



STOCK

NRB DG RAWAL
SWORN IN

Rawal had joined the NRB on 16 January 2006 as an Assistant Director. He was promoted to Deputy Director in 2011/12, Director in 2018/19, and Executive Director on 31 May 2025.

Mude chhurpi gains popularity at home and abroad

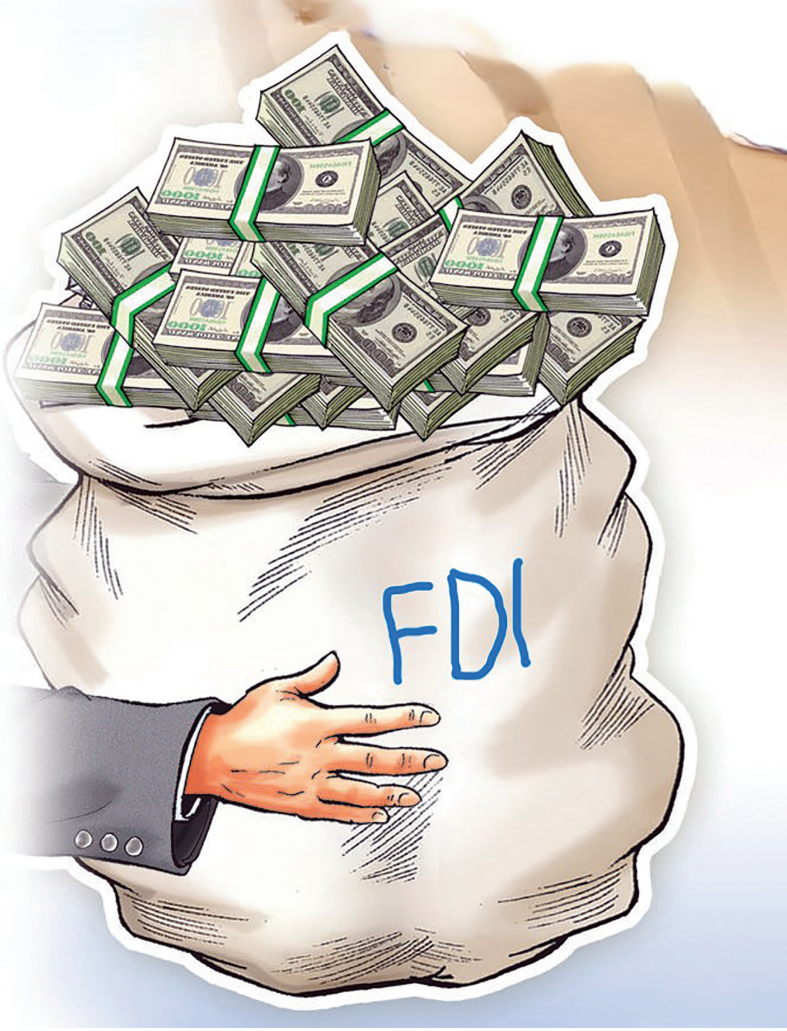
The cold climate is considered favourable for producing chhurpi, much of which is made by local women.

NADA AUTO SHOW TO FEATURE OVER 200 STALLS

"Spread across approximately 300,000 square feet, the exhibition will feature more than 200 stalls. It will include 23 passenger vehicle brands, 17 light commercial vehicle brands, 13 two-wheeler brands and 10 financial and insurance service providers," NADA informed in a statement.

FDI commitments fall sharply to Rs. 3.77 billion

Category-wise, most attraction of foreign investment in terms of number of industry registration is seen in the information and communication technology sector during the review period.



A total of 128 industries have been registered in information and communication technology sector. This accounts for 67 per cent share of the

NCELL PAYS RS. 4.96B FOR LICENCE RENEWAL

The company had initially applied for licence renewal after paying Rs. 4 billion as the first instalment in May 2024. The government subsequently allowed the remaining amount to be paid in instalments.

Toruits rise to Timbung Pokhari

According to Gopal Baniya, ward chair of Sidingwa-1, there is a religious belief that one's wishes are fulfilled by

Morang farmers return to jute cultivation

Other farmers in Rangeli-2, including Dayasagar Gautam, Bhishmaraj Gautam, Laxman Shrestha and Ramji Thapa, have also increased the area



PHOTO: HARI PRASAD KOIRALA/TRN

Jute field ready for harvesting.

ishchare-5 said he sold jute for Rs. 5,500 per man last year, only to see the price rise 15 days later. He has planted jute on five katthas this year and plans to sell it around first week of October.

Khadka plans to store his jute this year and sell it when prices rise. Cultivating jute on one bigha generally costs around Rs. 50,000 and produces 27-35 man. Even with a yield of 27 man,

GOLD PRICE SOARS AGAIN



According to FENEGOSIDA, gold and silver prices increased again in the domestic market following a rise in their prices in the international bullion market. In the international market, the price of gold rose by USD 144 per ounce to USD 4,498 per ounce on Thursday from USD 4,354 per ounce on Wednesday.

The municipality has also been promoting Timbung through activities such as trail-running events and festivals.

NEPAL PROMOTES TOURISM DIVERSITY AT PATA TRAVEL MART

It also featured more than 365 sellers representing over 200 tourism organisations and destinations, providing opportunities to connect with international markets and establish new business partnerships.

Landslide forces 83 Debal families to stay under tarpaulin

BY GUNA BAHADUR ROKA
Gorkha, (Sulikot), Aug. 20

For residents of Debal village in Chumnubri Rural Municipality-3 of northern Gorkha, nightfall is no longer a time for rest but the beginning of another chapter of fear.

The sound of rain pouring from the sky and landslides rumbling down the slopes has robbed most families of sleep for years. Clinging to the hope of finding a safe place to live, villagers are now forced to spend their nights under tarpaulins, amid fear and tears.

For 60-year-old Punnimaya Gurung, the nights over the past two weeks have been particularly distressing. Four years ago, a landslide swept away her house and farmland before her own eyes, forcing her family to take shelter under a temporary tarpaulin. The constant sound of landslides throughout the night prevents her from sleeping, while the need to work in the fields during the day has left her physically and mentally exhausted.

The family of Krishna Gurung is another example of the suffering faced by residents. After a landslide reached the courtyard of their house, the building became dangerously tilted. Its windows and doors can no longer be properly closed. Living under a tarpaulin, Gurung says, “My courage is weakening more than my spirit. As soon as the monsoon begins, I am haunted by the fear of whether we will survive.”



The situation is similar for all 83 families in Debal. Since the onset of this year's monsoon alone, four houses have been completely swept away by landslides, while most other houses have developed cracks, tilted or become uninhabitable. Except for a few houses

considered to be at relatively lower risk, most families are living under temporary tarpaulins.

The plight of Debal is not new. The village has been bearing the brunt of landslides for nearly three decades. In the past, landslides have already

destroyed three settlements, a school and a micro-hydropower project. Although geologists and technical teams have repeatedly studied the area, declared the village highly vulnerable and recommended immediate relocation, the recommendations have yet to be implemented.

A recent study conducted by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) has also concluded that all 83 households in Debal should be relocated to a safe area immediately.

Three alternative sites, including Philim, have been proposed for the relocation, and the final report is reportedly being prepared.

According to the authority, there is no realistic possibility of preventing the landslides, making relocation of the village the only permanent solution.

However, financing remains a major challenge. According to Chumnubri Rural Municipality, the relief amount available to each family would not even be sufficient to purchase land. Therefore, adequate budgetary arrangements will be essential alongside any decision to relocate the residents.

After living in fear for years, the people of Debal are now waiting not for further studies and recommendations, but for a secure future. Their sole appeal is that the state make decisions to save their lives not merely on paper but in practice, so that the nights spent shedding tears under tarpaulins can finally come to an end.

8 drivers detained for driving under influence

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Nepalgunj, Aug. 20

Police in Banke district have stepped up checks against motorists driving under the influence of drugs, intensifying drug-use testing and detaining those found driving after consuming narcotics.

According to Deputy Superintendent of Police Pratit Singh Rathore, information officer at the District Police Office, Banke, the checks were intensified following complaints from passengers that some drivers were operating vehicles after consuming drugs.

He said eight drivers were found to have consumed drugs at a single location during the intensified checks and were taken into custody for further action. Rathore said that while police had previously focused on fining motorists for traffic-rule violations and confiscating vehicles and driving licences, they have now increased checks for drug use as well.

He said eight drivers were arrested during a joint drug-use test conducted in front of the Chisapani Area Police Office and the Banke checkpoint in Bajjanath Rural Municipality-1.

A joint police team deployed from the Area Police Office, Kohalpur, the District Traffic Police Office, Banke, and the Chisapani Area Police Office conducted drug-use tests on vehicles and their drivers in the checkpoint area.

Police said 25 vehicle drivers were tested for drug use during the operation. Tests confirmed that eight of them had consumed drugs, following which they were taken into custody.



Banke police conduct an awareness campaign against drug abuse.

The District Police Office, Banke, said further investigation into the detained drivers and the incident was underway.

Driving under the influence of drugs can adversely affect a driver's decision-making ability, reaction time and vehicle control, significantly increasing the risk of accidents. Local residents have therefore called for more intensive drug- and alcohol-use checks.

Krishna Prasad Shrestha, coordinator of the Citizens' Concern Forum, Banke, said stricter checks for driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol were necessary to reduce road accidents.

Superintendent of Police Angur GC, chief of the District Police Office, Banke, said police had been regularly intensifying alcohol and drug-use tests on drivers with the aim of reducing road accidents and ensuring safer transport.

5 ABANDONED HOMEMADE GUNS FOUND IN GULMI

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Gulmi, Aug. 20

Five homemade muzzle-loading guns have been found abandoned at different locations in Gulmi district within a month, according to the District Police Office, Gulmi.

The five guns were recovered from different places at different times during the Nepali month of Shrawan (mid-July to mid-August), said Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Birendra Bir Bishwakarma, Information officer at the District Police Office, Gulmi.

According to DSP Bishwakarma, police recovered five homemade muzzle-loading guns, one gun barrel, 150 grams of gunpowder, 12 pellets and 12 gunpowder caps during the month.

One muzzle-loading gun was found abandoned at Setogurans in Resunga Municipality-2 on August 4, he said.

On the same day, police recovered a muzzle-loading gun barrel, 150 grams of gunpowder, 12 pellets and 12 gunpowder caps from a water tank at Musidanda in Baletaksar, Ruru Kshetra Rural Municipality-4.

Similarly, one muzzle-loading gun was found abandoned at Urlabari Chaur in Banjhkatari, Madane Rural Municipality-2, on August 7.

The following day, another gun barrel was found abandoned in a Banmara bush at Banjhkatari, according to DSP Bishwakarma.

Another muzzle-loading gun was recovered from Patalakateri in Madane Rural Municipality-5 on August 8. The weapons were discovered after police personnel passing through the area for official purposes and local residents spotted them and informed the police.

KTM Public Transport App launched to track valley buses

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 20

The KTM Public Transport mobile application has been launched to provide information on public transport services, including the locations of public transport vehicles in the Kathmandu Valley and the estimated time they will take to reach waiting passengers.

The application was made public by Sunita Dangol, Chairperson of the Federal Capital Urban Area Public Transport Council (FCCUPTC) and Acting Mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC), at the third meeting of the Council on Wednesday.

The application can provide information on approximately 1,200 GPS-enabled vehicles. The authority plans to increase this number.

At the meeting, Chairperson Dangol said that a system involving financial contributions from local governments should be developed to make daytime public transportation in the Valley simple, convenient and accessible, expand night-time services, and operate public transportation from early morning for students travelling to schools and colleges.

Chiribabu Maharjan, Vice-Chairperson of the Federal Capital Urban Area Public Transport Council and Mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan City, said that a system was needed to make passengers feel comfortable when boarding public buses.

“This council can bring about changes for the improvement of public transport. Let’s use this ability,” Maharjan said.

“The work could not progress in the past due to a lack of intergovernmental understanding regarding the scope of work of the Authority,” said Kuber Nepali, Executive Officer of the Federal Capital City Public Transport Authority. “The work that was initiated last year was also halted after the government put it on the cancellation list.”

The government has decided to restructure the Authority this year. Therefore, programmes have been proposed for the current fiscal year, he said.

For this year, programmes have been approved to determine bus-stop pick-up and drop-off points, prepare the necessary conditions for night-bus operations, initiate cooperation with municipalities by preparing a model agreement, establish a GPS-based public transport information system at major bus stops and bus parks in partnership with local governments, and prepare the legal framework for implementing cashless fares.

It has also been decided to conduct research and study programmes, including campaigns, to encourage the culture of purchasing tickets.

During the discussion, suggestions were received on issues including mutual relations and cooperation among municipalities, as well as the operation of public transportation services targeting heritage and tourist areas.

Lama said the local government had coordinated with the district administration to ensure that government services were delivered at the doorsteps of people with disabilities and those living in geographically remote areas.

According to Jyangmu Lama, a local resident of Ward No. 8, geographical remoteness, poverty, physical disabilities, and difficulties in obtaining the necessary documents and completing administrative procedures continue to deprive some citizens of basic state services.

“We villagers are happy that state agencies have come to the doorsteps of people who are unable to travel to government offices to access services,” she said.

The ward office said the process of enrolling Tamang in the social security allowance scheme would be initiated following the issuance of her citizenship.

After remaining without citizenship for decades, Tamang now has access not only to her fundamental citizenship rights but also to social security and other state-provided services and benefits.

QR code launched to provide digital information on ABC

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Myagdi, Aug. 20

A QR code service has been launched to provide tourists with digital information and essential details about Annapurna I Base Camp (ABC) and the trekking route in Narchyang of Annapurna Rural Municipality-4, Myagdi.

Annapurna I, at 8,091 metres, is the highest mountain in the district. The District Police Office, Myagdi, launched the QR code service to make safety information and other details easily accessible to tourists travelling to the base camp.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Rajan Karki said the QR code provides comprehensive information about the Annapurna I Base Camp and the Maurice Herzog Trail.

According to Karki, tourists can scan the QR code on their mobile phones to access information including the location and telephone number of the police office, details of hotels, estimated travel time to the base camp, trail conditions, the road condition from Besi village in Narchyang to Humkhola, where the trekking route begins, and contact numbers of available transport services.



PHOTO: THAKUR PRASAD ACHARYA

Deputy Superintendent of Police Rajan Karki providing information about the QR code.

Police Inspector and Information Officer Sagar Timilsina said the QR code was developed to make it easier for tourists to obtain information, as many visitors had been calling the police office to ask about the base camp.

He said the QR code was developed using the human resources and technical capacity of the District Police Office.

The QR code will be displayed at the

bus park in Beni, Bhurung Tatopani, along the Maurice Herzog Trail to Annapurna Base Camp and at major tourist hotels, Timilsina said.

Karki expressed hope that the QR code, which provides comprehensive information about the base camp and trekking route, would make it easier for tourists to obtain the information they need before and during their trek.

Kunjum receives citizenship at 61

BY HARI KRISHNA AIDI
Mugu, Aug. 20

Kunjum Palmu Tamang, a 61-year-old woman from Mangri village in Mugum Karmarong Rural Municipality-8, has finally obtained Nepali citizenship after a prolonged wait.

Physically disabled, Tamang had remained without citizenship until the age of 61, depriving her of various state-provided services and benefits.

Tamang has been cared for and supported by her elder brother, Yangap Tamang. He said her physical disability, coupled with her family's poor financial circumstances and lack of citizenship, had made it difficult for her to access government services, including social security allowance and a national identity card.

After local authorities and concerned agencies were informed that Tamang had remained without citizenship, the process of obtaining the document was initiated, he said.

In coordination with Ward No. 8 Office of Mugum Karmarong Rural

Municipality and the District Administration Office, Mugu, officials travelled to her home and provided her with both a citizenship certificate and a national identity card.

Chief District Officer Poshan Raj Bhandari said an administrative team travelled to Mangri village, taking into consideration the area's geographical remoteness and Tamang's physical condition.

On Sunday, a team led by Chief District Officer Bhandari and Assistant Chief District Officer Dhan Krishna Pandey reached Mangri village after a day-long walk from the district headquarters, Gamgadhi, and handed Tamang her Nepali citizenship certificate and national identity card.

Receiving the documents at her home has fulfilled Tamang's long-standing desire to obtain citizenship. With citizenship now secured, she is eligible to access various state services and benefits, including social security. She is particularly expected to be enrolled in the social security allowance scheme for senior citizens.

Mugum Karmarong Rural Municipality Chairperson Tshering Kyapne



हिमालय एअरलाइन्स
HIMALAYA AIRLINES

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Himalaya Airlines' network presently consists of Doha, Dammam, Riyadh, Dubai, Dhaka, Kuala Lumpur, Kuwait & China sectors. Interested candidates are requested to send in applications for the following posts not later than 17:00 hrs on September 04, 2026, Friday.

First date of publication : August 21, 2026

DEPARTMENT : FLIGHT OPERATIONS

Position: TRE

Vacancy Code : H9/FOD/0052026

Required No. : 05

Qualification Requirements:

• Below 65 years of age • Hold a valid ATPL and a TRE certificate for the applicable type • Minimum 12 months appointment as a TRI • Minimum 3000 hours on type • Minimum 3000 hours PIC including 2000 hours PIC on type • English Language Proficiency 5 preferred but minimum 4 is mandatory

Position: TRI

Vacancy Code : H9/FOD/0062026

Required No. : 05

Qualification Requirements:

• Below 65 years of age • Hold a current ATPL and rating on the applicable aircraft category • Minimum 3000 hours on type • Minimum 3000 hours PIC and 2000 hours PIC on type • Without any unsatisfactory report during the last 4 Proficiency Checks • English Language Proficiency 5 preferred but minimum 4 is mandatory

Position: LTC

Vacancy Code : H9/FOD/0072026

Required No. : 08

Qualification Requirements:

• Below 65 years • Hold a current ATPL pilot license on type • Minimum 2500 hours on type • Minimum 2000 hours PIC and 1500 hours PIC on type • Should have approved Instructor Course certificate with minimum of 1000 hours experience on A-320 series as LTC • English Language Proficiency 5 preferred but minimum 4 is mandatory

Position: Line Captain (LC) A320 Type Rated

Vacancy Code : H9/FOD/0082026

Required No. : 28

Qualification Requirements:

• Below 65 years • Hold a current ATPL pilot license on type • A minimum of the last two Pilot Proficiency Checks successfully completed • Has a total flight time on multi crew transport aircraft of at least 3000 hours; including 1000 hours on A320 family • Minimum 500 hours PIC on type • English Language Proficiency 5 preferred but minimum 4 is mandatory

Please fill-up the form & upload your updated resume, a copy of pp size photo, scanned copy (ies) of your qualifications & copy of citizenship etc. using the link: <https://forms.gle/rnicSyNAyvoFxfuJM7> not later than 15 days from the date of publication. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. Phone calls will not be entertained.

