

THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL

GOVT, NATIONALITY CAMPAIGN REACH 14-POINT DEAL

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 22

The government of Nepal and the ‘Rashtra, Rastriyata, Dharma, Sanskriti ra Nagarik Bachau Maha Abhiyan, Nepal’ have reached a 14-point agreement. The 14-point agreement between the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers and the Maha Abhiyan was reached following talks held on Saturday.

Following the agreement, the Maha Abhiyan has decided to end all its sit-ins and protest programmes that it had been organising for some time, with effect from Saturday. According to the Prime Minister’s Secretariat, the agreement was signed following intensive discussions between representatives of the Maha Abhiyan and the government-formed negotiation team.

On behalf of the government, Liladhar Subedi, coordinator of the negotiation team and joint secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, signed the agreement.

Bishnu Bohora Chhetri, coordinator of the Maha Abhiyan’s negotiation committee, signed it on behalf of the campaign.

HEALTH MINISTER CONCERNED OVER FORGED INSURANCE CLAIMS

BY SACHIN POKHAREL
Biratnagar, Aug. 22

Minister for Health and Food Safety, Nisha Mehta, expressed concern that unnatural, duplicate, and double claims observed under the health insurance programme have raised serious questions about the insurance system.

Minister Mehta said that during the study and monitoring, it was found that even men had their uterus removed in the health insurance documents. She informed that details of an MRI being done five times a week for the same person were also found.

At a special meeting and discussion programme organized in Rangeli on Saturday, Minister Mehta clarified that health insurance had not been closed, and that insurance services had been stopped only in private hospitals.

She added that it is necessary to make the claim system more systematic so that the services that real patients should receive in the name of health insurance are not affected and that state resources are not misused.

Minister Mehta said that in the past, there was a problem in implementing the health insurance programme when about 18 billion rupees were left to be paid to hospitals for health.

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Minister Yadav inspects Hetauda Textile Industry

BY RAMMANI DAHAL
Makwanpur, Aug. 22

Industry, Commerce and Supplies Minister Gauri Kumari Yadav has inspected the Hetauda Textile Industry Limited, which has begun initial trial production. The state-owned industry, which had remained closed for a long time, began initial trial production a couple of weeks ago.

Following her inspection of the industry on Saturday, Minister Yadav said some of the looms at the industry had been brought into operation. She said the industry was currently undergoing maintenance and trial production and that the government planned to operate it at full capacity at a low cost soon. According to her, the government had adopted a policy of reopening closed industries in line with its policy of promoting domestic investment and production.

After the government assigned the Nepali Army responsibility for the maintenance and production



BEATING THE HEAT: Children swim in the Katuwalkhola stream at Ghorahi Sub-Metropolitan City-18 in Dang district, to relieve themselves from the scorching heat on Saturday.

Legitimacy dispute dents NC unity bid

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 22

The Nepali Congress is facing a serious internal test, with party President Gagan Kumar Thapa’s leadership pushing ahead with the party’s 15th General Convention while the faction led by former president Sher Bahadur Deuba continues to challenge the legitimacy of the process.

The dispute, which began with the Special General Convention, has now moved beyond a contest over leadership. It has become a wider debate over the future direction of Nepal’s oldest democratic party, with questions of party unity, internal democracy, the authority to convene the general convention and the role of the judiciary all converging.

The Election Commission and Supreme Court have recognised the leadership that emerged from the Special General Convention.

However, the Supreme Court has since agreed to review its earlier decision following petitions filed by Deuba and former acting president Purna Bahadur Khadka, keeping the leadership dispute alive.

Deuba, who returned to Nepal after five months’ stay abroad for treatment, has brought confidence to his faction, seeking legitimization of previous central committee.

However, the Nepali Congress Central Working Committee has fixed the 15th General Convention for October 2-5 and is moving ahead with preparations. They argue that the special general convention reflected the demand

for change from a majority of party representatives and that the party cannot return to its previous leadership arrangement.

Nepali Congress spokesperson Devraj Chalise said the current rift was largely the result of some leaders refusing to accept the demand for change from party cadres and the public.

“The current rift is just the making of some leaders who cannot bear with

Chalise maintained that more than 50 per cent of party representatives had supported the demand for the Special General Convention and that both the Election Commission and Supreme Court had already legitimised the process.

“Even after all this, instead of uniting the party, some people within the party are trying to cause inter-party rift,” he said.



» TRN SPECIAL

the fact that the cadres and public want change within the latest democratic party of Nepal,” said Chalise.

He said the political environment following the Gen Z movement had forced the Nepali Congress to reconsider its organisation and relationship with voters.

“After the Gen Z movement, Nepali Congress saw that it needed to have a reform within itself to be closer to the public and understand public’s mandate,” he said.

He said the party should now focus on the convention already announced.

“Party convention has already been announced and it will go on according to the schedule. The only way forward is to understand that the convention will happen and the decision made from that convention will be the way forward for the party,” said Chalise.

The establishment faction has sought to portray the coming convention as an opportunity for organisational renewal rather than merely another leadership contest.

The Deuba faction, however, remains firmly opposed to the special general

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convention and argues that it was conducted outside the authority provided by the party statute.

Min Bahadur Bishwakarma, a leader of the Deuba faction, said the dispute had to be viewed against the political turmoil surrounding the Gen Z movement.

“The Gen Z movement saw much infrastructure destruction. The party offices of political parties were burned down. So many casualties took place. And our leader Sher Bahadur Deuba was attacked and injured,” said Bishwakarma.

He said the unrest had put the constitution and national sovereignty under serious pressure. “The constitution and the sovereignty of the country were put in danger and it still is in danger. So many institutions have been damaged,” he said.

Bishwakarma argued that, instead of bringing the party together during such a difficult period, some leaders moved towards a special general convention.

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PM WORSHIPS AT MUKTINATH TEMPLE

RSS
Mustang, Aug. 22

Prime Minister Balendra Shah paid homage to the revered Hindu shrine, Muktinath Mandir, in Mustang district on Saturday evening.

The Mustang District Police Office confirmed the PM’s visit to the temple. Santosh Basyal, the Information Officer of Mustang Police, said that the PM returned Jomsom after worshipping at the temple. PM Shah, who started his journey from Kathmandu on Friday on a family visit, arrived in Jomsom of Mustang district at 3:00 pm today by travelling along the Pokhara-Beni-Jomsom road section.

Tonight, the PM has resided in a hotel at Gharapiphong-3 in the district.

Likewise, Manager of Muktinath Development Committee Dinesh Bhusal said the PM worshipped at the temple for about 30 minutes after entering the temple at 7:30 pm. PM Shah also received Teeka and Prasada from the priest of the temple, Krishna Prasad Subedi.

Meanwhile, our Mustang correspondent Harikrishna Sharma adds: Prime Minister Shah is scheduled to stay at Om’s Home, a hotel built in a traditional architectural style reflecting the indigenous culture of Mustang and the Thakali community, during his visit to Mustang. Located in Jomsom Bazaar of Gharapiphong Rural Municipality-3, near Jomsom Airport, Om’s Home has reportedly been booked for the Prime Minister and his delegation for one night. The hotel was built in 1976.

Following the booking, necessary security and management arrangements have been made for the Prime Minister’s visit.

Om’s Home, which has been operating for nearly five decades, has become a preferred choice of prominent guests for its blend of modern facilities and an ambience reflecting Mustang’s traditional art, culture and way of life. The hotel displays photographs of prominent guests who have stayed there over the years. It offers scenic views of Jomsom Airport and mountain ranges including Nilgiri and Dhaulagiri.

Members of Nepal’s former royal family and other prominent personalities have stayed at the hotel.

Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan also stayed at Om’s Home while filming the popular Hindi movie Khuda Gawah in Mustang in 1991. The hotel has also been used as a location for Nepali films featuring scenes depicting Himalayan life. Visitors are greeted by decor reflecting the rural and local culture of Mustang as soon as they enter the hotel. The hotel also provides round-the-clock health worker services when needed, particularly for guests suffering from altitude-related problems.

Raju Lalchan, president of the Mustang Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said Om’s Home has created an environment where visitors are welcomed not only through traditional architecture, art, culture and lifestyle by restoring old houses rather than constructing modern structures, but also where Bollywood and Nepali film industries have been encouraged to bring their productions to Mustang.

Hunting permits issued to protect crops from wildlife in Arghakhanchi

BY GANESH KHANAL
Arghakhanchi, Aug. 22

Amid growing damage to crops and increasing human-wildlife conflict, a system allowing the legal hunting of certain wild animals has been introduced in Arghakhanchi.

The Division Forest Office, Arghakhanchi, has issued a public notice inviting Nepali citizens to apply for hunting permits in accordance with existing laws on national parks and wildlife conservation.

According to the office, permit holders can hunt barking deer, wild boar, sambar deer and spotted deer using designated weapons and following the prescribed legal procedures.

Narayan Dev Bhattarai, chief of the Division Forest Office, said the hunting permit process was introduced to reduce crop damage caused by wildlife and minimise human-wildlife conflict.

He said permits can be obtained to hunt designated wildlife under the



National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1973, the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Regulations, 1974, and other prevailing laws.

“People can obtain permits to hunt certain wildlife using designated weapons after completing the procedures prescribed by law,” Bhattarai said.

Local farmers, particularly in rural areas, have complained that wildlife frequently damage their crops.

Wild animals enter fields at night and destroy maize, rice and wheat crops, and in some cases pose risks to people.

The forest office, however, has made it clear that the provision does not allow uncontrolled hunting. Only designated wildlife can be hunted by permit holders and in accordance with prescribed procedures. Hunting wildlife without a permit will result in legal action, the office said.

Nepali citizens wishing to obtain a hunting permit must submit an application to the Division Forest Office, Arghakhanchi, by August 26, along with the prescribed fee under Rule 9(1) of the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Regulations, 1974.

According to Information Officer Kesar Khadka, applicants must submit a copy of their Nepali citizenship certificate, a licence for their firearm and other documents required under the law. Applicants must complete all legal procedures and, even after obtaining a permit, comply with rules concerning the designated area, period, weapons and wildlife species.

The Division Forest Office has urged the public not to hunt any wildlife without obtaining a permit.

Stakeholders said wildlife management should be based on scientific and legal principles to minimise crop damage while ensuring wildlife conservation. The extent to which the new hunting permit system benefits farmers affected by wildlife will depend on its effective implementation.



BULLION
(Rs. per tola)

Hallmark Gold : Rs. 316,700/-

Worked Gold : NA

Silver : Rs. 4,985/-



STOCK

NEPSE : 2,618.72

Total Amount : 4,167,618,882.32

No. of Share : 10,022,765

NARAYANGHAT-BUTWAL ROAD REPAIRED AGAIN AFTER DETERIORATION



BY BOMALAL GIRI
Nawalpur, Aug. 22

The Chinese contractor has started repairing the Narayanghat-Butwal road after sections of the expanded highway deteriorated even before the project could be handed over to the government.

Reconstruction work has begun in areas including Chormara and Arun Khola after sections of the road subsided.

Although the affected sections appear uniform at first glance, some parts have sunk by two to three inches while others have risen, according to traffic police. As the uneven surface has increased the risk of accidents involving two and three-wheelers, the Chinese contractor has begun repair work.

Opendra Mukhiya, an engineer with the contractor, said around 900 metres of road in the Chormara section had sunk or risen. He said the upper layer of asphalt has been removed from the damaged section and repair work has begun. If the problem persists, more asphalt will be removed and further repairs would be carried out, he said.

Problems have been observed mostly on uphill and downhill sections of the road. The contractor has said the deterioration may have been caused by overloaded vehicles and the terrain.

Mukhiya said repairs had already been completed in other affected areas and the work in Chormara would also be completed within two or three days.

The approximately 114-kilometre road from Narayanghat to Butwal has been expanded to six lanes in market areas, four lanes through forests and three lanes in the Daunne section.

The Chinese contractor was awarded the road expansion contract for Rs. 17 billion. Under the agreement, the contractor is responsible for maintaining the road for five years.

Minister Shrestha calls for reliable power supply in Koshi

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 22

Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Biraj Bhakta Shrestha has intensified consultations with stakeholders in Koshi Province to improve the reliability and efficiency of electricity supply and increase power consumption in the province. During his visit to Koshi, Minister Shrestha held discussions with elected representatives and officials and employees of the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) to learn about problems in electricity supply, public complaints, employees' concerns and opportunities to increase electricity consumption.

