

THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL

PM SHAH GREETES ON INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDIA

RSS
Kathmandu, Aug. 15

On the occasion of 80th Independence Day of the Republic of India, Prime Minister Balendra Shah has extended his heartfelt greetings and best wishes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and to the friendly people and Government of India.

In a post on his official X account this morning, the Prime Minister has also wished that the deep historical ties, close people-to-people relations and cooperation between Nepal and India may continue to strengthen in the years ahead.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal has extended his warmest congratulations and best wishes to the government and citizens of India on their 80th Independence Day today.

He has also highlighted the rich historical and cultural ties that bind Nepal and India, along with the strong connections between their citizens.

Minister Khanal has, through his good will message, expressed his optimism that the close friendship and collaboration between the two nations will further grow stronger in the years to come.

He also noted that the long-standing harmony, cultural affinity, and cooperation have fortified the bilateral relations between the two countries.

TWO PILGRIMS DIE IN BUS ACCIDENT

RSS
Trishuli (Nuwakot), Aug. 15

A tragic bus accident occurred on the Tokha-Chhahare road in Nuwakot today, resulting in the deaths of two pilgrims and injuries to three others.

The deceased, identified as 54-year-old Krishnamaya Prajapati from Banepa and 65-year-old Udayamaya Khatri from Ramechhap, succumbed to their injuries after being transported to a hospital.

The accident took place at Thanabhanjyang in Shivपुर Rural Municipality while the bus carrying pilgrims to Dupcheswar Mahadev, which was parked for lunch, rolled away and collided with a stationary EV van, leading both vehicles to fall approximately 50 meters down the road.

The injured, including 25-year-old Sujata Pokharel, 42-year-old Sharmila Shrestha, and 60-year-old Gyanu Shrestha, have been sent to Kathmandu for medical treatment.

The bus driver, Sitaram Acharya, has been detained for further investigation into the incident



People waiting in queues to buy liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders at Radha Swami in Basundhara, Kathmandu, on Saturday. Nepal Oil Corporation sold LPG from five locations in the Kathmandu Valley to ease the shortage of cooking gas faced by consumers.

PHOTO: KABIN ADHIKARI/TRN

Most quake-damaged heritage rebuilt but experts rue over quality of structures

BY BINU SHRESTHA
Kathmandu, Aug. 15

The 2015 Barpak-Gorkha earthquake destroyed many heritage sites within seconds. Structures that had stood proudly for generations, carrying the weight of history were reduced to debris within minutes. Bricks came apart, unique and rich carved wooden windows broke and statues of the temples were disfigured.

The earthquake caused extensive destruction, damage and suffering across Nepal. It resulted in 8,786 deaths and 22,491 injuries, while approximately 469,000 houses were destroyed. The earthquake also caused massive damage to Nepal's heritage with 920 heritage monuments affected.

The government's Post Disaster Need Assessment (PDNA) documented that the earthquake affected approximately 2,900 structures of cultural and religious significance.

After years of efforts, many temples now stand again. Some are in the process of reconstruction while some still await restoration. New bricks, new timber, and rebuilt structures have brought them back to life. Yet discussion remains among the heritage experts and heritage activists: if they only look the same, have we truly restored our heritage or simply rebuilt its appearance?



Neglected remains of Sundhara and Dharahara.

TRN SPECIAL

At first glance, they seem as before with the same shape, windows, pinnacles and architecture. But when we look closely beneath the surface, we find a different story.

Heritage experts, activists and even the Office of the Auditor General highlighted the weakness of failing to reuse old materials in heritage reconstruction.

However, Rule 9 of the Public Procurement Regulations, 2064 BS provides guidelines on the matters to be considered when preparing cost estimates. One important consideration is the potential reuse of construction materials.

The 62nd Annual Report of the Office

of the Auditor General pointed out that Department of Archaeology (DoA) has been paying for the demolition of old structures and new construction work as separate items in the Bill of Quantities.

However, the reuse of materials such as wood, windows, doors, stones, bricks and other elements recovered from demolished structures has not been properly verified.

There is no clear record confirming whether these original materials were actually reused.

The report stated that during the reconstruction of Yaksheshwor Temple in Bhaktapur, the old structure was demolished without properly recording or preserving reusable timber. Later, variations were made citing a shortage of old materials.

Rebuilt or restored

Restoration aims to preserve original materials and traditional techniques wherever possible. But reconstruction or rebuilding may require new materials and new techniques. The problem begins when a new structure looks like old one, but the original materials, traditional craftsmanship, and historic construction methods are gradually lost.

Prof. Dr. Sudarshan Raj Tiwari, an architect and heritage conservation researcher, has argued that rebuilding heritage sites should use old materials, skills and construction method. Too much use of modern materials can reduce the original character and authenticity of historic monuments.

He highlighted that true heritage conservation means reusing the original materials and traditional techniques as much as possible.

In the case of Kasthamandap, old materials and traditional methods were conserved. It is a model for heritage conservation. However, in the case of Rato Machhindranath temple in Bungegamati, original foundation materials were replaced with new materials. If traditional methods are not preserved, a structure may be rebuilt, but its original value could be lost for ever. Authenticity in heritage is not just about what we see, it also includes materials, craftsmanship, technology and cultural value, he said.

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LPG cylinders to be sold from seven locations today

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 15

The Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) has arranged for the sale of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders at seven locations in Kathmandu Valley on Sunday to facilitate consumers facing an urgent shortage of cooking gas.

According to a press statement issued by the NOC on Saturday evening, LPG cylinders of various brands will be sold from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at designated locations in coordination with the District Administration Office, Kathmandu.

The designated outlets are the NOC premises at Teku, Animal Service Branch in Chapali, Budhanilkantha, Radha Swami premises in Kirtipur, Naya Bazar Judo Hall, Tarakeshwor Municipality premises, Chandragiri Municipality Office and the National Tuberculosis Centre in Thimi, Bhaktapur.

The concerned gas industries will sell LPG to consumers in coordination with the NOC and the District Administration Office, Kathmandu.

Consumers can purchase Nepal, HP,

Everest/Sugam, Shriram and Sagar brands from the NOC premises in Teku.

Similarly, Nepal, HP and Bhanu brands will be available at the Animal Service Branch in Chapali, Budhanilkantha. The Radha Swami premises in Kirtipur will distribute Nepal, HP, Everest/Sugam, Shrimaya, Shreekrishna and Sai Baba brands, while Naya Bazar Judo Hall will distribute Nepal, HP and Om brands.

Similarly, Nepal and HP brands will be available at the Tarakeshwor Municipality Office, while Lokpriya, Nepal, HP and Shrimaya brands will be available at the Chandragiri Municipality Office. At the National Tuberculosis Centre in Thimi, consumers can purchase Nepal, HP, Surya, Sagar, Everest/Sugam and STC brands.

The NOC said consumers in urgent need of LPG must bring their citizenship certificate or National Identity Card to purchase a cylinder from the designated outlets.

The corporation said LPG imports are continuing regularly and gas industries are also distributing cylinders through their respective dealers.

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The buck stops somewhere else

A look at Trump's tendency to avoid blame when things go awry

AP
Washington, Aug. 15

It is among the most famous phrases in presidential history: "The buck stops here." Except with President Donald Trump, it almost never does.

Concerns about a weak economy and still-high inflation? His predecessor, Joe Biden, saddled him with that, he says, even though the Democrat has been out of office for 18-plus months and despite Trump once promising an immediate turnaround.

The problem-plagued revamp of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool? That was marred by vandalism, the Republican president insists, even though the office of a prosecutor he put in the job has said the damage was due to shoddy workmanship.

The increasingly unpopular war



in Iran that has kept oil prices high, Trump's approval rating low and sent shock waves through the global economy? Actually, this was Trump making

up for timid earlier presidents who, he argues, squandered nearly 50 years of opportunities to curb Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

Pithy slogans aside, all modern presidents shift responsibility onto others to some degree, frequently blaming the commander-in-chief who preceded them, Congress — or both. But Trump has taken it to a new level, effectively embracing a de facto political strategy of being in charge of everything but responsible for nothing when things go badly.

"Taking responsibility being a characteristic of presidential leadership — or any kind of leadership — is absolutely true," said Nicole Anslover, a history professor at Florida Atlantic University and author of "Harry S. Truman: The Coming of the Cold War."

Trump's tendency to point fingers at others is increasingly in the spotlight before November's midterm elections,

when Republicans are trying to retain control of Congress. His unwillingness to accept blame sometimes leads him to deny that there are problems at all, and could leave GOP leaders in tight races with little reassurance for voters that their concerns are being addressed.

The White House counters that Trump is working to correct long-festering challenges, not simply throwing up his hands and ignoring them.

The president is "rightfully addressing the failures of his predecessors while taking action to deliver big wins for the American people," spokesperson Taylor Rogers said, pointing to a series of policies that she said Republicans can run on, including tax cuts, efforts to lower prescription drug prices, cracking down on immigration and the U.S.-Mexico border, increasing domestic energy production and a strong stock market.

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BULLION
(Rs. per tola)

Hallmark Gold

: Rs. 301,600/-

Worked Gold

: NA

Silver

: Rs. 4,660/-

STOCK

NEPSE

: 2,643.83

Total Amount

: 4,275,675,402.84

No. of Share

: 9,754,403

NTC’S NET PROFIT RISES TO RS. 8.86 BILLION

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 15

Nepal Telecommunication Company Limited (NTC)’s net profit rose 47.58 per cent to Rs. 8.86 billion in the Fiscal Year 2025/26, according to the company’s unaudited fourth-quarter financial results.

The state-owned telecommunications company recorded a net profit of Rs. 8.86 billion in the year that ended mid-July, up Rs. 2.85 billion from Rs. 6 billion in the corresponding period of the previous FY 2025/26.

Profit before tax of the NTC increased 34.66 per cent to Rs. 13.26 billion from Rs. 9.85 billion a year earlier. Similarly, earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation rose 10.73 per cent to Rs. 20.48 billion from Rs. 18.49 billion.

The company reported annualised earnings per share of Rs. 49.25.

Likewise, the NTC’s total operating income increased 3.12 per cent to Rs. 34.95 billion during the review period, from Rs. 33.89 billion a year earlier. Total income rose 2.65 per cent to Rs. 39.19 billion from Rs. 38.18 billion.

The company said its GSM segment’s revenue rose by Rs. 645.4 million, or 2.28 per cent, compared with the previous financial year. However, interest income declined by Rs. 861.9 million, or 22.88 per cent, amid a gradual reduction in interest rates.

The company said it has continued to expand services and improve service quality in remote and geographically difficult areas, where operating costs are relatively high and returns are comparatively lower.

US RETAIL SALES SLUMP UNEXPECTEDLY

AP
New York, Aug. 15

After splurging on the World Cup and Amazon Prime Day sales, Americans unexpectedly cut their spending in July by the biggest amount in more than a year.

Retail sales fell 0.6% last month, marking the biggest decrease since May 2025, compared with a revised gain of 0.2% in June, according to the Commerce Department data released Friday. Economists were projecting a small increase. The decline followed a notable bump in spending in both April and May as Americans dipped into their government tax refunds.

The drop in spending for July, however, raised concern among some economists about the resiliency of consumers who have powered the economy forward despite nagging inflation and soaring gasoline prices. Yet, it may be too early to declare a retreat by one of the strongest and most consistent forces in the U.S. economy of late.

Tanahun farmers adopt rabbit farming

BY AMAR RAJ NAHARKI
Tanahun, Aug. 15

Rabbit farming is being promoted in Tanahun to attract farmers to the commercial venture, as it requires relatively little investment, labour and space. The programme aims to increase farmers’ income and meet the local demand for rabbit meat.

With support from the Directorate of Agricultural Research, Lumle, Kaski, farmers have started receiving technical information as well as improved breeds of rabbits for breeding purposes. Under the programme, seven farmers in Tanahun were recently provided with seven pairs of adult rabbits of the California and Soviet Chinchilla breeds free of charge.

A team comprising the Directorate’s Technical Officer Dr. Lilaram Pathak, scientist and Animal Nutrition Specialist Dr. Rishi Shrestha, and Technical Officer (veterinary) Dr. Deepa Paudel handed over the rabbits

Private sector seeks power trading right

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 15

Stakeholders have called for greater private sector’s participation in electricity trading, saying additional power trading companies are essential to promote the domestic and international marketing of electricity generated in Nepal.

Speaking at the Friday Forum organised by the Independent Power Producers’ Association, Nepal (IPPAN), they said private-sector involvement in power trading was necessary to address the growing problem of electricity wastage and safeguard the billions of rupees invested in power generation.

They said that hydropower generation was expanding rapidly and that a competitive power trading market would help ensure systematic consumption and export of electricity.

The large-scale electricity trading could not be handled by a single entity or through limited institutional arrangements and that the private sector should be allowed to obtain power trading licences, they said.

They also maintained that licences could be issued under the existing legal framework and urged the government not to delay the process.

Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Biraj Bhakta Shrestha said the government was moving ahead with a focus on promoting the private sector. “The government wants to move forward in collaboration with the private sector,” Shrestha said. “We are working to form a high-level committee to collaborate with the private sector.”

Former deputy managing director of the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) Prabal Adhikari presented a paper on ‘Nepal-India Electricity Trade: The Way Forward for the Private Sector’ at the programme.



IPPAN president Mohan Kumar Dangi welcomes Energy Minister Biraj Bhakta Shrestha.

Adhikari said there was no legal obstacle to issuing licences to private companies, as the Cabinet had already approved the Nepal Power Trading Company Limited (NPTC), a subsidiary of the Nepal Electricity Authority, for power trading.

