

THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL

PM SHAH ARRIVES  
IN ASTAM, KASKI



BY OUR CORRESPONDENT  
*Lekh Nath, Aug. 21*

Prime Minister Balendra Shah arrived in Kaski by road on Friday afternoon and reached Annapurna Eco Village Resort in Astam, Dhital, of Annapurna Rural Municipality after travelling through Pokhara.

Kaski Assistant Chief District Officer Chitrangal Baral said the Prime Minister would spend Friday night at the Eco Village. “He has arrived in Kaski. He is here on a private visit and will stay in Astam tonight,” Baral said.

Prime Minister Shah reached the resort at 2:55 pm.

All the rooms at the resort have been booked for the Prime Minister and his entourage. Annapurna Eco Village is located in the north of the Pokhara-Baglung highway of Annapurna Rural Municipality.

The area offers views of the Annapurna, Dhaulagiri and Manaslu mountain ranges, as well as the Hemja area of Pokhara Metropolitan City. Surrounded by hills, forests and traditional settlements, the area is a popular destination for short hikes. Prime Minister Shah’s team is scheduled to travel to Mustang on Saturday.

SC TO STUDY  
PETITION SEEKING  
TO HALT NC  
CONVENTION

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
*Kathmandu, Aug. 21*

The Supreme Court (SC) has kept for study a petition seeking to halt preparations for the Nepali Congress’s 15th general convention, scheduled for October 2 to 5.

The petition was submitted on Friday on behalf of former party president Sher Bahadur Deuba and former acting president Purna Bahadur Khadka, who have challenged the convention schedule announced by the party’s newly elected central committee.

Deuba’s authorised representative, party leader Dipak Khadka, and advocate Shrawan Kumar Shrestha submitted the petitions separately, seeking an order to stop the convention process.

Supreme Court spokesperson Arjun Prasad Koirala said the petitions were kept for further study and that a decision

» SEE PAGE 6

Draft bill to strengthen  
integrity of elections

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
*Kathmandu, Aug. 21*

The Election Commission held discussions on the draft of the Election Management Bill (Integrated) and reforms required in election management.

The discussion, held in the presence of Minister for Home Affairs Sudan Gurung, focused on contemporary issues concerning electoral reform and the new provisions proposed in the draft Election Management Bill.

A presentation was also made on the proposed provisions, followed by discussions among the participants, according to Commission Spokesperson Narayan Bhattarai.

During the discussion, Home Minister Gurung urged the Commission to incorporate necessary legal provisions in the proposed bill to address problems observed in previous elections and ensure voting rights for Nepali citizens living abroad and voters residing outside their



PHOTO: SUJAN GURUNG/TRN  
**Rastriya Swatantra Party President Rabi Lamichhane and other central leaders attending the Central Committee meeting held at the party headquarters in Banasthali, Kathmandu, on Friday.**

Local govts to devise action  
plans for waste management

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
*Kathmandu, Aug. 21*

A high-level inter-agency meeting has been held to address existing problems in waste management in Kathmandu Valley, explore solutions and chart a long-term strategy, with all participating local governments pledging to prepare clear action plans and manage their own waste.

The meeting, held at the Ministry of Infrastructure Development on Friday under the chairmanship of Minister for Information and Communication Dr. Bikram Timilsina, was attended by mayors of various local governments in the Valley, officials from the Department of Environment, heads of relevant agencies, waste management experts and representatives of communities affected by the Banchare Danda landfill site in Nuwakot.

The meeting concluded that although waste management is primarily the responsibility of local governments, long-term solutions require coordination among the federal government, local authorities and other concerned agencies.

Minister Timilsina said the government had accorded high priority to resolving the problems faced by residents of the Banchare Danda area and addressing waste management issues. He said the government was prepared to make all possible efforts to resolve policy and practical difficulties.

He stressed that each local government should move towards managing its own waste, as mandated by the Constitution and law, while assuring federal support and facilitation. He also pledged to expedite the acquisition of land

Minister Timilsina, Sunita  
Dangol discuss Banchare  
Danda landfill woes

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
*Kathmandu, Aug. 21*

Minister for Information and Communication Dr. Bikram Timilsina and Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) Acting Mayor Sunita Dangol have discussed problems at the Banchare Danda landfill site, including poor road conditions, foul odours and inadequate waste management.

Minister Timilsina called for budget allocation by the federal government and Kathmandu Metropolitan City to upgrade and blacktop the road

to the landfill site. He also stressed effective coordination among the three tiers of government and timely capping of disposed waste.

Dangol said Kathmandu Metropolitan City has been bearing most of the cost of waste management despite waste being brought to Banchare Danda from other local governments in the Valley. She urged other municipalities to share the financial burden.

She also said plans to establish decentralised waste management through seven waste clusters had been delayed due to difficulties in acquiring land and completing other procedures.

City Mayor Chiribabu Maharjan said the existing agreement with Nepwaste had prevented the metropolitan city from managing its waste independently and urged its cancellation.

Mayors of Budhanilkantha, Tokha, Dhunibeshi, Kirtipur and Dakshinkali also expressed commitment to managing their own waste. Kirtipur Mayor Krishnaman Dangol said the municipality would implement a plan to manage its own waste within six months, while Dakshinkali Mayor Mohan Basnet said waste segregation had reduced the volume of waste over the past three months.

» SEE PAGE 6

Govt to develop,  
supervise software  
for public institutions

BY MODNATH DHAKAL  
*Kathmandu, Aug. 21*

The government has moved ahead to create an institutional structure to domestically develop software for the public institutions and provide policy guidance to them.

A meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday has approved the Software Development and Operation Committee (Formation) Order, 2083 for the same.

It has paved a way to establish a Software Development and Operation Centre (SDOC) that will supervise its activities, to make public service delivery information technology-based through the development, upgrading, necessary maintenance and other related work of software used by public bodies.

According to the PMO, the Order provides for the formation of a six-member committee, chaired by the secretary responsible for governance affairs at the Prime Minister’s Office. “The committee will provide policy guidance to the centre. It will have a 6-member expert committee, led by a secretary of the PMO, to supervise the software used in the public agencies,” Spokesperson of the PMO Hemraj Aryal informed at a press meet held on Thursday.

The SDOC will be led by an executive director and will have 30 employees, including a gazetted first-class officer from the relevant service. Aryal said that additional staff will be appointed according to the need.

According to the order, the centre will undertake software development, upgrading and maintenance work as requested by public bodies. It will also upgrade and maintain software

systems developed by the centre itself, as well as various legacy software systems requested by public bodies.

Similarly, the centre will provide round-the-clock technical support for various software systems developed by it. “The order further states that, during software development, maintenance and upgrading, the centre must make appropriate arrangements for the secure hosting, processing, backup, access control and technical protection of data,” the Prime Minister’s Secretariat informed.

**PMO directs to use domestic goods**

The PMO issued a letter on Friday requesting all public bodies - including federal ministries, commissions, secretariats, provincial governments, local governments and Nepali diplomatic missions abroad - to give priority to Nepali products in their procurement processes.

At the direction of Prime Minister Balendra Shah and following recent consultations with domestic entrepreneurs and businesspeople, the PMO has requested all government agencies to use domestically produced goods and services. The move has been taken to ensure the full implementation of existing legal provisions governing public procurement, said Aryal.

“The government has taken this initiative to strictly enforce existing legal provisions with the objectives of increasing the contribution of domestic production to the national economy, substituting rising imports, promoting domestic products, protecting local skills and entrepreneurship, and creating employment opportunities within the country,” he said.

» SEE PAGE 6

RSP appoints office-bearers

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
*Kathmandu, Aug. 21*

The ruling Rastriya Swatantra party (RSP) has approved its candidate’s selection framework for the upcoming local government elections.

Nearly a year before the local election has scheduled for the month of next may, the party initiated its preparation through its central committee meeting held on Friday.

The meeting held at the party central office decided to approve the ‘Candidate Selection Framework 2083’ prepared under the coordination of Bipin Kumar Acharya, including the suggestions received in the meeting.

The meeting also decided to seek names from central committee members and members of the House of Representatives who are interested in becoming members of the central candidate selection committee to be formed for the local elections.

Similarly, the RSP has decided to form an 11-member committee under the coordination of general secretary Acharya to prepare documents related to the ‘Right to Recall’.

According to a statement issued by general secretary Acharya, the meeting has made various decisions prioritizing preparations for local elections, strengthening the organization, expanding the party structure and preparing policy documents.

**Appointments completed**

The party has completed its nomination process through this meeting, appointing several leaders in several positions, including treasurer, joint general secretary and office-bearers.

Sunil Lamsal, Sudhan Gurung, Pratibha Rawal, Bhupdev Shah, Purushottam Suprabhat Yadav, Dr. Manohar Pradhan, Basumaya Tamang, Surendra Chaudhary and Dr. Bhakta Bahadur Rai have been nominated as central committee members.

» SEE PAGE 6

White-rumped vultures make a comeback

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
*Kathmandu, Aug. 21*

Nepal is witnessing a notable recovery of the critically endangered white-rumped vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*), with its population increasing by approximately 13 per cent annually since 2012, according to a new study published in Ibis.

The study found exceptionally high annual survival rates of around 95 per cent for adult and 96 per cent for immature white-rumped vultures. Researchers attribute this recovery mainly to the successful elimination of the veterinary drug diclofenac, which was responsible for the catastrophic decline of vultures across South Asia during the 1990s.

The research was conducted by a team of researchers including Bed Kumar Dhakal, Deputy Director General, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Krishna Prasad Bhusal, Asia Regional Co-chair, IUCN Vulture Specialist Group and Ankit Bilash Joshi, Vulture Conservation Program Manager, Bird Conservation Nepal.

Vulture populations in Nepal, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh declined by 20 to 50 per cent annually during the



crisis. Vultures died after feeding on carcasses of livestock treated with diclofenac, which causes severe kidney failure and death in the birds, said ornithologist Bhusal.

According to Bhusal, Nepal banned veterinary diclofenac in 2006 and subsequently implemented extensive awareness, monitoring and enforcement efforts involving government agencies, conservation partners, veterinarians, livestock owners, pharmaceuticals and

local communities. By 2012, diclofenac had ceased to be available in Nepal’s veterinary market, marking a major turning point in the country’s vulture conservation efforts.

Long-term monitoring has also demonstrated strong breeding performance. Between 2007 and 2025, 6,410 vulture nests were monitored, with an average nesting success of around 69 per cent. Satellite tracking and demographic analysis further indicate that

the population increase is primarily the result of high survival and successful reproduction within Nepal, rather than large-scale immigration from India, he said.

Nepal subsequently became home to South Asia’s first Vulture Safe Zone, bringing together safe veterinary practices, habitat protection, population monitoring, community participation and safe food sources. Initiatives such as Jatayu Restaurants, which provide vultures with safe livestock carcasses, have further strengthened conservation efforts, the research said.

Despite this encouraging recovery, conservationists expressed that country’s white-rumped vulture population remains far below its pre-1990s level. Emerging veterinary drugs also pose a continuing threat. Strict monitoring of NSAIDs available through veterinary pharmacies and scientific safety testing of new veterinary drugs will therefore be essential to prevent another crisis.

Surveys were conducted in four main regions of the country -- Eastern and Western Tarai (lowlands) and Western and Sudhuraschim (mid-hills). These regions hold most of country’s populations of Critically Endangered vultures.

» SEE PAGE 6



Hallmark Gold : Rs. 316,700/-  
Worked Gold : NA  
Silver : Rs. 4,985/-



NEPSE : 2,618.72  
Total Amount : 4,167,618,882.32

No. of Share : 10,022,765

## NEA FORMS SUB-COMMITTEE TO PREPARE PPA CRITERIA



BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 21

The Nepal Electricity Authority has moved ahead with the process to open a power purchase agreement (PPA).

The meeting of the Nepal Electricity Authority's (NEA) board of directors held on Thursday evening under the chairmanship of Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Biraj Bhakta Shrestha has formed a sub-committee to prepare the necessary criteria for opening a PPA.

According to the NEA, the sub-committee, formed under the coordination of the authority's board of directors member Amshu Kiran Shahi, will prepare the criteria within seven days and submit it to the board.

The sub-committee includes the Deputy Director General of the Department of Electricity Development and Senior Divisional Engineer Shaligram Bhandari from the Ministry of Energy, and expert Riway Sharma.

Director of the Business Section serves as the Member Secretary of the sub-committee. The decision has been taken in line with the provisions of the Finance Act, 2083 BS, concerning PPAs with power producers holding generation permits.

The sub-committee will submit its recommendations within seven days to the NEA Board after reviewing the existing provisions and relevant recommendations. The move is expected to advance the long-pending process of opening PPAs for eligible power projects.

# Minister Shrestha urges for El Niño readiness

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 21

Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Biraj Bhakta Shrestha has called for preparations to deal with the El Niño crisis. He said that all concerned agencies must be prepared to cope with the drought and dry conditions expected from the impact of an exceptionally strong El Niño forecast to enter Nepal in about eight weeks.

Addressing a national seminar on Super El Niño and climate risks organised by the Water and Energy Commission Secretariat and the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology on Friday, Minister Shrestha stressed the need to remain vigilant about the serious impact El Niño, expected to be felt from October to February, could have on Nepal's hydropower, irrigation and overall food security.

