Wednesday, January 14, 2026
Poush 30, 2082 | Nepal Sambat 1146 | Pohelaga Ekadashi

NATION'S 1ST ENGLISH BROADSHEET

risingnepaldaily.com
Vol. LXI, No. 30 | Pages 8 | Rs. 5 | National Edition

THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL

175 PR CANDIDATES FROM 17 PARTIES WITHDRAW NOMINATIONS

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Jan. 13

A total of 175 candidates from 17 political parties have withdrawn their names from the Proportionate Representation (PR) closed lists submitted to the Election Commission.

Joint Spokesperson of the Election Commission, Kul GC confirmed this on Tuesday. He said the candidates personally appeared before the EC to formally withdraw their candidacies in accordance with the election procedures.

The Commission has instructed the concerned political parties to submit replacement names from the same respective clusters.

According to the EC sources, the Loktantrik Samajwadi Party (LSP) recorded the highest number of withdrawals, with all 110 candidates pulling out. These include 32 from the Indigenous/Ethnic cluster, 33 from Khas Arya, seven from Tharu, 15 from Dalit, 18 from Madhesi and five from Muslim categories.

The withdrawals followed the recent unification of LSP with the Janata Samajwadi Party–Nepal (JSP-N), under which some LSP candidates were moved to the JSP-N PR list.

Similarly, 20 candidates from the Janamat Party withdrew their nominations, including four from the Indigenous/Ethnic cluster and 16 from Khas Arya.

The Rastriya Prajatantra Party saw 12 withdrawals, while six candidates from Janadesh Party Nepal, five from CPN-UML, and four from the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist Centre) also withdrew their names.

In addition, four candidates from Rastra Nirman Dal Nepal, two each from Unnat Loktantrik Party, Nepali Congress, Nepali Communist Party and Rastriya Swatantra Party, and one candidate each from Gatisheel Loktantrik Party, Nagarik Unmukti Party, Nepal Janata Party, Sanghiya Loktantrik Rastriya Manch and Samyukta Nagarik Party withdrew from the PR lists.

GC said the Commission has directed political parties to submit replacement names between January 14 and January 16.

The revised PR closed lists will be published on January 18, while claims and objections may be filed from January 19 to January 24.

The Commission will review the objections through January 31 and publish a notice on February 2 if any candidates are found ineligible.

» SEE PAGE 6



PHOTO: RSS

Apple sukuti (dried apple), considered a major source of income in Mustang district in recent years, being prepared for sale.

NC convention makes key changes in statute, leaders seek truce

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Jan. 13

The ongoing second Special General Convention of the Nepali Congress has endorsed sweeping amendments to the party statute, introducing term limits, overhauling leadership selection, and tightening rules on party membership in what leaders described as a decisive move towards internal reform. The proposals were passed during a closed session at Bhrikutimandap in Kathmandu on Tuesday, following two days of intensive deliberations by delegates.

Under the revised statute, senior Nepali Congress leaders will no longer be able to hold government positions indefinitely. The new provisions bar any individual from serving as party president more than once and as prime minister more than twice. Limits have also been imposed on other offices, allowing a maximum of three terms as a minister and four terms for directly elected members of parliament. Entry into parliament through the proportional representation system has been restricted to once in a lifetime.

The amendments also seek to institutionalise a bottom-up leadership structure. From now on, all leaders, from the ward level to the central leadership, must be elected through the grassroots. Even the party president



will be required to be elected as a ward representative to qualify for higher office, effectively dismantling the long-criticised top-down culture in the party.

The reforms were advanced through separate political and organisational proposals submitted by general secretaries Gagan Kumar Thapa and Bishwo Prakash Sharma. Their documents were debated in nine discussion groups representing the seven provinces, the Kathmandu Valley, and affiliated committees, before being approved with incorporated suggestions. With the statute endorsed, the convention moved ahead with the election process for a new central committee.

Addressing delegates, Thapa said the special general convention was not convened to secure positions for individuals, including himself. He argued that questioning internal practices was itself an act of reform and warned against the growth of entrenched groups within the party. He urged delegates to ignore rumours circulating outside the convention hall and to respect the mandate emerging from the gathering.

While the Special General Convention continued, leaders from both factions remained busy holding meetings to avert a split in the party. The establishment faction that initially undermined the move of the two general secretaries, Thapa and Sharma, started parleys after over 60 per cent of the convention delegates arrived in Kathmandu to attend the Special General Convention.

The two factions formed separate talks teams to reach a conclusion. However, by the time this report was filed, the talks had not made progress. Pradeep Paudel, Gururaj Ghimire, Madhu Acharya and Devraj Chalise are on the talks team from the pro-special convention group, and Bal Krishna Khand, Ramesh Lekhak, Minendra Rijal, and Jiwan Pariyar are from the establishment faction. The team met twice but failed to reach an agreement, particularly on the leadership change issue.

Party president Sher Bahadur Deuba, meanwhile, stressed the need for consensus, according to spokesperson Prakash Sharan Mahat. Mahat said the leadership was engaged in talks to avoid divisions, arguing that unity was essential for strengthening both the party and the country.

» SEE PAGE 6

Govt approves National Policy against Human Trafficking

Sanctions multiple int'l engagement and promotions

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Jan. 13

The government has approved the National Policy against Human Trafficking-2025. The decision was made during the Cabinet meeting held on January 12.

Speaking at a press briefing to make the decisions of January 12 Cabinet meeting public on Tuesday, the interim government Spokesperson and Minister of Communication and Information Technology, Jagdish Kharel, announced that the government has decided to convene a session of the National Assembly of the Federal Parliament on January 18 at 11:00 am at the Federal Parliament Secretariat, Singha Durbar.

Minister Kharel said that the government has approved the transfer of eight officers from the first-class of the Nepal Judicial Service, Law Group, and the promotion of eight second-class officers of the same service to the first-class of their respective groups.

Additionally, the government approved Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Development, Dr. Madan Prasad Pariyar participation in the 49th Session of the Governing Council of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Rome, Italy, from February 9 to 11.

The government has also approved the payment of its 2024 annual contribution of USD 238,503 to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development as a member nation.

The Cabinet authorised Secretary (Revenue) Bhupal Baral of the Ministry of Finance to participate in the FATF plenary meeting on AML/CFT in Mexico from February 9 to 13. The government approved the Financial Sector Development Strategy for 2082/83–2086/87.

Similarly, the government has given approval for the participation of a Nepali delegation led by Secretary Dr. Ram Prasad Ghimire of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies in the third meeting of the Nepal–China Coordination Mechanism on Border Trade and Cooperation in Lhasa, China, on January 20 to 21.

Furthermore, Election Commissioner Dr. Janaki Kumari Tuladhar has been granted approval to participate as an international election observer in Myanmar's third-phase elections from January 23 to 26.

Secretary Dr. Dipak Kafle of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security has been authorised to attend the 6th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour in Marrakesh, Morocco, from February 11 to 13.

Similarly, Secretary Mukunda Prasad Niraula of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation will participate in the international tourism fair in Madrid, Spain, from January 20 to 26.

Secretary Dr. Bikash Devkota of the Ministry of Health and Population has been approved to participate in the 159th Session of the WHO Executive Board in Geneva, Switzerland, from February 2 to 7.

» SEE PAGE 6

CABINET DECISIONS



16,000 vapes seized at Korala border point

BY HARIKRISHNA SHARMA
Muktinath (Mustang), Jan. 13

Security personnel have seized 16,000 units of electronic cigarettes (vapes), worth approximately Rs. 22.4 million, at the Korala border point along the Nepal-China frontier and arrested the container driver involved.

The container carrying illegal vapes was seized by a joint team from the Mustang Customs Office, the Area Police Office and the Armed Police Force Nepal Border Out Post, Nechung.

According to Police Inspector Santosh Basyal of the District Police Office, Mustang, the container was intercepted at the Nechung-Liji route on the basis of a special tip-off. He said the container was carrying other goods as well and further investigation was underway.

The seized goods include 80 cartons of electronic cigarettes loaded in a container bearing registration number Na 6 Kha 7591. The driver, Pema Lama of Sunkoshi Rural Municipality-5, Sindhupalchowk, has been taken into custody and handed over to the customs office for further investigation.

The Armed Police Force team led by Assistant Sub-Inspector Uday Bahadur Kumal from Nechung recovered the goods and submitted them to the customs office.

Earlier, 19,000 units of vapes was seized in Mustang in January 2025, after which security checks at the border were tightened. Customs officials have increased vigilance to curb illegal trade, especially during the winter season.

Security agencies, along with local elected representatives, are actively monitoring the 14-kilometre stretch between the border point and the customs office to prevent illegal activities.

Tokha's Chaku factories scramble to meet Maghe Sankranti demands

BY BINU SHRESTHA
Kathmandu, Jan. 13

As Maghe, or Makar Sankranti, approaches, the air across Nepal is filled with festive cheer and the sweet aroma of Chaku, the beloved Newari delicacy.

Maghe or Makar Sankranti is being observed across the country on Thursday.