EDITORIAL

Performance Contracts

A performance contract is an agreement that focuses on delivering specific results and outcomes. Signing such a contract matters because it identifies the target to be met, its deadline, and the resources to be used. Once these parameters are clear, the equation becomes easier to solve, as every organisation member understands their role. By shifting focus from routine tasks to quantifiable outcomes, it encourages efficiency and productivity, as an unambiguous target makes it easier for managers and employees to effectively use time, resources, and skills.

Prime Minister Balendra Shah on Wednesday signed performance agreements with ministers of his Cabinet outlining the key tasks and achievements to be delivered during the current fiscal year. The agreements cover areas related to good governance, social justice and prosperity. The performance contracts span a range of governmental portfolios: finance, foreign affairs, energy, home affairs, law, science, technology, women's issues, land management, health, education, culture, tourism, information, agriculture, industry, and infrastructure. The agreements aim to establish clear expectations and accountability for ministers in delivering key policy objectives during the fiscal year. The agreements mark an effort by PM Shah to enhance governmental efficiency and ensure ministers are held accountable for achieving defined objectives.

With the signing, hopes have been raised that the ministers who are parties to the agreement will leave no stone unturned to achieve the stated goals. A minister clearly knowing what his/her ministry is expected to accomplish is fundamental to ensuring that officials deliver pledged services. The document is much more than a paper; it links political leadership with bureaucracy, creating a chain of responsibility of officials from the minister to those overseeing projects on the ground.

Performance agreements can provide a basis for periodically reviewing progress rather than waiting until the end of the fiscal year, working as a guiding policy that rights the ship when it veers towards a disaster or when projects start to underperform. Besides, it connects the budget with results, allowing it to monitor whether spending produces the promised outputs and outcomes, and to determine which sector needs what additional funding and which needs a cut. All these are crucial for building the institutional capacity of government agencies.

Building trust between leadership and employees is another vital dimension of such an inked deal, as stipulated responsibilities and expectations make cooperation between the two easier. When better results mean better rewards or pay and poor outcomes invite consequences, it incentivises workers towards project success. These can help reduce delays, improve service delivery, and make officials more accountable to citizens, all going a long way to strengthen good governance.

That said, performance contracts work best when targets are realistic, measurable, and coupled with proper monitoring and support. They hold immense significance as they try to translate government promises into tangible outcomes. To make them meaningful, poor performance should be met with consequences and good performance with recognition. Evidence abounds that failing to do this reduces them to mere paperwork. Also, authorities must refrain from frequent and unnecessary transfer of officials to make them work in their letter and spirit. Nepal is increasingly facing a human resource crunch in vital positions to implement critical projects as youth are leaving the country in droves. The success of the document hinges on the government's ability to retain a talented workforce and bring home expert compatriots from abroad.

The Digital Trap

OJASWEE MAHARJAN

What would you do when the trap is in your phone? You might know how to avoid a stranger on a dark street. You might know not to follow someone you don't know. But what happens when the person trying to trap you is hiding behind a friendly profile photo, promising you a job or simply sending a "Hi" in your inbox?

This is the new face of human trafficking in the modern, digital world. When people hear the word "trafficking" they usually imagine physical kidnapping or smuggling people across borders in the back of trucks. In the past, trafficking in Nepal often involved vulnerable people especially young women from rural areas, who were often tricked into going to other countries for work. Globally, traffickers are increasingly using digital platforms such as Facebook, TikTok and WhatsApp to lure and manipulate people. The trap usually begins with a simple job advertisement. Posts that promise well-paying jobs in data entry, customer service, digital marketing, etc. in countries like Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar or the United Arab Emirates. The offers look professional.

Sometimes interviews occur through video calls or employment letters sent via email. To a young Nepali who is eager to earn good income, this may look like a once in a lifetime opportunity. According to UNFPA, over 16.5 million Nepalese are actively online today and are driven by rapid smartphone expansion and widespread access to social networks. This does not necessarily mean that all 16.5 million people are exposed to online predators or are at risk of getting trafficked. However, this increasing number has also made it easier for traffickers to reach their targeted vulnerable people.

In Nepal, cases of people being lured through online job offers are becoming difficult to ignore. According to an article by Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), 47 Nepalis were rescued from scam centres in Myanmar in late 2025. During their stay they were treated harshly. One of the victims was a 29 year old male IT worker, who was promised a computer job in Thailand via social media. Instead he was trafficked into a heavily guarded cyber scam compound along the Myanmar border where his passport got taken. He expressed that his arms were hung up for 18 hours and was locked in a cell for 3 days as a punishment for not following their rules. Cases like these show how easily ordinary job seekers can fall into such traps.

Nepal is a country where thousands of young people leave home and move abroad every year hoping for work and better chances. And when that search ends up happening online more and more, traffickers get a space where they can easily reach people who want to believe in a better future. So, therefore the danger is not the phone itself. The danger is what can happen when technology, unemployment, desperation and deception all meet. This is why being aware of what happens online matters.

In a world where technology is rapidly expanding and improving, being aware of online risks and having basic digital literacy has become important. Knowing how to check if a foreign job offer is genuine, identifying fake companies and recognizing common recruitment scams can help people avoid falling into such traps. We often think of trafficking as something that only happens to other people especially those from remote areas or those who are uneducated. But the digital world is changing this image. Anyone searching for an opportunity online can potentially fall into a trap.

OP-ED

Generational Shift In Nepali Politics



Dr. Narad
Bharadwaj

Nepal is experiencing shockwaves from the generational shift in political leadership. It reflects the tension between the culture of prolonged incumbency and the aspiration for generational renewal in the leadership of democratic institutions. This tension has pushed traditional political forces into disarray, putting an inexperienced young generation at the helm of the state. Now a discourse has started on what the natural paradigm for democratic leadership is: prolonged incumbency or generational renewal? This article will try to briefly discuss the principles and practices that govern the evolution of leadership and its continuity in political parties.

The legitimacy of democratic leadership is derived from popular consent, which is reflected in electoral victories. The elected leaders serve the pleasure of the people for certain terms and are removed in a free and fair election. Transparency, accountability and acceptance of institutional check and balance are basic criteria of legitimate democratic leadership. In democracy, everyone, from the president to a commoner, is equal before the law. A democratic leader cannot exercise arbitrary power or monopolise state authority. Democratic leadership must honour dissenting views and minority rights, be it in the government or in the party. Even while in the majority, leadership must give priority to accommodate the feelings and expectations of the minority.

Catastrophic defeat

The traditional political parties suffered a catastrophic defeat in the election held on 5 March 2026, paving the way for a new generation of youth leaders to assume state power. There are controversies around how it happened but any careful observer knows this had not happened all of a sudden. The demands of generational transfer of power were reverberating across the boardrooms of political institutions. These voices were ignored, as leaders felt secure and irreplaceable within their coterie. The practice of co-opting loyalists to party positions and state institutions drove young party workers and supporters to the margin, many of them joining independent or non-party action groups. Some youths even formed political parties and contested elections.

They did not win many seats in earlier elections, but their agendas against corruption, commission grabbing, nepotism, and monopolisation of authority by old political leaders found resonance with the people. In a time span of just one parliamentary term of five years, the new youth force mustered enough power to sweep the election, relegating the traditional political parties to a marginal minority. The struggle between the ideology of lifelong incumbency and generational transfer of power finds acute reflection within the inner-party struggles of the two largest traditional parties, the Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML. Nepali Congress peacefully restructured itself under its youth leader Gagan Thapa in the absence of Sher Bahadur Deuba, who was forced to flee the country in the wake of last year's Gen Z revolt. Deuba has now come back and his supporters have moved the Supreme Court for recognition to his faction.

The irony of democracy is that power is never a lifelong entitlement. Clinging to high position is as fatal as the desire to stay on top after climbing the summit.

to their downfall. Political leaders, howsoever powerful, are never indispensable. Their wisdom lies in stepping aside and facilitating generational transfer of power before it is too late.

Restructuring parties

Today, the young generation of leaders and workers of traditional political parties, particularly the Nepali Congress and the UML, are rooting for restructuring of their party organisations, including the transfer of power to the younger generation. This reflects the true grassroots reality of these parties. If UML's chairperson KP Sharma Oli and the former NC president Deuba continue to cling to power or try to grab power through manipulation, intimidation and fraudulence, they run the risk of destroying their party and relegating themselves to irrelevance.

Leaders of democratic countries should realise that their position of power is not their entitlement but the trust of the people. They can remain in that position for one or two terms as fixed by the law. In a democracy, leaders are expected to deliver strong governance while remaining weak and vulnerable themselves. It is because the institutions which they strengthen for good governance paradoxically oversee their exit from office. The irony of democracy is that power is never a lifelong entitlement. Clinging to high position is as fatal as the desire to stay on top after climbing the summit. Leaders are in power not as conquerors but as repositories of public trust. They must have the humility to step down and mingle with the people before whispers of opposition turn into catcalls of disgrace.

(Dr. Bharadwaj is a former ambassador and former chairperson of Gorkhapatra Corporation. [bharadwajnarad@gmail.com](#).)

Call For Heavier Sentences On Rapists



Dr. Byanjana
Sharma

I came across a piece of news nearly a month ago that a 5-year-old girl from Pachthar was raped by her own grandfather and uncle and in a critical condition, she was brought to BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS), Dharan for treatment. I had been continuously haunted by this incident and suddenly another more severe case spread on social media early this month. It was from Karachi, Pakistan, where an 18-month-old baby girl was sexually assaulted by her 17-year old cousin. The baby could not sustain the excruciating pain, so she died. This tragic event is still fresh and there is another such occurrence in Simara - Garima Chaudhary, a 3-year-old girl, was raped and murdered. Two suspects have already been arrested by the police. It has not even been two months and we have faced three similar incidences which are really heart-breaking. In all these cases, the criminals involved are either relatives or acquaintances.

The children are regarded as images of God and I think it is absolutely true. This may be the reason why our frustration, sadness or worry melt away when we see an innocent child smiling at us. How come one thinks to hurt such tender souls who are merely meant to be loved? What sort of mentality do these demons have? Why aren't

they paralyzed as soon as they move towards the little children to harm them? These and other similar questions are incessantly popping up into my mind.

Abnormal mindset

Certainly these criminals do not have a normal mindset. In general, the adults who have sexual attraction to prepubescent children or, in some cases, to babies are termed as pedophiles. However, as Xanthe Weston points out, not all pedophiles are child sex offenders, and conversely not all child sex offenders are pedophiles. According to her, some people who sexually abuse children are not necessarily attracted to children at all. For them, the abuse is a matter of opportunity and the child is a sexual surrogate for an unavailable adult or the abuse represents a need to dominate and control another human being.

Whatever the reason for sexual abuse, the children who cannot differentiate between what is right and what is wrong for them must be protected in the first place. But this is also not easy all the time as the sexual offenders are usually found to be family, friends or relatives of their victims, so who to trust and who not to? Sadly, the abusers are known to the victims in all the cases mentioned in this article. What can be done to discourage those shameless people so that they are compelled to think again and again before involving themselves in child sexual abuse? One thing that automatically comes into my mind is to apply the death penalty straight away. In the case of Pakistan, there is a death penalty as a legal punishment for rape. So, there is hope for the 18-month-old little girl

No punishment can replace the irreparable loss but there is no other way available that can be more severe than death.

and her family to get justice by hanging the person who sexually assaulted the child to death. This crime is unforgivable. Even if there is a provision of the death sentence in Pakistan, rape crimes are happening but the bereaved family may at least feel they have got justice.

Unfortunately, the death sentence for a rape case has not been introduced in Nepal yet. But I think it is high time to review the punishment system. Realising the increasing rate of rape cases, the lawmakers have also started to talk about the death penalty. An Amnesty International report of 2020 indicates, "...Several lawmakers demanded the introduction of the death penalty for people convicted of rape. They argued that the punishment would serve as an effective deterrent to rape and sexual and gender-based violence, reported incidents of which have been steadily rising in the country." Although the debate over the death penalty has been going on for many years, it has not been materialised yet.

A sense of fear

There is a group of people who are expressing their fear about how to keep daughters safe, as the

criminals can be lurking around them. In such a situation, it is natural that you are doubtful of everyone. If a grandfather makes his granddaughter a prey, then who can you trust? At the same time, male children are not hundred per cent safe. They can also be the victim of sexual abuse. So, one must be watchful of both - sons and daughters. One of the reasons why people instigate sexual abuse fearlessly may be that there is no strong punishment system in Nepal. In the most severe cases, there is life imprisonment and in others, seven years to twenty years of imprisonment, which is not enough.

Therefore, this is the right time for the government should take an initiative towards this direction. Sarin Tamang, a social activist from Dharan, had seen the Home Minister, Sudan Gurung, to report to him about the Pachthar girl's predicament. During that time, she also insisted on introducing the death penalty to punish the rapists. Now, there are protests being organised in different parts of the country demanding justice for Garima Chaudhary. All the protesters are unequivocally asking for the death penalty for those who are involved in her rape and murder. No punishment can replace the irreparable loss but there is no other way available that can be more severe than death. So at least the death penalty for the criminals may bring some peace to Garima's soul.

(The author is the director of Vidya Shilpa Academy, Damak, Jhapa.)

50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

August 21, 1976

Seminar On Industrial Estate Adm.

The two-day-long seminar on "industrial estates administration" to be sponsored by the Centre for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA) began here today, reports RSS.

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READER'S MAIL

Promote Domestic Products

This is in reference to a news report 'Government offices urged to increase using domestic products' published in the digital edition of this daily on Thursday. According to the report, the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (OPMCM) has asked the government offices to give priority to the domestic goods and services.

In line with the instruction of Prime Minister Balendra Shah, the OPMCM requested all public bodies, including federal ministries, commissions, secretariats, provincial governments, local levels, and Nepali missions abroad, to use Nepali products in their procurement processes. This is indeed a positive move to promote domestic products and save foreign reserves.

However, the government entities must abide by the existing legal framework related to public procurement while purchasing the local goods and



services. The initiative is expected to enhance the contribution of domestic production to the national economy, replace the imported items, protect the local skills and boost entrepreneurship and employment opportunities. It is not only government offices but the ordinary people should also use domestic products to strengthen the national economy.

Radhika Aryal
Chitwan

TAILPIECE

On the first day of college, the Dean addressed the students, pointing out some of the rules:

"The female dormitory will be out-of-bounds for all male students, and the male dormitory to the female students. Anybody caught breaking this rule will be fined \$20 the first time."

He continued, "Anybody caught breaking this rule the second time will be fined \$60. Being caught a third time will cost you a fine of \$180. Are there any questions?" At this point, a male student in the crowd inquired: "How much for a season pass?"

++
Two blondes walking down the street. One reaches into her pocket-book for a make up compact and looks into the mirror. "This picture looks like someone I know" she says. The other one has a look and says, "Of course dummy, it's ME...."

Russian missiles kill 16 in Kyiv

AP
Kyiv, Aug. 20

Russia pounded the Ukrainian capital Kyiv and the surrounding region with scores of missiles and drones in a night-time aerial attack that lasted for hours and killed at least 16 people, officials said Thursday.

Moscow's forces have in recent months intensified their ballistic missile attacks on Kyiv, exploiting Ukraine's chronic shortage of U.S.-made Patriot air defense interceptors, the sole weapon in its arsenal able to shoot down ballistic missiles.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has pleaded for countries to send more Patriot interceptors but international stockpiles are low amid the Iran war and Ukraine's more than four-year fight against Russia's all-out invasion.

Russia's overnight barrage also included cruise missiles and fast-flying jet-powered drones that put further strain on air defenses, the Ukrainian air force said.

Explosions boomed across the city in the dark. Kyiv was the primary target, but hits were recorded at 28 locations across the country, according to the air force. Emergency services said 15 people were killed in the capital, with another fatality in the wider Kyiv region. About 40 people were wounded, Zelenskyy said, as air raid warnings remained in place until after dawn.

"It was a massive attack," Zelenskyy said on social media, adding that Russia "had been preparing (it) for a long time, combining different types of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones, aiming to cause as much damage as possible to civilian infrastructure."

But the Russian Defense Ministry said the attack struck a Kyiv industrial site manufacturing components for Ukraine's Flamingo cruise missiles. Sites involved in the production and storage of drones, an ammunition depot and a logistics center were also hit, it said.

Russia and Ukraine have battered



People take shelter in a metro station during a night Russian attack, in Kyiv, Ukraine, early Thursday, Aug. 20, 2026.

each other with drones and missiles as their armies struggle to gain the upper hand on the 1,250-kilometer (780-mile) front line, where huge numbers of drones are pinning down troops.

Ukraine has attempted to shift the war onto Russian soil through long-range drone strikes on oil facilities and other infrastructure.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Thursday morning that air defenses shot down 726 Ukrainian drones overnight over a number of Russian regions, annexed Crimea and the Black and Azov seas, in one of Ukraine's biggest aerial attacks of the war. There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties.

Russia's relentless onslaught on Kyiv has spooked other European countries, especially those bordering Ukraine, which fear what Russian President Vladimir Putin might have in store for the continent.

As the Russian attack on Kyiv unfolded, the Polish Armed Forces Operational Command activated its

military aviation operations, ground-based air defense systems and its radar reconnaissance.

