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THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL



PHOTO: RSS

Jal Vinayak Ganesh Temple located at Chobhar in Kirtipur Municipality of Kathmandu.

New national demographic policy unveiled

PM urges for timely marriage, childbearing

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 11



Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has said that human existence could be at risk if population growth does not go hand-in-hand with national development and prosperity. He urged people to marry in time and focus on having children.

Speaking at the launch of the National Population Policy 2082, organised by the Ministry of Health and Population on the occasion of World Population Day on Friday, Prime Minister Oli said that the pace of development and population growth must be balanced. He emphasised that everyone should see raising children as a responsibility to the Earth.

The policy was officially launched by Prime Minister Oli in the presence of Health and Population Minister Pradeep Paudel.

"Human beings give meaning to every country and the Earth itself. Without people, there would be no country. We must take the right steps and adopt suitable policies to protect the existence and wellbeing of humanity," the PM said.

He added, "Human life is the most valuable creation. Those who kill others for personal gain should stop. There is no point holding discussions and seminars about population while continuing to build weapons of mass destruction. This contradiction threatens human survival. We must not let demographic imbalance continue."

Referring to the legal provision that allows marriage after the age of 20, the Prime Minister urged people to marry on time and have three children by the age of 30. "Do not get distracted by songs that say enjoy life after 40," he said.

He expressed concern that some awareness campaigns, like telling people not to hope for children who "cover the hills", have had the opposite effect, leading to quite low birth rates.

Pointing to negative population growth in the developed countries, he warned that even advanced nations are facing threats to human survival. Therefore, he stressed the need to implement this new policy to ensure proper population management.

The country has launched a new national population policy, replacing the old one introduced in 2014. This new policy is all about using the country's large youth population to boost the country's development.

It also aims to create a better system for managing the population that fits with Nepal's overall goals for growth. The main idea is to guide the nation towards lasting success as its population changes.

The new population policy launched on Friday addresses critical challenges facing the country's population dynamics. With a current population of around 31.96 million, the country's population is expected to grow by around 299,000 in 2025, reaching an estimated 32.1 million in 2026.

According to the report, the median age of the population is 30.2 years in 2025, reflecting a youthful demographic. However, concerns about youth unemployment, which stood at 20.82 per cent in January 2024 and the increasing elderly population (up from 8.1% in 2011 to 10.2% in 2021 for those aged 60 and above) underline the urgency of strategic population management.

The policy seeks to create a sensitive and responsive population management system integrated with broader development efforts. This includes reforming policies to balance fertility with population growth and integrating population concerns into all economic development aspects.

The objective focuses on social justice and reproductive rights. It includes promoting gender equality and social inclusion, protecting the rights of children, and safeguarding reproductive rights. While over half of Nepal's population (51.1%) is female, the Gender Development Index (GDI) was 0.885 in 2022 (compared to 0.632 for males), indicating persistent gender disparities. The UNFPA Nepal Annual Report 2024 highlights efforts to improve sexual and reproductive health services, with significant supplies of family planning commodities and screenings for conditions like pelvic organ prolapse.

The new policy directly confronts challenges such as ensuring equitable access to quality reproductive health, education and social security; realising the rights of gender and sexual minorities; and effectively utilising the potential of both youth and senior citizens. It also stresses the need to incorporate demographic indicators into all planning and programme development.

Significantly, the policy supports the country's ambitious goal of graduating from a Least Developed Country (LDC) to a middle-income country by 2026, the report said.

Currently, 34 districts in the Himalayan region and 319 local levels are experiencing a negative population growth rate.

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Monetary Policy 2025/26

NRB slashes interest rates, promotes housing and share market growth

BY MODNATH DHAKAL
Kathmandu, July 11

The Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) unveiled the Monetary Policy for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/26 on Friday with measures to expand private sector credit, manage non-performing loans (NPLs) and non-banking assets, and promote the share market.

Amidst growing liquidity in the Banks and Financial Institutions (BFIs), the NRB has announced to adjust the bank rate from 6.5 per cent to 6 per cent and deposit collection rate to 2.75 per cent from the existing 3 per cent. Likewise, the policy rate is dropped to 4.5 per cent from the current 5 per cent, Governor of the NRB, Dr. Biswo Nath Poudel said while unveiling the Monetary Policy.

Lowered bank rate facilitates easier borrowing from banks, while the decreased policy rate reduces the cost of credit in the economy. Adjustment in deposit rate means less incentive to save and more incentive to invest or spend. Combined, these steps can result in more liquidity in the market, higher demand and inflation.

However, the central bank is confident that these steps will help in encouraging banks to lend more to businesses and individuals, reduce lending rates, and make the home, business and personal loans cheaper, and there wouldn't be the risk of high inflation.

"The inflation rate is a very comfortable position in mid-May to mid-June at 2.72 per cent compared to 4.17 per cent during the same period last year. Since there is room for some inflation, the interest rate moderation will not disturb this harmony and significantly push the prices up," NRB Spokesperson Kiran Pandit said at a post-Monetary Policy press meet held at the central bank on Friday.



PHOTO: SUJAN GURUNG/TRN

Nepal Rastra Bank spokesperson Kiran Pandit speaking at a press conference held to provide information about the monetary policy for the fiscal year 2025/26, in Kathmandu on Friday.

He said that the interest rate corridor has been moderately brought down to boost economic activities and help the market become more vibrant.

Likewise, the NRB has adopted a flexible policy in real estate lending, with the maximum limit for residential home loans granted to individuals for purchasing a house increased to Rs. 30 million from the existing Rs. 20 million.

For first-time homebuyers, banks will now be allowed to provide residential loans of up to 80 per cent of the property's assessed value, up from the earlier cap of 70 per cent. Similarly, the loan-to-value ratio for land and property purchases has also been increased to allow the BFIs to finance up to 70 per cent of the assessed value. Currently, they are permitted to lend up to 50 per cent.

Margin lending limit raised

Governor Dr. Poudel has increased the limit on margin lending. The ceiling of Rs. 150 million for personal share-backed loans has now been raised to Rs. 250 million. With the implementation of this provision, individuals can now obtain loans of up to Rs. 250 million in total from various banks and financial institutions by pledging shares as collateral. This measure, combined with the decreased interest rates, can drive a share market growth.

Likewise, the cap on deposit mobilisation for finance companies has been removed, allowing them to mobilise deposits beyond the current provision of 15 times their core capital. It is likely to attract more deposits to the finance companies and have a positive impact on the prices of their shares.

The NRB has also indicated that the microfinance companies can distribute dividends above the current limit of 15 per cent from their profits. This will also take the share prices of the class 'D' microfinance institutions up in the days to come.

Capital increase for commercial banks

Commercial banks will now be allowed to increase their capital with the approval of the central bank. The BFIs will be permitted to count the regulatory reserves generated from non-banking assets held for up to two years towards their supplementary capital.

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CIAA files another case against Sunil Paudel

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 11

The Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) filed a corruption charge sheet against six individuals, including former Executive Director of the National Information Technology Centre (NITC), Sunil Paudel, and the World Distribution Nepal Pvt. Ltd. at the Special Court on Friday.

According to the CIAA, the defendants embezzled approximately Rs. 158 million during the supply, delivery, installation, and commissioning of High Compute Infrastructure in the fiscal year 2019/20 for the.

An investigation revealed that specifications were manipulated and overpriced equipment with substandard processors was supplied, violating procurement standards.

Although the bid called for Oracle ZFS Storage Appliances with 2.4 GHz processors, the delivered products had only 2.1 GHz processors, which are about 14.28 per cent less efficient. The CIAA claimed that this caused a loss of Rs. 158.85 million to the government.

The defendants embezzled approximately Rs. 158 million during the supply, delivery, installation, and commissioning of High Compute Infrastructure in the fiscal year 2019/20 for the.

The case also named NITC former Director Saphal Shrestha, Assistant Director Ramesh Pokhrel, Computer Engineer Ramsharan Gayak, Account Officer Nim Bahadur Wali, and Arun Shrestha, Chairman and MD of World Distribution Nepal as defendants.

The CIAA has sought legal action against them under Clause 8 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 2002 with each facing a proposed fine of Rs. 158.85 million.

Fashion shopping goes online thriftily

BY ERISHA SHARMA
Kathmandu, July 11

Female fashion in Nepal has changed tremendously in recent years as women's choices have become versatile. With the growing number of designers and influencers, varieties have been visible in female fashion.

"In today's market, females mostly prefer comfortable designer t-shirts, tops, and pants, and the market is very competitive as many shop designs are being introduced. So, with our 20 years of experience, we work to give our best to our customers," said Aaryan Rauniyar, owner of Star Fashion.

As social media has connected the world, fashion around the world has been elevated. Women across the nations, especially teenagers, are found having different styles. Some like to style as tomboys, pairing oversized clothes, whereas some like a classy look, and others prefer dressing cutely and simply. Many of the teenagers have the trend of online shopping through apps like Instagram, TikTok and Daraz.



PHOTO CREDIT: NEPALESE BUSINESS DIRECTORY

"I like wearing light and comfortable clothes. To shop for them, I prefer online shopping as it cuts the travel time to the market and I can view products easily. This also makes my shopping experience comfortable and easier," said Anisha Adhikari, a customer.

Among the shopping apps, Daraz has gained maximum popularity. However, the number of fraud and scams is also increasing in apps like TikTok and Instagram.

"I ordered clothes from a high-followed account on Instagram. When they asked for prepayment, I didn't give it much thought and sent them the payment. After a week, I realised I had been scammed. I didn't know what to do, so at the end, I didn't take any action," said Smriti Subedi. Like Smriti, many have fallen victims to these types of scams.

On the other hand, many still prefer physical shops. "I like wearing crop tops and fashionable clothes. I find bargaining as the best part of shopping, and it's almost impossible to bargain with online vendors. So, I prefer physical shops for shopping," said Rukmmani Shah.

Unlike teenagers, older girls prefer comfortable clothes and like casually dressing in t-shirts and pants for day-to-day life and even for work. "A owner of a clothing store mentioned, "We are currently focusing on fashion for slightly older women and also on selling clothes for plus-size women."

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BULLION
(Rs. per tola)

Hallmark Gold	: Rs. 191,800/-
Worked Gold	: NA
Silver	: 2,220/-

STOCK

NEPSE	: 2,731.80
Total Amount	: 9,682,488,739.83
No. of Share	: 26,470,840

GERMAN COMPANY BEURER LAUNCHES HEALTH DEVICES

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 11

German health and wellness company Beurer GmbH has officially entered the Nepali market with a launch of range of home healthcare devices to consumers across the country. Beurer's initial product line in Nepal includes digital blood pressure monitors, respiratory care nebulisers, blood sugar glucometers, and digital thermometers. "These devices, known for their precision German engineering, ease of use, and clinical accuracy, cater to both home users and healthcare professionals seeking dependable diagnostic tools," the company said in a statement.

We should achieve prosperity through entrepreneurship: PM

RSS
Lalitpur, July 11

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has said the government, youths and women entrepreneurs should work together for country's prosperity.

Inaugurating the International Women Leadership Conference, 2082 organised by the Federation of Women Entrepreneurs' Association of Nepal here today, Prime Minister Oli stressed the need of achieving success by working together for prosperity.

He mentioned, "We should achieve prosperity through development of entrepreneurship. The government has given high importance to youths and women entrepreneurship. I am confident that the conclusion drawn from this conference will help to fulfill government's priorities."

The PM added that the country has been implementing provisions mentioned in the constitution for women empowerment in practice.

"We have guaranteed at least 33 per cent representation of women in three levels. The number of girl students is higher than that of boys in schools. Girl students have been achieving good results. We have to achieve further progress," PM Oli argued.



PHOTO: TRN

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli with women entrepreneurs and officials in Kathmandu.

'JIO FLIGHT' OFFERS EASY ACCESS TO FLIGHT BOOKINGS

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 11

To provide consumers with affordable and convenient access to air tickets and related services, Joy Group has launched 'Jio Flight' in Nepal. The online platform has been introduced by Joy Group with the aim of offering easy access to travel packages that include flight bookings.

Jio Flight, introduced by Joy Group, is now available for download on both Android and iOS devices. Additionally, the full range of services can be accessed via the company's website.

Ramesh Paudel, Managing Director of Jio Flight, said that the platform has been launched to meet the needs of today's tech-savvy consumers, allowing them to purchase flight tickets and travel packages from a single source.

Currently, most platforms offer only flight bookings, and consumers often need to contact representatives for further information. However, with our platform, everything can be understood directly through the app, helping bridge the gap between service providers and consumers," he said.

Paudel added that air tickets purchased through Jio Flight would be more affordable than those available through other platforms. The platform offers both domestic and international flight bookings, as well as religious and business travel packages.

Gold, silver traders ink agreement, hesitate to resume businesses

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 11

Gold and silver business entrepreneurs have suspended their month-long protest following a six-point agreement with the government.

The protest programme was withdrawn after the government and the agitating gold and silver traders inked a six-point agreement on Thursday evening, said Diyesh Ratna Shakya, Senior Vice President of Federations of Nepal Gold and Silver Dealers' Association.

Gold and silver traders had launched a protest demanding the removal of the luxury tax on gold, and the 13 per cent VAT on diamonds since first week of June.

The government had introduced a 2 per cent luxury tax on gold, and a 13 per cent VAT on diamond-studded jewelry in the budget for the fiscal year 2025/26.

The gold and silver traders had been protesting across the country against tax provision.

The agreement was reached between the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, the Inland Revenue Department, Department of Customs, Nepal Rastra Bank, the Federation of Nepal Gold and Silver Dealers' Association, Nepal Gem and Jewellery Association, Gold and Silver Dealers' and Artisans Struggle Committee in the talks held at the Ministry of Finance.

As per the agreement, a joint task force will be formed to study on the issue of gold and gold jewellery included in the definition of luxury and recommend for review of the tax imposed on it.

