights were suspended in the airports of Manizales, Quibdo, Armenia, Cartago y

Buenaventura and Pereira.

The earthquakes left many in the Andean nation unnerved after two back-to-back quakes devastated neighboring Venezuela in late June, destroyed hundreds of buildings and killed more than 5,000 people. At the same time the quake brought down buildings in Colombia, desperate families in Venezuela continued to search the ruins for the bodies of their loved ones.

In Pereira, photos and videos published by local media showed pieces of the airport ceiling falling down on travelers taking shelter and screaming, and people running through rubble in a panic.

## 'Dhalkebar Trauma Centre construction work continues'

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

Minister for Health and Food Safety Nisha Mehta has clarified that the process to construct a trauma centre in Dhalkebar will not stop.

Amidst the demand for the proposed construction of a trauma centre in Dhalkebar, Dhanusha, Minister Mehta made this statement during the House of Representatives meeting held on Monday.

Stating that the construction of the new structure will take time, she informed that a 'trauma unit' is being operated at the Provincial Hospital in Lahan for the time being.

She added that the decision to operate a trauma unit immediately was taken as the Provincial Hospital in Lahan has the basic infrastructure required for operating trauma services, including CT scans, necessary medical manpower, sufficient patient flow and a blood bank.

"Operating a trauma unit in Lahan is not an alternative to Dhalkebar. It is an interim and practical arrangement

to provide immediate treatment to citizens until the construction of a new structure is completed," Minister Mehta said.

Responding to the questions raised in the HoR meeting, Minister Mehta said that the process of construction of a critical care and trauma centre in Dhalkebar has already progressed.

Minister Mehta also urged people's representatives and all concerned parties to support the construction of the structure being built in Dhalkebar and to create an environment for providing immediate services to citizens using the available infrastructure.

However, the East-West Highway was blocked on Monday, demanding the construction of a proposed trauma centre in Dhalkebar, Dhanusha.

The protest called by the Trauma Centre Protection Struggle Committee on Monday marked the 5th day of the protest, with the participation of locals, representatives of various political parties and civil society.

Health Minister Mehta had told the House on Wednesday that it would be built in Lahan. Following the statement by Minister Mehta, protests started in the Dhalkebar area.

## Promotion of renewable energy technologies stressed

RSS  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

The stakeholders have laid emphasis on the need of promoting renewable energy technologies to mitigate climate change impact in Himalayan region of the country, in modern lifestyle, tourism activities as well as in indoor and outdoor environment.

At a programme organised to introduce 'Harnessing Renewable Energy for Clean Heating in the Himalaya (HEARTH)' here on Monday, they stressed the need of promoting renewable energy for clean heat. The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) introduced the project in collaboration with the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (APEC) and implementing partner Practical Action (PA) with funding support from the Clean Air Fund (CAF).

Stating that it consume more firewood to cook food and make houses warm as high-altitude regions experience cold round-the-year, they said that it increases indoor and outdoor pollution and black carbon emission in Himalayan region.

The participants shared that different types of renewable energy technologies could be brought into use to lessen this problem in the context when snow melting problem is

increasing due to this. The project is going to be implemented as a pilot project in 65 households and five different community organisations at Marpha village of Jomsom rural municipality in Mustang, it was shared.

On the occasion, Director General of ICIMOD, Pema Gyamtsho, emphasized the need of promoting clean renewable energy technologies to reduce adverse impact in the Himalaya as indoor pollution impacts human health and increases climate change problems.

Similarly, Executive Director of Alternative Energy Promotion Centre, Nawa Raj Dhakal, expressed the view that the implementation of the thermal energy roadmap approved by the government lead to improvement to environmental cleanliness, energy availability and living standard of the people of Himalaya region, adding the AEPC through different programmes has been expanding clean energy access in the region.

Likewise, Chairperson of the rural municipality, Mohan Singh Lalchan, expressed happiness over the project going to be implemented, targeting his rural municipality which has been struggling with the direct effects of climate change.

Country Director of Practical Action, Pooja Sharma, expressed the belief that the implementation of the project would help improve negative impacts seen on human health and environment.

## Finance...

According to the representatives, the government should facilitate companies operating in Nepal in bringing capital from their parent companies.

They said the government should also facilitate stable customs rates on the import of raw materials by multinational companies, access to locally available raw materials and price regulation, removal of land ownership ceilings, and the harmonisation of tax determination by local governments.