Speaking at an interaction on the current status, achievements and future direction of electricity distribution in the province, Minister Shrestha urged NEA employees to work harder to ensure regular, quality and reliable electricity services to citizens.

According to a press statement of Minister Shrestha's secretariat, he directed the authorities to establish a system for promptly resolving supply problems and addressing public complaints. He said that timely information dissemination and swift responses to complaints would help build public trust and improve people's perception of the authority's services.

The minister also called on provincial offices to effectively advance creative plans proposed by distribution centres based on local needs. He said that the quality of services received by citizens, rather than the volume of infrastructure constructed or budget spent, should be the key measure of performance. "Whatever work we do, ultimately, people will judge us on whether they received regular and reliable electricity," he said.

Minister Shrestha said the government had allocated sufficient funds for



Energy Minister Biraj Bhakta Shrestha inspects the embankment of Sunsari River at Bhokraha Narsingh Rural Municipality-4, Sunsari on Saturday.

improving transmission and distribution systems in the current fiscal year and directed officials to prepare clear implementation plans from the beginning of the fiscal year rather than waiting until its end. He also stressed the need to increase domestic electricity consumption alongside generation.

As Koshi is an important province for industrial and commercial activities, he called for special programmes to promote electricity use in industries, businesses and other sectors. He praised progress in controlling electricity leakage in the province and urged greater coordination with elected representatives and local governments to address transmission and distribution-related problems.

Ministry Secretary Sarita Dawadi said that targeted improvements in the distribution system could significantly improve the sustainability and quality of electricity services. NEA Acting Managing Director Dirghayu Kumar Shrestha said the authority needed to raise its performance further as public expectations were increasing.

On the occasion, Kamal Acharya, chief of the NEA's Koshi Provincial Office, said that electricity is being supplied to more than 1.137 million customers through 24 distribution branches in all 14 districts of the province. He said that the electricity system is being operated through major transmission corridors, including the Kabeli Corridor, Koshi Corridor, and Duhabi-Pandajungi-Anaramani Corridor.

According to Acharya, in the last fiscal year, Koshi Province generated an income of Rs. 19.21 billion from the sale of 2,048.41 gigawatt hours of electricity. Electricity leakage has declined to 11.21 per cent, Acharya said. Three important substations are under construction in the province, while a pole-mounted substation has been completed in Letang of Morang, he added.

During the interaction, lawmakers representing Morang and Sunsari, including Dipak Sah, Sirjana Shrestha and Rubina Acharya, urged the NEA to address local supply and infrastructure problems promptly and ensure accessible, regular and reliable electricity services.

Meanwhile, Minister Shrestha inspected the embankment area along

Nearly Rs. 2 B budget goes unspent in Dadeldhura

BY PUSHKAR BHANDARI
Dadeldhura, Aug. 22

In Dadeldhura, Rs. 1.82 billion of the budget allocated to offices under the federal and provincial governments for the fiscal year 2025/26 has been remained unspent.

Data from the District Treasury Controller Office and the Provincial Accounts Unit Office, Dadeldhura, shows that of the total unspent amount, Rs. 786.29 million was under the recurrent heading and Rs. 1.035 billion under the capital heading.

The amount of unspent capital budget was around Rs. 250 million higher than the unspent recurrent budget.

Federal government offices in Dadeldhura were unable to spend around Rs. 977 million under both recurrent and capital headings. Rs. 465.3 million under the recurrent heading and Rs. 511.67 million under the capital heading remained unspent on the federal side.

Similarly, provincial government offices were unable to spend Rs. 321 million under the recurrent heading and Rs. 521.86 million under the capital heading. The total unspent budget

of provincial offices stood at Rs. 842.86 million, according to accounting officer Trimal Saud.

Recurrent and capital budgets of both federal and provincial offices are combined; more than Rs. 1.82 billion remained unspent.

The capital budget was more affected than the recurrent budget in the last fiscal year. Of the capital budget allocated for development and infrastructure projects, Rs. 1.03 billion could not be spent. Federal offices failed to spend Rs. 511.67 million of their capital budget, while provincial offices left Rs. 521.86 million unspent.

The large amount of unspent capital budget has affected the implementation and payment of projects related to roads, buildings, drinking water, irrigation, health and other infrastructure.

Construction contractors blamed According to Dipendra Ojha from the Accounts Office, said that the rising prices of fuel and construction materials made it difficult for contractors to carry out works within the estimated costs, and several projects were affected. As contractors failed to move ahead with works on time, payments for contracted projects could not be made on schedule, affecting capital budget expenditure.

Dr. Shrestha, Khanal to receive Hem Bahadur Malla Awards

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 22

Public Administration Association of Nepal (PAAN) has decided to confer the Hem Bahadur Malla Award on Dr. Ram Kantha Makaju Shrestha and Rameshore Prasad Khanal for their significant contributions to public administration, public service, management and institutional development.

Dr. Shrestha will receive the 2081 award for his contribution to establishing and operating Dhulikhel Hospital and promoting quality public services. According to PAAN, his leadership in the health sector and institutional development had helped strengthen the effectiveness, quality and accountability of health services.

Khanal has been selected for the 2082 award in recognition of his contribution to public administration and public service. His role in policy, administration and public service while holding various public responsibilities was considered an important basis for his selection, according to PAAN.

A selection committee led by former secretary and former president of the PAAN Krishna Gyawali was formed



to recommend recipients for the two awards. The award recipients were announced at a press conference held on Friday. The recommendations of the committee were endorsed by the PAAN.

As a corporate social responsibility, the Salt Trading Corporation (STC) established Hem Bahadur Malla Memorial Award in 2000 in the memory of its founder president late Hem Bahadur Malla to recognise his contribution to the organisation. This is the national-level award and the winner is selected by the Public Administration

Association of Nepal (PAAN).

The Hem Bahadur Malla Award has been conferred annually since 2003 on individuals who have made notable contributions to public administration, management, public distribution, public service and matters of public concern.

The award carries a certificate of honour and a cash prize of Rs. 200,000. It aims to recognise long-term, exemplary and institutional contributions to public life at the national level and promote professionalism, accountability and institutional values in public service.

Sugarcane farmers still unpaid, debts mount

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Parasi, Aug. 22

A significant numbers of farmers of Nawalparasi (West) have long relied on sugarcane as a major cash crop. However, their financial condition has been deteriorating day by day as the sugar mills did not clear their dues.

Even years after selling their sugarcane, farmers in the district have yet to receive payments from sugar mills, leaving them under pressure from bank and cooperative loans, interest payments and daily household expenses. Although they have repeatedly staged protests, from the local administration to Kathmandu, demanding payment for their produce, the problem has not been fully resolved.

Farmers say two major sugar mills in Nawalparasi (West) - Indira Sugar Mill and Lumbini Sugar Industry - owe them tens of millions of rupees.

Indira Sugar Mill, based in Pratapur, reportedly owes farmers around Rs. 80 million. The mill has remained closed for the past two years. According to Ram Bahadur KC, Superintendent of Police at the District Police Office, a fraud case has been filed against mill operator Rakesh Agrawal, and an investigation is



A farmer busy with sugarcane processing.

underway after he went out of contact without paying the farmers.

SP KC said efforts were being made to locate Agrawal.

Lumbini Sugar Mill in Sunawal is also reportedly yet to pay farmers around Rs. 100 million accumulated from different crushing seasons. Farmers have been facing difficulties after failing to receive outstanding payments dating back two to three years. They

complain that the industry has been delaying payments, citing reasons including its inability to sell sugar.

The problems faced by sugarcane farmers have also been repeatedly raised in the House of Representatives. Federal lawmaker from the district, Bikram Khanal, recently drew the government's attention to the need to ensure payment of the farmers' outstanding dues.

He said that although the government

had been providing subsidies to sugarcane farmers on time, they had yet to receive the money owed by sugar mills. "The government provides a subsidy of Rs. 70 per quintal. But farmers have still not received the Rs. 620 per quintal that the mills are required to pay," he said.

According to him, with the festivals approaching, farmers are facing a financial crisis.

Demanding payment, farmers have staged sit-ins at the District Administration Office and even travelled to Maitighar Mandala in Kathmandu to protest. Farmers said they had planned to use the money earned from selling their produce to pay for their children's education, medical treatment, household expenses and bank loans, but have instead been burdened with loans and interest.

For farmers who depend on sugarcane as a cash crop, delayed payment has become their biggest problem. Rising production costs, uncertainty over sugarcane prices and prolonged delays in receiving payment for produce have affected the entire agricultural cycle.

Farmers said the authorities should trace the assets of mill operators who have gone out of contact and recover the farmers' money through legal procedures.



Yaks brought from Upper Dolpa to Jomsom, Mustang, for sale. Demand for Dolpali yaks is increasing in Mustang. Each yak brought is sold for more than Rs 150,000.

Artificial lake built to attract tourists

BY AMAR RAJ NAHARKI
Tanahun, Aug. 22

Byas Municipality, Tanahun, has constructed an artificial lake to attract domestic and international tourists.

The 'Nareshwor Lake' has been built by damming the Nareshwor stream at Dumsichaur in Ward No. 10. With the construction of the lake's main physical infrastructure completed, water has started to be collected. The lake's natural beauty has increased further as it is filled with water.

According to Bijay Darai, chairperson of the Nareshwor Lake Construction Users' Committee, the number of tourists visiting the lake has been increasing daily.

Tourists visiting the site have also helped promote the lake by posting photographs and videos on social media.

Darai said the aim is to develop Nareshwor Lake by linking it with agriculture, tourism, environmental conservation and local employment.

The project was constructed through a joint partnership between Byas Municipality and the Gandaki Province Government. The estimated cost of the project is around Rs. 40 million, with substantial financial support received from the provincial government.

At the initiative of Gandaki Province Assembly member Ashok Kumar Shrestha, the provincial government allocated Rs. 15 million for the project.

Similarly, Rs. 1 million was provided through the Provincial Lake Conservation Authority and Rs. 5 million was allocated by Byas Municipality. The municipality awarded the construction contract to GES Construction Service for Rs. 18.4 million.

The municipality acquired 24 ropanis



Artificial lake constructed by Byas Municipality.

PHOTO: AMAR RAJ NAHARKI

and 11 annas of land from locals for the construction of the lake.

A total of Rs. 13.7865 million has already been distributed to landowners as compensation. Compensation was provided at the rate of Rs. 550,000 per ropani for (Sim) and (Abbal) land and Rs. 575,000 per ropani for (Doyam land). The estimated cost of the project is around Rs. 40 million.

Spread over an area of around 28 ropanis, the lake is 300 metres long. Its width ranges from 28 to 68 metres, while its average depth is around 3.5 metres. Built with a concrete gravity dam structure, the lake can store up to 30,000 cubic metres of water.

The project was initiated from the

outset after identifying the tourism potential of the area. According to former Ward No. 10 chairperson Tulsiram Sapkota, the construction of the lake has added to the tourist attraction of the Dumsichaur area. Homestay facilities have also been arranged for visitors.

Byas mayor Baikuntha Neupane said the lake was constructed with the objective of extending tourists' stays and increasing local incomes.

Water-based recreational facilities, picnic spots and other necessary tourism infrastructure will now be developed around the lake. The municipality believes this will boost local hotels, restaurants and the trade of local products.

Along with tourism, providing irrigation facilities to the local agricultural sector is another major objective of the lake. A separate irrigation tank has also been constructed alongside the lake for this purpose.

According to Khemraj Pokhrel, chairperson of Ward No. 10, arrangements would be made to pump water from the lake and distribute it to nearby farmlands.

He said the facility would also provide significant relief to local farmers by reducing their dependence on rain water for farming.

Regular irrigation is expected to increase agricultural production in the Dumsichaur area, Pokhrel said.

Residents forced to leave homes whenever it rains

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Baitadi, Aug. 22

Locals of Ratapani in Surnaya Rural Municipality-8, Baitadi, fear landslides whenever it rains. As clouds gather in the sky, they have to leave their homes and seek shelter at neighbours' houses.

Seven houses in Ratapani are at high risk due to continuous landslides. The ground above the houses has developed cracks, while landslides have swept away farmland and damaged kitchens and toilets.

"We never know when or where a landslide will occur. As soon as it starts raining, we worry whether to stay inside or leave for a safer place. We are afraid to stay at home during rainfall and have to take shelter at neighbours' houses," said local Bhan Bahadur Bohara.