It has also been agreed to effectively implement the 'Gold Import and Sale and Distribution Procedures, 2068 and amend it if necessary so that the gold is available from commercial banks that import gold from nearby trading centres, providing easy access for local gold, silver, and gemstone jewelry entrepreneurs.

The task force will be coordinated by the Chief of the Revenue Management Division of the Ministry of Finance, and will include the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, the Director General of the Inland Revenue Department, Director General of the Department of Customs, Director of Nepal Rastra Bank, and officials and representatives of the Federation of Nepal Gold and Silver Dealers' Association, Nepal Gem and Jewellery Association, Gold and Silver Dealers' and Artisans Struggle Committee.

Representatives from Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Nepal Chamber of Commerce will include in the task force.

Goats worth over Rs. 30 million sold

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Sharada (Salyan), July 11

Goats worth over Rs. 30 million have been supplied to market from a single municipality in Salyan.

Farmers affiliated with groups and cooperatives in the Triveni Rural Municipality of the district have earned Rs. 32.22 million by selling goats in a year.

Stating that the rural municipality has been providing subsidies to farmers, who sell goats through cooperatives, under the 'Farmers' Production, Rural Municipality's subsidy programme', chairman of Triveni Rural Municipality Khim Bahadur Rawat said that the subsidy provision has attracted farmers towards goat farming.

"Farmers are making good income by selling goats," he said. "There were also complaints that farmers were being harmed when traders arbitrarily determined the price of goats. Farmers are happy after they started selling the goats through cooperatives."

Basanta Rawat, head of the livestock development branch of Triveni Rural Municipality, said that 308 farmers, who sold a minimum of 100 kg of goat meat in 2024/25, were given Rs. 1 million as subsidy at the rate of Rs. 20 per kg.

A total of 120 farmers of Durga Bhawani Social Entrepreneur Women's Cooperative were given Rs. 528,220.

Farmers affiliated with this cooperative have supplied goat worth Rs. 14.61 million.



Similarly, 73 farmers have been given a subsidy of Rs. 232,120 from the Namuna Social Entrepreneur Women's Cooperative. Goat worth Rs. 7 million were sold from this cooperative.

According to rural municipality, 62 farmers have been given a subsidy of Rs. 187,400 from the Uphaar Social Entrepreneur Women's Cooperative. Goat worth Rs. 7.15 million has been sold from this cooperative.

Similarly, 53 farmers have been given a subsidy of Rs. 139,839 from the Triveni Animal Husbandry Cooperative, and goats worth Rs. 3.83 million have been sold.

Rawat said that the rural municipality has supplied goat worth about Rs. 10 million more than the last fiscal year.

In the last fiscal year, farmers of Triveni Rural Municipality had sold goats worth Rs. 23.63 million through cooperatives and also received a subsidy from the municipality.

Although groups and cooperatives can be listed in the rural municipality for goat sales, only five cooperatives were listed this year.

Under the 'Farmers' Production, Rural Municipality's subsidy programme', Triveni Rural Municipality has been providing Rs. 20 per kilogram to farmers who sell more than one hundred kilograms of goats through cooperatives and groups.

In addition, funds are also provided to the cooperatives at the rate of Rs. 1 per kilogram for management.

Triveni Rural Municipality, which has been providing grants since the fiscal year 2019/20, has developed Ward Nos. 2, 4, and 5 as goat pocket areas.

Madhes declared drought-affected zone

BY BIJAY KUMAR SAH
Dhalkebar, July 11

After paddy transplantation was severely disrupted in lack of rainfall, the Madhes Province government has officially declared the entire region a drought-affected zone.

A cabinet meeting of the provincial government reached the decision following an assessment of the environmental imbalance and prolonged dry conditions, which have jeopardised agricultural productivity.

According to the findings, not only has paddy plantation been delayed, but cracks have begun to appear in paddy fields where rice seedlings had already been planted, signaling an impending agrarian crisis.

Recognising the urgent need for relief, the cabinet meeting has decided to request immediate assistance from the federal government. It has also issued an appeal to national and international donor agencies active in the agricultural sector to support drought-stricken farmers across the province.

In addition, the meeting has committed to mobilising all available resources to address the emerging drinking water crisis, particularly in areas such as Birgunj in Parsa district, which have been severely affected by extreme heat and water scarcity. Plans include coordination with the Federal Ministry of Water Supply and emergency distribution through tankers and other alternative means.



PHOTO: RSS

Paddy being planted with the help of a pumpset. Due to lack of irrigation and low rainfall, farmers in Janakpur have had to rely on pumpsets for sowing.

Paddy plantation reaches 25%

The Madhes Province Directorate of Agriculture reports that so far only 25 per cent of paddy plantation has been completed in the arable land due to the ongoing drought. Despite forecasts from the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology predicting above-average rainfall this year, the monsoon has yet to reach the province even as the traditional planting season nears its end.

Approximately 75 per cent of paddy fields remain barren. Even in the areas where bore well irrigation has enabled plantation, the lack of moisture has caused large cracks in the soil, and paddy seedbeds are beginning to wither.

Sudip Chaudhary, Crop Protection Officer at the Directorate, confirmed that only in 25 per cent of the total 372,645 hectares of paddy farmland have been planted so far. According to him, transplantation should have covered at least 50 per cent of the land by now.

RARE METAL TO BE EXTRACTED IN WYOMING

AP
Cheyenne, Wyo. July 11

The developer of what would be the first new coal mine in Wyoming in decades plans to process the fossil fuel to extract hard-to-get metals that are crucial for tech products and military hardware.

Energy Secretary Chris Wright, former West Virginia U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin, Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon, and Wyoming's congressional delegation are on the VIP list for a groundbreaking ceremony Friday at the Ramaco Resources, Inc., Brook Mine outside Ranchester in far northern Wyoming.

Rare earth elements are a family of 17 metallic elements with unusual properties that make them useful for specific applications. Neodymium and dysprosium are used in the permanent magnets of wind turbines, lanthanum in electric and hybrid car batteries.

Yttrium and terbium have critical military uses, including in targeting devices.

China supplies almost 90% of the world's rare earths. Concern about continued access to the substances has been a focus of recent negotiations between China and the U.S., and led the Trump administration to try to encourage more production domestically.

Trump to hike 35% tariffs on Canadian goods

AP
Washington, July 11

President Donald Trump said in a letter that he will raise taxes on many imported goods from Canada to 35%, deepening a rift between two North American countries that have suffered a debilitating blow to their decades-old alliance.

The Thursday letter to Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney is an aggressive increase to the top 25% tariff rates that Trump first imposed in March after months of threats.

Trump's tariffs were allegedly in an effort to get Canada to crack down on fentanyl smuggling despite the relatively modest trafficking in the drug from that country. Trump has also expressed frustration with a trade deficit with Canada that largely reflects oil purchases by America.

"I must mention that the flow of Fentanyl is hardly the only challenge we have with Canada, which has many Tariff, and Non-Tariff, Policies and Trade Barriers," Trump wrote in the letter.

The higher rates would go into effect Aug. 1, creating a tense series of weeks ahead for the global economy as recent gains in the S&P 500 stock index suggest many investors think Trump will ultimately back down on the increases.

But stock market futures were down early Friday in a sign that Trump's wave of tariff letters may be starting to generate concern among investors.

In a social media post, Carney said Canada would continue to work toward a new trade framework with the U.S. and has made "vital progress to stop the scourge of fentanyl."

"Through the current trade negotiations with the United States, the Canadian government has steadfastly defended our workers and business," Carney said.

While multiple countries have received tariff letters this week, Canada — America's second largest trading partner after Mexico — has become something of a foil to Trump.

It has imposed retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods and pushed back on the president's taunts of making Canada the 51st state. Mexico has also faced 25% tariffs because of fentanyl, yet it has not faced the same public pressure from the Republican U.S. president.

Carney was elected prime minister in April on the argument that Canadians should keep their "elbows up." He has responded by distancing Canada from its intertwined relationship with the U.S., seeking to strengthen its links with the European Union and the United Kingdom.

SEE pass rate in Karnali up by 14 per cent this year

BY LALIT BASEL
Surkhet, July 11

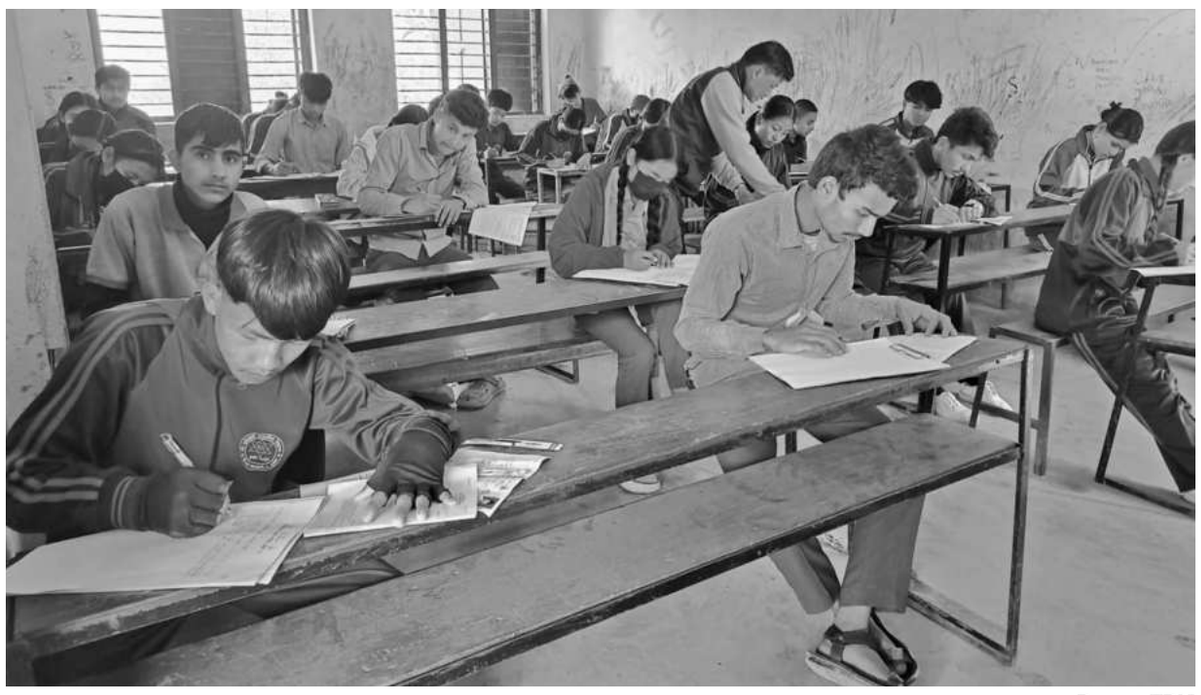


PHOTO : TRN

Students from Karnali Province appearing the SEE examination.

In the Secondary Education Examination (SEE) of the year 2081 B.S. (2025) Karnali Province saw an improvement by 14 per cent compared to the previous year's SEE results. While only 42 per cent of students had passed SEE in Karnali in 2080 BS (2024), the pass rate increased to 56.78 per cent this year.

Although Karnali has made progress in the SEE results, it still could not meet the national pass rate. Nationwide, 61.81 per cent of students passed the SEE. Karnali's pass rate is still less by 5 per cent than the national average.

This year, 31,773 students from 10 districts of Karnali Province appeared in the SEE. Among them, 18,042 students passed, according to the Education Development Board in Surkhet. A total of 12,631 students have been placed in the grade improvement category.

According to the Board, in Karnali, 1,051 students secured a GPA of A+, 4,644 students secured A, 7,785 students secured B+, and 4,260 students secured B. Similarly, 302 students received C, while 13,731 students remained in the non-graded category.

Surprisingly, the schools in remote areas of Karnali performed better than those in urban and accessible regions. Districts such as Jajarkot, Rukum West, Mugu, Salyan, Kalikot, and Jumla that are considered remote have improved pass rates, whereas more accessible districts like Surkhet and Dailekh have lagged behind.

Among the 10 districts, Jajarkot recorded the highest pass rate. With 82.11 per cent of students passing, Jajarkot became the top performing district in the province in terms of SEE results.

After Jajarkot, Jumla ranked second with a pass rate at 75.85 per cent, followed by Rukum West in third place with 74.94 per cent of students passing. Similarly, Mugu stood fourth with 79.09 per cent pass rate, Salyan fifth with 65.89 per cnet, Kalikot sixth with 57.0 per cent, Humla seventh with 51.6 per cent, Surkhet eighth with 45.13 per cent, Dolpa ninth with 33.1 per cent, and Dailekh ranks last with only 22.89 per cent of students passing.

Director of the Board, Dipa Hamal, stated that compared to 2080, there has been a notable improvement in Karnali's SEE results in 2081.

She expressed happiness over the fact that the remote districts of the province saw more improvement than the accessible ones. She further mentioned that unlike in previous years, this time there was visible contribution from schools, students, teachers, parents, and other concerned stakeholders.

She also shared that some schools conducted extra classes for weaker students, and school management committees carried out various activities aimed at improving results, which contributed significantly to the overall improvement.

Bhakta Bahadur Shahi, the headmaster of Janasewa Secondary School located in Birendranagar-10, Ghusra, said, "The improvement in Karnali's SEE results has been encouraging. He mentioned that the revised question papers this year made it easier for students to perform better."

According to him, the enhancement in infrastructure and the availability of necessary laboratories in schools have helped students gain practical knowledge, which in turn contributed to their improved performance in the exams.

Govinda Koirala, President of the Federation of Community School Management Committees, Karnali Province and Chairperson of the School Management Committee at Jana Namuna Secondary School in Birendranagar, said that the dedication and concern shown by school administration, teachers, students, and parents have contributed to the improvement in Karnali's results this year.

He expressed that although Karnali has not yet matched the national average, it will likely do so in the coming years. He added that if efforts such as providing target cards to teachers and students, training students on answer-writing techniques, making the examination system more disciplined, and ensuring regular teaching without missing class days continue, Karnali's SEE results will improve even further.