"There is a need for early warning and preparedness. Without this, farmers will suffer. But no one will remain unaffected. When farmers are unable to focus on their production, it directly affects food security. It also affects energy because most of our hydropower generation is based on run-of-river projects," he said.

"Water is already insufficient during the dry season. What will happen if water availability declines further due to its impact? On the other hand, what can we anticipate if some of our glacial lakes melt and cause another problem? Therefore, this is a serious issue," he said.

Minister Shrestha said that, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), there is more than a 90 per cent probability of a powerful El Niño occurring this year,



Energy Minister Biraj Bhakta Shrestha during a programme in Kathmandu.

with its effects expected from October to February. He said the phenomenon could affect the electricity system.

As the peak period of El Niño overlaps with Nepal's main electricity import season from November to April, both domestic hydropower generation and electricity imports from India could be affected simultaneously, he said.

Minister Shrestha also expressed concern that most irrigation systems are dependent on the monsoon and that could result in water shortages during the dry season and potentially causing a significant decline in the production of winter crops such as wheat and barley.

According to a press statement from Minister Shrestha's secretariat, he stressed the need to work on forecasting and preparedness. "Unlike sudden disasters, drought is a delayed disaster, so instead of announcing the damage after it has occurred, we should take advance planning and policy measures based on

pre-determined criteria," he said.

He stressed that the ministries of Energy and Agriculture should work together to combat this crisis by linking irrigation and agriculture. He said climate change was an issue that would affect future generations as well as the economy, energy sector and all other aspects of life, and urged everyone to take the sensitive issue seriously.

Minister Shrestha said that although he had been in office for only a short period, the Ministry of Energy had acted promptly to prepare for a potentially major disaster, while the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology had also made good preparations.

He called for collective efforts to address the El Niño crisis. He said the ministry had already prepared the Tarai-Madhes Drought Resilience Strategy in Jestha and had begun monitoring groundwater levels in 22 districts of the Tarai.

## FNCCI meets labour minister

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 21

The Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) delegation, led by President Anjan Shrestha, met with Minister for Youth, Labour and Employment Ramji Yadav and discussed timely amendments to labour laws, promotion of domestic employment, management of labour market demand and supply, and industrial relations.

The FNCCI stressed that amendments to labour laws should be pursued in line with the changing labour market, industrial requirements and the country's economic transformation. "Labour laws should be balanced and practical, encouraging investment and job creation, enhancing the competitiveness of industries, and ensuring workers' rights and social security," it said in a statement.

"Along with amending labour laws, we need to consider what we want Nepal's employment situation to look like over the next 10 years, while making the best possible use of the demographic dividend the country currently enjoys," Shrestha said.

In response, Minister Yadav said the ministry was currently working on the first phase of amendments to the Labour Act and that consultations with relevant stakeholders would begin once the ministry completed its preliminary work. He also urged the FNCCI to undertake the necessary studies and preparations in parallel, and said the federation and other stakeholders would soon be invited for discussions.

He added that the practical experience and institutional recommendations of the private sector should

be incorporated while amending the Labour Act 2017 and other labour-related laws. "Amendments to labour laws should not be pursued merely as legal reform, but as an economic reform linked to industrial investment, production, productivity, job creation and the long-term transformation of the labour market," he said.

Regarding the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Bill 2083, which is under consideration in Parliament, the FNCCI expressed its commitment to the objective of eliminating child labour. However, it said provisions relating to implementation, compliance by industries and businesses, investigation, and penalties should be made practical and enforceable.

The FNCCI also stressed the need to effectively implement the concept of one establishment, one official trade union to promote stability, dialogue and productivity in industrial relations.

Minister Yadav said the amendment of the Labour Act also required serious discussion on issues related to the platform economy. He said he had already instructed the committee to invite employers' and trade union representatives who participated in the 114th International Labour Conference to provide their suggestions.

Prabal Jung Pandey, chairperson of the FNCCI's Employer Council, said an effective mechanism was needed to test and certify the skills of Nepalis returning from foreign employment.

He also called for skills testing of workers already employed in the domestic labour market, followed by reskilling and capacity-building programmes in collaboration with industries.

## TANAHUN REGISTERS 670 NEW BUSINESS FIRMS IN LAST FY

R55  
Damauli, Aug. 21

A total of 670 new business firms and enterprises were registered in Tanahun district in the last fiscal year.

According to the Integrated Service Office, 243 enterprises and 327 business firms were registered in the fiscal year 2082/83 BS. The district witnessed a surge in new business firms and enterprises last year compared to the previous fiscal year. A total of 94 more new business firms and enterprises were registered in 2082/83 BS than in 2081/82 BS.

The newly registered businesses and enterprises are from the trading, production and service sectors, said Office Chief Ishwari Prasad Regmi.

Likewise, registration of 484 businesses was scrapped in the last fiscal. The Office has so far renewed 3,477 industries and business firms in the district.



problem was compounded by restrictions on selling goods produced inside the SEZ in the domestic market. As the business came under increasing financial pressure, the company had to cut around 75 per cent of its workforce. It eventually exited the SEZ in September 2025.

Ujjwal Kumar Kasaju, a central

member of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), said provisions such as these in the SEZ regulations had put private-sector investment at risk.

"When an industry shuts down, there should be a provision allowing the infrastructure to be transferred to another investor," he said.

# Apple prices set at Rs. 50–70 per kg

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT  
Humla, Aug. 21

Apple prices have been fixed in the Himalayan district of Humla for this year. The prices have been fixed on the eve of the apple ripening season and the time to send them to the market. Under the new price, it has been fixed from Rs. 50 to Rs. 70 per kg for fiscal year 2026/27.

According to Chudamani Panta, chief of the Agriculture Development Office, Humla, the price has been increased for this year as compared to last year. The price of Grade 'A' apples has been fixed at Rs. 70 per kilogram, Grade 'B' at Rs. 60 and Grade 'C' at Rs. 50.

The grading criteria include ripeness, juiciness, and weight. The initial phase of sales has begun. Panta suggested that farmers sell their apples at the fixed rates. Earlier, a decision was made to make a recommendation from an agricultural technician mandatory for supplying apples from Humla.

Apples will be allowed to be supplied only after the first week of Bhadra, following testing based on altitude, location, geography, and climate. For commercial purposes, the Agriculture Development Office and the National Agriculture Modernisation Programme will provide cartons required for the supply of apples, with the identity of the



Humla farmers' apple orchard.

district clearly marked as Humla.

According to data provided by the Agriculture Development Office,

apples have been planted on 2,820 hectares in Humla, but production is currently taking place on only 680

hectares. The office has set a target of producing 5,380 tonnes of apples this year.

PHOTO: TRN

## NT 4G service reaches Sinja Valley

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 21

Nepal Telecom's 4G service has been launched in Hat Sinja, Jumla, regarded as the origin of the Nepali and Khas languages. The 4G service came into operation on Friday in the Guthijyula Bazaar area of Kankasundari Rural Municipality.

According to Paras Pujara, chief of the Nepal Telecom Jumla office, the service was launched after a new tower was installed in the area. The new tower will provide 4G service to various areas of wards 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8 of Kankasundari Rural Municipality.

The service will cover Gauri, Okharbada, Hat Sinja, Simpati, Ludku, Guthijyula Bazaar, Baduwalwada, Barakudiwada, Sanjelwada, Jaach and Godinga, among other areas. The tower is currently being powered by solar batteries.

Although the tower was installed more than two months ago, the launch of the service was delayed because electricity from the national grid had not reached the area, Pujara said. As a connection to the national transmission line could not be established, Nepal Telecom has temporarily operated the tower using a solar power system.

The government has prioritised expanding telecommunications

services to remote and tourist areas. In line with this plan, 4G service will be brought into operation at the Badimalika Temple area of Bajura within this week. According to Nepal Telecom, it is also conducting a study to expand 4G service to the Everest Base Camp area.

The 4G services have already been expanded to several locations in high-altitude areas. In Dolpa, 4G service is available at Lhan in Tripurasundari Municipality-6 and Dunai in Thuli Bheri Municipality-1, both at an altitude of around 3,900 metres above sea level.

Similarly, 4G service has been launched at Olangchun Gola in Taplejung at an altitude of around 3,400 metres. The government also plans to expand telecommunications services to other remote areas and places with limited connectivity. Expanding telecommunications infrastructure has been prioritised with the aim of reducing the digital divide and providing quality communication services to all citizens.

The process of constructing around 1,600 new mobile towers and related sites is currently underway to expand the reach and quality of telecommunications services across the country. Nepal Telecom is preparing to invest more than Rs. 6 billion in the current fiscal year alone to expand services and improve quality in rural areas.

# Landslides wash away quake-hit settlements in Jajarkot

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT  
*Jajarkot, Aug. 21*

Settlements in Jajarkot that were weakened and cracked by the earthquake have been swept away by floods and landslides, leaving scores of families displaced and in distress.

Homes damaged by the earthquake that struck 34 months ago, with its epicentre at Ramidanda in Berekot Rural Municipality-1 of Jajarkot, have been displaced by floods and landslides triggered by torrential rainfall.

Following incessant rainfall on August 15, floods and landslides damaged houses and temporary structures in and around settlements in Bheri Municipality-2, leaving affected families in a desperate situation.

The earthquake had already cracked the steep terrain and caused sections of farmland to sink. With landslides occurring around the settlements, residents have been forced to abandon their homes and seek safer places.

Floods and landslides have destroyed houses, farmland and crops, forcing residents to spend their days and nights in fear. Families who depend on agriculture and daily wage labour for their livelihoods have been hit by another disaster before they could recover from the earthquake.

Residents who had continued living in earthquake-damaged houses after carrying out minor repairs have now been rendered homeless after landslides swept away their homes. They say the government's failure to expedite reconstruction after the earthquake has left them



Families in the Risang area left homeless after landslides swept away their houses and farmland.

PHOTO: TRN

living under the constant threat of earthquakes in winter and floods

and landslides during the monsoon. Large areas of agricultural land have

been badly damaged by landslides. Families have been forced to live in makeshift camps after heavy rainfall further destabilised the steep slopes already shaken by the earthquake.

A landslide in the Risang area of Bheri Municipality-2 has swept away more than a dozen houses, while around 200 houses are at risk. Displaced families are taking shelter in school buildings and under tarpaulin tents pitched in open spaces. With the entire settlement exposed to landslide risks, the village has become largely deserted.

Locals said delays in reconstruction have compounded the damage to already weakened houses and farmland. Families whose homes are at risk have abandoned their houses during the monsoon and moved to temporary camps, where they remain fearful of floods, landslides and snakebites.

The earthquake damaged more than 42,000 houses, either fully or partially, and claimed 101 lives. Although the government provided temporary shelters to families living under tarpaulins, reconstruction has not progressed as expected, resulting in further losses in settlements around Risang.

As their villages have become unsafe, children have been forced to seek shelter in nearby houses and educational institutions, including Tribhuvan Basic School in Risang and Bishnu Primary School in Darneta. Some displaced residents return home during the day but flee as soon as dark clouds gather overhead, fearing further landslides.

Man Bahadur Wali of Bheri

Municipality-2 has been left destitute after a landslide swept away his house and farmland. The family had been living in an earthquake-cracked house, but the landslide has now obliterated the site where their home once stood.

"The government and donors have provided relief, but how long can we survive on it? Our property has been swept away. The maize fields and paddy fields have been destroyed. We do not know where our family will live or how we will manage our daily meals," affected residents said.

Families whose houses have been swept away or are considered too dangerous to inhabit have been relocated to schools, where arrangements have been made for their food and accommodation.

Houses in most settlements in Risang of Bheri Municipality-2, Syala of Ward No. 3 and surrounding areas are also at risk.

The same landslide claimed the lives of Om Singh Khatri and his mother, Rati Khatri. Having lost their home and relatives in the disaster, affected families have been forced to live in temporary camps.

Locals have urged the government to conduct an immediate assessment of the damage and prioritise arrangements for safe shelter and rehabilitation.

Four people, including a mother and her son from the same family, have died in the landslide. Property worth tens of millions of rupees has also been destroyed. Local governments and concerned authorities are collecting details of the damage caused by the landslides.

## TEN QUINTALS OF CANNABIS SEIZED, TWO ARRESTED

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT  
*Sarlahi, Aug. 21*

Police have arrested two people after seizing more than 10 quintals of cannabis from separate locations in Sarlahi district.

The arrests were made in Lalbandi Municipality and Kaudena Rural Municipality following the seizure of a large quantity of cannabis.

Police arrested local residents 67-year-old Nar Bahadur Thing and 52-year-old Jesun Maya Thing after recovering 743.98 kilograms of cannabis from Dayani River in Lalbandi Municipality-14, in the northern Chure region of the district.

Acting on a tip-off that cannabis had been concealed at the house, a police team deployed from the Area Police Office, Lalbandi, and the Narcotics Control Bureau office in Bardibas recovered the cannabis hidden inside drums and sacks at the houses of Nar Bahadur and Jesun Maya. The team also destroyed cannabis seedlings cultivated on two kathas of land in a maize field in the area.

The police team reached the Dayani River area, one of the most remote areas of Sarlahi, on two tractors to seize the cannabis. As there is no road access to the area and flooding had made it impossible for vehicles to travel through the river, the police travelled by tractor to conduct the operation.

Police have repeatedly seized cannabis and destroyed cannabis plantations in the Narayan River. Due to the area's difficult terrain and limited police presence, local residents have reportedly been cultivating cannabis commercially in the hope of earning a substantial income.