The representatives urged Minister Wagle to eliminate the hassles associated with double taxation and simplify the process for repatriating returns from investments.

Representatives from multinational companies, including Surya Nepal Pvt. Ltd, Ncell Axiata Limited, Aarti Strips Pvt. Ltd, Gorkha Brewery Pvt. Ltd, Himalaya Airlines Pvt. Ltd, Hongshi Shivam Cement Pvt. Ltd, Doosan Enerbility Company Limited and Dabur Nepal Pvt. Ltd attended the meeting.

Similarly, representatives from Bottlers Nepal (Tarai) Limited, Unilever Nepal Limited, Asian Paints (Nepal) Pvt. Ltd., Power Construction Corporation of China Ltd., Gorkha Lahari Pvt. Ltd., Huaxin Cement Narayani Pvt. Ltd., New Hope Agro Business Nepal Pvt. Ltd., Nepal Wellhope Agri-Tech Pvt. Ltd., Varun Beverages Nepal Pvt. Ltd., Turkish Airlines Incorporation Pvt. Ltd., Bhotekoshi Power Company Pvt. Ltd. and Berger Jenson & Nicholson (Nepal) Pvt. Ltd. also attended the meeting.

## Govt to review bilateral...

However, the lawmakers of the opposition parties, expressing dissatisfaction with the bill, argued that it would be appropriate to keep the National Investigation Department under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

### Three bills submitted to the House of Representatives

In the Monday meeting of the House, ministers presented three bills on behalf of the government.

In the meeting, Finance Minister Dr. Swarnim Wagle presented the Employees Provident Fund (Tenth Amendment) Bill, 2083.

Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Sobita Gautam

presented the Reconciliation (Second Amendment) Bill, 2083. Similarly, Minister for Youth, Labor and Employment Ramji Yadav presented the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regularization) Bill, 2083.

### Government reviewing the Youth Council Act

Minister for Youth, Labour and Employment Ramji Yadav has said that preparations are underway to review the National Youth Council Act, 2072 and bring a new act.

Speaking at a question-and-answer session with lawmakers in the HoR meeting, Minister Yadav said that a new Act is being brought to make the

## Govt's 5-year strategy for...

**A collective trademark to be registered**

A collective trademark for Nepali chhurpi (dog chew) will be registered and Nepali missions abroad will be tasked for the same. The strategy also plans to seek help from the development partners in enhancing the managerial and professional capacity of the industry in this sector.

To enhance the export of dog chew, strategy will be implemented to strengthen the existing markets in Europe and America while new markets in Japan, South Korea, Australia, Canada and West Asia will be explored. Nepali producers' participation

in international trade fair, exhibition, business conference as well as business-to-business and government-to-government programmes will be increased. The strategy mentions that the trade promotion and trade diplomacy would be strengthened to achieve these targets.

The strategy also aims to promote agriculture and dairy sector cooperatives and mobilise them in enhancing the produce and developing the supply chain.

The strategy has listed down the activities and defined the roles for the federal, provincial and local governments, MoICS and Department of

National Youth Council more effective and a leading organisation in youth-related matters in accordance with the changing expectations of the youth, labor market and technology.

He also informed that the draft of the National Youth Act has been prepared by the Nepal Law Commission and sent to the ministry.

He further said that the Youth Policy, 2082 has been issued with the objective of mobilizing the new dimensions developed in the youth sector and the international environment in nation building.

Minister Yadav said that the policy is a roadmap to make the youth able to compete with the changing world in the

Industry, Department of Food Technology and Quality Control, Agricultural and Environment Ministry and Department of Livestock, Foreign Ministry and Nepali missions abroad, Department of Customs, Trade and Export Promotion Centre, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, chhurpi producers' association, and Department of Cooperatives.

### High-potential product

The strategy noted that dog chews made from chhurpi have become one of Nepal's fastest-growing export commodities. "Particularly in the European and American markets, its demand

coming decade, to become self-reliant and responsible citizens.

"Today, the expectations of the youth, time, labour market and technology have changed. Therefore, institutions must also change.

To make the Youth Council more effective and a more leading institution on youth-related issues, a draft of the National Youth Act has been prepared by the Nepal Law Commission and received by the ministry," the minister said.

Minister Yadav also said that the government has made necessary arrangements in the budget for the current fiscal year to connect youth with leadership skills and employment.

has increased significantly, where it is accepted as a safe, natural, and healthy alternative to artificial dog chews made from rubber," it read.