On the day, people celebrate Maghe Sankranti by performing cultural rituals and eating traditional delicacies such as ghee, yam, Chaku (molasses), and sweets made from sesame and molasses.

The mouth-watering delicacy **Chaku** is a favourite among children, adults and people of all age groups.

With Maghe Sankranti often referred to as the unofficial "Chaku Day" just one day away, factories in Tokha, Kathmandu are running at full capacity to



supply the chocolate-coloured stuff to markets in the Kathmandu Valley, other districts and even abroad.

Tokha, located on the northern edge of the Valley and famed for chaku, is considered the chaku (hardened molasses) capital of the national capital. Many families in this ancient Newa settlement have been involved in Chaku-making for generations.

Using methods and technology that have remained largely unchanged for centuries, Tokha has been producing Chaku, a delicacy cherished across the country and increasingly among Nepalis living abroad.

This winter alone from mid-November to the first week of January Tokha produced approximately 700,000 kilograms of the Chaku, worth more than Rs. 98 million, informed Krishna Shrestha, President of the Tokha Traditional Chaku Conservation Society, the community organisation responsible for branding all Chaku produced in the area.

Shrestha said the produce had been supplied to stores across districts of the Kathmandu Valley and other parts of the country where the Newar community resides. He added that Chaku is also in high demand in countries such as China, Australia, Japan and Canada, with Japan recording particularly high demand this year.

» SEE PAGE 6



BULLION
(Rs. per tola)

Hallmark Gold : Rs. 276,500/-
Worked Gold : NA
Silver : 5,340/-

STOCK

NEPSE : 2,639.91

Total Amount : 6,990,484,039.45

No. of Share : 113,624,824

GOLD PRICE REACHES A RECORD HIGH OF RS. 276,500 PER TOLA

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Jan. 13

The price of gold rose further, setting yet another new record in the local market on Tuesday.

According to the Federation of Nepal Gold and Silver Dealers' Association (FENEGOSIDA), the price of gold reached Rs. 276,500 per tola on Tuesday, the highest ever in the domestic market.

The price of the precious yellow metal increased by Rs. 1,800 per tola on Tuesday compared to Monday. Gold had been traded at Rs. 274,700 per tola on Monday.

Gold prices have surged by Rs. 8,700 per tola over the past three trading days in the local market. The price rose by Rs. 4,100 per tola on Monday and by Rs. 2,800 per tola on Sunday.

Similarly, the price of silver increased by Rs. 145 per tola to Rs. 5,340 on Tuesday.

According to FENEGOSIDA, gold reached USD 4,635 per ounce in the international market on Tuesday marking an increase of USD 65 per ounce compared to Monday's.

This is also a record high in the international market.

The current fluctuation in the international gold market indicates that prices are likely to rise further in the domestic market as well.

YARI CUSTOMS OFFICE CLOSED FOR THREE MONTHS

RSS
Adanchuli (Humla), Jan. 13

Yari Customs Office, Hilsa, has been closed for three months. The Office has been closed for months after the import of goods was stopped from Taklakot, China, in Hilsa due to extreme cold.

Office staffs have reached Simkot-based contact office closing the office from second week of Poush after the import of good was stopped from Taklakot from the beginning of Poush month, said Office Chief Ram Raj Jaisi.

"Though the snowfall has not occurred this year, transport service has also remained closed after the snowfall occurred in November 2025. So good from Taklakot have not been imported," he added.

However, the border towards China has been kept open, mentioned Chief Jaisi. The Office would be reopened after employees will return back to the Office in second week of Chaitra.

Cables go underground in Pokhara

BY PHADINDRA ADHIKARI
Lekhnath, Jan. 13



PHOTO: TRN

Nepal Electricity Authority has been installing underground electric cables on a section of the Prithvi Highway.

The six-lane road section from Pokhara International Airport to Prithvi Chowk now stands free of electricity poles and overhead internet wires.

The Nepal Electricity Authority has connected every household to electricity through underground cables on this section of the Prithvi Highway.

Work is underway with the goal of extending underground electricity lines across major highways, the entire Lakeside area, and most parts of the main market within current fiscal year.

According to the Pokhara–Bharatpur Distribution System Strengthening Project, of NEA, physical progress in the Pokhara section has reached 65 per cent, while work in Bharatpur is 85 per cent complete.

Project Chief Engineer Ananda Subedi said that if work continues at the current pace, the project will be completed within this fiscal year.

"Electricity through underground cables has already been supplied to around 600 households from the international airport to Prithvi Chowk," Subedi said. "The project deadline is June 30, and if the current momentum is maintained, the major works will be completed on time."

The underground cabling is being carried out in areas, including the stretch from the international airport to Prithvi Chowk, Srijana Chowk, Ratna Chowk, Rastra Bank Chowk, Sahid Chowk, Lakeside, and from Hallan Chowk through Bulaundi to Zero Kilometre.

At present, work is ongoing in the Srijana Chowk–Assembly Hall–Zero Kilometre area and the Jarebar section of Lakeside. While laying underground electricity cables for about 23 kilometres in Pokhara, cables have also been laid to provide telephone and internet services.

Indian company Tata Projects has been awarded the contract to lay the cables in Pokhara and Bharatpur for Rs. 2.53 billion. Internet cables to be laid underground

The metropolis has also taken the initiative to enhance the beauty of Pokhara, which is marred by electricity and internet cables.

The metropolis has requested internet service providers to work with the project to provide internet services through underground cables in places where electricity cables are to be laid underground and to remove unnecessary cables elsewhere.

Mayor of Pokhara Metropolitan City Dhanraj Acharya has directed the authorities to provide services through underground wires and remove unnecessary wires elsewhere within a month.

"We have asked them to remove unnecessary wires within a month, otherwise the metropolis will remove them itself," Acharya said.

Project Chief Engineer Subedi said that the process would become smoother once clear guidelines are developed on how private service providers can use underground infrastructure. "For now, we have asked them to place pipes and fibre cables in the same trenches we have dug so that services can continue," he said. "Once our guidelines are finalised, services can be provided through the cables we have installed."

He added that it would not be feasible to provide separate cables to every internet service provider, suggesting the creation of a separate company or a shared system for joint use.

Meanwhile, Project Chief Subedi said that it will be easier once the procedure is in place to allow private service providers to use underground cables.

He said, "Right now, we have asked them to provide service even if it is by placing pipes and fiber in the trenches dug for laying the cables. Once our procedure is in place, we can provide service through the cables we have laid."

As it is not possible to provide different cables to all internet service providers, he urges them to form a separate company or come together for joint use.

"Talks are underway on removing unnecessary wires and providing services through a shared cable for all ISPs," he said. "This cannot be done overnight, and it would be much easier once the NEA issues clear guidelines on the use of underground cables."

Price decline worries broom grass farmers

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Urlabari, Jan. 13



PHOTO: TRN

Heap of raw brooms in northern Morang.

Farmers cultivating amliso (commonly known as broom grass) in northern Morang have grown increasingly worried as prices continue to decline year after year.

Just four years ago, broom grass sold for as much as Rs. 130 per kg. This year, however, farmers are forced to sell it at Rs. 45–48 per kg directly from their fields. When transported to Letang market, it fetches Rs. 55 to 60 per kg.

Adiman Limbu of Letang Municipality–7, Warangi, said amliso that sold at Rs. 70 per kg last year is struggling to reach even Rs. 50 this year.

"When taken to the Letang market, traders offer up to Rs. 60, but the transportation and other costs are not covered by that price," he said.

Limbu, who cultivates amliso on 50 ropanis of land, said farmers have been hit hard by the continuous price decline. According to him, he sold broom grass worth Rs. 230,000 at Rs. 60 per kg last year but expects heavy losses this year due to the price reduction.

The main sources of income for farmers in Letang Municipality–7, Warangi, are the cultivation of broom grass, cardamom and bay leaves.

Another farmer, Dhan Kumar Limbu, said they are compelled to sell their produce at whatever price traders set. "I do all the work myself, so my costs are low. If labourers are hired, amliso farming does not even recover the expenses," he said.

Although he has increased production this year compared to last year—when he sold 1,600 kg of amliso—his income is expected to decline due to lower prices.

Amliso remains the most reliable cash crop for farmers in northern Morang, who usually sell it from Poush to Falgun.

Gauri Tamang of Warangi started the broom grass business 27 years ago. Earlier, she used to bring broom grass from villages to Letang market by hiring porters. Stating that she earned a good income as both a farmer and a trader, Tamang said, "In the past, broom grass was exchanged for rice in equal amounts."

"Selling one kilo of amliso would buy one kilo of rice. That is no longer the case," she said, adding that road access has now reached most villages, changing the trading system.

Gopal Barkoti, owner of SV Stores, who has been purchasing amliso from farmers in Letang Bazaar, said India remains the main market. "Like last year, demand is low this year too. After selling half of the amliso purchased last year, prices came down," he said.