# Three recover from Japanese encephalitis in Saptari, two die

BY BINAY KARNA  
*Saptari (Kalyanpur), Aug. 21*

Three people infected with Japanese encephalitis (JE) in Saptari have recovered after treatment, while two others have died.

According to the District Health Office, Saptari, five people have tested positive for the disease. They are Nitesh Yadav, 22, of Aurahi, Dakneshwari Municipality-6; Sushmita Rajak, 11, of Chakla, Mahadeva Rural Municipality-2; Kalawati Devi Sardar, 61, of Lachhanpatti, Dakneshwari Municipality-9; Shiv Kumar Ram, 14, of Nargha, Rajgadhi Rural Municipality-3; and Satyanarayan Yadav, 74, of Tilathi Koiladi Rural Municipality-1.

Satish Kumar Yadav, chief of the District Health Office, said Nitesh Yadav, Kalawati Devi Sardar and Sushmita Rajak recovered after treatment and were discharged from the hospital.

Shiv Kumar Ram, 14, of Rajgadhi Rural Municipality-3, died while undergoing treatment at Birat Teaching Hospital on August 6, said Ram Chandra Yadav, health coordinator of Rajgadhi Rural Municipality.

Similarly, 74-year-old Satyanarayan Yadav of Tilathi Koiladi-1 died while undergoing treatment at BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences in Dharan on August 6. District Health Office chief Satish Kumar Yadav confirmed the deaths of both patients during treatment.

### How infection spreads

Health Office Chief Satish Kumar Yadav said Japanese encephalitis can spread through mosquitoes that bite infected pigs and ducks and subsequently bite humans.

"Mosquitoes are common around pig and duck farms. When they bite pigs or ducks and then bite people, they can transmit the infection," he said.

He urged people to take precautions, including keeping pig and duck farms away from residential areas and maintaining proper sanitation around the farms. He also advised people to wear clothes that cover the entire body and sleep under mosquito nets at night.

According to Yadav, early symptoms of Japanese encephalitis include fever, headache and memory loss. He urged the public to remain alert and seek medical attention if such symptoms appear.

# Rising drug abuse puts Madhes youth at risk

BY AJAY SHAH  
*Mahottari, Aug. 21*

Bhaves, 35, of Jaleshwar was a brilliant student during his school years. After securing a distinction in Grade 12, he moved to Kathmandu to study engineering. However, a habit that began with smoking cigarettes in the company of friends gradually led him into drug addiction. After abandoning his studies and returning home, easy access to drugs in the border areas deepened his addiction.

Bhaves is currently undergoing treatment at a rehabilitation centre in Birgunj. He says he has changed significantly and expresses concern that many adolescents and young people in villages and communities are falling into the same trap.

Bhaves's story is representative of the growing drug problem in Madhes Province. Studies conducted by the Ministry of Home Affairs at various times show that the number of drug users in Nepal has been steadily increasing.

A national survey conducted in 2019 estimated that there could be more than 130,000 drug users across the country. The study noted that most users began taking drugs before the age of 20. Data show that after Sudurpashchim, Madhes Province has one of the highest rates of early drug use among adolescents.



According to a report published by the National Centre for AIDS and STD Control under the Ministry of Health and Population, the number of people who inject drugs in Nepal is estimated to be between 39,000 and 49,000. Of them, an estimated 6,000 to 8,000 are in Madhes Province. Health workers say the use of brown sugar, tramadol, diazepam and other pharmaceutical drugs has been increasing in border areas.

Madhes has become a major route for drug trafficking because of its open

border with India. According to the Madhes Province Police Office, 1,926 drug-related cases were registered and 2,701 people arrested over the past three fiscal years. During the same period, large quantities of cannabis, hashish, brown sugar, opium, heroin and pharmaceutical drugs were seized.

According to police, most people arrested in drug-related cases are users themselves, who later become involved in supply networks. Deputy Superintendent of Police

(DSP) Madhusudan Neupane, Spokesperson for the District Police Office, Dhanusha, said a significant number of people arrested for offences including theft are found to be drug users. Police have concluded that addiction beginning during adolescence increases the risk of young people being driven towards crime, particularly amid financial hardship.

A 2023 study conducted by the Nepal Public Health Research and Development Centre (PHRD) found that 15.5 per cent of adolescents in five districts consumed tobacco, alcohol or cannabis-related substances. The study highlighted a lack of awareness about the harmful effects of drugs and stressed the need for effective prevention programmes at school and community levels.

Madhes Province Minister for Home Affairs, Communications and Law Fakira Mahato said the provincial government had adopted a policy of providing police with the necessary resources to control drugs, expanding rehabilitation centres and conducting awareness campaigns among young people.

However, given the growing scale of the challenge, enforcement alone does not appear to be sufficient. Madhes can move towards containing the spreading drug crisis only by strengthening coordination among families, schools, communities, health institutions and security agencies and making rehabilitation-oriented programmes more effective.

# Marriage age must not be lowered from 20 years

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
*Kathmandu, Aug. 21*

Amid the ongoing debate to lower the minimum age of marriage from 20 years to 18 years, stakeholders have emphasised the effective implementation of the law to end child marriage rather than changing the existing legal system.

In Nepal, the current legal requirement for both the boy and the girl to get married is 20 years old. However, recently, there has been a debate about lowering the minimum age of marriage from 20 to 18.

This issue has come into focus after a study conducted by the Law Committee of the Parliament in various juvenile correctional homes and prisons and a task force formed by the government suggested setting the age of marriage at 18.

After extensive studies revealed health and other risks, the legal age limit of 20 years is now being gradually reduced. The Civil Code, which came into effect on 17 August, 2018 (1 Bhadra 2075 BS), stipulates that both the boy and the girl should be 20 years old to get married.

While there has been no study on what social problems have arisen from setting the age of marriage at 20, there has been a proposal to reduce the age of marriage on a whim.

Participants in the National Dialogue on Ending Child Marriage, held on two-day Child Rights Learning Conference organised by the Children as Zone of Peace (CZOP) in Kathmandu, expressed the view that the legal age of marriage should not be lowered.

National Assembly member Roshni Meche said that cooperation from all sectors is necessary to completely end child marriage, not just reduce it. She said that since the issue of child rights is related to various ministries, there should be effective coordination among the relevant government agencies.

Tarak Dhital, former executive director of the Central Child Welfare Committee, said that lowering the legal age of marriage could have a negative impact on the educational, mental, economic, and social lives of children.

He said that various studies have shown that marrying at an early age can have adverse effects on reproductive health. He stressed the need for collaboration between all three levels of government and the private sector for the effective implementation of the

Child rights activist Poudel has said that it is not appropriate to start the debate on lowering the age of marriage within a few years of the law being implemented.

Strategy to End Child Marriage, 2072 BS.

Chakra Bahadur Budha, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Women, Children, Gender and Sexual Minorities and Social Security, said that the government is making various efforts to end child marriage as it can take a serious form.

Stating that the ministry has been lobbying for the marriage age not to be lowered below 20 years, he said that schools, parents, and children should be made aware of the effects of early marriage.

Geeta Dahal, Deputy Secretary of the National Human Rights Commission, said that the role of the state, family, community and all concerned parties is important in preventing child marriage.

Tilottam Poudel, president of the CZOP and child rights activist said that marrying and giving birth at an early age increases the risk to maternal and child health and can also have an adverse impact on birth and death rates.

Child rights activist Poudel has said that it is not appropriate to start the debate on lowering the age of marriage within a few years of the law being implemented.

According to him, at the age of 18, most young people are still in the process of studying. They have neither completed sufficient education nor have a stable basis for employment and income generation.

Article 30 of the Constitution of Nepal stipulates that children should not be forced into child marriage. Similarly, Section 173 of the Criminal Code, 2074 BS, stipulates that marriage before the age of 20 is a punishable offense, he said.

House of Representatives member Gyanu Paudyal said that despite having a child-responsive budget, it has not been effectively audited. She said that if the budget is audited, the real achievements in the field of children can be identified.

The two-day Child Rights Learning conference concluded with the issuance of a 37-point declaration.

# Body of student, swept away by Basudev Khola, found

BY ANIL PARAJULI  
*Hetauda, Aug. 21*

The body of 11-year-old Sumitra Blon, who had gone missing after being swept away by the Basudev Khola at Bastipur in Hetauda Sub-Metropolitan City-19 of Makwanpur, was found on Friday, the fourth day after the incident.

With the recovery of her body, the death toll among the students swept away by the Basudev Khola has reached three.

Four students were swept away by the river on Tuesday while returning home from Nirmal Secondary School. The body of eight-year-old Roshani Syangtang, a Grade 2 student from Bastipur, Hetauda-19, was found the same day, about 500 metres downstream from the incident site, after becoming trapped in the roots of a tree.

The body of 12-year-old Binita Bholan, a Grade 7 student, was recovered from the confluence of the Basudev Khola on Wednesday. Her body was found about four kilometres from the incident site, according to Deputy Superintendent of Police Mahav Prasad Kafle, information officer at

the District Police Office, Makwanpur.

Meanwhile, 13-year-old Seema Bholan, a Grade 6 student, managed to swim to safety after being swept away by the strong current. She sustained a head injury and is receiving treatment at Hetauda Hospital, police said.

Nepal Police, the Nepali Army, the Armed Police Force, and local residents were mobilised to search for Sumitra.

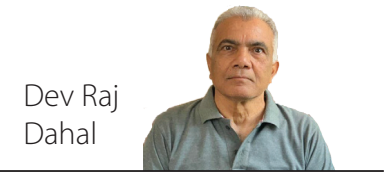
A search team from the Area Police Office, Newarpani, along with local residents, found Sumitra's body on Friday morning in the Rapti River at Lamitar in Manahari Rural Municipality-3, about five kilometres downstream from the incident site.

According to police, her body was found entangled in reeds and sand along the river.

The students were swept away when the water level suddenly rose as they were crossing a makeshift footbridge constructed along the route.

Following the recovery of Sumitra's body, a team comprising the Scene of Crime Officers (SOCO) and other personnel, led by Police Inspector Rajesh Kumar Bartaula from the District Police Office, Makwanpur, was deployed to the site to carry out the necessary legal procedures, police said.

# Intergenerational Learning Fosters Social Cohesion



Dev Raj Dahal

The key to political stability in Nepal is to plan for intergenerational learning among leaders, cadres, and ordinary people. It is a systemic effort to share values, experience, knowledge, information, and skills across various generations, and to build mutual trust, a shared conception of the will, and acknowledgement of each other's contributions, affirming their social nature. Their deep social, economic and political connections are pillars of social cohesion. The conflict between them polarises Nepali society and makes it weak to achieve national progress. Since the biggest agents of political socialisation are political parties and media, they must be able to maximise the zeal of youth and experience of the old rather than indulge in a stoking competition to subordinate one by the other.

While the senior generation shares their insight into history, culture and tradition, the new generation can share skills in the use of modern technology, information, communication and management practices to ease an adjustment to the life-world defined by intergenerational equality, power sharing and accountability. This helps to beat the limits imposed by circumstances of larger national context and connection and discover a rational balance of getting and giving across generations, thus fostering civic culture in Nepal. When their fate is linked to the health of the nation, they must cooperate to improve it. The disassembled life of multi-generations saps the synergy.

**Public morality**

Public morality and normative laws mediate the rival positions of each side and absolve from mutual exclusion. Proper reflection of humility and empathy can build a common cause in social cohesion and social change. Obviously,

multi-generational learning can reduce tension in social, economic and political life and make each generation accountable for its actions. It can thus incubate a healthy and cohesive community built on mutual deference, understanding, dependability, reciprocity and adaptability to internal and external stimuli without disrupting the fabric of the country's constitutional welfare state. Informed public discourse across generations can remove the internal tension between their ideas, values and actions, while the process of mutual learning can mark a shift from lopsided power politics to participatory democracy and a sense of belonging to its principles and institutions which help each to realise legitimate aspirations.

Through democratic socialisation and role occupation in the social, economic and political processes, Nepalis can collectively remove the conditions of structural injustice and formulate programmes of rational reforms and modernisation. Juergen Habermas rightly argues, "democratic constitutional state is, after all, best equipped to provide the framework as well as means for compensating the lack of intergenerational reciprocity by institutionalising procedures to reestablish the disrupted symmetry on the level of generalised norms," providing choice to the young and weakening the basis of paternalism by using the standard canons of decency and human rights. Certain steps can be deemed essential for the cultivation of social cohesion in Nepal through intergenerational learning and duties in sharing the burdens and benefits of cooperation in which various generations can calmly coexist in the same political space with fresh ideals:

**Golden rule of social cohesion:** Intergenerational learning is expected to set a golden rule of education for democracy and national identity. Inter and intra-generational interaction, beefed up by significant emotional investment, commitment and mutual understanding shape the structures, functions and quality of social cohesion in Nepal. Nepali society can easily harness norms

of social deference to elders and love for younger people. They spring from their socialisation in traditional culture and social practices, although the post-modernist surge of identity politics is crippling these values and turning politics into a game of zero-sum. This dynamic shows that habit-driven politics is less cultured and no longer governed by the ethics of a good, harmonious life. It is important to question the neoliberal moves of the atomization and individualisation tendency of the market and the post-modern essence of politics of difference fostered by political parties.

