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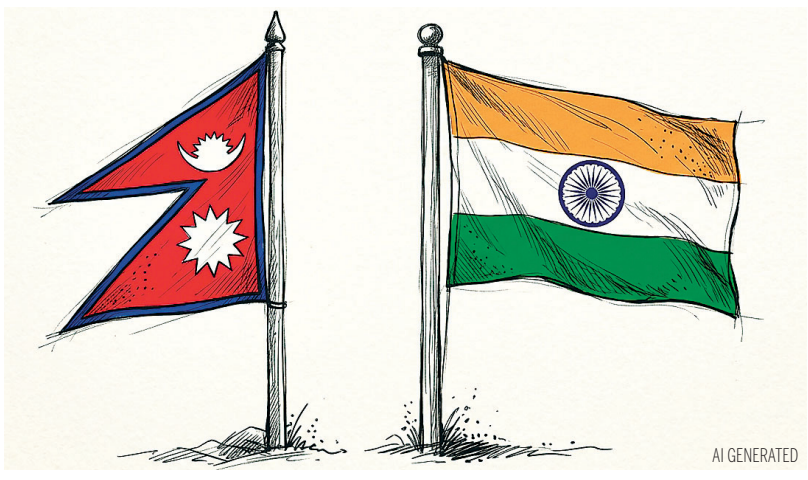
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Nepal and India agree to map cross-border occupation within 3 years

Survey officials agree to use aerial imagery to map land occupied by citizens of one country on the other side.



AI GENERATED

ANIL GIRI
KATHMANDU, AUG 14

In a major breakthrough, senior survey officials from Nepal and India have agreed to conclude the mapping of cross border occupation, a long-standing boundary issue between the two countries, within three years.

The 13th meeting of the Survey Officials' Committee (SOC), which concluded in Lucknow, India on Friday, agreed to determine the exact status of land occupation across the boundary with technological assistance.

"We have decided to use unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) to conclude mapping of cross border occupation in three years," Susheel Dangol, deputy director at Department of Survey, told the Post over the phone from Lucknow. Dangol was leading the talks from the Nepal side.

The issue of cross-border occupation came into the spotlight after Prime Minister Balendra Shah told parliament in late May that, after assuming office, he learned that "not only has India encroached on Nepal's land, but Nepal has also encroached on India's land in multiple places."

Later, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs clarified that Shah's reference to Nepal having encroached on Indian land referred to the cross-border occupation and use of land, rather than to any territorial claim.

When the Nepal-India border was delineated, the Fixed Boundary Principle was adopted in riverine areas, resulting in situations of "cross-border occupation", where citizens of one country cultivate and reside on land falling within the territory of the other country.

>> Continued on page 3

What happens when press freedom meets right to privacy

Journalist Kishor Shrestha's arrest raises questions over when an alleged breach of privacy becomes a criminal offence.

DAYA DUDRAJ
KATHMANDU, AUG 14

The arrest of Kishor Shrestha, journalist and editor of Jana Aastha weekly, on Wednesday, has triggered a sharp debate, with opinions divided over two difficult but closely connected questions: the freedom to publish and the right to personal privacy.

While one side, largely from the media fraternity, argues that criminal charges should not be brought over the subject matter of a news report, the other side, including media consumers and observers, has questioned the nature of the report itself.

Shrestha was taken into custody after a woman filed a complaint alleging an offence against personal privacy.

The arrest has its roots in a Jana Aastha report published on August 5 headlined "Honourable's 'Lip Kiss' with Another Woman". The report carried a photograph showing Amarkant Chaudhary, a member of the House of Representatives elected from Saptari Constituency-3 on behalf of the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), kissing a woman.

The report claimed that the woman who filed the complaint had shared the photograph on her Facebook wall, stating, "...the young woman has shared the photograph on her Facebook wall."

The fact that Shrestha was arrested on the basis of the woman's complaint is also mentioned in the detention warrant. The letter, signed by investigating officer Inspector Lok Krishna Dahal, states: "...on the complaint filed by [name omitted], in the case relating to an offence against personal privacy in which the Government of Nepal is the plaintiff and you are the defendant, it being necessary to keep you in police custody for investigation, you are hereby served this detention warrant and shall be kept in police custody from today's date."



POST ILLUSTRATION

Jana Aastha editor Kishor Shrestha is in police custody.

The dispute the arrest has triggered, however, is not simply about whether the report was responsible journalism. It raises a broader question about the route the state should take when published material is alleged to violate privacy: when does such a complaint remain a matter of media regulation, and when can it become a matter for the criminal justice system?

The Federation of Nepali Journalists, the umbrella organisation of journalists in Nepal, has described the arrest as an attack on press freedom, basing its argument on Nepal's existing laws, including the Journalists' Code of Conduct, 2016, the Press Council Act, 1992, and the Constitution of Nepal, 2015, which guarantees press freedom.

The code of conduct provides guidance on what journalists should or should not publish. The Council Act, 1992 provides the Press Council Nepal with mechanisms to deal with violations of the code, including requiring media organisations to publish a response or correction, issue an apology or publish a comment from an aggrieved party. In cases of repeated violations, the council can recommend the withdrawal of government facilities or benefits and can publicly express its disapproval.

The federation argues that if published material was found to have breached an individual's privacy, the aggrieved party should first have approached the Press Council Nepal, and that the police action was therefore unwarranted.

"The jurisdiction to deal with issues that are not satisfactory in a news report lies with the Press Council Nepal. The federation's position is that using government machinery in this manner against journalist Shrestha, while misusing that jurisdiction, is against press and freedom of expression, the journalists' code of conduct and the Constitution," the umbrella body of Nepali journalists said in a statement.

But the legal framework does not necessarily require the council process to be exhausted before the criminal justice system can be invoked. The council's role is primarily tied to violations of journalistic standards and the code of conduct. Where published material is alleged to constitute a criminal offence under a separate law, such as the Privacy Act, the matter can fall outside the council's jurisdiction.

Umesh Shrestha, the council's chair, said it can order a media organisation to publish its decision when it finds a violation of the code. He said that if such an order is repeatedly ignored, it can also recommend further action under existing provisions.

>> Continued on page 2



Nepal's diplomatic reach narrows as key envoy vacancies drag on

Ambassadorial posts in 21 countries are vacant or in transition. This has limited Nepal's access to senior officials and its ability to advance key political, economic and strategic interests.

RAJESH MISHRA
KATHMANDU, AUG 14



RSS

Prime Minister Balendra Shah (at the head of the table) chairs a cabinet meeting, Tuesday. The government has yet to appoint envoys to 21 countries.

Nepal's practice of recalling ambassadors after changes of government, followed by long delays in appointing replacements, has left its diplomatic network facing a crippling leadership vacuum.

Ambassadorial posts in 21 countries are either vacant or in transition, including some of Nepal's most important missions. Nepali envoys have been absent from 11 countries for the past 10 months, while six other missions have remained without ambassadors for four months. The four-year terms of career diplomats serving in seven more countries ended on July 21.

The vacancies have affected Nepal's representation in the United States, China, India and other countries that are central to its political, economic and security interests.

Missions in Washington, Beijing, Berlin, Tel Aviv, Kuala Lumpur, Doha, Moscow, Riyadh, Madrid, London and Tokyo have lacked resident ambassadors since the Sushila Karki-led government issued a blanket recall on October 17.

The recalled ambassadors were among 17 political appointees nominated on July 29, 2024, by the government led by then-prime minister KP Sharma Oli, which was backed by the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML.

The recalls continued after Prime Minister Balendra Shah's government came to power. On April 5, it recalled ambassadors serving in India, Australia, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Denmark and South Africa, less than two weeks after taking office.

The repeated recalls reflect a long-standing pattern in Nepal, diplomats say, whereby changes in government are followed by the removal of political appointees abroad, often without timely appointments of successors. A separate group of career diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also entered a period of uncertainty. Ambassadors to Austria, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Egypt, Myanmar, Oman and Brazil completed their four-year, non-renewable terms on July 21.

The Cabinet on July 22 allowed the career diplomats to continue working on an interim basis until new ambassadors are recommended and receive agrement, or formal approval, from their host governments. The exception is Brazil, where the current ambassador's term runs until October 17.

The situation has been further complicated by the government's decision to close three missions. In its budget speech on May 29, it said the embassies in Brazil, Denmark and South Africa would be shut as part of an expenditure review. But none has yet been formally closed. With those three missions excluded, the government now needs to nominate and appoint ambassadors to 21 missions.

The prolonged vacancies are weakening Nepal's ability to pursue its political, economic and strategic interests abroad, diplomats and foreign-policy experts say. With ambassadors absent from some of the country's most important missions, Kathmandu is increasingly relying on chargé d'affaires and back-channel diplomacy at a time when relations with major powers require sustained, high-level engagement.

Under Nepal's Constitution, ambassadors are appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers after parliamentary approval. Former secretary Arjun Bahadur Thapa, also former secretary-general of SAARC, said prolonged vacancies sent damaging signals to host countries.

"Leaving an ambassadorial position empty for an extended duration implies one of two things to the receiving state: either that bilateral relations have deteriorated, or that Nepal simply does not assign priority to that country," Thapa said.

"Recalling envoys whenever there is a political change at home and failing to send replacements in a timely manner has become a chronic practice in Nepal."

The consequences have become particularly visible during high-level diplomatic engagements.

Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal visited India from June 5 to 7 at the invitation of Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, before travelling to China from June 14 to 17 at the invitation of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Foreign Ministry officials said the absence of resident ambassadors in New Delhi and Beijing hampered preparations for both visits and also limited preliminary agenda-setting and Nepal's ability to identify and pursue key issues in advance.

The absence of an ambassador was also conspicuous during Rastriya Swatantra Party chair Rabi Lamichhane's five-day visit to India in June.

Indian authorities gave the visit considerable political attention, arranging meetings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and Jaishankar, among others. But Nepal had no resident ambassador in New Delhi to provide official state-level representation alongside those engagements.

The diplomatic gap was further exposed when Indian foreign secretary Vikram Misri's planned official visit to Nepal was abruptly cancelled on May 11.

Diplomats say the presence of a senior ambassador trusted by the political leadership could have helped resolve misunderstandings before the visit was called off. Instead, Kumar Byanjankar (Ben), chief adviser to Prime Minister Shah, travelled discreetly to New Delhi in May to hold talks with senior Indian officials on the prime minister's behalf.

Former diplomats describe such back-channel engagement as a symptom of weakened formal diplomatic channels. A fully empowered ambassador in New Delhi with the confidence of the prime minister, they argue, could have handled much of that work through established diplomatic mechanisms. The prolonged absence of ambassadors is also exposing deeper weaknesses in Nepal's foreign policy machinery, with officials and former diplomats warning that diplomatic representation cannot be sustained indefinitely through chargé d'affaires alone.

"Whether it concerns protecting the safety, labour conditions and wages of hundreds of thousands of Nepali migrant workers in the Gulf and Malaysia, or lobbying top officials in donor nations for development assistance, an ambassador can request and receive high-level meetings that are not normally accessible to lower-ranking officials," said Thapa.

"A chargé d'affaires does not enjoy that level of institutional access. Consequently, the country suffers economic, political and strategic losses on multiple fronts."

The vacancies are also putting Nepali diplomats in an awkward position. Officials from host countries routinely ask their Nepali counterparts when Kathmandu plans to appoint ambassadors to vacant missions, both in foreign capitals and at diplomatic functions in Kathmandu.

With no clear timetable from the Cabinet, Nepali diplomats are often left unable to provide a substantive answer.

International relations analyst Chandra Dev Bhatta said the vacancies reflected a broader erosion of Nepal's foreign policy institutions at a time when geopolitical shifts were becoming increasingly complex.

"To navigate these complexities, protect national interest, and drive forward economic and development diplomacy, having active ambassadors is an absolute necessity," Bhatta said.

He questioned why ambassadorial appointments had failed to become a government priority, arguing that the prolonged vacancies conveyed an image of a foreign policy weakened by domestic political interests.

Bhatta said one of the main problems was the tendency to treat ambassadorial appointments as political rewards rather than important state positions. Political quotas and factional bargaining, he said, often delay appointments and weaken institutional continuity.

He argued that Nepal needed to rely more heavily on experienced career diplomats, who could provide continuity regardless of changes in government. Foreign ministry spokesperson Lok Bahadur Poudel Chhetri said the formal process of selecting and recommending ambassadors was still underway.

Officials at the ministry, however, said on the condition of anonymity that the process had moved into political negotiations. Foreign Minister Khanal has held several rounds of discussions with Prime Minister Shah and RSP chair Lamichhane over the proposed appointments.

But the leadership has yet to reach agreement on the allocation of political appointments and candidates for strategically important capitals, including Washington, Beijing, New Delhi and London.

The delays have persisted despite an effort to make the selection process more open. On May 28, the government invited applications from the public for ambassadorial positions, receiving around 2,700 applications from people with varied professional backgrounds.

The Foreign Ministry reviewed the applications and prepared a shortlist, but the names have not been made public and no further official action has been taken.

Former foreign secretary Thapa said the government could not afford to allow political negotiations to paralyse the process.

"It is time for the political leadership to move past the obsession with appointing political favourites outside the career diplomatic track," he said. "The foreign service possesses qualified, highly trained personnel who are ready to serve immediately without requiring months of political negotiation." Nepal's own rules provide a framework intended to prevent prolonged vacancies. The Ambassadorial Appointment Guidelines, 2018, require at least 50 percent of ambassadorial positions to be filled by career diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The remaining positions can be given to distinguished individuals with demonstrated expertise in international relations, foreign policy and diplomacy.