Barkoti said he had to store about 500 quintals of broom grass in a warehouse for six months and eventually sell it at a loss. Last year, big traders suffered heavy losses due to the price drop, he added.

According to Devraj Neupane, information officer at the Trade and Export Promotion Centre in Biratnagar, around 15,193 tonnes of amliso worth Rs. 1.15 billion were exported to India in the fiscal year 2024/25.

In the previous fiscal year 2023/24, about 1,362 tonnes of amliso worth Rs. 1.32 billion was exported.

During the first five months of the current fiscal year, around 5,720 tonnes of amliso has been exported.

As exports to Bangladesh have also started in the current fiscal year, dependence on the Indian market alone has been reduced.

Information Officer Neupane said that 112 tonnes of amliso worth Rs. 3.34 million was exported to Bangladesh this year.

PADDY PRODUCTION DECLINES IN RAUTAHAT

RSS
Rautahat, Jan. 13

The paddy production decreased in Rautahat district this year compared to last year. Acting Chief of District Agriculture Knowledge Centre Surendra Prasad Kurmi said that paddy production witnessed a decline of 21,578 metric tonnes in the district this year.

The incessant rainfall occurred during the harvesting season in the first week of the last October resulted in reduced paddy production. Acting Chief of Office Kurmi shared that the district produced 95,130 metric tonnes of paddy this year, while the paddy production was 116,708 metric tonnes last year.

According to Kurmi, paddy farming was done in 31,500 hectares of land in the district and the production was 3.02 metric tonnes per hectare.

The flooding occurred in Bakaiya and Bagmati rivers had caused damage to the paddy farms, which was almost ready for harvesting in more than 17,600 hectares. The paddy farmers in Rajdevi, Paroha, Rajpur, Madhav Narayan, Gadhimai, Ishnath, Maulapur and Durga Bhagawati areas suffered due to the rainfall and flood occurred in the first week of October.

French farmers drive 350 tractors to Parliament

AP
Paris, Jan. 13

French farmers steered some 350 tractors Tuesday over cobblestoned Paris avenues toward Parliament to protest low incomes and an EU trade deal with South America that they fear threatens their livelihoods.

Escorted by police, the tractors tangled rush-hour traffic as they rumbled down the Champs-Elysees and other Parisian avenues, and then over the Seine River to reach the National Assembly.

Farmer anger in France and other European countries has escalated over a rash of challenges recently. The unions leading Tuesday's protests said they are demanding "concrete and immediate action" to defend France's food security.

French farmers say their earnings are being squeezed by rising costs for fuel, fertilizer and animal feed, as well as by what they describe as heavier environmental rules and price pressure from powerful retailers and food companies.

And like farmers across the European Union, the French farmers have long denounced the EU's planned trade deal with the Mercosur nations of Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay.

They argue the deal would flood the market with cheaper imports of South American beef, poultry, sugar and other farm products produced under different standards, undercutting European producers and driving prices down further.

French government spokesperson Maud Bregeon said on TF1 television Tuesday that the government would make new announcements soon to help farmers.

President Emmanuel Macron and his government also oppose the EU-Mercosur trade deal, which has been under negotiation since 1999.

But European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen is expected to sign the deal in Paraguay on Saturday, after a qualified majority of EU member states backed it last week.

CAN Federation calls for secure digital marketplace

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Jan. 13

CAN Federation, the umbrella organisation of Nepal's information technology sector, has said to the government that the country's digital marketplace should be made secure, simple and sovereign.

Submitting its official policy recommendations on the proposed E-commerce Directives 2025 through the Information Technology Development Committee of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), it stressed that the growth of Nepal's e-commerce sector rests on three key pillars: security, simplicity and sovereignty.

It recommended that the government go beyond general data protection provisions and introduce a National Minimum-Security Standard (NMSS) in terms of security. It has also proposed awarding a 'Trust Seal' to platforms that comply with the standard in order to enhance consumer confidence, presenting the recommendations, CAN Federation Senior Vice-President and cyber security expert Chiranjivi Adhikari said.

To improve simplicity, the CAN Federation has called for an end to the requirement for businesses to visit multiple offices for registration. Instead, it has advocated for an integrated, API-based registration system that would automatically synchronise PAN, VAT and OCR details with government portals.

Likewise, on sovereignty, the Federation has proposed providing tax rebates to companies that host Nepali citizens' data within domestic data centres, in order to ensure data security within national borders.

The CAN Federation has also raised concerns that the strict punitive provisions included in the draft directive could create a climate of fear among start-ups. It has suggested removing the proposed prison sentences of three to five years for platform failures and replacing them with graded financial penalties.

For small and medium enterprises (SMEs), it termed the existing 35-day registration period impractical, calling instead for a 90-day 'technical support period'. It has further recommended the inclusion of a 'safe harbour' provision, under which platforms would not be held liable for individual product defects of sellers, provided due diligence has been carried out.

Highlighting the need to make Nepali e-commerce globally competitive, the Federation has underscored the importance of resolving challenges related to international digital payments. It has proposed forming a task force in coordination with Nepal Rastra Bank and other relevant agencies, as well as introducing a fee holiday for small digital transactions.

Chair of FNCCI's Information Technology Development Committee Shakti Kumar Begani and the committee's vice-chair welcomed the initiative, describing it as timely and constructive.

Pathari section of East-West Highway to be four-lane road



PHOTO: TRN

A section of East-West Highway at Pathari Bazar of Morang awaiting expansion.

BY HARI PRASAD KOIRALA
Urlabari, Jan. 12

A four-lane road will be constructed along the Pathari Bazaar section in Morang under the East-West Highway Expansion Project, ending months of debate over road standards in the area.

Earlier, residents of Pathari-Shanishchare had requested the main office and the Itahari office of the ADB-supported road project to expand the Pathari Bazaar road according to the same standards applied in the market areas of Urlabari, Belbari, and Sundarharaicha municipalities.

The Asian Highway passes through Urlabari, Pathari-Shanishchare, Belbari, and Sundarharaicha municipalities, as well as Kanepokhari Rural Municipality in Morang. Of the district's 36-kilometre road section, 10 kilometres fall entirely within forest areas, where four-lane construction is underway. About 60 per cent of the work in this section has been completed. According to the East-West Highway Expansion Project Office (Western Section), Itahari, the detailed project report (DPR) initially proposed a six-lane road with a 50-metre width in urban areas of Morang, a six-lane road with a 33-metre width in semi-urban areas, and a four-lane road with a 24-metre width in rural and forest areas.

Project chief Jagat Prajapati said the Pathari Bazaar section was classified as semi-urban after consultations with local stakeholders at the time. However, after residents demanded last September that the market road be built to urban standards, the project forwarded a proposal to amend the DPR. He said the Asian Development Bank (ADB) was not positive about revising the DPR if it required demolishing houses, as such changes would affect loan conditions.

Constructing a 50-metre-wide, six-lane road in Pathari would require demolishing several houses in the market area and completely removing a squatter settlement to the southeast. Prajapati said ADB would have to bear the additional time and costs required for reconstruction, which created complications. He clarified that while a six-lane road would be built within a 33-metre width, it would not include footpaths or drainage.

Pathari-Shanishchare Municipality Mayor Mohan Prasad Tumbapo said that if the project revised and resubmitted the DPR, the municipality would take the responsibility for clearing the roadside area. He stated that if a 50-metre-wide road in the market area was approved, the municipality could clear the site within two months.

Meanwhile, consumers in the Pathari Bazaar area warned that the market would face flooding during the monsoon if the road is not built to full urban standards. Local Yubaraj Baskota said residents do not need a narrower road than those in neighbouring municipalities, adding that Pathari should follow the same standards applied in Urlabari and Sundarharaicha. He warned that constructing a six-lane road without drainage and footpaths would push Pathari's development back by 50 years.

Another local, Rajendra Bhandari, alleged that despite claims that the DPR could be revised with all-party consensus, the lack of interest from the mayor and ward chairs prevented changes. Ward No. 1 Chairman Bhim Kumar Rai said the DPR had already been revised, but roadside clearance had not begun as official notice had yet to be received. He added that discussions with affected households were still ongoing.

However, project chief Prajapati said that the DPR had not been changed, citing the social impact assessment conducted before construction, which sets thresholds to avoid displacing large squatter settlements. He stated that 18 squatter families currently reside west of the Latiholi Bridge in Ward No. 1.

There is no alternative to polls: Speaker Ghimire

RSS
Jhapa, Jan 13

Speaker of the dissolved House of Representatives (HoR), Dev Raj Ghimire, has stressed that all political parties should participate in the election to the new HoR in an enthusiastic manner to make the country free from adverse circumstances.

Talking to media persons in Birtamod on Tuesday, he laid emphasis on the need of participation of all sides in the election to the House of Representatives scheduled for March 5.

Speaker Ghimire expressed the view that there was no alternative to fresh people's mandate. He further said his term is terminating on January 19, adding he made all possible efforts to fulfill the voters' aspiration of development during his term in office.