Both cause democratic deficits and rely on the foraging order, not cooperative life. The regulation of markets by classical economic theory of supply and demand is not neutral when it is governed less by fair competition for the allocation of resources. The first step for the schools of major political parties is to adapt to the civic course to transform unequal Nepalis into equal citizens and foster an inclusive character of parties, spur inner-party democracy and circulation of various age groups in the party committees to stabilise and institutionalise them. The second step Nepali leaders have to learn is about evolving a listening culture so that people do not frequently disconnect themselves from the mother parties for new ones. They would be able to internalize the norms, rules, rights, discipline and expectations and provide a basis for civic solidarity.

The third step is to internalise democracy in leaders' lives. Democracy can cut private ambition of leaders and help dismantle social barriers to communication and collective action. It can open gates for opportunity and dignity for each Nepali and expedite social modernisation by shifting primordial loyalties to the modern institutions of party, community, civil society, business and the state. Individuality and freedom to make rational choices on vital issues of their concerns can enable each to hold a "we" perspective and shape conduct across generations so that the potential of what they would like to be in the future exists without being able to

Intergenerational learning can help establish equal opportunity, remove the clashing worldview, shape good political and economic outcomes and bring social transformation.

exercise power over each other to capsize the order of reciprocity.

**Utilisation of youth bulge:** The bulge of liberal youth, motivated by the idea of progress, reflects higher values of generational turn, liberation and the zeitgeist. Nearly 46 per cent of the Nepali population is youth aged between 16 to 40 years. They are economically active and contribute about 28 per cent to GDP in terms of remittances. If Nepali youths are given proper education and skill training, they can drive productivity, economic expansion and innovation. They are, however, living in a precarious time—growing poverty, inequality, joblessness and lack of adequate opportunities for livelihoods and progress at home, thus risking becoming pressure cookers without strong safety valves. The current government's efforts to revive agriculture, industries, infrastructure development and employment-generating can productively mobilise them not just in political change but also in sustainable economic progress and evolving a civic culture.

**Spur intergenerational justice:** It presumes the notion of fairness across generations. The current generation has the responsibility to preserve and share national resources in an equitable manner, not impose the burden of debt, dependence, scarcity and ecological decline for the future generations of which they are not the cause. All generations are equal subjects of human rights and justice, and senior generations are entitled to social security

and social protection by the Nepali constitution. Common nationality and humanity oblige both to evolve a shared perspective of "we" Nepalis. Multi-generational leaders need to foster a concept of intergenerational justice in society long dominated by octogenarian leaders who have crossed average life spans. The reaction is its inversion and imbalance. The circulation of each generation in political power can make the edifice of social justice edifying and moderate social stratification in each time driven by agriculture, industry or information to make consensus-creating forces attuned to social cohesion.

**Beyond cost-benefit calculation:** Public goods such as culture, religion and norms of social cohesion outstrip the market calculation of profit and political calculation of power: Nepal's voluntary, charity, self-help and philanthropic sectors have usually helped the needy to control the ruffled emotions of the deprived and stitched them to social cohesion and rituals. But Nepali public policies must be grounded in public opinion and public interests to solve the heap of problems. Generational learning must aim to promote freedom, equality, justice, cooperation, peace and cognitive adaptation of Nepalis, not subjected to hierarchy, necessity and scarcity that create an unequal level playing field and uneven outcomes of politics. Democracy is a non-zero-sum game where the defeated, opposition and minorities also have space to rebound. Gen Z needs to imagine a vision that links all others, not keeping outside of it and breathing life from the whole.

**Regulation of digital platforms:** Nepali educated youths are thriving in a digital sphere. It beats the notion of fatalism but stokes emotional intimacy without truth and empathy. Sometimes, its fake feelings disrupt social trust and blunt scruples. Its online space can share personal stories, learn about political progress, connect with friends, purchase goods and services, communicate to a larger audience and build intimate networks beyond the law of the state. The direct cause of Gen Z revolt in Nepal was a ban on digital platforms.

It had set free a fit of emotion among the netizens and their electrified action dislodged the government. The AI is helping Nepali youths to escape from a life of emptiness and desolation and imagine a better world. But it has to bridge the gap between the life of netizens in the virtual world and citizens' demands for education, health, food, information, infrastructures, opportunity, etc.

**Awareness of democracy**

An awareness of democracy and modernity can help both to build links to a larger world and articulate their worthy initiatives beyond AI's spread of phoney ideas and calculating consciousness. Public dialogue in the open sphere and access to digital platforms can help Nepalis to fight for good governance and institutional integrity, especially in matters of the delivery of public goods, security, rule of law, equity and accountability of leadership. A democratic regime assumes responsibility to protect the weak and helpless Nepalis as a part of the ethics of socialisation. If the weaker ones are constrained by a lack of choice in learning, political life suffers from a guilty conscience.

The outcome of the parliamentary election in Nepal showed a terrible gap. It has entirely displaced the octogenarian leaders with youths but they lack experience in wise statecraft and statesmanship and have generated a generational tension, not democratic reciprocity as coauthors of the social contract. It only marks a social identity-forming character which needs to be replaced by an undivided, shared national identity and opportunity which is rationally acceptable. Here, intergenerational learning can help establish equal opportunity, remove the clashing worldview, shape good political and economic outcomes and bring social transformation without disruptive costs for social cohesion and rebuilding of this ancient nation.

(Former Reader at the Department of Political Science, TU, Dahal writes on political and social issues.)

## Stop Humiliating Students

PREM NARAYAN BHUSAL

A child may forget what a teacher taught in a particular class, but he may not forget how the teacher made him feel. This is especially true when a child is embarrassed in front of classmates. I recently came across the experience of a student who was somewhat overweight. One day, his teacher called him to the front of the class and asked him to speak about the importance of physical exercise. The student was surprised. He had not prepared for the topic and could not understand why he had been selected.

In the class, the teacher sometimes used this method to correct students. A student who came late might be asked to speak about punctuality. A student who had fought with a friend might be asked to explain the importance of friendship and the harmful effects of fighting. The teacher may have believed that this would teach students a lesson. But there is a difference between correcting a child and embarrassing a child.

The boy tried to speak about physical exercise. He said that physical activity was important for physical fitness and mental well-being. But he was nervous and could not develop his ideas. Finally, he admitted that exercise was not an area of particular interest to him. The teacher became angry and asked him to apologise. The frightened student did so. For the teacher, the matter may have ended there. For the student, it did not. After leaving the classroom, he felt sad and humiliated. He felt that he had been called to the front because of his body. He began to wonder whether he was being bullied. His confidence started to fall, and he no longer felt completely safe and respected in the classroom. This incident raises a question that schools need to take seriously: What does bullying look like to a child?

We usually think of bullying as hitting, pushing, threatening or calling someone names but bullying can also be quiet and indirect. Public humiliation, repeated embarrassment, body shaming, intimidation and deliberately making a child feel inferior can also cause deep emotional harm. An adult may think, "I was only trying to teach him a lesson." A child may hear, "There is something wrong with me."

Teachers have the responsibility to guide and discipline students but discipline should help children understand their mistakes, not make them ashamed of themselves. If a student is late, the teacher can discuss punctuality. If students fight, they can be helped to understand conflict and reconciliation. If a child avoids physical

activity, the teacher can encourage healthier habits. None of these lessons requires public humiliation. Nepal's Constitution recognises children's right to protection from physical, mental and other forms of torture. The Children Act, 2075, also provides protection against violence, degrading treatment, intimidation and behaviour that causes mental suffering. Therefore, child protection is not simply a matter of being kind to children. It is a matter of respecting their rights.

We have rightly spoken against physical punishment in schools. Now we must pay greater attention to emotional punishment as well. A child can be hurt without being touched. Words can hurt. Public shame can hurt. Constant criticism can hurt. Teachers may not always understand the impact of their behaviour. Regular training in child psychology, positive discipline, emotional well-being and child protection is therefore essential. Municipalities and rural municipalities should also help schools provide such training.

Every school should have clear rules about the treatment of children and a safe system for students to report their concerns. Children should know whom they can approach when they feel threatened, bullied or humiliated. Above all, children need adults who listen. When a student says, "I felt humiliated," we should not immediately tell him that he is too sensitive. We should first listen. Listening does not mean automatically blaming the teacher. It means taking the child's experience seriously and examining what happened fairly.

Schools must also respect differences among children. Some are interested in sports, while others prefer books, music, art or technology. Some are confident speakers, while others need time to express themselves. Children also differ in appearance, personality, ability and learning style. Education should not try to make every child the same. A school is not a factory producing identical products. Mistakes are also part of childhood. Children will forget things, argue with friends, make poor choices and sometimes fail to meet expectations. Trial and error is a natural part of learning.

Adults should guide children through these experiences rather than punish them through humiliation. A child who is afraid of a teacher may obey, but obedience alone does not mean learning. A frightened child may remain silent, but silence is not confidence. The success of a school should therefore be measured not only by examination results, awards and academic achievements. We should also ask whether children feel safe there.

## Short-form Content And Convenient Trap



Bipyum Chaulagain

Until three decades ago, there was no classification of journalism as traditional and new age or digital or print media. Today these distinctions are ever present in journalistic discussions and practice. The differences are not limited to forms of journalistic presentation like newspapers or TV broadcasts but also to the content. These distinctions have emerged largely in order to meet the needs of every generation but have also raised serious questions about the practice of journalism and what it constitutes.

Today, in a world where attention spans are declining at an unprecedented rate, journalism has had to transform itself in order to make itself relevant to the wider population. This phenomenon can be traced to the extension of media content to online platforms. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) launched online portals to disseminate news content in 1997 AD, and the Cable News Network (CNN) launched its website in 1995 AD. Since then, the digital landscape has evolved drastically, which has forced journalists and journalism to adapt and evolve alongside the digital changes. The invention of social media platforms in the 2010s and the introduction of short-form content,

popularised by TikTok, have been the two most significant disruptors in journalism.

**Mainstream changes**

Alongside these mainstream changes, journalism has also been democratised in the sense that today every citizen with a device has the access and the opportunity to comment and report on the happenings around them. With access, convenience also becomes sought after. As such, there has been a growing demand for journalistic content in the shortest period of time possible. However, the very demand runs contrary to some core principles of journalism.

Journalism attempts to provide fact-based, detailed, nuanced, and researched information on events happening in the world. And the demand of the present day to fit such information in seconds to make it attention-grabbing and relevant makes it difficult and almost impossible to fulfill those principles. A nuanced understanding behind any news event cannot be grasped within a span of seconds. Yet, there has been an active push from media companies towards these kinds of content. While it is true that such short-form content provides some degree of information, it remains debatable as to the efficiency of the content in portraying the whole essence of the content. The question remains about how much information can be diluted in order to make the content appealing to the newer generation and what is lost in the process.

The issue of misinformation runs through the very core of all short-form journalistic content.

There has to be an effort from the whole journalistic field to inform the general audience of the importance of engaging with long-form news content like newspapers and regular TV coverage. This is even more crucial in the case of investigative journalism, which deals with sensitive topics and consists of long, research-intensive work.

Furthermore, the issue of misinformation runs through the very core of all short-form journalistic content. This has been exacerbated with the popularity of AI and the ease of access to AI media generation. Short-form content that generates the most extreme emotions, like hate and anger, has been found to spread quickly. Misinformation relies on a similar principle. People spread any unverified news in order to gain attention to themselves or their social media pages. And with the ease of access and dissemination of information to the public, citizen journalism is not held down by any written code of ethics, unlike traditional formal journalism. This in itself is a double-edged sword. It allows for people to share what traditional media would hesitate to cover but also leaves room for doubt regarding the large amount of such content available on the internet.

**Role of media houses**

Here the role of established media houses appears central and crucial in helping to manage the spread of misinformation. They have the capital and the resources to dedicate their time and services towards fact checking and ensuring true information remains accessible to everyone. Not only that, media houses and corporations must ensure easy access to long-form pieces and limit paywalls on their websites as much as possible. Facilitating access to long-form journalistic content stands as one of the deterrents to the dangers of short-form content reliance in journalism.

Of course, there exist nuances as to how much media companies and platforms can do to negotiate the access-misinformation dichotomy, but it is also true that they are the ones who stand to lose the most in the long run. Yet the burden cannot solely rest on media organisations. Individuals must also calibrate their expectations of what they can get from free short-form news content on social media. The expectation that news should be instant, constant, accessible, and endless has created a marketplace where attention, rather than accuracy, is the primary currency. Reversing this convenience dichotomy requires a cultural shift as much as an institutional one. The audience must understand that in-depth knowledge in any topic requires attention and patience, which has become a form of payment in today's attention economy.

(Chaulagain is a freelance writer.)

50 YEARS AGO

**THE RISING NEPAL**

August 22, 1976

Soviet Union Launches Cosmos-358

Moscow, Aug. 21: The Soviet Union launched its second artificial satellite in two days yesterday, the Tass News Agency announced today, reports AFP.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

TRN welcomes articles, letters and comments from our valued readers and contributors.

Please email your contributions to: trnfeatures@gmail.com

trnfeatures@hotmail.com

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

READER'S MAIL

Investment In Heritage Conservation

This is about the news report, "Janakpur's historic ponds to get facelift," which appeared in the digital edition of this daily.

According to the report, the Dhannush Sagar, Ram Sagar, Bishahara and Ratna Sagar ponds, all of 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).