The guidelines also require the administrative process for appointing a new ambassador to begin at least three months before the incumbent's term expires.

Former foreign secretary and former chief secretary Shanker Das Bairagi said the requirement was designed specifically to prevent gaps between ambassadors.

"The rule requiring the appointment process to begin three months before a vacancy occurs was instituted specifically to ensure seamless transitions and eliminate gaps in representation," Bairagi said.

Governments, however, have repeatedly failed to begin the process on time, he said, citing administrative delays and political considerations.

"This has become an entrenched practice in our governance, and it reflects very poorly on the state," Bairagi said.

He said host governments often expressed their frustration diplomatically when Nepali missions remained without ambassadors for extended periods. Prematurely recalling envoys while failing to appoint replacements, he added, damaged Nepal's credibility.

"Leaving our most critical international stations unmanned for nearly a year is simply indefensible," Bairagi said.

Technicians reach Jumla farms with refractometers to check apple quality

DB BUDHA
JUMLA, AUG 14

As apple orchards across the high-altitude district of Jumla are laden with ripening fruit, farmers are facing pressure from traders eager to buy this season's crop. But authorities and other local stakeholders have agreed to prevent unripe apples from reaching markets this year in an effort to protect the reputation of Jumla's apples.

Agricultural technicians have been visiting orchards with refractometers, handheld devices used to measure the sugar content of fruit. They are checking the size and sweetness of apples and advising farmers on when their apples are ready for harvest.

"Most farmers are proactively inviting us to their orchards to test their crops," said Rambhakta Adhikari, head of the Agriculture Development Office in Jumla. "If we rigorously maintain quality this season, we will further enhance the reputation Jumla apples."

Thirty-five technicians have been deployed across the district to monitor orchards and enforce the quality standards, according to Adhikari.

Apple farming is a major source of income in Jumla. Of the district's 18,000 households, about 16,000 grow apples. Orchards cover 4,604.53 hectares, including 2,338 hectares of fruit-bearing trees this season. The Agriculture Development Office expects production to reach 18,000 to 20,000 tonnes.

Refractometers have been distributed among the district's eight local units, with one in Kanakasundari, three in Sinja, one in Hima, two each in Tila, Tatopani, Chandannath and Guthichaur, and two in Patarasi. Three additional devices are kept at the agriculture development office.

The devices measure sugar content in degrees Brix. Apples with less than 11 degrees Brix tend to be excessively sour, while those measuring 12 to 15 degrees Brix have the level of sweetness preferred by consumers, according to Adhikari.

Authorities have also imposed harvesting dates following an all-party meeting. Farmers in Tila Rural Municipality can begin harvesting from August 21, while those in the other seven local units must wait until the last week of August.

Apples cannot be transported outside the district without a written approval from agricultural technicians.

Despite the restrictions, demand from traders has prompted attempts to move unripe apples out of Jumla. Six days ago, police at the Raralihi post intercepted 321 cartons of unripe apples being transported towards Surkhet and Nepalgunj. The apples were small and green and failed to meet the required sweetness level.

"The apples are simply not ripe yet, and the local technicians had not issued any export recommendations," Adhikari said. Rajesh Bishwakarma, head of the agriculture section at Tila Rural Municipality, said local authorities had stepped up surveillance to prevent the premature harvesting and transport of apples.

The measures are intended to ensure that the growing commercial demand for Jumla's apples does not come at the expense of their quality and reputation.

Kishor Shrestha's arrest tests whether privacy can constrain journalism

>> Continued from page 1

"For example, after repeated non-compliance, the council can recommend suspension of a press pass to the relevant authority," Umesh told Kantipur. "But the council itself does not have the authority to suspend a press pass. That power rests with the Department of Information and Broadcasting."

According to Umesh, the department has not implemented such recommendations, saying its own rules do not provide for suspension. "There is a legal obstacle in this," he said. "The council's role is therefore primarily tied to questions of journalistic conduct and professional responsibility."

The debate also raises a broader question about how press freedom is understood in Nepal. While it is often invoked in terms of the freedom of journalists and media organisations to publish, observers say that freedom also carries questions of responsibility, including how the public can assess the information it receives and how media organisations are held accountable for what they publish.

National Women Commission chair Kamala Parajuli has also cautioned against using press freedom as a justification for violating privacy.

Speaking to Kantipur after raising the issue in a social media post, Parajuli said journalists should not treat press freedom as a licence to publish anything they want.

"Press freedom does not give anyone the right to attack or violate an individual's privacy at will by taking shelter under the notion that journalists are not required to disclose their sources," she said. "Women have only recently begun to enter public life in greater numbers. They should not be subjected to this kind of mental harassment, and the media and social media platforms need to take this issue seriously."

Nepal's legal framework therefore provides different routes for different kinds of complaints. A violation of the journalistic code can be taken to the council, while certain violations of privacy can trigger criminal investigation by the police. Other privacy-related claims can be pursued directly through the courts, while defamation has a separate legal route.

That distinction is important in Shrestha's case. The central legal question is not simply whether the complainant should have approached the council first, but what exactly was alleged against Shrestha, under which provision of law, and whether that alleged conduct constitutes a criminal offence.

Nepal's Privacy Act provides specific protections for personal privacy. It defines personal information to include, among other things, information relating to a person's identity, address and contact details, documents, biometric information, criminal history and certain professional opinions.

The Act also protects a person's private life. It prohibits making matters relating to a person public in a manner that affects the person's private life, causes harm or brings the person into disrepute, subject to the exceptions and conditions set out in the law.

The Act provides criminal penalties for specified violations of its privacy provisions. Under Section 29(2), a person convicted of the relevant offence can face imprisonment of up to three years, a fine of up to Rs. 30,000, or both.

The police say Shrestha was arrested under this provision.

The detention warrant records the legal basis cited by police for taking Shrestha into custody. But it does not, by itself, answer a more fundamental question: what specific conduct in the published material is alleged to have constituted a criminal offence under the Privacy Act?

That question assumes importance because the report involved both a private individual and a sitting lawmaker. It also presented the photograph as something the woman herself had shared publicly on Facebook. Whether that fact has any bearing on the alleged privacy violation—and whether publication of material that has already been made public can itself constitute an offence—requires examination of the specific provisions of the Act and the circumstances in which the material was originally shared.

That is where the competing principles become harder to reconcile. A free press does not give journalists an unrestricted licence to publish private information. At the same time, the existence of privacy protections does not mean that every publication concerning a person's private life is beyond legitimate journalism. The distinction depends on what was published, why it was published, whose privacy was affected, whether there was a legitimate public interest and what the law permits.

According to Tribhuvan University assistant professor Shree Ram Paudel, the freedom to publish and the right to privacy are subjects that invariably come up for debate. He argues that both public figures and journalists must be responsible in their respective roles.

"The fact that there is a right to privacy does not mean that nothing can be written at all," Paudel told Kantipur. "But while exercising press freedom, journalists should not violate someone's personal privacy and cross into the realm of a criminal offence."

According to him, the conduct of public office holders such as ministers or MPs should also be dignified. If their activities fall within the public sphere, they must be responsible for their conduct.

"'I have privacy' cannot be a reason for them to escape becoming the subject of press coverage. But journalism should not seize only one side of an incident and engage in 'clickbait' or 'news-selling' journalism—journalism that is cheap and designed to sell," assistant professor Paudel said.

"When reporting news, the press must be conscious and responsible so that sensitive groups requiring protection, such as women, children or minorities, are not harmed."

Santosh Sigdel, a lawyer and executive director of Digital Rights Nepal, argues that journalists' conduct also comes into the discussion alongside journalistic freedom and privacy.

"One important aspect in determining whether a news report has violated privacy is whether the subject is a matter of public importance or public interest," Sigdel said.

According to Sigdel, the character of an elected representative can become a matter of public interest and therefore can be a subject of news.

"But, in doing so, journalists must not forget the legal provisions protecting an individual's privacy or the code of conduct, and must maintain a balance between the two," he said.

The circumstances of the police action raise a further question. Police also searched the Jana Aastha office the following morning and seized computers and a mobile phone. The legal basis for that search and seizure, and whether police obtained the necessary authorisation, therefore become relevant to assessing the state's response to the publication.

While Shrestha's journalism is not free of controversy, his paper has in the past been credited with scoops. Yet Jana Aastha has also often been criticised for prying into people's private lives and for publishing sensational material. Every time Shrestha, also a former chairperson of the council, lands in controversy, a 23-year-old news report resurfaces. Actor Shreeha Karki died by suicide after Jana Aastha published nude photographs of her, an incident that observers and journalists have cited as an example of journalism crossing ethical boundaries.

Lately, some of Jana Aastha's reporting has been critical of the current administration, and those opposing Shrestha's arrest have questioned whether the state machinery may have been mobilised against the journalist for that reason. The federation has described the arrest as part of a broader attempt to intimidate the media.

The arrest has put some in the media fraternity in a difficult position. While supporting the freedom to publish, some have also stressed journalistic accountability, arguing that no one, including journalists, is above the law. Their concern, however, is that legitimate accountability mechanisms should not be used to target journalists or restrict legitimate journalism, and that due process is followed when such mechanisms are invoked, including in Shrestha's case.

Journalists speaking privately also pointed to a responsibility that extends beyond the formal code of conduct: individual journalists and media organisations must define their own standards for deciding what should and should not be published. For them, self-regulation remains an essential part of a healthy media environment.

Umesh, the council's chair, said the council draws a distinction between a violation of journalistic ethics and a violation of criminal law.

"A complaint over a publication alleged to have violated privacy could fall within the council's jurisdiction to the extent that it raises questions about compliance with the journalists' code of conduct," Umesh told Kantipur.

"The code requires journalists to respect personal and professional privacy except where doing so would adversely affect the public interest."

He acknowledged that the question of journalistic ethics and the question of a legal offence can arise separately from the same incident.

"Which process applies depends on the nature of the alleged conduct, the applicable law and the relevant legal procedure," Umesh said.

"While the council examines the ethical dimension within its jurisdiction, determining criminal liability or other legal liability rests with the competent legal authorities or courts."

For the Nepali media, the issue now goes beyond the Shrestha arrest, leaving it with a difficult question: how can journalistic freedom and the right to privacy be protected at the same time, without either becoming a shield against accountability?

Capital's restaurants are serving contaminated food faster than inspectors can catch it

From momo packets to restaurant kitchens, officials are finding more violations than ever, but weak enforcement and stalled regulations are leaving diners at risk.





FILE PHOTO

The Department of Commerce, Supplies and Consumer Protection conducted inspections at 261 hotels and restaurants, mostly in Kathmandu, last fiscal year 2025-26.

❍ **KRISHANA PRASAIN**
KATHMANDU, AUG 14

Shashi Thapa has fallen sick from food poisoning twice in the past four months.

Thapa, a final-year management student who also works at a private logistics company, relies on eating out for breakfast and lunch and, on most days, dinner too.

"I ate fish and nan bread at a local eatery near my room for dinner. That night I couldn't sleep because of loose motion and nausea," said Thapa, who lives in a rented room.

"I had a fever the next day."

Thapa went to the hospital the following day, where a test confirmed food poisoning.

Government officials say there are no exact figures on the number of food contamination cases because such incidents can occur at schools, colleges, offices, hotels and restaurants, and even at airports.

But they say cases of food contamination are rising alarmingly across Nepal's cities. Many people who move to cities for work or study—and even longtime residents—depend on eating out for most of their meals. Nearly all of them report at least one, if not repeated, bout of illness from contaminated food.

For instance, Anjita Rokaya, owner of Aashal Pharmacy in Tinkune, sees two to three people coming in daily with bowel and other health-related problems.

"The patients usually say that they eat something outside," she said. "Most of the visitors are adults and children."

Another pharmacy reported a similar pattern.

Ecolife Pharmacy in Tinkune says 15-20 people visit daily with gut-related problems.

Among them, 10-12 cases are related to food poisoning.

"We provide them with oral rehydration and medicine to control diarrhoea and vomiting, and recommend going to hospital if the medicine does not help," said Pradip Joshi, owner of the pharmacy.

The most common symptoms of food poisoning are diarrhoea, stomach pain and cramps, nausea, vomiting and fever.

The sale of poor-quality and unhygienic food has been rampant—from hotels and restaurants and eateries to party palaces.

Government data too tell the story.

The Department of Commerce, Supplies and Consumer Protection conducted inspections at 261 hotels and restaurants, mostly in Kathmandu, last fiscal year 2025-26, which ended in mid-July, and found 59 selling unhygienic food. These eateries were fined Rs4.2 million, but no cases were filed. This shows that more than two out of every 10 hotels and restaurants inspected were found selling substandard fare.

The remaining hotels and restaurants were instructed to maintain food safety and hygiene.

In 2024-25, the department inspected 201 hotels and restaurants, of which 44 were found selling unhygienic food.

Anil Kirati, director of the Commerce Department, said that, as per the law, the department slaps fines between Rs200,000 and Rs300,000 on the spot if eateries are found selling substandard food.

"We have received a flurry of complaints from consumers about unhygienic food at hotels and restaurants in the past few months."

In April, the quality watchdog filed a case against the Tripureshwar-based Bagmati Sweets at the District Administration Office, Kathmandu, for serious violations of hygiene and quality standards.