Although the term ‘electricity trading’ is not explicitly mentioned in the Act, the government has already granted permission to the authority’s subsidiary, he said.

Section 21 of the Electricity Act, 2049 states that if a producer wishes to sell all the electricity it generates at once, the government may purchase or arrange for its purchase by incorporating it into the national grid. The tariff for such electricity shall be determined as prescribed by the Electricity Regulatory Commission.

Arguing that electricity trading is a complex issue, Adhikari said that the government investment alone would

not be sufficient for transmission and distribution infrastructure.

“Electricity trading is a complex issue, so it is not possible to conduct electricity trading through just one government entity,” he said.

Energy Secretary Sarita Dawadi said the ministry was committed to opening the way for private-sector participation in transmission and distribution.

“Today’s discussion focused on the need for private-sector participation in transmission and distribution along with generation. The ministry is committed to this,” she said. “The ministry is working accordingly to open the way for private-sector participation in electricity trading.”

Former secretary Anup Kumar Upadhyay said efforts had previously been made to issue licences to the private sector but were stalled due to the lack of a stable government.

“There had been repeated preparations to introduce legislation for granting power trading licences, but decisions could not be taken because governments changed during the process,” he said. “Now, hopefully, a decision will be made. There is no doubt that power trading licences should be issued.”

Ram Prasad Dhital, chairman of the Electricity Regulatory Commission, said the transmission charge would be determined and made public in the first week of Bhadra.

“When the open access guidelines were first introduced, there was a plan to meet all the criteria within a month. But that did not happen,” he said. He also said that there could be a conflict of interest if the same organisation is responsible for production, distribution and transmission. He said that the issuance of the open access directive

Labour permit numbers increase in Koshi Province

BY HARI PRASAD KOIRALA
Uribari, Aug. 15

The number of people from Koshi Province obtaining labour approval for foreign employment has been steadily increasing.

According to the Economic Activity Study Report of Koshi Province for the fiscal year 2024/25, published by the Nepal Rastra Bank’s Biratnagar Office, a total of 177,659 people from the province obtained labour approval for foreign employment during the year. This was a 10.57 per cent increase from 160,672 in the previous fiscal year 2023/24.

According to the report, the number of people leaving for foreign employment increased in all 14 districts of Koshi except Sankhuwasabha, where the figure declined by 0.08 per cent compared to the previous year.

Sunsari recorded the highest growth with the number of people obtaining labour approval for foreign employment increasing by 13.41 per cent. The figure rose from 23,949 in the previous fiscal year to 27,160 last year.

The number of labour approvals also increased by 12.22 per cent in Jhapa, 12.08 per cent in Solukhumbu, 12.62 per cent in Taplejung, 11.27 per cent in Udayapur, 11.12 per cent in Bhojpur and 11.48 per cent in Morang. The NRB data also showed increases in labour approvals in Dhankuta, Ilam, Khotang, Okhaldhunga, Panchthar and Tehrathum.

Chief of the Labour and Employment Office in Biratnagar Niraj Kumar Dev said the figures covered only those going abroad for employment. “The data do not include students going abroad for studies, people travelling for visits or those going on residential visas,” he said. He added that people travelling abroad from Nepal for various purposes could not be included in labour approval figures simply on the assumption that everyone worked while abroad.

Likewise, Dev said that although the federal, provincial and local governments conduct various training programmes and seminars every year to create employment opportunities within the country, they have failed to generate sufficient jobs domestically.

The lack of expected investment and employment growth in agriculture, industry, tourism, and other productive sectors appears to have made foreign employment a major option for Nepali youth. Although remittances from foreign employment have been supporting the economy, the increasing outflow of skilled workers is raising the risk of a shortage of productive human resources in the long term.

In particular, the double-digit growth in the number of people seeking foreign employment even from industrially promising districts such as Sunsari, Jhapa and Morang has reinforced the perception that there are limited employment opportunities within the country.

Six motorable bridges built in Gorkha in a year

BY GUNA BAHADUR ROKA
Sulikot, Aug. 15

Gorkha has made significant progress in road infrastructure development over the past Fiscal Year 2025/26. The Infrastructure Development Office, Gorkha, made remarkable progress by completing the construction of six motorable bridges at various locations in the district last year.

The office had completed only three motorable bridges in the previous fiscal year 2024/25. Chief of the Office Santosh Aryal said the development had helped expand the road network and directly benefited residents in various areas who previously faced difficulties crossing streams and rivers during the monsoon.

According to Mohan Shrestha, an engineer at the Office, four of the bridges completed last year cost more than Rs. 50 million each, while the remaining two cost less than Rs. 50 million.

The completed bridges are the Daraundi River bridge at Naya Saghu, Ludi Khola Bridge connecting Gorkha Municipality and Shahid Lakhani Rural Municipality, Chukti Khola Bridge connecting Lower Sera and Upper Sera in Palungtar Municipality-9, and Nauli Khola Motorable Bridge in Dharche Rural Municipality-7.

Similarly, the Silikhola Bridge connecting Salangiri in Gorkha



Municipality-14 and Ratmate in Palungtar Municipality-8, and the Tadikhola Bridge connecting Katjale and Nayagaun, were completed with budgets of less than Rs. 50 million each, according to the Office.

The bridges are expected to play an important role in keeping rural roads operational throughout the year, facilitating the transportation of agricultural produce to markets and making daily travel easier for local residents.

Meanwhile, the Office achieved an overall financial progress of 83.2 per cent in the last fiscal year. Of the Rs. 1.65 billion budget it received, Rs. 1.37 billion was spent, according to the office.

Of the Rs. 1.630 billion allocated for capital expenditure, Rs. 1.364 billion, or 83.69 per cent, was spent. The Office’s records show that Rs. 11.18 million was spent under the recurrent expenditure heading.

Pandey elected NATTA President

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 15

Bharat Jang Pandey has been elected president of the Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents (NATTA). He defeated Yubika Bhandari and Jiswa Tuladhar Shrestha in the association’s 59th Annual General Meeting and executive committee election held in Kathmandu on Friday.

Pandey secured 188 votes, while Bhandari received 158 votes and Shrestha 106 votes – from the total of 453 votes cast.

The panel led by Pandey won all seven office-bearer positions. Five of the eight remaining executive committee positions were also won by candidates from his panel, while three went to candidates from Bhandari’s panel.

Sunil Sharma was elected senior vice-president, Sabita K.C. Bhattarai vice-president, Raj Kumar Devkota secretary general and Ramesh Parajuli was elected secretary.

Likewise, Diki Sherpa was elected treasurer, while Jiban Koirala secured the joint-treasurer position.

The eight elected executive committee members are Smarika Thapa, Prakash Lohani, Nabin Gurung, Dinesh Mainali, Suman Lal Shrestha, Swastika Pradhan, Sanket Dahal and Bibhash Poudel.

During the inaugural session held on Friday, outgoing NATTA president Kumar Mani Thapaliya called for cooperation between the government and private sector on issues affecting the tourism and travel industry.

Hotel Association Nepal President Binayak Shah, Confederation of Nepalese Industries President Birendra Raj Pandey and FNCCI President Anjan Shrestha spoke about private-sector participation and government support for tourism businesses. They emphasised on bringing the international airports in Bhairahawa and Pokhara in operation and prioritising tourism as a sector to achieve prosperity.

Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister Khadak Raj Poudel ‘Ganesh’ said tourism was important to economic growth and referred to proposed amendments to the Tourism Act.



Rabbits being handed over to farmers.

to six farmers from Byas Municipality-13 and one from Byas-1.

According to Dr. Pathak, both breeds are considered suitable for meat production. He said the rabbits can weigh up to 4.5 kg when fully grown. Farmers can start the business at a low cost as

the rabbits can be raised on household grass and grains, while sheds can be constructed using locally available materials, he said.

The Directorate said demand for rabbit meat has been increasing in various districts of Gandaki Province. Farmers in Gorkha,

Bajura villagers await relocation

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Bajura, Aug. 15

Nearly 93 villages and settlements across all nine local levels of Bajura district are at high risk of floods and landslides. Of these, 49 settlements are currently awaiting relocation to safer areas.

The settlements are highly vulnerable due to the district’s steep terrain, fragile geological structure, river erosion, unplanned road construction, and the growing impacts of climate change. Although around 49 settlements have been considered at risk for years, the government has yet to relocate them to safer locations.

Locals have repeatedly urged the government to relocate their settlements, but their demands have still not been met.

Kaldhari Nepali of Amkot in Budhiganga Municipality-2 said the entire settlement has been at risk of landslides for nearly two decades, but relocation has yet to take place.

“The landslide has already indicated to us that we should leave our homes. But my financial situation does not allow me to do so. But if I continue to stay, a landslide can take my life at any time.



PHOTO: SHER BAHADUR SARKI

Villages and settlements in Bajura at high risk of floods and landslides.

Nepali, who was affected by floods and landslides, said that while her family can live safely at home during winter, they spend the monsoon months in constant fear.

According to the district authorities, 16 settlements in Badimalika, 12 in Budhiganga, 16 in Tribeni, 11 in Budhinanda, 12 in Gaumul, 10

in Khaptad Chhededaha, five in Jagannath, seven in Swamikartik Khapar and four in Himali are at risk of landslides.

Since 2020, around 62 people have lost their lives in disaster-related incidents, including floods and landslides, while more than 1,728 ropanis of cultivable land have been turned

into riverbed, according to the District Police Office, Bajura.

“These settlements are at risk and need to be relocated immediately. However, the relocation process has not yet been properly arranged, making it difficult to move them to safer areas,” said Chief District Officer of Bajura, Dorendra Niraula.

Birendranagar launches free dengue testing

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Surkhet, Aug. 15

Birendranagar Municipality has offered free dengue testing services at the municipal hospital and the Latikoili Health Institute as dengue cases have surged in the district.

At a programme organised by the municipality’s health department on Friday, Mayor Mohan Maya Dhakal said that free dengue testing has been started because dengue cases have been surging in the municipality since last year.

She appealed to the residents to visit the municipal hospital and Latikoili Health Institute for free dengue testing, as people are often unaware of the disease.

She informed that since dengue infection has been increasing recently, awareness programmes as well as search and destroy campaigns will be conducted in each ward to prevent and control it.

According to Mayor Dhakal, since Ward No. 6, 3, 4, 7, and 11 of

Birendranagar Municipality are at high risk, dengue awareness programmes will be expanded in these places.

Similarly, she said that the municipality is also preparing to conduct tests to find out the blood pressure and diabetes status of the residents within the city.

Of the nine local levels in Surkhet, dengue cases are high in Birendranagar. Out of 2,207 dengue cases in Surkhet this year, 1,923 dengue patients have been identified in Birendranagar Municipality alone.

According to the Municipal Health Chief Bhupendra dev Giri, there are 225 scrub typhus patients and 22 malaria patients as well in Birendranagar.

Uday BC an official at the Public Health Office, Surkhet stated that the search and destroy method should be conducted regularly.

He mentioned that this campaign would not cost anything and everyone can participate, so dengue can be prevented if mosquitoes can be destroyed. He urged people not to let water accumulate in old utensils, tires, etc.

Sudurpaschim hosts Olke Heritage Ride

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Dadeldhura, Aug. 15

On the eve of Olke, a traditional festival of Sudurpaschim, the wheels of bicycles turned through Dadeldhura. A group of young people gathered early in the morning at Bagbazar and cycled towards Ugratara via the historic Amargadhi Fort.

Their destination was a religious and cultural heritage site, while the ride aimed to promote health as well as preserve the region’s traditional culture and identity.

The ‘Olke Heritage Ride-2083’, which started from Bagbazaar in Amargadhi Municipality-5, passed through the historic stone Amargadhi Fort and reached the famous Ugratara Temple in Amargadhi-8 before returning to Bagbazar.

Although the one-day cycling event appeared to be an ordinary ride, it brought together Sudurpaschim’s culture, heritage, environment and healthy lifestyle.

Organised by Far Western Riders in cooperation with Nisarga Hospital and Research Centre, the ride was attended by cycling enthusiasts from Dadeldhura.

Organiser Bharat Bikram Shah said the ride began at 7 am on Saturday from different parts of Sudurpaschim. Cyclists from Dhangadhi, Attariya,

Mahendranagar, Belaury, Punarbas, Bardagoriya and Dadeldhura started their rides at the same time.

According to Shah, the ride was not organised merely as a recreational cycling event but as a campaign to introduce Sudurpaschim’s traditional culture and heritage to the younger generation.

Olke, celebrated on Bhadra 1 of the Nepali calendar in Sudurpaschim, is a distinctive traditional festival of the region. It is associated with social relationships, family bonds and community harmony, with a tradition of exchanging gifts and special food items.

Times and lifestyles are changing. Increasing numbers of people are moving from villages to cities and abroad for employment and education. Communication technology is also rapidly changing people’s lifestyles. In such circumstances, passing traditional customs on to the younger generation has become increasingly challenging.

Participants said the Olke Heritage Ride could be seen as an effort to address this challenge. Mohan Deuba, one of the participants, said it was necessary to create an environment in which young people could understand and embrace traditional festivals and culture.

“We need to connect the younger generation with our culture to preserve it. The bicycle ride was an effort to take the message of Olke to young people,” he said.

Harwacharwa Forum presses Madhes govt for rights and rehabilitation

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Gaushala, Mahottari, Aug. 15

The Freed Harwacharwa Rights Forum has urged the Madhes Provincial government to immediately start collecting and verifying data on the Harwacharwa community and distributing identity cards to its members.