Giving a facelift to Jankapur's ponds matters because they are not just water bodies; they are woven into the fabric of the city's history, culture, ecology and urban identity. Not only does this preserve its rich cultural heritage associated with

TAILPIECE

Walking through Chinatown, a tourist is fascinated with all the Chinese restaurants, shops, signs and banners. He turns a corner and sees a building with the sign, "Hans Olafsen's Laundry."

"Hans Olafsen?," he muses. "How the heck does that fit in here?"

He walks into the shop and sees an old Chinese gentleman behind the counter. The tourist asks, "How did this place get a name like 'Hans Olafsen's Laundry?'"

The old man answers, "Is name of owner."

The tourist asks, "Well, who and where is the owner?"

"Me, is right here," replies the old man. "You? How did you ever get a name like Hans Olafsen?"

"Is simple," says the old man. "Many, many year ago when come to this country, was stand in line at Documentation Center. Man in front was big blonde Swede. Lady look at him and go, "What your name?" He say, "Hans Olafsen." Then she look at me and go, "What your name?" "I say, Sem Ting."

# US, South Korea end drill early

AP  
Seoul, Aug. 21

The U.S. and South Korean militaries wrapped up their annual drill six days earlier than initially scheduled on Friday in a conciliatory gesture toward North Korea, though the North said the step isn't enough to persuade it to return to talks. U.S. President Donald Trump had earlier abruptly ordered the Pentagon to "substantially reduce" the Ulchi Freedom Shield exercise just before it began Monday. Trump cited what he described as a good relationship with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korea's refusal to support him over the war in Iran.

South Korea's military said the Ulchi Freedom Shield, a command post exercise with the U.S., ended on Friday. This month's exercise was initially reportedly scheduled to be held in two phases for 11 days in simulation of North Korean attacks — the first part until Friday on defensive operations and the second part until Aug. 27 on counter-offensive operations. North Korea is extremely sensitive to the second phase.

South Korea and the U.S. had also planned to hold 14 joint field training exercises during the Ulchi Freedom Shield period. But they've agreed to halve them as well, according to South Korea's military. Kim Yo Jong, the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, brushed aside Trump's overture on Wednesday, saying that reducing the duration and size of the drills won't change their "provocative, aggressive nature."

The next day, North Korea fired about 10 short-range ballistic missiles toward the sea, apparently following through with its previous threat to respond to the U.S.-South Korean drills



U.S. Apache helicopters parked at Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek, South Korea.

PHOTO: AP

that it views as an invasion rehearsal.

The U.S. Pacific Command said the events didn't pose an immediate threat to U.S. territory or its allies. The command said the U.S. remains committed to the defense of the U.S. homeland and its allies in the region.

Kim Yo Jong's statement dampened hopes for an early resumption of talks between Trump and Kim Jong Un, whose earlier nuclear diplomacy collapsed in 2019. Kim Jong Un has used the diplomatic stalemate to increase his leverage by modernizing his nuclear and missile arsenals and aligning with Russia over its war against Ukraine. Kim Jong Un suggested last year that he won't return to talks unless the U.S. drops its demand for North Korea denuclearization as a precondition for diplomacy.

Kim Yo Jong still used relatively measured language, avoided typical harsh North Korean rhetoric and touched upon what she called an "excellent"

relationship between her brother and Trump. This suggests North Korea doesn't want to completely shut the door for future talks and may seek to win bigger U.S. concessions, such as international recognition as a nuclear state and broad sanctions relief.

With its supply of ammunition and troops to Russia, North Korea is likely receiving economic and military assistance in return, and its expanding ties with Russia provides it with leverage to ask for greater support from China, its biggest trading partner.

"After this strategic play has run its course, Kim may seek further economic and reputational benefits from Washington," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul. "But that will probably be after the U.S. mid-term elections when Trump is expected to be in a weaker domestic political position and in search of headline-grabbing foreign policies."

Kim Dong-yub, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, said that Kim Yo Jong's statement showed North Korea's position that a personal relationship between her brother and Trump "can't be a factor that moves current North Korean-U.S. relations." He said Kim Yo Jong likely aimed to head off speculation that Trump's move can restore diplomacy so as not to fully take the blame when it doesn't happen.

Kim Yo Jong 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."

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. Its downsizing has caused worries about joint U.S.-South Korean readiness.

# China, Indonesia hold security talks

AFP  
Jakarta, Aug. 21

China's foreign and defence ministers were in Jakarta Friday for talks with their Indonesian counterparts to seek greater political and military cooperation days after a joint navy drill Taiwan blasted as a "provocation".

The talks marked "an important milestone in our bilateral relations," Indonesia's foreign minister Sugiono, who goes by one name, said as he welcomed Chinese counterpart Wang Yi. "It serves as a forward-looking strategic platform, guiding our bilateral partnership across all five pillars -- political, economic, maritime, people-to-people, and security."

Indonesia maintains a neutral foreign policy, what it calls "free and active" -- walking a diplomatic tightrope between Beijing and Washington. Earlier this month, Jakarta and Beijing raised the ire of Taiwan with a joint navy drill off the democratic island's east coast.

The two countries said it was a "passing exercise" with an Indonesian frigate passing through on its return home from the Russian port city of Vladivostok. Taiwan called it a "military provocation" from the Chinese Communist Party.

Wang said Friday it was crucial for Beijing and Jakarta to "increase strategic communication, to deepen strategic coordination" as important representatives of the Global South. "Today's world is fluid and turbulent," he said in translated remarks provided by Indonesia's foreign ministry. "We are seeing unilateralism and hegemonism. They have dealt a heavy blow to this world as well as to the global development

# Charter plane crash kills 8

AP  
Alaska, Aug. 21

A charter aircraft carrying eight people crashed at a remote radar site in western Alaska on Thursday, killing all on board, the U.S. military said. The crash happened near Cape Newenham Long Range Radar Site Airport, approximately 450 miles (725 kilometers) west of Anchorage, Alaska.

"This is a devastating loss for our military family and the communities we serve," U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Robert Davis, commander of Alaskan Command, the Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Command Region and Eleventh Air Force, said in a statement.

The radar site is managed by the Pacific Air Forces Regional Support Centre. It's part of a network of remote radar sites that tracks aircraft operating in Alaska's airspace and along its borders, the statement from Alaskan Command said.

The statement did not provide details on the specific work the individuals were doing. It referred to the plane involved as a "civilian-contracted aircraft."

Davis described those on board as "dedicated professionals carrying out a vital mission in a demanding

environment. Our absolute priority right now is providing unwavering support to their families, friends and teammates during this devastating time. We are profoundly grateful for the swift and tireless response of our search and recovery professionals."

Clint Johnson, the National Transportation Safety Board's Alaska region chief, said earlier Thursday evening that two pilots and six passengers were on board.

The plane, a Cessna 441, had taken off from the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport and was headed to Cape Newenham, the Federal Aviation Administration said in a statement. The crash happened about 12:15 p.m. Thursday west of Cape Newenham.

U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska posted online that the flight was operated by Security Aviation, an airplane charter company based in Anchorage. An email was sent to the company Friday morning seeking comment. "I join Alaskans in offering condolences as we learn of the plane crash in Cape Newenham," Murkowski posted Thursday night.

"I've traveled extensively with Security Aviation throughout Alaska, and have met many of their experienced pilots. I appreciate the U.S. Coast Guard, NTSB, Alaska State Troopers, and the Rescue Coordination Center for responding to the site. Alaska is praying for those on board, their loved ones, and the team at Security Aviation."

# Khan's family says Pakistan defied court

AP  
Islamabad, Aug. 21

The family and opposition party of imprisoned former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday accused authorities of violating a Supreme Court order by taking him to a government hospital for a medical examination instead of a private hospital designated by the court.

Khan's sister Uzma Khan told a news conference she was present at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, a government-run hospital in Islamabad, when Khan was brought there overnight.

Khan's personal physician, Faisal Sultan, said he had been escorted to Shifa International Hospital, where he waited for Khan until early Friday. He said he was eventually told that Khan had returned to Adiala prison in the garrison city of Rawalpindi.

The accounts came hours after Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said Khan had been returned to prison after doctors examined him and found him medically fit.

Tarar said authorities took Khan to the public hospital because of security concerns involving supporters of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, or PTI, who had gathered outside Shifa



PHOTO: AP

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's sister Uzma Khan speaks as Khan's personal physician Faisal Sultan watches during a press conference in Islamabad, Pakistan, Friday.

International Hospital or were heading there. He said Khan was found to be in good health.

Dozens of journalists gathered outside the private hospital overnight after Khan's party said he was being taken there. Authorities deployed heavy security around the facility.

Khan's sister said that during a meeting with her, Khan complained that he had been kept in solitary confinement, which she said amounted to mental torture for him.

Suhail Afridi, a senior PTI leader, also accused the government of violating the order by taking Khan to the public hospital.

The Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered that Khan be examined at Shifa International Hospital by a medical board that included specialists and one of his personal physicians. On Thursday, government minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry wrote on X that the government would fully comply with the Supreme Court ruling.

# QUAKE DAMAGES BUILDINGS IN PERU

AGENCY  
Peru, Aug. 21

At least three people have been injured and buildings have been damaged after an earthquake struck Peru, local officials have said. The earthquake, which occurred near the small settlement of Aniso in the southern Ayacucho region on Thursday, had a magnitude of 6.7, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said.

Peru's defence minister Rafael Belaunde said 22 homes and six schools were damaged, local media report. Earthquakes are common in Peru, which sits along the meeting point of the Nazca and South American tectonic plates, and Thursday's was the latest strong seismic event to hit South America in recent months, following deadly quakes in Colombia and Venezuela.

Belaunde, who has been involved in co-ordinating the emergency response, said three people had been hurt but did not suffer serious injuries, according to Peruvian newspaper El Comercio. The earthquake struck at around 13:00 local time (18:00 GMT) at a depth of 62 miles (100km), around 19 miles (31km) north-west of Aniso, in a relatively remote part of the Andes mountain range, data from the USGS showed.

Damage was reported at 10 health-care facilities in the Ayacucho region and two were damaged in the neighbouring Cusco region, but services remained operational, Peru's National Institute of Civil Defence said.

# India court orders elephant safeguards

AFP  
New Delhi, Aug. 21

India's top court has ordered tough new steps to protect wild elephant herds as habitat loss and human-elephant conflict intensify, a move welcomed by campaigners on Friday.

The world's most populous nation is also home to the majority of Asian elephants, a species listed as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and whose habitat is increasingly being sliced up by highways and railways or clawed up by mines.

The Supreme Court has directed states to prevent the blockage of elephant corridors -- routes used by herds to move between rapidly shrinking habitats -- and ordered a survey to identify obstructions along those routes. That must include steps to end the use of any "coercive measure to divert the natural movement of the elephants", it read.

A ban on "hulla parties" -- groups deployed to drive elephants away using "fireballs" and burning stakes -- is required, it said. The court ruling, issued on Monday, said ministry guidelines were already in place to ensure "unobstructed" elephant corridors, but those routes have often been impeded.

Wildlife conservationist Prerna Singh Bindra, who led the pro bono public interest case, told AFP her petition had challenged state governments



FILE PHOTO: AFP

Elephants in Assam, India.

"supporting horrifically cruel practices". "It becomes a mob situation with thousands of people chasing the elephants using burning spears," she said. "That does nothing to resolve conflict; science shows it only exacerbates the conflict."

There are fewer than 50,000 Asian elephants in the wild, according to the World Wildlife Fund -- most in India, with others in Sri Lanka and Southeast

Asia. Elephants are protected by law, are named as India's "national heritage animal", and many followers of the elephant-headed Hindu deity Ganesh see the animals as sacred. But they face mounting pressure from habitat loss, fragmentation, and increasing human-elephant conflict.

Bindra, a former member of India's top governing body for wildlife conservation and policy, the National Board

for Wildlife, said the court's order was needed to ensure the survival of elephants in one of the most densely populated areas in the world. "We know where elephant corridors and habitats are -- and they are being destroyed and fragmented at an unprecedented pace," Bindra said. "The will to protect and preserve is markedly absent. We hope with this Supreme Court order, this survey must lead to action."

India's government elephant survey, released in October 2025, estimated 22,446 wild elephants nationwide -- but also warned the herds were found in a "mere fraction" of their historical range, occupying only 3.5 per cent of the area they once roamed. In a separate order, the top court on Tuesday ordered tighter welfare safeguards for India's more than 2,600 captive elephants, including ensuring medical records for each animal and regular health checks.

Captive elephants, once used commonly for logging, are now used for tourism, entertainment, and religious ceremonies. Animal rights campaign group PETA India said it welcomed measures to ease their suffering but maintained that "no elephant belongs in captivity".

"Whether captured from the wild or bred for a lifetime of confinement, these intelligent, social animals are denied their forest homes, separated from their mothers, stripped of autonomy, enslaved, and controlled through intimidation and weapons," PETA India director Poorva Joshipura told AFP.

Last year, Jakarta joined the BRICS bloc of emerging economies that includes Russia and China.

agenda." On the agenda for Friday was the inaugural meeting of what is being called a "China-Indonesia Comprehensive Strategic Dialogue Mechanism".

Among other things, it is meant to boost "the alignment of development strategies", Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian told reporters ahead of Wang's visit. Wang would later be joined by Chinese Defence Minister Dong Jun in talks with Indonesia on "political security and defence cooperation and international and regional situations", according to Beijing.