Manufactured or packaged food have also been found to be unsafe.

In May, Nepal's quality watchdog recalled a batch of Dabur Honey after laboratory tests found the product to be of low quality.

The Department of Food Technology and Quality Control recalled batch NB00477 of honey produced by Dabur Nepal.

According to the department's laboratory test report, the Dabur honey was found to contain hydroxymethyl furfural (HMF) at 50 milligrams per kilogram, above the food standard of 40 milligrams per kilogram. A high level of HMF in honey indicates that the product has been overheated, stored improperly or is very old.

In the same month, the department recalled a batch of CO_2 Nova ice cream produced by the Pokhara-based Fishtel Dairy.

A sample test conducted on Current and Lali brands of noodles produced by Yasoda Foods found the acid value of the extracted fat to be below the standard determined by the government.

Recently, the Jack Nack Krakers biscuit brand produced by Asian Biscuit and Confectionery, Duhabi, Sunsari, was also recalled from the market after its fatty acid value was found to exceed the government-prescribed standard. Biscuits from 'batch 6' were recalled from the market.

In February, the department recalled and destroyed Khajurico brand puff, a popular snack, after laboratory tests found industrial trans fat levels exceeding the permissible limit. Around 5,200 packets were pulled from the market and crushed and buried within the factory premises in Godavari, Lalitpur.

Every year, the department inspects restaurants, hotels, and manufactured and packaged food across the country. But improvements from these inspections are barely visible, even as cases continue to rise.

Government data show that inspections are increasing but are not keeping pace with the growing number of contamination cases.

In the last fiscal year, the department conducted 12,806 market inspections—on its own and jointly with other agencies—across the country. The inspections covered food and feed factories, hotels and restaurants, and highway eateries, largely in response to public complaints. That amounts to an average of 35 inspections a day, mostly concentrated in urban areas. The inspection count has grown from 11,059 in the previous fiscal year.

Officials say the nature of complaints, ranging from poor hygiene and labelling violations to outright contamination and adulteration, is worsening.

"We receive complaints through our official phone line, written letters and Hello Sarkar on a daily basis," said Bal Kumari Sharma, spokesperson for the department, the quality watchdog.

"Most complaints involve foreign objects in food, including hair, metal, eggshells and plastic. Others mention spoiled ingredients."

Hello Sarkar is the government's grievance-handling system that operates through phone, email and social media.

Last Monday, food safety officials in Gauridhara seized and destroyed three packets of momo and four packets of chowmein that did not have complete labels, along with two packets of artificial food colouring, at the Local Thakali Restaurant and Bar Pvt Ltd.

A day later, inspectors found a cockroach infestation in the kitchen of New Dudh Sagar restaurant at Machhapokhari, Balaju.

Less than two weeks ago, Burger King and Crunchy Fried Chicken restaurant in Chandragiri was found storing food uncovered inside refrigerators, along with other hygiene lapses.

The World Health Organisation estimates that unsafe food causes around 866 million illnesses and 1.5 million deaths annually, many of which could be prevented through measures including improved water, sanitation and hygiene, food safety practices such as pasteurisation, and access to healthcare for vulnerable populations.

Exposure to biological hazards, including foodborne bacteria and viruses as well as parasitic infections, caused the majority of foodborne illnesses—approximately 860 million in 2021—while chemical exposures drove a disproportionate share of deaths.

Beyond health impacts, the study estimates that in 2021 foodborne disease led to about $310 billion in lost productivity, measured in time away from work due to illness. When the economic impact was adjusted for cost-of-living differences between countries, the estimate increased to $647 billion in lost productivity.

While these recent enforcement actions highlight the scale of the problem, Sharma, the department's spokesperson, said the rise in complaints reflects both growing consumer awareness and continued negligence by food businesses.

Food contamination and adulteration are not new in Nepal, but a regulatory system that struggles to oversee a vast informal food economy has created a deep crisis of consumer trust.

Small eating outlets known as khaja ghar, which offer affordable meals, typically operate on thin margins and rarely meet even basic hygiene standards. Workers skip hygiene protocols and ingredients go unchecked.

Nepal does have rules meant to prevent this.

The Food Safety and Quality Control Act 2024 governs how food is made, stored, transported and sold. Under the law, food safety officers are responsible for inspections, sample collection and investigating complaints.

"The Food Safety and Quality Control Act has laid out standards for how food should and shouldn't be handled. The implementing regulations are yet to come," said Sharma, the department's spokesperson.

In practice, consumers remain exposed to unsafe food on a routine basis.

Restaurant owners say most kitchens operating across the country lack basic infrastructure, including proper exhaust systems, fire extinguishers or proper drainage.

"Like with hotels, the government needs to set minimum standards for restaurants, categorise them, and divide inspection responsibility between local, provincial and central governments based on that categorisation," said Sangharsha Bista, president of the Restaurant and Bar Association Nepal (Reban), the umbrella organisation of restaurants.

"Owners and staff also need training on maintaining hygiene."

Bista said restaurants and local eateries are supposed to register with local governments, which are then responsible for inspections, but in practice, local-level inspections rarely happen.

Consumer rights activists say food is often tested only after complaints surface or suspicions are raised. But by that point, contaminated or adulterated food may already have been consumed or sold elsewhere.

Madhav Timilsina, president of the Consumer Rights Investigation Forum, said hotels and restaurants are covered by both the Consumer Protection Act and the Food Safety and Quality Control Act 2024. Even so, he said, violations remain widespread: adulterated food at party palaces and hotels, low-quality or cheap cooking oil, substandard meat and fish, and foreign objects turning up in food.

"Restaurant and eatery operators aren't being held accountable because inspections are seasonal at best, and the Department of Food Technology can't handle this alone," Timilsina said. "With local governments failing to fulfil their duties, consumers are left eating contaminated food, and the state has failed to guarantee food safety."

Public health experts warn that eating contaminated food carries both immediate and long-term health risks.

Sharad Raj Onta, a retired professor of Community Medicine and Public Health at the Institute of Medicine, said poor toilets and drinking-water management, workers not washing their hands or covering their hair, and improperly cleaned kitchen utensils all contribute to food contamination.

"Over the long term, contaminated food can cause hepatitis, jaundice and infections in different parts of the digestive system," Onta said. Chemical contamination in food, he added, can also damage the kidneys, nervous system and blood.

In October 2017, Nepal's Department of Food Technology issued a directive making it mandatory for hotels and restaurants to meet food quality, safety and hygiene standards. The directive, endorsed by the Ministry of Agriculture, classified eateries into four categories based on food quality, service and infrastructure: very good, good, medium and average.

Under the directive, hotels and restaurants are required to follow Good Manufacturing Practice, Good Hygiene Practice and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point principles to protect consumer health.

But these principles are hardly practised.

"This is a serious matter," Onta said. "We need a systematic and strict inspection process."

Nepal, India set three-year deadline to map cross-border land occupation

>> Continued from page 1

Over the decades, changes in the courses of hundreds of rivers have shifted thousands of hectares of land from one side of the border to the other. The SOC and the Joint Field Survey Teams are currently documenting these changes, and their findings will provide the technical basis for future decisions by the two governments, according to the officials.

When the 182 sets of strip maps were signed between Nepal and India in 2007, it was identified that nationals from both countries had either cultivated or resided on hundreds of hectares of land belonging to citizens of the other country.

"The UAVs will capture aerial images for the survey. We will then analyse those images and reach a common understanding to determine the extent of cross-border occupation," said Dangol.

He said the three-day meeting also approved the annual plan and budget for implementing the agreement.

Both the sides will start the joint survey soon after the monsoon season ends, around September or October.

The SOC is a subordinate committee of the Boundary Working Group (BWG), which is led by the heads of the survey departments of the two countries.

In its 2025 meeting, the BWG agreed to complete technical boundary work—including the joint construction of new boundary pillars and repair of damaged ones—within three years, except in the Susta and Kalapani-Limpiyadhura-Lipulekh areas.

Bilateral efforts to resolve technical boundary issues date back further, particularly to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to Nepal in 2014.

During the visit, the two sides agreed to establish the BWG, giving it a mandate to clear no-man's land, construct, restore, and repair boundary pillars, update records of cross-border property holdings, and undertake other technical tasks related to border management.

According to the Department of Survey, 8,554 boundary pillars have been installed along the Nepal-India border. Of these, 1,325 are missing, while 1,956 are either partially or completely damaged.

Under the BWG framework, the SOC and Joint Field Survey Teams provide technical expertise and carry out field-level work.

In 2015, the two sides set a three-year deadline to complete the technical work. After missing that target, they renewed the deadline in 2017, aiming to finish the work by 2022. That deadline also lapsed due to a combination of factors, including funding constraints, the Covid pandemic, recurring boundary disputes and adverse climatic conditions. Nepal and India share a 1,880-kilometre border spanning 27 districts.



New aircraft carrier heads for Mideast after reports of issues on long-deployed USS Lincoln

KONSTANTIN TOROPIN/AP
WASHINGTON, AUG 14

The Pacific-based aircraft carrier USS George Washington has begun heading toward the Middle East as reports have emerged of mental health and supply issues aboard the long-deployed USS Abraham Lincoln.

The Lincoln has been supporting the US war against Iran, and its deployment has included a record-setting uninterrupted time at sea of more than 260 days.

Several Democratic lawmakers are pressing for accountability from the Pentagon over conditions aboard the carrier, which Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Thursday said were "completely misrepresented".

Extended deployments of carriers during the Iran conflict have raised concerns about the impact on service members who are away from home for long periods as well as the increasing strain on the ship and its equipment. While renewed hostilities between the US and Iran have calmed in recent weeks, the Navy has reimposed a blockade on Iranian ports in the crucial Strait of Hormuz, and the Trump administration has offered no clarity on how it intends to wind down the war.

Hegseth told reporters that the US can maintain the blockade "indefinitely."



AP/RSS

Sailors and Marines line the deck of aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln as it deploys from San Diego, on January 3, 2021.

A new aircraft carrier is heading west from the Asia-Pacific

The USS George Washington left port in Da Nang, Vietnam, last week, a Navy statement said. The carrier, along with a cruiser and a destroyer, have since been spotted crossing the Singapore Strait.

A Navy official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to detail sensitive ship details, confirmed that the Washington was in the Strait of Malacca, which links the Pacific and Indian oceans and puts the carrier on a course to head into the Indian Ocean. The Wall Street Journal reported earlier that the Washington would replace the Lincoln as one of the two aircraft carriers now stationed in the Middle East.

The move would leave the waters of the Pacific without a US carrier presence for an unknown period of time. The Trump administration sees China, the dominant power in the region, as "a settled force" that only needs to be deterred from dominating the US or its allies and not the top global adversary that it was under the Biden administration.

The Lincoln originally deployed November 21 from San Diego, and it arrived in the Middle East in January, ahead of the launch of the Iran war on February 28. The Navy conceded that the conflict created a "highly contested environment where traditional supply hubs in the Middle East were disrupted by combat actions." That, in turn, led to shortages and loss of mail aboard the aircraft carrier, the Navy said in a statement. "Leadership prioritized mission-critical supplies: first food, then hygiene items, then mail," the statement said, before assuring that sailors aboard the ship now have access to clean water and "healthy meal options."

Democrats call for scrutiny, while the Pentagon defends conditions aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln

Democratic lawmakers are calling for investigations, more information and greater visibility into conditions aboard the ship, which was originally set to return home in May.

"The Lincoln's prolonged deployment is especially significant because it is occurring in the context of continuing military operations against Iran and the possibility that substantial US naval forces will be required in the region for an extended period," Connecticut Senator Richard Blumenthal, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, wrote in a letter to Navy leadership asking for a response to several questions.

Arizona Senator Ruben Gallego, a Marine Corps veteran, said on social media that he is looking to take a bipartisan delegation on an official oversight visit to the ship and that the way sailors are being treated is "not just disgusting; it's dangerous."

Hegseth told reporters during a visit to Panama that he wants the Lincoln's sailors home and crews rotated as quickly as possible but pushed back against reports of problems aboard.

"We make sure that every ship, every crew, every captain has everything we can provide them at every single moment. Some deployments are longer than others, and I have more respect and gratitude for those sailors than anybody. What they do in those high seas in those austere conditions with less port calls—it's incredible."

Navy leaders, including acting Secretary Hung Cao, last week held a tense town hall for families of troops aboard the USS Lincoln, at which the commanders of the Navy's air and surface forces promised to do everything they could to relieve the aircraft carrier. MS NOW reported earlier on the meeting.

When reports of food shortages aboard the ship first surfaced in April, the Navy pushed back, calling those reports "false."

Reports of mental health concerns and more aboard the ship

Reports have since emerged that sailors on the Lincoln are struggling with mental health concerns. The Navy said in its statement that it has "not observed an increase in suicidal ideations or attempts aboard the ship," but officials declined to provide data, citing operational security and patient privacy concerns.

The Navy official said that a sailor aboard the Lincoln went overboard in early August but that the person was quickly recovered, treated by the ship's medical department and transferred off ship for follow-on care. The official would not say if it was being considered a suicide attempt.

US Central Command, which oversees military operations in the Middle East, pushed back on reports about poor conditions.

"The Sailors and Marines of the Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group remain resilient and resolved after more than 260 days at sea, 10,000 aircraft flights, and 1.5 million pounds of ordnance expended," the command said on social media.