The forum has given the government a 10-day ultimatum, demanding concrete policies, a budget and an implementation plan to identify landless freed Harwacharwa families and ensure their sustainable rehabilitation, land rights, social security, decent employment and livelihood opportunities.

The forum submitted a memorandum to Minister for Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperatives Shyam Patel, signed by the district chairpersons of the Freed Harwacharwa Rights Forum from all eight districts of Madhes Province.

The forum warned that it would launch peaceful and phased protests if its demands were not addressed within the given timeframe.

According to the forum, nearly four years have passed since the then Prime Minister Sher Bahadur

The Madhes provincial government has pledged, through point 4.2.1 of its policies and programmes for the fiscal year 2026/27, to ensure the full liberation of the Harwacharwa community and ensure land rights, social security, economic rehabilitation and dignified livelihoods.

Deuba declared the Harwacharwa community free from the traditional system of bonded labour on July 18, 2022, but the decision has not been effectively implemented.

Although the government formally declared the community free, many Harwacharwa families still face landlessness, poverty, unsafe housing, unemployment and social insecurity, the forum claimed.

The Madhes provincial government has pledged, through point 4.2.1 of its policies and programmes for the fiscal year 2026/27, to ensure the full liberation of the Harwacharwa community and ensure land rights, social security,

economic rehabilitation and dignified livelihoods.

However, the forum said the government had not made public the action plan, budget, responsible agencies or clear timeframe needed to implement the commitment.

The forum has put forward two main demands for immediate implementation. First, it has called for effective coordination with local governments in all eight districts of Madhes Province to begin collecting and verifying data on the Harwacharwa community and distributing identity cards.

It has also demanded that landless freed Harwacharwa families be identified and a clear action plan for their sustainable rehabilitation be approved and implemented. Along with rehabilitation, the forum has called for ensuring land rights, social security, employment and livelihood opportunities.

The forum has urged the government to make public, within seven to 10 days of receiving the memorandum, concrete decisions, the necessary budget and a clear implementation process to address the demands. District chairpersons of the forum said that if the demands were not met, they would organise phased protests, including mass rallies and sit-ins.

They said the proposed protests would be entirely peaceful, democratic and in accordance with the Constitution, with the leadership and participation of the community.

Receiving the memorandum, Minister Patel said the provincial government was serious about the demands of the community. According to the forum, he pledged to coordinate with the Chief Minister and take the necessary steps to address the demands within the given timeframe.

The forum said the liberation of the community should not remain limited to government declarations and assurances.

It stressed that real liberation means practical guarantees of identity, rights, rehabilitation and a dignified life, and urged the provincial government to immediately implement the commitments included in its own policies and programmes.

The forum said the community had long been forced to live without adequate access to land, employment, housing and social security.

It called on the state to implement programmes that would allow the community to experience the freedom declared by the government in practice. It also said data collection and identity card distribution should be used as the basis for ensuring rehabilitation and rights.

New trekking route to Rikhar constructed



BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Myagdi, Aug. 15

A trekking route leading to the famous religious site of Rikhar in Kuinemangale, Ward No. 8 of Raghuganga Rural Municipality, Myagdi, has been constructed. As visitors to the Rikhar area were facing difficulties due to the lack of a proper trail route, the rural municipality constructed the trail at several difficult locations.

According to Kulraj Paudel,

Chief Administrative Officer of Raghuganga Rural Municipality, the footpath was constructed through a users’ committee with an allocation of Rs. 500,000 from the current fiscal year’s budget.

He said the trial was built to make it easier for devotees visiting the Rikhar Temple for worship and religious rituals on the occasion of Janai Purnima.

Chitra Bahadur Chhetry, chairman of the Trekking Route Construction Users’ Committee and also chairman of the Likhar Conservation Committee, said that approximately 60 meters of

footpath was constructed at various locations.

He said that people traveling to Rikhar had previously faced several difficulties because there was no proper trekking path. He added, “The rural municipality has made travel easier by constructing trial routes at places that were difficult to access using the budget allocated for the current fiscal year.”

Located near the Dhaulagiri Base Camp at an altitude of approximately 4,500 meters, Rikhar is an area of significant

religious and natural importance. He said the local government should give priority to developing tourism infrastructure and promoting the area.

Rikhar is a sacred religious site situated in the foothills of the world’s seventh-highest mountain, Dhaulagiri. It has long been recognised as a holy pilgrimage site where the Seven Sages (Saptarishis) are believed to have meditated and attained spiritual knowledge. Special worship and religious rituals are performed at Rikhar on the day of Janai Purnima.

नेपाल सरकार
कानून, न्याय तथा संसदीय मामिला मन्त्रालयको
मानव अधिकार पुरस्कार सम्बन्धी सूचना

(सूचना प्रकाशन मिति : २०८३।०१।३१)

मानव अधिकारको संरक्षण र सम्बर्धनमा उल्लेखनीय योगदान पुऱ्याउने एक जना व्यक्ति र एउटा संस्थालाई प्रत्येक वर्ष अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय मानव अधिकार दिवसको अवसरमा नेपाल सरकारको तर्फबाट मानव अधिकार पुरस्कार प्रदान गरिने र त्यस्तो पुरस्कार छनोटका लागि सूची तयार गर्न पुरस्कारका लागि योग्य व्यक्ति तथा संस्थालाई कुनै व्यक्ति वा संस्थाले सिफारिस गर्नुपर्ने व्यवस्था रहेको छ । यस वर्ष प्रदान गरिने मानव अधिकार पुरस्कारका लागि योग्य व्यक्ति तथा संस्थालाई सिफारिस गर्न इच्छुक व्यक्ति वा संस्थाले मानव अधिकार पुरस्कार कोष सञ्चालन नियमावली, २०७५ र मानव अधिकार पुरस्कार वितरण कार्यविधि, २०७८ बमोजिम आवश्यक कागजात संलग्न गरी सोही कार्यविधिको अनुसूचीमा उल्लिखित ढाँचामा यो सूचना प्रकाशन भएको मितिले २१ (एक्काइस) दिनभित्र यस मन्त्रालयमा वा यस मन्त्रालयको तल उल्लिखित इमेलमा सिफारिस गरी पठाई मानव अधिकार पुरस्कार छनोट प्रक्रियामा सहभागी हुन आह्वान गरिन्छ ।

इमेल : info@moljpa.gov.np
पुनश्च: मानव अधिकार पुरस्कार कोष सञ्चालन नियमावली, २०७५ र मानव अधिकार पुरस्कार वितरण कार्यविधि, २०७८ यस मन्त्रालयको वेबसाइट (www.moljpa.gov.np) मा राखिएको छ ।

मानव अधिकार पुरस्कार समितिको सचिवालय,
कानून, न्याय तथा संसदीय मामिला मन्त्रालय,
सिंहदरबार, काठमाडौं ।

नेपालमा कानूनले बर्जित गरेका अनलाइन प्रविधि मार्फत सञ्चालन हुने जुवा (Betting, Gambling etc.) लगायतका गैर कानूनी क्रियाकलाप तथा आर्थिक अपराधसँग सम्बन्धित वेबसाइट तथा एपहरूमा पहुँच नपुग्ने व्यवस्था गर्ने सम्बन्धमा दूरसञ्चार सेवा प्रदायकहरू (मोबाइल सेवा प्रदायक, इन्टरनेट सेवा प्रदायक लगायतका कम्पनीहरू) का लागि नेपाल दूरसञ्चार प्राधिकरणबाट जारी गरिएको

अत्यन्त जरुरी सूचना

सूचना प्रकाशित मिति : २०८३।०१।३०

नेपालको कानूनले अनलाइन प्रविधि मार्फत सञ्चालन हुने जुवा (Betting, Gambling etc. e.g. 1xBet), क्रिप्टोकरेन्सी, विट्क्वाइन, हाइपर नेटवर्किङ, बालयीनजन्य सामाग्री, अशिल्ल सामाग्रीहरू लगायतको प्रकाशन/पहुँचमा रोक लगाएको हुँदा त्यस्ता गैरकानूनी वेबसाइट तथा एपहरू नेपालभित्र सञ्चालन हुन नसक्ने तथा पहुँच पुग्न नसक्ने गरी व्यवस्था गर्न दूरसञ्चार सेवा प्रदायक संस्थाहरूलाई (मोबाइल सेवा प्रदायक, इन्टर नेट सेवा प्रदायक लगायतका कम्पनीहरू) यसै सूचना मार्फत प्राधिकरणबाट निर्देशन जारी गरिएको छ । यस निर्देशनको पालना नगर्ने दूरसञ्चार सेवा प्रदायक संस्थालाई दूरसञ्चार ऐन, २०५३ तथा प्रचलित कानून बमोजिम कारवाही हुने व्यहोरा समेत यसै सूचनाद्वारा जानकारी गराइन्छ ।

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EDITORIAL

Post For Citizens

Nepal's postal services have the capability to form an important connection between the government and the citizenry. Through door-to-door delivery and improved tracing, the postal system in the country is serving as an important source of government services to the people. The government's effort to revamp the old post service system into a new tech-based and people-friendly public service should be praiseworthy. This is evident from the distribution of passports, driving licenses, education certificates, samples and other official documents to citizens. Through the postal system at least 10,000 people have so far received government documents in their homes, which means that a public institution considered as obsolete can be transformed to suit present day needs. As of August 12, 2026, the postal department has transported 247,043 passports to District Administration Offices in 76 districts while 8,669 were directly delivered to the applicant. Over a million driving licenses have been distributed using the postal system. Agreements made with Nepal Open University, National Public Health Laboratory and Health Insurance Board have proved that the service is now going beyond ordinary delivery of mails.

However, the government should not confuse expansion with transformation. Statistics show much work still needs to be done. Only 8,669 out of 247,043 passports were delivered to their recipients. In a similar manner, of the 1,038,808 driving licenses issued, only 1,099 were sent directly to the owners. This shows that the process of delivering letters to the doors is still in its infancy. What is most worrisome is whether there is adequate infrastructure to enable the government to accomplish its task. The Department of Postal Services admits that there is a lack of transportation and IT equipment. A modern postal service cannot be based on poor transportation, computers, and addressing systems. It is good news that a seven-digit postal code and a better tracking system have been introduced, but what would these changes mean if the addresses of the citizens were incorrect?

Continuous rains, damaged roads, difficult terrain, and disrupted transportation have made the rescue operations very difficult. In this case, efficient logistics are necessary for the good of citizens. Efficient logistics would ensure that documents, medicines, relief supplies, and other necessities can be transported to difficult areas. So, the government should see postal reform as a form of public infrastructure, as only administrative reform will not be sufficient to deliver the services. It is necessary to invest in vehicles, technology, staffing, and reliable connections in rural areas. The project Smart Post Office, where 50 post offices are expected to be transformed, must pay attention to remote and under-serviced areas. The postal system requires more accountability from the citizens' side. Citizens must be able to easily trace their documents, have delivery times and make complaints about inadequate services. There could be integration between the passport databases and the postal tracking system, but proper protection of privacy and data should be guaranteed. The government should ensure postal system effective in serving the interests of citizens, especially who live away from the administrative centres.

Fading Community Culture

KUMUD GAUTAM

Kathmandu has always been something more than a city of houses and roads. For generations, its neighbourhoods, or toles as they are known locally, were tight-knit communities where people knew each other, children played together, festivals were celebrated together, and neighbours helped each other in good and bad times. But today this culture is slowly dying out as rapid urbanisation, migration and changing lifestyles shape the capital of Nepal. This change is evident to many residents not only in terms of buildings, but also in the loosening of social ties.

In traditional settlements in the Kathmandu Valley, community life was organised around common spaces. Courtyards, temples, stone spouts, local tea shops and public squares were not just physical structures; they were places where people gathered to exchange news, share experiences and strengthen relationships. Neighbours visited each other without formal invitations, helped each other at weddings and funerals, and shared food during festivals. The neighbourhood often functioned like an extended family.

This pattern has changed due to rapid urban growth. People from across Nepal have flocked to Kathmandu for education, employment, health care and business opportunities. As the population has increased, so has the growth of concrete houses, apartment buildings, commercial centres and busy roads, replacing farmland and conventional habitation. This development has created opportunities, but it's also made neighbourhood relationships less personal.

Many people today live in rented rooms or apartments and may not know their neighbours. Families are always moving, so it is difficult to develop long-term relationships. The new ways of working have also reduced social interaction. Parents leave early, young people spend long hours in school, college or work, and evenings are more and more spent indoors.

Children, too, have undergone this change. The older people remember

playing football in the open fields, playing marbles in the alleys, hide and seek in the courtyards and traditional games with local friends. Construction and parking have taken away many of the open spaces. Concerns about safety and heavy traffic also prevent parents from letting their children play outside freely. Mobile phones, television and internet-based games are increasingly taking the place of outdoor community play.

The erosion of neighbourhood culture also threatens the cultural heritage of Kathmandu. Festivals such as Indra Jatra, Gai Jatra and many local jatras depend on the active participation of the community. Traditional guthis have long been involved in organising ceremonies, maintaining temples and supporting social activities. If the younger generations are cut off from these institutions, the knowledge of the rituals, music, food, language and local history may gradually disappear.

But neighbourhood culture is not entirely gone. During festivals, earthquakes, family emergencies and community events, residents continue to show strong traditions of cooperation. In many older settlements, guthis are still active, whereas in newer settlements, youth clubs, local committees and social organisations have been established.

Kathmandu needs to modernise, but development should not destroy the relationships that make the city what it is. Protection of courtyards, parks, pedestrian spaces and traditional heritage sites can encourage people to meet and interact. Community clean-ups, cultural programmes, local sports and festivals can unite old and new residents, too.