The Karnali Province government has also stated that it aims to further improve SEE results to meet the national pass rate in the coming year. The Ministry of Social Development, which supervises education in Karnali, increased its education budget by 27 per cent this year to improve the quality of education.

Similarly, Social Development Minister Ghanshyam Bhandari informed that starting this year, the province has allocated Rs. 100 million under the "SEE Preparation Programme" to work toward that goal.

Chair Dahal assures of providing continuous support to Manavsewa Ashram



RSS
Kathmandu, July 11

Chairperson of the CPN (Maoist Centre), Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has expressed commitment to provide support and cooperation for the development of Manavsewa Ashram.

At a programme organised at Raniban-based Manavsewa Ashram today on the occasion of second Memorial Day of his wife, Sita Dahal, Chair Dahal recalled that he in the capacity of Prime Minister had inaugurated the central office of Ashram in Hetauda and assured of providing continuous support to the Ashram. He shared, "I want to assure you that there will be continuous support towards your sentiments and needs from my side and my party."

Chair Dahal argued that he visited Raniban-based Ashram to preserve memory of late Sita and to inspire everyone.

Stating that the Ashram is doing the work that should be done by the state, the CPN (Maoist Centre) Chair added that the Ashram is working in challenging and sensitive areas. On the occasion, Chair Dahal had provided meals to those taking shelter in the Ashram.

Wild elephant kills Banke women while collecting grass

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Nepalgunj, July 11

A 45-year-old woman in Banke district died after being attacked by a wild elephant while she was collecting grass in the local forest.

According to Area Police Office Kohalpur, Purnima Budha, a resident of Baijanath-1, Chisapani, was killed on Friday at around 9:00 am, when a group of elephants attacked her and two other women in the Bardiya National Park forest near their village. The women had gone to the forest to collect grass and mushrooms.

While the other two women managed to escape, Budha was unable to flee and was fatally attacked, police said. Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Laxmi Khanal, head of the Kohalpur Police Office, confirmed the incident and reported that Budha's body has been sent to Bheri Hospital in Nepalgunj for post-mortem report.

According to Lok Bahadur Rokaya, a relative of the deceased, Budha's husband is serving in the Nepali Army in Dipayal, and her son is currently working in Dubai. She was living with her daughter at home. Local residents frequently enter the Bardiya National Park area adjoining Chisapani for firewood and fodder collection, and fall prey to wildlife attacks, authorities said.

17 held in possession of illegal drugs

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 11

Police have arrested 17 drug peddlers from various locations across the country on Thursday.

In Kathmandu, police arrested 46-year-old Sanju Tamang of Budhanilkantha Municipality-4 with 7.8 kilograms of marijuana. She was arrested during a house search conducted by a team from the Budhanilkantha Police Post.

In Jhapa, four individuals were arrested from Damak Municipality-4 with 350 tablets each of controlled drugs Tramadol and Energon. The arrestees included 19-year-old Priya Tamang of Damak-4, 19-year-old Sumit Sundas of Damak-5, 21-year-old Prabin Chemjong, and 27-year-old Manoj Khanal of Sano Baraghare, Damak-10. They were apprehended by a team from Area Police Office, Damak.

In Sunsari, two individuals were arrested from Itahari Sub-metropolitan City-4 with 1.44 grams of a brown sugar-like substance. The arrested were identified as 26-year-old Dhiren Rai, and 27-year-old Dhiraj Magar. They are residents of Sagurigadhi Rural Municipality-6 in Dhankuta. They were arrested by a team from Itahari Area Police Office.

Likewise, in Kailali, police arrested four individuals from Bhajani Municipality-5, Lalbojhi with 5.67 grams of a heroin-like substance. The arrested were identified as 25-year-old Manoj Chaudhary of Bhajani-4, 21-year-old Bikram Chaudhary, 28-year-old Hanuman Chaudhary, and 21-year-old Bishal Chaudhary of Ghodaghodi Municipality-12.

They were travelling from India on motorcycles (Se.3P 9263 and Ga.6P 8379) when police of the Prithvipur Area Police Office arrested them.

Also, in Siraha, police arrested two men from Lahan Municipality-1 with 20 ampoules each of controlled drugs Diazepam, Buprenorphine, and Phenergan. During the search operation, police detained 30-year-old Ram Babu Das, aka, Bona and 31-year-old Ram Udgar Purbe.

They were caught with the drugs by Lahan Area Police Office. They were carrying the drug on a motorcycle (Lu.73P 538).

In Bardiya, two individuals were arrested from Karnalipur, Badhaiyatal Rural Municipality-7 with 160 milligrams of a brown sugar-like substance. The arrested were identified as 22-year-old Kiran BK, and 19-year-old Tara Bahadur Chuni Magar. Both are residents of Khairapur, Gulariya Municipality-1. They were coming from Balai village in India when Mainapokhar Area Police Office took them under control.

Five held in Koteshwor with 40 kg of cannabis

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 11

Police arrested five individuals with 40 kilograms of cannabis from Koteshwor, Kathmandu, on Thursday. The narcotics were seized from a rented room in Palpakot, Koteshwor, according to Superintendent of Police (SP) Apil Raj Bohara of the Kathmandu District Police Range.

The cannabis was recovered from the rented room of Suman Chepang, a resident of Dhading. Along with him, four others, Prakash Chepang, 19, Shankar Chepang, 20, and Jeevan Praja, 36, were also taken into custody. All five are originally from Dhading district. In addition to the cannabis, police confiscated Rs. 125,000 in cash, three mobile phones, and two motorcycles from the suspects.

Police were tipped off about an ongoing drug transaction in Koteshwor. Acting on this information, a joint team from the District Police Range and the Kathmandu Valley Crime Investigation Office was deployed. The team found and arrested all five individuals from the location. SP Bohara said that Suman Chepang had smuggled the cannabis from Dhading via public transportation.

Laligurans Municipality to provide free education to 11 and 12 graders



BY HARI PRASAD KOIRALA
Urlabari, July 11

Laligurans Municipality in Tehrathum district has decided not to enroll students in Class 11 at three of its secondary schools.

Chief Administrative Officer Santosh Ghimire said that Shriman Smarak Education Niketan Secondary School in Musankhel, Trijure Secondary School in Firke, and Singhadevi Secondary School in Mangalkabar will not be enrolling new students in Grade 11. These schools are among the eight community schools operating in the municipality.

According to Ghimire, the schools faced operational challenges due to a low number of students. The government has not allocated separate teaching positions for grades 11 and 12, and based on the current student-to-teacher ratio, requesting additional teachers from the federal government is not viable.

He added that when the municipality provides grants from its own budget to pay teachers, the Office of the Auditor General flags it as a policy discrepancy. As a result, a meeting of the Municipal Executive held on July 10, 2025, decided to halt enrollment in these three schools.

Due to these policy limitations and teacher-student ratio issues, continuing classes of Grade 11 and 12 has become impractical, he said.

Starting this academic session, classes 11 and 12 will be allowed to run only at Basanta Secondary School and Ratna Secondary School within the municipality.

Students from the remaining six schools will receive free enrollment and monthly tuition, as well as food and accommodation provided by the municipality.

Enrollment at Krishna Secondary School in Ward No. 7, Public Secondary School in Ward No. 4, and Singhbahini Secondary School in Ward No. 5 has not been suspended. The municipality believes that students from these schools—located near Basanta and Ratna Secondary Schools—will take advantage of the free education and residential facilities offered.

"We believe parents will naturally enroll their children at Basanta or Ratna Secondary Schools since we are providing quality, free education nearby," said municipality spokesperson Devendra Khadka.

Khadka added that student numbers have declined due to increasing migration. While in the past, rising population led to the establishment of more schools, current demographic trends have made it unfeasible to operate them all.

"We were compelled to make this decision in such a pressing situation," he said.

Mayor Arjun Mawohang also announced the decision to discontinue Class 11 and 12 enrollment at the three schools to ensure quality education for all.

He noted that the number of students has been decreasing, with many opting to study in the Tarai. "Rather than running higher secondary classes with only one or two students in each school, we decided to consolidate students into one or two schools and offer free education," said the Mayor.

He urged other municipalities to adopt a similar approach. "Instead of keeping schools running with two or four students just to protect someone's job or position, it is our responsibility to merge schools and ensure quality education," Mawohang emphasised.

BRIEFS

Mans' body found in Nawalpur

Nawalpur: A body of a man has been found on the Triveni Barrage Bridge along the Nepal–India border in Binayi Triveni Rural Municipality–7, Nawalpur. The identity of the deceased has not been confirmed.

According to the District Police Office, the body of a man estimated to be 35 to 40 years old was found floating face down.

The man had a tattoo with the name "Binod" on his arm, according to Deputy Superintendent of Police Madhu Nepal, the information officer at the District Police Office.

Teams from the Triveni and Dumkibas area police offices retrieved the body, which has been sent for post-mortem examination.

Although it is suspected that the body could belong to someone who went missing in the Bhotekoshi flood, this has not been confirmed, DSP Nepal said.

Iron gate crushes boy to death

Saptari (Kalyanpur): A minor boy died after being crushed by an iron gate in Khoryatole of Saptakoshi Municipality-1, Saptari district.

Four-year-old Samir Jung Katwal, son of local resident Sanjeev Katwal, died on Thursday.

The incident occurred while he was playing with friends when an iron gate in the yard suddenly fell and crushed him, causing severe injuries.

The injured child was rushed to Biratnagar Teaching Hospital for treatment, where doctors declared him dead, according to Deputy Superintendent of Police Madhav Prasad Kafle of the Kanchanpur Area Police Office.

The body has been sent to Gajendra Narayan Singh Hospital in Rajbiraj for examination, and further investigation into the incident is underway.

(TRN)

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Our virtues and our failings are inseparable, like force and matter. When they separate, man is no more.
-Nikola Tesla

Subset Of Conflicts Linked To Global Powers



Dev Raj Dahal

The Russia-Ukraine, India-Pakistan and Israel-Iran conflicts are subsets of larger geopolitical struggles shaping the dynamics of world politics. Geopolitical thinkers believe that China has emerged as a security, economic and technological competitor of the sole superpower. It holds leverage on the geopolitical struggles and strongly supports its allies, which may prolong the war of attrition so that the US grand strategy and its allies cannot fully pivot the Conflict Theater to the Indo-Pacific region and avert China's integration of Taiwan by 2027. The US carriers, thousands of soldiers and artillery are moving from the South China Sea to the Middle East in Qatar, Iraq, Bahrain and the Arabian Sea to attack Iran at the call of Israel. Iran may have a sleeper cell inside the US, which can be activated in case of a US attack.

The domestic turmoil, Congressional and Court's restrictions and opposition politics are prompting US President Donald J Trump to suggest Israel and Iran pull back from the war offensive and begin diplomacy, to which Iran demanded an immediate halt to Israeli attacks. He has offered Iran an incentive to remove all sanctions if it drops its nuclear program and chooses peace. China deems Taiwan's integration vital to break the invisible chains of security created by the US and its allies around several islands of the Pacific, the formulation of the Indo-Pacific Strategy, QUAD and AUKUS alliance of English-speaking nations, control the production of semiconductors and secure its peace and prosperity.

Multi-axial dimension

Under the trade deal, China has agreed to resume the flow of rare earth minerals and magnates essential for civilian and military manufacturing to the US in return for the lifting of export restrictions on chip software and jet engines. China sees Brazil, France, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Mexico and Canada moving away from the US in defense, trade and diplomacy and deepening ties with it. Vietnam and India, both manufacturing powerhouses, are, however, caught in the cross-pressure of the USA and China and seeking not the rejection of the West but a hedge to ensure strategic autonomy. The acceptability of any great power rests on how it balances the multi-axial dimension of world politics and engages them in mutually beneficial payoffs.

The Asian nations are affected by the US deportation of their citizens, imposition of reciprocal tariffs and cut of foreign aid. In the QUAD ministerial meeting, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio pledged to reduce dependence on China on rare earth minerals, avoid supply chain disruption, make the Indo-Pacific free and open and prioritise the like-minded nations to counter China. India's plan to sign a 10-year Defense Framework with the US is deemed by India's Minister for External Affairs S. Jayashankar, "the most consequential pillar of the relationship in the Indo-Pacific." Europe's Russophobia will occupy its priority to Ukraine's freedom of choice to join NATO, while the US priority lies in Israel's survival, a keystone of American foreign policy in the Middle East and frontline defense of Western civilisation.

Iran has suspended cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and has shown determination to pursue nuclear projects for peaceful purposes. China, Pakistan, Russia, North Korea, Turkey and Afghanistan are acting as a deterrent against Israeli-American attack, while North Korea is eager to supply nuclear weapons. The Gulf nations are trying to halt the war. Thinking that the US is controlled by a deep state, Russia cares less about its rhetoric of negotiation and seems ready to confront NATO. The Russian supply of 24 SU-35, Chinese delivery of 40 advanced J-10 C fighters and Pakistan's air defense to Iran have strengthened its military muscle. Turkey and Saudi Arabia's air defense systems are bolstered by Russia, while that of Egypt is by China.

India is unhappy over American military aid to Turkey and supplying its S-400 missiles to Greece, at Turkey's discomfort for its support to Pakistan. Both the US and China think of Pakistan as a friend and do not share the Indian lens about Pakistan's Baluchistan and Myanmar mess. Israel and the US support Kurdish rebels in Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran so that they are strained by domestic turmoil and thus lack the will and capacity to indulge in anti-Israel and anti-US activities. NATO's bellicose attitude against Russia will beef up the latter's ties with China, India, Iran, North Korea, SCO, and BRICS members and their purchase of oil, gas and weapons will provide it an economic lifeline to bolster its military competence. NATO members' purchase of US weapons to an unlimited supply to Ukraine may spiral the war to a catastrophic scale and disrupt the resetting of US-Russia relations. Hungary and Italy are troubled over NATO's combative mood.