A team led by Baitadi Chief District Officer Meena Aryal, comprising officials from the District Administration Office, local governments, security agencies and other concerned bodies, visited Ratapani on Friday to assess the situation.

After the inspection, Aryal said the families at risk should be relocated to a safer area.

The houses of Ram Singh Bohara, Dhanuwa Bohara, Mina Bohara, Gambhir Singh Bohara, Uday Singh Bohara, Chakra Bohara and Krishna Bohara are at high risk, according to authorities.

Aryal said the administration was coordinating with concerned agencies to provide tents, tarpaulins and other

essential materials for the affected families and to determine whether the settlement should be relocated.

Locals said landslides have been occurring continuously in Ratapani for the past five years. Although they have repeatedly requested concerned authorities to take long-term measures to control the landslides, the problem remains unresolved.

"All the land above our houses has cracked. We also have problems with drinking water, and there is no proper road for children to go to school," said Harka Bohara, who is living in a landslide-prone area. The landslides have not only put homes at risk but have also swept away farmland, the main source of livelihood for local residents. Locals estimate that around 35 to 40 ropanis of farmland have been damaged in Ratapani.

According to local Gambhir Bohara, more than 15 ropanis of his farmland alone have been damaged. Landslides swept away fields planted with maize, resulting in the loss of this year's crop.

"Our maize fields have been swept away, and our house is also at risk. We are increasingly worried about what will happen next," locals said.

As landslides continue, residents say neither their homes nor their farmland are safe. They have called for immediate relief as well as the long-term relocation of the settlement to a safer area.

CDO Aryal said the immediate priority was to ensure the safety of families at risk. She said coordination was underway to provide tents, tarpaulins and other essential materials for temporary shelter.

Galyang gets Syangja's longest suspension bridge

BY ARJUN KAFLE
Syangja, Aug. 22

Galyang Municipality has constructed the longest suspension bridge in Syangja district.

The 444-metre-long bridge connects Budhathoki Danda in Ward No. 11 with Senapuk in Ward No. 7 of the municipality. The bridge is 76 metres longer than the suspension bridge previously built at Karadi, making it the longest suspension bridge in the district.

Mayor Gurupasad Bhattarai said the bridge was constructed at a cost of Rs. 45.66 million by the Suspension Bridge Division under the federal government, following the municipality's initiative. Jai Nepal Ishwor Nirman Sewa Pvt Ltd started construction on June 24, 2025, with a target to complete the project within 18 months.

Mayor Bhattarai said the bridge was completed and brought into operation five months ahead of the deadline, while many other construction companies have left bridges unfinished even after the expiry of their contracts.

The bridge has made movement, trade and business, education, healthcare and daily life easier for residents on both sides, he said. The bridge would help strengthen Galyang physically, economically, socially



PHOTO: ARJUN KAFLE

The 444-metre suspension bridge connecting Budhathoki Danda in Galyang-11 with Senapuk in Galyang-7.

and in terms of tourism.

The bridge has a load-bearing capacity of 1,058 people and 133 metric tonnes. Following its construction, Galyang Municipality-7 has been directly connected to the Siddhartha Highway. The travel time between the two areas has been reduced from around 1 hour to just 15 minutes.

INSPIRE project brings digital learning to Madhes schools

BY AJAY SHAH
Mahottari, Aug. 22

Efforts are underway to equip children of Madhes Province with knowledge, skills and creativity suited to changing times through the use of digital technology.

Along with technology-based learning, emphasis is being placed on problem-solving, creative thinking, practical exercises and the development of life skills to connect children with future opportunities.

Such practices are being introduced in community schools in Madhes through the five-year INSPIRE project being implemented by Save the Children Nepal in partnership with the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

The project is making digital learning an integral part of school education while providing children and young people with opportunities to develop skills needed in the future.

An event titled 'INSPIRE's One Year of Learning, Partnership and Progress', held in Kathmandu to mark the completion of the project's first year, highlighted its achievements, lessons learnt and future plans.

The INSPIRE project is being implemented in five local levels in Bara and Mahottari districts of Madhes Province. Schools and communities in Devtal Rural Municipality, Karaiyamai



Rural Municipality and Mahagadhimai Municipality of Bara, and Aurahi and Loharpatti municipalities of Mahottari are benefiting from the project.

Under the project, tech labs and maker spaces equipped with computers, smart boards, alternative power systems and various electronic materials have been established in seven secondary schools in Bara. These facilities provide students with opportunities to learn new things using technology, turn their ideas into prototypes, test them and solve problems.

Students in Bara are using drone technology to monitor agriculture and practising how to turn their concepts into useful prototypes using 3D printers.

The initiative is not only teaching

students how to operate technology but also providing practical knowledge on how technology can be used for problem-solving and creativity.

Tara Chhetri, Country Director of Save the Children Nepal and Bhutan, said maker spaces were being developed as places where children could use, create, learn from mistakes and try again.

She said experience-based learning helps develop children's thinking, creativity and confidence while also increasing their interest in school.

The project is not limited to digital technology but also focuses on improving the overall quality of education.

It provides teacher capacity development, additional support for students with learning difficulties, home-based

learning, school attendance management, scholarship assistance, and opportunities for vocational skills development for adolescents and young people.

In Mahottari, parents and caregivers have been provided with information and support on ways to help children learn at home. The project said it was working to ensure continuity in children's learning by linking schools, families and communities with the learning process.

Mahagadhimai Mayor Upendra Prasad Yadav said new possibilities in education had emerged as children in community schools began using technology, asking questions and learning practical skills.

Shankar Prasad Adhikari, Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Education and Sports, said long-term changes in education were possible through investment at the basic level.

Mooheon Kong, KOICA Nepal country director, said quality education, digital transformation and skills required for employment should be integrated to advance education in line with changing global needs.

He said children should be introduced not only to basic learning but also to technology, problem-solving and skills required in the future.

Joon Oh, Board Chair of Save the Children Korea, said the first year of the INSPIRE project had demonstrated that partnerships could create new opportunities for children.

Sindhupalchowk bears witness to disasters

BY CHITRA KUMAR MIJAR
Sindhupalchok, Aug. 22

Sindhupalchok has witnessed dozens of monsoon-related disasters over the years, including floods and landslides, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of people and the destruction of physical infrastructure worth billions of rupees.

On the night of August 31, 1982, a massive flood in the Brahmayani River swept away the settlement of Kartike Phalam Sangu in what is now Jugal Rural Municipality, killing 97 people. More than 30 houses were washed away. The police post and the Phalam Sangu market were also swept away by the flood.

In 1987, a landslide at Gorthali in what is now Ward No. 1 of Bahrabise Municipality buried a large number of people and swept away dozens of houses and settlements.

On August 2, 2014, the Jure landslide in what is now Ward No. 8 of Balepi Rural Municipality buried 145 people. It caused billions of rupees in physical damage, destroying 153 houses, schools, resorts and other structures. Hundreds of houses were also inundated.

The devastating earthquake of April 25,



FILE PHOTO: TRN

Photograph of monsoon-related disasters that occurred in the district in the past.

2015 claimed 3,557 lives in the district, while more than 90,000 physical structures were

completely destroyed, according to the District Disaster Relief Committee.

Melamchi flood, killing 26 people. Seven motorable bridges and 13 suspension bridges, dozens of fish farms, hundreds of houses and settlements, and thousands of ropanis of land were swept away by the flood.

According to the committee, rainfall on September 28, 2024, killed 12 people, including five people in Lisankhu Pakhar Rural Municipality, four in Kune village of Jugal Rural Municipality and three people after the Sindhubich Resort in Sunkoshi Rural Municipality was buried.

The committee said thousands of people have lost their lives and billions of rupees worth of physical property have been destroyed in the district due to monsoon-related disasters in the past.

However, the district has not witnessed any disaster-related incident during this year's monsoon, according to the committee. Considering the risks posed by such disasters, all 12 local governments in the district have been carrying out preparedness measures.

Bahrabise Mayor Balkrishna Basnet said the municipality has been carrying out preparedness activities aimed at preventing loss of lives and property from disasters that could occur during the rainy season.

TWO DEAD IN ROAD ACCIDENT IN CHITWAN

RSS
Narayangadh (Chitwan), Aug. 22

Two people were killed Saturday in a road accident involving a bus and a motorcycle at Khairhani municipality-1 in Chitwan.

The deceased have been identified as a man, around 32 who was riding the motorcycle, and a woman, around 26, who was pillion riding the motorcycle. Their names and addresses are yet to be confirmed.

According to the District Police Office Chitwan's information officer and Deputy Superintendent of Police Chandra Bhushan Yadav, the accident occurred when a bus (Ba Pra 03-001 Kha 2773), heading towards Bardibas from Narayangadh, collided with a motorcycle (Ba Pra 01-015 Pa 3385) coming from the opposite direction.

The two in the motorcycle succumbed to their injuries while undergoing treatment at Chitwan Medical College in Bharatpur.

Following the accident, bus driver Ajay Kumar Maskey, 51, of Hariwan municipality-8 in Sarlahi has been taken into custody for further investigation into the accident. -

EDITORIAL

Waste Without Burden

For residents living near the Banchare Danda landfill in Dhunibesi, waste from Kathmandu Valley has become a daily burden. The smell of garbage, water pollution, and numerous health issues plague the residents living near the landfill site. With the blowing of the wind, the odour spreads to the surroundings, and crows, kites, and stray dogs take the dead carcasses and other waste products into the residential area. In order to address the issue, a high-level meeting was held with the involvement of several government agencies, mayors, waste management experts, and representatives from the communities where the Banchare Danda landfill exists. As per the news report published in this daily on Saturday, the meeting proposed de-centralising waste management, establishing recycling facilities within local jurisdictions, producing compost and energy from biodegradable waste, and introducing resource recovery technology at Banchare Danda.

Waste management is the primary function of the local government in Nepal. Nevertheless, Kathmandu Valley has managed to create a trend where local governments produce waste but heavily rely on Banchare Danda for the waste management process. Kathmandu Metropolitan City itself produces 48.8 per cent of the total waste taken to Banchare Danda, followed by Lalitpur, with 10 per cent, and Budhanilkantha, with 5 per cent. The federal government has facilitated the process of land acquisition, overcome policy-related problems and assisted local governments. However, federal government intervention must not become an excuse for lack of responsibility on the part of local government bodies. It is essential that each municipality create an effective waste management plan based on their abilities and territory. Kirtipur's decision to build its own system in six months and Dakshinkali's waste sorting show that political will can make it happen.

But it is also necessary to realise that decentralisation does not mean each municipality has to tackle the problem alone and without enough resources. Smaller municipalities might be lacking land, technologies, technical expertise and money. Another case of how institutional uncertainty comes with a price is the long-standing conflict over Nepwaste. In case legal or other issues are hindering the local authority from taking up a proper solution for their waste management, this must be done without any further ado. Political meddling and the tendency to pass the buck have cost the Valley plenty of time. Fundamentally, the issue cannot be sorted out by finding another place to dump the waste. Segregation and processing of waste according to its nature will be imperative. Composting of organic waste, recycling, reuse of material from the waste, and generating energy through it may reduce the amount to be disposed.

The authorities plan to stop sending Valley waste to the site within four years by promoting waste reduction, source segregation, reuse, recycling and a circular economy. This goal must be backed by concrete annual objectives, budgets, accountability and transparency. The residents surrounding Banchare Danda have suffered the repercussions of the Valley's waste. Locals should not suffer in pursuit of convenience in the cities. The waste management issue in Kathmandu calls for collective responsibility – from those who produce the waste to municipalities that handle it and the government which sets the framework for waste management policies.

A Global Humanist

TARA BASYAL

Jaya Prithvi Bahadur Singh, founder of Gorkhapatra weekly, was an advocate of world peace and brotherhood, a preacher and a thinker of humanism. He was born on August 22, 1877, in Chainpur, Bajhang, as the eldest son of then king Bikram Bahadur Singh. He was primarily educated in Thapathali Durbar School, Kathmandu. By 1889, the then Rana prime minister Bir Shumsher forced his father to abdicate in favour of Jaya Prithvi Bahadur Singh. As a result, he was coronated as the King of Bajhang state at the age of twelve. A man of creative imagination and humanistic thinking, He devoted his life to spreading the message of humanism and love throughout the world. He wrote many books, spoke prolifically and published a few of his writings in his lifetime. He wanted the unpublished ones to be published posthumously. His writings give a clear and subtle message for the betterment of society through peaceful progress.