The future of Kathmandu cannot be gauged in terms of wider roads, taller buildings or rising property prices. A liveable city is one where people feel connected and supported. If Kathmandu loses its habit of knowing, helping and celebrating with its neighbours, it risks losing something that modern buildings and technology cannot replace: the sense of belonging that once made every tole feel like home.

OP-ED

Military Ties Boost Bilateral Bonds



Suresh Sharma

The military-to-military relations between the Nepali Army and the Indian Army are rooted in history, geography, culture, and different levels of professional interaction. Military camaraderie occupies a distinctive place among the many dimensions of bilateral relations between the two immediate neighbours. The foundations can be traced back to the eighteenth century, with the tradition of recruiting Nepal-domiciled Gorkha (NDG) into the Indian Army.

The Indian embassy in Kathmandu notes that India has always been proud of the rich tradition of enlisting of NDG soldiers in the Indian Army. Gorkha soldiers contributed to India's security during the British rule and continued their service following Indian independence in 1947, undertaking both conventional and unconventional operational roles. This legacy of Gorkha soldiers continues today in the context of newer security challenges associated with India's Line of Control and Line of Actual Control. It has produced unwavering professional, institutional, and familial bonds between the two armies, and most importantly, friendly relations between the two countries.

Guiding principles of foreign policy

"Amity with all, and enmity with none" remains the foundational motto of Nepal's foreign policy, guiding the nation in maintaining balanced, peaceful, and friendly relations with all countries, regardless of their political systems or size. Defence policy is an important

component of foreign policy; the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has its own interests, which are a constituent element of national foreign policy. The MoD ensures national security through military means. To this end, it is necessary to constantly pursue favourable conditions, which can be created through military diplomacy, for military cooperation with foreign armies. Despite the world being unified by a web of mutual dependencies, military power and national interests still validate the traditional approaches to security. Regional stability among neighbouring countries, regardless of their size or economic strength, requires meaningful interaction and greater interconnectedness through military diplomacy.

The bond of friendship between the Nepali and Indian armies has a long legacy. The contribution of the Indian Army to the Nepali Army's modernisation programme has helped shape its organisational and operational structure and weapon systems, which have evolved to become identical to those of the Indian Army. This has helped the Nepali Army institutionalise its operational doctrine and logistics system. The supports have different dimensions beyond modernisation. The training cooperation and the supply of weapons and equipment to the Nepali Army have given an exceptional impetus to its professionalism and capability. There has been a valuable offer to meet our military's hardware wastage rates. In fact, such assistance is valuable; however, the Nepali Army's modernisation must be driven by Nepal's own security requirements.

Joint exercises are the most visible manifestations of Nepal-India military cooperation. Both armies conduct joint training exercises annually in each other's territory. The 18th edition of the joint military exercise, Surya Kiran, was conducted in Nepal from 31 December 2024 to 13 January 2025. The primary aim of such

The high-level visit gives an opportunity to the highest political leader to learn from the professional expertise and strategic insights of the senior-most military leaders in determining and prioritizing various aspects of the security strategy between the two neighbouring countries.

joint exercises is to enhance interoperability between the two armies. Such exercises are valuable in complex disaster management and prevent cross-border terrorism and violent extremism. High-level military visits have long helped sustain the friendship between Nepal and India. Visits by the chiefs and senior commanders of both armies reinforce institutional communication and reaffirm longstanding professional ties. The visits of Indian Army Chiefs to Nepal serve as a significant benchmark for reinforcing the longstanding relations between the two armies and reaffirming shared values.

Mutual trust

On the other hand, the tradition of conferring the honorary rank of General upon each other's Army Chiefs remains particularly symbolic. Such tradition helps to boost our camaraderie, mutual trust, and confidence. If the relationship is nurtured into a strong, close-knit partnership, it ensures resilience despite petty differences that may sometimes arise from political differences.

Peacekeeping provides another important area for cooperation. Both

Nepal and India are major troop-contributing countries (TCC) globally, serving in complex conflict zones with dedication and high professional standards. Both forces can work together through pragmatic interoperability experiences amid the daunting challenges of peacekeeping duties. As of June 11th, 2026, the Nepali Army has deployed across nine missions worldwide. Currently, the Nepali Army stands first in the TCC (accessed at https://www.nepalarmy.mil.np/page/na_in_un August 10, 2026). It is well known that multinational troops, when deployed together, have excelled. In this context, Nepal and India can use their respective peacekeeping experiences to exchange lessons and strengthen professional practices. Cooperation in this field can also extend their military camaraderie beyond bilateral relations into the wider international security environment.

Regular high-level military visits should continue, but they should increasingly serve as a forum for substantive strategic dialogue. Such visits can create new avenues for sharing perspectives on transnational security concerns and for reaching a common understanding of mutual interests. Every country maintains a military establishment to serve national interests, counter threats, and project armed force internationally. Finally, military cooperation must remain firmly anchored in mutual respect and national interest. In addition, the high-level visit gives an opportunity to the highest political leader to learn from the professional expertise and strategic insights of the senior-most military leaders in determining and prioritizing various aspects of the security strategy between the two neighbouring countries.

(The author is a retired brigadier general and former spokesperson of the Nepali Army.)

Please Stop Charging The Dead



Ram Sharan Sedhai

Charge begins with birth. It follows even after death. A child doesn't earn. The dead neither earn nor consume. But they must pay a charge. Law requires birth and death registration. Registration demands a fee. Nepal charges the dead by collecting a cremation fee. Charging the dead is unethical, unjust, and against the basic principle of economics.

All governments, irrespective of those formed after the Popular Movement of 1990, have been taxing in life and charging in death. The anti-economic malpractice flourished after 2008 when Nepal was federated. The new constitution created 753 local governments. It allowed the local governments to collect fees, charges, cesses, and taxes at their will.

Poverty

The Economic Survey 2026-27 states that 20.27 per cent of population in Nepal lives below the absolute national poverty line. This means a considerable number of people are so poor that they cannot afford even two meals a day. Poverty is so pervasively entrenched that there are cases of poor families committing collective suicides because of poverty.

Fed up with political instability - 30 governments in 35 years since 1990 - coupled with mismanagement, imprudence, extractive policies, rampant corruption

and culture of impunity, Nepalis rebelled against the traditional political parties in September 2025. The revolt known as the Gen Z movement, changed the political course of Nepal.

Conspiracy theory aside, it was a home-grown revolt triggered by extreme frustration stemming from decades of inaction, corruption, and the unaccountability of political leadership. People expressed it through ballots in the March 5, 2026 election to the House of Representatives. Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), a new political force, won 182 out of 275 seats.

The RSP did not win the election because of its popularity. It won due to the unpopularity of the traditional parties. The old parties faced an ignominious defeat. The RSP should understand that people have just changed their guards. They are watching the government closely. Hence, instead of being euphoric, the RSP should exercise extra vigilance.

The RSP's unexpected victory comes with a string attached: a clear public mandate to steer the nation for five years; high hope for improved policies and public service delivery; relief from bureaucratic red tapism; end of extractive state institutions; and a conviction of a just and welfare nation. Hence, the government has no luxury of basking in the status quo. They will do to you what they did to the traditional parties, lest you perform poorly.

Nepal is not the highest taxer in South Asia. But the cumulative charges in some of the sectors make it. The 13 per cent value-added tax (VAT) appears the lowest among its neighbouring countries. But the government imposes VAT on the amount with other taxes added. Let's take import tax for instance. A product with a cost, insurance and freight value of 100, customs duty 50, VAT base 150, VAT 19.5, and total excluding other charges becomes 169.5.

Burdened with tax right from birth, at least free people after their death.

The general import duty in Nepal ranges from 0-80 per cent. Imported basic items, particularly fossil fuel-run vehicles, are heavily taxed in Nepal. The combined charges exceed 200 per cent. The annual ownership taxes are also high. So is the case with vehicular spare parts, fuel and lubricants.

Before imposing charges, the government should be aware of and keep in mind the paying capacity of its people. A look at Nepal's gross domestic product (GDP), an indicator of a country's economic performance, compared with other South Asian countries reveals bitter reality.

According to IMF World Outlook data on nominal GDP per capita estimates, the Maldives leads by a huge margin with \$18,658. Bangladesh has \$2,911, India \$2,812, Sri Lanka \$5,002, Bhutan \$4,394, Pakistan \$1,550, and Nepal \$1,450. This clearly shows the lowest paying capacity of Nepalis. Hence, heavy taxation means the state is extracting from its citizens.

One of the major causes of a failed state is extraction. Countries that impose heavier taxes on their citizens provide high-quality education, health services, and other public facilities free of cost. And these basic rights of people are absent in Nepal. Taxpayers have not benefited from their contribution to the nation.

Well-connected people evade tax. People on the margins of society pay without fail. There are notorious cases of tax evasion in complicity with the legislative, executive, and judiciary. First, clean out

the political cesspool. Second, reward the taxpayers and punish the tax evaders. Tighten tax collection. This compensates the waiver on cremation charges being imposed on the families of the dead forever.

People die once. Barring exceptions, they don't die en masse. A country with a total population of 30 million can easily afford electric crematoria. Nepal already has abundant electricity and holds a huge potential for producing hydroelectricity. Thus, the government can and should provide an all-time free-of-charge cremation service.

Cremation system

End the centuries-old cremation system. In those days, forget about the use, people of Nepal had not even dreamt of electricity. Cremating on firewood had no alternative. Continuing it in the 21st century is akin to tying up a cat while performing annual ancestral rites. So, turn all traditional cremation sites into electric crematoria. It saves cremation time, preserves the environment, protects forests, and reduces funeral cost. Electric crematoria provide privacy during last rites.

Constituted at the cost of 76 lives, the ruin of national monuments worth trillions of rupees and arson of invaluable official documents, this government cannot and must not continue collecting a cremation fee. Please don't strip people of their dignity. Don't forget your election commitments. You rose to power with a pledge to improve governance. Burdened with tax right from birth, at least free people after their death. Cremation or burial - any form of last rites - must be free of charge forever, period.

(Sedhai is a freelance writer.)

50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

August 16, 1976

Flood Relief Committee In Sunsari

Sunsari, Aug. 15: An eleven-member flood relief committee has been formed under the chairmanship of district panchayat president Ambika Prasad Shrestha, reports RSS.

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

READER'S MAIL

Ensure Hassle-free LPG Supply

This is about the news report headlined "LPG supply sufficient to meet demand," which appeared in this daily on August 16. According to the report, the government, Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC), and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) industrialists have assured consumers that there is no need to stockpile cooking gas, citing that the current supply and distribution are sufficient to meet regular demand.

However, the reality on the ground tells a different story. Nearby where I live, there's a major LPG refilling and distribution centre, and every day, as I make my way to my office, I see hundreds of people, mostly females, standing in lines for a cylinder of cooking gas. Recently, I stopped by to ask how long they have been waiting



that way, and the answer was "at least two weeks."

This is outrageous. People are simply wasting their precious time waiting in lines for their turn, one that never seems to come. Their time deserves to be spent on doing some productive work, not on seemingly endless waiting. The government must take concrete steps to ensure a smooth supply of cooking gas.

Kapil Basyal
Kathmandu

TAILPIECE

Three old ladies are sitting in a diner, chatting about various things. One lady says, "You know, I'm getting really forgetful. This morning, I was standing at the top of the stairs, and I couldn't remember whether I had just come up or was about to go down."

The second lady says, "You think that's bad? The other day, I was sitting on the edge of my bed, and I couldn't remember whether I was going to bed or had just woken up!"

The third lady smiles smugly. "Well, my memory's just as good as it's always been, knock on wood." She raps the table. With a startled look on her face, she asks, "Who's there?!"

7.7 quake kills 38 in Indonesia

AP
Indonesia, Aug. 15

A powerful magnitude 7.7 earthquake struck off the coast of Indonesia early Saturday, killing at least 38 people, collapsing buildings and homes as well as causing panic in a region prone to deadly quakes. Authorities said more than a dozen residents were injured.

Authorities issued a tsunami warning and urged coastal residents to move to higher ground, but later lifted the warning when Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency said monitoring showed no significant sea-level changes that would pose a threat to coastal communities.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake hit Indonesia's Flores region with a depth of 10 kilometers (six miles) at 5:58 a.m. local time. Its epicenter was 68 km (42 miles) north-northwest of the city of Ende in East Nusa Tenggara province. The initial quake was followed by several aftershocks.

The head of the National Disaster Management Agency, Suharyanto, said rescuers have recovered at least 38 bodies, mostly in the three devastated regencies of Sikka, Manggarai and East Manggarai, including 16 bodies that were pulled from a landslide in the village of Reok in Manggarai. At least 13 people were rushed to nearby hospitals, including two with serious injuries.

Suharyanto, who like many Indonesians uses a single name, said three helicopters and a rescue vessel were deployed to assist with logistics and support emergency response operations, including possible evacuations if needed, given East Nusa Tenggara's geography, which consists of numerous islands and presents significant transportation and access challenges.

He said about 2,000 villagers in Nagekeo regency fled their homes to temporary shelters. East Nusa Tenggara Police Chief Rudi Darmoko said the earthquake caused severe damage



PHOTO: AP
People evacuated to higher ground following an earthquake in East Manggarai, Indonesia, on Saturday.

and collapsed buildings. He said power outages in cities and villages have hampered the flow of information and complicated search and rescue efforts.

"We are continuing to collect reports of damage and casualties, but there are communication disruptions," Darmoko said. He said that landslides in Ende regency triggered by the earthquake also cut off the Trans-Flores highway, a roughly 700-kilometer (435-mile) paved mountain road spanning Flores Island, from Labuan Bajo to Larantuka.