According to Nepal Chhurpi Producers Association, more than 2 million kg of chhurpi is produced annually from over 400 chhurpi industries across the hilly and mountainous districts of Nepal. Out of it, 80 per cent is produced in Koshi Province alone.

However, the decline in commercial animal husbandry, gradual depletion of available grazing lands in the Himalayan region and climate change have emerged as the major challenges in this sector.

## NAT'L CAMPAIGN AGAINST DOWRY TO BEGIN FROM MADHESH

RSS  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

A national campaign against the prevalent dowry system is starting from the Madhesh Province.

Minister for Women, Children, Gender and Sexual Minorities and Social Security Sita Badi, and office bearers of the Madheshi Commission held discussions at the Ministry today to launch the initiative in an effective way. The campaign would be gradually made nationwide by taking it to the community level.

During the meeting, implementation of legal provisions to end dowry system like harmful social practices and changes in social behavior were discussed since dowry system was linked to economic and social suppression of women, gender-based discrimination and domestic violence.

On the occasion, Minister Badi viewed that the Dowry-Free Nepal is a shared national campaign and should be taken as a responsibility of all.

Likewise, Minister Badi stated that youth, women, local level, academic institutions, social and religious leaders, civil society and media should be brought on board in the campaign against dowry system.

Prior to this, Minister Badi also discussed the issues with Deputy Speaker of House of Representatives (HoR), Rubi Kumari Thakur.

## LMC honours high-scoring...

Today, the situation has reversed, as Nepali is increasingly taught in English, and many students struggle to understand it." He further said that English education has become very important and praised schools and teachers for

improving students' English skills. He noted that this was particularly evident when students from English-medium schools spoke fluent English.

Maharjan also recalled how the GPA-based award system was introduced.

"We introduced the system of rewarding students who achieve a 4.0 GPA, and community-school students with a 3.95 GPA are also considered equivalent to 4.0," he said.

He recalled that when the system was

first introduced, there were only 42 GPA 4 achievers in the country. He was particularly pleased when a student from his ward achieved a 4.0 GPA.

"We initially awarded Rs. 100,000 to the student and Rs. 200,000 to the school.

Later, the amount was increased to Rs. 200,000 for the student and Rs. 400,000 for the school," he said. The system has continued, with the criteria later expanded to include community-school students scoring a 3.95 GPA.



# Thousands of devotees visit Halesi on final Monday of Saun



BY OUR CORRESPONDENT  
Khotang, Aug. 10

More than 31,000 devotees visited the world-famous Halesi, during the Bol Bom fair held on Mondays in Nepali month of Saun.

On the final Monday of Nepali month of Saun on August 10, more than 20,000 devotees visited Halesi in a single day.

According to Ramesh Rai, chief of the Halesi Information Centre, around 2,000 people visited Halesi on the first

Monday of Saun this year.

The number of devotees increased in the following weeks, with around 2,000 visiting on the second Monday and around 7,000 on the third Monday.

More than 20,000 devotees visited Halesi on the final Monday, making it the largest number of visitors in a single day in the history of the site, according to the Information Centre's records.

Kamala Giri, ward chairperson of Halesi Tuwaching Municipality-7, Mahadevsthan, said hotels and homestays in Halesi and nearby areas were fully occupied.

Some devotees could not find accommodation due to the large number of visitors.

He said it was difficult to manage accommodation and entry into the Halesi caves after the number of devotees exceeded the capacity of local hotels.

Considering the huge crowd, the temple gate was opened at 2 AM. Devotees stood in queues and visited the temple from 2 AM until 2 PM, said Ward Chairperson Giri.

Halesi is a world-famous religious site and a meeting point of Hindu, Buddhist and Kirat faiths. Devotees from different

parts of Nepal and other countries visit Halesi. On Mondays during Saun, the site becomes crowded with devotees wearing saffron-coloured clothes.

A large number of devotees from Nepal's Tarai region and India's Bihar state visit Halesi, chanting 'Bolbam' together.

Devotees from different districts of Nepal, particularly the Tarai, as well as India, China, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka, visit Halesi on Mondays in Saun to offer holy water brought from various rivers and worship at the temple.

Devotees traditionally bring water from different rivers and offer it at Halesi every Monday in Saun, believing that their wishes will be fulfilled.

Hindu devotees who come to Halesi from Nepal and abroad take a bath, observe fasting and offer water to Lord Mahadev, Parvati and Ganesh.