Dr. Nepal to be presented Gobinda Biyogi Journalism Award

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Jan. 13

The Editors' Society has decided to confer the Gobinda Biyogi Journalism Award–2082 on Dr. Jagat Nepal.

The award was established in memory of Gobinda Biyogi, the founder of the organisation. The Award carries a purse of Rs. 25000 along with a certificate.

Dr. Nepal is the Head of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, Kathmandu.

Likewise, the Gobinda Biyogi Special Award will be presented to Gorkhapatra's reporter Chandani Hamal and columnist Rajendra Manandhar. Manandhar, a columnist for Shukrawa: Ya Tansapau, has been contributing to the promotion of the ethnic Newari language through continuous writing.

Similarly, Hamal has been contributing to journalism through her work in climate reporting.

> The award was established in memory of Gobinda Biyogi, the founder of the organisation. The Award carries a purse of Rs. 25000 along with a certificate.

A meeting of the Editors' Society held on Sunday also decided to felicitate senior journalists Saratchandra Wasti and Sudarshan Acharya this year.

The awards and honors will be distributed at an event to be held at the Society's building at Sulichaur, Shivapuri-7 on January 17, according to a statement of the Editor's Society.

The meeting, chaired by Society President Puru Risal, also passed a condolence resolution on the demise of Homanath Dahal, former President of the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ), and senior media person Michael Chand.

River management stalled after office relocation

BY JYOTI MAGAR
Babai (Bardiya), Jan. 13

River management works on the Babai River have come to a halt after the office of the Babai-Bhada-Aurahi River Management Project was relocated from Bardiya to Dadeldhura.

The project was established to protect Guleriya, the district headquarters of Bardiya, from floods and river erosion. Following the relocation, ongoing works have been left incomplete, forcing locals to live in fear of flooding.

The Babai River, which flows through Guleriya, poses an increasing risk of floods and erosion every year. To reduce this risk, the project was launched in 2017, and embankments, erosion control and protection works were started at various locations.

However, since the project office was moved out of Bardiya from the fiscal year 2025/26, neither new works have begun nor have the ongoing works been completed.

Ward chairperson of Guleriya Municipality-5, Mumbahadur Mall, said it was unfair to relocate the office without completing essential river management works in such a high-risk area. "Moving the office at a time when the risk is increasing has been a serious blow to local people," he said.

River management work that began three years ago in the Balapur area of Guleriya-5 remains incomplete. Locals said construction contractors stopped work this year after failing to receive payments for work done in previous years.

"The work was going on, but it was abandoned halfway," said Balapur resident Sobendra Chaudhary.

Over the past seven years, the project has completed river management work along around 22 kilometres of the river, while about six kilometres remain incomplete. After the office relocation, uncertainty has grown over when and how the remaining work will be completed. The project was established following severe loss of life and property caused by the Babai River floods in 2014 and 2017.

Responsibility for the project has now been handed over to the Irrigation and Water Resources Management Project based in Rajapur. Project chief Sudin Moktan said that although his office has been assigned to oversee Babai River works, contractors have shown little interest in continuing due to unpaid dues from earlier works.

Frozen Kshama Lake stuns Mustang visitors

BY HARIKRISHNA SHARMA
Muktinath (Mustang), Jan. 13



PHOTO: HARIKRISHNA SHARMA

Frozen Kshama Lake in Gharapjhong Rural Municipality-5 Mustang.

Due to extreme cold, Kshama Lake, located in Gharapjhong Rural Municipality-5 of Mustang, has frozen.

The lake, which recently emerged as an attractive new tourist destination, lies at an altitude of 3,750 metres above sea level at the foothills of the Nilgiri range.

Known for its clear blue colour resembling the surrounding mountains, the lake is now completely covered in ice. Despite the harsh winter, tourists and officials visiting Mustang have begun travelling to the site to take photographs of the frozen lake.

The lake can be reached via the Thini-Kaishang road, followed by about an hour's walk through the Nepal Army's Kaishang Camp. From Jomsom, the district headquarters, it takes around one and a half hours on foot to reach the lake.

Mohan Singh Lalchan, Chairperson of Gharapjhong Rural Municipality, said efforts have been made to improve infrastructure and promote the lake so that both domestic and foreign tourists visiting lower Mustang can easily reach Kshama Lake and enjoy the scenery.

He added that the lake also holds religious significance, but many religious tourists have not yet visited due to a lack of awareness. Tourist Prakash Paudel said the lake, which appears lively during summer, feels as if it is in deep slumber during winter. "The lake is completely frozen, and one can take a photograph standing in the middle of the lake," he said. Visitors have been amazed by the sight of the frozen lake.

According to religious legends, Kshama Lake is believed to be the place where a Yaksha questioned Yudhishthira as the Pandavas' period of exile was coming to an end. The lake is also linked to the 12 years of exile and the subsequent year of incognito living of the Pandavas.

The area where a Nepal Army camp now stands was once a shelter for Tibetan Khampa rebels. Because of its religious and strategic importance, Kshama Lake is regarded as a significant site. The recent increase in tourist arrivals has delighted the locals.

Meanwhile, due to the severe cold, small streams, wells, drinking water taps, irrigation canals and even household water tanks in both lower and upper Mustang have frozen.

एसजेवीएन अरूण-3 पॉवर डवलपमेंट कंपनी प्रा. लि.
SJVN Arun-3 Power Development Company Pvt. Ltd.
(एसजेवीएन की पूर्ण स्वामित्व वाली अधीनस्थ कंपनी)
(A wholly owned subsidiary of SJVN)
900 मेगावाट अरूण-3 जलविद्युत परियोजना
900 MW Arun-3 Hydro Power Project
Regd. No.: 111808/69/070

एसएपीडीसी SAPDC

PRESS NOTICE

SJVN Arun-3 Power Development Company (P) Ltd. (SAPDC) invites sealed open tender enquiries from the eligible bidders/contractors of Nepal as per the following details:

Contract No.	Description of Work	Publishing date on website	Last date for Submission/ Opening of bid Proposals
PCD-282/2026	Annual Civil Maintenance, Green Belt and Landscaping Plan Development of Package-C-2 of Arun-3 HEP at Diding/ Power House.	13.01.2026	Submission: at (Tumlingtar Office) 03.02.2026 upto 1530 Hrs. Opening: at (Tumlingtar Office) 03.02.2026 at 1600 Hrs.

Bids are to be submitted either by post/Courier or physically in the SAPDC office at Tumlingtar, Distt. Sankhuwasabha, Nepal. The Tender Documents can be downloaded from websites: https://sjvn.nic.in & https://www.sapdc.com.np.

Further, Amendment(s) / Notification(s) etc. shall be issued on above websites only.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (P&C),
SAPDC, Satluj Bhawan, Arun Sadan,
Tumlingtar, Distt. Sankhuwasabha, Nepal.
Tel.: +977-29-575154
E-mail: pnc.sapdc@sjvn.nic.in

हिमालय एअरलाइन्स्
HIMALAYA AIRLINES

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Himalaya Airlines' network presently consists of Doha, Dammam, Riyadh, Dubai, Dhaka, Kuala Lumpur, Kuwait & China sectors. Interested candidates are requested to send in applications for the following post not later than 17:00 hrs on January 28, 2026, Wednesday.

First date of publication : January 14, 2026

DEPARTMENT : MAINTENANCE & ENGINEERING

MCC Manager | **Vacancy Code : H9/M&E/0012026** | **Required No. : 01**

Duties and Responsibilities:
• Maintain acceptable airworthiness, safety and performance standards in H9 aircraft fleet A320/A319 • Ensure that aircraft maintenance is in compliance with the requirements of NCAR-145 • Train technicians in A320 aircraft maintenance, safety, human factor etc. • Accomplish production, maintenance and inspection tasks as delegated by optimum use of manpower and resources in the most efficient and cost-effective manner • Assist M&E Department in Maintenance, Trouble-Shooting & Defect Analysis

Qualification Requirements:
• Holder of Aeronautical or appropriate Engineering Degree and minimum 5 years of work experience in Engineering Department. (Preferably with A320 Family) • Licensed AME with CAAN AMT License or equivalent in Ratings: A320/A321/A319 CFM56, A320/A321/A319 (V2500) • Priority will be given for additional license on B737-600/700/800 (CFM56), B777-200/300 (GE90), B777-200/300 (PW4000), A330-200/300 (Trent700), A330-200/300 (PW4000) • Capable of planning under guidance of Maintenance Manager, for man-power/ man-hour/ tools/ equipment/ spares/materials management • Able to handle all major and minor maintenance activities in advance coordinating with CAMO, Engineering Stores, Material Procurement, Operations and Marketing • Knowledge of NCAR Part 145, NCAR Part 66, NCAR Part M, NCAR Part 147, MOE, FTS, EWIS, CDCCL, SMS, Human factor principles & Type training

Please fill-up the form & upload your updated resume, a copy of pp size photo, scanned copy (ies) of your qualifications & copy of citizenship etc. using the links: https://forms.gle/1LCawemCyDLKzFQPA not later than 15 days from the date of publication. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. Phone calls will not be entertained.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

It is better to be feared than loved, if you cannot be both.
-Niccolo Machiavelli

EDITORIAL

Build Trade Centres

Exhibition centres are vital for the promotion of trade, innovation, business networking and tourism. International business needs to boost global networking and brand visibility through face-to-face interactions, thereby building trust and securing strategic partnerships. Well-equipped exhibition and convention centres support trade growth and attract high-value visitors through Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism. In Nepal, however, the absence of modern venues has become a major obstacle. The country relies almost entirely on a single, government-owned exhibition hall, Bhrikuti Mandap, which is old, poorly maintained, and unable to meet the growing demands of businesses or international events. This gap limits opportunities for enterprises and restricts the potential of MICE tourism, which could generate significant revenue. Thus, the country urgently needs state-of-the-art exhibition and convention centres.