Footage on local television showed patients at several hospitals being evacuated from buildings as a precaution following the quake. Hospital staff moved equipment outdoors, including beds, IV stands and oxygen cylinders, and set up temporary treatment areas to adapt to emergency conditions.

The quake was felt across much of Flores island with initial reports

indicating heavy damage. Yohanna Embu, a resident of Sikka regency, said a number of buildings were damaged by the strong shaking and panicked people ran to higher ground. "Many buildings here were damaged ... I saw that the waiting room at the port terminal in Maumere had collapsed," she said.

Students at St. Peter Major Seminary in Sikka who were attending morning Mass fled in panic when the roof of an assembly hall collapsed, said the Rev. Guidelbertus Tanga, rector of the seminary, which is known locally as Ritapiret Seminary on the predominantly Catholic island of Flores.

"Our students and nuns ran out in panic beneath a collapsing roof," Tanga said. "At least one priest suffered a broken leg after jumping from the second floor of a building during the quake."

The quake also reportedly caused panic in Labuan Bajo, a gateway town

to eastern Indonesia's Komodo National Park, one of the country's best-known attractions. Damage was also reported in Bima, a city in neighboring West Nusa Tenggara province, and in some parts of southern Sulawesi island.

Indonesian authorities initially issued a tsunami warning for parts of East Nusa Tenggara, West Nusa Tenggara, South Sulawesi and Southeast Sulawesi provinces, and urged residents to stay away from beaches and riverbanks. The agency located the shallow undersea quake near Flores island.

Indonesia, a vast archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, is prone to earthquakes and volcanic activity because of its location on the "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin. A powerful earthquake caused a tsunami in 1992 that killed about 2,500 people on Flores, part of a group of islands in the eastern half of Indonesia.

Modi says Maoists fading, warns ideology threat

AP
New Delhi, Aug. 15

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that India's decades-long Maoist insurgency was nearing its end but warned that the country now faced a new battle against what he called "dimagi Naxals," or people who align with the movement's ideology.

In his address to the nation on India's 79th Independence Day from the ramparts of New Delhi's 17th-century Mughal-era Red Fort, Modi said Maoist violence was "breathing its last" after years of security operations against the insurgency, once described by Indian authorities as the country's biggest internal security threat.

Also known as the Naxalite movement, it challenged state authority across large swathes of central and eastern India for decades, leaving thousands of civilians, rebels and security personnel dead.

"We have succeeded in getting rid of armed Naxals in the jungles, but 'dimagi Naxals' (intellectual Naxals) are looking for opportunities to create violence and unrest," Modi said. "They have to be identified and isolated." "They want to drag the society on the wrong path," he added.

Modi also unveiled a series of measures aimed at boosting self-reliance in sectors ranging from defense to agriculture, with a strong focus on youth.

The outreach to young people comes weeks after a youth-led protest movement, the Cockroach Janta Party, emerged as a rare challenge to Modi's government and helped force the resignation of his education minister. While

Modi did not mention the protests, he repeatedly highlighted initiatives aimed at young Indians, including AI skills training and free online coaching for competitive exams.

He said India had transformed from a "fragile" economy into the world's fastest-growing major economy over the past decade and reaffirmed his government's goal of turning the country into a developed nation by 2047, the centenary of its independence.

The Naxalite movement, inspired by Chinese revolutionary leader Mao Zedong, began in 1967 with an uprising in the village of Naxalbari in eastern India, and grew into a decades-long armed rebellion championing the rights of landless farmers, the rural poor and Indigenous communities.

Modi said the Maoist movement had "destroyed the future" of generations of young people and credited his government's security and development policies with sharply reducing Maoist violence since taking office in 2014.

The phrase "dimagi Naxal" echoes the politically charged label "urban Naxal," a term Modi and leaders of his Bharatiya Janata Party have previously used for activists, academics, intellectuals and other critics of his government. Critics say such labels have increasingly been used to stigmatize dissent.

Modi's remarks come amid years of criticism from international rights groups, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, which have accused the government of using anti-terror laws, sedition-related provisions and foreign-funding rules to squeeze civil society and target activists, journalists and groups critical of its policies.

Myanmar verifies 300,000 Rohingya for return

AP
Bangkok, Aug. 15

Myanmar's military-backed government said Saturday that more than 300,000 Rohingya refugees living in camps in Bangladesh are former residents of western Rakhine state and that it will accept their return once security conditions improve.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement comes as the Rohingya refugee crisis enters its ninth year, with hundreds of thousands of refugees still living in camps in Bangladesh after fleeing Myanmar in August 2017 when the military launched a crackdown following attacks by a Rohingya insurgent group on guard posts in Rakhine.

The operation drove more than 700,000 Rohingya across the border into Bangladesh, joining hundreds of thousands of others already living there for decades in the wake of waves of previous violence perpetrated by Myanmar's military. The scale, organization and ferocity of the operation led to accusations of ethnic cleansing and genocide from the international community, including the U.N.

Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, does not recognize the Rohingya as one of the country's 135 lawful ethnic minorities, instead referring to them as Bengalis to imply they are natives from Bangladesh and are illegally settled in Myanmar.

Myanmar said it had verified 426,545

of the 828,824 refugees on a list provided by Bangladesh as of the end of July, and determined that 308,797 of those verified were former residents of Rakhine.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said 113,507 people could not be verified and that 4,241 people were found to have been involved in what it called terrorist activities.

The statement said it will continue working with Bangladesh to receive verified former residents when the security situation in Rakhine becomes more stable.

The ministry also rejected claims that more than 1 million people were displaced from Rakhine, saying that more than 540,000 people crossed into Bangladesh after the violence in 2017 while more than 200,000 remained in northern Rakhine.

Myanmar and Bangladesh agreed to a two-year repatriation process in 2018. However, security in Myanmar worsened following an army takeover in 2021 that ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, triggering widespread armed resistance. Plans to repatriate the refugees have not succeeded.

The renewed chaos brought about by fighting between the Rakhine-based ethnic Arakan Army group and the military over control of the region in 2023 forced more refugees to flee toward Bangladesh and elsewhere in a desperate move to save their lives. The Arakan Army controls much of Rakhine after capturing territory from the military in recent years.

Takaichi skips WWII shrine visit

AP
Tokyo, Aug. 15

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi avoided Tokyo's controversial Yasukuni Shrine, apparently to prioritize diplomatic relations with China and South Korea, as Japan marked on Saturday the 81st anniversary of its surrender in World War II.

However, she did not mention her country's wartime past in Asia or show remorse over it in her address. The Yasukuni Shrine, which commemorates over 2.4 million people who died in wars, became controversial after including 14 convicted World War II Japanese war criminals. China and South Korea say visits by Japanese officials to the shrine show a lack of remorse over Japan's wartime atrocities.

Takaichi mourned the victims of major devastation in Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Okinawa, as well as those who perished in overseas battlefronts, and thanked them for their sacrifice as the "foundation of Japan's peace and prosperity today." "Japan, since the end of the war, has consistently contributed to global peace and prosperity. We will never let the tragedy of the war be repeated," she said in her address at Budokan Hall, a walking distance from Yasukuni.

Takaichi also said Japan can play a key role in addressing global challenges as "a dependable nation" in the region. Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi, three other Cabinet ministers and three executives from



PHOTO: AP
Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi lays flowers during her visit to the Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery as the country marks the 81st anniversary of its surrender in the World War II, in Tokyo, Saturday.

Takaichi's governing party showed up at the shrine earlier Saturday. A non-partisan group of dozens of lawmakers also prayed there.

China's Foreign Ministry protested to Japan over the visits, saying that Japanese politicians' true intentions were to "change the verdict on the war criminals, cover up Japan's war crimes, distort the historical facts and pave the way for accelerating militarization." It urged Japan to do "serious soul searching" on history and make a clean break with militarism.

Tensions between Japan and China escalated in November when Takaichi

said a Chinese attack on Taiwan could constitute "a survival-threatening situation" for Japan requiring the use of force. The comments enraged Beijing.

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, in a statement Saturday, said that his administration used "pragmatic diplomacy centered on national interests" and will broaden cooperation in shared interests to resolve common challenges. "Korea-Japan cooperation is now more important than ever." "The new bilateral relationship we are building must warmly illuminate those who are still suffering from pain in the shadows of history," he wrote.

9 PEOPLE DIE IN LEBANON

AP
Beirut, Aug. 15

Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon killed at least nine people Saturday, in some of the deadliest attacks since a precarious truce between Israel and Hezbollah went into effect on June 20.

Lebanon's Health Ministry and state news agency said one of the airstrikes that targeted a home on the edge of the village of Ansar killed seven people, including three children, and wounded two. The second, on the village of Deir al-Zahrani, killed two and wounded nine.

Israel and the Lebanese government announced a "framework agreement" on June 26, laying out a plan for Israeli forces to withdraw from southern Lebanon, in exchange for the disarmament of the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group. It also envisions steps toward an eventual peace agreement between the two countries — which technically remain in a state of war nearly 80 years after Israel's establishment.

Health workers stunned as Ebola spreads

AP
Congo, Aug. 15

Every day, community health worker Gédéon Banga Ngbape and his team fan out across communities in eastern Congo looking for people who may have crossed paths with the country's fastest-growing Ebola outbreak in history.

The workers investigate dozens of alerts, search for those exposed to suspected or confirmed cases and try to get anyone showing symptoms into care before the virus spreads further.

But the surveillance system is increasingly failing to keep pace with the virus. Between 60% and 70% of new Ebola cases are being detected among people who were not already being monitored as contacts, meaning health workers may only discover infections after patients become sick and have had opportunities to expose others. "If surveillance does not work well, the entire response suffers," Ngbape said. "Surveillance is the engine of a response."



PHOTO: AP
Gédéon Banga Ngbape, left, an Ebola surveillance officer, does contact tracing in Nizi, Ituri province, eastern Congo.

The outbreak has killed over 2,200 people out of more than 4,700 cases, according to the latest government figures. This death toll has been reached almost three times faster than in the 2014-16 Ebola outbreak in West Africa

— the worst in history. That outbreak claimed over 11,000 lives. "We are chasing the virus; the virus is ahead of us," said WHO regional director for Africa, Dr. Mohamed Yakub Janabi, this week. U.N. humanitarian chief Tom

Fletcher on Friday announced an additional \$30.5 million in emergency funding to help tackle the Ebola outbreak. In Nizi, Ngbape's surveillance teams say they receive an average of 60 to 70 alerts a day. They move through communities to investigate suspected infections, follow people who have been in contact with suspected or confirmed cases and direct those showing possible symptoms to health facilities.

The work can stretch deep into the night. "I leave in the morning at 8 and return around 11 p.m., sometimes midnight," Ngbape said. "I still have to follow up and plan the next activities. I feel really tired, but what matters to me is always being of service to the community."

He did not say how many days a week he works or how often he is able to take time off. Community health workers who go door to door face risks of their own. Ana Ndroy Kasime, a community health worker in Nizi, said she visits homes to educate residents about Ebola and reports suspected cases to health officials. But she said workers like her lack basic protective supplies.

PRISM

Snake slithers across hood of moving car

Lebanon: A Tennessee woman captured video during a recent car trip when a snake slithered out from under the hood of the vehicle. Analissa Hensley said she and her family were in the car when the serpent made its surprise appearance on Callis Road in Lebanon.

"I'm sitting there like, 'We have a huge snake on the hood of our car,'" Hensley told WKRN-TV. "We were on our way to Mount Juliet, going to pick up some soccer stuff for my youngest daughter, and we're just having a conversation and my husband's like, 'There's a snake.'"

Hensley recorded video of the snake, which she estimated to be about 5 feet long. The family attempted to pull over to the side of the road to get the snake off the car, but it made a jump for it before the vehicle came to a stop.

Mallory Tate, a biodiversity biologist for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, said the serpent in the video appears to be a grey rat snake. She said the species is not venomous and is very common in the state.

Woman runs 100 miles on treadmill

Boston: A 44-year-old fitness influencer broke a Guinness World Record by running 100 miles on a treadmill in a time of 12 hours, 47 minutes and 10 seconds. Ashley Paulson, a trainer for fitness app IFTT, beat the previous record by an hour and a half when she completed her April 18 run in Boston.

"I've wanted to attempt this record for several years. I'm a passionate runner and have run many ultramarathons of 100 miles or more," Paulson told Guinness World Records.

"Many of these were faster on the road than the previous record on the treadmill."

Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

- 1652– Battle of Plymouth: Inconclusive naval action between the fleets of Michiel de Ruyter and George Ayscue in the First Anglo-Dutch War.
- 1685– An imperial coalition army under Charles of Lorraine defeats the Ottoman army that had been besieging Esztergom.
- 1717– An imperial coalition army under Prince Eugene of Savoy defeats an Ottoman army under Haji Halil Pasha, leading to the surrender of Ottoman garrison of Belgrade a few days later.
- 1777– American Revolutionary War: The Americans led by General John Stark rout British and Brunswick troops under Friedrich Baum at the Battle of Bennington in Wallomsac, New York.



Devotees gather to offer prayers and worship at the famous Manakamana Temple in Gorkha district on Saturday.

PHOTO: RSS

HOME MINISTER GURUNG VOWS TO MEET PUBLIC ASPIRATIONS

RSS
Gandaki, Aug. 15

Home Minister Sudan Gurung has arrived in his hometown Gorkha to take stock of the situation of development activities, public service delivery and other issues.

The Chief District Officer of Gorkha, Tulsi Bahadur Shrestha, said the Home Minister visited some development projects and enquired about the district's security situation on Saturday. "The Home Minister has no any formal programme.