Married women worship at the temple praying for the long life of their husbands and the happiness and prosperity of their families. Unmarried women pray for a good husband.

There is a belief that worshipping Lord Shiva with holy water and bel leaves fulfils one's wishes and brings happiness and peace.

Large fairs are held at Halesi during festivals such as Ram Nawami, Shivaratri, Balachaturdashi, Teej and the Mondays of Saun. Devotees also visit Halesi almost every day throughout the year to worship and observe the site.

Followers of Hinduism, Buddhism and Kiratism worship at Halesi in their own ways.

Hindus regard Halesi as a form of Pashupatinath, Buddhists regard it as the second Lumbini, while Kirat followers consider it their ancestral land.

Devotees visit several religious sites in the Halesi area, including Mahadev Cave, Pap Dwar, Dharma Dwar, Bhairav Cave and Basaha Cave.

# Gauthali grosses Rs. 197.1 million



BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

Gauthali, which entered its third week of theatrical release on Saturday, has grossed Rs. 197.1 million.

According to a box-office report issued by the Film Development Board, Gauthali has fared encouragingly at the box office, selling 115,118 tickets and generating Rs. 197.1 million in revenue.

The film has continued to draw audiences, with most of its shows remaining nearly houseful even on regular weekdays.

The film's director, Dr. Kapil Rijal, said the audience's positive response had given the team confidence that Gauthali could complete a 51-day theatrical run.

"Once a film is released in theatres, it no longer belongs to us, it belongs to the audience. Audiences have liked the film and have been encouraging their relatives and neighbours to watch it,"

Rijal said.

The film's success has particular significance for its makers. The original Gauthali, released in 2057 BS, had celebrated its 51st day at three stations outside Kathmandu, including Dang, at a time when cinemas were being affected by the Maoist insurgency. It was reportedly the first musical film to celebrate a 51-day run.

The new Gauthali is an updated version of the earlier film and was released 26 years after the original. It is based on a story by Dr. Bhola Rijal and directed by his son, Dr. Kapil Rijal. It is Kapil Rijal's second directorial venture after 'Harry Ki Pyari.'

Released on July 17, the film features Arun Chhetri, Simran Khadka, Madan Krishna Shrestha, Prakash Ghimire, Luniva Tuladhar, Rabindra Jha, Ishwari Baral, Sanjog Rasaili and Sitadevi Timilsina, among others.

The screenplay and dialogues were written jointly by director Kapil Rijal, Nischal Kunwar, Niraj Nepal and Giriraj Ghimire, based on Dr. Bhola Rijal's story.

# Kandara to embark on US musical tour

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

Kandara, a Nepali musical band, is set to begin its 2026 US tour with 'Rhythm of Change'.

According to a press release issued by Bishishta International Inc., the tour aims to use music to connect communities and encourage positive social change.

The tour will go beyond live performances, creating opportunities for audiences to discuss cultural identity, belonging, homecoming and the changing role of the Nepali diaspora, the press release said.

For more than three decades, Kandara has connected generations through songs celebrating Nepal's landscapes, people, traditions and shared experiences.

Through the US tour, the band aims to continue this tradition while bringing Nepali communities together across generations and borders.

The band seeks to show how music can build resilience, strengthen



communities, encourage civic engagement and promote understanding between cultures.

Kandara will also engage with Nepali diaspora communities in the US to discuss ways to preserve Nepali art and literature while contributing to the country's future.

Fans, community leaders, diplomats and cultural organisations are expected to join the tour, which will mark more than 30 years of Kandara's musical journey.

Kandara was founded in Pokhara, Nepal, in 1992.

# Spider-Man: Brand New Day hits \$1.6B worldwide

AP  
New York, Aug. 10

"Spider-Man: Brand New Day" continued its blistering run in cinemas, collecting \$144.5 million domestically in its second weekend, according to studio estimates on Sunday, while Christopher Nolan's "The Odyssey" set a new box-office record for the director.

The Sony-Marvel release has earned \$1.67 billion worldwide in just 10 days, putting it on course to become one of the biggest blockbusters ever. Domestically, no film has reached a higher total so quickly. In US and Canadian cinemas, "Brand New Day" has grossed \$655.1 million so far. Overseas, it has already surpassed \$1 billion.

It took just seven days for "Brand New Day" to become the highest-grossing film of the year, easily overtaking "Toy Story 5" (\$1.07 billion worldwide). No Sony film had previously cleared \$100 million in its second weekend. It came close to breaking the record for the biggest second weekend, held by "The Force Awakens", which earned



\$149.2 million in 2015.