Last year, Jakarta joined the BRICS bloc of emerging economies that includes Russia and China. But President Prabowo Subianto has also signed a trade deal with US President Donald Trump and joined his so-called "Board of Peace". International relations researcher Pieter Pandie of the CSIS think tank told AFP that Jakarta still leaned "much more" towards Washington than Beijing.

"From the security and defence side of things, the Indonesia-China relationship is still very much less developed... compared with Indonesia's security cooperation with other Western and Asian partners," he said. "I wouldn't look too much into whether or not (Friday's meeting) signals some sort of 'realignment' for Indonesia towards Beijing," added Pandie.

## PRISM

## Former car salesman quietly becomes prince

Belgium: Belgium has a new prince after the 26-year-old former car salesman was recognized by the king's brother as his son. Clement Vandekerckhove reportedly joined the royal family in February in a low-key town hall ceremony, which was disclosed Wednesday. The ceremony was required for him to become a prince.

Prince Laurent, King Philippe's younger brother, last year publicly acknowledged Vandekerckhove, who was born during Laurent's seven-year relationship with Flemish former model turned singer Iris Vandekerckhove. The younger Vandekerckhove now has a royal title and a claim to an inheritance after Prince Laurent, 62. He is not included in the line of succession and will not receive a royal allowance.

## Man wins lottery during gas station pit stop

Michigan: A Michigan couple made a pit stop for gas on their way home from vacation and ended up winning a \$500,000 lottery prize.

The 64-year-old Genesee County man told Michigan Lottery officials he hadn't originally planned to buy any lottery tickets when he stopped at the Shell gas station on South Main Street in Standish.

"My wife and I were on our way home from vacation and stopped to get gas," he said. "When I was in line to cash out, the person ahead of me bought several scratch-off tickets, which inspired me to buy a few. I bought two Detroit Tigers tickets for myself and two Cash-word tickets for my wife." The couple played their tickets when they arrived home later that day.

Agencies

## TODAY IN HISTORY

- 1614– Fettmilch uprising: Jews are expelled from Frankfurt, Holy Roman Empire, following the plundering of the Judengasse.
- 1639– Madras (now Chennai), India, is founded by the British East India Company on a sliver of land bought from local Nayak rulers.
- 1642– Charles I raises his standard in Nottingham, which marks the beginning of the English Civil War.
- 1703– A janissary revolt forces the deposition of Ottoman sultan Mustafa II.
- 1717– Spanish troops land on Sardinia.
- 1770– James Cook names and lands on Possession Island, and claims the east coast of Australia for Britain as New South Wales.
- 1777– British forces abandon the Siege of Fort Stanwix after hearing rumors of Continental Army reinforcements.
- 1791– The Haitian slave revolution begins in Saint-Domingue, Haiti.
- 1798– French troops land at Kilcummin, County Mayo, Ireland to aid the rebellion.



Lawmakers participating in a meeting of the National Assembly at the Federal Parliament Building in Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, on Friday.

PHOTO: RSS

## BAGMATI CM THAPA TO SEEK VOTE OF CONFIDENCE ON MONDAY

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT  
Hetauda, Aug. 21

Bagmati Province Chief Minister Kiran Thapa Magar will seek a vote of confidence from the provincial assembly on Monday, following a revision to the date of the scheduled vote.

The provincial assembly meeting, which was earlier scheduled for Sunday, August 23, has now been rescheduled for Monday, August 24, according to the Provincial Assembly Secretariat.

According to Prakash Chapagain, Deputy Secretary (Law) and Spokesperson for the Provincial Assembly Secretariat, the 18th meeting of the eighth session of the provincial assembly will be held at 1:00 pm on Monday as stated in the revised notice issued on Friday.

At the meeting, Chief Minister Thapa Magar will table a motion seeking a vote of confidence in accordance with Article 168(4) of the Constitution of Nepal and Rule 143 of the Provincial Assembly Regulations, 2017.

Thapa Magar was appointed Chief Minister of Bagmati Province on Thursday (August 20). He assumed office with the support of the CPN-UML, Nepali Communist Party and Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) under a new political power-sharing arrangement.

On the same day, Thapa expanded his Cabinet, appointing six ministers from the coalition partners.

## Experts assess landslide risks in Jajarkot

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 21

A team led by Suresh Sunar, under-secretary at the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA), comprising geologists, meteorologists, engineers and disaster management experts, has reached the landslide-affected areas of Jajarkot with drones and other equipment.

The team, deployed following a decision of the Monsoon Response Command Post on August 16, held a meeting with concerned agencies at the district headquarters on August 20 before visiting Risang in Bheri Municipality-2.

Administrative officials are facilitating relief distribution, initial rehabilitation, restoration of blocked roads and temporary housing. Technical experts are primarily assessing whether the places where displaced families are currently taking shelter are safe. They will also study the causes of the landslides and assess future risks.

Landslide victims from Risang and surrounding areas, where a landslide and flood occurred on August 15, are staying at Tribhuvan Basic School in Risang, Bishnu Primary School in Darneta and the holding centre at Thaplechaaur.

With roads blocked, security personnel have been carrying relief supplies to the affected areas. They have been forced to depend on relief supplies after losing their homes and farmland in landslides and floods.

Nabina BK of Bheri Municipality-2 said her house was swept away by the landslide and her family was now living in a shelter with government assistance.



PHOTO: BASUDEV SHARMA/TRN

A team of officials meets landslide victims relying on government relief.

“Our house and farmland were swept away, and we were displaced with only the clothes we were wearing,” she said. “We are cooking and eating together at the shelter. Apart from clothes, rice and lentils, we have received little else.”

She said the family, which previously depended on farming and daily wage labour, was worried about how to survive after the monsoon.

“We have received temporary support, but we do not know where we will live after returning from the shelter,” she said, adding that the government and aid agencies should provide long-term support for housing and livelihoods.

Meanwhile, a team of geologists and other experts, accompanied by House of Representatives member Khadak Bahadur Budha, has begun assessing vulnerable settlements in Bheri Municipality-2 Risang and Ward No. 3 Syala.

Sunar said the expert team would conduct an on-site assessment of the damage and ground conditions and identify suitable locations for relocating affected families.

The team is studying landslide-affected areas of Bheri municipalities 1, 2, 3 and 4 and assessing the condition of land and the level of risk to households in vulnerable settlements.

Budha said affected families would be relocated after the expert team identifies safe locations. He said ensuring a safe place for landslide victims was the government’s immediate priority.

Four people were killed and 11 injured in the landslide around Risang. More than 200 households are at risk. Water supply, electricity and roads have also been disrupted, while the continued risk of rainfall and further landslides has left affected residents fearful.

## PRI pushes for evidence-based policy

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 21

The Policy Research Institute (PRI) under the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers has intensified its efforts to make Nepal’s public policymaking process more factual and evidence-based.

According to the Institute’s biweekly progress report submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers for the period from August 1 to 16, eight reports prepared by the Institute have been sent for expert and internal review.

The reports “Gender Issues and Domestic Violence in School Curriculum, Crimes and Punishments” and “Enhancing the Capacity of Teachers and Strengthening the Management System for Improving the Quality of School Education in Nepal: A Strategic Study” have been sent to the Institute’s publication review and recommendation committee for internal review. Meanwhile, the report “Study on Determining the Basis of Identification of Backward Classes” has been sent for expert review.

The reports “Basis of Identity of Economically Backwards Khas-Aryas, Review of National Housing Policy, 2068: Policy Guidance in the Context of Nepal’s Changing Socio-Economic Environment, Suggestions for Integration of Social Security System, Commitment to Foreign Direct Investment in Nepal and its Implementation,” and

“Reintegration of Returning Migrants to Nepal: Utilisation of Capital, Knowledge and Skills” have been taken up for both internal and expert review.

To address the information gap caused by frequent transfers and changes in responsibilities within the bureaucracy, and to preserve institutional memory, the Institute published two important reports online during the period including “Effectiveness of Public Expenditure Management” and “Culture of Knowledge Transfer in the Civil Service.”

In addition, three other reports are currently in the final stages of layout, with the aim of making policy debates more logical and evidence-based.

The Institute’s efforts to strengthen its institutional capacity are not limited to research and publication. They have also expanded to comprehensive policy dialogue and concrete plan formulation. During the reporting period, the Institute conducted a public policy dialogue with stakeholders to make the two-decade-old National Drug Control Policy 2063 compatible with current international human rights and health standards.

Similarly, the Institute’s Development Committee approved the annual budget allocation and annual programme and work plan for fiscal year 2083/84. The approval is expected to help integrate the Institute’s research activities, both financially and strategically, with the government’s annual work plan, rather than limiting them to academic exercises alone.

## Local govts to devise...

A presentation by Kathmandu Metropolitan City’s Environment Department said 1,792 ropanis of land had been acquired at Banchara Danda. Of the waste transported there from 21 local governments, Kathmandu accounts for 48.8 per cent, Lalitpur 10 per cent and Budhanilkantha five per cent.

The meeting proposed decentralising waste management, establishing recycling facilities within local

jurisdictions, producing compost and energy from biodegradable waste, and introducing resource recovery technology at Bancharadanda.

Infrastructure worth Rs. 1.04 billion has already been constructed at the landfill, with contracts worth a further Rs. 516.3 million underway.

The site directly affects 875 households across 539 hectares, while areas within three kilometres are indirectly affected.

## RSP appoints...

Purushottam Suprabhat Yadav has been appointed as a joint general secretary, Dr. Manohar Pradhan has been given the responsibility of treasurer and Basumaya Tamang has been given the responsibility of co-treasurer.

Likewise, Jagadish Kharel has been appointed as spokesperson and Dr. Namita Yadav and Surendra Chaudhary have been appointed as co-spokespersons.

Ganesh Parajuli, Shisir Khanal, Biraj Bhakta Shrestha, Purushottam Suprabhat Yadav, Dr. Manohar Pradhan, Kabindra Burlakoti, Jagadish Kharel, Lima Adhikari Acharya, Deepak Raj Bohara, Samiksha Baskota, Shiva Nepali, Indira

Rana Magar and Manish Jha have been nominated as party secretariat members.

Similarly, Pramod Neupane has been appointed as the head of the Organisation Department, Shisir Khanal as the head of the International Relations Department, Vijay Jaiyu as the head of the Public Service and Public Grievance Management Department, Dr. Toshima Karki as the head of the Public Health Department, Nisha Dangi as the head of the Infrastructure Department, and Lima Adhikari Acharya as the head of the Finance Department.

In addition, Kamal Subedi has been appointed as the deputy head of the Training Department.

## White-rumped vultures...

The research, “Nepal’s experience offers hope for other South Asian countries where vulture populations remain critically low. It demonstrates that coordinated, science-based

conservation can reverse even a catastrophic population decline -- but sustained vigilance and action will be essential to keep vultures flying safely in Nepal’s skies.”

## Preparations underway for PM's Muktinath visit

BY HARI KRISHNA SHARMA  
Mustang, (Muktinath), Aug. 21

Preparations have been stepped up following informal information that Prime Minister Balendra Shah is scheduled to visit the Muktinath Temple, a major pilgrimage site for both Hindus and Buddhists.

Prime Minister Shah, who left Kathmandu for Pokhara by road on Friday, is informally expected to reach Mustang on Saturday and visit the temple on Sunday morning, according to Dinesh Bhushal, chief administrative officer of the Muktinath Temple Management Committee.

“There is no official information about the Prime Minister’s visit. However, we have made preparations on our own. Everything is ready should he wish to perform a special puja,” Bhushal said.

The temple, situated at an altitude of 3,610 metres above sea level, is preparing arrangements for the Prime Minister’s darshan, religious rituals and bathing at the sacred site.

The temple management committee also plans to coordinate with

representatives of the Prime Minister’s Secretariat and brief him, as far as possible, on the work carried out by the temple so far.

A security source said Prime Minister Shah is expected to travel to Mustang via the Beni-Jomsom road, as he travelled from Kathmandu to Pokhara by road.

According to a security official, no other government engagements have been scheduled as the visit is considered a private trip. The District Administration Office, Mustang, also said it had received only informal information regarding the Prime Minister’s proposed programme in the district.

According to Hindu scriptures, Brahma is believed to have performed a yogic sacrifice at Muktinath in ancient times in pursuit of salvation. In Buddhist tradition, it is believed that a Buddhist scholar travelled from Tibet to view Mount Kailash and brought water from the sacred mountain to Muktinath, where it was stored and used to establish the 108 sacred water spouts.

Based on these religious beliefs, devotees from around the world believe that visiting Muktinath at least once and bathing in its 108 water spouts and sacred ponds leads to salvation.

## 'Make Bhrikuti Mandap well-organised public space'

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 21

Sita Badi, Minister for Women, Children, Gender and Sexual Minorities and Social Security, conducted an inspection of the Bhrikuti Mandap area on Friday morning. Minister Badi, along with a team from the secretariat and a team from the Social Welfare Council, inspected the Mandap.

During the monitoring, Minister Badi conducted an on-site inspection of various activities and structures being conducted at the Bhrikutimandap premises. She took first-hand information about the goat market, vegetable market, garden hall, various stalls and exhibition and commercial areas, open and green areas, parking, sanitation, public toilets, pedestrian areas and other activities being conducted at the premises.