He arrived here as a part of the visit to his election constituency. The Home Minister is meeting with people and holding direct talks," CDO Shrestha added. During his visit on Saturday, the residents of Bhimsen Thapa Rural Municipality raised the issue of squatters' management, inundation and others.

On the occasion, matters of road infrastructure, drinking water supply, electricity, security situation, shortage of chemical fertilizer, disaster management and public service delivery were discussed.

In response to public concerns, Minister Gurung said the government was committed to addressing the issues through concerned bodies by identifying the problems.

Minister Timilsina inspects disaster-prone settlements in Nuwakot

RSS
Nuwakot, Aug. 15

Minister for Information and Communication Dr. Bikram Timilsina on Saturday inspected different landslides occurring sites and the human settlements affected from the disasters in Nuwakot district.

After the inspection visits and consultations, Minister Dr. Timilsina asked the concerned agencies and officials to immediately protect the communities and shift the risk-prone settlements, ensure vehicular movements along the disrupted roads, supply drinking water, electricity and other essential services. Minister Dr. Timilsina visited a settlement affected from the Semrang landslide in Suryagadhi Rural Municipality-1 and in Phatpur and Paharethok in ward-2.

During the inspections, Minister Dr. Timilsina enquired the locals about the causes of the landslides and the status of the road networks, people's mobility, power disruption, water supply facility from Dwache Drinking Water Project and other related aspects.

Similarly, Minister Dr. Timilsina inspected the landslides at Ratmate and Ramche in ward-2 and Devithan as well and the damages caused to the pipeline of water supply there.

During the interactions with the

stakeholders, district disaster management committee, local people and others, Minister Dr. Timilsina pledged to advance necessary steps based on the technical studies.

He said the federal government is ready to implement the decisions based on the recommendations and added that efforts will be made to ensure safety in the settlement and to immediately shift the affected households if safety measures did not protect them.

Minister Dr. Timilsina also directed the government agencies to ensure

Chief District Officer and Coordinator of District Disaster Management Committee Shambhu Prasad Regmi and the officials of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority, Nepal Telecommunications Authority, Nepal Electricity Authority, Road Division Office and Infrastructure Development Office joined the Minister during the inspections of the landslides and disaster-prone settlements.

On the occasion, Minister Dr. Timilsina said the federal government will advance the tasks of infrastructure



alternative measures to clear the obstructions and resume traffic in different road sections in the district.

development, maintenance and others key issues by taking all bodies on board at the earliest possible time.

Indian Embassy in Nepal marks 80th Independence Day

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 15

The Embassy of India in Kathmandu celebrated India's 80th Independence Day on Saturday with a series of programmes highlighting India's progress, Nepal-India ties and the contribution of Nepali Gorkha soldiers to the Indian Army. The celebrations began with the singing of Vande Mataram, followed by the unfurling of the Indian national flag, the Tiranga, by Indian Ambassador to Nepal Naveen Srivastava. The National Anthem of India was also sung on the occasion.

The Embassy also broadcast the address to the nation delivered by the President of India on the eve of the 80th Independence Day. The address reflected on India's journey and achievements during the past 79 years.

A major highlight of the programme was the felicitation of the widows and next of kin of 11 Nepali Gorkha soldiers of the Indian Army who died while serving India. The Embassy distributed insurance cheques worth Rs. 82 million to the families of the deceased soldiers.

The programme also featured the felicitation of winners of various competitions organised by the Embassy as part of the Independence Day celebrations. The winners included participants in a painting competition held under the theme 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India), the Viksit Bharat Run and

an inter-school quiz competition.

Winners of the special edition of the 'Bharat Ko Janiye' Quiz, organised to promote awareness about India among participants, were also felicitated during the ceremony. In another initiative aimed at supporting education in Nepal, the Embassy provided book grants to 22 educational institutions and libraries across all seven provinces. The initiative is intended to expand access to educational resources and support students and readers through better availability of books and learning materials.

The celebrations also featured cultural performances by teachers and students associated with the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre of the Embassy of India in Kathmandu.

The participants presented patriotic songs and dances, adding a cultural dimension to the programme.

The Embassy said the Independence Day activities reflected the close people-to-people and institutional ties between Nepal and India while also highlighting India's development journey and its commitment to educational and cultural cooperation with Nepal.

The programme was attended by officials, representatives of various institutions, members of the Indian community and other invited guests.

India celebrates its Independence Day every year on August 15 to commemorate its independence from British colonial rule in 1947.

The year 2026 marks the country's 80th Independence Day celebrations.

Discussion held to make health service more affordable

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 15

A broad discussion was held at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers on Friday on how to make the country's health system more organised, quality-based and accessible.

The meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Balendra Shah's Health Adviser Dr. Jagadish Prasad Agrawal, discussed how to effectively implement the Standard Treatment Protocols (STPs) issued so far by linking them with health insurance to bring consistency and improve the management of basic health services and treatment for various diseases.

The meeting was attended by 18 groups of specialist doctors working at various government health institutions, including paediatrics, neurology, cardiology, haemophilia, oral health and ENT, as well as Dr. Pawan Jung Rayamajhi, director of the Curative Services Division under the Ministry of Health and Food Hygiene.

The specialists discussed the practical difficulties and advantages of the protocols currently being used in their respective fields and offered suggestions for improvement.

They also pointed out that there was a lack of coordination among protocols developed by different departments and divisions, and called for this issue to be addressed.

According to Dr. Rayamajhi, 19 protocols have so far been developed based on need. Some have been approved and implemented, while others are still in the process of approval. Even the protocols already in use need to be updated from time to time to maintain consistency, he said. He also said doctors sometimes prescribe unnecessary tests such as CT scans and MRI scans during patient examinations based on their own judgement, adding to the financial burden on the insurance programme.

He stressed the need to develop clear protocols so that such tests are carried out only when medically necessary, and said the discussion would help move the process forward.

It is expected that revising the protocols and ensuring their effective implementation will reduce unnecessary tests and the use of expensive medicines.

This would lower patient's treatment costs, prevent misuse of government funds and make it easier to manage the government's health insurance programme.

Minister Dr....

"Come and invest with confidence. Put your knowledge and skills to use here." The Finance Minister also said that the government was reviving sick industries and would hand them over to people with the necessary skills and knowledge to revitalise and operate them.

He said Nepal's living abroad could also participate in such initiatives.

LPG cylinders...

It urged consumers not to stockpile cooking gas unnecessarily and requested only those in genuine need to purchase cylinders from the designated outlets.

6,802 LPG cylinders sold on Saturday

The NOC had also arranged for the distribution of LPG cylinders at five different locations on Saturday, targeting consumers in urgent need.

The designated outlets were the NOC premises at Teku, the Transport Office premises at Chabahil, Radha Swami premises in Kirtipur, Radha Swami premises in Basundhara and the premises of the Old District Administration Office in Babarmahal, Kathmandu.

According to the NOC, a total of 6,802 LPG cylinders were directly sold to consumers facing an urgent shortage at these locations.

The NOC said some brands ran short during Saturday's distribution. Consumers who were present at the designated locations within the stipulated time but could not obtain their preferred brand will be given first priority on Sunday through coupons, according to the corporation.

Most quake-damaged heritage rebuilt...

He claimed that 90 per cent old materials from the ruins of heritage sites can be reused but they have not been used properly.

Ganapati Lal Shrestha, heritage activist and a local from Jhochhen, Basantapur, said that heritage reconstruction is not just about rebuilding a destroyed building. It is about preserving its history, original materials, traditional construction techniques, cultural meaning, and the memories of generations.

One major achievement after the 2015 earthquake has been the growth of public awareness and the culture of questioning heritage decisions. However, the next challenge is to protect and reuse original materials, conduct scientific studies, ensure transparency, use traditional skills, and make responsible authorities accountable, he said.

Sharing his everyday eyewitness account of Basantapur area reconstruction process, he said it was painful to see modern materials being used in the name of making heritage structures stronger, while the value of original materials was often ignored.

He further added, "During the earthquake, we saved and protected many original materials, but they were not sufficiently reused in restoration, reconstruction, or strengthening. The concerned authorities must understand their importance."

For example, new jhingi tiles being used at under-repair Kumari Ghar roof may look beautiful, but using the original tiles would preserve its authenticity and historical value, he said. The restoration of the

Juddha Barun Yantra (Fire Brigade) building of Basantapur is a positive example, where original materials were given priority, he added.

Recalling the struggle to conserve Rani Pokhari, the first major heritage reconstruction project after 2015 earthquake, Shrestha said the process became a bitter experience. The reconstruction initially involved use of reinforced cement concrete columns, which raised serious concern among heritage activists and local communities. Strong protests from locals and heritage activists eventually forced the authorities to stop the use of such unacceptable modern materials and additions.

"We succeeded in protecting Rani Pokhari, but Dharahara was later rebuilt with the idea of making it stronger and more durable," he said. "We had proposed preserving the historic Dharahara remains in glass, but they have still not received proper protection."

The nation's revenue has been wasted, but that historic tower is crying. It is not well protected. Today, there is an ancient golden stream in that place, but it is said that it was mocked by making a fake stream. Today, even the ancient Sundhara has been overshadowed by a new replica.

Heritage reconstruction

The 2015 earthquake, which had its epicentre in Barpak, Gorkha, damaged or destroyed 920 heritage sites across Nepal. Of these, 825 have been reconstructed, according to the DoA.

Among the 920, 133 had completely collapsed, 233 heavily damaged and 554 partially damaged. Of the

completely damaged 133 structures, 25 were in Kathmandu, 13 in Lalitpur and 78 in Bhaktapur. In Kathmandu Valley alone, 33 monuments had collapsed, while 107 suffered heavy damage and 40 sustained minor damage.

Sandeep Khanal, Chief of the World Heritage Conservation Section of the Department of (DoA), said that 825 of the 920 heritage monuments damaged by the earthquake have been reconstructed so far.

In the last fiscal year, 10 heritage sites were restored as part of ongoing reconstruction of 215 centuries-old monasteries and 920 temples and other heritage sites of archaeological, cultural, and historical importance that were damaged by the earthquake, he informed.

For the current fiscal year, it has been allocated Rs. 627.4 million for post-earthquake damaged heritage and other regular preservation and conservation plans and programmes, according to the DoA.

Saubhagya Pradhananga, Director General of the DoA, said, "The budget for heritage reconstruction has been decreasing year by year, which creates challenges in completing the reconstruction work. If the budget is allocated as needed, remaining heritage reconstruction could be completed within few years."

One major reconstruction project, the new Dharahara Tower, is now in operation. However, the remains of the historic Dharahara are still waiting for conservation.

And Sundhara, another important heritage structure within the Dharahara Complex has not been properly restored.

A look at Trump's tendency to avoid...

Ducking responsibility dates to Trump's first term

Truman famously kept a "The Buck Stops Here" sign on his desk as president. That came from "pass the buck," which, according to Truman's presidential library, dates to frontier times, when poker players would pass a buckhorn handle knife to the person whose turn it was to deal the cards.

"The president, whoever he is, has to decide," Truman said during his farewell address in 1953. "He can't pass the buck to anybody. No one else can do the deciding for him. That's his job."

The understanding of the phrase has broadened over the years to include taking responsibility for the outcome of tough decisions. Trump used to espouse similar beliefs, saying back in 2013 that in running a business, "Whatever happens, you're responsible. If it doesn't happen, you're responsible."

Accepting the 2016 presidential nomination, Trump said, "Nobody knows the system better than me, which is why I alone can fix it." But as president, he has often suggested that the solution and blame rest elsewhere.

"The buck stops with everybody," Trump said in 2019, during a lengthy government shutdown. In 2020, on the same day he declared the coronavirus pandemic a national emergency, he said, "I don't take responsibility at all" for a lack of COVID-19 testing.

Anslover said Truman took full responsibility for dropping atomic bombs on Japan even though he was not informed that the U.S. was developing such weapons until his predecessor, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, died.

John F. Kennedy saw his approval ratings rise after he acknowledged he was to

blame for the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba. Ronald Reagan said he was sorry for any involvement he may have had in the Iran-Contra scandal even while saying he wasn't sure he was to blame. "The buck stops here with me," he said then.

At his final news conference in early 2009, George W. Bush listed a series of mistakes he had made, including failing to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. His successor, Barack Obama, said, "I screwed up," after his nominee for health chief, Tom Daschle, withdrew because of unpaid back taxes.

Presidents before Trump "really usually take accountability," Anslover said.

'We inherited a total catastrophe,' Trump says

The president acknowledged in a recent Punchbowl interview that voters are angry, but he said they are not mad at him but at congressional Republicans.

Trump believes his party can hold its congressional majorities after November, but he was clear that if Republicans lose, it won't be his fault — echoing his comments before the 2018 midterms that he would not accept blame if his party lost control of the House, which it did.

Trump's approval rating on the economy, once seen as among his strongest issues, has fallen throughout his time in office, from 40% in March 2025 to 32% in July, according to Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research polling. About 6 in 10 U.S. adults say Trump's economic policies have made economic conditions worse, according to Pew Research Center polling.

"The public certainly expects the president to be concerned about, and focused on, making life more affordable," Republican pollster Frank Luntz said.

US imposes import restrictions on Nepal's 'certain' cultural materials

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 15

The United States has imposed an import ban on certain archaeological and ethnological materials imported from Nepal. The rule, issued by the U.S. Department of State, was published in the U.S. Government's Official Gazette on August 12, 2026.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) published the new rule in the U.S. government's Federal Register on August 12, 2026, under the title "Imposition of Import Restrictions on Categories of Archaeological and Ethnological Material of Nepal." The restrictions took effect on the same day.