The ability of business competence is compromised, and the benefit to the country from the MICE tourism sector cannot be acquired if there are no proper exhibition centres. A hosting venue is supposed to be an open place where any given business, small or big, is supposed to meet the market. Industry experts have been pointing out the issues at the Bhrikuti Mandap. The issues include a dearth of parking spaces, leakage of water during monsoons, outdated electric cables, fewer toilets, and poor waste management. This shabby condition is likely to damage materials, disrupt events and reduce the credibility of exhibitions. Due to these limitations, organisers are forced to host events at expensive five-star hotels that cannot even host large conventions. As a result, small and medium enterprises are priced out. This dents the purpose of exhibitions, which are meant to provide equal exposure and networking opportunities. This is an issue that directly affects the running of the business. As stated by the Nepal Chamber of Commerce, the quality of the event venues is one of the aspects that restricts access to the international market and even the export sector.

Our neighbouring nations have invested significantly in technology-driven venues to showcase their products. The need for a new convention centre has been proposed and even planned, but no visible progress has been made. It could be argued that investing in new exhibition centres would be too expensive for a country with limited resources. Others would suggest that since hotels already provide exhibition centres, there would be no need to invest public funds. Another concern would be that these projects might fail to utilise the spaces throughout the year. While raising these issues, the long-term advantages that are derived from MICE tourism are often undermined.

Public-private partnerships offer a practical solution. The government can provide land on lease while the private sector can invest in the construction and management of professional venues. Relying on Bhrikuti Mandap will not be feasible anymore. Nepal will lag even further without contemporary convention centres in comparison to its neighbouring countries, where palatial exhibition and demonstration zones attract the business from far and wide. The policy makers and authorities should consider investment in exhibition venues as it has a positive yet long-standing impact on the production, trade and employment generation. This requires formulation of a clear policy and public-private collaboration. No doubt, building proper venues is a necessary step for inclusive business growth, stronger tourism and a better global image.

Winter Blues

DIXYA POUDEL

As of writing this, Kathmandu recorded the coldest day this season when the minimum temperature dipped to 2.4 degrees Celsius on Friday, January 9, 2026. For the past few months, the mercury has been on a steady decline nationally, troubling residents with cold-related woes. Hospitals have been seeing an influx of patients with winter ailments, especially colds, coughs, and cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and even psychological disorders. In winter, the human body tends to slow down as the mercury falls. The human body is complex but it is also equally delicate. It requires an optimal temperature for survival.

When the temperature drops, the body undergoes thermoregulation, a process regulated by the hypothalamus, the brain's internal thermostat, through which the body engages in a multi-system bid to maintain its core temperature at around 37 degrees Celsius. When faced with cold, the nervous system triggers peripheral vasoconstriction in which the blood vessels near the skin and the extremities, like hands, feet, ears and nose, tighten. The objective is to flow the warm blood away from the skin because heat escapes via radiation from the skin.

Vasoconstriction keeps the warm blood concentrated around vital organs such as the lungs, heart and brain. In a way, it is a defence mechanism of the body to protect itself from the adverse effects of the chill. In case insulating blood flow doesn't do the work, the body switches from heat conservation to heat production. One of its most visible responses is shivering as the brain signals the skeletal muscles to contract and relax rapidly in an effort to burn energy and gain heat as a byproduct. Metabolic spike also occurs to boost the metabolic rate through the release of hormones such as adrenaline.

The entire human body responds to the cold that creates a ripple effect throughout the major organs. The heart pumps harder to push blood through the narrowed blood vessels. Due to the dry winter air, the linings of the lungs get inflamed, leading to coughing and a burning sensation, more so in people with asthma. In case of extreme cold, such as cold waves, fatalities occur as seen in the Terai region of Nepal.

When it comes to brain and psychological health, this season, people are more vulnerable to Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which is also referred to as "winter depression." It follows a seasonal pattern, beginning in late autumn and peaking in the darkest and coldest months of winter. SAD occurs due to a lack of adequate sunlight and is worse in regions where sunlight is scant. Sunlight helps the production of serotonin, a "happy" chemical in the brain. Less sun means a drop in serotonin, triggering feelings of lethargy and sadness.

Meanwhile, a decline in sunlight resets the human biological clock (circadian rhythm), leading to disruption in the daily routine. Likewise, the cold season can dysregulate the balance of melatonin, affecting sleep patterns and even mood. Common symptoms of SAD include low energy, craving of carbohydrate (leading to weight gain), oversleeping, mood disorders and generally feeling melancholy. Given such effects of the cold in the human body, it is necessary to take care with adequate health measures such as proper diet, exercise, regular checkups and adequate sunlight. Let's take this season to recharge and reset.

Anomalies Plague Nepali Politics



Prof. Bhupa P. Dhamala

Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) tells a biting tale in which a traveler encounters diverse people in different places, each with distinct perspectives. In Lilliput, he finds six-inch-tall people; in Brobdingnag, he finds people sixty feet tall, a race of giants. On his third voyage, he is set adrift by pirates and eventually ends up on the flying island of Laputa. Although they are highly concerned with mathematics and music, their learning has no practical applications. In the fourth part of the book, Gulliver visits the land of the Houyhnhnms, a race of intelligent horses who are cleaner and more rational, communal, and benevolent, so they have no words for deception or evil than the brutish, filthy, greedy, and degenerate human race called Yahoos, some of whom they have tamed for their service.

This book is widely regarded as one of the greatest political satires ever written. Considered as Swift's masterpiece, *Gulliver's Travels* is the most brilliant, bitter, and controversial of his satires. The essentially trivial Lilliputians are described as warlike, disputants in the first section, and the deranged, impractical intellectuals and pedants in the third segment are portrayed as imbalanced beings lacking common sense and decency. The Houyhnhnms, by contrast, are the epitome of reason and virtuous simplicity. However, Gulliver's own proud identification with Houyhnhnms, the horses, and his subsequent disdain for his fellow humans, Yahoos, indicate that he, too, has become imbalanced and that human beings are simply incapable of aspiring to the virtuous rationality that Gulliver has glimpsed in his travels.

Mainstream politics

Contemporary Nepali politics can be likened to Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, in which several incidents resemble the political events in terms of people's perspectives and the behaviour of political actors. It undergoes several contradictions and anomalies in principles. While some contradictions involve confusion over party names and agendas, other anomalies involve a double standard in their practices. Numerous parties have been registered in the Election Commission for election purposes without a clear vision, mission, or goal. Not to mention the mushrooming of new parties; even decades-long-standing parties such as the Nepali Congress (NC) and communist parties operate without a fixed agenda, despite their claims.

NC claims that its central political agenda is democratic socialism, but it does not appear to articulate this clearly, except in a few documents provided by its pioneering leader, the late BP Koirala. It does not satisfactorily explain how two contradictory principles of democracy and socialism can coexist. The explanation given is no more than a juxtaposition of two dissimilar political concepts. Most cadres and supporters of democratic socialism may not understand that, in essence, the two concepts are mutually exclusive: if democracy exists, socialism does not, and if socialism is to establish itself, it requires curbing individual freedom. No one can readily implement both principles simultaneously. This is the bone of contention that has led to contradictions in principles, let alone in real-life practices.

Communist parties of Nepal fare no better. They can be categorised into two schools: those that do not participate in elections and proclaim scientific socialism, an ideal state of the Marxist political system that once existed in the Soviet Union, and those that take part in the election process and form the government if they win. The first school of communist parties has experienced contradictions in principle and practice. Whereas their principle is the forcible overthrow of the conventional political system and the establishment of scientific socialism in its place, their practice is like that of other political parties, not visibly distinct from them.

> The greatest irony is that the so-called bourgeois and proletarian parties are not forging an alliance based on principle, but instead, they are at war over contingent phenomena.

The second school has exhibited contradictions, primarily in its principles and, consequently, in its practices. Specifically, CPN-UML and the Nepali Communist Party (NCP) are the most controversial communist parties in contemporary Nepali politics. The contradictions and anomalies lie in their party's manifesto and election manifesto. While they claim to advance scientific socialism and, eventually, communism through the proletarian revolution, they nevertheless participate in conventional elections to form the government and effect partial reform. As even a layperson can readily understand, revolution and reformation are mutually exclusive.