Polish and other NATO military aircraft were deployed to monitor the country's airspace, Polish news agency PAP reported. Romania's Defense Ministry said that an unidentified drone crashed and caught fire in an uninhabited area near the border with Ukraine.

Two Spanish F-18 jets, deployed on an air policing mission in Romania, were scrambled after 2 a.m. local time to monitor a group of "air targets" near the border, the ministry said. Moldova's Defense Ministry also said that its airspace was breached by at least one unauthorized drone.

Russia "is increasingly testing the resolve of NATO and its partners, violating the sovereignty of neighboring states and deliberately expanding the risks posed by its war far beyond Ukraine," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said on social media.

Russia's overnight strikes hit 12 locations across Kyiv's Darnytskyi,

Sviatoshynskiy and Solomianskiy districts, damaging residential buildings, a medical facility and an educational institution. Emergency crews were at the scene and pulled people out from under the rubble.

60-year-old Larysa Bondaruk sat on the ground, holding her cat, Chanel, which had been rescued by firefighters.

With tears in her eyes, she said that her neighbor's grandson had been trapped under the rubble and died. Her apartment was badly damaged. "A rocket hit the roof. It was incredibly loud. Immediately, debris and doors were blown out. There were columns of smoke, columns of fire, screams, crying and despair," she said. "Two people were killed in our building, but the rescuers responded quickly and professionally. I am grateful to them for that."

In Solomianskiy district, the top two floors of a 9-story residential building were destroyed and fires broke out on other floors. People were also trapped in two residential buildings and a school shelter.

Evergrande founder jailed for life

AP
Hong Kong, Aug. 20

Chinese property developer Hui Ka Yan, founder of the Evergrande real estate group, has been sentenced to life in prison and the companies were fined a total of more than \$2 billion, a court in the southern city of Shenzhen said Thursday.

The decision marks a milestone in Evergrande's saga after it collapsed with more than \$300 billion in liabilities when Chinese authorities cracked down on excessive borrowing in the real estate industry in 2020. That triggered a crunch among many developers and brought on a downturn in the property market that has weighed on the broader economy ever since.

The Shenzhen Intermediate People's Court convicted Hui, 67, and Evergrande of engaging in large-scale financial fraud in inflating the group's assets and concealing its liabilities.

In a statement, the court also said Hui, also known as Xu Jiayin, abused his position in orchestrating fraud and misappropriating company assets.

Evergrande group was fined 8.82 billion yuan (\$1.31 billion) and Evergrande Real Estate Group was fined 7 billion yuan (\$1.04 billion), the court said in the statement.

"The amount involved is exceptionally large, the circumstances are particularly egregious, and extraordinarily heavy economic losses have been caused," the court's statement said. "The harm to society is extremely serious. Therefore, severe punishment should be given in accordance with the law."

Hui's sons, Xu Tenghe and Xu Zhijian, were also sentenced alongside senior Evergrande executives and others linked to the group on charges including illegally taking public deposits, fundraising fraud and the illegal use of funds, China's official Xinhua News Agency said. A total of more than 50 individuals were sentenced to imprisonment of

between 22 months and 18 years, Xinhua said, although a breakdown of sentencing details was not provided.

A photo of Hui's courtroom appearance released by the Shenzhen court on Thursday showed an aged Hui, who used to be a high-profile figure but had long been out of public view, wearing a navy blue shirt standing in between two uniformed officers behind a sign that read "defendant."

Hui pleaded guilty in April to various charges including illegal absorption of public deposits, fraud and bribery after he was detained in China.

China Evergrande, founded in 1996, defaulted on its debts in 2021. It was the world's most heavily indebted real estate developer before it was ordered to liquidate its assets. After Evergrande's downfall triggered the broader downturn in China's massive property sector, home prices have fallen by roughly 20% or more since 2021.

Authorities in Hong Kong and mainland China earlier said their investigations found Evergrande had manipulated its financial data by tactics that included prematurely booking revenue from property sales before completion and delivery of the apartments to buyers. Revenues were overstated by roughly \$80 billion over 2019 and 2020, they said.

Hui was fined 47 million yuan (\$6.5 million) in 2024 and banned from China's securities markets for life by the China Securities Regulatory Commission over inflating company financial results, among other issues.

Once reported to be China's richest man, Hui used to own the football club Guangzhou Evergrande. At one point, he and his companies were involved in investing in and building theme parks and electric vehicles.

His story was one of rags-to-riches. Born in 1958 into a rural family in central China's Henan province, he worked in the steel industry in the 1980s before establishing Evergrande, which then prospered during China's housing market boom.

Rescuers recover bodies after mine collapse

AP
Bangui, Aug. 20

Hopes of finding survivors of a collapsed gold mine in Central African Republic were fading Thursday, two days after the disaster killed more than 100 people and left others buried under debris.

Rescuers continued recovering bodies from the artisanal mining site in Zamboye, near the border with Cameroon, but local workers said the response lacked the equipment and expertise needed for a disaster of such scale. "The rescue effort is being organized, but it is not up to the task," said Jérémie Ngbiri, a miner at the site who lost his brother and a friend in the collapse.

Ngbiri said he saw some victims suffocate as people tried to rescue them. The local Red Cross was helping with the search but could not say how many people remained buried, volunteer Gervais Ganagoro said. "We continue to find bodies," he said, adding that more than 10 were recovered Thursday morning alone. "Every hour, bodies are being discovered, increasing the number of victims."

Local officials and the Red Cross said Wednesday that more than 100 people had died in the collapse and warned the toll was likely to rise. The Baboua

subprefecture court said in a statement that several underground tunnels in which the miners were working had collapsed, causing a landslide.

An investigation has been opened to determine why the tunnels collapsed, identify the victims and those responsible for operating the site, as well as establish any potential criminal liability, the statement said.

Artisanal mine collapses are common in Central African Republic, where thousands of people work in small-scale mining, often with little protection. Pits are frequently dug by hand and can reach several meters deep. Without adequate reinforcement, shifting ground can cause tunnels to collapse suddenly, burying miners within seconds.

Mines Minister Rufin Benam Bel-toungou expressed condolences to victims' families and warned miners about the dangers of unsafe mining practices, according to a statement posted by the ministry. Some of the victims were from neighboring Cameroon. Cameroon's Mines Ministry said both Cameroonian and Central African miners were believed to be among the dead and deployed a team to assess the situation along the border. "

Among the dead were four Cameroonians and two Chadians, Abdou Adamou, the mayor of Garoua-Boulai, a Cameroonian town near the mining site, told The Associated Press.

Iran executes Afghan over protests

AFP
Paris, Aug. 20

Iran on Thursday executed an Afghan national convicted over the killing of police officers during anti-government demonstrations, the 30th in a wave of hangings since the start of the Middle East war, a rights group said.

Ghaem Hosseini was executed after being convicted of involvement in the deaths of four police officers, the Iranian judiciary's Mizan Online website reported. It said he was a foreign national, without providing further details. But, the Norway-based Iran Human Rights (IHR) group said the 21-year-old was from Afghanistan and was hanged at Isfahan central prison.

Mizan Online said Hosseini was convicted "of drawing a weapon and causing fear and terror, creating widespread insecurity, acting against people's physical integrity and national security in a manner that seriously disrupted public order". But according to IHR, Hosseini was accused of kicking one of the policemen and the "authorities have presented no evidence proving that his actions led to the death of any of the policemen".

The case "is a stark example of collective punishment and the arbitrary use of the death penalty by the Islamic Republic," said IHR director Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam. He is the fifth person to be hanged over the case involving



Iran has executed at least 30 protesters during the war.

the death in Isfahan of four policemen during the nationwide protests that peaked in January.

He is also the second Afghan national to be executed over the protests, after Gol Mohammad Mohammadi was hanged in the same case in July. At least 12 defendants in the case have been sentenced to death, said IHR.

IHR said that since wartime executions resumed on March 19, at least 30 protesters have been executed -- 28 in connection with the January protests and two in connection with the "Woman, Life, Freedom" protests that erupted in 2022. "That is an average of more than one protester execution per week," it said.

IHR says hundreds of other protesters have been sentenced to death or are facing charges which could carry the

death penalty, including over 70 in Isfahan, the main city of central Iran which saw intense protests in January.

Iran's escalating use of the death penalty has triggered international concern, with rights groups and governments accusing Tehran of using executions to instill fear into society and prevent further protests.

According to Amnesty International, Iran executed at least 2,159 people in 2025. But authorities now appear to be intensifying executions of protesters and others deemed political prisoners during the conflict.

More than 30 nations, including France, Britain and Canada, last week condemned Iran's use of capital punishment, saying the Islamic republic was executing protesters to "silence dissent".

US ENVOY'S KASHMIR REMARKS ANGER PAKISTAN

AFP
Islamabad, Aug. 20

Pakistan summoned Washington's top envoy in Islamabad and "strongly condemned" remarks by the US ambassador to New Delhi calling disputed Kashmir "an important part of India".

"(A) strong demarche was lodged over the factually incorrect remarks of US Ambassador to India, regarding the status of Jammu and Kashmir," Pakistan's foreign ministry said in a statement late Wednesday. "It was underscored that Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognised disputed territory."

The divided Muslim-majority territory has been at the centre of bitter rivalry between India and Pakistan since their independence from British rule in 1947.

North Korea fires missile barrage

AP
Seoul, Aug. 20

North Korea launched a barrage of ballistic missiles toward the sea on Thursday, South Korea's military said, a day after the North shrugged off a U.S. decision to scale back military drills with South Korea in an apparent bid to resume diplomacy.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff said the launches of about 10 short-range ballistic missiles happened from North Korea's capital region around 5 p.m. (0800 GMT) on Thursday.

The military said the missiles were launched toward North Korea's eastern waters. The military said South Korea has bolstered its surveillance posture and was closely coordinating information on the launches with the U.S. and Japan.

South Korea's presidential national Security Council held an emergency

meeting to discuss the launches. After the meeting, the council issued a statement urging North Korea to halt ballistic missile launches that are banned by U.N. Security Council resolutions. The Japanese prime minister's office had earlier said that it detected a suspected missile launch.

On Wednesday, the South Korean and U.S. militaries said they were scaling back their 11-day Ulchi Freedom Shield exercises. U.S. President Donald Trump earlier ordered the Pentagon to "substantially reduce" the exercises, just before they began Monday. Trump cited what he said was a good relationship with Kim and South Korea's refusal to support him over the war in Iran.

Kim Yo Jong, the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, dismissed Trump's overture later Wednesday, saying it was not even worthy of comment.

"The provocative, aggressive nature of the drills won't change even though their duration and size were reduced," she

said in a statement. "If the U.S. calculates that it can propagate its recent measure as the one of so-called good faith, they will not get the desired answer."

Kim Yo Jong still refrained from the typical North Korean reaction of fiery rhetoric and said personal relations between her brother and Trump are "still excellent." That signals North Korea would want to wait for Trump to make bigger concessions before returning to talks. She denied Trump's claim that Kim Jong Un had responded to his request for a conversation.

When asked by reporters Wednesday if he would be meeting with Kim Jong Un this year, Trump said that "Yeah, I will be." He wouldn't answer a question about whether he is exchanging letters with Kim but said he gets along with him.

The Ulchi Freedom Shield is one of the main military exercises conducted by the U.S. and South Korea annually to enhance their ability to cope with potential North Korean aggression.

Washington and Seoul say their drills are defensive in nature, but North Korea calls them an invasion rehearsal and often reacts with weapons tests.

Before this month's drills started, North Korea accused the U.S. and South Korea of plotting more provocative exercises this summer and vowed to respond with "a new level of a deterrent." Days before the drills' start, North Korea fired two ballistic missiles into the sea in its first such launches since late June.

Trump's earlier diplomacy with Kim Jong Un collapsed in 2019 due to disputes over how much sanctions relief North Korea should be given in return for dismantling its main nuclear complex, a limited denuclearization step. Kim has since shunned any talks with the U.S., pushed to modernize weapons arsenals and expanded cooperation with Russia.

Kim has said he won't place his nuclear program back on the negotiating table.

PRISM

Woman finds escaped snake in bedroom closet

Netherlands: A Netherlands woman discovered a snake in her bedroom closet that police later determined had escaped from a neighbour's home. The Limburg Police said on social media that the Blerick woman called authorities to report that she had spotted a snake slithering through the clothes on her bedroom floor and the serpent had made its way into a closet.

Police discovered the snake, a non-venomous reticulated python, had escaped from a terrarium in a neighbour's home. The neighbour was brought into the woman's home to retrieve the pet and bring it home. "The owner will investigate how the python managed to escape and make sure it doesn't happen again," police said.

Player wins lottery prize on his birthday

Ohio: An Ohio man stopped at a gas station just after midnight on his 18th birthday and walked out with a lottery ticket worth \$10,000. The Lewis Center resident, identified only as Austin, told Ohio Lottery officials he and a friend stopped at a gas station just after midnight on Aug. 6, his 18th birthday.

Austin decided to buy a scratch-off lottery ticket as "sort of a joke" since it was finally legal for him to do so, and he selected a \$20 \$300 Million Diamond Dazzler game.

The player's beginner's luck paid off with a \$10,000 prize. Austin's friend, who is a year older than him, joked: "This is not how adult life goes!" The winner said he is planning to put his winnings toward a new vehicle.

Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

- 1140 – Song dynasty general Yue Fei defeats an army led by Jin dynasty general Wuzhu at the Battle of Yancheng during the Jin–Song Wars.
- 1169 – Battle of the Blacks: Uprising by the black African forces of the Fatimid army, along with a number of Egyptian emirs and commoners, against Saladin.
- 1331 – King Stefan Uroš III, after months of anarchy, surrenders to his son and rival Stefan Dušan, who succeeds as King of Serbia.
- 1415 – Henry the Navigator leads Portuguese forces to victory over the Marinids at the Conquest of Ceuta.
- 1673 – The Dutch fleet defeats an Anglo-French fleet under Prince Rupert in the battle of Texel.



Photo: RSS
The Newar community performs Kshama Puja (a worship for forgiveness), heaping Samayabaji with 12 food items, at the Indrayani Temple in Khaumatole, Bhaktapur on Thursday.

NCP to GET THREE MINISTRIES IN LUMBINI

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Dang, Aug. 20

The Nepali Communist Party (NCP) is set to get three ministerial portfolios in the Lumbini Provincial government.

NCP Parliamentary Party leader Jokh Bahadur Mahara said the party has reached an agreement with Chet Narayan Acharya, Parliamentary Party leader of the CPN-UML and Chief Minister of Lumbini Province, to get three ministries.

The party has begun discussions to recommend names for the ministerial posts. "We have reached an agreement with the UML to get three ministries for the operation of the provincial government," he said.

"Accordingly, we have started discussions to recommend the names of the ministers." "The CPN has 13 provincial assembly members, including the Speaker. Of them, three are former members of the Nagarik Unmukti Party and one joined the NCP after merging from the CPN (Unified Socialist).

All provincial assembly members have expressed interest in becoming ministers. However, as the party has to recommend only three names, discussions are underway accordingly, Mahara said.

Among those aspiring to become ministers from the NCP are former minister and Chief Whip of the Parliamentary Party Indrajit Chaudhary, Dipendra Pun 'Sijal' of Rolpa, Krishna Kushma Tharu of Bardiya, Krishna Bahadur Sarki of Gulmi, Raj Kumar Chaudhary, who was elected from the former Nagarik Unmukti Party, and former minister Bhagawati Ghimire, who joined the NCP from the CPN (Unified Socialist).

Janakpur's historic ponds to get facelift

BY LAXMI CHAUDHARY
Janakpurdham, Aug. 20

Four historic and religiously significant ponds in Janakpurdham Sub-Metropolitan City are set to be conserved and beautified at an estimated cost of Rs. 650 million.

The Dhanush Sagar, Ram Sagar, Bishahara and Ratna Sagar ponds, which hold religious, cultural and environmental significance, will be restored under a programme proposed by the Project Implementation Unit of the National Resilience and Livelihood Improvement Project under the Ministry of Infrastructure Development, with loan assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Janakpurdham Mayor Manoj Kumar Sah said the programme, being implemented at the initiative of the sub-metropolitan city, will focus on environmental conservation, tourism promotion and improving the city's aesthetic appeal.

He said the restoration programme would help revive Janakpurdham's cultural heritage while contributing to environmental protection. Local needs and suggestions will also be incorporated alongside the conservation of the historical and cultural heritage, he said.

"These ponds are important not only as religious and cultural heritage sites but also for the city's ecological balance, tourism and aesthetic appeal," Sah said. "Their planned conservation and restoration is expected to further strengthen Janakpurdham's historical identity," he added.



Photo: TRN
Ram Sagar and Ratna Sagar, two of the four ponds set to be beautified in Janakpurdham.

Initial environmental assessment conducted

A public hearing on the proposed Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) for the project was held at all four pond sites last Friday. The hearing aimed to assess the potential environmental impacts of the project, discuss mitigation measures and collect suggestions from local stakeholders.

Participants urged the authorities to prioritise environmental protection during the restoration. They suggested planting trees around the ponds, installing water fountains where appropriate, properly storing construction materials and minimising dust, noise and other environmental impacts during construction.

They also stressed that restoration work should not affect the ponds' original religious and cultural character and called for local communities' needs and participation to be incorporated into the plans.

The environmental impacts and mitigation measures associated with the

restoration of Bishahara Pond were discussed in particular. Stakeholders said religious, cultural, social and environmental aspects should be considered together while restoring Ratna Sagar, Ram Sagar and Dhanush Sagar.

ADB consultant Kul Bhushan Sharma said the ponds and related heritage structures would be repaired and restored without compromising their historical significance.

He said the sites would be made more attractive, functional and environmentally friendly, while suggestions received during the public hearing would be incorporated into the project.

The project aims to conserve, restore and ensure the long-term management of the ponds while giving priority to local participation and suggestions.

Meanwhile, a tender worth Rs.1.65 billion has already been invited for road and drainage construction in Janakpurdham under the first phase of the project, and the bids are currently being evaluated.