On January 8, 2026, the United States and Nepal entered into a bilateral agreement, "Agreement between the United States of America and Nepal concerning the imposition of import restrictions on categories of archaeological and ethnological material of Nepal."

The process began on May 23, 2023, when Nepal formally requested the U.S. government to impose import restrictions on certain archaeological and ethnological materials from Nepal. The request sought to strengthen international protection for Nepal's cultural heritage and curb the illicit excavation, export and trafficking of archaeological objects.

However, this is not a complete ban on all art, sculptures, or antiques from Nepal.

Instead, the restrictions apply to specific categories of materials identified in the official Designated List published with the Federal Register rule. The list includes archaeological and ethnological objects that meet specified material,



cultural and chronological criteria.

The archaeological categories are divided into two: archaeological material and ethnological material. The stone, ceramic and fired clay, metal,

plaster, stucco and unfired clay, paintings, ivory and bone, glass, leather, parchment, birch bark, paper and palm leaf, wood, shell and other organic materials, as well as human remains

are categorised under archaeological materials.

The ethnological categories include religious architectural elements, religious and ceremonial objects, and manuscripts.

According to the U.S. government notice, the archaeological material covered by the restrictions dates approximately from 32,000 BCE to 1770 CE.

Certain ethnological materials covered by the agreement date from approximately the 13th century CE through 1950. The designated list provides more specific descriptions, dates and categories for the objects subject to the restrictions.

The U.S. government stated that the restrictions are intended to help protect Nepal's cultural heritage from pillage, illicit excavation and trafficking.

Saubhagya Pradhananga, Director General of the Department of Archaeology, said that the agreement recognises the importance of protecting archaeological and ethnological material that represents Nepal's cultural heritage while also supporting legitimate cultural, scientific and educational exchanges between the two countries.

However, UNESCO has developed legal instruments through the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, but it is the first bilateral agreement between two countries, she said.

Pradhananga further added that, for Nepal, the agreement could also strengthen international efforts to recover cultural objects that have been illegally removed from the country and to prevent further trafficking of its archaeological and religious heritage.

‘Road to Everest’ trailer released



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 15

A new documentary capturing the challenges of climbing Mount Everest, the courage of mountaineers and the growing impact of climate change in the Himalayas has released its official trailer.

Named Road to Everest, the 50-minute documentary follows the real-life journey of Raj Gurung, a man in his fifties who attempts to climb the world's highest mountain. The film explores his struggles, determination and dream of reaching the summit.

According to its production team, the film uses real footage without artificial or computer-generated visuals.

They said it took more than two years to research, film and produce.

Journalists Santosh Acharya and

Nirmal Shrestha wrote the story, while media person Bhusan Dahal gives the voice. The documentary has been produced in both Nepali and English.

Directed by Shrestha, the film also highlights the contribution of the Sherpa community, the risks of high-altitude mountaineering and the effects of climate change on the Himalayan region. Renowned mountaineers Phurba Tenjing Sherpa and Nima Gyalzen Sherpa appear in the documentary.

Phurba has climbed Everest 18 times, while Nima has summited Everest 10 times and climbed all 14 of the world's over 8,000-metre peaks.

Road to Everest will premiere in Kathmandu on August 22 and have its international premiere in Hong Kong on September 13.

It will later be screened at various locations in Nepal and at international film festivals and cinemas.

Picasso etching stolen in 2018 found

AP
Madison, Wis., Aug. 15

Bill DeLind thought the Picasso etching stolen in 2018 found a print that was stolen from his Milwaukee gallery in 2018 was gone forever. But then police called last week and asked him to look an artwork that a local landlord found while cleaning out a vacant apartment.

DeLind immediately recognized the stolen "Torero" print, one of 30 known to exist signed by Picasso.

"I was overwhelmed," DeLind said Friday. "I was at a loss for words. It was an overwhelming moment for me."

The sticker from his DeLind Fine Art Appraisals was still on the back of the framed print, just as it had been placed there in 2018. "It was indeed mine," DeLind said. "It came back full circle."

Milwaukee landlord Tim Dertz told WISN-TV that he found the print while cleaning out an apartment of someone who had been evicted.

"It was kind of in a weird spot hanging on a wall," Tim Dertz told the station. "It looked like it had been there for a long, long time because it had tons of dust across the top of it."

Dertz said he showed it to an antique dealer friend who recognized it as a



Picasso and said it appeared to be the one DeLind reported stolen in 2018. Dertz handed it over to police, who then contacted DeLind.

"When they called me, I was in disbelief," DeLind said.

The Milwaukee Police Department said in an email Friday that the statute of limitations for theft and property crimes is generally six years but the case remains under investigation. Caroline Clancy, a spokesperson for the FBI in Milwaukee, declined to comment.

The year it was stolen the piece was appraised at between \$35,000 and \$50,000, DeLind said. He guessed that the value hasn't changed much since then, but now given its story it may be worth closer to \$50,000.

The artwork remains in possession of Milwaukee police while the client who had commissioned it for sale with his art gallery works it out with his insurance company, DeLind said.

Adam Driver, Inde Navarrette join Marvel's ‘X-Men’ reboot

AP
California, Aug. 15

Adam Driver will make a long-anticipated entrance into the Marvel Cinematic Universe to play super villain Mister Sinister, and "Obsession" breakout star Inde Navarrette will play Rogue in Disney's forthcoming film reboot of "X-Men."

Driver and Navarrette were among the new cast members announced Friday night at Disney's D23 convention by Marvel Studios President Kevin Feige, along with Driver's "Girls" castmate Christopher Abbott as Professor Charles Xavier and Maya Boyd as Storm. The film is slated for release in May 2028.

The announcements were the biggest news to emerge from Disney Entertainment's D23 presentation that also brought updates on its forthcoming "Star Wars" titles and a song-and-dance that went sideways from the stars of "Frozen 3."

Driver's name was often rumored and often dismissed as an "X-Men" possibility. Many thought he'd be playing the antihero Magneto. The rest of the cast appeared on stage at the Honda Center arena in Anaheim, California, while Driver appeared on a big screen.

"Kevin and I had been talking for years about my joining the Marvel Cinematic Universe, and I think we finally found the perfect film," Driver told the crowd of 12,000 via video. "So I'm very excited to be playing the role of Maaagneto!" he said before pausing, taking it back and saying, "even better, Nathaniel Millbury," an alias for Mister Sinister.

Also on stage were previously announced cast members Samara Weaving, who is playing Emma Frost; Kit Connor, who is playing Scott "Cyclops" Summers; and Sadie Sink, whose role as Jean Grey was revealed by her appearance in this summer's Marvel megahit "Spider-Man: Brand New Day."

The castmates were as new to each other as they were to the fans.

"They've just met backstage for the very first time," Feige said.



Navarrette had also been heavily rumored to have a role after fast becoming one of Hollywood's most sought-after actors for her striking performance as a spellbound girlfriend in the indie horror hit "Obsessed" earlier this year.

The "X-Men" joining the MCU became possible with Disney's 2019 acquisition of Fox's film studio.

Director Jake Schreier is heading the reboot, and two writers from prestige TV — "Beef" creator Lee Sung Jin and "The Bear" co-showrunner Joanna Calo — are working on the script.

Gosling cosplays as Kade Auber on in 'Star Wars' presentation.

Ryan Gosling and director Shawn Levy headlined the "Star Wars" part of the night with a presentation on their film "Star Wars: Starfighter," which is getting a May, 2027 release.

Gosling's appearance on stage was preceded by clips of him as a child cast member of "The Mickey Mouse Club."

"I owe a lot to Disney," Gosling said. "Had they not looked far and wide and come to my hometown I would not be here today. Now, 30 years later, I'm back and it's changing my life again."

HOROSCOPE

tarot.com

ARIES: A relationship may require clearer boundaries. The Moon conjoints Venus in Libra and your 7th House of Partnership, softening one-on-one conversations and making compromise more appealing.

CANCER: A calmer start can help you meet the day with steadier focus. The Moon moves through Libra and your 4th House of Home, Family, and Emotional Roots, drawing your attention toward privacy, comfort, and the people closest to you.

LIBRA: Your charm lands beautifully when your needs are clear. The Moon conjoints Venus in Libra and your 1st House of Self, highlighting your presence, style, mood, and personal magnetism.

CAPRICORN: Public efforts can feel surprisingly supported when your request is clear. The Moon conjoints Venus in Libra and your 10th House of Career, Reputation, and Authority, helping your work, leadership, or public image land with more grace.

TAURUS: Your routine needs realistic limits today. The Moon conjoints Venus in Libra and your 6th House of Work, Health, and Daily Habits, making small tasks, team exchanges, and wellness choices feel easier to improve.

LEO: YA warm message can still carry a firm point. The Moon conjoints Venus in Libra and your 3rd House of Communication, softening texts, calls, errands, sibling dynamics, and local conversations.

SCORPIO: Quiet care can help you return to yourself. The Moon conjoints Venus in Libra and your 12th House of Solitude, Spirituality, and Hidden Patterns, softening private emotions and making rest feel more restorative.

AQUARIUS: Your big ideas travel farther when the message is clear. The Moon conjoints Venus in Libra and your 9th House of Travel, Learning, Publishing, and Belief, making inspiration, teaching, and future planning feel more inviting.

GEMINI: A little planning can make joy easier to enjoy. The Moon conjoints Venus in Libra and your 5th House of Creativity, Romance, and Play, making self-expression easier to share and share well.

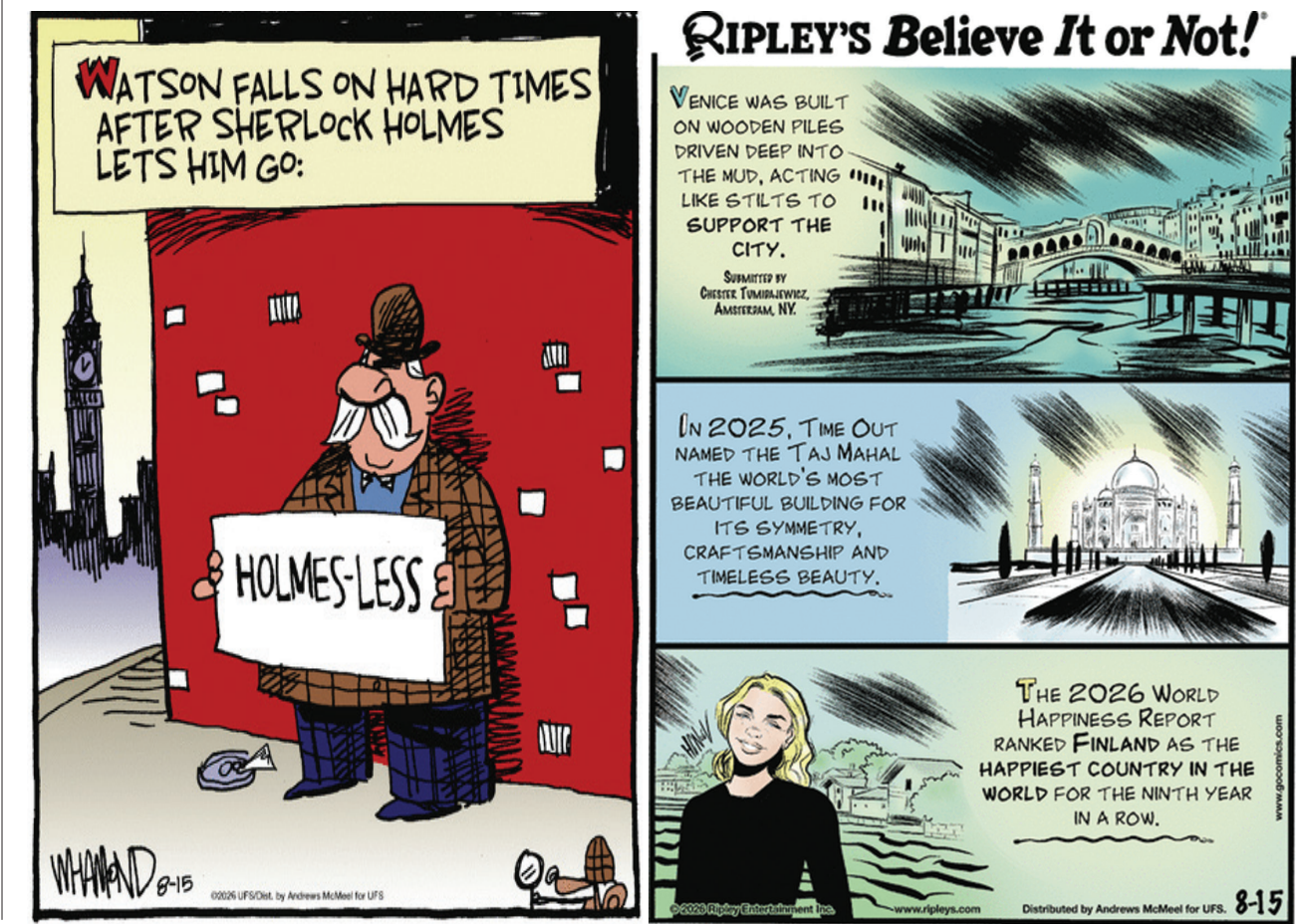
VIRGO: Clearer financial terms can help everyone feel steadier. The Moon conjoints Venus in Libra and your 2nd House of Money, Values, and Self-Worth, bringing attention to comfort, spending, and personal security.

SAGITTARIUS: A group plan works better when your joy is included. The Moon conjoints Venus in Libra and your 11th House of Friends, Community, and Future Plans, making collaboration and social connection feel easier to enjoy.