Other carriers also have had long runs that have raised concerns about morale. The USS Gerald R Ford returned home in mid-May after an 11-month deployment, the longest since the Vietnam War, during which it supported the US war with Iran and the capture of Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro.

During its deployment, the Ford experienced a fire in a laundry space that forced the carrier to turn around and return to the Mediterranean Sea for repairs and left hundreds of sailors without places to sleep.

Concerns about the demands of battle and the dangers of overextending ships and their crew predate the Iran war, with a number of mishaps on ships battling Houthi rebels in Yemen in 2024 and 2025, including the aircraft carrier USS Harry S Truman on a longer-than-expected deployment.

Trump orders new aircraft carriers to revert to steam catapults

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON, AUG 14

US President Donald Trump has directed future aircraft carriers to scrap their advanced systems for launching warplanes and return to using older but "proven" catapult technologies, a move that could dramatically drive up military costs.

Trump made the announcement on Thursday as part of a national security presidential memorandum to "fix critical long-term issues in Navy shipbuilding and ship repair programs and restore capacity and competition to the maritime industrial base."

The US Navy has dominated the seas since the World War II era but recent conflicts, including the war with Iran, have highlighted problems with aging vessels and lengthy procurement periods. Trump bemoaned "an atrophied shipbuilding industrial base" which he said made building and repairing warships slower and more costly. His order directs the Pentagon to draft a plan to replace the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS) and Advanced Weapons Elevators with steam and hydraulic systems for forthcoming aircraft carriers.

The first ship affected will be the USS Doris Miller, the fourth Gerald R. Ford-class carrier which has a projected delivery date of 2034. Changing the catapult systems will likely cost billions of dollars, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing Bryan Clark of the Hudson Institute think tank. Operating and maintaining steam systems would also require more sailors. General Atomics, the company that won the contract to build electromagnetic catapults for the Doris Miller, said the decision to switch systems "warrants careful reconsideration."

Senator Mark Kelly, a former astronaut and retired US Navy combat pilot, mocked Trump's order as unnecessary meddling in military operations. "I've launched off the front of aircraft carriers hundreds of times, have a Master's degree in aeronautical engineering, and am a test pilot and even I wouldn't suggest to the Navy how to engineer specific systems on its ships," Kelly posted on X.

Trump had complained about purported shortcomings of EMALS as early as 2017, when he said they were "not good" and "doesn't have the power" of steam catapults.

WHO decries lack of justice over 10,000 attacks on health care

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GENEVA, AUG 14

The World Health Organization said on Friday that more than 10,000 attacks on healthcare had been recorded since 2018—but nobody has ever been brought to justice.

These attacks, reported across 29 countries and territories, have resulted in approximately 5,700 deaths and 8,500 injuries, the WHO said. WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus repeatedly states that healthcare should never be a target. The WHO verifies and records attacks on healthcare but does not attribute blame as it is not an investigation agency.

Altaf Musani, the director of the WHO's humanitarian and disaster management unit, who presented the figures at a media briefing in Geneva, said accountability could take place not just at the national level.

Health facilities and the health system at large fall under the protection of international humanitarian and rights law, and is protected by certain Geneva Conventions, he said.

However, "of the more than 10,000 verified incidents that I spoke of, not a single one has entered the accountability system".

This year alone, the UN health agency has recorded 914 attacks, resulting in 911 deaths and 1,486 injuries, Musani said. Ukraine, Lebanon and the Palestinian territories account for the majority of incidents in 2026.

Other incidents were reported from Myanmar, Iran, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Russia, Syria and Nigeria.

Musani said attacks with heavy weapons were by far the most frequently reported type of attack this year, followed by obstruction of healthcare and psychological violence. There have been 44 reported incidents involving the abduction, arrest or detention of health workers and patients, affecting 148 individuals.

"When a hospital is attacked, the impact is not only on the people inside that hospital that day," Musani said.

"It is the patient who cannot receive care tomorrow, the ambulance that cannot make its next referral, the health worker who cannot return to work, or the medicine supply that can no longer reach other facilities."

He said that all 36 hospitals in Gaza had sustained damage by the end of 2025. In Ukraine, the WHO has verified more than 3,000 attacks since the beginning of Russia's invasion in 2022—with a WHO warehouse in Dnipro being destroyed last week.

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हिमालय एअरलाइन्स
HIMALAYA AIRLINES

Invitation for Bids
Himalaya Airlines Pvt. Ltd.

Date of publication: 15 August, 2026 (30 Shrawan, 2083)

1. **Himalaya Airlines Pvt. Ltd.** invites **Sealed** bids from eligible bidders for the procurement of **Muffins/Fruit cakes** under **Competitive Bidding – Single Stage Two Envelope Procedure.**

2. **Under the Single Stage, Two Envelope Procedure,** Bidders are required to submit simultaneously two separate sealed documents, one containing (i) the Technical Bid and the other (ii) the Financial Bid

3. Requirements:
Eligible bidders must meet the following criteria:
- Product Name: Muffin or Fruit cake in different flavors (at least 2)
- Weight specification 45g-50g,
- DFTQC Registered with additional food-safety certifications/standards (HACCP, ISO 22000:2018)
- Delivery Schedule: Within 7 days from the date of receipt of the Purchase Order (PO).
- Minimum Delivery frequency: twice a week

4. During Business days (Monday to Friday) in office hours (10:00 AM to 5:30 PM LT NST) eligible Bidders may contact for any additional queries at:
Himalaya Airlines Pvt. Ltd.
Gairidhara-2, Kathmandu, Nepal
Telephone: +977 1 4004000 Ext (707)
Electronic Mail Address: **bid@himalaya-airlines.com**

5. Sealed bids must be submitted at the Head Office of Himalaya airlines (address given below)on **21st August, 2026 by 10 AM Nepal standard time.**
Himalaya Airlines Pvt. Ltd.
Gairidhara-2, Kathmandu, Nepal

6. Bids received after this deadline will be rejected.

7. Bids must be valid for a period of **120 days** from the date of bid opening.

Gairidhara - 2, Kathmandu
+977 1 4004000 | +977-1-4004098 | www.himalaya-airlines.com

China's viral 'spicy strips' take a bite of global snack market

SAM DAVIES/AFP
PINGJIANG, CHINA, AUG 14

At a gleaming new factory in China's central hinterland, masked workers in white uniform season and sift through mounds of latiao, a longtime popular snack that has found hungry fans overseas.

Spicy, sweet and curiously chewy, Chinese latiao—literally "spicy strips"—are made by cooking wheat flour dough at a high temperature and pressure.

Despite their reputation as junk food, the snacks originally developed as emergency supplies have grown into an industry worth more than 60 billion yuan ($8.9 billion).

The factory that AFP visited in Hunan province's Pingjiang turns out nearly 700 tonnes per day of the spongy, red-coloured strips, which look like squashed French fries covered in oil.

The plant's operator Mala Wangzi currently sells all of that domestically, but latiao have acquired new legions of foreign fans spurred by online enthusiasm for Chinese culture, or "Chinamaxxing".

"Latiao are now exported to more than 160 countries worldwide, showing that the market is moving increasingly towards internationalisation," Li Manliang, Mala Wangzi's vice president, told AFP.

Some brands have expanded into East and Southeast Asia, where they are growing rapidly, while consumers from the United States to Australia are snapping up the snacks in specialist grocery stores, e-commerce platforms and via TikTok.

The country's largest latiao producer, Hong Kong-listed Weilong, made 117 million yuan from overseas sales last year, up nearly 50 percent from 2024. TikTok and Instagram are awash with videos of foreigners trying the fiery snacks.

One influencer gained 1.5 million views by chowing down on a model house made entirely of the glutinous strips.

In another TikTok video with 2.6 million views, an Australian reviewer tucked into a giant latiao.

"If you can handle your spice, I think you would enjoy this," she said. "Highly, highly recommend."



AFP/RSS

This picture taken on June 17 shows people visiting a spicy strips shop in Changsha, in China's central Hunan province. Chinese latiao are made by cooking wheat flour dough at a high temperature and pressure, and the longtime popular snack has found hungry fans overseas.

'Quite addictive'

Latiao were created in Pingjiang in 1998 as an emergency staple food, after devastating floods wiped out the local soybean crop.

They became ubiquitous in supermarkets across China, but gained a reputation as unhealthy and unsanitary—an image latiao brands have spent years trying to counter.

"When I was young, my parents believed they contained too many additives," 22-year-old Beijing resident Wang Jingfei told AFP.

"But as the industry has developed and more brands have emerged, food safety has drawn a lot of attention... so I don't think it's a big problem to eat it now and then."

At the Mala Wangzi facility, an employee livestreamed the factory floor to showcase its hygienic conditions.

Li, the company's vice president, claimed these were based on standards used in the pharmaceutical industry.

And the recipe has changed to make the snack healthier, he said. "We're reducing the use of oil, salt, sugar and additives, and using more natural raw ingredients."

The company has made other concerted efforts to appeal to younger buyers, its main consumer base.

Mala Wangzi has opened pop-up museums around the country, held more than 4,000 latiao-themed weddings for superfan couples, and sponsored e-sport events, music festivals, and animation conventions.

"I find latiao is quite addictive and also stress-relieving," said 24-year-old Yang Xuhao.

"When I don't feel like having a proper meal, I'll just eat latiao instead. I also like to snack on them while watching TV shows."

But not everyone is sold on the snack's rehabilitation.

Li Peng, 22, said he had kicked the latiao habit he developed in his school days.

"I want to have a healthy lifestyle and get in shape, so I've stopped eating them," he said.

In a video watched 2.8 million times, a foreign reviewer described it as "kind of like chewy tofu" and "very oily".

FOREX

US Dollar	152.99
Euro	176.75
Pound Sterling	206.92
Swiss Franc	188.13
Australian Dollar	108.24
Canadian Dollar	110.15
Singapore Dollar	119.6
Japanese Yen (10)	9.61
Chinese Yuan	22.69
Saudi Arab Riyal	40.75
Qatari Riyal	41.98
Thai Bhat	4.61
UAE Dhiram	41.66
Malaysian Ringit	37.44
Korean Won (100)	10.83

Exchange rates fixed by Nepal Rastra Bank

BULLION

	PRICE PER TOLA
Fine Gold	Rs 301,600
Silver	Rs 4,660

SOURCE: FENEGOSIDA

BIZLINE

US retail sales fall to $763.6 b in July, weakest in over a year

WASHINGTON: US retail sales declined unexpectedly in July, government estimates showed Friday, marking their weakest showing in more than a year as consumers pulled back at auto dealers and online stores. Total sales were down 0.6 percent in July from the previous month, at $763.6 billion, according to the US Department of Commerce. Excluding sales at auto dealers and gasoline stations, sales dipped 0.2 percent on a month-on-month basis. "American consumers are showing signs of fatigue. July retail sales were disappointing on all levels," said Navy Federal Credit Union chief economist Heather Long. Consumers likely brought forward their spending to capitalize on online sales events in June, Long said. But she warned: "Even with lower spending on gas in July, consumers weren't eager to spend elsewhere." Inflation has remained elevated in recent months, boosted by higher gasoline prices, after US-Israel strikes targeting Iran prompted Tehran to block most traffic through Hormuz. **(AFP)**

Nepal Airlines is making more money, but losses still huge

Revenue reached an estimated Rs23.4 billion last fiscal year, but expenses may have exceeded it by Rs1 billion, contrary to the PM's upbeat assessment.

SURAJ KUNWAR
KATHMANDU, AUG 14



POST FILE PHOTO

Nepal Airlines has 11 aircraft, but only six are operational. Its biggest financial albatross is its debt, which has climbed to around Rs51 billion.

Prime Minister Balendra Shah recently highlighted what he called encouraging signs of recovery at the national flag carrier, Nepal Airlines Corporation.

In a social media post, Shah said the airline had generated Rs6.27 billion in revenue in just four months, achieved an 86 percent occupancy rate and repaid Rs1.06 billion in loan instalments.

But the airline's own preliminary annual figures paint a not so rosy picture.

Nepal Airlines (NAC) estimates that it generated around Rs23.40 billion in revenue in the last fiscal year, while its gross expenses may reach Rs24.40 billion. That would leave the airline with a deficit of about Rs1 billion for the year, despite the increase in revenue.

The corporation has yet to compile its final financial statements. Archana Khadka, the NAC's corporate director and spokesperson, said income and expenditure figures from several stations were still being compiled. The preliminary figures should therefore not be treated as final, she said, adding that both revenue and expenses could rise once the accounting is completed.

Even so, the preliminary figures indicate that the NAC's revenue in the fiscal year 2025-26 rose by about 12.5 percent from roughly Rs20.50 billion the previous year. The increase suggests that the airline is getting more business, but its inability to tame expenses continues to undermine its finances.

The NAC had set a far more ambitious target in its budget for the last fiscal year. It projected a total revenue of Rs37.85 billion against an expenditure of Rs37.72 billion, with an expected surplus of about Rs125 million. The preliminary actual revenue is therefore substantially below the budget target.

Ground handling remains a key revenue source

Ground handling remains one of the NAC's most important sources of income. The airline estimates that it earned around Rs5.71 billion from the service in the last fiscal year, up from about Rs5.04 billion the previous year.

Khadka said the number of international flights had fallen temporarily because of the West Asian conflict, but the impact did not last long. Revenue from ground handling has since increased as more international airlines have begun operating in Nepal, she said.