Banchare Danda landfill issues discussed

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 20

Information and Communications Minister Dr. Bikram Timilsina, who is also a member of the House of Representatives from Nuwakot-1, held discussions with Kathmandu Metropolitan City Acting Mayor Sunita Dangol on problems at the Banchare Danda landfill site, complaints from local residents and ongoing waste management efforts.

During the meeting held at the Ministry of Communications, Timilsina said the federal government and Kathmandu Metropolitan City should allocate the necessary budget to upgrade and blacktop the road leading to the landfill site.

Locals have complained about the poor condition of the road, foul odour from waste, uncovered waste-carrying vehicles, waste falling from vehicles onto the road and vehicles returning to the Valley without being cleaned after waste disposal. They have also raised concerns about delays and negligence in covering disposed waste with soil.

Timilsina said effective coordination among the federal, provincial and local governments was necessary to address the problems. He stressed that timely covering of waste was essential to control foul odour.

Acting Mayor Dangol said that although waste from Kathmandu and 20 other local governments is taken

to Banchare Danda, Kathmandu Metropolitan City has been bearing most of the financial burden of waste management.

She said other local governments had committed to sharing the cost but had not contributed sufficiently so far. Their financial participation would make it easier to address problems faced by local residents, she said.

Dangol also said the city had been unable to acquire land needed for waste collection and waste segregation centres. Under its decentralised waste management plan, the metropolis has been divided into seven waste clusters, with plans to reuse and recycle dry waste, but implementation has been delayed due to difficulties in acquiring land and completing other procedures.

The meeting also discussed reducing the amount of waste sent to the landfill, segregation at source and improving waste collection and transportation systems.

According to the metropolis, about 60 per cent of the waste reaching Banchare Danda is biodegradable and 40 percent non-biodegradable. More than 200 waste trucks reach the site daily. During the monsoon, poor road conditions frequently cause trucks to get stuck, resulting in foul odour and disruption to local life.

The Banchare Danda landfill, built after the government acquired 1,792 ropanis of land, began receiving waste on May 24, 2022. It lies on the border of Kakani Rural Municipality-2 in Nuwakot and Dhunibesi Municipality-1 in Dhading.

PAC instructs to mobilise foreign aid through on-treasury system

RSS
Kathmandu, Aug. 20

The Public Account Committee meeting on Thursday under the House of Representatives (HoR) has directed the authorities concerned to arrange mobilisation of foreign aid through national on-treasury and bring development cooperation within audit ambit.

The PAC meeting held at the Singha Durbar on the topic 'audit of foreign aid received to Nepal' issued a nine-point directive related to development assistance.

Committee President Bharat Bahadur Khadka informed that the meeting decided to instruct the government to receive and mobilize development cooperation directly aligning with national priorities and programmes.

The meeting instructed that donors should provide the government with full details of foreign aid that is operated through off-treasury system, and that clear policies and procedures should be prepared and implemented to integrate such aid into the national

system.

The meeting also directed to make arrangements to timely recover amounts spent from foreign aid to minimize the additional burden on Nepal's resources caused by unrecovered funds.

The meeting instructed that an integrated record of all foreign aid commitments, actual receipts, expenditures, utilization, and reimbursement should be maintained and compulsorily updated in the relevant information system.

All foreign aid should be mandatorily registered in the 'Development Finance Information Management System' with project approvals given only through this system.

Likewise, it was decided to make the procurement process, auditing and national fund management system transparent and effective and of international standard to enhance trust in the government system.

The meeting also decided to enhance project management, monitoring and implementation capacity so that the projects run with foreign assistance would be completed within the stipulated time and cost, Khadka added.

Search ends in joy as Shivan found safe after...

The moment he was found brought immense relief to his family, relatives, police personnel and hundreds of local residents who had spent days searching for him.

He was immediately taken to a government hospital in Bharatpur for medical examination. Apart from blisters on some parts of his body,

doctors found no serious health problems.

"He is fine and his health condition is good. There is nothing to worry about," said Inspector Laxman Giri, chief of the Area Police Office, Gaindakot, after meeting the rescued child.

After the necessary medical procedures,

Shivan was handed over to his family.

For his family, however, those three days in the forest will remain an unforgettable ordeal, a period that began with a little boy following his grandmother and ended with a community coming together to bring him safely home.

Govt respects CIAA's autonomy, says...

He also highlighted challenges in investigating corruption involving transactions outside Nepal, saying the absence of mutual legal assistance agreements with countries such as Singapore and the UAE had limited access to evidence.

Rastriya Swatantra Party chairman Rabi Lamichhane said his party supported full autonomy for the CIAA

and an environment free from political interference.

He called for a clear definition of policy decisions made by the Cabinet, saying officials should not become reluctant to take necessary decisions for fear of investigation.

Lamichhane also urged caution over bringing the private sector under the CIAA's jurisdiction, arguing that

specialised laws and institutions already exist to deal with financial and economic offences.

He further stressed the need to protect the credibility of constitutional institutions, saying decisions should be based on facts and evidence rather than political pressure or personal grievances.

Foreign policy should deliver economic...

"For countries like Nepal, a rules-based multilateral order is not merely an academic priority, it is a matter of existential necessity. When the multilateral system weakens, developing, landlocked and vulnerable nations are affected before powerful countries," he said.

He said geopolitical fragmentation and conflict were not merely theoretical issues, but had a direct impact on the lives, employment and economic well-being of Nepali citizens. Referring particularly to the large number of Nepali workers employed in West Asia, he said instability in the region had a direct impact on Nepal.

"We have a large workforce in West Asia, and they make a significant contribution to remittances coming into Nepal. As instability increases in the Gulf region, it can lead to flight disruptions, affect employment contracts, raise consumer prices, increase anxiety among families and, unfortunately, even result in the loss of Nepali lives," Minister Khanal said.

Marc Saxer, author of the book and Head of Asia Pacific Regional Programme of the FES, said that although

south is not under hot war for now the countries need to learn how to navigate in the world that has been increasingly moving to a might-based international order from the liberal rule-based one.

According to him, geoeconomic disruption shifts have been made through the trade war, supply chain reconfiguration, currency competition and price wars.

"There is now a political price for market access while open trade order has almost come to an end, while tech race is driven by security concerns and bifurcation has created high opportunity cost for third parties, and rise of techno-nationalism," he said.

Saxer expressed concerns to the weaponisation of technology transfer.

He suggested a Neo-Westphalian order as a solution – sovereignty, non-interference and territorial integrity to be maintained by the United Nations General Assembly. This is a non-hegemonic 'universalism without interference', he said.

Former ambassador, Gyan Chandra Acharya, said that if everyone believes 'might is right', the world would be in chaos and anarchy. "That's why I think

it's very important for us to make sure that whatever we have, we try to have an impact at the global level or at the regional level in terms of really getting across the values, the principles as well as the benefit of cooperation," he said.

According to him, as the multilateral institutions and principles are completely undermined, the world has so many other things that are coming up. This makes having an issue-based coalition more prominent.

Stressing on reform and revitalisation, Acharya said that since major proponents of the multilateral principles themselves are now abdicating that responsibility, it is necessary to make sure that the other powers and the rest of the international community follow it.

Binoj Basnyat, major general (ret.) of Nepali Army, said that Nepal must move to a designed strategy from the current practice of reactive diplomacy to make sure the national interest is protected.

Likewise, political analyst Dr. Chandra Dev Bhatta said that for a country like Nepal, multilateralism is the best option in terms of international cooperation and development initiatives.

Thapa appointed Bagmati...

Earlier, Nepali Congress Parliamentary Party leader Indra Bahadur Baniya was serving as Chief Minister. He fell into a minority after UML withdrew its support for the government.

Following Baniya's resignation as Chief Minister on August 17, Province Chief Devkota called on the parties represented in the Provincial Assembly to stake a claim to form a new government that same day.

Forms seven-member Cabinet

Meanwhile, a seven-member Council of Ministers has been formed in Bagmati Province. Newly appointed CM Thapa Magar inducted six ministers into his Cabinet.

Chief Minister Thapa Magar assigned CPN-UML's Bharat KC the portfolio of Minister for Physical Infrastructure, while Gyan Bahadur Tamang was appointed a Minister without portfolio.

Similarly, NCP's Saral Sahayatri Poudel has been appointed Minister for Economic Affairs and Planning, RPP's Raju Bista as Minister for Water Supply, Gir Bahadur Tamang as Minister for Health and Social Development, and Rajendra Prajapati as Minister for Industry, Tourism, Labour and Employment.

The newly appointed ministers also took their oaths of office from the provincial head on Thursday.

Nepal to study impacts of super...

The main objectives of the workshop are to enhance scientific understanding of super El Niño, review country's experiences and lessons from past El Niño events, increase the use of seasonal forecasts and climate services, assess possible impacts on water resources, the cryosphere, agriculture and energy and identify priorities for policy, research and

institutional coordination.

The workshop will also initiate the process of developing a national contingency and preparedness plan for possible impacts of a super El Niño.

Around 150 national and international experts, policymakers, researchers, practitioners, development partners and private-sector representatives are expected to participate in the event.

A key part of the workshop will be a group discussion on the super El Niño contingency and preparedness plan. Participants will identify preparedness and response measures in four thematic areas: water resources, irrigation and drinking water; hydropower and energy security; agriculture and food security; and early warning and disaster risk reduction.

Brajesh Khanal-led team visits 6 theatres



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 20

Newly appointed academicians of the Nepal Academy of Music and Drama, led by Chancellor Brajesh Khanal, visited six theatres in the Kathmandu Valley for consultations. The group included academician Saraswati Chaudhary, head of the Drama Department, academician Jeet Bahadur Deuja, head of the Theatre Department; and Assembly member Parivartan.

Veteran director Ashesh Malla of Sarwanam Theatre, actor and theatre director Ghimire Yubaraj of Shilpee Theatre, renowned actor Dayahang Rai of Mandala Theatre, and artiste Suraj Tamang and all expressed their happiness on academicians' visit for the first time in its five-decade history.

"Seeing the state come to our doorstep and recognise us as its own has been a completely new and immensely gratifying experience for us," they said.

Navaraj Budhathoki of Shaili Theatre, which has been organising the Children's Theatre Festival continuously

for the past 18 years, said that having the Academy's team visit them directly made him feel proud of being a theatre practitioner for the first time.

During the consultations, theatre practitioners offered suggestions for improving the Academy's policies, plans, and immediate action programmes. Theatre practitioners Aakanksha Karki and Lunibha Tuladhar of Kausi Theatre suggested that the Academy should become a "smart academy" that is inclusive and friendly to women, persons with disabilities, and the LGBTQ+ community.

More than 200 theatre practitioners associated with theatre organisations as well as independent artistes active in Kathmandu shared their experiences, challenges, and aspirations during the consultations.

Among the suggestions were expanding theatre activities beyond the Kathmandu-centric model to all parts of the country; providing life insurance for artistes and technical personnel involved in theatre production and performances; and waiving or reducing fees for theatre performances held in state-owned theatre venues.

Theatre actor Praveen Khatiwada said he had heard that the government had allocated budgets to build theatres in all seven provinces, and expressed the view that this would help independent theatre practitioners, particularly those without their own theatre spaces, create an environment conducive to producing and staging plays.

Ghimire Yubaraj argued that the programme expenditure component of the Academy's overall budget should be increased. He also called for policies to protect private and community-based theatre organisations; for theatre festivals and training programmes, and for each theatre organisation to receive grants sufficient to produce at least two plays.

Actor Dayahang Rai offered a somewhat different perspective. Pointing out that Mandala Theatre alone has produced more than 150 plays and nurtured more than 200 actors, he requested that the Academy work towards documenting and theorising the body of theatre being produced both at Mandala and across the country. Chancellor Khanal responded simply, "The Academy has opened its doors today."

He also requested all theatre organisations to regularly provide the Academy with transparent records of their activities and programmes. "The positive suggestions would be addressed swiftly," he promised.

Jhulan Utsav brings festive fervour to Janakpurdham



PHOTO: LAXMI CHAUDHARY/TRN
Jhulan Utsav at Janaki Temple in Janakpurdham.

BY LAXMI CHAUDHARY
Janakpurdham, Aug. 20

As the evening falls, the songs of the Kajri, Malhar and Jhula echo from the temples of Janakpurdham.

In some places, the idol of Sitaram placed on a swing is being worshipped, while in others, women sit in groups and sing folk songs of the rainy season.

This scene of religious faith, folk culture, and collective entertainment has created a festive atmosphere in Janakpurdham.

The Jhulan Utsav, celebrated from the last Saturday of Saun Shukla Tritiya to the full moon, is not only a religious festival in the Mithila region but also a cultural festival connected to folk life.

The Kajari, sung during the Jhulan festival, describes the rainy season, separation, love, and Radha Krishna. Although its content has expanded over time, cultural scholars said that its core aspects remain the praise of the gods and goddesses and devotion.

Songs of Pawas, Malhar, Barah-masa and Jhula also make the festival livelier. According to Ramroshan Das

Vaishnav, the successor of the Mahant of Janaki Temple, the Jhulan Utsav unites everyone in a single religious and cultural spirit.

He said that the tradition of swinging the idol of Sita Ram for about 15 days in Janakpurdham has been going on for a long time. "The Jhulan Utsav is an important occasion for devotion, joy and social interaction," he said.

However, cultural experts are concerned that the original charm of the swing festival is weakening compared to the past. Although women used to participate significantly in folk singing and hymns that lasted until late at night, it is said that such participation is now decreasing.

During the Jhulan Utsav, pilgrims from the bordering Indian regions flock to Janakpurdham.

Cultural experts say that the true spirit of the Jhulan Utsav will reach future generations only if the old collective participation and originality associated with the song can be preserved.

According to religious scholars, the Jhulan Utsav festival in Janakpurdham is believed to have been started by the saint Surkishore Das of the Ramanandi sect.

Nepali talents honoured in Thailand

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 20

Dozens of Nepali talents contributing to various sectors have been honoured at the Nepal-Thailand Friendship Festival and Asia Global Excellence Awards 2026, held recently in Thailand.

Organised jointly by the Himalayan Community Project and Worldwide Production Media, the ceremony honoured Nepali personalities who have made significant contributions in their respective fields while residing in Nepal and abroad, including the USA, Australia, Canada, Maldives, India, and Israel.

In the field of local governance and development, Mayor Deepak Kumar Risal of Gokarneshwor Municipality, Mainkumar Moktan, Chairman of Doramba Sailung Rural Municipality, Renuka Chaulagai, Chairperson of Chaurideurali Rural Municipality, and Thulokancha Tamang, Chairman of Sunapati Rural Municipality, were honoured.

Likewise, awards in various categories were presented to individuals contributing to literature, journalism, tourism, social service, entrepreneurship, sports, culture, and business. Among those honoured were Shambhu Bikram Dhvaj Joshi, Bikram Bhakta

Joshi, Shyam Smriti, Padam Lal Kafle, Paras Bhandari, Nanukaji Aryal, Sudeep Gautam, Anuj Bhujel, Binod Chaulagai, Sudeep Shrestha, Dhiraj Shrestha, Roshan Karki, Santosh Chauhan, Pradeep Gautam, Bhagiratha Bista Chhetri, and Ranjana Budhathoki.

Chefs and culinary figures promoting Nepali cuisine and Nepal's identity internationally were also honoured. They included Ram Thapa (USA), Bhabhi Khanal (Australia), Bikram Vaidya (USA), Binod Tamang (Maldives), Sai Kumar Sharma (India), Deepak Karki (Canada), Jitman Basnet (USA), Bharat Sunuwar, Govinda Prasad Acharya, and Bed Prasad Adhikari (USA).

Ram Prasad Sapkota, president of the Himalayan Community Project, stated that the programmes aimed to strengthen Nepal-Thailand friendship and promote Nepal's tourism and cultural identity in the international market. Kumar Prasad Chaulagai, managing director of Worldwide Production Media, said the main objective of the event was to honour and promote the skills, talent, culture, and identity of Nepalis living abroad on the global stage.

According to the organisers, the ceremony delivered a strong message about introducing Nepali talent, tourism, culture, and entrepreneurship to the international arena while further strengthening the friendly ties between Nepal and Thailand.

Bangladesh envoy proposes cultural, creative exchange

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 20

Ambassador of Bangladesh to Nepal Md. Shafiqur Rahman called for beginning an annual Bangladesh-Nepal Cultural and Creative Exchange Programme while addressing the inauguration of the "Beautiful Bangladesh" International Photo Exhibition 2026 on Wednesday at Kathmandu Durbar Square, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Basantapur, Kathmandu.

The Beautiful Bangladesh International Photo Exhibition 2026 was jointly organised by the National Forum of Photo Journalists (NFPJ) Nepal and Bangladesh Photo Journalists Association (BPJA) as part of the Bangladesh-Nepal Photo Journalist Exchange Programme to strengthen friendship, professional collaboration, cultural understanding and tourism promotion between the two countries. The event also commemorated World Photography Day, according to a press statement from the Bangladesh Embassy in Kathmandu.

Acting Director General of the Nepal Tourism Board and Deputy Director of the Chinese Cultural Centre and



dignitaries from Nepal and China also joined the event.

In his remarks as the Chief Guest, the Ambassador, highlighting the importance of photography as a powerful means of communication and expression, said the exhibition in a

world heritage site on World Photography Day provides Nepali audiences with an opportunity to discover Bangladesh's natural beauty, cultural heritage, historical landmarks and, most importantly, the everyday lives and aspirations of its people.

Mocked film surges at Chinese box office

AP
Los Angeles, Aug. 20

The new sensation among some Chinese cinema-goers is an animated film whose characters appear to have been created using rudimentary 3D animation and have been described as "ugly" and "eerie".

But it is the scathing online reviews that seem to have sparked interest in "Niu Lai", an animated film about a calf who dreams of growing up with the help of his family, triggering a surprising surge at the box office.