If a party is entirely engaged in the reformation process, revolution is impossible. Herein lies the essential contradiction between these two communist parties. Another anomaly within CPN-UML concerns the name of the system they intend to establish and implement. What they call People's Multiparty Democracy is a new concept propounded by the late Madan Bhandari in the 1990s. The very name is anomalous: the term "democracy" is already in everyday use, so it is tautological to include "people" in the programme's title, let alone "multiparty," which the other communist parties argue is that of bourgeois parties.

Cross-current politics

The other newly formed political parties include the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, the Janata Samajbadi Party, the Rastriya Swatantra Party, and others. However, all of these parties are also rife with contradictions in their principles and practices. As a matter of argument, they have no substantive political agenda per se, despite their relatively fair practices. If a party does not establish a fixed programme guideline, it may get lost in the fog. The greatest irony is that the so-called bourgeois and proletarian parties are not forging an alliance based on principle, but instead, they are at war over contingent phenomena. This has happened several times since the restoration of democracy in 1990.

Due to the hung parliament, which yields no majority for any single party, alliances based on party interests, group interests, and even individual interests have been forged and reshaped to form the coalition government, often in the Nepali political arena. This has marred the beauty of democracy. In this context, the interim government must create a conducive environment for the upcoming election by demonstrating neutrality, impartiality, and fairness. This is undoubtedly a difficult task, if not impossible. We expect this to happen under the wise leadership of the interim Prime Minister Sushila Karki.

(The author is the chairman of Molung Foundation. bhupadhamala@gmail.com)

Give A Fillip To Tourism Industry



Devendra Gautam

This scribbler recently got platinum (remember, this metal is more precious than gold even as the yellow metal continues its journey towards the Sagarmatha in terms of price) opportunities to keep abreast with strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges facing Nepal's tourism sector, one of the most sensitive sectors, amid headwinds blowing against it throughout the world from Latin America to Europe to Mideast to South Asia, thanks primarily to wars, other hostilities and uncertainties of varying scales, including the recent spate of death as well as destruction seen during the Gen Z protest in our very own proverbial land of milk and honey.

Hearing from the who's who of the industry, like government ministers, relevant officials, including the captains of the industry, experts of repute and academicians par excellence during the 27th anniversary celebrations of the Nepal Tourism Board at Bhrikuti Mandap in Kathmandu was indeed enlightening. Getting to meet past colleagues and members of the diplomatic community was a bonanza in itself.

Progress reports

As a starter, though, this sapien wishes not to delve into the main course — long and intense academic exhortations — as he likes the dessert far more. Nonetheless, space permitting, he will deal with those thought-provoking materials, which can be important raw materials for policymaking, some other time. Long speeches, great thoughts and incisive progress reports are indeed welcome in an argumentative society like ours, but visuals are far more effective (methinks) in this day and age of instant gratification.

A cultural dance offering glimpses of ethnic dresses and musical heritages of all seven provinces was indeed mesmerising, leaving the audience craving for more. The organisers and the artistes from the National Theatre deserve kudos for a great performance. Additionally, glimpses of Nepal's natural and archaeological wonders towards the weekend were refreshing and invigorating, especially for those badly in need of a downtime on the eve of the year 2026.

Yet, should such platforms be used to pile pressure on higher authorities as part of collective bargaining, bring to the fore discords within an entity tasked with projecting Nepal as an ideal tourist destination worldwide and issue directives to subordinates? There's a time and place for everything, even in a society where almost every member thinks they have rights only and hardly any obligations, right? Who knows this better than Nepal's tourism fraternity?

Then came big celebrations marking the 58th anniversary of the Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents. In a fitting tribute to Ganesh, the deity tasked with removing obstacles and ensuring a smooth completion of tasks, artists from the FCH group clad in traditional attire performed a dance, touching hearts and minds after lighting of our traditional lamp (diyo), marking the auspicious start of an important event.

> The time has indeed come for the industry to talk the talk, walk the walk, fasten the seat belt and soar high, keeping in mind that the sky is its limit.

As speakers put it at the above-mentioned events, global tourism is at a crossroads and our industry is not in an enviable position. Notably, though, Nepali tourism has proved its resilience in trying times such as the decade-long war, the Gorkha earthquake of 2015 and the COVID-19 pandemic, having brought in around 1.2 million tourists in 2025 despite a violent, youth-led protest of September 8-9. Still, the contribution of the tourism industry to our GDP remains meager at 6.7 per cent, even as our two neighbours continue to enjoy an upswing in their respective tourism industries.

What should our unique selling points (USPs) be as we move ahead from the crossroads? An affordable destination for all and sundry? An international picnic spot of sorts, where a guest can even visit environmentally sensitive and exotic areas with a very limited carrying capacity by paying a nominal fee? A place where the intrepid backpacker can munch on locally-made doughnuts on the roadside with a cup of tea, along with some local chaps? A destination where one can climb down the world's tallest peak and other majestic peaks from a specially-designed helicopter? A country where the guest can go anywhere with no restrictions whatsoever, given that guests are 'gods'?

Classy destination

A classy destination for the rich and the famous that provides them the opportunity of a lifetime to literally burn their millions? Or a destination that offers diverse packages based on varying spending capacities of tourists, starting from a threshold?

Incidentally, before attending the above-mentioned events, this pen-smith came across a video where a tourist was complaining about the roads, hotels, hydels and other poorly-planned modern infrastructure in the Annapurna region, acting as a big turnoff for backpackers like him.

Equally noteworthy is a response from the owner of a travel and tour agency on the sidelines of the NATTA event in response to a query regarding the state of the business: The business has not really taken off since the COVID-19 times. A limited fleet and a very limited reach of the national flag carrier, thanks also to the European Union's act of putting Nepal on its aviation safety blacklist for more than a decade, is a pointer to an untapped yet vast potential of Nepal's tourism industry. Like any other industry worth its name, Nepali tourism cannot remain at a crossroads till the cows come home. The time has indeed come for the industry to talk the talk, walk the walk, fasten the seat belt and soar high, keeping in mind that the sky is its limit.

(The author is a freelancer.)

50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

January 14, 1976

89 Die of Cold In Bihar

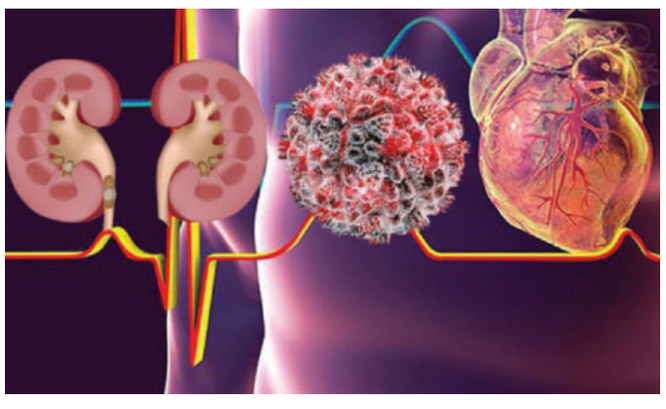
New Delhi, Jan 13: Eighty-nine people have died as a direct result of the cold in the north-east Indian state of Bihar since December 1, it was announced today, reports AFP.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

TRN welcomes articles, letters and comments from our valued readers and contributors.
Please email your contributions to:
trnfeatures@gmail.com
trnfeatures@hotmail.com
Or send them to
P.O. Box 23, Kathmandu, Nepal

READER'S MAIL

Check Non-communicable Diseases



I am writing in reference to a news report titled *'Health minister calls for shift to prevention as NCD treatment costs surge'* published in the digital edition of this daily on January 12, 2026. NCD stands for non-communicable diseases which are on the rise these days, alarming health experts.

While communicable diseases are caused by microbes, non-communicable diseases are often attributed to factors such as a sedentary lifestyle, genetics, and diet. As Nepal progresses towards modernisation and industrialisation, the lifestyle of people also changes. Exercise and diet are keys to warding off non-communicable diseases but urban life is hardly conducive to promoting physical health and fitness.

The roads in Nepal mostly lack proper pedestrian pavements. In cities, air pollution is a major problem, particularly in the capital city, Kathmandu. It is about time the government worked towards policies that promote a healthy lifestyle in its residents.

Muna Lama Tanahu

TAILPIECE

A tourist asks a man in uniform, "Are you a policeman?" "No, I am an undercover detective." "So why are you in uniform?" "Today is my day off."

+++

A teacher was giving a lesson on the circulation of the blood. Trying to make the matter clearer, she said, "Now, class, if I stood on my head, the blood, as you know, would run into it, and I would turn red in the face.."

"Yes," the class said.

"Then why is it that while I am standing upright in the ordinary position, the blood doesn't run into my feet?"

A little fellow shouted, "'Cause your feet ain't empty."

Russia hits Ukraine grid, 4 killed

AP
Kyiv, Jan. 13



Photo: AP

Emergency services personnel work to extinguish a fire following a Russian attack in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Russia launched a second major drone and missile bombardment of Ukraine in four days, officials said Tuesday, aiming again at the power grid and apparently snubbing U.S.-led peace efforts as the war approaches the four-year mark.