At the age of seven, in 1894, he was married to Khageshwori Devi Rana, the eldest daughter of Maharaj Chandra Shumsher. Then he went to India to study up to the intermediate level at Prayag College in Uttar Pradesh. There he also learnt the policies of the Rana regime. He was not satisfied with its activities. In 1898, he returned to Bajhang and from there he sent eight young men from different caste groups to Kathmandu for training and educational purposes. With the consent of the then prime minister Dev Shumsher Rana, he founded the Gorkhapatra and the Oriental Nepali Language School named Satyabadi School in Kathmandu in 1901.

At the age of 16, he was appointed to the post of Wakil (Consul-General) in Calcutta, and in 1905 he returned to Kathmandu with a hand press to print textbooks in the Nepali language.

In 1906, he reopened Satyabadi School in Naxal, Kathmandu. He authored many books, including Nepali Language Grammar, Prakrit Vyakarana, Tatto Prashansha, a book on human and humanity, and Nagarik Shiksha. He served as chief of the court, called Bharadari Shabha. Because of his growing dissatisfaction with the Rana rule and his empathy with the poverty-stricken Nepali people, he handed over his crown to his father in 1916 and went to Nainital, India, where he lived for eight years.

During his stay in Nainital, he wrote the three volumes of Nepalese manuscripts of Philosophy of Humanism. In 1924, he migrated to Bangalore, South India, and, with the help of his friend Maharaj Jaya Sawade of Mysore, acquired Coorg for the settlement of Nepalis. Later on, he established liaison offices in Kalighat, Calcutta, and Shivalukuti, Allahabad.

To propagate his ideology, he published the humanist magazine and the book named Flag of Peace. He travelled to various parts of the world on his mission of humanism. After winding up his world tour, he started the Humanist Club in Bangalore and initiated a series of talks and correspondence to oppose British Rule in India and Rana Rule in Nepal. For this, the British government put him under house arrest at his private residence, Jaya Bhawan, Bangalore. He passed away on October 15, 1940, at 63. At a time when there is a quest for some common principles and values that could restore or promote peace and goodwill among nations, his principles and ideologies may inspire the world in this direction. His message on humanism struck a note of peace and solace to those who lived in the period of what has been labelled as 'the lost generation'

(The article is based on the book 'Speeches & Writings of Colonel Raja Jai Prithvi Bahadur Singh')

Ritu Raj Subedi



The big old parties, such as the Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML, are now going through their worst moments. The internal bickering has crippled their organisations from the centre to the local level. Their crisis has been precipitated by the youth-led Gen Z revolt and the March 5 general elections. The Nepali Congress attempted to fill the intergenerational gap in leadership through a special convention, but the old guard has ganged up to upend this change through political and legal manoeuvring. However, the situation in the left parties is chaotic. The old leaders have refused to pass the baton to the younger generation. Instead, the leadership of CPN-UML and Nepali Communist Party (NCP) have forged an alliance to prevent a threat to them. At the provincial level, they formed coalition governments to stay afloat in the politics.

Once an undisputed leader of UML, Oli is now facing humiliation and neglect when he steps up to execute his plan. This occurred especially when he tried to appoint his own loyalists to the post of Chief Minister in Bagmati and Koshi Provinces. In Koshi, Oli wanted to make Til Kumar Menyangbo Chief Minister, replacing the incumbent Hikmat Kumar Karki. Karki refused to resign despite mounting pressure and instructions from him. Oli had to finally

eat humble pie and felt how fast his authority is eroding in the party. Karki, also the party secretary, has been Oli's trusted right-hand man from the very beginning. But he retained his position by aligning with new internal alliances. Karki stood along with other stalwarts who have been calling for party restructuring in the wake of the debacle in the election.

Gundu episode

In Bagmati, Oli succeeded in installing Kiran Thapa Magar as the province head by sidelining UML Bagmati Province Parliamentary Party leader Jagannath Thapaliya. There were rumours that Oli scolded Thapaliya during a meeting at the former's residence in Gundu some time back. Media reports suggested that Oli taunted him to the hilt for his failure to mobilise the PP to muster support to form the government. Unable to tolerate his rebuke, Thapaliya became emotional and collapsed on the ground. He was rushed to a hospital at midnight. Oli has dismissed this episode as merely rumours, but it has further damaged his image in the party. The party leader is not expected to cuss his/her cadres in a way that creates a nasty scene.

Chairman Oli has stirred up a hornet's nest within the party by calling his own functionaries 'awara' (loafers or vagrants) and 'kirna' (ticks). The use of derogatory terms against his own cadres has drawn strong reactions from the party's foot soldiers. Generally, communist leaders have their own lexicons such as opportunists, rightists, revisionists, deviationists, traitors and so on to disparage their factional rivals or those who disagree with them. But Oli did not use these traditional red

Physical Activity Essential For Healthy Life



The burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is rising worldwide. It has become the leading cause of illness and death worldwide in recent times. In general, NCDs are not transmitted from one person to another like infectious diseases. They are strongly associated with unhealthy lifestyles such as use of tobacco, unhealthy diets, harmful use of alcohol, and physical inactivity. Many NCDs, including heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and certain cancers, can be prevented or delayed through healthier lifestyles. Among many of the unhealthy lifestyles, physical inactivity is the most overlooked cause of NCDs. Physical inactivity is, therefore, important because it is one of the modifiable risk factors of NCDs.

In a modern world, technology has made our daily life easier; however, physical activity has become less than in earlier times. Nowadays, people spend hours mostly sitting at desks or scrolling on phones as computers replace physical tasks and different means of transportation replace walking. Physical inactivity should not be viewed as a personal lifestyle choice; its effects have far-reaching consequences.

Human body

The human body is designed for movement. Regular physical activity strengthens the heart, muscles, and bones, improves blood circulation, helps maintain a healthy body weight, and is also beneficial for mental well-being. These important benefits are lost when people remain inactive for a long time. A sedentary lifestyle, through its contribution to weight gain, increased levels of blood pressure, blood sugar,

and unhealthy cholesterol, has a strong association with NCDs like diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers.

The connection between physical inactivity and obesity is a scientifically proven fact. In recent times, people often consume more calories and spend less energy. A sedentary lifestyle at office or school and spending considerable leisure time watching television or using smartphones contribute to weight gain in the long run. It is a known fact that obesity is associated with increased risks for several non-communicable diseases.

Heart disease is also closely related to physical inactivity. It has been scientifically proven that regular movement helps the heart work better and reduces several cardiovascular risk factors. Physical inactivity, therefore, increases the risk of hypertension, abnormal cholesterol and cardiovascular disease. Simple physical activities, if performed regularly, such as walking, cycling, climbing stairs, and recreational sports, can have a significant effect on heart health.

Physical activity helps the body use glucose more efficiently through its positive effect on insulin sensitivity. Physical inactivity, along with obesity and an unhealthy diet, contributes to the development of type 2 diabetes in the long run. Increased incidence of diabetes and its associated consequences such as kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, retinopathy, and nerve damage take their toll on already overstretched healthcare systems, particularly in developing countries.

Nowadays, physical inactivity is increasingly seen among children and adolescents. Children and adolescents spend significant amounts of time sitting in classrooms, using computers, watching television, and playing video games. At the same time, there are limited outdoor activities and physical education in schools and colleges. Habits developed during childhood often continue into

Oli had to finally eat humble pie and felt how fast his authority is eroding in the party.

slangs to deride his detractors in the party undergoing an existential crisis. But he resorted to offensive words to verbally attack the party leaders who have been demanding his removal and its reorganisation.

Last Saturday, Oli was in his constituency in Jhapa district. He reached his hometown for the first time after the election loss. But his meeting with the party workers did not go well. The UML chair compared his critics as awara, kirna and sadakhchap (street thug). He said that loafers and urenthaula (immature persons) were talking about removing him over tea at the party canteen. "Is it a joke to oust the chairman? Do they have party memberships?" he questioned. Referring to them, he said that indiscipline and anarchy have grown in the party. Now Oli has blown a fuse after a party task force, formed under senior vice-chair Ram Bahadur Thapa Badal, submitted a report, urging him to step down from the chair and calling for reorganising the party. Oli's insulting remarks have shocked several layers and wings of the UML organisation. Mocking Oli, UML's Intellectual Council has launched the 'Awara Campaign,' calling party members to gather at its canteen at Chyasal and support the party's reform drive. It is now turning Oli's 'ranting and raving' into a political slogan through humour and satire.

Internal equation

UML's internal equation has shifted in favour of leadership transfer. Oli's close allies - vice-chairs Bishnu Paudel and Prithvi Subba Gurung and general secretary Shankar Pokharel - have distanced themselves from him. Pokharel, who always supported Oli's decisions in the past, is now demanding a special convention to amend the party statute and change the leadership. Pokharel was alleged for often 'theorising' Oli's flawed arguments and sometimes his 'white lies' while defending the leadership. Following the huge poll defeat, he realised that grassroots level social-economic classes have drifted away from the party. Seemingly, the task force's shows its mea culpa for the years of missteps and deviations.

There is another bad news for the UML. A news report says that only about 53 per cent of organised UML cadres have renewed their membership. The provincial committees have reported that only 359,000 out of 686,700 members renewed their membership within the deadline of mid-August. Though the party officials are still updating the figures, the sharp decline in the membership renewal demonstrates UML's steep downward trajectory. The youth members have shown their little interest in continuing their membership after they found no space on the party leadership rungs. The dwindling number of members - the life-line of party organisation - must have impelled the second-tier leaders to vigorously push for a restructuring agenda. Failure to revamp the party in crunch time will render it irrelevant in national politics in the long-run.

(The author is the Managing Editor of this daily.)

Regular physical exercise, taking the stairs instead of lifts, reducing sitting time, and engaging in recreational activities are a few changes that increase our movement.

burden of NCDs and improve overall health and well-being. It is undesirable to wait until the development of diabetes, hypertension, or heart disease to become active. Small and sustainable changes in daily life can improve health and well-being. Regular physical exercise, taking the stairs instead of lifts, reducing sitting time, and engaging in recreational activities are a few changes that increase our movement. Therefore, an active lifestyle significantly improves our health and reduces the chances of the development of NCDs, as well as improves the quality of life of those with NCDs.

Public health issue

Physical inactivity should not only be seen as being lazy and unfit but has long-lasting consequences with the rising burden of NCDs. Therefore, it is a significant public health issue that needs to be addressed with improvements in physical environments, awareness campaigns, and physical education from early childhood. In the coming days, people may become increasingly sedentary as cities turn more urbanised and technologically dependent.

It is, therefore, essential to acknowledge the importance of physical activity. A reasonable amount of movement with regular exercise should be a part of our daily life. By incorporating physical education in school curricula, improving physical environments, creating active workplaces, and making small changes in our habits along with a healthy diet, smoking cessation, and reduction in harmful use of alcohol, we can significantly reduce the burden of NCDs. Lastly, preventing NCDs depends on multiple factors, but encouraging people to be physically active is one of the simplest and most powerful ways to make life healthier.

(Dr. Lohani is the clinical director at the Nepal Poison Information Centre. lohansis@gmail.com)

READER'S MAIL

Retain Investors In SEZ



This is about the news report, 'Panchakanya pulls out of SEZ,' which appeared in this daily on August 22. According to the report, the Panchakanya Group (PG) has started demolishing a structure it built at a cost of around Rs. 40 million for operating an industry inside the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Bhairahawa, after being unable to sell the structure.

The exit of the PG underscores the shortcomings in the nation's SEZ policy: reliance only on export, restrictive domestic-market provisions and inflexible rules for transferring assets when an industry has to make its way out.

The industry became financially unsustainable in the wake of India tightening its standards for steel products, which made it extremely hard for the PG to meet, resulting in the loss of its only export market. Making matters worse was the fact that the company couldn't sell its steel in the domestic market because of the provision in the SEZ rule.

At a time when the government is committed to promoting manufacturing industries, this news must serve as a wake-up call. If the rules stand in the way of industrialisation, they must be scrapped. Concrete efforts must be made to retain investors in the SEZ.

Himanshu Napit Thankot

TAILPIECE

Mrs. Harrison took her three-year-old daughter, Jenny, to church for the first time. After arriving, the church lights were lowered, and then the choir came down the aisle, carrying lighted candles. There was silence in the entire sanctuary until Jenny's voice was suddenly heard, loudly singing: "Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you!..."