The film earned only about 10,000 yuan (\$1,480) at the box office during the first 10 days after its 5 August release. On some days, the film took in as little as 200 yuan (\$30) at the box office, according to Maoyan, a film-tracking platform. The figure was exceptionally low, particularly during the competitive summer cinema season. But its box office surged to 8.2 million yuan (\$1.2 million) on Monday, with nearly 300,000 admissions, according to Maoyan. Its total box office has reached 17.1 million yuan (\$2.5 million).

Red Star News, a local news website in Chengdu, reported that the film was made over five years by just two people — director Xin Yumeng



and his mother, Sun Lifan. The Associated Press was unable to reach Xin and could not independently verify this.

Posters seen at cinemas featured a calf, hand-drawn in pen without colour, alongside handwritten slogans: "Come on over if you're into the bizarre" and "No refunds."

On Douban, a popular Chinese film-review platform, viewers piled on with mocking and bewildered comments.

Among the most popular were: "unbelievably terrible and

eye-opening", "a symbol of the new internet troll culture", and "a must-watch for Chinese stock market investors". The last is a play on the film's name, "Niu Lai", which literally means "the bull is coming" in Chinese — a wish for a bull market.

Comments such as "over nine out of ten" and "awesome and highly recommended" were also among the sarcastic reactions.

"My initial intention has always been to play pranks on my friends," said Du Mingxi, a 19-year-old university student in Shanghai.

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Golden Shoe winner Kane hopes for Ballon d'Or



PHOTO CREDIT: HARRY KANE FACEBOOK

AFP
Munich, Aug. 20

Bayern Munich striker Harry Kane has set his sights on the Ballon d'Or after receiving his second European Golden Shoe in Munich on Wednesday.

The England captain collected the prize after scoring the most goals in Europe's top divisions last season.

Kane won the 2023-24 award after a prolific first season at Bayern, but said this year's honour "tasted even better than the first".

The 33-year-old scored 36 goals in 31 Bundesliga games last term, the third most in a German top-flight campaign, while winning the league and cup double.

He also netted six times at the World Cup, becoming England's top goalscorer at the competition with 14 career goals.

In total, he scored 73 goals for club and country last season.

Kane said he hoped to receive football's highest individual honour after his "best season ever".

"Obviously, that's out of my control. I know, of course, there's going to be a lot

of talk about it from now until October when it's announced," he said.

"Ultimately, I've done everything I can last season. It was my best season by far. I achieved a lot with the teams I was in."

Kane made it to the Champions League semi-finals with Bayern, who were narrowly defeated by eventual winners Paris Saint-Germain.

He also reached the semi-finals of the World Cup with England before an agonising 2-1 loss to Argentina.

Only serial Ballon d'Or winners Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo have won the Golden Shoe more often than Kane. Messi won the award six times, all with Barcelona, while Ronaldo won it three times at Real Madrid and once at Manchester United.

"That's for you guys to debate and fans to debate," Kane said of the possible winner of this year's Ballon d'Or, which will be handed out in London in late October.

"That's what makes the Ballon d'Or so special as well. Many players have had great seasons."

Kane said on Monday he was about to begin negotiations to extend his contract at Bayern, which will expire in 2027.

Mourinho begins second Madrid reign with Barca in his sights

AFP
Barcelona, Aug. 20

Jose Mourinho's second spell at Real Madrid begins in Barcelona this weekend in La Liga, although at Espanyol rather than up against his and Los Blancos' bitter rivals.

The veteran Portuguese coach returns to the club 16 years after first being appointed but charged with a similar task, deposing Barcelona as the leading club in Spain.

Mourinho is also aiming to restore some of the intensity and attitude that defined his first Madrid reign, between 2010-2013, after two seasons without winning a major trophy steered president Florentino Perez back to him.

The 15-time European champions have suffered dressing room turbulence, with tensions between players and a succession of coaches unable to find a convincing balance on the pitch.

None of Carlo Ancelotti, Xabi Alonso or Alvaro Arbeloa could fit the team's attacking stars -- Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Junior and Jude Bellingham -- in together without compromising the team defensively.

Perhaps disciplinary Mourinho might be the man to make it work, to turn superstars into willing runners without dulling their attacking edge.

The Portuguese says he returns as a different coach, more mature after years of experience in England, Italy, Turkey and elsewhere.

"I'm much more mature, less emotional, and more in control... as always, learning from mistakes," said the 63-year-old this week, although he insisted he was not "more boring".

Mourinho made clear from his first days back at Madrid's Valdebebas training ground what it is he wants from his team.

"I am here... to create a culture of work, responsibility, ambition," said Mourinho, describing his role as a "mission".

Perez has certainly given Mourinho the ammunition he needs to catch up with Barca.

Los Blancos spent heavily this summer, making Ivorian winger Yan Dione their record signing at 140 million euros (\$163m) and bringing in Bernardo Silva and Marc Cucurella among a series of high-profile arrivals.

However some would argue that in not signing Rodri, who

they were linked with before he joined rivals Barcelona, Madrid have not reinforced sufficiently in midfield.

Diomande's arrival adds yet another major attacking threat to a squad that already boasts plenty of them. It may be former Manchester City midfielder Silva who proves the more significant signing when it comes to balance.

Madrid have spent years trying to move on from the era of Toni Kroos and Luka Modric, whose ability to control matches allowed the forwards great freedom and reduced the team's exposure to relentless opposition attacks.

Silva is not a direct replacement for either, but his technical quality gives Mourinho an option for solving a problem that has persisted since their departures.

Whether he will be enough to give Madrid a foothold in the biggest games, including against Hansi Flick's double-defending Spanish champions, remains to be seen.

Mourinho's first Madrid spell was defined by his rivalry with Pep Guardiola and a Barcelona side that dominated Spanish football.

Clasicos became increasingly bitter during his time in Madrid, with touchline confrontations, accusations of refereeing bias and a succession of heated encounters making the rivalry increasingly dark and compelling.

Mourinho's Madrid eventually ended their rivals' domestic dominance by winning the title in 2011-12 with a record 100 points.

This season Madrid visit Barcelona in late October in the first Clásico of the campaign, already eagerly awaited.

Between now and then, starting at Espanyol on Saturday, Mourinho has two months to get his team fit, firing and most importantly, all on the same page.



ATLETICO START LA LIGA WITH WIN

AFP
Madrid, Aug. 20

Kang-In Lee and Alex Baena's superb strikes helped Atletico Madrid kick off their La Liga campaign with a 2-0 win over Malaga on Wednesday, without forward Julian Alvarez.

Argentina international Alvarez, who wanted to sign for Barcelona, is not involved yet as he finds fitness following a post-World Cup break along with several others, Diego Simeone sent out an Atletico side peppered with youngsters.

However, substitutes Lee and Baena ensured the Rojiblancos, who last won La Liga in 2021, got off to winning ways with second-half goals from outside the box. "They were two great goals, and that's how we were able to win a game that wasn't that easy," Simeone told Movistar.

"We're still lacking rhythm. With more work we'll improve as a collective and personally," said Lee. "All the team did a good job and (the substitutes) came on to help."

Promoted opponents Malaga, who were relegated from La Liga in 2018 and dropped to Spain's third tier before fighting their way back up, kept things tight in the first half.

Before the hour mark Simeone sent on Lee, Baena and his son Giuliano, and soon Atletico forced their way ahead.

Korea international Lee, signed from Paris Saint-Germain this summer, picked the ball up on the right, cut along the face of the area and then curled a fine strike in at the far post in the 70th minute.

Wearing the number seven shirt vacated by Atletico great Antoine Griezmann after his move to Orlando City, Lee got off to a perfect start at the Metropolitano stadium.

Ademola Lookman and David Hanco came close as Atletico pushed to double their advantage.

The hosts got the second goal as Spanish World Cup winner Baena bent home a spectacular free-kick, in off the crossbar, with five minutes remaining.

MESSI SCORES FIRST GOAL SINCE FATHER'S DEATH

AP
Chester, Aug. 20

Lionel Messi had a goal and assist as Inter Miami and the Philadelphia Union played to a 2-2 draw on Wednesday night.

Messi's cross was headed by Luis Suarez into the path of forward Daniel Pinter for the first Inter Miami goal in the 21st minute.

Messi cut inside to his preferred left foot from 12 yards out in the 26th and curled a shot into the corner of the net for his first goal since returning to action following the death of his father.

Messi has 13 goals and nine assists in 17 MLS games this season. He has six goals and four assists in six matches in all competitions against the Union.

Indiana Vassilev scored on a volley in the first half to give the Union the lead, then 18-year-old defender Neil Pierre headed home his third goal in five games this season in the 58th minute to tie the score. Cavan Sullivan, the Union's 16-year-old midfielder, was credited with his seventh assist of the season on Vassilev's goal.

Union forward Milan Iloski appeared to put the Union ahead in the 62nd minute, but the goal was reviewed and waved off with Pierre offside in the buildup. The game ended with a pair of red cards in stoppage time to Yannick Bright and Sullivan for a scuffle off the ball.

Inter Miami (11-3-6) entered the game in second place in the Eastern Conference after losing to first-place Nashville on Saturday, 4-1. Messi played 90 minutes in that loss, in which he missed a penalty, hit the post twice and assisted on Telasco Segovia's goal. He had a game-high 11 shot attempts.

Miami had lost three straight games in all competitions entering Wednesday, having lost to a pair of Mexican clubs in the Leagues Cup.

Arsenal can become world's best club: Arteta

AFP
London, Aug. 20

Mikel Arteta has warned Arsenal's rivals that he plans to build the Premier League champions into the "best club in the world".

Arteta's side start their bid for a second successive English title against promoted Coventry in the opening game of the top-flight season on Friday.

For the first time in 22 years, the Gunners will begin a campaign as the Premier League's preeminent force, a status Arteta is determined to maintain as he targets an Arsenal dynasty.

With Manchester City's golden era potentially at an end after Pep Guardiola resigned at the end of last season, the stage is set for Arsenal to enjoy their own sustained period of success.

Guardiola won six Premier League titles and Arteta, who worked under the Spaniard at City before taking charge of Arsenal in 2019, has no qualms about challenging his players to emulate that dominant run.

"It's certainly the ambition of the club and the owners to be the best club in the world," he told Sky Sports this week.

"In order to do that, you need the best facilities, the best stadium, the best supporters, and you need the best squad and the best players in the world."

"That's what we try to build with the actual players that we have, and with the players that we want to sign to make the difference for Arsenal."

Arsenal haven't won consecutive English titles since the 1930s, a feat that proved beyond even Arsene Wenger's 'Invincibles', who were the club's last champions before Arteta's men ended the drought.

Arteta is using that goal as a rallying cry for his team, with the



FILE PHOTO: AP

Arsenal's Martin Odegaard, left, celebrates with teammates after scoring his side's third goal during the FA Community Shield final on Aug. 16.

pain of their Champions League final loss to Paris Saint-Germain on penalties last season adding further fuel to the Spaniard's motivational fire.

"It's very difficult. You have to raise the level from every angle," he said.

"When I look into the eyes of my players, I see that fire, that desire and the will to be better every single day."

Winning the Champions League for the first time remains a burning desire for Arteta's men, but their manager's primary ambition is domestic supremacy.

Arsenal, installed as the bookmakers' favourite for the title, showed their hunger for silverware has not been sated by dispatching Manchester City 3-0 in the Community Shield on Sunday.

'We want more'

Bolstered by the arrival of Brazil midfielder Bruno Guimaraes from Newcastle and Greek

winger Christos Tzolis from Club Brugge, Arsenal looked more formidable than ever as they tore City to shreds.

Ominously for their rivals, Arteta isn't finished spending yet. The club are on the verge of tying up a deal for Aston Villa defender Ezri Konsa and have also been linked with Atletico Madrid striker Julian Alvarez.

Coventry manager Frank Lampard could be forgiven for having a sleepless night or two as he ponders how to subdue Arsenal in his club's first game in the top tier for 25 years.

It is a conundrum that may well torment managers with far greater resources than Lampard this season.

City, Liverpool, Manchester United and Chelsea all have major questions to answer before they can establish themselves as genuine contenders for Arsenal's crown.

Enzo Maresca has replaced

Guardiola at City, while former Bournemouth boss Andoni Iraola succeeds the sacked Arne Slot at Liverpool and Xabi Alonso takes charge of under-achieving Chelsea.

City finished seven points behind Arsenal last term and already seem further adrift on the evidence of their Community Shield debacle.

Liverpool, who came fifth last season, and Chelsea, who ended 10th, hope for much improved campaigns, but are far from the finished article.

The same is true of United, who climbed to third under Michael Carrick last season but have taken a surprisingly low-key approach in the transfer market.

As captain Martin Odegaard says, Arsenal have the destiny of the title in their hands.

"This year we want more. We want to do it again in the league and then there are the other trophies," he said.

SNIPPETS

Nepali athletes to compete in Pentathlon World Championship

Kathmandu (TRN): Nepali athletes Rahul Darshan and Soheb Man Shrestha are set to compete at the UIPM 2026 Pentathlon World Championships in Guiyang, China. Organised by the Union Internationale de Pentathlon Moderne (UIPM) alongside the Chinese Modern Pentathlon Association (CMPA), the global tournament will take place from 24 to 30 August. Nepal Olympic Committee (NOC) President Jeevan Ram Shrestha and Secretary General Rajiv Shrestha bid farewell to the duo at NOC House in Satdobato on Thursday. Addressing the gathering, President Shrestha urged the athletes to deliver their best performances and represent the nation with pride on the international stage. The NOC also extended its well wishes to both competitors for a successful campaign at the flagship championship.



Embark College partners with NSJF Pulsar Sports Award

Kathmandu (TRN): Embark College has joined hands with the Nepal Sports Journalists Forum (NSJF) as the higher education partner for the upcoming 23rd edition of the NSJF Pulsar Sports Award. The award ceremony is scheduled to take place in Kathmandu on 3 September. Under the partnership, Embark College will sponsor a full scholarship worth up to Rs 1.8 million for undergraduate or postgraduate studies to a national athlete selected by the forum. The institution will also support research, training, and mentorship programmes run by the forum's academic wing, the NSJF Academy. The agreement was signed by NSJF President Niranjana Adhikari and Niraj Neupane, representing Ashis Thakur, Executive Director and CEO of Embark College, multiple disciplines.

Nepali squad depart for World Hapkido in South Korea

Kathmandu (TRN): A two-member Nepali martial arts team left for South Korea on Thursday to represent the nation at the 11th World Hapkido Championship, scheduled for 22 August. Deepak Chhantyal will compete in the men's 80-84kg division, while Megma Gurung will vie for honors in the women's 48-52kg category. According to Kali Bahadur Gharti Magar, President of the Nepal Hapkido Association, expectations are high for Gurung, who secured a silver medal at the previous biennial tournament held in Thailand. National Sports Council (NSC) Member-Secretary Ramcharitra Mehta and Executive Committee Member Pawan Shahi bid farewell to the delegation during an official send-off ceremony in the capital on Thursday.



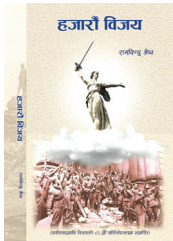
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Transforming Kathmandu Amid Challenges



Keshav Bhattarai

A justice-centred, ecologically bound, and evidence-based resiliency policy is needed to manage the Kathmandu Valley. This may help protect its river systems while securing dignified housing and services for vulnerable residents through 2050 and beyond. Though it might be unpleasant at the outset, overhauling urban management policy may help the valley replace fragmented crisis response with a metropolitan resilience system integrating multi-hazard planning, blue-green infrastructure, humane housing policy, shared governance, and dedicated resilience finance.

Current piecemeal approaches to managing recurring floods, earthquakes, water shortages, air pollution, traffic mismanagement, and housing conflicts may not yield a sustainable solution, no matter how many times we revamp urban policies. All of these are interconnected outcomes of an urban system expanding faster than its ecology and infrastructure can accommodate. It cannot be supported in the long run. For example, the flooding of a government holding centre for displaced landless families in Kirtipur in July 2026 exposed this systemic failure with painful clarity. Families removed from vulnerable riverbank settlements were relocated to another flood-prone area, where they once again lost their shelter and belongings.

This incident happened not just because there was heavy rain in 2026, but also because heavy rainfall issues were addressed on an ad hoc basis. It represented a breakdown in risk assessment, humanitarian responsibility, land governance, and intergovernmental coordination. A resilient city should never transfer vulnerable people from one known hazard zone to another. Kathmandu, therefore, needs more than drainage projects, river walls, or periodic eviction campaigns. It must adopt a justice-centred urban-resilience policy that simultaneously addresses physical hazards, housing rights, ecological restoration, metropolitan governance, and long-term climate uncertainty.

Kathmandu needs planning

The bowl-shaped Valley of Kathmandu was formed from an intermontane basin surrounded by steep hills. The elevation of much of the urban areas ranges between 1,300 and 1,400 metres above sea level. The Bagmati River and its tributaries collect runoff from surrounding slopes and channel it through increasingly constricted urban corridors. The bowl-shaped topography has disadvantages in its natural drainage systems. Water descends rapidly from the surrounding hills but leaves the valley through relatively limited outlets. Kathmandu and Lalitpur Consequently, their location in a valley and limited natural drainage make Kathmandu and Lalitpur highly susceptible to flooding due to their location in a valley and limited natural drainage. Rapid urbanisation has magnified this susceptibility beyond management. Agricultural fields, wetlands, ponds, and open spaces that once absorbed monsoon



Photo: AI

rainfall have impervious surfaces that have replaced agricultural fields, wetlands, ponds, and open spaces that once absorbed monsoon rainfall into impervious surfaces. River channels have been narrowed by encroachment, embankments, and construction. Solid waste obstructs drainage. Expanding built-up areas and impervious surfaces are increasing flood runoff and risk across Kathmandu Valley.

As if the valley does not have enough problems, severe seismicity adds further risks. The 2015 earthquakes killed nearly 9,750 people and destroyed over half a million homes. Reconstruction improved some building practices, but dense settlement, narrow roads, weak structures, and limited evacuation space remain critical concerns.