PISCES: Deeper trust grows when tenderness has clear support. The Moon conjoints Venus in Libra and your 8th House of Intimacy, Shared Resources, and Emotional Vulnerability, softening conversations about money, care, desire, or fear.

CARTOON

gocomics.com



Taekwondo referee Bablu Shiwakoti to officiate at 20th Asian Games

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 15

International taekwondo referee Bablu Shiwakoti has been appointed as an International Technical Official (ITO) for the 20th Asian Games, which will take place in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, from 19 September to 4 October.

The Nepal Taekwondo Association (NTA) announced his selection on Saturday, following confirmation from the Asian Taekwondo Union (ATU). Shiwakoti will officiate during the taekwondo events, scheduled from 1 to 3 October.

Shiwakoti, an executive member of the NTA, is certified as an international referee in both Kyorugi (sparring) and Poomsae (forms). His selection is considered a significant endorsement of Nepal's growing technical capacity within the sport.

"We extend our heartiest congratulations to Bablu Shiwakoti on his appointment as an ITO for the Asian Games," the NTA stated on its official social media channels.

Shiwakoti's career in international officiating began with his Kyorugi certification in Dubai in January 2023, followed by his Poomsae accreditation in September 2024. He has since officiated at tournaments across ten countries, including Australia, Japan, China, and India. Earlier this year, he served as an official at the 27th Asian Taekwondo Championships and the Asian Games qualification tournament in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. His most recent assignment was the WT President's



Cup (G-3) in Gold Coast, Australia, earlier in 2026.

Beyond his role as a referee, Shiwakoti is an accomplished practitioner who previously secured a bronze medal in the Master Team Poomsae event at the 4th Heroes Taekwondo International Championship in Bangkok.

In recognition of his expertise, the ATU appointed him to its Technical Committee for 2026. He also

participated in the ATU Referee Education Course in Seoul last December, where he was briefed on the updated World Taekwondo competition rules that came into effect on 1 January 2026.

Domestically, Shiwakoti serves as a central board member and Technical Delegate for the NTA, where he leads efforts to standardise officiating through national refresher courses and technical seminars.

Bangladesh closes in on historic win against Australia

AP
Darwin, Aug. 15

Bangladesh moved to within sight of one of the biggest wins in its test cricket history after Australia stumbled to 161-4 and remained 67 runs behind at stumps on Day 3 of the first test on Saturday.

Cameron Green (43 not out) and Alex Carey (19 not out) dug in to keep Australia afloat, but the hosts face a huge task to first erase the deficit and then build a competitive total to defend in the final innings. Bangladesh needs six wickets to secure its first test victory in Australia and arguably the biggest win in its history in the format.

Resuming at 351-6, Mehidy Hasan Miraz calmly shepherded Bangladesh's tail to another 75 runs, taking the visitors to 426 and extending their first-innings lead beyond 200 before returning to make the crucial breakthrough with the ball, removing Steve Smith late in the day.

Mehidy shared partnerships of 46 with Hasan Mahmud, 18 with Taijul Islam and then a handy 46-run partnership with Taskin Ahmed before eventually falling for 65 from 154 balls.

Australia was at times its own enemy with another three dropped catches Saturday, including an inexplicable drop by Smith in the deep, making it five for the battered hosts across the match.

Hazlewood's 300

Josh Hazlewood claimed all four wickets to fall on Saturday and returned 6-89 off 28 overs for the innings. His fifth wicket of Mehidy was also his 300th test wicket, making him the fourth of Australia's Big Four bowling attack to reach the milestone, and



PHOTO: AP
Mehidy Hasan Miraz of Bangladesh bats during play on day three of the first cricket test in Darwin, Australia.

the ninth Australian to do so.

Hazlewood then removed Ebadot Hossein caught behind for 7 to end the innings at 426 to mark a strong return after 12 months out of the test team through injuries.

"From my point of view I think I bowled four out of six good balls a lot of the time and let things off in those other two," Hazlewood said.

"I am still standing. That's good. It was a pretty tough slog straight-up. Obviously the more matches you play the better you get through those longer spells."

Top order woes repeat

Australia lost both openers cheaply before tea as Bangladesh strengthened its grip at Marrara Stadium.

Jake Weatherald (0) and Travis Head (17) both chopped on to paceman Hasan Mahmud attempting cut shots too close to their stumps as Australia slid to 37-2. It took Mahmud's (2-33) match wicket

tally to eight after his return of 6-55 in the first innings limited the hosts to 198 and set the tone for the tourists' upper hand for the following two days.

Marnus Labuschagne, also in search of runs after a lean spell, looked busy at the crease until he missed a straight ball from spinner Taijul Islam (1-28) and was bowled for 31 from 59 balls.

Australia's hopes of salvaging the match rested on Smith's shoulders and the veteran looked composed as he characteristically accumulated his runs with low risk.

The match spun firmly toward Bangladesh though, when Mehidy (1-20) took a sharp caught and bowled chance from Smith (44) as Australia sunk to 122-4, still 106 in arrears.

"If we can bat deep into tomorrow and potentially the whole day there is always the opportunity to take 10 wickets on the final day," Hazlewood said.

"Winning is still in our mind and always is."

SNIPPETS

Dhaubhadel to officiate at 20th Asian Games Karate

Kathmandu (TRN): Prakash Mohan Dhaubhadel, vice president of the Nepal Karate Federation (NKF) and chairman of its Referee Committee, has been selected to officiate at the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. The Asian Karate Federation (AKF) Referee Commission appointed Dhaubhadel to serve as a referee for the karate competitions during the continental multi-sport event, according to the NKF. The 20th Asian Games are scheduled to take place from 19 September to 4 October 2026.

EWV, NVL dates announced

Kathmandu (TRN): Dates for the upcoming men's and women's franchise volleyball leagues have been announced, with both tournaments scheduled to take place at the covered hall of Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu. The Nepal Volleyball Association (NVA) has officially sanctioned the dates for the third edition of the Everest Women's Volleyball League (EWVL), which will run from 1 to 10 October. Organisers confirmed in a press statement on Saturday that seven teams will compete for the title in the women's category. Meanwhile, the men's franchise tournament, the Nepal Volleyball League (NVL), is scheduled for 4 to 12 September. The organizer, Kedia Group, officially announced the dates on Friday and confirmed that six teams will participate, with the player auction already concluded.

NGA secures Guangzhou ADY partnership

Kathmandu (TRN): The Nepal Golf Association (NGA) has signed a memorandum of understanding with China's Guangzhou ADY Golf Sports Development to foster the growth of the sport in Nepal. NGA President Tashi Ghale and company chairperson Huang Guo Mei formalised the agreement on Saturday. The partnership will provide the Nepali national team with advanced training opportunities in Guangzhou, alongside plans to establish a dedicated golf academy in Nepal. The collaboration also encompasses exchange programmes for players and coaches and joint initiatives to promote golf tourism. ADY co-founder Mark Tui confirmed the firm's commitment to organising bilateral tournaments to support the sport's development. President Ghale noted that while golf in Nepal remains in its infancy, the association is prioritising junior programmes and is currently seeking government land for a national academy. In a separate development at the same ceremony, Waldo Dynasty Ang Ho Nepal was announced as the official kit sponsor for the Nepali squad competing at the upcoming Asian Games in Japan. Chairman Steward Chong, whose firm has supported Nepali athletes since 2014, formally handed over the team's attire to the NGA.

Padikkal hits century in his comeback to India

AFP
Galle, Aug. 15

Top-order batsman Devdutt Padikkal made a memorable comeback on Saturday, posting his maiden hundred as India finished the first day of the first Test against Sri Lanka on 288-2 in Galle. Left-hander Padikkal reached 131 not out in a chanceless innings as India batted themselves into a strong position after electing to bat first in the country's 600th Test.

Padikkal was recalled to the side as a late injury replacement for Sai Sudharsan and made a strong claim to become India's long-term number three batsman.

He last played a Test in November 2024 but scored a hundred in a warm-up game in Colombo last week and carried that good form on to Galle.

The 26-year-old faced 178 balls by the end of the day, hitting 12 fours and a six. India's batting coach Sitanshu Kotak praised Padikkal's performance.

"He was waiting for an opportunity and he's made most of it today," he told reporters after the day's play.

"The pitch offered different challenges. There was assistance for seamers after the rain but he showed lots of character."

Padikkal joined K.L. Rahul after



opener Yashasvi Jaiswal was run out for 32 following a mix-up, and they combined to put India in a strong position.

Padikkal was the first to reach his half-century, off 81 balls, while Rahul took 127 deliveries to record his 21st Test half-century. They added 150 runs for the second wicket before Rahul was forced to retire on 77 due to cramps soon after tea.

Nasty blow

Rahul, who hit nine fours and a six, is expected to resume his innings on day two.

Padikkal reached his hundred with a single off debutant spinner Keshara Nuwantha to mid-off.

Sri Lanka's fielding coach Jordon

Gregory rued the lost chances.

"We were consistent with our areas for the most part of the game. The spinners in particular created some opportunities but didn't have much luck," he said. "Credit to Padikkal in particular for the manner in which he batted. It was only his third Test and he looked solid."

Indian captain Shubman Gill, who struck two boundaries in an over by Asitha Fernando, was dismissed for 16 when he tried to loft Prabath Jayasuriya but couldn't clear mid-off.

Padikkal and Rishabh Pant saw India through to stumps, with the wicketkeeper-batsman stepping out to the spinners during his unbeaten 27-run knock that included three fours and a six.

PSG bolsters star-studded attack by signing Ferran Torres

AP
Paris, Aug. 15

Champions League titleholder Paris Saint-Germain bolstered its star-studded attack by signing World Cup hero Ferran Torres from Barcelona on a five-year contract Saturday.

PSG announced the signing in a statement without giving financial details. Sports Daily L'Equipe said the club was paying the Spanish champion 50 million euros (\$58 million) for Torres. The French team said he will wear the No. 9 jersey.

The 26-year-old Torres scored Spain's winning goal during extra time of the World Cup final against a robust and physical Argentina side. Brought on as a second-half substitute, he pounced on a bouncing ball and drove a left-foot shot under the crossbar.

It was his only goal of the competition and he said it was "scored by 47 million people," referring to Spain's population.



The transfer to PSG is his second big move. Barcelona signed Torres from Manchester City during the January 2022 transfer window for a reported fee of 55 million euros. Before joining City in 2020, he played for Valencia.

More of a roaming forward than a prolific scorer he netted 65 goals in

207 games for Barcelona, including a career-high 21 in all competitions last season. But his contract was set to expire next year and Barcelona reportedly had to pay a fee to City if he was to extend it.

Torres had played briefly alongside PSG forward Ousmane Dembélé when

the France star was at Barça.

The move reunites Torres with Spanish coach Luis Enrique, who gave the player his international debut in 2020 when he was in charge of Spain. Luis Enrique took over at PSG in 2023 and has led the team to back-to-back Champions League titles as well as the French league title in each of his three seasons in charge.

PSG boasts attacking options

Luis Enrique has multiple options in attack, with Ballon d'Or winner Dembélé, Désiré Doué, Bradley Barcola — who has been linked with a summer move to Liverpool — Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and new signing Maghnes Aklouché. Dembélé set up Doué for PSG's winner against Aston Villa in the UEFA Super Cup on Wednesday after Kvaratskhelia had given PSG the lead in a 2-1 victory.

It's the first of a possible six trophies this season for PSG, which became the first team to win back-to-back Super Cup titles since Real Madrid (2016 and '17).

AP
Ohio, Aug. 15

Venus Williams' losing streak in singles play has reached 13 matches.

The seven-time major champion was defeated 6-2, 6-2 by Emiliana Arango on Friday in the first round of the Cincinnati Open.

The 46-year-old Williams received a wild-card entry to the WTA 1000 event. She has not won a singles match since July 2025.

Arango, a 25-year-old qualifier from Colombia ranked 95th, needed 1 hour, 5 minutes to defeat Williams on the grandstand court at Lindner Tennis Center. Williams had her serve broken in the first game of the match and faced an uphill battle the rest of the way. Arango was 4 of 5 on converting break points and won 71% of her first-serve points.

Williams was unable to convert on her lone break opportunity and was only 41% on first-serve points.

"That kind of eased my nerves a little bit of having maybe a little bit of breathing room. And then I think I just did a good job of staying on it, trying to make her play as much as possible," Arango said about getting ahead early.

Arango will face No. 7 seed and defending Cincinnati champion Iga Swiatek in the second round.



Williams' last singles victory came last year in Washington, when she defeated Peyton Stearns.

"I think that at all times I was really controlling the point, but unfortunately didn't finish it the way I wanted to," said Williams, who is making her 11th appearance in the tournament. "The encouraging part is that I'm controlling the shots, but I have to just get a little more consistent on that last part."

Williams will remain in Cincinnati to play doubles with her sister, Serena, after they received a wild-card entry. They last played doubles together at the 2022 U.S. Open.

The Williams sisters were slated to play doubles at Wimbledon before an injury to Serena. They will play Marta Kostyuk and Peyton Stearns in the first round.

NEPAL STRENGTHENS MEDAL HOPES AT ASIAN GAMES

RSS
Kathmandu, Aug. 15

Nepal is hoping to win a medal in the kata discipline of karate at the upcoming 20th Asian Games.

Nepal will compete in the women's individual and women's team kata events at the Asian Games, which will be held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, from 19 September.

According to the Nepal Karate Federation, Sanumaya Thing will compete in the women's individual kata, while Thing, Megha Limbu and Alisha Raskoti Magar will represent Nepal in the team kata event. The team is preparing under kata coach Mandekaji Shrestha.