The American imperial ambition to integrate Canada and Greenland and control maritime routes haunts President Trump as he is feeling uneasy over Canada outplaying him in power politics by developing ties with the EU and China. Even Mexico desires military and economic cooperation from China, much to its disappointment. One obvious fact is that neither the US, nor China, nor even Russia is capable of defeating and dominating each other, nor does their zero-sum game create a modicum of global governance. Peace can prevail if each of them realises their collective responsibility for global security, cooperation and peace and learns to coexist so that sub-set conflicts do not boil into a broader great power dynamic.

The dynamics of world politics are shaped not only by shifting alliances but also by cutting-edge technologies, communication, manufacturing, and production of sophisticated weapons to expand one's influence, fill the vacuum of power left by American alienation from multilateralism, the UN and WTO. Great powers can acquire respect if they act to respond to international conditions, laws and institutions and not pursue their own selfish interests to conform their transactional leaders' private passion devoid of the moral wisdom of statesmen. In a world of interlocking challenges including arms race and climate change,

> Nepal will continue to face development constraints and security dilemmas if its ties with its neighbours and several poles of power remain slanted.

pursuit of unilateralism and exercise of power disproportional to responsibility can easily cripple the authority of international institutions and degenerate world politics to the state of nature. If great powers maximize their absolute security, others evolve a bent to either free ride, remain indifferent or seek adaptive responses.

Global dynamics have changed the axis of power. Pan-African sentiment unleashed by the decolonisation movement is diverting Africa from the Atlantic world to Asia. Latin America, Europe, Canada, Mexico and Central Asia are redefining their ties with Asia and have shown interest in joining BRICS, the vehicle of the Global South to evade American domination and keep policy autonomy. President Trump has threatened new tariffs on nations supporting anti-American policies of BRICS and its plan to ditch the US dollar. The 17th BRICS summit criticised the coercive tariffs of the US and the US-Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear sites by violating international law, while favouring a two-state solution against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's fear, "A Palestinian state would destroy Israel."

The growth of new poles of power has incubated a multi-polar world order. India prefers the reforms of global governance, applying the principle of inclusiveness. The trust deficit in the US leadership is prompting many nations to diversify their ties while Germany and Italy withdraw their gold from the US. It can reduce the dollar's value, weaken the current global economic order and generate global economic woes. China and the EU can benefit from the American alienation from the global trading system. Both the EU and China need each other to offset the impact of higher tariffs on the US: the former can get investment from the latter, better access to its domestic market and bolster defense spending of 5 per cent if they remove the obstacles, including subsidies.

For the EU, North America and Latin America, China can offer an alternative to the US for its relative advantages in the manufacturing of textiles, home appliances, EVs, AI innovation, solar panels, ship building, rare earth minerals, powerful drones and battery technologies. China's BRI links it with Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia. Pakistan and Russia are boosting rail links for warm water access and Central Asian markets. Fifty-three nations of Africa have signed a tariff-free trade pact with China, providing them access to its markets. It is the biggest trading partner of the entire African continent, like Southeast Asia. China and the Gulf Cooperation Council are also boosting their free trade.

China's Indian Ocean Forum includes 23 littoral and landlocked nations, including Nepal and covers the straits of Malacca, Hormuz, Gwadar and Djibouti, the major sea trade routes. It has many projects to boost the blue economic capabilities of member nations, including climate change and sustainable development. During the pandemic, China had organised webinars of small South Asian nations and shown interest in creating an alternative to SAARC, which is moribund now, owing to the shifting interest of India from SAARC to BIMSTEC. As India is not included in China's Indian Ocean Forum, it is promoting the Indian Ocean Rim Association for inclusive development. Nepal attends both the forum and the association.

The US effort to use India as a counterbalance to China may not work owing to India's imports of Chinese goods. Sino-Indian trade stands at $136.2 billion. The Indian government is sensitive over its huge trade deficits with China, its support to Pakistan and Bangladesh, with whom it has an uneasy relationship and border security, although both are tied by SCO, BRICS and the agenda of the Global South. India, however, prefers a policy of multi-alignment rather than de-linking. This is the reason it does not support the policy of de-dollarization and was silent when Israel and the US attacked Iran.

The Chinese government is sensitive over India hosting Taiwan's office, acting as a de facto embassy since 1995, publicly supporting the Dalai Lama's right to determine his successors and seeking to reduce Indus River water for Pakistan in response to a deadly attack of terrorists on Indian tourists in April for which India blames Pakistan. In the recent India-Pakistan brief war, China supported Pakistan and used the Brahmaputra leverage against India, threatening it to divert water if it continued to block water to Pakistan. The outstanding issues between the Indo-US trade deal stand on 50 per cent tariffs on steel and aluminum and 25 per cent on electric vehicles and India's defiance of the American objection to purchase Russian oil, gas and weapons for its national defense and development.

Economic diplomacy

Small states are trying to adapt, rather than retreat from this world order where economic diplomacy is aligned with geopolitics. Nepal is struggling to adopt an excruciating balancing act, uphold the creditworthiness of the nation for foreign aid, investment and employment and secure its identity and independence in world politics. The fourth international conference on Finance for Development in Spain on June 30 indicated the declining interest of developed nations in aid as they are heavily indebted, face economic decline and pressure for defense buildup.

The BRICS nations have set up an investment fund for member states managed by China's New Development Bank to serve as an alternative to the World Bank. In this context, Nepal will continue to face development constraints and security dilemmas if its ties with its neighbours and several poles of power remain slanted. It is geo-strategically positioned to play a vital role but its economic vulnerability and political instability require its leadership to devise tangible measures for an adaptive response to value-free geopolitical trends and reap the opportunity to outsize its diplomacy in the global power dynamics.

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

Science Of Intuition

AIGERIM ALPYSBEKOVA

When was the last time you just knew something—without being able to explain why? Have you ever had a gut feeling that something wasn't right, only to discover later that your instincts were spot-on? We're often taught to distrust these feelings—calling them irrational, emotional, or "just anxiety." But what if our gut instincts aren't just soft whispers of worry? What if they're actually biologically, neurologically, and spiritually aligned signals from within?

Intuition operates at the intersection of body, brain, and spirit—and learning to trust it may be one of the most powerful things we can do. Years ago, when my daughter was just two, I hired a babysitter who checked all the boxes. She was attentive and responsible, and she seemed to genuinely care for my child. And yet…something felt off. I couldn't explain it. We barely communicated beyond work-related tasks, and being around her felt uncomfortable in ways I couldn't put into words.

So, I let her go a month later—still unsure why. Weeks after, I began finding tiny sewing needles in unusual places: by the front door, in the corners of my bedroom. At first, I dismissed it. But then a friend from my culture pointed something out: in some traditions, placing sharp objects like needles in hidden spaces is part of magic rituals meant to harm or manipulate a household. Whether one believes in this or not, it shook me. My body knew something was wrong—before my mind could catch up.

This is what we call intuition. And science supports the idea that it's not only real—it's biologically intelligent. Intuition is often misunderstood as irrational guesswork. But in psychological terms, it's the brain's ability to make fast, unconscious judgments by recognising patterns and signals—many of which come from the body itself. This process is known as interoception—the brain's capacity to perceive internal bodily states like heartbeat, muscle tension, and gut activity. These internal cues are constantly feeding information to the brain, shaping our perceptions, behaviours, and yes—our instincts.

In a phenomenological study of somatic psychotherapists, Jennifer Tantia found that many clinicians described their intuitive insights as "a felt sense"—an embodied signal that emerged not from logical reasoning, but from physical sensation. They often couldn't explain how they knew something about a client—they just felt it in their bodies. This mirrors what many of us experience in everyday life: a stomachache before an important meeting, a wave of nausea around someone who seems "off," or tension in the chest when making a rushed decision. These are not random symptoms—they're part of the body's intuitive language. Although science maps the mechanics of intuition, I believe its roots also reach deeper—into the self and the unconscious.

During my first pregnancy, for example, I was walking in the park with my ex-husband, feeling healthy and joyful. Out of nowhere, I said, "If I die, name her Aru. If it's a boy, name him Zhan." There was no discussion, no logic behind it. The names just arrived. From where? I can't say. But I believe they came from a place beyond intellect—something that connects us to deeper wisdom. For some, intuition shows up as body signals. For others, it arrives as symbols, sounds, or spontaneous messages in stillness. The key is to listen. And to listen, we have to create space—which is where spiritual well-being comes in.

Spiritual well-being can be understood in two parts: one religious (rooted in faith), and one existential (rooted in meaning and purpose). Research shows that this existential side plays a critical role in how we handle emotional and physical challenges. A 2018 meta-analysis found that cancer patients with higher spiritual well-being—especially those with a strong sense of meaning—had better emotional outcomes and less despair. Those lacking meaning, on the other hand, were more prone to demoralisation and emotional suffering.

When we are calm and connected, our intuitive voice becomes louder. When we are fragmented or spiritually numb, it's hard to hear anything beyond anxiety. In 2017, I was told by doctors that I had a life-threatening condition. Later, it turned out to be a mistake, but in that moment, I couldn't eat or sleep and felt ungrounded. That night, I came home, sat on the floor, and started to pray. I turned off all noise and searched for how to meditate. I began with 60 minutes a day. I didn't know what I was doing, but something inside me said: go deeper. And then, literally—I saw a card on my desk that said exactly that: go deeper.

Since then, I've practiced meditation and breath of fire, a yogic technique involving rapid, rhythmic breathing. It's helped me regulate my emotions, sharpen my mind, and develop a relationship with my intuition. The next time something feels off, don't rush to dismiss it as irrational. Pause. Listen. Observe what your body is saying. Your intuition isn't superstition. It's a deep, silent intelligence woven through your nervous system, your subconscious mind, and yes—your spirit.

-Psychology Today

Climate Change: Secret Driver Of Inflation



Kishor Basyal

When it comes to the topic of climate change, extreme weather events, which have increased in frequency, intensity, and duration in recent years, come to mind. These events often dominate the discussions, overshadowing other subtle impacts and failing to give the big, nuanced picture. However, according to experts, the invisible hand of climate change is also responsible for a lived reality that is equally painful: inflation. Climate change is pushing the cost of daily life in ways that many consumers may not realise.

For the past few years, much of the world has been reeling from the cost-of-living crisis. The monthly income, which once went as far as covering the expenses of 30 days, hardly goes half that period these days. Shoppers complain that they have to borrow money even to buy groceries, while vendors resent that only a tiny fraction of the shoppers who ask the price actually buy the goods. As prices of staples rise sharply, it's not only the consumers who have been hurt; governments worldwide have also been kept awake at night. When people's discontent over the prohibitively expensive goods spreads, it risks unrest and protests that may eventually topple the governments.

Cotton crisis

Over the years, the cost of everyday essentials has risen markedly as a result of the impact of climate change. The price of cotton, one of the staple fabrics, has climbed steeply since 2022, when Texas, a state in the USA that is the world's third-largest producer and the largest exporter, saw its cotton harvest fall massively. As the state experienced a mega drought and heat waves made worse by climate change, farmers there abandoned 74 per cent of their planted crops due to parched soil.

In the same year, Pakistan, the sixth-largest producer, was ravaged by massive flooding attributed to climate change. This destroyed half of its cotton plantation. More such events across the world continue to reduce the supply of cotton, raising the prices of tampons, diapers, gauze pads, T-shirts, pants, shirts and other clothing and hygiene products. By 2040, half of the world's regions where cotton is grown are forecast to face a high or very high climate risk from drought, floods and wildfires.

Not only clothes, but food is also getting expensive, threatening people's ability to feed themselves. Climate change is increasingly putting the global food supply under threat. Year 2023 stands as the one India, one of the major food producers and also its biggest exporter, faced a dire shortage of wheat, rice and vegetables. The reason was never-seen-before floods in some parts of the country and usually prolonged drought in other parts. The shortage of tomatoes, one of the country's culinary staples, was so

> Not only clothes, but food is also getting expensive, threatening people's ability to feed themselves. Climate change is increasingly putting the global food supply under threat.

widespread and acutely felt that it made international headlines.

People faking accidents to stop trucks laden with tomatoes and wholesalers hiring bouncers to prevent theft highlighted how severe the crisis was. As their price rose fivefold, several Indian states turned to Nepal to plug the shortfall. Not only did ordinary people stop buying them in local markets, but big-name restaurants like McDonald's dropped tomato-heavy dishes off its menu. As the reduced supply of rice and wheat prompted the Indian government to ban their export, the impact rippled across the world. In Nepal, the prices of diverse varieties of rice shot up sharply.

The ban was enacted despite the fact that India had previously assured the world that the gap left by the loss of wheat export from Ukraine as a result of the war would be compensated by India. As weather patterns grow erratic, with rainfalls too heavy, droughts growing in frequency and duration, and heat waves withering crops, abandonment of crop plantation and crop losses are forecast to grow markedly in the future, curtailing the availability of food and hiking their prices.

Shortage of chips

What's more, even consumer goods like electronics aren't spared. In 2021, Taiwan, the world's leading manufacturer of semiconductor chips, was in the grip of the most severe drought in over half a century. The country didn't even see the usual typhoons that, in normal times, replenish its depleted water sources – something linked to climate change. The combination of these factors created a water shortage so dire that even people stopped bathing, and water rationing was enforced. It also dented the production of chips used in cars worldwide. Producing electronic chips is a very water-intensive process. And, as the shortage of such chips grew more acute, their price spiked, hitting the global car manufacturers that relied on that country for the supply. As a result, the prices of cars also rose, dealing a blow to the common people's prospects of owning a car. However, to their huge relief, as things improved, the prices fell to previous levels.

Climate change is already a harsh reality of life for millions of people worldwide. Only with urgent climate action can we put the brakes on its relentless march, saving people not only from catastrophic weather events but also from the painful experience of not having the wherewithal to buy daily essentials.

(The author is a journalist at The Rising Nepal.)

50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

July 12, 1975

Bill Presented

Kathmandu, July 11: The Minister of State for Law and Justice today presented the Judicial Service Commission Act, 2021, amendment bill at the Rastriya Panchayat, reports RSS.