Nature has been repeatedly warning the valley management authority. For example, the catastrophic rainfall of September 2024 demonstrated how rapidly Kathmandu's urban systems can collapse. Scientific analysis concluded that climate change increased rainfall intensity, while rapid urbanisation, floodplain occupation, and insufficient drainage greatly magnified its impacts. The repeated disaster, therefore, illustrates a fundamental principle – hazards become catastrophes when they interact with exposure, weak services, mobility bottlenecks, and fragile governance. The Resilient Futures framework similarly treats disasters as development outcomes rather than purely natural events. The July 2026 flooding of the Radhaswami holding centre at Sundarighat, Kirtipur, affected over 15 dozen families who were forcibly relocated there. These families were assured that they would be permanently relocated within 15 days, but they remained for months. Temporary shelter became a second disaster site, indicating the poor have no place to go but to blame their fates.

Rights before removal

Kathmandu's informal settlements present legitimate planning challenges. River corridors must be protected, flood conveyance restored, and public land responsibly managed. Yet these objectives do not justify treating poverty as a criminal offence. Many informal settlers are low-income workers who support the metropolitan economy but cannot access formal housing near employment, schools, and services. During my recent visit to the Iringa region of Tanzania, I observed that the landless squatters were placed with the consent of community leaders and the community. When there is opposition from the poor, the government has taken their appeal very seriously and asked them to propose solutions. By doing so, family difficulties were addressed through verification to distinguish genuinely landless households from opportunistic occupation. I heard from many social service workers that eviction cannot substitute for housing policy.

Nepal's legal obligations are clear. The Right to Housing Act guarantees appropriate housing and protection from conditions in which the absence of shelter places life at risk. Responsibility for implementing this right is shared by federal, provincial, and local governments. The Act requires coordination to provide housing to families who possess no house or land and cannot secure accommodation through their own resources. It also requires temporary shelters for disaster-displaced households to provide minimum gender- and disability-sensitive facilities.

Before removal for a public purpose, affected people must be consulted, properly identified, and given adequate notice; vulnerable groups must receive special protection. The policy choice is therefore not between tolerating dangerous riverbank settlements and demolishing them. Negotiated,

risk-informed, and livelihood-sensitive relocation, accompanied by affordable housing, services, tenure arrangements, and social protection, may be worth following Tanzanian examples.

Policy for 2050

Hazard maps alone are insufficient. Ward-level data should combine flood depth, slope, liquefaction, earthquake exposure, and heat with income, housing quality, age, disability, water access, mobility, and emergency-response capacity. Vulnerability must be measured by who can cope, evacuate, recover, and participate – not merely by the location of infrastructure. Every holding centre, school, hospital, housing project, and relocation site should undergo a publicly disclosed multi-hazard assessment before occupation.

The authority should represent all municipalities, provincial agencies, and the federal government. Rivers, drainage networks, transport corridors, water systems, and housing markets cross municipal boundaries. Fragmented decisions by individual jurisdictions cannot manage basin-wide risks. The authority should maintain shared geospatial data, enforce common floodplain and building standards, coordinate emergency operations, and publish annual resilience accounts.

River setbacks should be scientifically defined rather than imposed through arbitrary uniform distances. Wetlands, ponds, recharge areas, river terraces, and remaining agricultural land should be treated as life-support infrastructure. Where relocation is necessary, restored river corridors can serve simultaneously as flood-retention areas, ecological parks, pedestrian routes, and public open spaces. Permeable paving, rain gardens, rooftop storage, detention basins, and neighbourhood-scale drainage should become compulsory elements of urban development.

Verified landless households should be offered alternatives, including serviced land, rental housing, housing cooperatives, incremental housing finance, and carefully planned in-situ upgrading, where hazards can be reduced. Relocation sites must provide access to transport, schools, health care, water, sanitation, and employment opportunities. Moving families to remote locations without livelihoods merely reproduces informality elsewhere. Temporary holding centres should meet enforceable standards for elevation, drainage, structural safety, sanitation, privacy, disability access, and emergency evacuation. No person should remain indefinitely in a facility designed for short-term use.

Municipalities should establish dedicated resilience funds supported by development charges, land-value capture, climate finance, and intergovernmental transfers. Capital projects should be ranked according to avoided deaths, reduced displacement, ecological benefits, and assistance to vulnerable populations – not only visible construction value. Policy implementation should follow a continuing cycle of diagnosis, infrastructure and resource auditing, participation, scenario testing, investment ranking, and annual learning.

Crisis to transformation

By 2050, Kathmandu will face heavier development pressure, more intense rainfall, rising heat, water insecurity and continuing migration. Decisions made during the next decade will determine whether these pressures become manageable challenges or repeated humanitarian disasters.

Resilience cannot mean protecting commercial districts while displacing poor residents into unsafe shelters. Nor can humanitarianism permanently accept settlements in lethal floodways. True resilience connects ecological limits with social justice: restore rivers, regulate construction, protect critical infrastructure, provide adequate housing, and include vulnerable communities in decisions affecting their lives.

Kathmandu's flooded holding centres should become a turning point. It demonstrated that relocation without science is unsafe, eviction without rehabilitation is unjust, and infrastructure without accountable governance is fragile. Nepal now needs to move from reactive rescue and demolition toward an integrated urban policy that enables people, ecosystems, and institutions to withstand shocks, adapt to change, and transform together.

A resilient Kathmandu in 2050 will not be defined by the height of its concrete embankments or the number of families removed from public land. It will be judged by whether every resident – including the poorest – can live safely, evacuate with dignity, recover from disaster, and participate in shaping the city's future.

(The author is a professor of geography at the University of Central Missouri, USA.)

“ Nepal now needs to move from reactive rescue and demolition toward an integrated urban policy that enables people, ecosystems, and institutions to withstand shocks, adapt to change, and transform together.

The Allure Of Abroad



Dixya Poudel

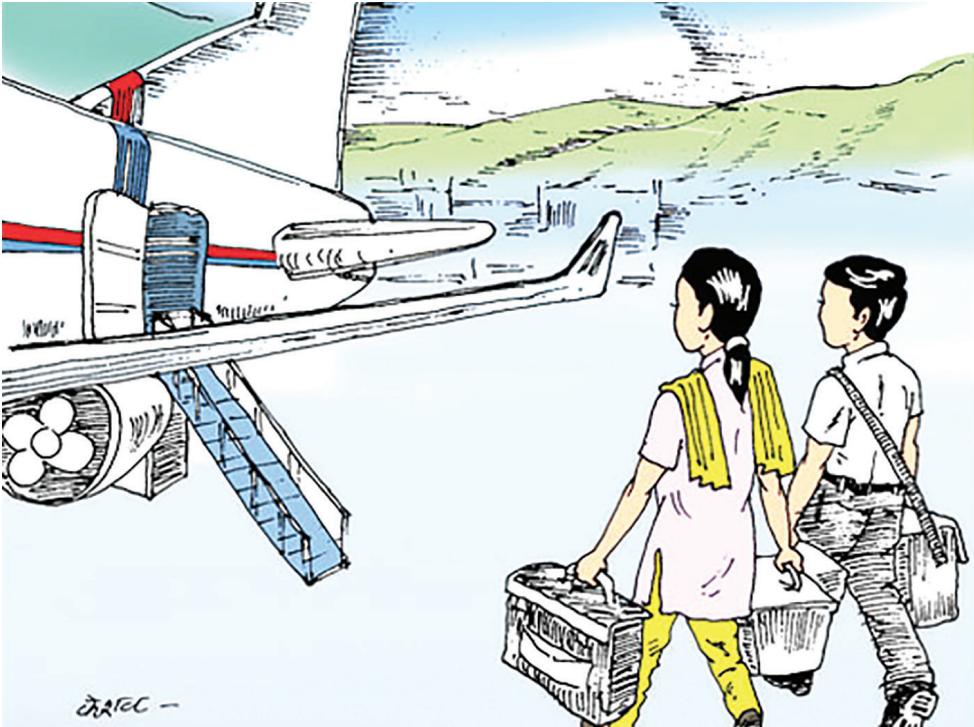
Once a student passes 10+2 or A levels, higher education beckons. A certified degree from a reputed college or university can certainly take one far. It isn't then surprising that admission to top-tier colleges and universities, both national and international, is highly competitive. And if one is to look at the educational trends of Nepali youths, many increasingly opt for study abroad even if it means higher expenses and a rigorous balance of study and work.

Among the popular destinations for higher education are Australia, the USA, the UK, Japan, South Korea, and European nations, among others. Today, Australia is the most sought-after nation for Nepali students. And each year, thousands of Nepalis apply for foreign student visas, and the lucky ones are accepted. From 2018/19 to 2024/25, over 543,833 Nepali students received No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for foreign study. However, once abroad, the reality of staying away from home for years along with a culture shock greets many students amid challenging classes and higher expenses of living. Yet, it is a continuing trend among Nepali

students to compete for higher education abroad. What is then so alluring about study abroad? Could it be the promise of a better future secured through world-class education? Or could it be a change of scenario and the challenge of finding one's future path in a foreign nation? Either way, study abroad does have its many advantages and opportunities. One can extend one's horizon, meet new people from different nations, acclimate to a cosmopolitan culture and savour the delight in new ways of learning. And what is education if not the versatility in learning?

While it is all well and good to aspire for foreign education, one has to keep several things in mind. Firstly, students will be thousands of miles away from home in a strange new world. Apart from culture, language and customs too will be different. Except for English-speaking countries, the rest will require a proficiency in a foreign language. Language can be learnt, but it might be difficult to acclimate to an entirely different culture where there are novel ways of communicating and socialising. Homesickness can afflict a vulnerable young person in a foreign college or university. It can even affect educational prospects if it becomes acute. Thus, it might help to reach out to international students who too may be facing similar problems. Joining clubs, taking classes in varied subjects and socialising with students of different nationalities can ease the transition.

Certainly, studying in a foreign nation is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but it is also important for students to focus on self-care. Since they will be far from home, they won't have anyone checking on them, whether to see if they



have had a meal or if they are getting enough exercise, hydration and even sleep. On the plus side, it will encourage international students to be more independent. They will learn to manage a bank account, shop for essentials and even prep a meal on their own. Likewise, abroad studies

bring travel opportunities for international students. Travelling to foreign nations is surely enticing, as one can see new places and cultures, try out new cuisines, and make new friends. Additionally, today in an age of social media, students can vlog their thoughts and emotions

and share their take on study abroad. An online community can be quite supportive if it is the right and safe one. And social media accounts, if successful and thriving, can be a source of extra income as well.

Talking of expenses, students might require pocket money to spend on minor things such as stationery supplies, groceries, or even treating themselves to a coffee besides tuition and boarding. It might thus help to seek out opportunities to find suitable work or scholarships and funding. For example, one can work in the college or university cafeteria or library or assist the professors in a lab or office and be open for grants. However, there are instances of students dropping out to illegally work in foreign nations, especially if they are short of money. They should instead study and work hard while also applying for further funds and scholarships.

Youths can keep these in mind when venturing for higher education in foreign nations. They may have the privilege of time, but they are also quite deep in an uncharted territory, and therefore adequate guidance from parents, seniors, professors and counsellors will go far in securing their future. Once graduated, students will have to face adult responsibilities, but during their college or university years, they are open to creating memories of a lifetime along with their studies. Thus, a time in a foreign nation can be exhilarating, educational and developmental. Youths should then spend their time learning, socialising, and growing to make the best of their study abroad.

(Poudel is a freelance writer from Kathmandu.)

Unseen TB Threat In Nepal



Yogendra Shah

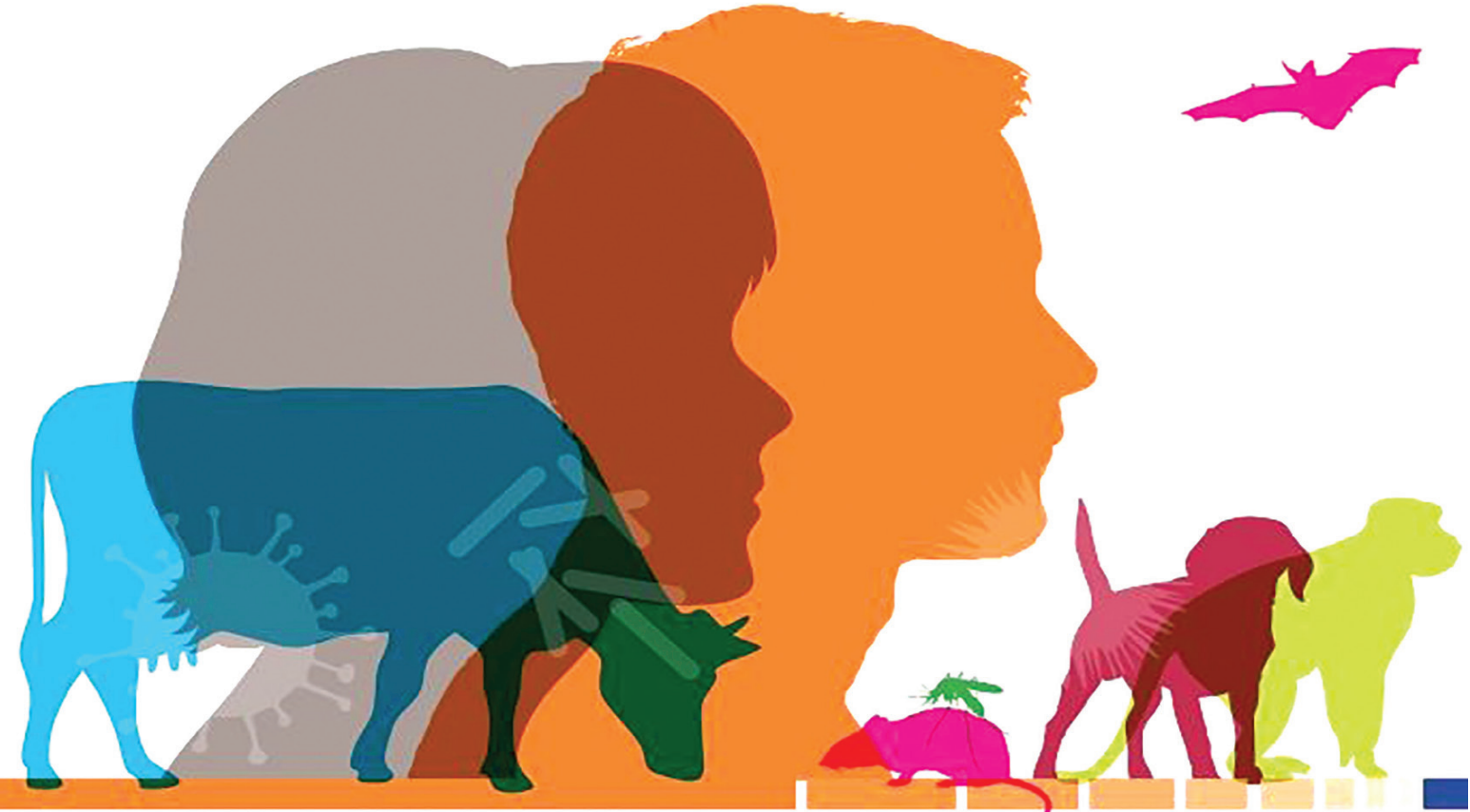
Given the country's long border with India, stronger cross-border collaboration and a coordinated One Health approach involving human, animal, and environmental health sectors are essential to reduce the risk of zoonotic tuberculosis transmission.

Tuberculosis (TB), one of the leading bacterial infections worldwide, is caused by the Mycobacterium tuberculosis complex (MTBC) and is primarily transmitted through the air from person to person. The MTBC comprises a genetically related group of Mycobacterium species that infect both humans and animals, including M. tuberculosis, M. africanum, M. orygis, M. bovis, M. microti, M. canettii, M. caprae, M. pinnipedii, M. suricat-tae, and M. mungi, among others. Most of these species exhibit host specificity; including humans, animals, and the BCG vaccine strain. However, some species of Mycobacterium like M. tuberculosis exhibit zoonotic nature and may spillover from animal hosts like livestock and wildlife to human populations. TB has been known for thousands of years and remains a major public health challenge despite advancements in laboratory diagnostics and clinical management.

Zoonotic diseases are major threats for public health. TB is one of the zoonotic diseases with complex pathophysiology both in humans and animals. Thus, it is very essential to trace the ecological source of TB between humans and animals. Dairy sector is one of the major components of livestock and has a great role in the national economy but there hasn't been progressing this sector as per its potentials. Cattle and buffaloes are mostly reared for milk production in Nepal. As milk production ceases, either due to old age or certain disease conditions except cattle, buffaloes are sold for slaughter. The slaughter houses are ill-managed with no proper monitoring on the quality and at farmers level there is no screening and destruction of positive reactors. At slaughterhouses 14 per cent of buffaloes were found to have tuberculosis lesions. However, M. tuberculosis and M. bovis are endemic in the human and livestock population in Nepal.

In Nepal, tuberculosis caused by different members of the MTBC has been detected in different animal species, including Asian elephants, greater one-horned rhinoceros, deer species, and blue bull, using molecular genotyping tools. Notably, two captive Asian elephants were found to be infected with mixed M. tuberculosis lineages (Indo-Oceanic and Beijing/CAS-Delhi) through whole-genome sequencing analysis. In addition, TB screening of cattle and buffaloes from 60 households of TB patients using the single intradermal tuberculin test indicated a high risk of bovine TB transmission between animals and humans. Similarly, a study of 123 cattle showed bovine TB positivity rates of 9.76 per cent by comparative tuberculin test, 37.4 per cent by rapid test, and 5.7 per cent by ELISA, highlighting a substantial risk of zoonotic TB transmission at the cattle-human interface. These studies findings suggest interspecies transmission of TB between humans and animals. Therefore, comprehensive studies on MDR-MTB strains including pulmonary TB, and zoonotic TB transmission are needed.

Nearly 75 per cent of all new emerging or re-emerging diseases affecting humans at the beginning of the 21st century have originated in



animals. The speed with which these diseases can emerge and spread presents serious public health, economic and development concerns. It also underscores the need for the development of comprehensive disease detection and response capacities, where disease threats are likely to emerge. It is very important to give emphasis in early identification and response to dangerous pathogens in animals before they can become significant threats to human health. One world health movement where human and animal health professionals work together to address the world's most challenging health concern is gaining momentum globally and it is very timely to build a similar capacity in the country.