Christopher Nolan's "The Odyssey" also crossed the \$1 billion mark. In its fourth weekend, the Universal Pictures release added \$31.5 million domestically, taking its global total to \$1.1 billion.

Nolan's Homeric epic is the director's

first film to reach that milestone since 2012's "The Dark Knight Rises". It is now Nolan's biggest box-office success ever, without adjusting for inflation, surpassing "The Dark Knight Rises" (\$1.08 billion) and 2009's "The Dark Knight" (\$1 billion). Nolan's "Oppenheimer" (\$975 million) fell just short of

the milestone.

A major part of that success has come from IMAX. With \$147.3 million earned domestically on the company's large-format screens, "The Odyssey" is now IMAX's highest-grossing domestic release of all time.

"The Odyssey" still has one major market left. It opens in China on Friday.

"Spider-Man: Brand New Day" and "The Odyssey" have helped Hollywood achieve its strongest box-office year since the pandemic. Ticket sales are running 18.5 per cent ahead of last year, according to Rentrak. There have already been five \$1 billion films — more than in any year since 2019. The other two were "Michael" and "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie".

Rentrak forecasts that overall summer theatrical revenue will reach \$4 billion on Monday. That seasonal milestone has long been seen as a sign of a thriving Hollywood. Since the pandemic, the only summer to surpass \$4 billion was 2023, when "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" drove ticket sales.

According to Rentrak, summer revenue was just \$14.8 million short of \$4 billion through Sunday.

## HOROSCOPE

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**ARIES:** A private matter may be harder to ignore than usual. Mars enters Cancer today, stirring up your home life and anything that feels emotionally close to the bone.
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**CANCER:** You may stop waiting for permission. Mars enters Cancer today, bringing heat, drive, and impatience. After managing everyone else's needs, your own priorities may suddenly feel urgent, important, and impossible to ignore.
- 

**LIBRA:** A work situation may feel more personal than usual. Mars enters Cancer today, putting pressure on your reputation, leadership, or the next move you want to be taken seriously for.
- 

**CAPRICORN:** Partnerships get more active, honest, and harder to ignore. Mars enters Cancer and your 7th House of Partnership, energizing close relationships, client dynamics, negotiations, and one-on-one commitments.

- 

**TAURUS:** A simple conversation could turn tense quickly. Mars enters Cancer today, adding intensity to your words and decisions. A sibling, neighbour, message, or scheduling issue may unexpectedly trigger strong emotions.
- 

**LEO:** You may not want an audience for what is moving through you. Mars enters Cancer today, stirring private frustration, fatigue, or an old emotional bruise that still knows your address.
- 

**SCORPIO:** Your beliefs need somewhere real to go. Mars enters Cancer and your 9th House of Travel, Learning, and Beliefs, pushing you to explore, study, teach, write, or defend an idea that matters.
- 

**AQUARIUS:** Your schedule may reveal where your energy needs protection. Mars enters Cancer and your 6th House of Work and Wellness, motivating action around routines, tasks, health, coworkers, and how your energy gets spent.

- 

**GEMINI:** Money may feel less abstract and more personal today. Mars enters Cancer today, turning your attention toward what you earn, spend, keep, and quietly resent paying for.
- 

**VIRGO:** A group situation may show you who is really doing the work. Mars enters Cancer today, adding heat to friendships, team plans, and future goals that require more than good intentions.
- 

**SAGITTARIUS:** The thing nobody wants to name may require courage today. Mars enters Cancer, energizing your 8th House of intimacy and shared resources. Money, honesty, debt, desire, trust, and agreements demand attention now too.
- 

**PISCES:** Your creative courage gets a stronger heartbeat. Mars enters Cancer and your 5th House of Creativity, Romance, Pleasure, and Self-Expression, motivating you to make, play, flirt, perform, or protect time for joy.

## CARTOON

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# Lamichhane returns as Nepal ODI captain

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

The Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) on Monday appointed Sandeep Lamichhane as the new One Day International (ODI) captain while announcing a 14-member squad for the upcoming ACC Men's Premier Cup in Malaysia.

Leg-spinner Lamichhane returns to lead the ODI side after a four-year hiatus, succeeding Rohit Paudel ahead of the tournament scheduled for 30 August to 12 September.