+++
St. Peter and Satan were having an argument one day about baseball. Satan proposed a game to be played on neutral grounds between a select team from the heavenly host and his own hand-picked boys. "Very well," said the gatekeeper of Heaven. "But you realize, I hope, that we've got all the good players and the best coaches." "I know, and that's all right," Satan answered unperturbed. "We've got all the umpires."

Russian and Ukrainian attacks kill 5

AP
Kyiv, Aug. 22

Russian drone and missile strikes killed at least three people in Ukraine, officials said Saturday, while a Ukrainian drone attack on Russia's Krasnodar region killed two others, a day after a strike on a Ukrainian shopping center killed 16 people.

In the latest attacks, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that one person was killed and another wounded when ballistic missiles hit railway infrastructure in the capital, Kyiv, overnight. Russia's Defense Ministry said that its forces had hit a locomotive depot.

In a separate attack, local authorities said one person was killed Saturday afternoon in a Russian ballistic missile strike on the Kyiv region, which surrounds the capital.

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

Russian drone strikes also killed one person overnight in a village in the Zaporizhzhia region, local officials said Saturday. Zelenskyy said that three people were wounded in an attack on a minibus in the regional capital, also called Zaporizhzhia.

In Russia's southern Krasnodar region, authorities said that two children were killed and two adults were wounded in a Ukrainian drone strike. The latest attacks came a day after Russian drones struck a shopping center in the city of Kryvyi Rih in central Ukraine on Friday.

Dnipropetrovsk regional head Oleksandr Hanzha said in the early hours of



Firefighters work on a fire at a shopping mall following a Russian drone attack in Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine.

PHOTO: AP

Saturday that the death toll had risen to 16 and nine people remain missing after the attack, which wounded another 130.

Kryvyi Rih is the hometown of Zelenskyy, who described the attack as a double-tap strike, in which an initial wave of drones hit the area followed by a second wave as rescue workers responded. The Ukrainian leader said the fire, which spread across 9,000 square meters (around 97,000 square feet), had been extinguished and rescue efforts were underway.

Kryvyi Rih has been hit multiple times during the 4½-year all-out war between Russia and Ukraine, with one of the

deadliest occurring in April 2025, when 20 people were killed, including nine children.

Large-scale Russian strikes have become a regular occurrence this summer, with Friday's attacks landing just 24 hours after Russia pounded Kyiv with scores of missiles and drones in a nighttime assault that killed 16 people.

The capital has been hit hard repeatedly in recent weeks: 17 people were killed in a strike on Kyiv and its surrounding region just over two weeks ago, and nine died in another attack on the city two days before that. The United Nations said last week that Kyiv was one of the hardest-hit cities in July, with at

least 54 civilians killed and 202 wounded.

At the same time, Ukraine has shifted the war onto Russian soil through long-range drone strikes on oil facilities that have caused fuel shortages across Russia. It also has unsettled the Russian public by striking warehouses of Wildberries, the country's biggest online retailer.

The Russian online news outlet Astra reported Saturday that a Ukrainian drone set ablaze an oil refinery in the Samara region. Local officials said that damage was recorded at an unidentified "industrial facility" and a logistics centre for Ozon, a competitor to Wildberries.

Somali pirates hijack oil tanker off Yemen

AP
Mogadishu, Aug. 22

Somali pirates hijacked an oil products tanker off Yemen, a Somali maritime security official said, the latest in a resurgence of piracy that has seen six commercial vessels seized since April across the Gulf of Aden and western Indian Ocean.

Six armed pirates hijacked the Eritrean-flagged M.T. Sibul on Thursday about 136 nautical miles (252 kilometers) east of al-Mukalla, Yemen, and took it toward Somalia's Puntland coast, the official, who has knowledge of the incident, told The Associated Press on Friday. He spoke on condition of anonymity as he was not allowed to discuss the matter publicly.

The Sibul, managed by the UAE-based Qatrat Alnada Almasi Ship Management, was sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department last year for allegedly belonging to an Iranian "shadow fleet" used to transport petroleum products seeking to evade U.S. sanctions.

The tanker had 20 crew members aboard: 16 Indians, one Syrian, one Sudanese, and one Iraqi. The nationality of one crew member was not immediately known. The vessel's previous port of departure and intended destination remained unclear.

The hijacking came three days after pirates seized the Lutuf, a Cameroon-flagged general cargo vessel, off Somalia's coast. The vessel had 10 crew aboard, including six Indians, a Turkish national, a Georgian national and two Serbian security guards, according to maritime tracking reports.

The Sibul is the sixth commercial vessel hijacked by Somali pirates since April 21, when the Palau-flagged tanker Honor 25 was seized off Somalia. Pirates later seized the Sward on April 26, the Eureka on May 2, the Asana on July 17 and the Lutuf on Aug. 17.

The attacks have occurred increasingly far from Somalia's coastline, including the hijacking of the Eureka while anchored off Yemen and the Asana about 65 nautical miles (120 kilometers) southwest of al-Mukalla.

Trump tariffs pile up, Canada resists

AFP
Montreal (Canada), Aug. 22

US President Donald Trump's 50-percent tariffs on certain Canadian goods which took effect Saturday delivered another blow to bilateral trade, renewing focus on Ottawa's efforts to reduce dependence on its southern neighbor.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's strategy involves a search for new markets, a focus on domestic trade and the launch of major projects. The two economies are heavily inter-connected, with roughly 70 percent of all Canadian exports heading to the United States.

Previous Trump levies on autos, steel, aluminum and lumber have hit Canada hard, forcing job losses and stunting growth. Canada has even entered a technical recession this year after two consecutive quarters of economic contraction.

The latest 50-per cent tariffs came into force after days of negotiations failed to produce an agreement. They impact some \$20 billion worth of goods, or 5.5 percent of Canadian exports to the United States, targeting products ranging from hockey sticks to cement.

Carney said Friday that Canada



would match the US tariffs "dollar for dollar to protect our workers and businesses." The exports affected by the US tariffs include products that were previously protected under the North American trade pact, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

At first glance, "that's frightening," said Richard Ouellet, a professor of international economic law at Quebec's Laval University. "Until now, the USMCA acted as kind of a shield. The Americans are opening a breach," he told AFP. Trump declined to renew the USMCA on July 1, making it subject to annual reviews.

While Trump ditching USMCA exemptions could forecast more extreme measures to come, Canada's largest

Iran claims it defeated US

AP
Dubai, Aug. 22

Iran's president says the world has accepted that it's won the war with the United States, while France and Saudi Arabia are expected to discuss plans to bypass the Strait of Hormuz, which has been effectively closed since the U.S. and Israel launched a war with Iran nearly six months ago.

Meanwhile remarks by the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey and special envoy for Syria appear to contradict official U.S. position over the Golan Heights.

Iranian state media reported Friday that President Masoud Pezeshkian said the war with the U.S. should end since the world has already accepted that Iran has won. Iran sees its control over the Strait and not giving into U.S. demands as a win.

"The entire world approved our victory and the U.S. is hated," he said according to IRNA news agency. Iran sees its control over the Strait and not giving into U.S. demands as a win.

The remarks came as the Trump administration is touting a crushing financial campaign against Iran, promising an "economic D-Day" against the country. President Donald Trump announced that the U.S. would be imposing an "unprecedented" level of economic warfare and isolation on Iran, aiming to force its leadership to cave to demands to end its nuclear program and fully reopen the crucial Strait of Hormuz to oil and natural gas tankers.

In an interview Friday, Tom Barrack said that Israel "still" occupies the territory in violation of U.N. resolutions.

In his comments made to Mario Nawfal, a Lebanese-Australian entrepreneur, Barrack said that "in the Golan, with Syria, they (Israel) still occupy the Golan, against the U.N. resolutions."

Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 war and annexed it in 1981. The U.N. considers the territory occupied Syrian land and the annexation null and void, with U.N. resolutions calling for Israel's withdrawal to the June 4, 1967, line.

In March 2019, Trump signed a proclamation recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, reversing decades of U.S. policy. The move did not change the territory's status under international law or win broader international recognition.

Colombia became the second country to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan this month, joining the United States. Barrack's remarks sparked a backlash Saturday from conservative activist and U.S. presidential ally Laura Loomer, who posted on X that he "should resign for his lack of understanding of U.S. foreign policy."

French President Emmanuel Macron and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman are expected to discuss the effects of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and plans to develop routes around the waterway during the Saudi leader's two-day visit to Paris beginning Sunday, according to officials in the presidency who are not authorized to be publicly named.

Proposals under consideration include increasing trade through Omani ports outside the Persian Gulf, expanding or doubling pipelines in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, and developing new rail links, the officials said.

PRISM

Rancher helps police lasso bull

California: Authorities in California called in a professional to help lasso a loose bull found running along a highway. The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office said deputies responded alongside the California Highway Patrol when the "large bull" was spotted Tuesday evening along Highway 35 in Half Moon Bay.

Authorities spent several hours attempting unsuccessfully capture the bull, deputies and troopers sought the assistance of Samuel Ramos Palomino, a foreman at Sea Horse Ranch. Palomino was asleep when authorities reached him shortly after midnight, but he got out of bed and rushed to the scene, despite having to be at work at 4 a.m.

Fastest clog shoe tops 70 mph

Netherlands: A Dutch TV host drove a clog-shaped vehicle to a high speed of 70.05 mph to break a Guinness World Record for a motorized shoe. Klaas van Kruijstum and the team behind his TV series, Klaas Can Do Everything, decided they wanted to create a record-breaking vehicle, so they reached out to British man Kevin Nicks, who set the record for the fastest motorised garden shed in 2025. The team decided to use a Dutch wooden clog as their inspiration, and used the frame of an electric go-kart as the base for their motorised shoe.

The completed vehicle, with a shoe-shaped shell made from polyester and fiberglass, reached a top speed of 70.05 mph when van Kruijstum got behind the wheel April 4 at Breda International Airport in Bosschenhoofd, Netherlands. The speed was enough to earn the Guinness World Records title for the fastest motorized clog shoe.

Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

- 1904– The automobile tire chain is patented.
- 1914– World War I: The British Expeditionary Force and the French Fifth Army begin their Great Retreat before the German Army.
- 1914– World War I: Japan declares war on Germany.
- 1927– Italian anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti are executed after a lengthy, controversial trial.
- 1942– World War II: Beginning of the Battle of Stalingrad.
- 1943– World War II: Kharkiv is liberated by the Soviet Red Army for the second time after the Battle of Kursk.
- 1944– World War II: Marseille is liberated by the Allied forces.
- 1944– World War II: King Michael of Romania dismisses the pro-Nazi government of Marshal Antonescu, who is later arrested. Romania switches sides from the Axis to the Allies.
- 1944– Freckleton air disaster: A United States Army Air Forces B-24 Liberator bomber crashes into a school in Freckleton, England, killing 61 people.

CONGO RECEIVES 16,000 DOSES OF EBOLA VACCINE

AP
Bunia, Aug. 22

Congo has received more than 16,000 doses of the Ervebo vaccine as the country grapples with the fastest Ebola outbreak in history, the country's health minister said.

The 16,250 doses arrived at the N'djili International Airport in the capital, Kinshasa, late Friday, as part of 70,000 doses expected from the World Health Organization and partners that were announced on Thursday. More doses are expected early next week.

The current Ebola outbreak in Congo is caused by the rare Bundibugyo virus, which currently has no approved treatment or vaccine. It can spread easily and go undetected because some of its symptoms are similar to other illnesses, such as malaria. The Ervebo vaccine is licensed to treat Ebola and has been effective in past outbreaks. The WHO said it may provide some protection against the Bundibugyo virus.

The latest outbreak, which has recorded 2,557 deaths out of the 5,375 confirmed cases across six affected provinces, is spreading at an unprecedented rate and is on track to surpass the deadliest outbreak on record, which killed over 11,000 people across West Africa between 2014 and 2016. Data from the Africa Centre for Disease Control shows that transmission has not yet peaked and could reach three times its known rate.

Mexico resumes livestock sales to US

AP
Hermosillo, Aug. 22

At daybreak, rancher Martín Alfonso Ibarra takes advantage of the cooler hours in northern Mexico's desert to oversee the milking of his cows and tend to 16 prized calves. Soon, he hopes, they will be headed north to the United States as a yearlong ban on Mexican cattle imports comes to an end.