In addition to the commonly observed human TB, numerous studies on domestic, free-ranging, and wild animal populations have consistently reported the isolation and detection of various MTBC members in multiple animal species. However, the epidemiology, ecology, and transmission dynamics of zoonotic TB remain poorly understood, and the pathobiology of animal-adapted MTBC species in domestic and wild animals is still inadequately described. Therefore, comprehensive surveillance, incorporating both active and passive approaches and biological investigations are needed to clarify the epidemiological patterns, transmission dynamics, risk factors,

and pathogenic mechanisms driving zoonotic TB across humans, livestock, and wildlife.

Tuberculosis therapy generally consists of a 6 to 9 month course of Isoniazid, rifampicin, streptomycin, thioacetazone, pyrazinamide and ethambutol. The timely identification of persons infected with tuberculosis and their rapid laboratory confirmation of tuberculosis are two key ingredients of effective public health measures for the control of the TB. More importantly, there is no system to differentiate human TB caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis from that caused by Mycobacterium bovis. As a result, the same standard treatment regimen is commonly used for both, despite M. bovis being naturally resistant to pyrazinamide, a key first-line anti-TB drug. This leads to suboptimal therapy, delayed recovery, and reduced treatment effectiveness. Moreover, zoonotic TB frequently involves extrapulmonary sites, where drug penetration is limited, and is often diagnosed late due to inadequate detection methods; further complicating management and highlighting the need for tailored diagnostic and treatment strategies.

Diagnosis of active disease includes clinical suspicion, chest radiographs, staining for acid-fast bacilli, and culture for mycobacterium and Immunological diagnosis, more recently molecular test including Nucleic acid amplification methods; GeneXpert, Truenat, Loop-mediated Isothermal

Amplification (LAMP), DNA sequencing and whole genome sequencing has shown potential.

The country should strengthen the National Tuberculosis Control Programme and expand access to affordable molecular diagnostic tools such as LAMP and Truenat for early detection and surveillance of zoonotic tuberculosis in humans and animals. Artificial intelligence-enabled laboratory technologies and stronger surveillance systems should be introduced to improve diagnosis, monitor MTBC transmission, and strengthen screening and treatment, including in border areas. The government should develop and endorse national guidelines for the diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and control of zoonotic tuberculosis based on evidence and international standards. Health and animal authorities should improve and standardize diagnostic protocols and implement comprehensive measures to protect humans and captive and wild animals, including elephants, rhinoceroses, deer, and blue bulls. Given the country's long border with India, stronger cross-border collaboration and a coordinated One Health approach involving human, animal, and environmental health sectors are essential to reduce the risk of zoonotic tuberculosis transmission.

(The author holds a PhD in Veterinary Medicine from Hokkaido University, Japan.)

Swaminarayan's Spiritual Tourism Gateway



Padam Neupane

Swaminarayan gave special importance to ethics, non-violence, education, devotion and morality, along with campaigning against the evils, superstitions, caste discrimination, alcoholism, violence and other social evils prevalent in the society.

An 11-year-old boy, Ghanshyam Pandey, born in Chhapaiya village of Uttar Pradesh, India, is revered globally today as Swaminarayan. Demonstrating exceptional spiritual insight and vision from a young age, he became a central spiritual figure to more than 20 million followers worldwide. He is considered a great spiritual guru and social reformer of Hinduism. Born on April 3, 1781, he left home and travelled to various pilgrimage sites in India. By the time he reached Gujarat, he was known by the name Neelkantha Varni. After he took initiation from Guru Ramananda Swami, he was given the name Sahajananda Swami. But later, after he started preaching the "Swaminarayan" mantra, the name of Swaminarayan gained fame and is now considered as Swaminarayan Bhagwan by the Swaminarayan sect all over the world.

During his spiritual journey, he visited various pilgrimage sites in India as well as Muktinath in Nepal and studied yoga, Vedanta and religion in depth. Later, Swaminarayan gave special importance to ethics, non-violence, education, devotion and morality, along with campaigning against the evils, superstitions, caste discrimination, alcoholism, violence and other social evils prevalent in the society.

This sect founded by Swaminarayan has spread to too many countries of the world today. His teachings are collected in books, including Shikshapatri. As Akshardham, large structures have been built in various countries of the world by spending billions of rupees. It is seen that crores of people visit these places every year. Swaminarayan passed away on June 1, 1830, in Gadhdha, Gujarat.

Spiritual journey

According to records maintained by the Swaminarayan tradition, he had undertaken a seven-year trek from the Himalayan region of India to South India. During this journey, he reached Mount Kailash through Nepal.

Followers of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Bon religions also consider Kailash and the Mansarovar region to be holy areas. In addition, it is mentioned in various publications that he reached the holy place Muktinath through the Himalayan region and meditated on one leg for two and a half months. While returning south from Muktinath, he traditionally travelled to Butwal via the Kaligandaki River, Galeshwar, the Beni region, the Ridi Ruru region and then Palpa (Tansen). After reaching Butwal, he stayed at the court of Mahadatta Sen in Phulbari for 3-5 months. According to historians, these places are based on religious tradition and local folklore.

During the journey, he began to spread the knowledge gained through rigorous penance, as well as the message of simple life and human service. After reaching Gujarat, he met Guru Ramananda Swami and received the title of Sahajananda Swami and later became famous by the



name Swaminarayan. This journey of Swaminarayan was a journey in search of truth, knowledge, devotion and human welfare.

Neelkantha Varni is believed to have travelled on foot to various parts of India and Nepal for more than seven years.

The importance of Neelkantha Varni's visit to various pilgrimage sites in India and Nepal and his rigorous penance are mentioned in documents published by organisations such as Swaminarayan Sambaddha Dyabye. But the one-foot austerity performed in Muktinath while standing with a stick is considered very important. In the Akshardham built in India and third countries related to

Swaminarayan, the austerity of this posture is found as an idol. Perhaps for this reason, the Swaminarayan sect considers Muktinath a holy pilgrimage site, and thousands of people visit there every year and have a desire to visit it at least once. The tradition established by Swaminarayan is now internationally recognised.

Muktinath Temple is a sacred pilgrimage site for both Hindus and Buddhists. It is considered a place of salvation in Hinduism. Muktinath is one of the major pilgrimage sites of Vaishnavas. Since Swaminarayan also practised direct penance or meditation, many followers wish to visit Muktinath at least once in their lifetime. Especially those who

follow the Swaminarayan sect and the devotees of the Swaminarayan organisation have reached Muktinath on private or group trips from India.

For Nepal's religious and spiritual tourism, this could be an opportunity to attract India's Vaishnava pilgrim market. Swaminarayan Marg (Nilkanth Bani Padayatra) and tourism in Nepal have a rich potential connection. But its promotion should be done on the basis of historical facts and spiritual connections. This journey is considered to be very inspiring for Swaminarayan followers even today. From Kailash Parbat, Mansarovar to Muktinath Temple and returning from Muktinath, Myagdi, Galeshwar, Parvat, Modiveni, Mahashila, Baglung Balewa, Gulmi, Palpa Ridi, Tansen Narayan Sthan, and Parvas to Butwal can be established as the shortest way to Muktinath. Similarly, while staying in Butwal, Mahadatta Sen's palace, nearby Manarayan Temple, will also be included in this path. It is said that the route of Shiddhagufa (Ramdi, Mayatari), Chitwan (Devghat), Kaski, and Kathmandu was used on the way from Butwal to Pokhara. Similarly, Nepal-based Swaminarayan Sewa Samiti says that they are searching for people who may have gone from Kathmandu to Siliguri in India via Sun-sari (Barah area). Even the Indian scholars have not been able to draw a conclusion about this path. For this, it seems necessary to decide on this in coordination with various municipalities in this area of Nepal and in coordination with Swaminarayan-related organizations and Indian organisations in Nepal. It will also establish a short road from Bhairahawa, Lumbini, to Muktinath.

Currently, the number of tourists visiting Muktinath in the thousands seems to reach millions every year. There are millions of followers of Swaminarayan tradition all over the world. Especially in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Delhi, the UK, America, Canada and African communities of Indian origin, the interest towards Nepal's religious tourism can be increased. As Nepal is deciding to conduct a health tourism campaign, it seems that this sector will also include more spiritual and religious tourism, so the government's goal will also be strengthened. Also, this route will fulfil the desire of Indian tourists to reach the cold environment in the shortest distance through the Bhairahawa.

This Swaminarayan Path is an attractive demand not only for the Swaminarayan Sampradaya or its followers but also for tourists for other purposes. After visiting the Kaligandaki corridor in the Ranimahar area via Bhairahawa, Butwal and Palpa, one can directly reach Muktinath and can also visit the pilgrimage sites of great religious importance on that route. Therefore, if there is cooperation between the municipalities of this area, the Nepal Tourism Board, private travel companies and Swaminarayan organisations, it will contribute to tourism growth in Nepal.

(Neupane is a tourism activist and secretary of the Tansen Tourism Board.)

An Inspiring Life Story



Maheshwor Acharya

During the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic, Anthony Hopkins looked back on the time he had lived, revisiting and remembering the experiences he had gone through. Tracing his life's journey from who he used to be to who he has become. Over time, he composed these reflections into his memoir, *We Did Ok Kid*, published in October 2025. The two-time Oscar winner shared that he began writing the book during the lockdown, when daily life had come to a standstill, and he was confined to his home. He described the writing process as a source of immense joy.

Throughout his illustrious acting career, Hopkins portrayed real-life icons based on the biographies of Richard Nixon, Alfred Hitchcock, Pope Benedict, Sigmund Freud, and Pablo Picasso, all of which became unforgettable cinematic masterpieces. Among his most memorable roles is the butler in the film adaptation of Kazuo Ishiguro's timeless masterpiece, *The Remains of the Day*. He also delivered a hauntingly powerful performance in *The Silence of the Lambs*, despite being on screen for a mere 16 minutes, his role earned him an Academy Award.

The memoir has a straightforward, linear storyline. It tells how Hopkins went from being a weak, underachieving student, gradually being drawn to acting, and how he eventually became a great artist. However, other stories parallelly come along the way. One deeply touching aspect of this book is that it reveals his unpleasant childhood mental state and how it has impacted him. Those unpleasant events have an inspiring story underneath, which tells how he adapted himself amidst scarcity and hardships, and how he continuously pushed through his struggles.

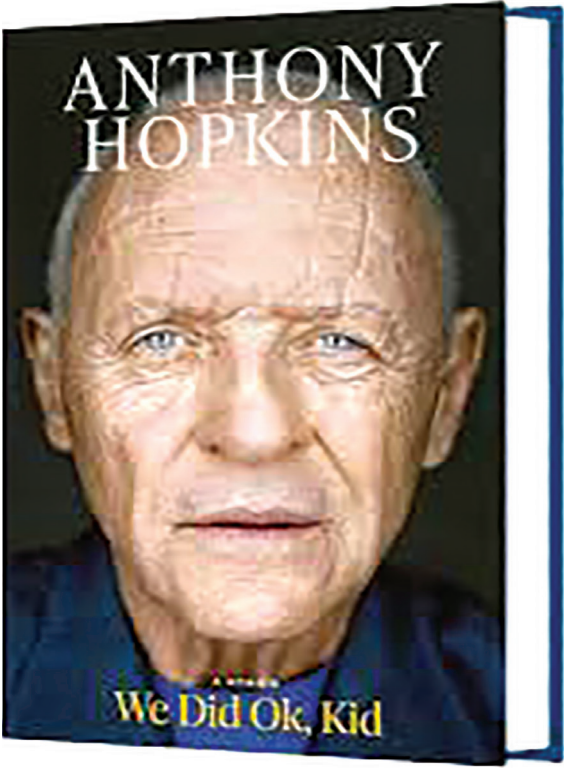
He was lonely without a close companion to share his feelings with. And, he tries and wishes to live alone. While passing through the phases of life, the guiding mantra he learned was to 'never have any complaints against anyone'. His philosophy is simple. If nobody cares about you, why should you care about them? This reminds us of the teaching from the Bhagavad Gita. You have the right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, nor be attached to inaction.

Once, he elaborates in the book, his parent's worry that he will become useless. When their worry turns into anger, father's harsh words become a hurtful insult that shakes him mentally. He stops listening to his parents. Teachers, too call him a fool, as he was a slow learner. But, he does not argue back. He kept enduring the bullying and the contempt from people until he became numb. Gradually, he grew indifferent to these adverse events. This exact trait later became a wonderful tool for his acting career; even back then, he was already acting.

When he started to feel a deep passion for acting growing inside him, to hone his acting skills, he began studying the tragic plays of Shakespeare and Sophocles. He read Shakespeare so intensely that the characters were engraved in his memory, and he felt that in times of crisis, those characters helped him endure and overcome. In order to understand the philosophy of Sophocles' tragedies, he spent hours reflecting on their meanings. He developed the habit of memorising scripts completely before arriving on set. He wouldn't just read the script a few times, but would read it a hundred to two hundred times. He said that it would deeply root the character within, allowing the dialogue to flow naturally so that it no longer feels like acting. Immersing himself in the depths of Shakespearean drama, he realised that everyone in the world is performing- the only difference is the degree to which they act. He became so absorbed in shaping the character within himself that the turbulence of 1960s London did not affect him at all.

In the 1960s, London's surging cultural transformation rejected traditional values and boldly proclaimed a new mindset that embraced freedom and creativity. Young people in particular asserted their distinct identity through music, fashion, and lifestyle. Bands like The Beatles and The Rolling Stones instilled confidence and a rebellious consciousness in the youth, while colorful clothing and new fashions signaled open disagreement with old ways of thinking. And, political and social consciousness in London was also intensifying. Protests against the Vietnam War, movements against nuclear weapons, and student uprisings took the form of peaceful rebellion.

Literature and art, too, saw new experimentation, in which themes of freedom, spirituality, and resistance to tradition grew increasingly prominent. This wave left a lasting mark on modern society, yet he somehow remained untouched by it. To stay apart from the storm of rebellion that swept through London was like someone born and raised in Kathmandu's Jhoche, aka Freak Street, being



unaware of hippie culture. Today, we might think, "How is that even possible?" But so it was, and that is perhaps why Anthony Hopkins became a great artist. While the world was busy constructing a culture of rebellion, he was sitting in his cave, meditating on his craft of acting.

Another striking trait of Hopkins is that he walked away from things he strongly disliked, including his wife. However, his actions indicate to us how resolute a person he is. Eventually, abandoned by society, he starts enjoying his own company and walking alone. Leaving one's infant daughter behind was a pain he couldn't escape. Its lingering shadow remained with him for a long time.

Perhaps that is why, while filming a movie, when a director was shouting at an actress, Hopkins pulled the director aside. He warned him sternly, "If you raise your voice at her again, I will walk off the set." Chastened by the warning, the director fell into line. Hopkins believes that one must be responsible to work and should never cause trouble for others; one must also stand up and fiercely resist injustice and mistreatment instead of silently tolerating it. In another instance, a co-star notorious for always arriving late to sets was never a minute late when working with Hopkins. When colleagues remarked that pairing the infamous actor with Hopkins would be a way to keep him disciplined. Hopkins considered profound respect and goodwill as his greatest achievement.

In his youth, Hopkins drank heavily. Once, completely blackout drunk, he drove 500 miles, from Arizona to Beverly Hills, and reached home at midnight. The next morning, he had absolutely no memory of how he came along. Terrified by the thought, "What if I had caused an accident and killed someone on the way?", he quit drinking. He mentions that this was a profound awakening, and we all receive such awakenings, but we should listen to the inner voice of our heart. Hopkins's life story is a chronicle of the solo journey of a mentally and socially isolated man. Yet, this story of isolation helps us to understand how loneliness can actually be a blessing and suggests to us how to use loneliness to achieve the goal of life.

Reading his memoir shows that difficult life experiences make a person strong from within. One must endure those experiences and should not let oneself break down. While people around the globe eagerly listen to his wisdom and view him as an idol, Hopkins humbly claims that he knows nothing at all. Yet, despite this modesty, one of his philosophies stands out brilliantly: Live life in such a way as if today is your very last day. In a society like ours in Nepal, where mental health is often neglected amidst limited resources, Hopkins' life story serves as an inspiring read. His book delivers a powerful message that humans should strive for a meaningful life rather than just a long one. While reading about life philosophy, we too are compelled to think about what human life means and what purpose we, as bearers of this human life, ought to pursue.

(Acharya is a freelancer and a regular book reviewer.)

FUTURE WATCH

(Based on birth names)

From August 21st to 27th, 2026

- D. N. Lohani



ARIES

Initially a family problem can cause concern. Circumstances will improve from tomorrow. Financial status will remain ordinary. Trade and profession both will turn profitable. Health disorder is predicted. Feeding a dog is a remedy.



TAURUS

You may have to tackle numerous challenges. Hardship will be key to progress. Social prestige can decline. The job will yield a limited return. Business-related travel is likely. Family will provide good support.



GEMINI

You will advance ahead, overcoming emerging challenges. Hardship will help you develop leadership skills. Trade and profession both will turn profitable. Health disorder is predicted. You may have to tolerate a cold cough problem. The study will take a progressive course.



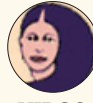
CANCER

Support from others will be required to complete tasks. Avoid risky lending on Thursday. Smaller discussions or arguments will frequently occur, so be cautious.



LEO

Initially, stomach disorders can delay your progress. Circumstances will improve from Tuesday. You will be able to make the right decision. Opponents will remain active and influence jobs. You can start planning for a new venture. Despite expenses, study can slow down.



VIRGO

An ordinary week is in the store. Health disorder is predicted. Medical expenses can rise. Business can slow down. Prayer to Lord Narayana and offering holy basil (Tulasi) will help.



LIBRA

Problems will emerge; however, financial status will improve. The technical task will yield a return. Travel is likely. Love or marital development will take progress. Health condition will improve. Friends will provide appreciable support.