"Sandeep Lamichhane has been selected as the Nepali national cricket team's One Day captain effective from the upcoming ACC Premier Cup," CAN said in an official statement.

The appointment formally ends Paudel's tenure as ODI captain, reflecting CAN's decision to split format leadership. All-rounder Dipendra Singh Airee was named Twenty20 International skipper a few months ago.

Paudel originally assumed the captaincy in November 2022 following Lamichhane's suspension amidst legal proceedings.

His final match as captain came against Scotland in the ICC World Cup League 2 series in the Netherlands last month.

Under Paudel's leadership, Nepal achieved notable success, qualifying for the One Day World Cup Qualifier, the Asia Cup, and two editions of the T20 World Cup. He led the side in 63 ODIs, recording 31 victories and 30 defeats.

Lamichhane, who first captained the national team in 2021, reclaims the role despite a recent dip in form during Nepal's World Cup League 2 campaign, where he was dropped in last match after going wicketless in three consecutive matches.

Alongside the leadership change, national selectors have made four adjustments to the ODI squad. Regular opener Kushal Bhurtel, veteran pace bowler Sompal Kami, and middle-order batter Aarif Sheikh have been dropped, whilst all-rounder Nandan Yadav misses out through injury. Sundeep Jora, Dev Khanal, Basir Ahamad, and



Sher Malla have been recalled to complete the 14-man roster.

In other administrative developments, CAN confirmed that a Nepal 'A' side, captained by Anil Sah, will compete in the Northern Territory (NT) Top End T20 Series in Darwin, Australia, from 21 to 30 August.

Furthermore, the squad for the upcoming 20th Asian Games has been finalized following the release of the official participant roster by the National Sports Council.

### Declared Squads

Nepal ODI Squad: Sandeep Lamichhane (C), Aasif Sheikh, Arjun Kumal, Rohit Paudel, Dev Khanal, Dipendra Singh Airee, Sundeep Jora, Basir

Ahamad, Ishan Pandey, Gulsan Jha, Sher Malla, Lalit Rajbanshi, Karan KC, Hemant Dhami.

Nepal 'A' Squad (Top End T20 Series): Anil Kumar Sah (C), Trit Raj Das, Mayan Yadav, Kushal Bhurtel, Pawan Sarraf, Dipak Dumre, Kushal Malla, Lokesh Bam, Rashid Khan, Narayan Joshi, Aakash Chand, Shahab Alam, Bipin Khatri, Yuvraj Khatri, Rijan Dhakal.

Nepal T20 Squad (Asian Games): Rohit Kumar Paudel, Dipendra Singh Airee, Sompal Kami, Karan KC, Sandeep Lamichhane, Aarif Sheikh, Aasif Sheikh, Kushal Bhurtel, Lalit Rajbanshi, Gulsan Jha, Nandan Yadav, Lokesh Bam, Sundeep Jora, Sher Malla, Kushal Malla.

## CRICKET SCOTLAND, KNCB CRITICISE ICC OVER LATE WCUP QUALIFICATION CHANGES

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

Cricket Scotland and the Royal Dutch Cricket Association (KNCB) have jointly criticised the International Cricket Council (ICC) over recent alterations to the World Cup qualification process, demanding greater transparency, broader consultation, and equitable opportunities for Associate Nations.

In a joint statement issued on Monday, the two governing bodies expressed deep concern that the changes were introduced less than 18 months before the tournament with minimal consultation. They warned that the abrupt decision threatens to undo years of preparation and undermines progress made by emerging nations.

"These changes represent a setback to Associate Member cricket and risk undermining the progress made in recent years to grow the global game," the joint statement read. "At a time when cricket is seeking to expand its reach, attract new audiences, and strengthen its position on the international sporting landscape, reducing meaningful opportunities for emerging nations sends entirely the wrong message."

The boards highlighted that introducing structural adjustments midway through a qualification cycle compromises the integrity and credibility of international cricket. They stressed that affected members must be properly consulted before key decisions are taken.

Following the ICC's announcement, representatives from Cricket Scotland, the KNCB, and several other Associate Members met twice with cricket's global governing body. During these sessions, the boards formally requested written clarification regarding the official rationale and procedures behind the decision.

Calling for immediate institutional reform, the two boards urged the ICC to re-engage with Associate Members and commit to an open, collaborative dialogue that serves the long-term interests of the global game.