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READER'S MAIL

Laudable Work To Protect Rare Bird



This is about the news report titled, "*Counting of Endangered Finn's Weaver Underway,*" published in this daily on July 7. The ongoing effort to count and conserve Finn's Weaver, locally known as "sunaulo top chara", is truly commendable. It is encouraging to know that Shuklaphanta National Park and Bird Conservation Nepal (BCN) are working together to protect this rare bird, which is only found in Nepal.

The annual count not only helps in tracking the bird's population but also raises public awareness about its endangered status. The report also highlights the challenges, such as habitat changes and predation by other birds like crows and cuckoos, which are contributing to its decline. It is important that authorities continue such efforts with stronger conservation plans to preserve their nesting grounds, especially during the breeding season.

I believe more attention from both the government and the public is required to protect this unique species. The Finn's Weaver is not just a part of Nepal's biodiversity but also a matter of national pride.

Freza Singh Shrestha
Maitighar, Kathmandu

TAILPIECE

Six guys were playing poker when Smith loses $500 on a single hand, clutches his chest and drops dead at the table. Showing respect for their fallen comrade, the other five complete their playing time standing up.

Roberts looks around and asks, "Now, who is going to tell the wife?" They draw straws. Rippington, who is always a loser, picks the short one. They tell him to be discreet, be gentle, don't make a bad situation any worse than it is.

"Gentlemen! Discreet? I'm the most discreet man you will ever meet. Discretion is my middle name, leave it to me." Rippington walks over to the Smith house, knocks on the door, the wife answers, and asks what he wants.

Rippington says, "Your husband just lost $500 playing cards." She hollers, "TELL HIM TO DROP DEAD!" Rippington says, "I'll tell him.

Russian drones damage a maternity hospital

AP
Kyiv, Ukraine July 11

A Russian drone barrage targeted the center of Kharkiv on Friday, injuring nine people and damaging a maternity hospital in Ukraine's second-largest city, officials said.

Mothers with newborns were being evacuated to a different medical facility, Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov wrote on Telegram. He didn't say whether anyone at the hospital was among the injured.

Russia's recent escalation of long-range Shahed drone attacks on Ukrainian cities, which often also include ballistic and cruise missiles as well as powerful glide bombs, has brought renewed urgency to efforts to improve Ukraine's air defenses after more than three years of war.

"There is no silence in Ukraine," Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said after the Kharkiv bombardment. Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital, has endured repeated and intensifying drone attacks in recent weeks, as have many other regions of the country.

June brought the highest monthly civilian casualties of the past three years, with 232 people killed and 1,343 wounded, the U.N. human rights mission in Ukraine said Thursday. Russia launched 10 times more drones and missiles in June than in the same month last year, it said.

At the same time, Russia's bigger army is pressing hard on parts of the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, where thousands of soldiers on both sides have died since the Kremlin ordered the invasion of neighboring Ukraine in February 2022.



PHOTO: AP

Russian drone damages a maternity hospital.

Zelenskyy urged Ukraine's Western partners to quickly enact pledges of help they made at an international meeting in Rome on Thursday.

Ukraine desperately needs more U.S.-made Patriot air defense systems to stop Russian missiles and more interceptor drones to bring down the Russian-made Shaheds, he said. Russia reportedly has expedited drone production, and Zelenskyy said Moscow plans to manufacture up to 1,000 drones a day.

Zelenskyy said Thursday that talks with U.S. President Donald Trump have been "very constructive," even though the administration has given conflicting signals about its readiness to provide more vital military aid. Zelenskyy said he is minded to replace his ambassador to the U.S., Oksana Markarova, with Defense Minister Rustem Umerov.

Ukraine has asked foreign countries to supply it with another 10 Patriot systems and missiles, Zelenskyy said. Germany is ready to buy two systems and Norway has agreed to buy one, which will be passed on to Ukraine, he said.

Trump said late Thursday that the U.S. is sending weapons to other NATO countries, which are paying Washington for them and giving them to Ukraine. In an interview with NBC, Trump didn't specifically refer to Patriot systems.

He said he would make "a major statement" on Russia on Monday. He didn't elaborate, but Zelenskyy has long pleaded for tighter economic sanctions on Moscow.

A new bipartisan U.S. sanctions package that aims to force Russia to the negotiating table could go to a vote in the Senate before the August recess, its backers Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham and Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal told The Associated Press on Thursday.

Kurd fighters begin laying down weapons

AP
Sulaymaniyah, Iraq July 11

Fighters with a Kurdish separatist militant group that has waged a decades-long insurgency in Turkey began laying down their weapons in a symbolic ceremony on Friday in northern Iraq, the first concrete step toward a promised disarmament as part of a peace process.

The Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, announced in May that it would disband and renounce armed conflict, ending four decades of hostilities. The move came after PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, who has been imprisoned on an island near Istanbul since 1999, urged his group in February to convene a congress and formally disband and disarm.

Öcalan renewed his call in a video message broadcast Wednesday, saying, "I believe in the power of politics and social peace, not weapons."

In Turkey, Devlet Bahceli, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's nationalist ally who initiated the peace process, welcomed the development.

"Starting today, members of the separatist terrorist organization have begun surrendering their weapons in groups, marking historic developments that signal the end of a dark era," Bahceli said in a written statement. "These are exceptionally important days for both Turkey and our region."

Bahceli, who has traditionally maintained a hard-line stance against the PKK, had surprised everyone in October, when he suggested in parliament that Öcalan could be granted parole, if he renounced violence and disbanded the PKK.

The PKK issued a statement from the fighters laying down their weapons, who called themselves the "Peace and Democratic Society Group," saying that they had disarmed "as a gesture of goodwill and a commitment to the practical success" of the peace process.



PHOTO: AP

Kurd fighters in Iraq begin laying down weapons as part of peace process with Turkey.

"We will henceforth continue our struggle for freedom, democracy, and socialism through democratic politics and legal means," the statement said.

The ceremony took place in the mountains outside the city of Sulaymaniyah in northern Iraq's semiautonomous Kurdish region. The state-run Iraqi News Agency reported that "the process will take place in stages, with a group of party members initially laying down their weapons symbolically." The disarmament process is expected to be completed by September, the agency reported.

The PKK has long maintained bases in the mountains of northern Iraq. Turkish forces have launched offensives and airstrikes against the PKK in Iraq and have set up bases in the area. Scores of villages have emptied as a result.

Last year, Iraq's government announced an official ban on the separatist group, which has long been prohibited in Turkey.

Journalists weren't allowed at the site of Friday's ceremony.

An Iraqi Kurdish political official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak publicly, said that about 30 fighters took part in the ceremony.

Burning of migrant boat triggers police investigation

AP
London, July 11

Authorities in Northern Ireland are investigating a bonfire that featured effigies of migrants in a boat and a banner reading "stop the boats" to determine whether it was a hate incident.

Church leaders and politicians complained about the display in Moygashel, a village in County Tyrone about 40 miles (65 miles) west of Belfast, before it was lit Thursday night. Parts of Northern Ireland were gripped by anti-immigrant rioting last month amid tensions surrounding a recent influx of people from Eastern Europe.

Police said they didn't intervene before the bonfire was lit because they can only act "within the legislative framework that exists."

Some 300 bonfires are set to be lit in the days ahead of July 12, when Protestant groups in Northern Ireland celebrate the victory of the Protestant King William III over the forces of the deposed Catholic King James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690.

The battle turned the tide against James' effort to regain the throne and cemented Protestant control of Ireland.

While many Protestants celebrate the victory as part of Northern Ireland's history and culture, the celebrations often fuel tensions with Catholics who oppose continuing British rule in the territory.

Bonfires have sometimes been an issue due to flags, effigies or election posters that are placed on the pyres before they are ignited.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland said its officers would be on the ground through the weekend and would take "firm and proportional action to keep people safe."

"It is vital that in marking these events, we do so in a way that respects the backgrounds and cultures of everyone who share these neighborhoods," Chief Constable Jon Boutcher said in a statement. "There is no place for hate or intimidation — only space for celebration that welcomes and celebrates not divides."

US adults more pro-migrants, poll shows

AP
Washington, July 11

Just months after President Donald Trump returned to office vowing mass deportations, the share of U.S. adults saying immigration is a "good thing" for the country has jumped substantially — including among Republicans, according to new Gallup polling.

About 8 in 10 Americans, 79%, say immigration is "a good thing" for the country today, an increase from 64% a year ago and a high point in the nearly 25-year trend. Only about 2 in 10 U.S. adults say immigration is a bad thing right now, down from 32% last year.

During Democratic President Joe Biden's term in office, negative views of immigration had increased markedly, reaching a high point in the months before Trump, a Republican, took office.

The new Gallup data suggests U.S. adults are returning to more pro-immigrant views that could complicate Trump's push for sweeping deportations in his second term.

Americans' views of immigration policies have shifted dramatically in the last year — including among Republicans, who have become much more content with immigration levels since Trump took office but who have also grown more supportive of pathways to citizenship for people in the country illegally. The broader trend also shows that public opinion is generally much more favorable to immigrants than it was decades ago. Americans' more positive view on immigration is driven primarily by a shift among Republicans and independents.



About two-thirds of Republicans now say immigrants are "a good thing" for the country, up from 39% last year. And independents moved from about two-thirds last year to 80% this year.

Democrats have maintained their overwhelmingly positive view of immigration in the last few years. In the time since Trump took office, Republicans have become more satisfied with the level of immigration in the country.

PRISM

Bear gets trapped in car

Colorado: A bear managed to close itself inside a parked car in Colorado and demolished the interior of the vehicle before being freed by a sheriff's deputy.

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office shared body camera footage recorded by a deputy summoned to a location in the foothills. "Oh, there's a bear in there," the deputy can be heard saying after peering through a window.

The deputy used a rope to open the car's door from a safe distance, freeing the bear. The animal managed to completely destroy the interior of the vehicle before being set free. "Caution: Local bears may redecorate your ride," the department said.

Dinosaurs dash for the finish line race

Washington: More than 300 people donned inflatable dinosaur costumes and took to the track at Emerald Downs in Washington for the annual T-Rex World Championship Races.

The yearly event at the Auburn racetrack began when TriGuard Pest Control held it as a team-building exercise in 2017, and the race quickly gained popularity online and opened to the public the next year.

The race was suspended in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but made a return in 2022. Houston man Andrew Stuber was crowned the top Tyrannosaurus in this year's race.

This year's T-Rex World Championship Races also featured an aerial event -- three people in T-Rex costumes jumped out of a Skydive Snohomish plane and parachuted down to the field before racing to the finish line.

Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

1913– Serbian forces begin their siege of the Bulgarian city of Vidin; the siege is later called off when the war ends.
1913 – The Second Revolution breaks out against the Beiyang government, as Li Liejun proclaims Jiangxi independent from the Republic of China.[10]
1917– The Bisbee Deportation occurs as vigilantes kidnap and deport nearly 1,300 striking miners and others from Bisbee, Arizona.
1918– The Imperial Japanese Navy battleship Kawachi blows up at Shunan, western Honshu, Japan, killing at least 621.
1920– The Soviet–Lithuanian Peace Treaty is signed, by which Soviet Russia recognizes the independence of Lithuania.
• 1943 – World War II: Battle of Kursk: German and Soviet forces engage in the Battle of Prokhorovka, one of the largest armored engagements of all time.

Netanyahu leaves US without Gaza deal

AP
Washington, July 11

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's trip to Washington this week netted President Donald Trump another nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize he covets, but the ceasefire the U.S. leader sought for the war in Gaza didn't emerge.

Despite Trump throwing his weight behind a push for a 60-day truce between Israel and Hamas, no breakthrough was announced during Netanyahu's visit, a disappointment for a president who wants to be known as a peacemaker and has hinged his reputation on being a dealmaker.

"He prides himself or being able to make deals, so this is another test case," said Rachel Brandenburg, the Israel Policy Forum's Washington managing director and senior fellow.

Trump's ability to strike a ceasefire deal in the 21-month war will reveal the boundaries of his influence with Netanyahu, especially after their recent joint strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities that both leaders touted at the White House this week.

Beyond the back-to-back meetings Trump and Netanyahu had at the White House this week, there was little public evidence of progress at a time when the Republican U.S. president is pushing to end the fighting.



PHOTO: AP

US President Donald Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and officials in Washington.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Thursday that when it comes to a ceasefire in Gaza, "we're closer than we've been in quite a while and we're hopeful, but we also recognize there's still some challenges in the way."

Rubio, who spoke to reporters while traveling in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, also said that Trump "wants to see a ceasefire and we've invested a lot of time and energy."

Beyond ending the bloodshed, ending the war in Gaza would give Trump more leeway to strike some of the broader agreements he seeks in the Middle East, such as expanding the Abraham Accords that started in his first term and normalizing relations with Syria's new government.

It's unclear how much pressure Trump put on Netanyahu in their private talks this week. But the two leaders came into the visit seeming more aligned than ever — at least for now — fresh off the president having twice come to the Israeli leader's assistance.

Trump made the risky move to join Israel's attacks on Iran last month, delivering pivotal U.S. firepower while alarming world leaders and some of Trump's "America first" supporters. Trump also inserted himself into Israel's domestic affairs, calling for Netanyahu's yearslong corruption trial to be thrown out.

That's a marked turnaround in their relationship, which had appeared somewhat strained in recent years.

Trump shocked some of his fellow Republicans and staunch supporters of Israel by publicly criticizing Netanyahu not long after Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, setting off the conflict.

Even during his last visit to the White House earlier this year, Netanyahu seemed caught off guard when Trump announced the U.S. would hold talks with Iran over its nuclear deal rather than embrace Netanyahu's push for military pressure.

With their military objectives aligning for a time on Iran, the Israeli leader has worked to foster a warmer relationship.

In his visit to Washington this week, the Israeli leader also showed he knows how to praise the president in a way that matters greatly to him when he unveiled a letter in front of reporters and cameras to announce he had nominated him for a Nobel Peace Prize.

Those gestures, though, may only carry him so far as Trump pushes for a deal that Netanyahu may not be able to accept.