SCORPIO

Hardship will yield return. You will advance ahead, overcoming emerging challenges successfully. Entertaining events can occur during the initial period. Hardship and financial gain will be enjoyed during the latter period. Health requires attention on Thursday.



SAGITTARIUS

Recreational and other unnecessary causes will increase expenses. Students will have to work harder. Foreign travel will lure you; however, long travel is unlikely. The prayer of Lord Shiva is a remedy.



CAPRICORN

Return will be lower than hardship applied. Financial loss is probable. Lack of support from relatives can create some problems. Circumstances will improve from Tuesday. Job-related travel is likely. Business will turn profitable. Religious sentiment will remain low.



AQUARIUS

Impatience can create some problems. Travel-related expenses can be incurred. Lack of decisive ability can create some problems. Expenditure level can rise on Tuesday and Wednesday. Trade and profession both will turn profitable.



PISCES

An advantageous week is in the store. Philanthropic activities can fascinate you. Undertaken assignments will complete successfully. Health disorder is predicted. Expenditure level can rise on Thursday. Business will have to face challenges.



Asmita KC

"We may not have pleasant feelings when writing about war, but if humanity wishes to prevent such conflicts from recurring, we must learn from history rather than distort it", Rambindu Shrestha's writes in his latest book, 'Hajaraun Bijaya'. This belief lies at the heart of this book. More than a historical account, the book is an attempt to preserve the memory of one of the twentieth century's most devastating conflicts while challenging readers to reflect on the political and moral consequences of remembering or forgetting the history.

Wars always emerge with causes. As the history, wars have been driven by struggles for power, territory and ideology. Yet, their greatest burden is borne by the general public not by political leaders. Millions of peoples lose their lives, societies are torn apart, and generations inherit the scars. Thus, it is impossible to understand the present world without knowledge of wars history that shaped it. In this book, author Shrestha motivates readers to restudy the World War II, through a perspective that he believes has been increasingly overlooked in present historical discourse.

The immense sacrifice made by the Soviet people during the World War II is the central theme of the book. According to the narrative outlined by author Shrestha, around 27 million Soviet people lost their lives in the struggle against Nazi Germany. He argues that this sacrifice not only secured the liberation of the Soviet Union but also played a crucial role in defeating fascism across Europe.

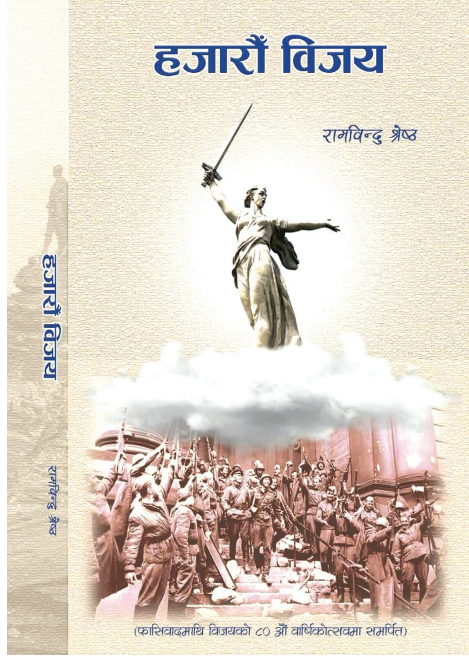
In this book, author also explores the wider consequences of the Soviet victory. Beyond

the battlefield, he mentions, the defeat of fascism reshaped global geopolitics, accelerated the decline of European colonial empires, and inspired anti-colonial movements throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America. 'Hajaraun Bijaya' portrays the World War II not merely as a military conflict but as a turning point that altered international power structures and encouraged the emergence of newly independent nations.

Author Shrestha argues that, the sacrifices of Soviet soldiers have gradually faded from public recognition in parts of Europe. He discusses the removal of Soviet war memorials in several Eastern European countries and expresses concern that the historical narrative surrounding the World War II is being reinterpreted in ways that minimise the Soviet contribution to the defeat of Nazi Germany. Whether readers agree with every interpretation or not, the discussion raises important questions about how societies remember the past, whose memories are preserved, and whose are forgotten.

According Shrestha, 'Hajaraun Bijaya' also draws a poignant contrast between the shared sacrifices of Belarusians, Russians, and Ukrainians during the World War II and the tragic reality of the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. This represents one of history's deepest ironies: peoples who once fought side by side against a common enemy are today engaged in war against one another. This emotional dimension gives the book a reflective tone beyond its historical analysis.

Hajaraun Bijaya is not a fiction. Thus, it may not hold much appeal for readers who prefer stories or novels. However, for those readers who are interested in learning about historical events and facts, it is a highly engaging and useful work. Additionally, this book can serve as a valuable reference for researchers, students, and



the academicians. Furthermore, this book can prove to be a useful guide for anyone who wants to understand international politics and global developments.

Each page of the book discusses about the World War II, the Great Patriotic War, fascism, and the political consequences of the allied victory. It examines those historical periods in depth while exploring their long lasting impact on global politics. The narrative also seeks to connect with the past with present-day international relations, making the book valuable not only as a historical account but also as an insightful commentary on

Book: Hajaraun Bijaya
Genre: Non-fiction
Writer: Rambindu Shrestha
Publisher: Nepal Russia Literature Society
ISBN: 973-9937-1-2615-1
Price: 350
Published in 2082 BS

contemporary geopolitical developments.

One of the strongest aspects of the book is the author's effort to support his narrative with documented sources. Throughout the text, Shrestha cites the references from which he has drawn information. Such careful citation is still relatively uncommon in much of Nepal's general non-fiction publishing, where historical and political books often rely on unsourced assertions. By acknowledging his references, the author encourages readers to verify information independently and demonstrates respect for academic standards. As a reader and social researcher, I found this practice particularly commendable. It enhances the book's credibility and reflects a growing culture of evidence-based writing within Nepali literature.

The writing itself is accessible and straightforward. Rather than overwhelming readers with academic jargons, Shrestha explains complex historical developments in a language that remains readable for the general public. At the same time, the narrative retains enough historical detail to satisfy readers seeking a deeper understanding of the period. The author's long-standing interest in Russian literature and Soviet history is evident throughout the book, lending the narrative both knowledge and personal conviction.

The book's greatest strength lies in its ability to stimulate discussion. Historical writing is rarely free from interpretation, especially when dealing with events as politically sensitive as the Second World War and its legacy. Readers from different historical traditions may agree or disagree with some of the author's conclusions or emphases. Nevertheless, the value of Hajaraun Bijaya lies in encouraging readers to revisit historical events critically and to recognise that public memory is continually contested. In an age of misinformation and polarised historical narratives, engaging with different perspectives becomes increasingly important.

At the same time, readers should approach the book as one interpretive account among many. The history of the Second World War has been extensively studied by scholars across the world, and many of its political and military dimensions continue to generate debate. Reading Hajaraun Bijaya alongside works representing other historical perspectives would allow readers to develop a broader understanding of this complex period.

As wars continue to unfold in different parts of the world and geopolitical rivalries intensify, the lessons of history remain profoundly relevant. The book reminds readers that the human cost of war extends far beyond battlefields and that preserving historical memory is essential if future generations are to avoid repeating past tragedies. Whether one fully accepts the author's interpretations or not, the questions he raises deserve thoughtful consideration.

More importantly, this book reminds us that history should not merely be remembered, it should be understood, questioned, and learned from, so that the tragedies of the past are not repeated in the future.

(KC is a Kathmandu-based journalist and poet.)

A Colourful Forest Treasure



Rajesh Dhungana

The Red-headed Trogon (Harpactes erythrocephalus) is a medium-sized, quiet and slow-moving forest dweller with glittering metallic plumage and various colour combinations. It is one of the most beautiful and colourful birds in the world, belonging to the Trogonidae family and known as a unique gift from nature. Full of unique physical characteristics, it is considered a valuable species by observers. It is one of the most vibrantly coloured, but also notoriously elusive, treasures of this species. In Nepali, this species is called Raktashir, which is related to its colour. The Red-headed Trogon is found in Nepal, India, Bhutan, southern China, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia. English ornithologist John Gould first discovered and described this species in 1834. Bird research in Nepal during the 19th century marked the first recorded observations of the species in the region.

Trogons are renowned for their striking crimson head, belonging to an ancient lineage of birds. They uniquely possess a heterodactyl toe arrangement, with two toes facing forward and two backward, which aids their arboreal existence. Additionally, trogons have the smallest and weakest legs among birds, constituting only about 3 per cent of their body weight, limiting their ability to walk on the ground.

In Nepal, this species is sedentary and inhabits mid-level branches in dense tropical and sub-tropical forests, particularly in national parks, community forests, and various types of broad-leaved and mixed forests. It has been observed at altitudes between 200 and 2,600 metres above sea level.



There are 40 to 47 species of trogons in the world, all belonging to the Trogonidae family. Of these, only one species of trogon, the Red-headed Trogon, is commonly found in Nepal.

The male bird has bright feathers, a bright red head and underparts, and a narrow white stripe across the middle of its breast. Its rusty-brown



mantle and back are complemented by mauve-blue legs, while the primary feathers appear black and white. The bird's features include a black-tipped cobalt-blue beak, a deep mauve-blue gape and red-brown irises.

In contrast, the female has an olive-brown



head, neck and upper breast, with a light red to pink lower breast and belly. Its mantle and back range from orange to brown, while the wings are dark and yellowish brown. These birds are shy and prefer to stay motionless on leafy branches, possessing a compact body, short yet strong

wings and a long tail. Although capable of flight, trogons usually only fly short distances of a few hundred metres.

They are 31 to 37 cm long and weigh an average of 60 to 110 grams. The breeding season for this species is typically from mid-April through mid-July, with activity peaking in May and June.

Trogons dig their dens in soft, decaying wood. Scientists call this process "caving." When trogons are finished building their dens, the holes are not wasted. They later provide free housing for other small mammals, insects and birds to live and breed in. The female lays two to four round, cream-coloured and shiny eggs. The chicks hatch after an incubation period of 18 days.

Quiet by day and vocal by night, unlike hyperactive foragers that dart across the canopy, the Red-headed Trogon is a sit-and-wait predator. The main diet of this species is stick insects, cicadas, beetles, grasshoppers, caterpillars, flies and moths. It will also eat millipedes and centipedes. Additionally, this species consumes berries, fruits with strong-smelling seeds and the leaves of deciduous trees, including bamboo.

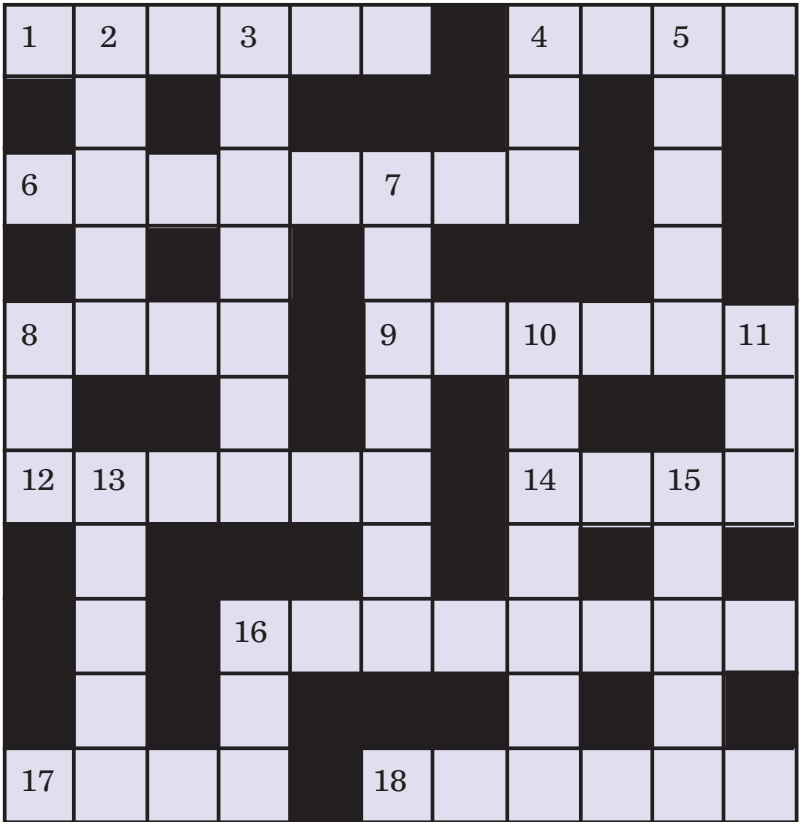
It usually forages quietly in the canopy of dense forests, plucking insects from leaves or catching them in mid-air. Outside of their regular feeding patterns, they are generally inactive. For this reason, birdwatchers and biologists have noted that, apart from their general beauty, they are notorious for their lack of other immediately attractive features.

Their lack of activity has been suggested as a defence against predation. Their head, which can rotate significantly, is turned to watch for any potential predators.

The Red-headed Trogon is currently classified as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. This is mainly due to rapid population growth, deforestation and habitat loss caused by chemical pesticides in agriculture. Globally, climate change has shortened the flowering and fruiting seasons of plants in the foothills of the Himalayas, as well as activities such as hunting with slingshots by local people.

(The author is a wildlife photographer. Photos used in this article are by the author.)

TRN CROSSWORD PUZZLE NO. 1892



Last date of entry:
August 26, 2026

Win a prize of Rs. 600. In case there are more than one correct entry the prize will be split into three sums of Rs. 200 each. The winner will be selected by a lucky draw. Only cuttings (not photo copy) that include the Crossword Puzzle no. will be accepted.

Across

1. Optimistic
4. To ruin, destroy
6. The use of something
8. An urgent request
9. To attack brutally
12. A US coin worth five cents
14. Full of something negative
16. Temporary suspension from work
17. To push someone with your finger
18. A short afternoon nap

Down

2. Smallest unit of a digital image
3. To set aside resources
4. Expected at a certain time
5. To prick painfully
7. Narrow-mindedness
8. A small thin piece of metal
10. Using more words than needed
11. A period just before an important event
13. To bring negative results
15. To engage in battle
16. Something that becomes popular only for a short time

Solutions to TRN Crossword Puzzle No. 1891

ACROSS: 1. COGENT 4. SPAT 6. VIGILANT 8. SERE 9. GLOSSY 12. AUNTIE 14. EXIT 16.ANTIDOTE 17. BRAT 18. TREMOR
DOWN: 2. OLIVE 3. EMINENT 4. SET 5. ABYSS 7. AUGMENT 8. SEA 10. OVERDUE 11. YET 13. UTTER 15. INTRO 16. APT



Mukunda Ranjit, Baneshor, Kathmandu
Sheela Shrestha, Kuleshwor-14, Kathmandu
Sunil Sharma Bhattarai, Yetkha, Kathmandu



Shreya Shrestha, Lalitpur

CREATIVE CORNER

A Journey Of Friendship



Krishav Pant

友谊的桥梁,文化的使者

For most people, these are just some Chinese characters put together to make one phrase. But for me, these characters hold a lot of meaning because they symbolise the relationships formed and the fun times experienced that would be cherished for years to come. Now, this phrase forms an integral part of my identity and represents my journey as a Junior Cultural Ambassador of The Song Ching Ling Foundation, China.

It is amazing to think about how it all began from one video of a little boy from LRI School, Nepal, narrating about his experience in learning Chinese.

While making the video, it would have been impossible for me as a younger kid to even think that this ordinary video could lead him to represent Nepal in the 2023 Junior Cultural Ambassador Programme of the Song Ching Ling Foundation.

Being a part of this programme turned out to be a life-changing experience for me, as it got me out of my comfort zone and allowed me to explore many cultures and traditions and forge relationships beyond borders.

However, I didn't realise that participating in this activity would be the end of my Junior Cultural Ambassadorship; it would be just the start.

This event made a great impression on me and motivated me to learn Chinese further.

I have participated in different competitions, like Chinese Bridge and the Ambassador Cup, and have met many people who inspired me to keep

studying. Along the way, I even had the honour of sharing my journey with the President of Nepal, Ram Chandra Paudel, and former Prime Minister, Pushpa Kamal Dahal. Before I knew it, learning Chinese had grown from just being a hobby to something much more meaningful. It had become a way for me to share my culture and traditions with the world.

This year in July I was invited as a guest speaker to take part in the 5th Junior Cultural Ambassador event once again, as someone who was returning with new experiences and had the privilege of sharing my story with the next generation of young cultural ambassadors.

Taking part in the event after three years meant meeting passionate individuals from all around the world. It meant revisiting the same places I had visited three years ago to still be just as amazed at their beauty as it was the first time I was there. Most importantly, it meant realising how much I had grown, while also understanding how much more there was still to learn.

To conclude, here is a translated version of the ending part of my speech delivered as a guest speaker to the Junior Cultural Ambassadors of the 2026 event.

At the end, I would like to leave you all with a quote my teacher often told me:

“宝剑锋从磨砺出·梅花香自苦寒来”

(The sharp edge of a sword comes from grinding; the fragrance of plum blossoms comes from bitter cold.)

I know mastering Chinese is far from easy, and the road to chasing one's dreams is always full of hardships. But if a shy, introverted little Nepali boy can now stand here and share my story with you, there is no limit to what you can achieve.

As long as you stay true to your original aspiration, work steadfastly, and stay patient, all your dreams will come true sooner or later.

Grade:XII, St. Xavier's College



Prajwol Wagle, Grade: XII, LRI



Aavik Baniya, Grade: II, Sampada Pathsala



Suvechran Luitel, Grade: Nursery, Bright Future School Lalitpur

QUIZ OF THE WEEK

58

Prepared by: Bishwo Nath Kharel

Questions

1. What percentage of Nepal's population lives in urban areas?
2. What percentage of the world's total land area is covered by forests?
3. Which is the easternmost district of Nepal?
4. Which is the lightest element?
5. The confluence of which rivers is called 'Triveni' in Nepal?

Answers

1. 79.5%
2. 31%
3. Ilam
4. Hydrogen
5. Ganges, Yamuna and Gomti