## PUBG Mobile World Cup

# Nepal's Horaa Esports book spot in grand final



BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

Nepal's Horaa Esports have secured direct qualification for the Grand Final of the PUBG Mobile World Cup (PMWC) after finishing fourth in Group B at the Esports World Cup (EWC) 2026 in Paris, France.

Horaa accumulated 98 points and secured one 'Chicken Dinner' across 12 matches during the group stage, held on 8 and 9 August, placing them among the top five sides in Group B to advance automatically to the final stage.

Joining Horaa in direct qualification from Group B are group leaders Team Vitality (148 points), Alpha7 Esports (108 points), GodLike Esports (105 points), and S2G Esports (97 points).

Following their qualification, Horaa's team captain, Supreme 'JiGGL3' Adhikari, expressed satisfaction with the team's progress, noting that whilst every side in the final poses a challenge, their primary focus remains on their own performance.

"I am very happy. Last time we qualified via the Survival Stage, but this time we made it directly from the group stage," Adhikari said. "It got a little tough towards the end, but we will put in the hard work for the final."

Teammate Aayush 'NoFear' Lama echoed his captain's enthusiasm,

adding: "I really enjoyed the intensity in the final moments. We intend to carry this same momentum into the final."

Horaa mounted a strong opening day, amassing 59 points to finish third after claiming victory in their second match. They added 39 points over six matches on the second day, bringing their total to 37 placement points and 61 eliminations.

By securing fourth place, Horaa have guaranteed themselves at least \$57,500 in prize money. They join the top five qualifiers from Group A: 4Thrive Esports (107 points), Orangutan (91 points), Vampire Esports (90 points), Team Flash (89 points), and Nigma Galaxy (88 points).

Sixteen teams, those finishing between sixth and 13th from both groups, will now compete in the Survival Stage on 11–12 August, where the top six will claim the remaining spots in the Grand Final. The bottom three teams from each group have been eliminated.

The Grand Final, featuring 16 teams contesting a multi-million-dollar prize pool, will take place from 14 to 16 August. The tournament champions will receive \$500,000, with the runners-up and third-placed teams earning \$250,000 and \$150,000, respectively. All 16 finalists are guaranteed a cash payout, with the 16th-placed side receiving \$25,000.

# Thapa claims bronze at Asian ITF Taekwondo

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 10

Nepali martial artist Shekhar Thapa has secured a bronze medal at the 11th Asian ITF Taekwondo Championship held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Thapa earned the bronze in the Black Belt 3rd Dan Pattern event, according to Gham Bahadur Thapa, General Secretary of the Nepal International Taekwondo Federation (ITF).

Mongolia's Dorjpalam Ayurzana shared the third spot alongside Thapa, whilst Malaysia's Chin Lung Kang clinched the gold medal and the Philippines' Amais Christer Lu claimed silver.

Thapa also represented Nepal in the men's 65–70 kg sparring division, though he finished outside the medal positions in that category.

A seasoned competitor, Thapa is a former South Asian ITF Taekwondo Championship medallist, having won silver in pattern during its inaugural edition and silver in sparring in the



second.

His past honours also include a gold medal in sparring at the 3rd Indo-Nepal ITF Taekwondo Championship and a first-place finish in pattern at the 3rd General Choi Memorial National ITF Taekwondo Tournament.

Meanwhile, ITF President Prabin Kumar Karki and General Secretary Thapa officiated as an umpire at the continental event.

# PSG sign France full-back Digne

AFP  
Paris, Aug. 10

Aston Villa left-back Lucas Digne has joined Paris Saint-Germain on a three-year deal, the European champions announced Sunday.

The 33-year-old French international, who grew up in the Paris region, returns to PSG, where he played for two seasons between 2013 and 2015.

"I am very honoured to be returning to Paris Saint-Germain," Digne said in a statement on the Ligue 1 champions' website.

"I am particularly impressed by how the club has developed over the years.

"I can't wait to start this new chapter and put all my experience at the service of the team."

After PSG, Digne spent time on loan in Serie A with Roma before signing for Spanish giants Barcelona, who were then coached by current PSG boss Luis Enrique.

He moved to the Premier League in 2018, firstly with Everton, then four years later joining Aston Villa.

At Villa Park, he won the Europa



League under Unai Emery last season.

Capped 64 times by his country, Digne became France's first-choice left-back over the course of the 2026 World Cup.

Digne is PSG's second major signing of the summer transfer window after fellow French international Maghnes

Akliouche arrived from Monaco.