Around 30 international airlines currently fly to Kathmandu. The NAC provides ground-handling services to most international carriers at the Tribhuvan International Airport, with the exception of Air India.

The corporation had budgeted a Rs7.92 billion ground-handling revenue for the fiscal year. The preliminary actual figure, however, is well below that target.

The latest data shows that while the NAC has managed to expand revenue, it has struggled to keep expenditure under control. The problem is not new. The airline has increased its income in recent years, but repayments on its loans, interest costs, aircraft maintenance and operating expenses have continued to weigh heavily on its balance sheet.

According to the Office of the Auditor General, NAC's total revenue rose from Rs9.46 billion in the fiscal year 2020-21 to Rs24.21 billion in 2022-23. Despite that growth, the corporation has continued to post losses. It recorded a loss of around Rs1.51 billion in the fiscal year 2023-24, according to the auditor general's report.

Debt remains NAC's biggest problem

NAC's biggest financial burden is its debt.

The corporation borrowed from the Employees Provident Fund and the Citizen Investment Trust to purchase four Airbus aircraft. Repayment of the principal and interest on those loans has become a major strain on the airline's finances.

According to NAC records, it has so far repaid Rs16.54 billion on the loans taken to purchase the four aircraft. Its preliminary records show that about Rs46.22 billion in liabilities related to those loans remains outstanding. Including other borrowings, NAC's total debt is estimated at around Rs51 billion.

Khadka said there are some discrepancies between the debt figures maintained by the NAC and those recorded by the lending institutions.

The airline is seeking to reduce its interest burden and restructure its debt, said executive chairman Maheshwor Bhakta Shrestha. NAC is also exploring the possibility of replacing some of its expensive borrowing with loans carrying lower interest rates.

Shrestha said discussions had already been held with the Employees Provident Fund and the Citizen Investment Trust.

The airline borrowed Rs34 billion from the two institutions to purchase the four Airbus planes. It has been paying interest rates of as much as 10.5 percent on those loans. The corporation had projected financial expenses of around Rs4.10 billion for the fiscal year 2025-26 alone.

The corporation believes that reducing its interest burden would narrow the gap between its operating revenue and expenditure and provide some room for financial recovery.

A fleet too small to support expansion

NAC's operating capacity is also constrained by the condition of its fleet.

The corporation has 11 aircraft, including five Chinese-made planes. Only six are currently operational: two Twin Otters, two narrow-body aircraft and two wide-body aircraft.

Several aircraft have remained grounded for extended periods, limiting the airline's ability to expand services and make full use of its fleet.

> **Ground handling remains one of the key sources of income for Nepal Airlines.**

The carrier has repeatedly identified fleet expansion as necessary for increasing both domestic and international services. Its programme for the fiscal year 2025-26 included plans to add narrow-body craft for international routes and study the possibility of leasing aircraft where necessary.

Those plans, however, did not move forward.

Under its budget projections, the NAC planned to operate 2,520 international flights using two Airbus A330s and two A320s and carry more than 865,000 passengers. For domestic services, it had planned 5,174 flights using two Twin Otters.

The airline's failure to expand its fleet while some existing aircraft remain grounded has limited its ability to increase revenue, even as demand for air travel grows.

The NAC management nevertheless argues that the recent increase in revenue is a positive sign.

Khadka said the income growth should be viewed as an encouraging development. But a sustained financial turnaround will require more than higher revenue, Shrestha said.

The new management is seeking to pursue three objectives simultaneously: increase revenue, control operating costs and reduce the cost of servicing NAC's debt.

For an airline carrying around Rs51 billion in debt and operating only six of its 11 aircraft, that will be a considerably harder task than the recent rise in revenue figures alone might suggest.

NEPSE This Week

2,643.83 ▼-6.26 -0.24%

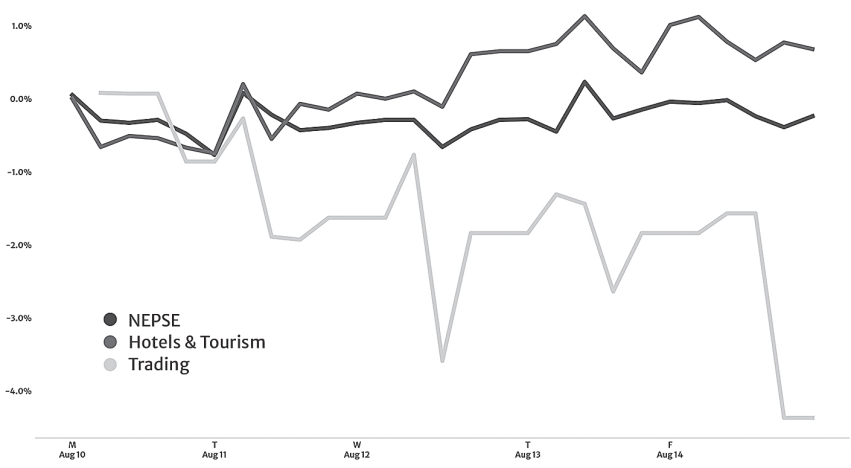
Turnover	Shares Traded	Gainers	Losers
Rs. 18.40 Billion	40.64 Million	116 Stocks	158 Stocks

Data provided by npstocks.com

TRENDING STOCKS

KKHC	RIDI	GHL
CFCL	UHEWA	AKJCL

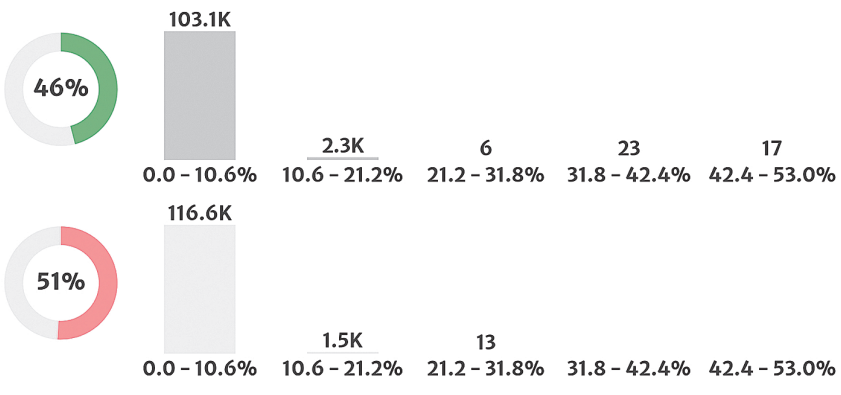
Indices performance for the week



	At Close	% Chg	Volume (Rs.)	Advancers	Decliners	52wk High	52wk Low	YTD Chg
Hotels And Tourism	7,338.85	0.68%	375.2M	4	4	8,570.32	5,775.66	5.58%
Microfinance	4,576.54	0.30%	934.1M	22	27	5,335.64	4,483.06	-7.07%
Investment	97.32	0.24%	1,009.6M	5	2	115.30	94.07	-5.04%
Others	1,929.84	0.17%	275.8M	3	5	2,822.31	1,866.70	-18.52%
HydroPower	3,727.72	-0.06%	9,964.3M	49	62	4,151.22	3,120.66	11.63%
Banking	1,458.99	-0.11%	1,744.6M	7	10	1,572.61	1,308.53	6.45%
Life Insurance	11,803.83	-0.21%	393.5M	5	9	13,998.19	11,670.25	-9.40%
Non Life Insurance	10,585.05	-0.21%	158.9M	5	8	12,639.99	10,302.55	-3.73%
Development Bank	5,583.79	-0.26%	956.3M	5	11	6,533.59	5,166.72	1.68%
Manu.& Pro.	10,342.91	-0.49%	1,579.7M	8	8	12,106.76	6,943.38	20.57%
Finance	2,374.89	-0.96%	986.3M	2	11	2,718.98	2,137.39	2.25%
Trading	3,239.86	-4.37%	23.7M	1	1	4,348.83	3,188.66	-14.73%

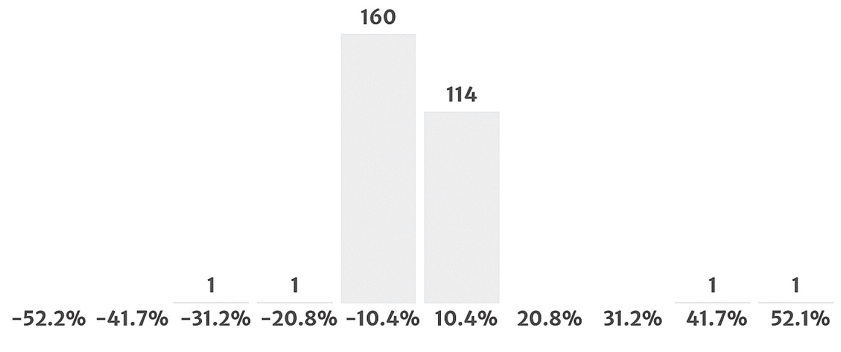
Trade distribution

Of all transactions in the week, 46% increased prices while 51% decreased prices.
116.6K transactions decreased prices between 0.0% and -10.6%



Price change distribution

Prices of 160 companies decreased between 0.0% and 10.4% this week.



Top gainers

	At Close (Rs.)	% Chg	52wk High (Rs.)
Mount Everest Power Development	456.20	52.07%	456.20
Sarvottam Paints	396.70	32.23%	396.70
Ghalemdi Hydro	249.00	9.21%	290.00
Khanikhola Hydropower Co.	352.30	9.07%	360.00
Upper Hewakhola Hydropower	628.90	8.06%	692.60
Bikash Hydropower Company	522.10	6.77%	699.00
Taragaon Regency Hotel	840.00	6.33%	985.06
First Microfinance	830.00	6.27%	982.00
Global IME Laghubitta	1,133.70	5.95%	1,288.51
CYC Nepal Laghubitta	1,355.00	5.86%	1,879.00

Top losers

	At Close (Rs.)	% Chg	52wk Low (Rs.)
Mahila Lagubitta	1,279.00	-21.05%	1,234.10
Aatmanirbhar Laghubitta	5,320.00	-11.32%	4,917.58
Upper Lohore Khola Hydropower	342.00	-9.76%	332.00
Everest Colour Limited	1,534.10	-7.86%	296.60
Bhagawati Hydropower	514.10	-7.54%	514.10
Saptakoshi Development Bank	787.80	-6.20%	686.00
Manakamana Engineering Hydro.	279.00	-5.74%	275.00
Sagarmatha Jalabidhyut	432.20	-5.63%	418.00
Sagar Distillery Limited	1,653.00	-5.54%	319.50
Swet-Ganga Hydro. & Constr.	299.00	-5.17%	296.00

Top turnover

	Turnover (Rs.)	At Close (Rs.)	% Chg
Solu Hydropower Limited	1,397.2M	671.00	-2.47%
Ridi Power	928.2M	367.90	-1.89%
NRN Infrastructure and Dev.	688.7M	1,390.00	1.39%
Khanikhola Hydropower Co.	616.3M	352.30	9.07%
Central Finance	557.4M	639.00	-3.18%
Ngadi Group Power	474.1M	414.90	1.52%
Ankhu Khola Jalvidhyut Company	426.6M	360.00	-0.58%
Ghalemdi Hydro	413.7M	249.00	9.21%
Reliance Spinning Mills Limited	333.7M	2,556.00	-2.44%
First Microfinance	319.3M	830.00	6.27%

Most active

	Stocks Traded	At Close (Rs.)	% Chg
Ridi Power	2.445M	367.90	-1.89%
Solu Hydropower Limited	1.990M	671.00	-2.47%
Khanikhola Hydropower Co.	1.914M	352.30	9.07%
Ghalemdi Hydro	1.649M	249.00	9.21%
Liberty Energy	1.183M	230.70	4.29%
Ankhu Khola Jalvidhyut Company	1.171M	360.00	-0.58%
Ngadi Group Power	1.138M	414.90	1.52%
Kumari Bank	1.068M	216.80	0.84%
National Hydro Power	1.013M	268.00	-1.83%
Prabhu Bank	0.901M	187.00	-2.09%

CAN calls for patience amid captaincy row

Addressing a rushed send-off of the senior team, CAN leadership insists replacing Rohit Paudel with Sandeep Lamichhane—and other major squad changes—was for long-term betterment.

NAYAK PAUDEL
KATHMANDU, AUG 14

Head coach Stuart Law, ODI skipper Sandeep Lamichhane and Cricket Association of Nepal officials made a common statement on Friday: "The changes in team roster and captaincy are for the betterment of Nepali cricket."

Ever since the Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) announced that Lamichhane was replacing Rohit Kumar Paudel as the skipper for the 50-over format, there were many questions for the governing body. And the leadership had to answer them in a hurried farewell ceremony for the senior men's team on Friday afternoon.

CAN originally intended to host the ceremony after the squad returned from the upcoming 10-day training camp in Bengaluru, India. However, the governing body issued a rushed media call less than three hours before the event.

Nepal men's cricket team has a busy schedule ahead—ACC Men's Premier Cup in Malaysia from August 30 to September 12, Asian Games in Japan from September 17 to October 3, and ICC CWC League-2 tri-series in Oman from October 9 to 19.

Addressing the media ahead of the team's departure on Friday evening, head coach Law embraced the administrative shift, framing it as an opportunity for progress.

"I haven't slept for around 20 hours, so bear with me," started Law, who had just arrived from the UK after attending a memorial reception. "With change comes a new era, and I am excited for the future. Let's start this new era with a bang with new players and a new skipper."