Minister Badi had sought information from the concerned authorities and management regarding the utilisation of various structures and areas on the premises, the status of management, the nature of business and service operations, income, and the benefits being received by the state and citizens from it.

Minister Badi has directed the concerned bodies to proceed with the necessary studies to develop Bhrikuti Mandap, an important public asset located

in the centre of Kathmandu, into a well-organised, safe, clean, green, inclusive and citizen-friendly public centre that makes maximum use of the available area and infrastructure, without limiting it to its current form.

“The area of Bhrikuti Mandap is large, and the potential is also great. A comprehensive study is needed to look at the current state of all the activities and structures in operation and determine where improvements are needed and how it can be made more useful for the citizens,” said Minister Badi.

She has directed to conduct of a feasibility study by prioritising the existing structures and activities at Bhrikuti Mandap, including child, women, senior citizens, and disabled-friendly infrastructure, organised exhibition and programme venues, open and green areas, public libraries, social service structures, parking, sanitation, and waste management.

Minister Badi has said that the future course of action should be decided based on the current situation, needs and possibilities by reviewing the studies, plans and DPRs conducted in the past at Bhrikutimandap.

Emphasising the protection of public property along with its effective utilisation and transparent management, Minister Badi said, “It is not enough to simply protect government property; we must create an environment where citizens directly benefit from its proper utilisation.”

## Govt to...

In line with the request from the PMO, government offices will now be required to make arrangements to use Nepali handicraft products, wherever possible, for meetings, ceremonies, souvenirs, gifts and decorative items.

However, such goods must be procured in accordance with the Public Procurement Act, 2063, and other prevailing legal provisions, while ensuring standards relating to availability, quality, price and safety.

In addition, public bodies will be required to explicitly mention the priority to be given to domestic products when preparing tender documents.

Responding to the sustained demand from the private sector entrepreneurs and business associations, the government had implemented the Directives for the Use of Domestic Products in Public Institutions in 2014.

The policy couldn’t make any impact and the government came up with a new edition of the policy in 2024 but public institutions received it coldly.

While the public entities must purchase local goods, as far as they are available. However, such goods should be produced locally and should have obtained ‘Nepal Standard’ and the manufacturers should be registered with the government and.

## SC to study...

would be made on Monday after the court holiday. The dispute comes amid a continuing legal challenge over the legitimacy of the special general convention that elected Gagan Thapa-led leadership. The Supreme Court has already allowed a review of its earlier ruling in that case.

# Miss Menuka: Can't women stand for justice?

AVAYA SHRESTHA  
Kathmandu, Aug. 21

The popular play currently running at Shilpee Theatre in the capital, 'Miss Menuka: Ek Sambedansil Yaunkarmi', is a story of atrocities and hatred by the Pahade community against the Madhesi community. It is a Nepali adaptation of French author Jean-Paul Sartre's famous play 'The Respectful Prostitute.'

Translated from French into Nepali by Kalpana Ghimire Nurisson, the play was adapted to the Nepali context by Bhaskar Gautam. Sartre's original play is based on a real incident that occurred in 1931 in the southern state of Alabama, USA, widely known as the 'Scottsboro Boys' case. In the incident, an all-white court handed down harsh sentences to nine Black youths based on false rape allegations made by two white prostitutes. The themes raised in the play, such as racial discrimination, the abuse of power and authority, and the distortion of truth, remain equally relevant across the world and at any given time.

Renowned theatre actress Pabitra Khadka is the director of this play. In the Nepali adaptation, the main character is Menuka, a sex worker travelling by bus from Dharan to Kathmandu. During the journey, she witnesses wealthy youths from Kathmandu committing atrocities against two Madhesi youths. One of the Madhesi youths is shot dead. The culprit is a Member of Parliament's (MP) nephew. The MP's



son, Bibekjung Sharma, two police officers, and MP Jagannath Sharma pressure Menuka to sign a false document claiming that the two Madhesi youths raped her. Menuka's conscience tells her that the Madhesi youths are innocent. She even assures the victim, Arvind Paswan, that she will tell the truth to the police if necessary. However, influenced by the MP's persuasive talking, she ends up signing the forged document. The murderer is released from prison.

The play is magnificent, and the actors have all excelled in their performances. In particular, Sarita Giri in the role of Menuka, Prabhakar Sharma as the cunning MP Jagannath Sharma, and Ghimire Yubaraj as the wicked

youth Bibek Sharma deliver phenomenal performances. For an hour and a half, the play completely grips the collar of the audience.

The misuse of power and authority, a

## » DRAMA REVIEW

police force siding with power, and the discrimination against the Madhesi community evoke an anger in the audience strong enough to incite a movement.

However, the core question is: what is the play's perspective on a woman's conscience? It sends a message that women, even when they know the truth, are unable to make the right decision at a critical moment. Sartre's original play says the same thing. Are women really that weak?

# Yama Buddha Foundation sets up Rs.1M scholarship endowment fund

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT  
Morang, Aug. 21

Yama Buddha Foundation has established a scholarship endowment fund of Rs. 1 million at Sukuna Multiple Campus in Sundarharaicha, Morang, in memory of the late Anil Adhikari (Yama Buddha).

Foundation Chairman Ambikaprasad Adhikari and Treasurer Urmila Adhikari handed over a cheque for Rs. 1 million to Campus Management Committee Chairman Surendra Bahadur Thapa and Campus Chief Arjun Raj Adhikari at a ceremony.

A Yam Buddha Tribute programme was organised at Sukuna Multiple Campus on January 15.

Coordinator of the programme Yogesh Dahal said the endowment was established using funds collected through the programme, with additional contributions from family members.

Foundation Chairman Ambikaprasad Adhikari said the foundation would gradually increase the size of the endowment in the coming days.

Campus Management Committee Chairman Surendra Bahadur



Thapa and Campus Chief Arjun Raj Adhikari said the endowment established in the name of the renowned singer Yama Buddha would ensure that he is remembered for generations to come.

Yama Buddha, who helped establish hip-hop as a popular genre in Nepal, was born in Sundarharaicha, Morang, in 1987. He died in the United Kingdom on January 14, 2017, at the age of 29.

# US singer Jessica Lynn to perform in Nepal



BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 21

American singer-songwriter Jessica Lynn is set to visit Nepal as part of the US Embassy's Arts and Music Envoy Programme, where she will collaborate and perform live with Nepali musicians.

According to information shared by the US Embassy in Nepal on social media, Lynn's visit is part of an initiative aimed at promoting cross-cultural musical exchange between the United States and Nepal.

The programme will bring Lynn together with leading Nepali musicians, combining her signature country-rock sound with Nepal's

diverse musical traditions. It will feature collaborative performances and opportunities for artists from both countries to share their musical experiences.

The initiative also seeks to promote professional artistic exchange and live performance while supporting Nepal's growing creative economy. It will provide participating artists with opportunities to collaborate, develop professional connections and gain exposure to different musical practices.

The US Embassy said the programme aims to strengthen cultural and artistic ties between the United States and Nepal through music.

Lynn is known for songs including 'Truckin', 'Roadhouse', 'Not Your Woman', 'Must've Been The Whiskey', '16 Miles' and 'Something 'Bout You'.

# Yash's 'Toxic' sells 85,000 tickets in advance

AGENCIES  
Mumbai, Aug. 21

Action drama film 'Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups' has made a strong start in advance bookings across India, with nearly 85,000 tickets sold within hours of bookings opening.

According to industry tracker Sacnilk, the film has sold 84,915 tickets for its first day, generating a gross of INR 41 million from 4,886 shows.

Including blocked seats, the advance booking gross has reached INR 91.9 million.

Karnataka, Yash's home state, is leading the advance sales with INR 30.7 million.

Bengaluru alone has contributed INR 22.4 million from 549 shows.

The Kannada version has sold 59,603 tickets, earning INR 30.6 million, while the Hindi version has sold 25,312 tickets, generating INR 10.4 million).

The film has also seen strong demand in other Karnataka cities. Mysuru recorded 66 per cent occupancy, Tumakuru 83 per cent, Shivamogga 66 per cent and Hubballi 60 per cent.

Some premium screenings in Mumbai and Bengaluru have ticket prices of more than INR 2,000.

Tickets at Jio World Drive in Mumbai are reportedly priced at up to INR 2,250, while a premium show at Bengaluru's Forum Rex Walk costs about INR 2,181.

'Toxic' has also crossed one million interests on BookMyShow, becoming



only the second Yash film after 'KGF': Chapter 2' to reach the mark.

The film is also attracting audiences in the US, where advance bookings have crossed \$163,150, with 7,545 tickets sold across 260 locations.

Directed by Geetu Mohandas, 'Toxic' stars Yash, Kiara Advani, Nayanthara, Huma Qureshi, Tara Sutaria and Rukmini Vasanth. The film has received an 'A' certificate from India's Central Board of Film

Certification without any cuts.

'Toxic' is scheduled to release worldwide on August 26 in Kannada, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and English. It is Yash's first theatrical release since 'KGF: Chapter

Arjun Rampal marries Gabriella Demetriades

Bollywood actor Arjun Rampal has registered his marriage with his long-time partner Gabriella Demetriades in Goa.

According to PTI, the couple completed the formalities at the Sub-Registrar's Office in Mapusa, North Goa, in the presence of close friends.

The marriage was registered under Goa's Uniform Civil Code. The couple had received special permission to waive the 15-day waiting period required between the first and second signatures under local law.

Rampal and Demetriades arrived at the office at around 4pm and were dressed casually.

The couple have been together since 2018, following Rampal's separation from his former wife, Mehr Jesia. They welcomed their first son, Arik, in 2019, and their second son, Ariv, four years later.

Rampal announced his engagement to Gabriella in 2025, six years after they began dating.

Previously, Rampal said he did not feel the need to marry because he and Gabriella already considered themselves married. However, he later clarified that he was not against marriage.

## HOROSCOPE

tarot.com

**ARIES:** Your daily routines are ready for a practical reset. The Sun enters Virgo and your 6th House of Work, Health, Habits, and Daily Routines, turning your attention toward tasks, schedules, wellness, and the details that keep life moving.

**CANCER:** Your words, plans, and daily choices become sharper and more useful now. The Sun enters Virgo and your 3rd House of Communication, highlighting texts, errands, and daily logistics.

**LIBRA:** A quieter chapter helps you clear the noise before your next beginning. The Sun enters Virgo and your 12th House of Solitude and Maintenance, drawing attention to what happens behind the scenes.

**CAPRICORN:** The Sun enters Virgo, helping you organise long-term goals around travel, learning, beliefs, and future plans. Break ambitions into manageable steps, and classes, legal matters, publishing ideas, or journeys may feel achievable..

**TAURUS:** Creativity becomes more meaningful when you give it time, shape, and care. The Sun enters Virgo and your 5th House of Creativity, Romance, and Self-Expression, helping pleasure become more intentional.

**LEO:** Money, value, and confidence get a clearer direction. The Sun enters Virgo and your 2nd House of Money, Values, and Self-Worth, helping you bring practical attention to spending, income, comfort, and what your time is worth.

**SCORPIO:** Your authority grows wheYour friendships and plans become stronger when everyone knows their part. The Sun enters Virgo and your 11th House of Friends, Networks, and Future Plans, helping shared goals become more organized and useful.

**AQUARIUS:** What you share with others is about to get real. The Sun enters Virgo and your 8th House of Shared Resources, bringing practical attention to what you owe, share, or manage with others.

**GEMINI:** Home becomes the place where your mind can finally sort itself out. The Sun enters Virgo and your 4th House of Home, Family, and Emotional Roots, bringing attention to your space, private routines, and household conversations.

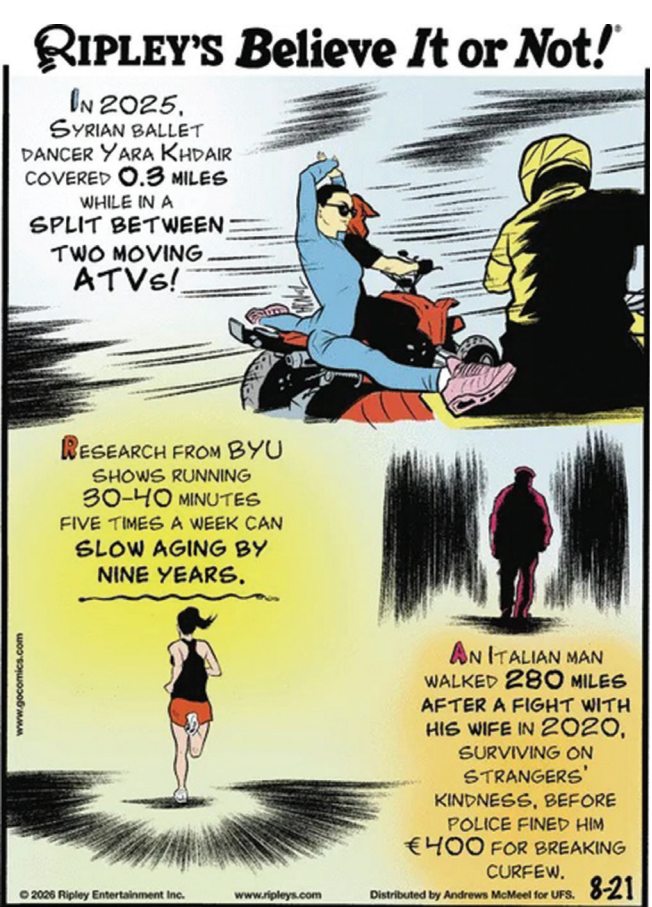
**VIRGO:** Your personal reset begins with small choices. The Sun enters Virgo, illuminating your identity, body, mood, and direction, encouraging thoughtful refinement, self-awareness, and growth without harsh judgement or unnecessary self-criticism.