He could make his debut for his new club against his former employers Aston Villa on Wednesday in the UEFA Super Cup in Salzburg.

However, long term it is likely his principal role will be to provide cover for PSG's starting left-back, Nuno Mendes.

# UEFA, CONCACAF and AFC accuse FIFA of 'deception' and 'breach of trust' over World Cup plans

AP  
Lausanne, Aug. 10

UEFA, CONCACAF and the AFC believe that FIFA president Gianni Infantino's recent plans to sell an interest in the World Cup was a "fundamental breach of trust" with the institutions world soccer's governing body serves.

In an "open letter to the football family" revealed on Monday, UEFA, CONCACAF and the AFC also said that "when trust is broken through deception, when an individual places himself above the collective that entrusted him with authority, that duty has been abandoned."

UEFA runs soccer in Europe, CONCACAF does the same for North, Central America and the Caribbean, while the AFC governs the sport in Asia.

The letter was co-signed by UEFA president Aleksander Čeferin, AFC president Salman Bin Ibrahim Al-Khalifa, CONCACAF president Victor Montagliani and three general secretaries.

"Football is the world's greatest shared passion. It belongs to no individual and no institution. It belongs to the players, the fans, the clubs, the member associations and every institution entrusted with safeguarding its future," the open letter said. "It is in that spirit, as confederations representing its members, that we speak

collectively today."

Infantino is facing a revolt after his failed plan to sell stakes in the World Cup to private equity investors.

"It is not the conduct of a custodian of the game, but of one who believes the game is answerable to him," the letter said.

"These are not the qualities football deserves in its leadership. That is why we have taken this stance: not lightly and not alone, but together, and out of duty to the game we serve."

UEFA previously issued a threat to boycott the World Cup and other FIFA competitions despite the governing body abandoning and apologizing for its failed plan.

Norway's soccer federation called for Infantino to step down, while the

English Football Association has also withdrawn its support for Infantino's re-election next March.

"Football's strength has always been its unity. We call for that unity to be honoured now," the letter said. "For leadership that serves football, not seeks to command it."

Last Wednesday, FIFA said it had apologized for errors made over the failed plan but that senior staff at a crisis meeting in Morocco "reaffirmed their full support" for his presidency.

However, the nature of the meeting was also met with criticism.

"FIFA's own letter also confirms that only one elected official was present at the leadership meeting in Morocco," the open letter said. "No

FIFA Council members or Member Associations were invited to participate. Only the management committee, composed of FIFA-employed senior staff, was present."

FIFA was also urged to go further than just acknowledging mistakes were made.

"It treats this as a failure of communication, when what football witnessed was a failure of judgment," the letter said. "There remains no recognition that attempting to sell an interest in the FIFA World Cup was a profound failure of judgment — not just a procedural misstep, but a fundamental breach of trust with the very institutions FIFA exists to serve."

## VOLLERING WINS TOUR DE FRANCE FEMMES

AFP  
Nice, Aug. 10

Dutch rider Demi Vollering took the Tour de France Femmes overall title in style on Sunday, winning the hilly final stage to extend her lead on nearest rival Kasia Niewiadoma, who finished second overall after a tense struggle.

The 29-year-old also won the 2023 title and earned her second one by timing the nine-day slog to perfection, carving out solo wins on the final two stages, which both ended in Nice.

"It's a dream to live this life," Vollering said after hoisting her bike above her head at the finish line.

"I knew my level and even when Kasia won on Mont Ventoux I was still confident," added Vollering, who has also finished second on this race three times in its five editions since being relaunched in 2022.

Vollering's FDJ-United Suez are the first French team to win the race, earning her high praise from team boss Stephen Delcourt.

"Through her high standards, sensitivity, authenticity, and the way she brings others along with her, she is redefining what it means to be a modern leader," he said.

"She inspires her teammates, she inspires the fans, she inspires an entire generation ... She doesn't just win races; she shows the way forward."

Vollering had to carve out this win. Niewiadoma took the yellow jersey on Friday's climb of Mont Ventoux, setting up a pulsating finale.

Vollering then edged into the overall lead on Saturday, attacking late on a small hill and edging into an eight-second overall advantage over 2024 winner Niewiadoma.

A furious Niewiadoma, however, complained she had been blocked by a teammate of Vollering's at a crucial moment, but no action was taken.

Vollering said her team had been both "honest and humble" after Sunday's race, adding that her teammate Celia Gery, the alleged blocker, had received death threats on social media.