The ban, imposed over concerns about a flesh-eating parasite known as the New World screwworm fly, dealt a blow to cattle and beef industries on both sides of the border, exacerbating a livestock shortage in the U.S. and hurting a Mexican ranching sector already weakened by drought and a cattle export business that generated \$1.2 billion for Mexico last year.

Now, the U.S. is set to resume livestock imports from Mexico beginning Aug. 24 at the Douglas, Arizona, border crossing, which borders Agua Prieta in Mexico's Sonora state. If the reopening goes smoothly, the U.S. Department of Agriculture could allow imports through additional ports, though shipments will initially be subject to restrictions aimed at preventing the spread of the parasite — which has already crossed the border, with authorities battling cases in Texas and New Mexico.

The screwworm gets its name from the maggots' habit of burrowing — or screwing — into a wound, according to the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Any warm-blooded animal, including wildlife, pets and occasionally even humans, can be infested.



PHOTO: AP

A rancher unloads calves at the pens of the regional cattle ranchers association ahead of the announced reopening of the U.S. border to Mexican cattle imports, in Hermosillo, Mexico.

In Mexico, the screwworm outbreak was detected in November 2024 and has spread to 30 of the 32 states — most recently in Sonora, where the first case was reported Wednesday in the community of Munihuaa, near the borders with Chihuahua and Sinaloa, states where infections have also proliferated.

To date, Mexico has 1,969 active screwworm cases, which represent less than half of the infections reported a year ago, a decline that authorities say shows progress in containing the outbreak. Still, they acknowledge eradication will take time.

Against that backdrop, Ibarra and thousands of other ranchers in the northern state of Sonora are preparing to resume live cattle exports. But optimism

is tempered by new U.S. controls expected to slow shipments across the border. "This is not over yet," said the 58-year-old rancher, adding that the export halt cut his income by 40% last year.

According to the protocol defined by U.S. authorities, in the first week of reopening, only 700 cattle per day will be allowed through; this will rise to 900 in the second week and will gradually increase until reaching 1,300 cattle per day, veterinarian Arturo Ruiz, responsible for animal health for the state of Sonora, told The Associated Press.

The new rules also require cattle to be fitted with radio-frequency identification tags in their ears and screened by electronic readers and trained dogs.

GOVT TO OPEN RESIDENTIAL AUTISM SCHOOLS IN ALL PROVINCES

RSS
Sudurpaschim, Aug. 22

Minister for Education and Sports Sasmit Pokharel reiterated that the government was preparing to establish separate residential schools in all seven provinces for the autistic children.

At a programme in Dhangadhi on Saturday, Minister Pokharel shared that the government has also allocated budget for the announcement, adding that discussions were on-going on the modality of the schools.

The programme was organized to hold discussions on running academic programme for children with autism and neuro-diversity. He mentioned that studies, therapies and other creative activities will be run by keeping students and parents together.

Minister Pokharel shared that a detail project report will be prepared and the process for its implementation will be initiated from this year.

Likewise, Minister Pokharel said that the government was serious to resolve the challenges of autistic children and their parents, and this issue will be incorporated in upcoming laws, bylaws and guidelines of the education sector.

AWARENESS PROGRAMMES FOR MIGRANT WORKERS HELD IN JEDDHA

RSS
Kathmandu, Aug. 22

The Consulate General of Nepal in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia organised the 'Migrant Workers Awareness and Interaction' targeting Nepali migrants workers in Saudi Arabia.

The recent programme focused on providing Nepali migrant workers with basic but vital information on major Labour-related legal provisions in Saudi Arabia, job contracts and the rights and responsibilities of workers, according to Yagya Raj Poudyal, the Deputy Consular General During the programme, the participants were briefed on basic matters that Nepali migrant in Saudi Arabia require to know while living and working in Saudi Arabia.

The programme provided practical information on use of digital platform and online services available in Saudi Arabia, including procedures for accessing and using digital tools in Saudi Arabia.

It was particularly targeted at Nepali migrant workers and Nepali community members residing in the local Al-Khumrah region.

Around 100 participants attended the programme, including Consular General Paras Pundit, representatives from the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) and representatives of local social organizations and migrant workers.

School buildings destroyed by earthquake reconstructed

BY RAJU LAMICHHANE
Rukum West, Aug. 22

Twenty-seven community school buildings destroyed by the earthquake in Rukum West have been reconstructed.

The buildings damaged by the Jajarkot earthquake three years ago, have been reconstructed through the Infrastructure Development Office with the support of the Karnali Provincial Government. According to Ramchandra BC, Chief of the Infrastructure Development Office Chaurjahari, 27 school buildings out of the 43 schools selected for reconstruction in Rukum West have been reconstructed.

Twenty-even schools were reconstructed in the last fiscal year 2025/026, while the remaining 16 schools are in the process of reconstruction in the current fiscal year.

These buildings have been reconstructed from the budget allocated in the fiscal years 2024/025 and 2025/026 as per the Earthquake Damaged Building Reconstruction Programme Operation Procedure, 2024 approved by the Karnali Provincial Government.

Office Chief BC informed that in these two fiscal years, the provincial government has allocated Rs. 385 million under the reconstruction programme for earthquake-damaged community schools and health institutions in all six local levels of Rukum West.

From the same amount, 27



Photo: RSS

SAVE THE SOIL: The green paddy fields at Dhulikhel Municipality-5 not only highlight ecological harmony but also provide visual relief. Local governments must take necessary actions to protect farmlands.

Expo on stolen heritage to begin today

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 22

An exhibition presenting the displacement of sacred objects and cultural heritage during colonial rule and its continuing consequences across South Asia, is kicking off at Taragaon Next, Boudha in Kathmandu, on Sunday.

The two-month-long exhibition will run till October 31.

Supported by the Saraf Foundation and curated by Dr. Arshiya Mansoor Lokhandwala, the exhibition – ‘What Empire Took, What Empire Left: Museums, Borders and the Politics of Return in South Asia’ – brings together artists from across South Asia to explore questions of cultural loss, ownership, restitution, memory and the politics surrounding displaced heritage.

The exhibition will showcase how deities, manuscripts, sculptures and ritual objects were removed from living cultural and religious contexts and subsequently reclassified within Western museums and collections. “In these institutional settings, objects once embedded in ritual, community and belief systems often came to be viewed primarily as archaeological, historical or aesthetic artefacts,” the organiser said in a statement.



Participating artists include Temsüyanger Longkumer, Reetu Sattar, Shaurya Kumar, Raqs Media Collective, Mithu Sen, Divya Mehra, Marium Ghani, L.N. Tallur, Roshan Mishra, Bishal Manandhar and Jagath Weerasinghe.

“This exhibition brings South Asia into that urgent discourse, asking not simply what should return, but who holds the power to own, interpret and determine the afterlives of displaced heritage,” Dr. Lokhandwala said.

According to the organiser, rather than presenting cultural loss simply as a historical event, the exhibition will portray the structures that enabled such displacement, including colonial systems of knowledge, illicit markets, institutional complicity and museum practices that historically privileged possession and classification over the cultural and spiritual relationships surrounding an object.

Legitimacy dispute dents...

“During these kinds of times, some leaders within the party, instead of uniting and moving forward, called for special convention,” he said.

He rejected the legality of the special general convention and maintained that the central working committee under Deuba should have remained responsible for organising the party’s regular convention.

“The special convention, how it was done and how it took place is not legal according to the party statute. It is totally illegal. The only way forward was via party convention called by then central committee members under Sher Bahadur Deuba.

But that was overridden illegally via special convention,” said Bishwakarma.

The Supreme Court’s decision to review its earlier ruling has provided the Deuba faction with renewed grounds to pursue its legal challenge. However, the decision to review the case does not itself overturn the existing recognition of the Thapa-led leadership.

Despite the differences, Bishwakarma said he did not want the dispute to result in a permanent split.

“As per unification or breaking the party, I am always for unification. This historic party has a part to play in Nepali politics. It has a role to play in saving the country’s constitution and sovereignty,” he said.

He said his faction would accept the outcome of a convention it considers legally constituted.

“When the legal party convention

will take place and new representatives will be elected, we will all agree to the result. But for now, we will fight for what is right,” said Bishwakarma.

The position reflects the central contradiction facing the Nepali Congress. Both factions speak of unity, but they disagree fundamentally over the organisational process through which that unity should be achieved.

The Deuba faction has also held a separate national gathering, where its leaders rejected the special general convention and called for a unified 15th General Convention. The Thapa faction, however, has rejected the authority of such a parallel gathering to determine official party policy.

Amid the confrontation, general secretary Pradip Paudel has emerged as a voice for reconciliation. In an appeal to party leaders and cadres, Paudel warned that the Nepali Congress could not afford to remain consumed by its internal dispute while the country was facing political uncertainty.

“The Nepali Congress is not just a political party, it is a democratic movement that carries the trust of the common Nepali people, the carrier of rights, and the dream of the country’s prosperity,” Paudel wrote via social media.

He said the events surrounding the Gen Z movement and their aftermath had left the country at a difficult juncture and urged the party to look beyond its internal troubles.

Nepal, India agree to coordinate on border crime control

BY MAHESH KUMAR DAS
Jaleshwar, Aug. 22

Nepal and India have agreed to strengthen coordination between their security agencies to reduce crime along the border.

The agreement was reached at a coordination meeting between security officials of Nepal and India held on Saturday at the Jaleshwar Municipality in Mahottari district headquarters, according to Mahottari Chief District Officer Indra Dev Yadav.

The meeting discussed border security, prevention and control of border-related crimes, control of drug smuggling, protection of border pillars, criminal activities along the border, and the illegal trafficking of firearms, Yadav said.

Security officials from Mahottari, Sarlahi and Rautahat districts of Nepal and Sitamarhi district of India participated in the meeting.

The two sides signed a written agreement to expand areas for joint patrols and share information about incidents to help control border crime.

CDO Yadav signed the agreement on behalf of Nepal, while Sitamarhi District Magistrate Tanay Sultania signed on behalf of India.

PROMPT JUSTICE DELIVERY OUR PRIORITY: CJ

RSS
Baglung, Aug. 22

Chief Justice (CJ) Dr. Manoj Kumar Sharma has said that the key priority of the judiciary was to ensure prompt justice delivery, as this will ease the service recipients. The CJ said people’s hopes and confidence to the judiciary will be strengthened only if prompt justice delivery was ensured.

The CJ, who arrived in the Baglung bench of the High Court Pokhara to take stock of the situation of courts, physical infrastructures and justice delivery, said the courts have applied technology to provide speedy justice delivery.

On the occasion, the Chief Justice inspected the Baglung bench of the High Court Pokhara and the Baglung District Court.

Similarly, the Chief Justice held interactions with the legal practitioners of High Court Bar Unit, Baglung, and reminded the role of the legal practitioners to spread awareness on law related issues.

Sharma stated that the rising cases of child marriage, divorce and rape were not the good phenomenon.

Likewise, he added that timely justice delivery could be made possible only if the courts were technology-friendly.

The Chief Justice also observed that the trend of case settlement of the District Court Baglung has improved in the last some years.



Photo: Mahesh Kumar Das

Participants at a meeting of security officials from Nepal and India held at the Jaleshwar Municipality, Mahottari.

Sultania praised the active cooperation between the security personnel of the two countries in maintaining security along the border.

The officials also held detailed discussions on the monitoring and maintenance of border pillars and controlling human trafficking. They agreed to continue sharing information on such issues.

More than two dozen security officials attended the meeting, including Mahottari CDO Yadav, Sarlahi Chief District Officer Bijay Raj Subedi, Rautahat Chief District Officer Dinesh Sagar, Sitamarhi District Magistrate Sultanian and Sitamarhi Superintendent of Police Amit Ranjan.

Health Minister...

She stated that the current government had paid the health insurance amount up to February, informing that only about two and a half months’ worth of payments remain.

According to her, health insurance claims worth about two and a half billion rupees are received every month.

Minister Mehta also said that citizens should not only depend on health treatment but also pay attention to their lifestyle to minimise diseases.

She suggested that many types of health problems can be reduced by adopting regular exercise, a balanced diet, and a healthy lifestyle.

She clarified that the federal government is not legally allowed to give direct instructions to the provincial governments on health-related matters and said that it has been assisting in providing doctors at the provincial level as per the need.

She stated that there is a system for the federal government to send doctors and the respective provincial secretaries to deploy doctors to various hospitals based on need and priority.

She also claimed that the current government has achieved success in sending doctors to remote areas of all seven provinces. She added that the government has prioritized increasing the availability of doctors in remote areas and areas where there is a shortage of health workers.