Rasuwa flood aftermath

91 Nepalis stranded in Kerung taken care by Chinese authorities

BY GANGA KUMARI MIJAR
Rasuwa, July 11

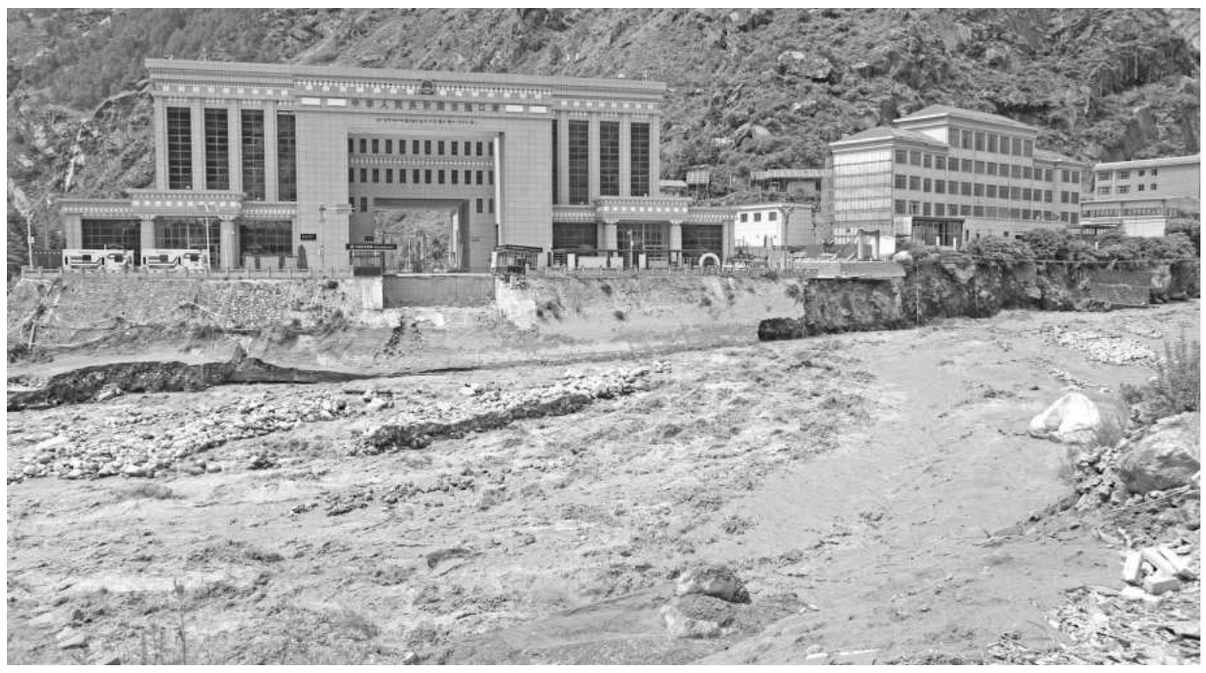


PHOTO: SUJAN GURUNG/TRN

A view of flooded area of Nepal-China border customs office in Rasuwa district.

The sudden flash flood that struck Rasuwagadhi on July 8 caused widespread damage to life and infrastructure along the Bhotekoshi River.

In response to the disaster, the District Administration Office (DAO) of Rasuwa has launched rapid rescue and rehabilitation operations.

According to official information released by the administration, 91 Nepalis who were stranded in Kerung, China, have been safely accommodated by the Chinese authorities.

They are being provided with food, shelter, medical care, and other essentials, with continuous coordination between the two countries keeping the situation under control.

A joint search and rescue team comprising the Nepali Army, Nepal Police, Armed Police Force, and the National Investigation Department has been mobilised to locate those still missing.

> According to official information released by the administration, 91 Nepalis who were stranded in Kerung, China, have been safely accommodated by the Chinese authorities.

So far, 143 individuals, comprising 16 women, 124 men, and three children, have been rescued safely via the Syaphrubesi-Timure foot trail. Additional 12 people were airlifted to safety via private helicopters.

Communication and electricity services, which had been disrupted by the flood, were restored by 11 am on July 10. The Syaphrubesi–Rasuwagadhi road section sustained heavy damage and is under reconstruction with the support of Langtang Hydropower, Rasuwagadhi Hydropower, and Langtang Bhotekoshi Hydropower Projects. Heavy equipment, including JCVs, excavators, and breakers, is being deployed in coordination with the Department of Roads and local authorities.

The flood has devastated not only local livelihoods but also inflicted irreversible damage to cultural heritage. A western wall, approximately seven metres long of the historic Rasuwa Fort in Gosainkunda Rural Municipality-2, has collapsed.

Additionally, the ancient Kali Temple located in the same area has been completely destroyed, according to local officials. At the Timure customs yard, four electric vehicles and four shipping containers were safely relocated with the help of the Nepal Electricity Authority. Around 100 metres of debris piled up in the customs compound have been cleared, and search and recovery operations continue in the area.

Meanwhile, bodies swept away by the swollen Trishuli River have begun surfacing in downstream districts. One body was found on the banks of the river in Kalikhola, Ichchhakamana Rural Municipality-6 of Chitwan, while another was discovered at the barrage bridge on the Nepal–India border in Binayi Triveni Rural Municipality-7 of Nawalparasi East. Both bodies have been sent to the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital for identification and post-mortem examination.

The Rasuwa District Administration has emphasised that all rescue, relief, and rehabilitation efforts are being executed with urgency and in alignment with its guiding principle: "Professional and creative administration for development, prosperity, and good governance." Authorities assure that efforts to restore normalcy in the district are ongoing in coordination with all concerned stakeholders.

TikTok launches guide to combat monsoon misinformation

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 11

TikTok announced the launch of a new search guide designed to help users in Nepal access authoritative and up-to-date information during the ongoing monsoon flood season.

As part of TikTok's continued efforts to promote safety and factual awareness on its platform, the guide will provide verified information to counter misinformation trends surrounding natural disasters.

Users searching for flood-related updates on TikTok will now see a prominent banner urging them to verify information through credible sources, according to a press statement issued by TikTok.

This guide connects users directly with trusted organisations, including BIPAD--the country's national disaster information portal and TikTok's Safety Center resources, as well as a direct link to TikTok's Tragic Event Support guide, which offers practical support for individuals affected by distressing incidents.

The guide defines what constitutes a tragic event, ranging from natural disasters to personal loss, and provides users with information on seeking mental health support and responsibly sharing or reporting content related to such events.

"We understand that during times of crisis, access to timely and accurate information is critical," said Ferdous Mottakin, Head of Public Policy and government relations, South Asia at TikTok.

"By partnering with organisations that work directly with disaster response and making these resources more visible to our community, we aim to support informed decision-making and ensure user safety."

This launch builds on TikTok's broader goals of elevating credible information and creating a safer digital environment for its community.

The platform remains committed to fostering a space where people can stay informed, care for their well-being, and engage responsibly during moments that matter most, it said.

Minister Rana returns home from Rome

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 11

Foreign Minister Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba returned to Nepal on Friday after attending the 44th Session of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and a high-level ministerial conference held in Rome, Italy.

During the FAO conference, which took place from June28 to July 4, she addressed the main plenary session as well as several other high-level meetings and side events.

In her address, she informed the participants that Nepal has enshrined the right to food as a fundamental right of its citizens, backed by necessary legislation to ensure its implementation, her secretariat informed in a statement.

FM Dr. Rana said that Nepal has been ensuring safe and quality food through its Food Safety and Quality Control Policy, which incorporates regulatory standards, laboratory monitoring, and consumer protection mechanisms.

Speaking on the challenges faced by Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), Minister Dr. Rana drew the global community's attention to the impacts of climate change being borne by these nations, including Nepal.

She further stressed the need for grant-based climate finance for sustainable agricultural systems and Himalayan regions in countries like Nepal. "In particular, she urged for international climate funding to be provided as grants to help Nepal and its climate-vulnerable Himalayan regions cope with the impacts of climate change," read the statement.

While visiting Germany following her participation in Rome, FM Dr. Rana held a bilateral meeting with German Foreign Minister Dr. Johann David Wadephul in Berlin.

In the meeting, held on Tuesday, she emphasised the need to strengthen private sector networks between Nepal and Germany to boost bilateral trade, and invited German investment in areas such as chemical fertiliser production in Nepal.

She also proposed the establishment of direct air connectivity between Nepal and Germany and said that following Nepal's graduation from the LDC category in 2026, the country expects continued support in terms of resources, technology, and financial cooperation from Germany, the European Union, and other development partners.

FM Dr. Rana informed that Nepal has already begun drafting laws in line with EU and ICAO standards, and requested Germany, as an influential EU member, to support lifting the ban on Nepali airlines.

Likewise, she requested the German government's support for Nepal's candidacies to the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Economic and Social Council, and as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Minister Dr. Rana also participated in investment promotion programmes organised by the Investment Board Nepal in both Italy and Germany.

Madhes Province declared drought-affected zone amid delayed monsoon

BY BIJAY KUMAR SAH
Dhalkebar, July 11

After paddy transplantation was severely disrupted in lack of rainfall, the Madhes Province government has officially declared the entire region a drought-affected zone.

A cabinet meeting of the provincial government reached the decision following an assessment of the environmental imbalance and prolonged dry conditions, which have jeopardised agricultural productivity.

According to the findings, not only has paddy plantation been delayed, but cracks have begun to appear in paddy fields where rice seedlings had already been planted, signaling an impending agrarian crisis.

Recognising the urgent need for relief, the cabinet meeting has decided to request immediate assistance from the federal government. It has also issued an appeal to national and international donor agencies active in the agricultural sector to support drought-stricken farmers across the province.

In addition, the meeting has committed to mobilising all available resources to address the emerging drinking water crisis, particularly in areas such as Birgunj in Parsa district, which have been severely affected by extreme heat and water scarcity. Plans include coordination with the Federal Ministry of Water Supply and emergency distribution through tankers and other alternative means.

> A cabinet meeting of the provincial government reached the decision following an assessment of the environmental imbalance and prolonged dry conditions.

Paddy plantation reaches 25%

The Madhes Province Directorate of Agriculture reports that so far only 25 per cent of paddy plantation has been completed in the arable land due to the ongoing drought. Despite forecasts from the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology predicting above-average rainfall this year, the monsoon has yet to reach the province even as the traditional planting season nears its end.

Approximately 75 per cent of paddy fields remain barren. Even in the areas where bore well irrigation has enabled plantation, the lack of moisture has caused large cracks in the soil, and paddy seedbeds are beginning to wither.

Sudip Chaudhary, Crop Protection Officer at the Directorate, confirmed that only in 25 per cent of the total 372,645 hectares of paddy farmland have been planted so far. According to him, transplantation should have covered at least 50 per cent of the land by now.

New national demographic...

Minister Paudel proposed a new policy to tackle these changing problems. His proposal was approved in the Cabinet meeting last Monday, leading to the announcement of this updated policy.

This policy builds upon the earlier population policy introduced in 2014 (2071 BS) and addresses new challenges. It also aims to benefit from the growing number of young people in the country.

The policy sets a goal to increase the current declining fertility rate from 1.94 to 2.1, which is considered a stable rate for population growth. It also aims to take advantage of the current large proportion of the population (61.9%) aged 15 to 59, which is seen as an opportunity to support economic growth. The policy highlights the need to plan based on the current population situation and encourages coordination among all three levels of government -- federal, provincial, and local.

It proposes forming a National Population Steering and Coordination Committee under the leadership of the Minister for Health and Population, which will provide guidance and help manage population-related issues across all levels.

NRB slashes interest...

The Governor announced that the new monetary policy aims to strengthen the capital base of banks further. However, the banks should obtain approval from the central bank for the capital increment plan.

Likewise, necessary arrangements will be made for the effective implementation of the concessional loan mentioned in the government's budget statement for the fiscal year 2025/26.

"Laws and regulations will be drafted and submitted to the government to allow BFIs to establish asset management companies for the purpose of managing their non-performing assets. Process would be initiated to establish a Neo Bank with an aim to expand the financial inclusion as envisioned by the budget of the government," read the Policy.

Loan to migrant workers to be 'deprived sector'

It announced a new provision would be made to count the loan (with or without collateral) up to Rs. 300,000 mobilised to youth going for foreign employment as 'deprived sector lending'. Such an amount for women going for jobs abroad could be up to Rs. 500,000.

Likewise, standards on target groups, loan receiving and creditors' qualifications for microfinance institutions would be reviewed. The amount of foreign currency that Nepali citizens are allowed to carry while travelling abroad has been increased to USD 3,000.

The central bank will launch a new programme titled 'Nepal Rastra Bank with Borrowers' with an aim to listen to borrowers' grievances. This initiative will be implemented particularly in the rural areas to engage continuously with borrowers.

According to Governor Dr. Poudel, the NRB will coordinate with relevant government agencies to address risks arising from undesirable activities encountered when banks and financial institutions carry out loan recovery or regularise loans in accordance with existing legal procedures.

Concession to mid-hill businesses

In a new move, the central bank has announced a concessional loan to the businesses along the Mid-Hill Highway and Postal Highway at a base rate plus 2 per cent interest rate. However, to get this facility, the businesses must be registered with the government and met all quality standards prescribed.

Similarly, BFIs would be allowed to mobilise agriculture or business loans of up to Rs. 1 million by evaluating agriculture yield, land and business structure by themselves.

Speaking at the press meet, Executive Director of the NRB, Guru Prasad Poudel, said that the mid-hill region could not contribute to the economic activities as expected so the new measures were announced to increase business activities there.

SKorea, US and Japan hold aerial drill

AP
Seoul, South Korea, July 11

Top South Korean, U.S. and Japanese military officers urged North Korea to cease all unlawful activities that threaten regional security, as the three nations flew advanced warplanes for a joint exercise in a show of force against the North.

The development came Friday as Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was to travel to North Korea amid booming military and other cooperation between the two countries that have raised concerns among their neighbors.