The immediate focus of the squad is the 10-day training camp at the Bengaluru-based National Cricket Academy, which Law views as critical for ironing out flaws exposed during Nepal's recent tour of the Netherlands.

While pitch conditions in Malaysia remain somewhat unpredictable, the Australian coach expects standard Subcontinent-style surfaces.

"Conditions are a bit unknown, but they should be low and slow and favour spin," Law said. "With a combination of new and experienced players, I am confident we can put a powerful team on the park."

Law also clarified that a separate squad would be assembled for the T20 format at the upcoming Asian Games, allowing players to specialise as the calendar grows increasingly demanding.

Law shared a playful piece of advice for his newly reinstated captain, who mostly has had bad luck at the coin toss.

"I just want to tell Sandeep to train for the toss," Law joked.



POST PHOTOS: ANGAD DHAKAL

(Top) Available players and staff of the senior men's team pose after their farewell programme in Kathmandu on Friday. (Below) Head coach Stuart Law (right) and new ODI skipper Sandeep Lamichhane have a quick chat before the senior team's farewell on Friday.



Providing clarity on the rushed schedule, CAN Secretary Paras Khadka explained that logistical changes forced the governing body's hand.

"Originally, the plan was to bring the team back to Kathmandu after the Bengaluru camp before departing for the ACC Premier Cup," Khadka said. "However, a last-minute readjustment means the squad will fly directly to Malaysia from India, which led to this sudden farewell."

After training in India, the Nepal team is expected to arrive in Malaysia early and have some extra training sessions before the main event.

Addressing the elephant in the room—the sudden change in the ODI leadership—Khadka defended the board's decision, insisting that strategic structural needs dictated the move rather than personal preference.

"We know there are many questions surrounding the squad and the captaincy, and we want to clear them up," Khadka said. "Looking at our ODI structure, CAN felt a change was necessary. Cricket is a team sport where every player holds equal importance, and this decision was made strictly for the betterment of Nepali cricket. At the end of the day, Nepal must win."

Khadka pushed back against speculation that the leadership strip was aimed at sidelining former captain Rohit Paudel. Khadka stressed that CAN's focus remains on long-term national development.

"We are not trying to end any player's career," Khadka asserted. "We are making decisions based on multiple factors, all aimed at turning Nepal into a top-tier cricket nation. Players are the bridge between management and development."

Offering a realistic assessment of the team's standing in ICC Cricket World Cup League 2, the former national captain urged fans and critics to recognise the rising standards of international competition.

"We managed to beat top-placed League-2 teams at home, but we struggled while travelling on foreign soil," Khadka acknowledged. "The level of competition today is tough. Maintaining ODI status is crucial, but we have to look beyond just surviving in the 50-over format."

Despite the recent turbulence, Khadka expressed firm belief in the selected squad's ability to secure back-to-back Asia Cup qualifications and appealed to supporters for patience during this transition.

"We picked this squad with Asia Cup qualification firmly in mind, and we believe they will deliver results," Khadka said. "Nepali cricket has never gotten anything the easy way. We are confident this team will win the Premier Cup in Malaysia, but we ask the fans to remain patient. If Nepal doesn't win, nothing else matters."

Similarly, Lamichhane acknowledged the team's recent slump, echoing sentiments shared by coach Law and CAN Secretary Paras Khadka, but insisted the squad is focused on making amends.

"As the coach and Paras dai mentioned, our recent matches didn't go our way," Lamichhane said. "Sometimes opponents simply play better than us despite our best efforts. But we won't let that happen again, and we will come back with better execution."

Addressing the heavy media scrutiny surrounding leadership changes and performance slumps, the leg-spinner called for a forward-looking mindset, stressing that the team intends to answer its critics on the pitch.

"We have a fantastic squad with a strong blend of senior and young players, and there are exciting times ahead," Lamichhane added. "Leaving the past behind, we must take criticism constructively and respond on the field by giving our absolute best—in Bengaluru, Malaysia, and wherever we play in the future."

Closing his address, Lamichhane called on Nepali cricket supporters to stay behind the team during this transitional period.

"Every single cheer and word of motivation will boost us and elevate our game," he said.

While CAN officials downplayed the absences—insisting there were no underlying issues behind their non-attendance—informal reports indicated



logistical and personal delays. Airee was reportedly outside the Kathmandu valley celebrating his birthday with family and close associates a day prior.

CAN clarified that the absent players would link up with the rest of the squad directly in Bengaluru for the 10-day preparation camp ahead of the Malaysia tour.

Ty Gibbs will drive M&M's-themed car in memory of Kyle Busch at Bristol

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BRISTOL, AUG 14

Ty Gibbs' car will be adorned in the multicoloured M&M's paint scheme made famous by former teammate Kyle Busch during the NASCAR Cup Series race at Bristol Motor Speedway next month, Busch's widow announced Thursday.

"Bristol was always one of Kyle's favourite tracks," Samantha Busch wrote on X. "He loved racing under the lights, found so much success there, and the iconic M&M'S car holds some of the best memories of his career and our life together."



FILE PHOTO: AP/RSS

Kyle Busch waves to fans while doing a victory lap after winning the second of two 150-mile qualifying races for Sunday's NASCAR Daytona 500 auto race at Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach on February 21, 2013.

Busch, 41, died May 21 after severe pneumonia progressed into sepsis, resulting in rapid and overwhelming complications.

Busch and the No 18 Toyota M&M's car were synonymous when he drove for Joe Gibbs Racing from 2008-22. He moved to Richard Childress Racing in 2023.

Busch won nine Cup Series races and a total of 23 NASCAR races at Bristol.

Ty Gibbs, 23, is coming off his second win of the season at the Cup Series race in Iowa.

He posted pictures of the M&M's car on Instagram and wrote, "Excited for Bristol. Gonna be a cool (one)... So honored to drive this."

Samantha Busch wrote it would be "heartbreaking" to be at Bristol without Kyle. The race is on September 19.

"He should be there," she wrote. "But I'm so grateful to be able to tell you that those iconic M&M'S colors will be coming back to Bristol, one last time, on the 54 car. It's a chance to honor him at a place he loved so much, surrounded by our NASCAR family and the fans who loved him too. I know Kyle would want us to be there, to keep showing up, keep racing, and keep carrying his legacy forward."

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
Important alliances can be made later today. Expand your reach by connecting with people you admire but don't feel out of your league.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Hold discussions at the table to explore the mutual and individual dreams of those you love most, brainstorming ways to support each other. Just be mindful not to override the opinions of others.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)
Embark upon a learning journey. Now is also a good time to spread information that can further your goals. You'll easily draw attention this afternoon.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)
Be generous with any resources you can spare, dear Cancer. News of your kindness will spread, and those in a position to lift you may feel moved to do so.

LEO (July 23-August 22)
You will make an impression wherever you go with little to no effort, dearest Leo. However, putting in the work to look and feel your best will take these sentiments to the next level.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22)
You will benefit from some alone time, dearest Virgo. Take space to sort through your thoughts and dream big. Treat yourself to minor luxuries.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22)
Promote inclusivity and give the people around you a chance to shine, dearest Libra. You'll be a beacon of light for those who wish to be seen as.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21)
Ideas expand quickly if you are resilient enough to follow through on them, dear Scorpio. Push grand visions to the surface with steadfast effort.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21)
You're in a position of great potential, dear archer. Connect deeply with your goals and spirituality, allowing them to intertwine and strengthen one another.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19)
As you see opportunities to level up, be mindful to pursue them with fairness and grace. Though you may have the upper hand, taking advantage of others will come back to haunt you later.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18)
You'll feel starry-eyed and giddy when in the company of that special someone, dear Aquarius. Self-care will also prove extra effective at clearing away negativity and restoring optimism.

PISCES (February 19-March 20)
You'll have plenty to do, dear Pisces, finding satisfaction with each task completed. The efforts you put forth bring you closer to major milestones and your best life.

ASTROLOGY.COM

CROSSWORD

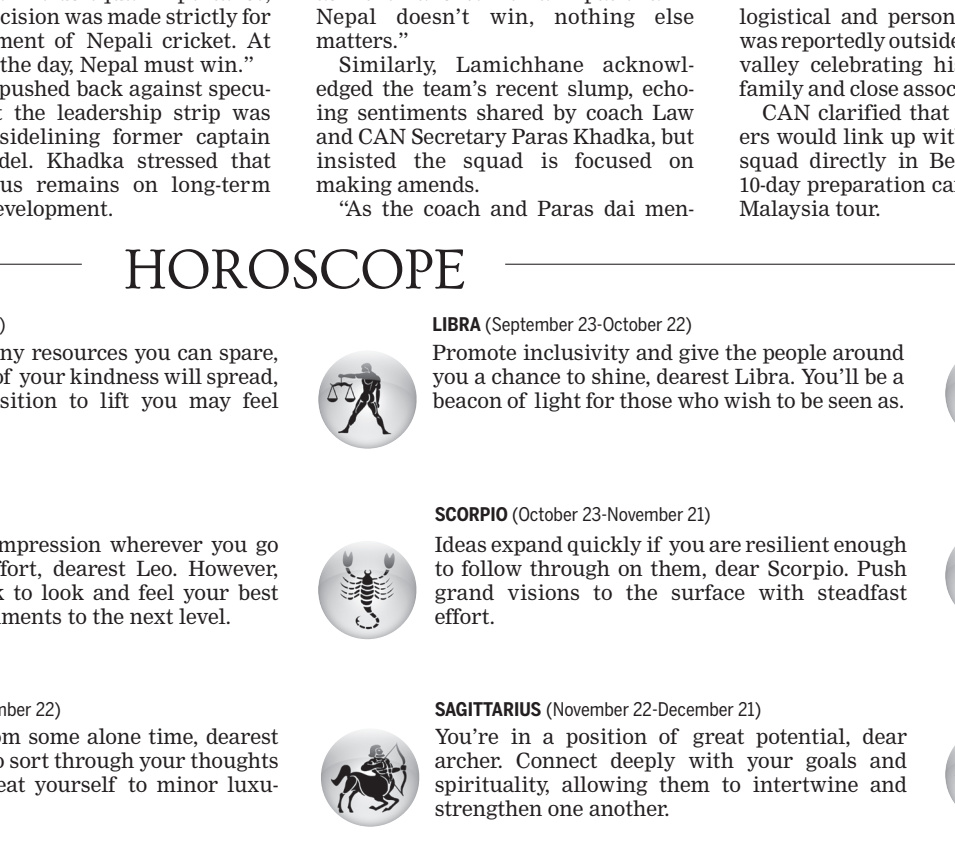
ACROSS
1 Spinning plaything
4 Commonplace
9 British baby buggy
13 Close
14 Soap plant
15 — avis
16 Workplace standards org.
17 Lighter brand
18 All (Prefix)
19 Outside wall covering
21 Barred legally
23 Rigid
25 Fuss
26 Number puzzle game
28 Dwell
32 Uncle —
33 Twisted
36 Dye plant
37 Bit of movie footage
39 — Andreas Fault
40 Wash
41 Ellipse
42 Make carbonated
45 — de plume
46 Symbols
48 Rug
50 Recipe measure
51 Musical group
52 Horse race's scheduled start (2 wds.)
57 Soft
61 Perpetually
62 Hoist
64 Stern
65 Chile neighbor
66 Bird with long legs
67 Singer — James
68 Utah city
69 Food regimens
70 Fish eggs

DOWN
1 Trial
2 Hawaiian island
3 Calm
4 Anti-tank weapon
5 "What Kind of Fool — —?"
6 "Forget it!"
7 Mont Blanc's range
8 Bodysuit
9 Offer of marriage
10 Incline
11 British composer
12 Hotel employee
13 Distress call letters
20 Brag
22 "— on a Grecian Urn"
24 Hospital worker
26 Burst of gunfire
27 Simple boat
29 Silly
30 Chunk of turf
31 Basic (Abbr.)
32 Highlander
34 Golf standard
35 Make into law
38 Guitar pick
42 Aimed for
43 Bull's-eyes
44 Ohio's lake
47 Fanatic
49 Think
52 Hard-rind fruit
53 More than
54 Withered
55 "The Gift of the —"
56 Ireland
58 Dorothy's dog
59 Old instrument
60 Time
63 Collection