**SAGITTARIUS:** Your ambitions are ready to move forward. The Sun enters Virgo and your 10th House of Career and Public Life, turning your attention toward goals people can recognize, measure, and trust.

**PISCES:** Your closest relationships become steadier as the Sun enters Virgo and your 7th House of Partnership. Clear expectations help partners, collaborators, or close friends build supportive, practical, balanced, and lasting connections together.

## CARTOON

gocomics.com



# Barcelona enter new era as Flick targets La Liga hat-trick

AFP  
Barcelona, Aug. 21

Hansi Flick's second season at Barcelona built on the success of his first, with the German coach guiding the Catalan giants to a second straight La Liga title.

His third campaign, however, brings significant structural change to the team as Barcelona look to maintain their domestic dominance and handle the threat of Jose Mourinho's Real Madrid, while aiming to end their wait for Champions League glory.

Barca begin their campaign at Elche on Sunday in the Spanish top flight, a day after Mourinho's Los Blancos visit Espanyol in the Catalan capital.

"We have an incredible team, with a lot of quality," Flick told Barca's fans on Wednesday ahead of their final pre-season friendly against Al Ahly. "We are ready to work hard day after day and to fight for all the titles."

The arrival of Rodri from Manchester City is Barca's most significant addition, while the departures of veteran striker Robert Lewandowski and Ferran Torres leave Flick with a reshaped attacking unit.

Barcelona have been prolific going forward but vulnerable at the back since Flick arrived in 2024, and the club hopes the arrival of World Cup winner Rodri can help address the latter.

The Spain captain was a market opportunity Barcelona were reluctant to pass up, particularly with Real Madrid also linked with the 30-year-old

holding midfielder before his move to Catalonia.

Rodri brings not only control and defensive protection but also the experience of winning the biggest trophies in club football, qualities Barcelona hope can help them claim a first European crown since 2015.

"I'm here to compete for everything, for big things like the Champions League," said Rodri after his presentation.

Achieving a third consecutive Liga title is a challenge in itself, particularly with Real Madrid strengthening heavily in the transfer market and turning back to Portuguese veteran Mourinho.

Barcelona have established a domestic advantage over their great rivals in recent seasons, but Mourinho's arrival adds fuel to the fire of a rivalry he helped turn particularly bitter during his first spell in Madrid, between 2010-2013.

For Flick, the wily Mourinho represents a different kind of challenge.

The German has generally had few problems with opposing coaches during his time in Spain, but Mourinho is an expert at piling pressure on his rivals.

**Striker vacancy**

Former Germany and Bayern boss Flick will also have to rebuild an attack that has been one of the team's greatest strengths.

New arrivals Anthony Gordon and Karim Adeyemi appear well suited to the German's high-intensity approach, with both offering the pace and work rate required to lead Barcelona's aggressive pressing game.



FILE PHOTO: AP  
Barcelona's Lamine Yamal, left, vies for the ball with Al Ahly's Karim Fouad during the Joan Gamper trophy soccer match against Al Ahly at the Camp Nou Stadium in Barcelona, Spain, Wednesday.

However, the key question is whether sporting director Deco can land a

centre-forward before the transfer window closes.

## NEPALI BBL TEAM TO COMPETE IN ASIA PRE-QUALIFIERS

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 21

The Nepal Basketball Association (NeBA) has announced its national men's squad for the upcoming FIBA Asia Pre-Qualifiers, scheduled to take place from 24-29 August in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The Nepali contingent will depart for the UAE on Monday. Veteran guard Sadish Pradhan will captain the side, with Binod Maharjan named vice-captain.

The 12-member squad comprises Shreyas Bahadur Shah, Asim Shrestha, Saurav Shrestha, Nischal Maharjan, Sudip Paudel Chhetri, Ajay Kushwaha, Kamal Thapa, Pemba Sherpa, Simon Gurung, and Pranay Man Shrestha.

A delegation of officials will accompany the players, led by NeBA President Bhim Singh Gurung alongside Rajen Shrestha and Saroja Koirala Shrestha. Sushil Gurung serves as head coach, supported by assistant coach Ashish Neupane and team manager Narendra Thapa.

The backroom staff is completed by physiotherapist Abhipsa Singh Koirala, medical officer Dr Rupesh KC, and media officer Siddhartha Khadka.

National Sports Council Member-Secretary Ramcharitra Mehta bid the team farewell during an official farewell ceremony on Friday, offering his best wishes for the tournament.

# Nepali team to join SAOC Meeting

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 21

A joint delegation from the Nepal Olympic Committee (NOC) and the National Sports Council (NSC) left for Islamabad on Friday to participate in the executive committee meeting of the South Asia Olympic Council (SAOC).

The two-day meeting, scheduled for 23 and 24 August, will focus on preparations for the 14th South Asian Games (SAG), which are set to be hosted by



Pakistan in 2027.

The Nepali delegation comprises NOC President Jeevan Ram Shrestha, NOC Vice-President Chaturanand Rajvaidya, and NSC Member Sikka Suwal

Shrestha. While Shrestha and Rajvaidya will represent the NOC, Suwal Shrestha will represent the national sports governing body.

According to the NOC, the

delegates will deliberate on Pakistan's operational readiness, venue management, and other core administrative agendas related to the regional event.

South Asia's largest multi-sport event has not been held since Nepal hosted the 13th edition across Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Janakpur in 2019. The inaugural edition of the Games was held in Nepal in 1984.

NOC Acting President Ashok Ratna Bajracharya and General Secretary Rajiv Shrestha saw off the delegation at Tribhuvan International Airport.

# Nepal 'A' lose Top End Series opener

BY A STAFF REPORTER  
Kathmandu, Aug. 21

Nepal 'A' made a disappointing start to their Northern Territory (NT) Top End T20 Series campaign, falling to an eight-wicket defeat against hosts NT Strike in Darwin on Friday.

Invited to bat first at the Marrara Cricket Ground, Nepal 'A' managed only 122 for eight in their allotted 20 overs.

In reply, NT Strike cruised to victory in 15 overs, reaching 123 for two. Douwtjie Hoogenboezem scored an unbeaten 50 off 37 balls, while Jordan Silk contributed a brisk 40 not out off 28 balls to guide the hosts home.

After losing openers Jaga Koduru

(8) and captain D'Arcy Short (23), Hoogenboezem and Silk shared an unbroken 84-run partnership to comfortably secure the win. Pawan Sarraf was the sole wicket-taker for Nepal 'A', finishing with impressive figures of 2-13 off his four overs.

Earlier, Nepal 'A' endured a wretched outing with the bat. Opener Kushal Bhurtel fell for a duck in the opening over, while captain Anil Sah (13) and Trit Raj Das (10) were dismissed in quick succession in the fourth and fifth overs, leaving the visitors struggling at 30 for three.

Promoted to number three, Sarraf top-scored with 41 off 49 balls. The rest of the batting order struggled to build partnerships, with Kushal Malla (9), Lokesh Bam (16), Rashid Khan (10), and Narayan Joshi (15) all falling cheaply.

Hamish Martin led the home side's bowling attack with three wickets. Nepal 'A' will look to rebound in their second fixture against Bangladesh 'A' on 22 August.

Likewise, a fine century from Dev Khanal powered Nepal to a five-wicket victory over Karnataka State in their practice match in Bengaluru, securing their second consecutive win of the tour.

Chasing a target of 243 runs, Nepal reached 244 for five in 44.3 overs. Khanal anchored the chase with a match-winning 100 runs.

Earlier, opting to bat first, Karnataka posted 242 for eight in their stipulated 50 overs. Pacer Karan KC and captain Sandeep Lamichhane were the pick of the bowlers for Nepal, taking three wickets apiece.

# Inter set for Serie A title defence as Milan get Amorim reboot

AFP  
Rome, Aug. 21

Inter Milan begin their Serie A title defence on Saturday as clear favourites to retain the Scudetto, but the reigning champions have undergone significant changes since completing a league and Italian Cup double in May.

Cristian Chivu is entering his second season in charge and has reshaped a squad he inherited from Simone Inzaghi little over a year ago.

The Romanian has focused on rejuvenating an ageing team while adding a distinctly Premier League flavour during the summer transfer window.

Spanish goalkeeper Josep Martinez is expected to take over from the departed Yann Sommer as part of a refreshed rearguard that was showing signs of wear.

Veterans Francesco Acerbi, Matteo Darmian and Stefan de Vrij have all moved on, while Died Spence, who impressed for England at the 2026 World Cup, has arrived alongside experienced Manchester City centre-back John Stones.

Manuel Akanji, another former City defender, has completed a permanent switch after joining Inter on loan last term, but Denzel Dumfries is now at Real Madrid.

Inter are also pursuing Liverpool midfielder Curtis Jones as they look to maintain a squad capable of competing on multiple fronts.

With captain Lautaro Martinez and France forward Marcus Thuram continuing to lead the attack, supported by emerging talents Pio Esposito and Ange-Yoan Bonny, Inter are targeting a third league title in four seasons.

They are also eager to make amends for a disappointing European campaign



FILE PHOTO: AP  
Inter Milan players celebrate with the Italian Serie A soccer championship trophy on May 17, 2026.

that ended in the knockout play-off round against Norwegian side Bodo/Glimt.

"The objective is always to win, always to dominate the league," midfielder Hakan Calhanoglu recently told beIN Sports. "In five seasons I've won eight trophies and played in two Champions League finals, and we'll keep trying to win titles."

**Amorim tasked with Milan reboot**

The race to unseat Inter appears wide open, with city rivals AC Milan turning to ex-Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim in a bid to revive their fortunes after finishing fifth last season.

They splashed out a club record 74 million euros (\$86 million) to sign Portugal forward Goncalo Ramos from Paris Saint-Germain, striving to bolster the attacking options for a team hurt by a lack of goals.

"I know exactly what this club means: history, prestige and an extraordinary fanbase around the world," Amorim said after his appointment in June.

"It is a challenge I embrace with pride and enthusiasm, fully aware of what these colours represent. I can't wait to get started and to experience every day the passion that drives AC Milan."

Anything less than a return to the Champions League would represent another setback for the seven-time European champions after a series of frustrating seasons that have tested supporters' patience.

Napoli finished second last season but head into the new campaign under new management after Antonio Conte's exit.

Conte's successor, Massimiliano Allegri, boasts six Serie A titles with Juventus and Milan. He has questions to answer though after a disappointing spell at Milan ended with the club missing out on Champions League qualification on the final day.

Napoli also had a quiet transfer window. Romelu Lukaku left for Turkey after an injury-ravaged past year, leaving Rasmus Hojlund as the main man up front for the 2024-25 Italian champions.

Juventus also view a top-four finish as

the minimum requirement. The Turin giants ended last season sixth, 18 points behind Inter, and continue to grapple with financial pressures despite the backing of the Agnelli family.

The club has made sweeping changes and parted ways with Serbian striker Dusan Vlahovic, previously Serie A's highest-paid player. Juventus have nevertheless invested heavily, spending more than 40 million euros to secure France forward Randal Kolo Muani.

Should Milan and Juventus fail to meet expectations again, Roma and ambitious Como could be well placed to capitalise.

Roma finished third under Gian Piero Gasperini, while Como, led by former Spain midfielder Cesc Fabregas, are preparing for a remarkable Champions League debut just seven years after playing in Italy's fourth tier.

Elsewhere, Fiorentina have spent more than 120 million euros to mark the club's centenary and erase memories of a disastrous 2025-26 campaign that ended with a 15th-place finish.

# Ronaldinho returns in search of 'beautiful' 300<sup>th</sup> goal

AFP  
Ravenna, Aug. 21

Former Brazil star Ronaldinho, who retired from the game in 2015, said on Thursday that he was making a comeback 11 years later with Italian third-division side Ravenna to try and score "a 300th goal".

The 46-year-old, who won the World Cup in 2002 and the Ballon d'Or in 2005, ended a glittering career when he played his last official match in September 2015 with Brazilian club Fluminense.

"I'm very happy to be here with friends, we have a team that can do something good," said the former Paris Saint-Germain, Barcelona and AC Milan playmaker on the sidelines of his presentation on a beach in Ravenna.

"Will you see me play? I don't know, only the coach knows that. Coming back to Italy is wonderful, I'm here to help my teammates win.

"As you can see, I'm in shape, I feel good... If I could score my 300th goal, that would be even more beautiful."

Ronaldinho's comeback was announced in June on the sidelines of the World Cup in Miami by Ignazio Cipriani, an Italian-American businessman and owner of the club since 2024.

"His objective is romantic, to try to score his last goal," said Cipriani on Thursday.

"His involvement is not a token gesture or a marketing stunt to get people talking about us."

Cipriani added that Ronaldinho, who scored 33 goals in his 97 appearances for Brazil, would become a shareholder in the club and would not play



against Reggina on Monday in the Serie C season opener.

Ravenna finished third in Group B of last season's third-division championship and are aiming for a return to Serie B, where they haven't played since 2008.