Russia fired almost 300 drones, 18 ballistic missiles and seven cruise missiles at eight regions overnight, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on social media.

One strike in the northeastern Kharkiv region killed four people at a mail depot, and several hundred thousand households were without power in the Kyiv region, Zelenskyy said.

The daytime temperature in the capital was -12 C (around 10 F). The streets were covered with ice, and the city rumbled with the noise from generators.

Four days earlier, Russia also sent hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles in a large-scale overnight attack and, for only the second time in the war, it used a powerful new hypersonic missile that struck western Ukraine in what appeared to be a clear warning to Kyiv's NATO allies that it won't back down.

On Monday, the United States accused Russia of a " dangerous and inexplicable escalation " of the fighting, when the Trump administration is trying to advance peace negotiations.

Tammy Bruce, the U.S. deputy ambassador to the United Nations, told an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council that Washington deplores "the staggering number of casualties" in the conflict and condemns Russia's intensifying attacks on energy and other infrastructure.

Russia has sought to deny Ukrainian civilians heat and running water in the freezing winter months over the course of the war, hoping to wear down public resistance to Moscow's full-scale invasion, which began on Feb. 24, 2022. Ukrainian officials describe the strategy as "weaponizing winter."

In Ukraine's Kharkiv region, the Russian attack also wounded 10 people, local authorities said.

In the southern city of Odesa, six people were wounded in the attack, said Oleh Kiper, the head of the regional military administration. The strikes damaged energy infrastructure, a hospital, a kindergarten, an educational facility and a number of residential buildings, he said.

Zelenskyy said that Ukraine is counting on quicker deliveries of agreed upon air defense systems from the U.S. and Europe, as well as new pledges of aid, to counter Russia's latest onslaught.

Meanwhile, Russian air defenses shot down 11 Ukrainian drones overnight, Russia's Ministry of Defense said Tuesday. Seven were reportedly destroyed over Russia's Rostov region, where Gov. Yuri Slyusar confirmed an attack on the coastal city of Taganrog, about 40 kilometers (about 24 miles) east of the Ukrainian border, in Kyiv's latest long-range attack on Russian war-related facilities.

Ukraine's military said domestically-produced drones hit a drone manufacturing facility in Taganrog. The Atlant Aero plant carries out design, manufacturing and testing of Molniya drones and components for Orion unmanned aerial vehicles, according to the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Explosions and a fire were reported at the site, with damage to production buildings confirmed, the General Staff said.

Hong Kong court prepares to jail Jimmy

AP
Hong Kong, Jan. 13

A Hong Kong court heard sentencing arguments Tuesday for former publisher Jimmy Lai's co-defendants as it moved closer to sentencing the prominent democracy advocate whose conviction under a national security law could land him in prison for life. The jail term's potential length remained unclear.

Former executives of the now-defunct, pro-democracy newspaper founded by Lai finished pleading for lighter sentences Tuesday afternoon in the landmark case widely seen as a barometer of media freedom in a city once hailed as a bastion of free press in Asia.

The former journalists pleaded guilty in 2022 to conspiracy to collude with foreign forces to endanger national security. They admitted to the prosecution's charge that said they conspired with their ex-boss and onetime media mogul Lai to request foreign sanctions, blockades or engage in other hostile activities against Hong Kong or China.

Lai, who pleaded not guilty in the case, was convicted in December. The verdict raised concerns about the city's declining press freedom and drew criticism from foreign governments.

But the government insists the case has nothing to do with media freedom, saying the defendants used news reporting as a pretext for years to commit acts that harmed China and Hong Kong.

Following the conclusion of arguments, Esther Toh, one of the three government-vetted judges, said they would need to analyze the lawyers' arguments, saying they will inform them "as soon as we can" on the sentencing date. They did not give a date.

After the judges left, some people in the public gallery waved goodbye to the defendants. Lai pressed his palms together in an apparent expression of gratitude before leaving the courtroom.

Defendants ask for a sentence reduction

Six Apple Daily executives were convicted in Lai's case: publisher Cheung Kim-hung; associate publisher Chan Pui-man; editor-in-chief Ryan Law; executive editor-in-chief Lam Man-chung; executive editor-in-chief responsible for English news Fung Wai-kong; and editorial writer Yeung Ching-kee. Some of them served as prosecution witnesses during the 156-day trial.

A conviction on the collusion charge carries a sentence ranging from three years to life in prison. But a guilty plea can result in a sentence reduction. Under the security law, a reduced penalty may be granted to those who report on offenses committed by others.

Chan's lawyer, Marco Li, said if the judges decided to place his client in the upper sentencing band, he suggested the starting point should be 10 years, given her limited role. Citing factors including her timely plea and assistance to the prosecution, he asked for her sentence to be halved.

Li said Chan, who started working at Apple Daily in 1996 and has an emotional attachment to journalism, regretted not resisting even more firmly when matters arose that made her uncomfortable. But according to her mitigation letter, Chan couldn't leave her beloved job casually at that time because she was suffering serious health issues and was under financial burden, he said.

Lawyer Erik Shum, who represented Lam, argued the acts of individual defendants and their roles should be taken into account when deciding which tier of the sentencing bands one falls into.

Japan, SKorea pledge summit cooperation

AP
Nara, Jan. 13

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung and Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi agreed to step up cooperation in areas including economic security, defense and searching for the remains of Korean forced laborers, as both countries face growing uncertainty and regional challenges.

The two neighbors are both longtime U.S. allies, but their relations have frequently been strained by issues including disputes over their wartime history.

"I believe cooperation between Korea and Japan is now more important than ever and anything else, as we have to continue moving forward to a new, better future amid this complex, unstable international order," Lee said at the outset of the summit Tuesday.

During a joint news conference after the talks, the two leaders said they had agreed to cooperate in areas including supply chains, artificial intelligence, measures against transnational crime and carrying out DNA analysis on remains that may belong to Korean forced laborers found last year at a former Japanese undersea mine.

Takaichi said she had renewed her determination to further improve Japan's relations with South Korea "as I believe the two countries should cooperate and contribute for the stability in the region."

"This year I will elevate Japan-South Korea relations even higher," said smiling Takaichi, who aims to secure stable ties with Seoul while Tokyo struggles with a worsening dispute with China.

The meeting could deliver a political win as Takaichi seeks to shore up her power. Less than three months after taking office, she enjoys strong approval ratings but her party has a majority in only one of two houses of Parliament. There is growing speculation she may be planning a snap election in hopes of gaining more seats. Takaichi is hosting Lee in her hometown, Nara, an ancient capital known for its treasured deer and centuries-old Buddhist temples.

Nara, the center of cultural exchanges between the Korean Peninsula and Japan in ancient times, "carries a special meaning at a time Korea-Japan exchanges are more important than ever," Lee said.

Lee proposed a meeting in the city during October's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Gyeongju, South Korea.

Takaichi will take Lee on a tour Wednesday of Horyu Temple, which includes buildings from the late 7th or early 8th century. They are among the world's oldest surviving wooden architecture and illustrate Japan's adoption of Buddhism via the Korean Peninsula. Lee also will meet with South Korean residents in Japan before returning home in the afternoon.

US carbon emissions up in 2025

AP
Washington, Jan. 13



Photo: AP

Jeffrey Energy Centre coal-fired power plant operates at sunset near Emmett, Kan. in Topeka, Kan.

In a reversal from previous years' pollution reductions, the United States spewed 2.4% more heat-trapping gases from the burning of fossil fuels in 2025 than in the year before, researchers calculated in a study released Tuesday.

The increase in greenhouse gas emissions is attributable to a combination of a cool winter, the explosive growth of data centers and cryptocurrency mining and higher natural gas prices, according to the Rhodium Group, an independent research firm.

Environmental policy rollbacks by President Donald Trump's administration were not significant factors in the increase because they were only put in place this year, the study authors said.

Heat-trapping gases from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas are the major cause of worsening global warming, scientists say.

American emissions of carbon dioxide and methane had dropped 20% from 2005 to 2024, with a few one- or two-year increases in the overall downward trend.

Traditionally, carbon pollution has risen alongside economic growth, but efforts to boost cleaner energy in recent years decoupled the two, so emissions would drop as gross domestic product rose.

But that changed last year with pollution actually growing faster than economic activity, said study co-author Ben King, a director in Rhodium's energy group.

He estimated the U.S. put 5.9 billion tons (5.35 billion metric tons) of carbon dioxide equivalent in the air in 2025, which is 139 million tons (126 million metric tons) more than in 2024.

The cold 2025 winter meant more heating of buildings, which often comes from natural gas and fuel oil that are big greenhouse gas emitters, King said. A significant and noticeable jump in electricity demand from data centers and cryptocurrency mining meant more power plants producing energy.

That included plants using coal, which creates more carbon pollution than other fuel sources.

A rise in natural gas prices helped create an 13% increase in coal power, which had shrunk by nearly two-thirds since its peak in 2007, King said.