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

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SUDOKU

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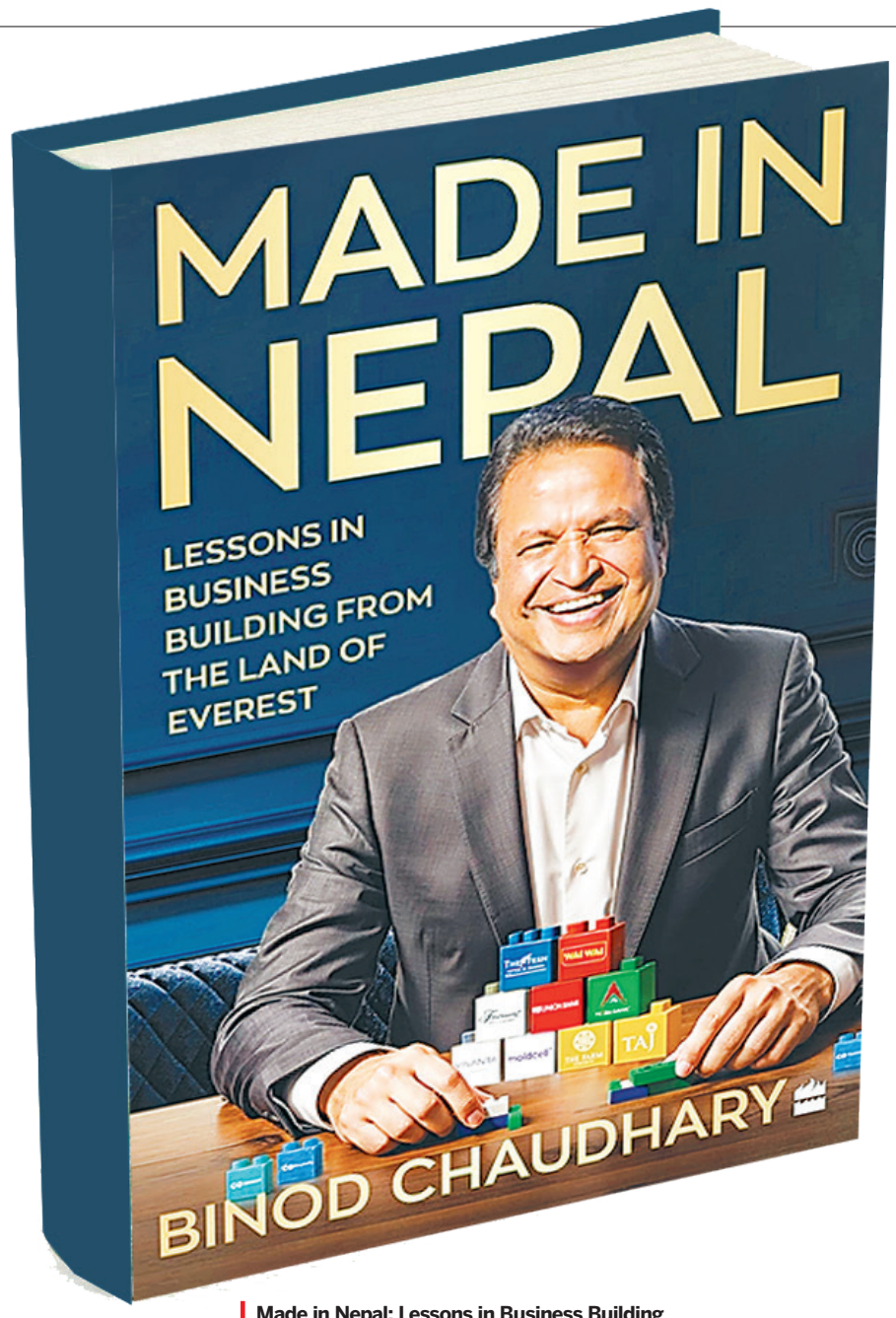
No.SC6102 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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No.SC6103 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆



Made in Nepal: Lessons in Business Building from the Land of Everest
Author: Binod Chaudhary
Year: 2025
Publisher: Harper Business

What it takes to get rich in Nepal

'Made in Nepal' is as much a story of privilege, power and betrayal as it is of business.

RIVASH RIJAL
KATHMANDU

The country's sole dollar billionaire, Binod Chaudhary's, new memoir, 'Made in Nepal: Lessons in Business Building from the Land of Everest', is, above all, a window into his mind. The truthfulness with which Chaudhary writes is striking. He does not attempt to conceal facts that may portray him in a bad light. He is, for example, upfront about the relationship between business and politics.

"Businessmen politicians were a reviled lot," he says in the part talking about his political journey. He has written with a type of awareness that most of the rich and powerful lack.

At the beginning of his work is a note addressing protests last September, in which he points to Nepal's staggering economic inequality as the issue at the core of what motivated protestors. This is a welcome understanding for the man, alongside being a lawmaker and, one would imagine, an influential donor, but the understanding does not seem to translate for him into support for left-wing policy. It comes across as more a distrust of Nepal's politicians and bureaucrats than an aversion to policies aimed at helping the poor itself.

"Nobody can make Binod Chaudhary a communist," he says in a part where he talks about almost getting a ticket from the CPN-UML. The same party, however, he shares, dropped a policy proposing higher taxes on Nepal's hyperwealthy, in part because of his lobbying, so I suppose the 'communist' in CPN-UML is as little an indication of ideology as his membership in the party is.

The book follows Chaudhary's journey as he takes over his father's business and takes it to the heights he did. It was a journey full of many mistakes and betrayals. Chaudhary comes across as both shrewd and naive at the same time. On the one hand, over and over again, he is taken advantage of by lying, scheming, and swindling business partners, and on the other hand, he seems to manage to react in time and well enough to come out on top.

While reading the book, one comes across a long sentence, about four lines long. The following four lines repeat the same sentence in full, almost

BOOK REVIEW

The author is guilty of assuming the best of people; he pays for this mistake at times.

verbatim, with only a few words replaced. There are many other errors throughout my editions of the book, suggesting that whoever was responsible for finalising the manuscript did a rather slack job.

Some stories Chaudhary shares feel like straight fiction, like things that could never happen in real life, yet have happened to him and those around him. A standout example is when a sitting minister forces Chaudhary's sons to donate a large sum of money to the PM fund during the Covid-19 pandemic, money that CG had otherwise raised for its own aid efforts.

On that note, the book tells readers a great deal about CG's philanthropic efforts in Nepal. Of the many projects that the billionaire had overseen, the most impressive are his works in the aftermath of the 2015 Gorkha earthquake and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chaudhary is not shy, except in a handful of cases, about naming people with whom he has clashed in the past and detailing how they tried to wrong or harm him. I suppose the point of a business book is to teach readers business lessons; the book's name would also suggest the same. The biggest lesson in the book is not about business management or efficiency creation, but that people can be really nasty and conniving with each other.

The author is guilty of assuming the best of people; he pays for this mistake at times. It makes him alert but does not tip him over the edge into someone weary of their colleagues.

'Made in Nepal' is a good reminder of who gets to become rich in a country like Nepal. And the answer is often those with ancestral wealth and connections with the ruling class.

Prince Dhirendra saves Binod Chaudhary from ruin in the book. This is not my takeaway; the author says as much. Saved from whom, you ask? A leader from the RPP, whose opponent Chaudhary had backed during a bid for power.

In a country like Nepal, power gives just as easily as it threatens to take away. To get to where CG is, one needs Binod Chaudhary's discipline and brilliance, but one also needs a few generations' worth of connections and rapport with strong families with deep roots. As long as that does not change, social inequality will remain, and so will the people's discontent with it.

EVENTS

International Youth Week 2083


PHOTO: COURTESY OF JEEVAN VIGYAN/ FACEBOOK

A 7-day youth-led wellness programme is being organised by Jeevan Vigyan Youth, blending wellness, service, creativity, music and connection.

When: Until August 15
Where: Jeevan Vigyan, Chabahil
Time: Musical evening daily from 5:30 pm–7:00 pm
Entry: Free

The Great Elephant Jam

Eden Sanepa is hosting a fundraiser music event supporting the care and welfare of two rescued elephants; Eva and Lhamo,


PHOTO: COURTESY OF EDEN SANEPA/ FACEBOOK

featuring Albatross, Cobweb, Phosphenes, Nattu Shah along with various food stalls.

When: August 15
Where: Eden Sanepa, Lalitpur
Time: 2:00 pm onwards
Entry: Rs2,000

La La Land Live Screening + Jazz Night


PHOTO: COURTESY OF MOKSH/ FACEBOOK

Moksh restaurant is celebrating the 10th anniversary of La La Land with a live screening paired with a live jazz night.

When: August 16
Where: Moksh, Lalitpur
Time: 5:30 pm onwards
Entry: Rs1,000

The Age of Darkness


PHOTO: COURTESY OF MANDALA THEATRE/ FACEBOOK

Mandala Theatre is showcasing Dharamvir Bharati's Hindi classic, The Age of Darkness translated by Rajendra Salabh, directed by Sudeep Khatiwada.

When: Until August 30
Where: Mandala Theatre, Thapagaun, New Baneshwor
Time: 5:30 pm (also 1:30 pm on Saturdays)
Entry: Rs300 - Rs500

Production A-Z

Playbook Kathacharya is organising a hands-on workshop to share their production process learned over 5+ years.

When: August 20, 2026
Where: Address shared after registration
Time: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Entry: Rs2,500

Hobby Hangout

Hobby Hangout is a community event which will include knitting, baking, coffee roasting, board games, reading, journaling, painting and other creative pursuits.

When: Saturday, August 15, 2026
Where: Nextdoor Patan, Lalitpur
Time: 12:00 pm
Entry: Free

Dog Fest

Dog fest is a playful day out hosted by Ka Ho and Offline.888. It includes fashion shows, quizzes, bingo, challenges, face painting, and DIY activities for participants and their dogs.

When: Saturday, August 15
Where: Ka Ho 88, Bhanimandal, Lalitpur
Time: 11:00 am to 5:00 pm
Entry: Rs500 per dog

Embroidery Workshop

As a part of Alliance Francaise's 'The Pace of Making' workshop series, Danfe Arts presents an embroidery workshop facilitated by Priyanka Maharjan.

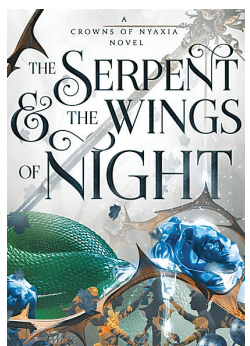
When: August 15
Where: Alliance Francaise, Pulchowk, Lalitpur
Time: 3:00 pm to 6:30 pm
Entry: Rs350


PHOTO: COURTESY OF ALLIANCE FRANCAISE/ FACEBOOK

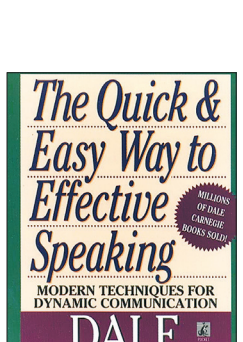
BEST-SELLERS | NEW RELEASES

Fiction

1. The Serpent and the Wings of Night - Carissa Broadbent
2. We Free the Stars - Hafsah Faizal
3. Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less - Jeffrey Archer
4. The Winner Stands Alone - Paulo Coelho
5. The Paris Apartment - Lucy Foley

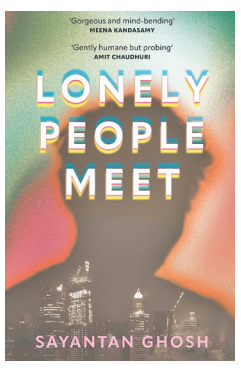


Non-Fiction



1. The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Speaking - Dale Carnegie
2. Modern Achievement - Asheesh Advani and Marshall Goldsmith
3. The 4 Disciplines of Execution - Chris McChesney, Sean Covey, and Jim Huling
4. Daring Greatly - Brené Brown
5. 80/20 Sales and Marketing - Perry Marshall

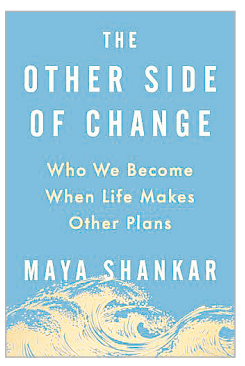
Source: Ekta Books



Lonely People Meet
Author: Sayantan Ghosh
Price: Rs798.40
Publication: Bloomsbury

Sayantan Ghosh's "Lonely People Meet," crafts an assured debut that begins as a tender love story before unfolding into an evocative work of speculative fiction set in contemporary Delhi. The novel follows Karno, an aspiring novelist balancing two jobs, whose chance meeting with Devaki grows into a deeply affecting relationship shaped by afternoons in bookstores, coffee houses, and Lodi Gardens.

Their seemingly ordinary romance takes an unexpected turn when a mysterious organisation suggests that Devaki's identity and memories may not be what they appear.



The Other Side of Change
Author: Maya Shankar
Price: Rs1598.40
Publication: Penguin Books

In 'The Other Side of Change,' cognitive scientist Maya Shankar explores how life's most unexpected disruptions can reshape our identities and perspectives. Inspired by her own experience of an unforeseen life change, Shankar brings together compelling stories of individuals who have faced profound upheavals.

Weaving these narratives with insights from psychology and behavioral science, she examines how people respond to uncertainty, reclaim a sense of agency, and adapt to circumstances beyond their control.