During their regular meeting in Seoul on Friday, the chairmen of the joint chiefs of staff from South Korea, the U.S. and Japan discussed North Korea's deployment of troops to Russia to support its war against Ukraine and Russia's potential transfer of military technology to North Korea in return.

"They urged the DPRK to immediately cease all unlawful activities to destabilize the Korean Peninsula, the Indo-Pacific, and beyond, and pledged to continue working together to respond to the DPRK's threats," according to a joint press statement.

DPRK stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, North Korea's formal name.

Fashion shopping...

According to statistics from the Department of Customs, 86 per cent of women's fashion and daily wear are imported from China and India. In the first 11 months of this fiscal year 2024/25, around 648,254 pieces of different female wear were imported. Among them, 41 per cent of the clothes were imported from China, whereas around 45 per cent were imported from India, generating around Rs. 140,000 in revenue.

In recent days, a new concept of thrifting has been introduced. Thrifting is buying second-hand clothes which were either donated or bought second-hand.

"I think buying expensive, branded clothes just to wear them a few times is a waste of money. So, I prefer thrifting to get branded and expensive clothes at cheaper prices. It becomes like a steal deal for me," said Saya K.C. There are many online and physical thrift stores in the Kathmandu Valley; however, this concept is yet to be popular outside the valley.

(Sharma is an intern at TRN)

Government of Nepal
Ministry of Home Affairs
Department of National ID and Civil Registration
Singh Durbar, Kathmandu

IFB No.: DoNIDCR/G/ICB/081/82/01-R1

Project Name: **Warranty and Related services for Biometric Database Search and Matching system of National Identity Management System**

Addenda No. 1

(Publication Date: 2082-03-28)

The Addenda No. 1 has been issued pursuant to Section I, Clause No. 9 (Amendment of Bidding Document) of ITB of above referenced Bidding Document. The following changes have been made.

S.N.	Section	Point /Topic	Changes to Bid Document
1.	Section II: Bid Data Sheet, ITB 8.2	Pre-Bid meeting ***shall*** be organized. If a Pre-Bid meeting will take place, it will be at the following date, time and place: **Date: 13 June 2025** **Time: 14:00 Hrs of NST** **Place:** Office of the Department of National Id and Civil Registration, Singha Durbar, Kathmandu	Pre-Bid meeting ***shall*** be organized. If a Pre-Bid meeting will take place, it will be at the following date, time and place: **Date: 13 July 2025** **Time: 14:00 Hrs of NST** **Place:** Office of the Department of National Id and Civil Registration, Singha Durbar, Kathmandu

Shrawani Mela begins in Bolbam Dham



BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Butwal, July 11

The Bolbam Jalarpan Yatra and Shrawani Mela have begun at Parroha Parmeshwor Shiv Jyotirlinga Bolbam Dham, located in Sainamaina Municipality-1 of Rupandehi district.

The Bolbam Jalarpan Yatra, which started on the occasion of Guru Purnima at Parroha Bolbam Dham, will continue for one month until Raksha Bandhan or Janai Purnima on August 11.

The yatra was inaugurated by Sainamaina Municipality Mayor Phanendra Prasad Sharma, temple chairman Chitra Bahadur Karki, and Vyasacharya Pandit Kishor Kumar Gautam, among others.

On the occasion, Mayor Phanendra Prasad Sharma said that life feels incomplete and unfulfilled without visiting Parroha Bolbam Dham.

He urged people to participate in the Shrawani Mela and, if possible, to visit the dham with their families or at least once, even if alone.

Chairman Chitra Bahadur Karki said, "Parroha Bolbam Dham is our dham, and it is our responsibility to develop and establish it."

He called on everyone to recognise the value of nearby pilgrimage sites and support the Bolbam Jalarpan for the entire month.

Parroha Parmeshwor Bolbam Dham, known for its historical, religious, and archaeological significance in western Nepal, is home to a self-emerged Shiv Jyotirlinga.

Devotees offer water to the lingam throughout the month of Shrawan.

Also referred to as the 'Pashupatinath of the West,' the dham draws hundreds of thousands of devotees from both Nepal and India each year during the Shrawan month to perform the water offering ritual.

Many devotees from sacred Indian sites such as Ganga, Yamuna, Kashi, Gaya, and Haridwar also collect holy Ganga water and undertake a barefoot pilgrimage to this location to offer it to the Shiv Jyotirlinga.

Pandit Kishor Kumar Gautam, the dham's spiritual guardian, said that wearing saffron attire and participating in the Bolbam Yatra while offering holy Ganga water at the Jyotirlinga grants spiritual merit.

He added that this act helps protect against natural disasters such as floods, landslides, river erosion, and soil degradation, and also brings relief from seasonal diseases during the monsoon.

PRADIP RODAN TO RECITE GHAZAL IN DAMAULI



BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Tanahun, July 11

Renowned ghazal poet Pradip Rodan, who has won the hearts of many by presenting his ghazals at various programmes both in Nepal and abroad, as well as on social media, is all set to perform in Damauli.

Rodan will recite his ghazals in Damauli on Saturday on the occasion of the 212th Bhanu Jayanti, organised by the Gandaki Wangmaya Pratishthan, Tanahun.

Pratishthan Chairperson Gaukumari Neupane informed that Rodan was invited to perform due to the deep impact his ghazals make by addressing the pains and struggles of society.

Highly popular among the youth, Rodan presents themes ranging from social and political distortions to love and separation through his ghazals.

According to Pratishthan's Vice-Chair Anju Dahal, to ensure everyone can benefit from his work, free entry has been arranged for the event.

Vikrant Massey to play Sri Sri Ravi Shankar in White

AGENCIES
Mumbai, July 11



After delivering some of Bollywood's biggest blockbusters, director Siddharth Anand is set to explore a new dimension of storytelling with White, a biopic on renowned spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

The film will delve into lesser-known aspects of the guru's life, especially his global peace initiatives, including his role in Colombia's peace process.

Stepping into the challenging role is actor Vikrant Massey, known for his depth and sincerity.

Calling it both an honour and a responsibility, Massey shared, "It's a crucial part of his life and world history. Unfortunately, not a lot of people, especially in India, know about his contribution to global peace. I can never be him, only attempt to be him—and I hope my attempt is as sincere as his efforts."

Massey recalled visiting Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's ashram last year, describing it as a life-altering experience. "Every moment spent with him is etched in my heart. I'm grateful to have that access. I start shooting for White in August."

While White may be a milestone in his career, Massey is also set to appear in major upcoming films, including Farhan Akhtar's Don 3 and Nitesh Tiwari's Ramayana. He also addressed recent online trolling regarding a social media post about taking a break: "Some are bullies, some want to provoke. I don't care two hoots. People who matter understood me."

With White, Massey aims not just to portray a public figure but to illuminate a legacy of peace and compassion that often goes unspoken.

The film 'White' is scheduled to begin shooting in August 2025 and is expected to be released in 2026.

Justin Bieber releases 'Swag,' as his 7th album



AP
New York, July 11

Never say never! Justin Bieber surprised fans Friday by releasing "Swag," his seventh studio album, hours after he teased it on billboards and social media posts.

It is his first album since 2021's "Justice" and his first since becoming a father last year. "Inspired by his devotion as a husband and father, this new era of music has fuelled a deeper perspective and more reflective sound, resulting in some of his most personal music yet," Def Jam Recordings said of the 21-track album.

Billboards depicting Bieber were found by fans on Thursday in Reykjavik, Iceland, and Los Angeles. The singer also shared images of billboards on his official Instagram account along with a track list that included song names like "All I Can Take," "Walking Away," "Dadz Love" and "Forgiveness."

Bieber, the two-time Grammy Award-winning singer and Canadian pop idol who revolutionised teen pop and social media fame, is best known for his silky R&B pop lyric tenor, demonstrated on the diamond-selling "Baby," "Sorry," and "Stay" with the Kid Laroi. At the beginning of his career, and as a tween, Bieber began working with Usher and the influential music manager Scooter Braun.

In 2023, Bieber sold the rights to his music — all six of his albums, including hits like "Sorry" and "Baby" — to Hipgnosis, a U.K.-based music investment company. The deal's financial details were not disclosed, but Billboard Magazine reports that the sale was worth an estimated $200 million.

In August 2024, Bieber and his wife, the model Hailey Bieber (nee Baldwin), announced the birth of their first child, Jack Blues Bieber.

CHRIS BROWN PLEADS NOT GUILTY TO 2 NEW LONDON ASSAULT CHARGES

AP
London, July 11

Grammy-winning singer Chris Brown on Friday pleaded not guilty to two further charges related to the serious beating of a music producer with a bottle in a London nightclub in 2023.

Brown, 36, denied the more serious charge of attempting to cause grievous bodily harm at a hearing last month.

The singer, wearing a light brown suit, pleaded not guilty to assault causing actual bodily harm to Abraham Diaw at the Tape nightclub in the swanky London neighbourhood of Mayfair in February 2023.

He also denied having an offensive weapon — a bottle — in a public place during the short hearing at Southwark Crown Court.

Around 20 fans sat in the public gallery behind the dock for Friday's hearing, with several gasping as the singer walked into the courtroom.



Pakistani actress Humaira's family refuses to claim her body

AGENCIES
Islamabad, July 11



The sudden death of Pakistani actress and model Humaira Asghar Ali has sent shockwaves through the entertainment industry and ignited a broader conversation about loneliness, mental health, and dignity in death.

The 32-year-old star, known for her work in drama serials and her appearance on ARY Digital's Tamasha Ghar, was found dead and alone in her Karachi apartment. Her final days were marked by growing isolation, unreturned calls for help, and, most distressingly, a heartbreaking rejection by her own family.

According to media reports, police traced her relatives through phone records. When they contacted her father, Dr. Asghar Ali, a retired army doctor, they were met with a cold response. He allegedly told authorities the family had severed ties with her years ago and had no intention of claiming her body.

With no family members stepping forward, the Sindh Culture Department has intervened to arrange Humaira's funeral and burial. Meanwhile, fellow actors Yashma Gill and Sonya Hussyn have expressed grief and are reportedly supporting her final rites, offering compassion in the absence of family.

Authorities say they will make one last attempt to persuade Humaira's relatives to take responsibility. If they continue to refuse, her body will be declared heirless and buried by the state.

The discovery of her death came during eviction proceedings initiated by her landlord over months of unpaid rent. On a local court's order, Gizri police entered her locked apartment and found her body. Initial findings suggest no signs of foul play or forced entry, and police are awaiting the post-mortem report to determine the exact cause of death.

Once a vibrant presence in the entertainment world, Humaira had reportedly become reclusive in recent months. Her appearances in notable dramas like Just Married, Chal Dil Mere, Ehsaan Faramosh, Guru, and the 2015 film Jalaibee earned her recognition and admiration. Her final screen role was in the 2021 film Love Vaccine, alongside Farhan Saeed and Sonya Hussyn.

Her death—and the painful isolation surrounding it—has prompted national reflection on how society treats individuals struggling with mental health and social estrangement. Public reaction has been one of mourning, not only for the loss of a talented actress but for the deeply human tragedy of her final days.

HOROSCOPE

tarot.com

ARIES: Your goals might be tough to match up with your efforts. You may want to do more, better, faster, but the more realistic way to make your desired progress is to be consistent and innovative as you go.

CANCER: You are enough as you are, authentically true and sincere. Still, others' assumptions or insecurities may surface unexpectedly, causing friction. Stay confident in your truth, even when others project their doubts or misunderstandings onto you.

LIBRA: Anxiety can prevent you from trying new things. Worrying too much about the outcome of a situation before it even begins could keep you from ever starting it! This may be something that you want.

CAPRICORN: Safety may start to feel suffocating. Analyze your current situation -- while you might have felt safe there for a long time, it's plausible that you're now ready to move on to a bigger pond with more room to grow.

TAURUS: Success takes time. Though you may feel ready to lead or climb higher, unexpected gaps in skills or experience could surface. Patience, continued learning, and preparation are essential before truly reaching the top with confidence.

LEO: Someone close may be crossing your boundaries, pressuring you to overspend or engage in things that feel wrong. Their actions could trigger discomfort and force you to reconsider whether this relationship supports your well-being and values.

SCORPIO: Your heart is asking you to be kind to yourself. Someone in your life, or even multiple people, might be putting an emotional strain on you with criticism or silence. Remembering who you are matters far more than their judgment.

AQUARIUS: You may not see eye-to-eye with a necessary collaborator at this time. This can be a tricky situation, one where compromise is difficult to find -- likely because you're on opposite ends of some spectrum.

GEMINI: Your plans for adventure might suddenly be interrupted by unexpected responsibilities or obstacles. Even well-prepared fun could be delayed. Stay flexible, as today's demands may require you to pause and reassess before moving forward again.

VIRGO: Sometimes you have to be an advocate for yourself. You may not be as comfortable with the people who work alongside you as you are with your superiors at the moment.

SAGITTARIUS: How you're feeling inside may not match the image you're portraying to the wider world. Others might see you as closed off or angry right now, even though that might not be what's true for you in your heart.

PISCES: Self-awareness shapes your relationships. If you're unsure of your emotions, it can create distance between you and others. Take time to understand your true feelings before attempting to resolve any tension or misunderstandings in the relationship.

CARTOON

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NEPALI GIRLS MAKE FLYING START IN SAFF U20

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 11

Nepal kicked off their SAFF U-20 Women's Championship campaign in style with a commanding 6-1 victory over Bhutan at the Bashundhara Kings Arena in Dhaka on Friday.

Purnima Rai stole the spotlight with a sensational quadruple, while Senu Pariyar chipped in with a brace to seal the emphatic win. Last edition's runners-up, Nepal seized control early, with Senu opening the scoring in the 9th minute before Purnima doubled the lead nine minutes later. Senu then netted her second just before the interval to give Nepal a 3-0 cushion heading into half-time.

Bhutan pulled one back in the 54th minute through Kelden Wangmo, but Nepal quickly reasserted their dominance. Purnima completed her hat-trick in the 84th minute and capped her stellar performance with a fourth goal in the 88th—Nepal's sixth of the evening. A few more chances went begging for the Nepali side as two goals were disallowed for offside.