Local level officials, members of organizations and other concerned locals from Dhanpalathan, Rangeli, Sunbarshi and Ratuwamai participated in the programme.

The participants expressed their opinions and suggestions regarding the state of health services at the local level, the implementation of the health insurance programme, the availability of doctors, issues encountered in hospitals, and access to services.

Teej song Nau Gedi-2 raises voice against daughter-in-law abuse

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 22

Teej is not only a festival and an opportunity for entertainment in Nepali society, but also an important means for women to express their pain, suffering and social realities through songs. The Teej song 'Nau Gedi-2', created with this social reality in mind, has been released.

Featuring lyrics by former High Court judge and lyricist Bhim Kumar Ojha, music by singer-composer Santosh BC and vocals by singer Tika Sanu, the song explores the family pain, social discrimination and complex relationships that Nepali daughters-in-law often face. The song and its video have been released on Ojha's own Bhim Kumar Ojha YouTube channel.

In the previously released 'Nau Gedi-1', the story of a daughter-in-law subjected to continuous mental torture by her mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law and husband was presented. She found the strength to return to life through the love of her young daughter. 'Nau Gedi-2', which continues the same story, further portrays the daughter-in-law's family pain and neglect. This time, however, the greatest force driving her forward is her unconditional love for her daughter.

The song raises questions about a social mentality that refuses to accept a daughter-in-law as a member of the family. It exposes the tendency to view a



married woman merely as a 'daughter-in-law' and to inflict mental and domestic violence against her as normal in the name of tradition and culture.

Tika Sanu plays the daughter-in-law in the video. Her performance conveys pain, silent rebellion and a mother's immense love for her child. Rather than relying on dialogue, she expresses her emotions through facial expressions and her eyes, making her performance one of the video's most striking elements. Child artist Rubika Baskota plays her young daughter.

Santosh BC plays the husband. Through his portrayal of a stubborn and irresponsible man, he depicts the patriarchal mentality that prevents a

husband from understanding his wife's pain.

Similarly, Devi Ojha, lyricist Bhim Kumar Ojha's life partner, plays the mother-in-law. Her portrayal of a harsh mother-in-law who constantly torments her daughter-in-law is compelling. Through these characters, the video depicts the psychological pressure and domestic abuse that the daughter-in-law faces within her own home.

In contrast, lyricist Bhim Kumar Ojha himself plays an understanding and sympathetic father-in-law. His character conveys the message that not all members of a family share the same mindset. His role offers hope that humanity and compassion can survive

even in a harsh family environment.

The video also makes social superstitions surrounding marriage an important part of the story. It portrays the mentality of blaming a newly married daughter-in-law for the death of her brother-in-law and placing responsibility for the tragedy on her. In doing so, the video questions an outdated social mindset of blaming a daughter-in-law for every misfortune.

Overall, 'Nau Gedi-2' is more than a Teej-themed song. The lyrics express pain, the music conveys sympathy, Tika Sanu's voice evokes compassion, and the visuals reflect social reality.

By portraying the torture suffered by the daughter-in-law, particularly at the hands of her mother-in-law, sister-in-law and husband, the song raises an important question: How long will it take us to understand that a daughter-in-law is also someone's daughter?

The most poignant aspect of the song is the way a mother, overwhelmed by suffering, ultimately draws strength from the love of her young daughter. That love gives her the courage to keep living even in the midst of pain.

Through its combination of lyrics, music, vocals and acting, 'Nau Gedi-2' seeks to move beyond the traditional entertainment associated with Teej songs and convey a message about women's suffering, the power of motherhood and the importance of compassion within families. Alongside entertainment, the song and video encourage audiences to reflect on their own attitudes and behaviour within the family.

Trial begins in the 1996 killing of Tupac Shakur

AP
Las Vegas, Aug. 22

In the first week of testimony at the trial of a man accused of orchestrating the killing of Tupac Shakur, the night of Sept. 7, 1996, has been run and rerun many times — through police who were at the scene, through the people near the hip-hop superstar, and through the recorded words of the suspect, Duane "Keffe D" Davis.

Many of the basic facts jurors have learned are not in dispute.

Shakur and Death Row Records co-founder Marion "Suge" Knight were in Las Vegas to watch a Mike Tyson fight at the MGM Grand Garden Arena. Just outside, Shakur, Knight and their entourage got into a brawl with Davis' nephew, Orlando "Baby Lane" Anderson.

Later that night, Shakur and Knight were in a black BMW at a red light near the Las Vegas Strip, when a white Cadillac with four men inside pulled up beside them and someone opened fire. Shakur was shot multiple times and died six days later. Knight survived with minor injuries.

Years later, Davis would say he procured the gun and his nephew fired the shots. Davis' lawyers have disputed the statements and fought unsuccessfully to get them excluded. The other men in the Cadillac have since died, limiting eyewitness testimony.

The dispute had its roots in the long-running feud between the Mob Piru Bloods, a gang Knight and Shakur were affiliated with, and the South Side Compton Crips, for whom Davis was a prominent leader.

A jury of six men and 10 women — four are alternates — will decide whether Davis, 63, is guilty of one count of murder with a deadly weapon with the intent to promote, further or assist a criminal gang. He has pleaded not guilty. If convicted, he could get life in prison.

Here's a closer look at the first week of the trial that is expected to last about a month.

Is Keffe D admitting old truths — or as his lawyer says, 'full of crap'?

A prosecutor said in his opening statement that Davis' own words — in interviews with police, podcasters and filmmakers — would prove he orchestrated the killing.

"Let's be clear, Duane Davis did not pull the trigger. But he did plan the shooting in retaliation of the beating of his nephew," Chief Deputy District Attorney Binu Palal told jurors. "Remarkably, you will learn that from Duane Davis himself."

"Now, 30 years later, we're going to ask you to finally hold Duane Davis accountable," Palal said.

Davis' defense attorney Michael Sanft took the unusual approach of telling jurors his client's words were all bloviating and braggadocio, and did not represent the truth.

"What they are telling you, they are representing as fact, when it's really fiction," said Sanft. He said Davis wasn't previously charged because law enforcement knew that he was "full of crap."

Who are the witnesses and what have they said about the 1996 shooting?

Seventeen witnesses testified through the first five days, a little under half the number prosecutors said they plan to call at the trial.

Arjun Rampal marries longtime girlfriend

AGENCIES
Mumbai, Aug. 22

Bollywood actor Arjun Rampal has registered his marriage with his longtime girlfriend 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 couple had obtained special permission from the Assistant Public Prosecutor of the local court to condone the 15-day waiting period required between the first and second signatures under local law.

Sub-Registrar Suraj Vernekar said the marriage was registered under Goa's Uniform Civil Code. Arjun and Gabriella arrived at the office around 4 pm and were dressed casually for the occasion.

Arjun Rampal and Gabriella Demetriades have been in a relationship since 2018, following the actor's separation from his former wife, Mehr Jesia. The couple welcomed their first son, Arik, in 2019, before getting married. Four years later, they welcomed their second son, Ariv. In 2025, Arjun announced his engagement to Gabriella, six years after they began dating.



Previously, speaking to Ranveer Allahbadia on his YouTube channel, Arjun opened up about why he and Gabriella had not married despite having two children together.

The actor said, "It's not me, it's not her. What is marriage? A piece of paper after all. I think we are already married and there is no doubt in my mind about that. But, sometimes what that piece of paper can also do is change you. Because it's like you think it's permanent, it's a false notion in fact but you are just legally bound."

He added, "It could change your attitude towards each other. I think that's how we both feel. Whatever has happened between us was very organic. I don't want to speak much about it because I don't want to jinx it. I don't think I need to justify this to anybody. For us, this is beautiful. You should keep experiencing it for as long as you can. In both our minds, we are married to each other. We are both pushing each other in the right direction and at the same time, we are boyfriend-girlfriend."

However, Arjun Rampal had clarified that he was not against the institution of marriage.

Over 3,000 Kawadiyas pay homage at Bageswori

BY SIRAJ KHAN
Nepalgunj, Aug. 22

More than 3,000 Kawadiyas from the Nanpara tehsil area of Uttar Pradesh, India, have reached Nepalgunj and offered 'Maitri Jal' to Khadeshwor Junge Mahadev, located within the historic Bageshwori Temple premises.

The devotees arrived in Nepalgunj on Friday carrying holy water from the Saryu River, collected at Shivpur Takiya Ghat in Nanpara. They offered the water to Khadeshwor Junge Mahadev and performed worship at Bageshwori Temple.

Gopal Prasad Adhikari, chairman of the Bageshwori Temple Guthi Management Committee, said the Indian pilgrims were given a grand welcome. After offering holy water and performing worship, they returned to India. Nepalgunj Sub-Metropolitan City Mayor Prashant Bista and others welcomed the devotees at Triveni Chowk in Nepalgunj, saying the religious and cultural ties between Nepal and India were unbreakable.

He said the relationship was growing stronger as the number of religious tourists travelling between the two countries increased each year.

Civil society leaders Deepak Lodh, Chintu Verma and Sushil Verma also welcomed the Indian devotees.

Radheshyam, president of the Young Kawadiya Association, who led the group, said the devotees were excited and impressed by the welcome and respect they received in



PHOTO: SIRAJ KHAN/NEPALGUNJ

Indian devotees who reached Junge Mahadev Temple carrying 'Maitri Jal' from India.

Nepalgunj.

According to Radheshyam, the pilgrimage aims to strengthen the religious, cultural and friendly ties between India and Nepal. Kawadiyas from the border area have been offering water to Junge Mahadev for the past 25 years, while a large number of devotees have been making the journey together since last year.

Chief Police Inspector Rajan Bhattarai of the Area Police Office, Jamunaha,

at the Nepal-India border, said more than 3,000 devotees crossed into Nepal from India on Friday morning and travelled to Bageshwori Temple before returning.

During the journey, a welcome programme was held at Sankat Mochan Hanuman Temple in Rupaidiha, India, on Thursday night. Local residents organised a grand welcome and arranged food and drinks for the pilgrims,

said Santosh Shukla, a Rupaidiha resident.

The local administration and social organisations in Nepalgunj said the journey symbolised the religious and cultural unity between the two countries. Krishna Prasad Shrestha, coordinator of the Citizen Concern Forum, Banke, said the journey was not only a religious event but also a symbol of cultural cooperation and goodwill between Nepal and India.

HOROSCOPE

tarot.com

ARIES: The routine that keeps costing you energy may need a smarter system. The Sun in Virgo moves through your 6th House of Work, Health, and Daily Habits while trining Chiron in your 2nd House of Money and Self-Worth.

CANCER: The check-in you have been meaning to send could reopen a useful connection. The Sun in Virgo moves through your 3rd House of Communication while trining Chiron in your 11th House of Friends, Community, and Future Plans.

LIBRA: The home issue competing with work may need a calmer order of operations. The Moon in Capricorn moves through your 4th House of Home and Family while opposing Mars in your 10th House of Career and Responsibility.

CAPRICORN: A close request becomes easier to answer when you know your own pace. The Moon in Capricorn moves through your 1st House of Self while opposing Mars in your 7th House of Partnership. A partner, client, friend, or collaborator may be ready to move faster than you are.

TAURUS: A creative outlet can help you feel more like yourself. The Sun in Virgo moves through your 5th House of Creativity, Romance, and Self-Expression while trining Chiron in Taurus and your 1st House of Self.

LEO: A clearer sense of value can help your work receive the respect it deserves. The Sun in Virgo moves through your 2nd House of Money, Values, and Self-Worth while trining Chiron.

SCORPIO: The message that feels like a debate may just need a clearer purpose. The Moon in Capricorn moves through your 3rd House of Communication while opposing Mars in your 9th House of Beliefs, Travel, and Learning.

AQUARIUS: A short pause can help your task list become easier to handle. The Moon in Capricorn moves through your 12th House of Solitude, Rest, and Hidden Stress while opposing Mars in your 6th House of Work and Wellness.

GEMINI: A small home reset can make your private thoughts easier to sort. The Sun in Virgo moves through your 4th House of Home, Family, and Emotional Roots while trining Chiron in your 12th House of Solitude and Hidden Patterns.

VIRGO: One brave step can help your confidence grow beyond familiar limits. The Sun in Virgo moves through your 1st House of Self while trining Chiron in your 9th House of Learning, Travel, and Belief.