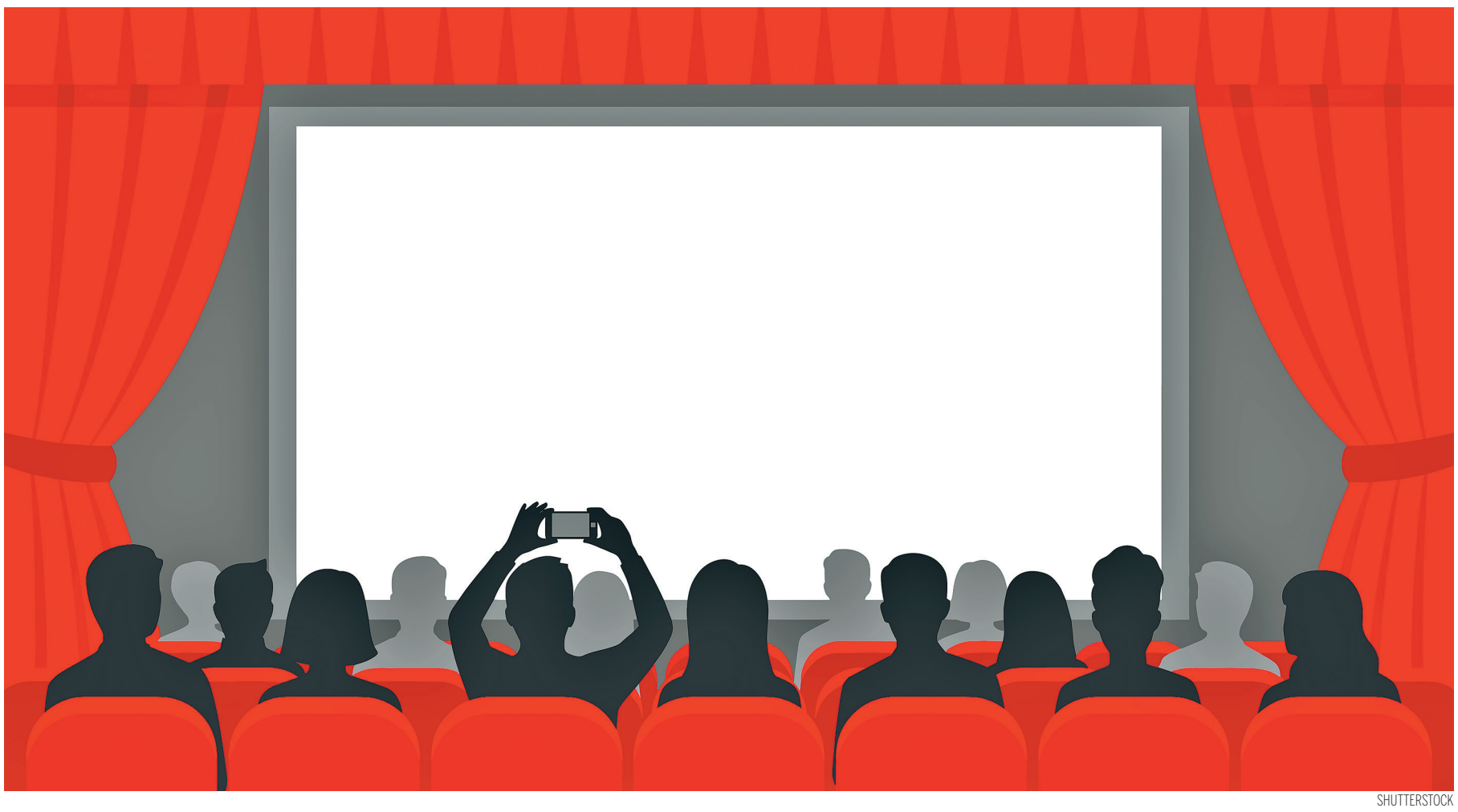
Unlock Your Hidden Star
Author: Vandana V Prakash
Price: Rs638.40
Publication: Harper Learning

In 'Unlock Your Hidden Star' Vandana V Prakash draws on three decades of clinical practice to offer a lucid, deeply compassionate guide through one of India's most misunderstood corners of child development.

The book moves fluidly between clinical explanation and real-world application, illuminating conditions ranging from dyslexia and dyscalculia to dysgraphia and dysorthographia through case studies drawn from her practice. Prakash pushes past textbook definitions toward a sharper reckoning.

As Nepali films go digital, piracy laws struggle to keep up

As audiences record films from cinema seats and circulate them online, Nepali filmmakers are navigating the growing piracy problem.



SHUTTERSTOCK

JONY NEPAL
KATHMANDU

When Suman Giri, one of the producers of Nepal's third-highest grossing film 'Gauthali', came across a YouTube channel that had been continuously posting pirated clips from his movie, what struck him was more than the piracy itself. It was a weary reminder of human nature.

With clips ranging from a few seconds to hours being recorded inside cinema halls and circulated without copyright permission, Giri, also one of the co-producers of Nepal's most celebrated franchise 'Chakka Panja', now believes that every Nepali film is vulnerable to digital piracy.

Initially, he said, short clips of one or two minutes from 'Gauthali' were shared, which the production house tolerated since they also served as promotion. But almost inevitably, it escalated to 20, 27, and even 30-minute segments, splitting the film into 'Part 1, Part 2'.

"This was when we were compelled to report the materials to the Cyber Bureau," he said. "Almost 300 clips posted on social media, particularly on TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, have been taken down until now."

Nepali cinema is increasingly facing sophisticated digital piracy, yet the country's response remains merely reactive. The legal actions involve taking down individual clips under laws that predate the current social-media ecosystem, without even knowing the scale of the losses.

With this trend of digital piracy, the Nepal Film Development Board issued a notice on July 31, 2026, urging social media users and digital platform operators to stop the unauthorised recordings of Nepali and foreign film screenings in theatres.

The Board warned that such 'cam-recording' violated Nepal's Copyright Act 2002 and Electronic Transactions Act 2006, further calling on the public to remove any illegally recorded content posted online. It cautioned that those involved in unauthorised recording or piracy could face legal action under existing law.

The Copyright Act (2002) declares that reproducing, distributing, or publicly sharing a film without the copyright owner's authorisation constitutes infringement. Offenders, as a result, can face a fine of Rs10,000 to Rs100,000, or imprisonment of up to six months, or both, along with seizure of the pirated materials and compensation to the copyright owner.

In accordance with the existing laws, the Nepal Police's Cyber Bureau handles complaints that require digital evidence such as screenshots, URLs, transaction IDs, and metadata-preserved chat logs.

> The real cost of piracy may be the trust between filmmakers and their audience.

"We have received digital piracy complaints particularly from the films 'Gauthali' and 'Balidan'," said Dilip Kumar Giri, SP at the Bureau. "After receiving the links to the illegally uploaded movie clips, we have been taking them down from social media."

Yet, many Nepali audiences appear unaware that recording, sharing, or distributing copyrighted material without permission can have legal consequences. For some, watching pirated clips has simply become a way of staying connected to Nepali cinema.

Sona (name changed), an international student, said that watching Nepali films helps her "feel closer to home while staying connected to her language and culture". As Nepali films are not always screened in global theatres, she turned to pirated videos.

"When I did have the chance to watch movies in the hall, I had posted videos on my Instagram, which I later deleted after realising it was a violation of copyright law."

The Film Development Board, therefore, steps in to raise awareness, reminding the audience that even casual sharing of pirated clips carries legal consequences.

"Some people may not even know it's wrong, and might post something without any real intention of causing harm," said Santosh Babu Lohani, board member of the Nepal Film Development Board. "That is why our first and primary focus is on raising awareness."

As a filmmaker and director himself, Lohani reflects on the challenges of resisting digital piracy.

"I understand that seeing your film scattered across social media in pieces is enormously stressful," he added.

Before watching any film in cinema halls, the audience comes across a message stating that piracy is illegal and that punishment awaits those who engage in it. These acts, to some extent, serve as an alarm and a warning to mitigate the losses faced by filmmakers.

"There have been cases of an entire film being leaked," says Lohani. "Losses can range from small amounts to running into the tens of millions."

While 'Gauthali' was able to generate commendable revenue despite the cases, not all Nepali films' box office could be as ambitious. Digital piracy inflicts direct financial harm on producers, actors, technicians, and exhibitors, while undermining the broader growth of the Nepali film industry.

Meanwhile, other countries are developing technological and institutional responses while Nepal lacks even basic data on the scale of the problem.

As per a recent study, the Indian entertainment industry loses approximately Rs358.4 billion (INR 224 billion) annually to piracy. India's copyright protection framework—the Copyright Act, 1957 (amended in 2012)—reinforces regulations governing the preservation of digital content. It can lead to imprisonment of up to three years with fines, website blocking, and criminal prosecution under the Copyright Act and the Information Technology Act.

The Japanese government is taking a tech-driven approach to fighting anime and manga piracy. The country's Agency for Cultural Affairs has set aside roughly 2 million dollars to build an AI-powered system that hunts down and removes pirated content online.

In Nepal, there is neither an official figure tracking the film industry's monetary losses due to piracy nor a specific aggregation of the official actions taken against it to date. The question, however, is whether copyright laws written nearly two decades ago remain adequate for a radically transformed digital landscape.

"We are in the process of making a new copyright act," said Sunita Aryal, Legal officer of Nepal Copyright Registrar's Office.

Beyond these legal frameworks and revenue losses, digital piracy also comes at the cost of the filmmakers' faith and trust in their audience. "If something is someone's intellectual creation, their life's work and entire income invested into it, and others illegally upload it just so people can watch it for free before it's even properly out, that simply hurts," says Giri.

Ellen Greene revisits Audrey from 'Little Shop of Horrors' for the film's 40th anniversary

Forty years after stepping into Audrey's shoes, Greene is still bringing the character to life.

LINDSEY BAHR

Ellen Greene can still do a killer Audrey.

In conversation, she seamlessly slips in and out of that singular voice — a little breathy, a little squeaky, a little lispy, a little New York — that made her "Little Shop of Horrors" heroine an instant icon. It wasn't a register she'd planned on hitting at the audition. It just came out of her in the moment, and it stuck.

"I didn't think about it," Greene, 75, said in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "It was weird, I mean, I don't know where half of this stuff came from."

Back on tour with 'Little Shop'

In her long and robust career on the stage and screen, Audrey is perhaps Greene's defining role. Her tragicomic shopgirl of skid row belted her way into audiences' hearts off-Broadway in 1982, and then in Frank Oz's 1986 film opposite Rick Moranis.

The catchy musical about that flesh-eating plant is never too far in the rearview either. Every few years it seems she's beckoned for an encore. In 2015, she reprised the role for three sold-out shows, with Jake Gyllenhaal playing Seymour.

Starting this weekend, she'll be making stops around the country for the next few months for 40th anniversary screenings, from Seattle (Aug. 18) to Atlanta (Nov. 13). Performances of "Somewhere That's Green" have been promised too.

'Somewhere That's Green'

That aching ballad about wanting more, aside from being one of the big showstoppers, holds a special place for Greene. She remembers first listening to it on the unemployment line, waiting to get her check, and quietly singing along.

"I just knew there was an Audrey inside of me waiting to be born," Greene said.

She carried that feeling to the audition where composer Alan Menken jumped in to play the piano with lyricist Howard Ashman, already her great friend, looking on. When she finished, everyone was in tears.

Getting the role wasn't any sort of immediate windfall either. When they started at the WPA Theatre in New York, she was being paid $50 a week for a month of rehearsals and two months of shows off-Broadway. But it was a hit. One night, Steve Martin, who would later play Audrey's abusive dentist boyfriend in the film, even came to see it with Mary Tyler Moore.

On the stage, she performed "Somewhere That's Green" sitting on a trash can. For the film, Ashman wrote the number to be staged like the Leslie Caron and Cyd Charisse numbers they both loved, where a character walks into a room and suddenly they're in a different outfit for the song.

"You would think I would just have been floored and so excited that he gave me this gift," she said. "Instead, I call him up and I'm crying my eyes out. And I'm saying, wait for this, 'Where's my trash can?'"

Ashman, she said, just laughed and assured her that they'd elicit the same response when the camera pans out to reveal she's still on skid row. Ironically, this whole exchange happened before she'd even officially been cast in the movie.

How the audience saved Audrey from dying

The story of how the film was made is long and bumpy. John Landis was originally attached to direct, then, briefly, Martin Scorsese, before it found its way to Oz. Greene's participation was never a given, either. Producer David Geffen wanted to get a "bigger name," like Cyndi Lauper, on screen.

"I never thought I would have gotten the film," Greene said.

But it's hard to imagine anyone else turning in a performance as distinctive. Test audiences loved her Audrey so much that they wholly rejected an ending in which she dies.

"I love that death scene, personally," Greene said. "But I had an inkling, you see, because Frank directed the Audrey for the screen more heroine-like."

He'd taken out lines from the play like "you don't meet nice boys when you live on skid row," she said in Audrey-speak. She thinks it set her up a little differently. Then at the end, there's the line "when I die, which should be very shortly." On stage, she said it to the audience. In the film, she says it to Seymour. It's more intimate and serious.

"Frank thinks it's because we didn't take a bow, like in the play, but I think it's because it's just the line is interpreted two different ways. One sets it up that this is silly and I'm OK, and the other one is it's real and it's touching," she said.

Oz ultimately relented and they shot a happier conclusion. Now, Greene just likes that they both exist (the original in a director's cut).



PHOTOS: AP/RSS



Keeping Howard Ashman's memory alive

Remembering "Little Shop" is also a way to remember Ashman, who died of complications related to AIDS in 1991. Their friendship was one of many laughs, songs and adventures. He even took her on her first trip to Paris.

"We got into my room and he put on a bubble bath, because he knows I love bubble baths. I got into the bath, he gave me Champagne, he gave me caviar, he put on Piaf," she said. "We had separate rooms, of course, but we were close, so what can you do? And I'm from the theater, so I'm not modest."

He also looked out for her. When they were drawing up contracts for the "Little Shop" stage run, all she could think about was making sure London was in there. Unbeknownst to her, Ashman had also given her a half point of the profit, "because I created Audrey," she said.

"That's how generous and kind he was and how much he loved me," she said. "Everybody loves Audrey because we, I, loved her first. And everybody loves "Little Shop" because we put so much love in it … I am so grateful and very humble because when they love 'Little Shop', they keep it alive, and they keep Howard Ashman alive."

– Associated press

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