Earlier in the day, defending champions and hosts Bangladesh kicked off the tournament with a resounding 9-1 win over Sri Lanka. Sagorika bagged a hat-trick, Munki Akhter netted twice, while Sapna Rani, Sinha Jahan Shikha, Rupa Akter, and Shanti Mardi each scored to join the goal fest.

Nepal and Bangladesh will meet each other in their second match on Sunday. The team topping the double round league standings will win the title.

Semenya's sex eligibility battle has confounded sports for 16 years and still isn't over

AP
Cape Town, July 11



One of the most complex current issues in sports can be traced back to a track meet in Germany in 2009, when an unknown 18-year-old from South Africa blew away a field of the best female runners on the planet to win the world title. The teenager was hardly out of breath when she flexed her muscles at the end of it.

What quickly became clear is that sports faced an unprecedented dilemma with the arrival of Caster Semenya.

Now a two-time Olympic and three-time world champion in the 800 meters, the 34-year-old Semenya has been banned from competing in her favored event since 2019 by a set of rules that were crafted by track authorities because of her dominance.

They say her natural testosterone level is much higher than the typical female range and should be medically reduced for her to compete fairly against other women.

Semenya has refused to artificially alter her hormones and challenged the rules claiming discrimination at the Court of Arbitration for Sport court in Switzerland, then the Swiss Supreme Court and now the European Court of Human Rights.

A ruling Thursday by the highest chamber of the European court — Semenya's last legal avenue after losing at the other two — found that she was denied a fair hearing at the Swiss Supreme Court.

It kept alive Semenya's case and reignited a yearslong battle involving individual rights on one hand and the perception of fairness in sports on the other, with implications across the sporting world.

A complex issue

Semenya is not transgender and her case has sometimes been inaccurately conflated with that of transgender athletes. She was assigned female at birth, raised as a girl and has always identified as female.

After years of secrecy because of medical confidentiality, it was made public in 2018 that she has one of a number of conditions known as differences of sex development, or DSDs. They are sometimes known as intersex conditions. Semenya was born with the typical male XY chromosome pattern and female physical traits. Her condition leads to her having testosterone levels that are higher than the typical female range.

World Athletics, the track governing body, says that gives her an unfair, male-like advantage when racing against other women because of testosterone's link to muscle mass and cardiovascular performance. It says Semenya and a relatively small number of other DSD athletes who emerged after her must suppress their testosterone to below a specific level to compete in women's competitions.

The case has transcended sports and reached Europe's top rights court largely because of its core dispute: Semenya says the sports rules restrict the rights she has always known as a woman in every other facet of life and mean she can't practice her profession. World Athletics has asserted that Semenya is "biologically male."

How the rules work

Track and field's regulations depend on the conclusion that higher testosterone gives rise to an athletic advantage, though that has been challenged in just one of the many complicated details of Semenya's case.

To follow the rules, DSD athletes must suppress their testosterone to below a threshold that World Athletics says will put them in the typical female range. Athletes do that by taking daily contraceptive pills or using hormone-blocking injections and it's checked through regular blood tests.

Track first introduced a version of its testosterone regulations in 2011 in response to Semenya and has made them stricter over the years. The current rules require athletes affected to reduce their testosterone for at least two years before competing and throughout competitions, effectively meaning elite DSD runners would be constantly on medication to stay eligible for the biggest events like the Olympics and world championships.

That has troubled medical experts and ethicists, who have questioned the "off-label" use of birth control pills for the purpose of sports eligibility.

Semenya is not alone

While Semenya is the only athlete currently challenging the regulations, three other women who have won Olympic medals — Francine Niyonsaba of Burundi, Margaret Wambui of Kenya and Christine Mboma of Namibia — have also been sidelined by the rules.

The issue came to a head at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, when Semenya, Niyonsaba and Wambui won the gold, silver and bronze medals in the 800 meters when the rules were temporarily suspended. Supporters of the ban cited that result as evidence they had an insurmountable advantage over other women.

World Athletics is now considering a total ban on DSD athletes like Semenya. Its president, Sebastian Coe, said in 2023 that up to 13 women in elite track and field fell under the rules without naming them.

What Thursday's decision means

Track's DSD rules became a blueprint for other sports like swimming, another high-profile Olympic code that has regulations. Soccer is considering testosterone rules in women's competitions.

Sex eligibility is a burning issue for the International Olympic Committee and new president, Kirsty Coventry, who was elected in March. It was brought into urgent focus for the IOC after a sex eligibility scandal erupted at last year's Paris Olympics over female boxers Imane Khelif of Algeria and Lin Yu-ting of Taiwan.

Most sports will watch the direction of Semenya's case closely as it is sent back to the Swiss Supreme Court, and possibly to sport's highest court, even though that could take years. The ultimate outcome — whether a victory for Semenya or for World Athletics — would set a definitive precedent for sports because there has never been a case like it.

Minister Chaudhary raises serious concern over NPL allegations

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, July 11

Minister for Youth and Sports, Tejulal Chaudhary, has expressed grave concern over attempts to implicate him in issues surrounding the Nepal Premier League (NPL).

Issuing a press statement on Friday, Minister Chaudhary acknowledged that the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) had received complaints regarding financial dealings during the first edition of NPL, organised by the Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN).

In response, an investigation taskforce was formed in line with legal procedures, and it submitted its report on Ashar 25, 2082 BS. "The investigation, carried out by a legally-formed taskforce, concluded with the submission of its report on July 9. In this context, attempts to dramatise the issue are regrettable," the statement read.

"We will study the taskforce's findings and forward the report to the CIAA for further action. We must examine what it contains, and whether a higher-level committee is required. However, we are not in the process of stopping the NPL. Even the Prime Minister has said it should continue. All procedures must be respected," he stated.

He stated the government expects that the second edition of NPL would proceed under the guidance of the organising body and in accordance with established rules. Minister Chaudhary dismissed accusations suggesting his role in preventing the second edition of NPL as misleading. "The allegation that I am involved in stopping the next edition of NPL is entirely false, particularly when the taskforce report supports its continuation," the statement added.

"Such misinformation undermines the morale of cricket fans, players, and participating teams. I urge all concerned to refrain from engaging in such behaviour."

On different occasion, Minister Chaudhary affirmed that the NPL will be conducted in a more systematic and organised manner under the leadership of the Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN). Speaking at the Youth Journalism Awards handover programme organised by the Ministry in Kathmandu on Friday, Minister Chaudhary highlighted the legal framework guiding the tournament's operations.

"We have the Procurement Act and Regulations, as well as the Sports Development Act of 2075 BS, which govern procurement procedures. The NPL is held within the bounds of existing laws and regulations," he said.

Last-gasp Xhemaili fires Swiss into Euro 2025 quarters

AFP
Geneva, July 11

Switzerland reached the quarter-finals of Women's Euro 2025 on Thursday after Riola Xhemaili struck with a stoppage time equaliser in a 1-1 draw with Finland.

Xhemaili swept home Geraldine Reuteler's cross in the second minute of added time to send a passionate ground in Geneva wild just as it looked the hosts were set to be knocked out.

Switzerland were trailing with moments to spare after Natalia Kuikka marked her 101st international appearance with the opening goal from the penalty spot after Viola Calligaris fouled Emma Koivisto.

"Scoring that goal was a real relief, we all played together, we knew we had to fight together," said Leila Wandeler to RS1.

Pia Sundhage's team will face the winners of Group B, most likely world champions Spain, on July 18 after scraping into the next round on goal difference.

Switzerland needed a draw to go through ahead of Finland in second place in Group A and the point meant they finished second on four points, level with Finland who were eliminated in the most brutal of fashions.



PHOTO: AP

Switzerland players celebrate at the end of the Euro 2025, group A, soccer match against Finland in Geneva.

"Switzerland were much better than us -- they came to the game like they wanted to win and it kind of showed," said Kuikka to SRF.

"We lost a lot of individual battles and I felt like the ball was just bouncing around. We weren't taking control of it."

The Swiss are five points behind Norway who sailed into the last eight with a perfect three wins from three after just beating 4-3 rock-bottom Iceland, who finished with no points.

Signe Gaupset and Frida Maanum scored twice to pull Norway ahead in the 26th minute after Sveindis Jonsdottir gave Iceland a shock lead in the sixth minute.

Norway survived a scare with late goals from Hlin Eiríksdottir and Glodis Perla Viggosdottir cutting the gap for Iceland, but it was too little, too late.

Iceland were already eliminated before kick-off and were contesting a dead rubber with the Norwegians who were already in the quarters and await the runners-up in Group B.

MENDIS LEADS SRI LANKA TO 7-WICKET WIN

AP
Pallekele, July 11

Kusal Mendis continued his sublime batting form in white-ball cricket and led Sri Lanka to a seven-wicket victory against Bangladesh in the first T20 on Thursday.

Mendis followed his ODI century two days ago at the same venue with a 73 off 51 balls as Sri Lanka cruised to 159-3 with an over to spare for a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Former captain Dasun Shanaka made an impressive return to white-ball cricket after almost one year and limited Bangladesh to 154-5 after Sri Lanka skipper Charith Asalanka won the toss and elected to field.

Mendis and Pathum Nissanka (42) had all but sealed the chase inside the first five overs with their belligerent hitting as Sri Lanka sped to 78-1.

Nissanka smashed fast bowler Mohammad Saifuddin's first three deliveries for boundaries and Taskin Ahmed conceded 34 off his first two overs inside the powerplay, with Mendis smacking the pace bowler for three boundaries and three sixes.

Nissanka's entertaining 16-ball knock ended when he holed out to mid-on but not before hoisting spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz for two sixes.

Mendis eased to his 16th T20 half century off 31 balls and — although leg-spinner Rishad Hossain beat Kusal Perera with a googly in the 13th over and had the left-hander splice an easy catch to wicketkeeper Litton Das — Sri Lanka eased to victory.

Shamim Hossain timed his jump to perfection at short extra cover and plucked a brilliant left-handed catch to end Mendis' innings when Sri Lanka was only seven away from victory, after fast bowler Mohammad Saifuddin found the leading edge of the batter.

Earlier, opener Parvez Hossain Emon showed plenty of aggression in the powerplay with his breezy knock of 38 off 22 balls before Shanaka squeezed Bangladesh's middle-order with his slower balls.

Emon, who hit five fours and a six, couldn't clear Shanaka at long-on when he attempted a big hit against Nuwan Thushara as Bangladesh slid to 67-3.

Leg-spinner Jeffery Vandersay perfectly filled the void of injured Wanindu Hasaranga, who has been ruled out of the series with a hamstring injury. Vandersay had Das leg before wicket for just six as the batter misread the googly and went for a sweep.

Mohammad Naim made an unbeaten 32 off 29 balls, but Bangladesh's batters couldn't find acceleration even in the death overs with Shamim Hossain (14 not out) hitting two late sixes to breach the 150-run mark.

Swiatek, Anisimova battle to be new queen of Wimbledon

AFP
London, July 11

Iga Swiatek and Amanda Anisimova clash in the Wimbledon final on Saturday with only one thing certain -- there will be an eighth consecutive first-time winner of the women's tournament.

Swiatek and Anisimova will both be making their first appearance in the Wimbledon final after unexpected runs to the showpiece occasion.

No player has retained the crown since the now-retired Serena Williams won her seventh and final title at the All England Club in 2016.

Aryna Sabalenka started as the hot favourite after reaching the past three Grand Slam finals but faltered in a gripping semi-final against American 13th seed Anisimova.

Poland's Swiatek is seeded eighth at Wimbledon following a disappointing first half of the season, though she is back up to fourth in the rankings after reaching the final of the grass-court Bad Homburg tournament.

That run, together with her surge through the draw at All England Club, suggests the 24-year-old is cured of her grass-court allergy.

Initially she went under the radar at Wimbledon, with the focus on Sabalenka and French Open champion Coco Gauff, but she kept winning while the top seeds tumbled, dropping just one set on route to the final.

Swiatek, who had never been past the Wimbledon last-eight before this year, brushed aside former Olympic champion Belinda Bencic 6-2, 6-0 in Thursday's semi-final.

Four of her five Grand Slam titles have come on the clay of Roland Garros and she won the 2022 US Open on hard courts.

But she is finally showing an affinity with the lawns of Wimbledon, a development that has shocked even her.

"Honestly, I never even dreamed that it's going to be possible for me to play in the final," Swiatek said.

"So I'm just super-excited and proud of myself and, I don't know, tennis keeps surprising me.



"I've been enjoying just this new feeling of being a bit more comfortable on grass."

Swiatek has won all five of her Grand Slam finals, but standing in the way of a sixth major title is Anisimova.

Mental health break

The 23-year-old American, shattered Sabalenka's title bid with a shock 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 win on Thursday.

Anisimova has overcome many obstacles to make her maiden Grand Slam final.

She reached the French Open semi-finals in 2019 at the age of just 17.

But in 2023 she took an eight-month break from the court for mental health reasons, tumbling out the top 400.

This time last year, she was on the comeback trail but was ranked too low to get into the Wimbledon main draw and fell in qualifying.

"If you told me I would be in the final of Wimbledon, I would not believe you. It's indescribable to be honest," she said.

Anisimova, whose parents emigrated from Russia in the 1990s, added: "I think it goes to show that it is possible.

"I think that's a really special message that I think I've been able to show because when I took my break, a lot of people told me that you would never make it to the top again if you take so much time away from the game."

Anisimova won the Qatar Open in February and showed she was comfortable on grass by reaching the Queen's Club final in June.

She is guaranteed to reach the top 10 for the first time when the rankings are updated on Monday.

The two players have never met professionally, though they did face each other as juniors, with Swiatek coming out on top.

"I did lose that match against her, unfortunately," said Anisimova. "I remember a lot of coaches were saying that she's going to be a big deal one day. Obviously they were right.

"I'm sure it will be an amazing match. Getting to compete against an unbelievable player again is going to be super special."

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