SAGITTARIUS: The shared cost causing pressure needs a calm plan. The Moon in Capricorn moves through your 2nd House of Money and Self-Worth while opposing Mars in your 8th House of Shared Resources, Trust, and Intimacy. A bill,

PISCES: The group plan may need more room for your creative voice. The Moon in Capricorn moves through your 11th House of Friends, Community, and Future Plans while opposing Mars in your 5th House of Creativity, Romance, and Play.

CARTOON

gocomics.com



Nepal suffer second straight defeat in T20 Series

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Aug. 22

Nepal A suffered their second consecutive defeat in the Top End T20 Series in Australia, going down to Bangladesh High Performance XI by nine wickets at Marrara Oval on Saturday.

Put into bat, Nepal struggled for momentum and were restricted to 99 for nine from their allotted 20 overs. Opener Kushal Bhurtel top-scored with a patient 46 from 40 deliveries, including three fours and a six.

Nepal made a disastrous start, losing four wickets for just 10 runs inside the fourth over. Trit Raj Das fell for six before captain Anil Sah was dismissed for a duck.

Pawan Sarraf and Kushal Malla also departed cheaply, leaving Nepal in deep trouble.

Bhurtel briefly steadied the innings, but his dismissal for 46 in the 16th over ended Nepal's hopes of building a competitive total. Shahab Alam contributed 11, while Rijan Dhakal and Bipin Khatri scored 10 and 11 not out respectively. Aakash Chand remained unbeaten on five as Nepal finished on 99 for nine.

Bangladesh's Md Rubel was the pick of the bowlers, claiming four wickets for 18 runs from his four overs. Rohanat Doullah Borson and Ripon Mondol took one wicket each, while Samiun Basir also claimed one.

The Bangladesh High Performance XI made light work of the modest target, reaching 101 for one in just 10.2 overs with 58 balls to spare.



Photo Credit: CAN

Bhurtel briefly steadied the innings, but his dismissal for 46 in the 16th over ended Nepal's hopes of building a competitive total. Shahab Alam contributed 11, while Rijan Dhakal and Bipin Khatri scored 10 and 11 not out respectively. Aakash Chand remained unbeaten on five as Nepal finished on 99 for nine.

Jishan Alam led the chase with an unbeaten 52 from 29 balls, striking three fours and four sixes at a blistering strike rate of 179.31. Ariful Islam provided strong support with an unbeaten 34 from 27 deliveries, hitting three fours and a six.

Habibur Rahman Sohan was the only Bangladesh batter dismissed, caught behind off Shahab Alam for seven.

Nepal's bowlers struggled to contain the Bangladesh batters, with Rijan Dhakal conceding 21 runs in his solitary over. Shahab Alam was the lone wicket-taker, finishing with one for 27 from 3.2 overs.

The defeat leaves Nepal still searching for their first win of the campaign after consecutive losses in the Australian T20 tournament.

Starc, Islam take six each on wild test day

AP
Mackay, Aug. 22

Mitchell Starc removed Bangladesh opener Shadman Islam with the first ball of the match and the veteran Australian fast bowler took six wickets in the first innings on a wild first day of the second cricket test Saturday.

Later, Shoriful Islam incredibly matched Starc's total with a six-wicket haul on a day which saw 18 wickets fall. The left-arm Bangladesh fast bowler has recovered from a side strain that kept him out of the first test.

After Australia won the toss and decided to bowl, with captain Pat Cummins suggesting "the wicket looks pretty good, but if there is any moisture in it, it might be this morning," Starc proved Cummins correct and Bangladesh was bowled out for 64 runs shortly after lunch.

The wicket, however, continued to be a challenge for batters well beyond the morning.

In reply, Australia was 165-8 at stumps to lead by 101 runs despite Shoriful Islam's 6-35 total. Cameron Green was one of the not-out batsmen on 51 with Nathan Lyon on 10.

Shadman Islam was caught in the gully off a leading edge to give Starc his record fourth career wicket on the first ball of a match. Starc removed Tanzid Hasan and had captain Najmul Hossain Shanto caught lbw in the third over to leave Bangladesh, which surprisingly won the first test of the two-test series, reeling.

Starc got his fourth wicket when Cameron Green made a grass-top catch to remove Mominul Haque for 9, the



PHOTO: AP

Mitchell Starc of Australia appeals unsuccessfully for a wicket during play on day two of the first cricket test against Bangladesh in Darwin, Australia.

only Bangladesh batter to score a run among the first four batters Saturday. His fifth wicket came when he had Litton Das trapped lbw and his sixth after lunch.

Starc's figures were 6-12 in 10 overs and Cummins finished with three wickets. The Bangladesh total was the lowest while batting first in Australia since 1932 when South Africa was dismissed for 36.

The highest Bangladesh score was by No. 11 batter Shoriful Islam with 14. "Six (wickets) in the first session, can't beat that," Starc told his wife, television commentator and former Australia captain Alyssa Healy while walking off the field at lunch. "Obviously a little bit of anger."

Russell cruises to Dutch sprint win



PHOTO: AP

Mercedes driver George Russell of Britain in action during sprint race at the Formula One Dutch Grand Prix in Zandvoort , Netherlands.

AP
Zandvoort, Aug. 22

George Russell started the second half of the Formula 1 season in style as he eased to a sprint race victory on Saturday ahead of the Dutch Grand Prix.

Russell started from pole position, quickly built a gap to Lando Norris in second and managed the pace from there, taking his first win since the Austrian Grand Prix in June.

"Obviously a great start to the weekend," he said. Charles Leclerc snatched second off Norris with a daring pass into the inside of the first corner with six laps to go, but couldn't get close enough to try passing Russell.

Norris held off a late charge from Russell's Mercedes teammate Kimi Antonelli to stay third as Antonelli pulled out of a potential overtaking move on the final lap. "We just don't have the pace in general, especially in the slow-speed

corners," Norris said.

Fourth-place Antonelli, starting fifth after car damage in qualifying, still managed to extend his standings lead by three more points to 53 because his closest challenger Lewis Hamilton could only manage seventh for Ferrari.

F1 still hasn't had a wet race this year but came tantalizingly close as rain fell as the drivers were heading back to the pits, seconds after the sprint finished.

"If there was one more lap it would have been a very, potentially, different end to the race so I'm glad the rain came when it did," Russell said.

While it stayed dry, overtaking was difficult, even in a year where the cars' electrical power has made back-and-forth passes common. The overtakes by Leclerc and Antonelli were the only changes of position anywhere in the top 11 finishers.

That should make grid position even more important than usual when qualifying takes place later Saturday for Sunday's Dutch Grand Prix.

Arsenal, Marseille and Real Betis begin league campaigns with wins

AP
Madrid, Aug. 22

Arsenal got its title defense off to a perfect start with a 3-0 win over newly promoted Coventry City in the opening match of the Premier League.

In France, a second-half double from Amine Gouri set Marseille on its way to a 4-0 victory over Strasbourg on the first night of this season's Ligue 1 action.

Elsewhere in Europe, Real Betis beat Real Sociedad 1-0 in the Spanish league while fan trouble overshadowed the first round of the German Cup.

Arsenal sweeps Coventry aside in Premier League opener

Newcomer Christos Tzolis helped set up two goals as defending champion Arsenal opened the Premier League season by dismantling promoted Coventry 3-0 to spoil the visitor's long-awaited return to the top flight.

After ending a 22-year wait for the Premier League title, Arsenal showed why it's favored to repeat as champion by completely dominating Frank Lampard's side in a game that was one-sided from start to finish.

Kai Havertz, Bukayo Saka and Martin Odegaard scored for the Gunners, who spurned chances to pad the scoreline even further.

For Coventry, it was a rude welcome back to the Premier League after a 25-year absence. Having won the second-tier Championship last season by a wide margin, Lampard's side simply



PHOTO: AP

Arsenal's Riccardo Calafiori leaps over Coventry City's goalkeeper Carl Rushworth during the English Premier League match between Arsenal and Coventry City in London.

looked outmatched as it was repeatedly taken apart by the marauding Gunners.

Gouri leads Marseille to dominant win over Strasbourg

Gouri, who scored eight goals in 22 league matches last season, has been linked with a move to Everton in recent days, but the speculation clearly did not hinder his concentration in the Ligue 1 opener.

He slotted home from close range a minute after the break and then doubled his tally from the penalty spot midway through the second half, just

minutes after Strasbourg was reduced to 10 men following Samir El Mourabet's dismissal for a bad tackle.

Keyliane Abdallah added a third in the 89th minute before Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg completed the scoring in stoppage time to give new Marseille coach Bruno Gésinio the perfect start to the season.

Rodrigo Riquelme gives Real Betis a winning start in Spain

Betis kicked off its La Liga campaign with a 1-0 win over Real Sociedad in Seville.

Sinner withdraws from the US Open with a knee injury

AP
New York, Aug. 22

Top-ranked Jannik Sinner withdrew from the U.S. Open, unable to recover from a right knee injury that has sidelined him since winning the Wimbledon title.

Sinner beat Alexander Zverev last month for his second straight title at the All England Club, but then pulled out of the hard-court tournaments in Montreal and Cincinnati that serve as a warmup for the U.S. Open.

The 25-year-old Italian wrote Friday that he won't be ready when the main draw begins on Aug. 30.

"Even though I have been working hard with my team and my medical staff, we have now had to make the difficult decision that I will not be able to compete at the US Open this year," Sinner wrote in a post on X.

"We have been back on court in Monte

Carlo over the last couple of days and have realized that I still need more time to recover from my right knee issue. I'm obviously very sad and disappointed, as New York has a special place in my heart. I was very much looking forward to coming back and playing in the electric atmosphere in front of the great fans there."

Sinner was the 2024 U.S. Open champion and lost to Carlos Alcaraz in last year's final.

The rivalry between those two has dominated men's tennis in recent years, and they met in the last three Grand Slam finals in 2025. Alcaraz took the most recent one with his four-set victory in New York.

That ended Sinner's title reign after he beat Taylor Fritz in straight sets in the 2024 final.

Sinner is 44-3 with six titles this year. He had a stunning collapse at the French Open, blowing a two-set lead while struggling in the heat in his second-round match against Juan Manuel



Cerundolo. He then sat out until Wimbledon, where his victory gave him five Grand Slam titles.

It will be the first time Sinner has missed a Grand Slam tournament since

making his major debut at the U.S. Open in 2019.

Meanwhile, Carlos Alcaraz is ready to return from injury to defend his U.S. Open title.

"Here we go," Alcaraz posted on his social media pages Thursday, with one picture showing him in front of the U.S. Open logo.

The seven-time Grand Slam champion has been sidelined since April because of a right wrist injury, forcing him to miss both the French Open and Wimbledon.

Alcaraz won his second U.S. Open title last year, beating Jannik Sinner in the final. He then won the Australian Open and his next tournament, part of his 22-3 start to this season.

But after winning his first match in the Barcelona Open, Alcaraz withdrew from the tournament because of the injury. He is still ranked No. 2 despite his absence.

Photos and videos on social media had shown Alcaraz on the practice

court, so it appeared he was on the verge of returning during the hard-court swing preceding the U.S. Open before he withdrew from the Cincinnati Open. That tournament is ongoing, and during a match Wednesday night commentators speculated whether Alcaraz would attempt to come back to play a Grand Slam tournament without preparation.

The top-ranked Sinner has also been out of action, not playing since winning the Wimbledon title. He pulled out of the Cincinnati tournament with a right knee injury, saying he would focus on being ready to play in New York.

Their injuries should create more intrigue for the last Grand Slam tournament of the year than there was in 2025, when they had met in the final at both the French Open and Wimbledon, and were widely expected to do so again in New York.

Alcaraz won his first Grand Slam title in the 2022 U.S. Open, a victory that at 19 made him the youngest man to hold the No. 1 spot in the ATP rankings.

JOAO PEDRO SIGNS NEW DEAL AT CHELSEA

AP
London, Aug. 22

Brazil striker Joao Pedro has signed a new contract with Chelsea until 2034 — and also taken on the Premier League team's No. 9 jersey which many attackers have struggled in.

Pedro's previous deal, signed when he joined from Brighton a year ago, was set to run until 2032 with the option of a further year.

The extension, on improved terms, was announced Saturday and comes in recognition of the impact he made in finishing his debut season at Chelsea with 20 goals.

"I always dreamed of playing for a big club, and it means a lot to me to give my long-term commitment to this club," Pedro said. "Chelsea has a long tradition of winning and it has big ambitions for the future."