"It's not like this is a huge rebound," King said. "We're not sitting here claiming that coal is back and going to dominate the sector or anything like that. But we did see this increase and that was a large part of why emissions went up in the power sector."

King said the list of more than two dozen proposed rollbacks of American environmental policies by the Trump administration hadn't been in place long enough to have an effect in 2025, but may be more noticeable in future years.

"It's one year of data so far," King said. "So we need to see the extent to which this trend sustains."

PRISM

Bear raids Tennessee candy shop again

Tennessee: Wildlife officials in Tennessee are investigating a serial burglary after a candy store was broken into and ransacked by a bear -- for the fourth time.

Glades Homemade Candies in Gatlinburg said on social media that the store was broken into by a bear Thursday night and the bruin caused significant damage to the store and its wares.

The post said the break-in marked the fourth incident of a bear busting into the store.

"We have nurtured our arts and crafts business in this community for 35 years, spreading joy and love to our customers, blessed by divine providence, but this persistent bear is a challenge we urgently need to overcome," the owners wrote.

Tiny deer vs. giant rhino

Poland: A zoo in Poland shared video of a tiny muntjac deer facing off with a massive -- and luckily patient -- rhinoceros.

The Wroclaw Zoo in Poland posted a video to Instagram showing the small Chinese deer, named Mundzak, in a standoff with a rhinoceros named Maruska in the enclosure the animals share.

"Someone probably forgot to look in the mirror this morning. Respect for Maruska for her angelic patience," the post said.

Zookeepers explained Mundzak's aggressive behavior was a result of an excess of testosterone, as his partner is currently in heat.

-Agencies

Iran allows calls abroad as death toll spikes

AP
Tehran, Jan. 13



Photo: AP

Protesters hold up placards and flags as they demonstrate outside the Iranian Embassy in London.

Iran eased some restrictions on its people and for the first time in days allowed them to make phone calls abroad via their mobile phones on Tuesday. It did not ease restrictions on the internet or allow texting services to be restored as the toll from days of bloody protests against the state rose to at least 646 people killed.

Although Iranians were able to call abroad, people outside the country could not call them, several people in the capital told The Associated Press.

The witnesses, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal, said SMS text messaging still was down and internet users inside Iran could not access anything abroad, although there were local connections to government-approved websites.

It was unclear if restrictions would ease further after authorities cut off all communications inside the country and to the outside world late Thursday.

The United Nations human rights chief is calling on Iranian authorities to immediately halt violence and repression against peaceful protesters, citing reports of hundreds killed and thousands arrested in a wave of demonstrations in recent weeks.

"The killing of peaceful demonstrators must stop, and the labelling of protesters as 'terrorists' to justify violence against them is unacceptable," U.N. High Commissioner for Human Right Volker Türk said in a statement Tuesday.

Alluding to a wave of protests in Iran in 2022, Türk said demonstrators have sought "fundamental changes" to governance in the country, "and once again, the authorities' reaction is to inflict brutal forces to repress legitimate demands for change." "This cycle of horrific violence cannot continue," he added.

It also was "extremely worrying" to hear some public statements from judicial officials mentioning the prospect of the use of the death penalty against protesters through expedited judicial proceedings, Türk said.

Finland's foreign minister said she is summoning the Iranian ambassador after authorities in Tehran restricted internet access.

"Iran's regime has shut down the internet to be able to kill and oppress in silence," Elina Valtonen wrote in a social media post Tuesday, adding "this will not be tolerated. We stand with the people of Iran — women and men alike."

Finland is "exploring measures to help restore freedom to the Iranian people" together with the European Union, Valtonen said.

Separately, Finnish police said they believe at least two people entered the courtyard of the Iranian embassy in Helsinki without permission Monday afternoon and tore down the Iranian flag. The embassy's outer wall also was daubed with paint.

Iranian security forces arrested what a state television report described as terrorist groups linked to Israel in the southeastern city of Zahedan.

The report, without providing additional details, said the group entered through Iran's eastern borders and carried U.S.-made guns and explosives that the group had planned to use in assassinations and acts of sabotage.

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai expressed her support for the growing protest movement roiling Iran, hailing people who have "long warned about this repression, at great personal risk."

The French Foreign Ministry said it has "reconfigured" its embassy in Tehran after reports that the facility's nonessential staff left Iran earlier this week.

TODAY IN HISTORY

1236 – King Henry III of England marries Eleanor of Provence.
1301 – Andrew III of Hungary dies, ending the Árpád dynasty in Hungary.
1601–1900
1761 – The Third Battle of Panipat, the largest battle of the 18th century,[3] is fought in India between the Afghan Durrani Empire under Ahmad Shah Durrani, and the Maratha Empire under Sadashivrao Bhau.
1784 – American Revolutionary War: Ratification Day, United States: Congress ratifies the Treaty of Paris with Great Britain.
1797 – The Battle of Rivoli is fought with a decisive French victory by Napoleon Bonaparte, marking the beginning of the end of the War of the First Coalition and the start of French hegemony over Italy for two decades.

NCP CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS SWORN-IN

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Jan. 13

The oath-taking ceremony of central committee members of the Nepali Communist Party took place at the party's central office in Paris Danda, Kathmandu on Tuesday.

The NCP has formed a 2,499-member Central Committee. Members who are unable to be physically present in Kathmandu are being administered the oath digitally from their respective provinces.

Party Coordinators Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Madhav Kumar Nepal have already taken the oath from the party's senior-most leader, Nanda Kumar Prasai.

During the ceremony, the leaders pledged to firmly adhere to the party's guiding principles, programmes and policies.

DEATH TOLL FROM IRANIAN PROTESTS SURPASSES 2,000

AP
Dubai,Jan. 13

The death toll from nationwide protests in Iran surpassed 2,000 people on Tuesday, activists said, as Iranians made phone calls abroad for the first time in days after authorities severed communications during a crackdown on demonstrators.

The number of dead climbed to at least 2,003, as reported by the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency. That figure dwarfs the death toll from any other round of protest or unrest in Iran in decades and recalls the chaos surrounding the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iranian state television offered the first official acknowledgment of the high death toll, quoting an official saying the country had "a lot of martyrs" and that it did not release a toll earlier because of the dead suffering gruesome injuries. However, that statement came only after activists reported their toll.

The demonstrations began a little over two weeks ago in anger over Iran's ailing economy and soon targeted the theocracy, particularly 86-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Images obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press from demonstrations in Tehran showed graffiti and chants calling for Khamenei's death — something that could carry a death sentence.

Soon after the new death toll became public, U.S. President Donald Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform: "Iranian Patriots, KEEP PROTESTING - TAKE OVER YOUR INSTITUTIONS!!!"



PHOTO: RSS

General Secretaries of Nepali Congress, Gagan Kumar Thapa and Bishwa Prakash Sharma, attending the closed session of Special General Convention organised in Bhrikuti Mandap, Kathmandu, on Tuesday.

Bus lost in Simaltal accident 18 months ago found in Trishuli River

BY SHALIGRAM NEPAL
Chitwan, Jan. 13



PHOTO: SHALIGRAM NEPAL

The bus that was swept into the Trishuli River by the Simaltal landslide eighteen months ago was found on Tuesday during excavation.

It has been confirmed that the bus found in the Trishuli River is the same bus that was lost in the Simaltal accident eighteen months ago.

After only a small part of the bus became visible on Sunday morning, the police began excavation work. By the third day of excavation, it was confirmed that the bus was the one involved in the Simaltal accident.

Police Inspector Pratik Singh of the Mugling Area Police Office said that a section of the bus was recovered from the excavation that bore the words 'Ganapati Deluxe', confirming that it was the one gone missing.

As excavation work is still ongoing, he added that further evidence may be found.

On the morning of July 5, 2024, a Ganapati Transport bus (Province 03–001 Kha 2495) travelling from Kathmandu to Gaur and an Angel Deluxe bus (Bagmati Province 03–006 Kha 1516) travelling from Birgunj to Kathmandu were struck by a landslide at Simaltal - 22 kilometres towards Mugling from Narayangadh.

The landslide swept both buses off the road and into the Trishuli River. Search operations were carried out after the buses fell into the river, but they could not be located at the time. There were 65 passengers on board the two buses.

Of those, three passengers travelling on the Ganapati Transport bus managed to swim to safety after plunging into the river, while all others were swept away along with the buses.

Only a few bodies of those involved in the accident were recovered. In the search for the buses and passengers, around 500 security personnel were deployed, including divers from the Nepal Army and Armed Police Force, along with water drones and police teams.

The government also brought in high-tech divers from India to assist with further searches, but the bus could not be found at that time.

Ravindra Khanal, spokesperson for the Chitwan District Police Office, said that further evidence related to the incident is currently being sought. Efforts are under way to search for additional evidence inside the bus and to retrieve other parts of it. He noted that the difficult location is causing problems in carrying out the work.

Gen Z protest derails Kanti Hospital's 1000-bed plan

BY RAMAN PAUDEL
Kathmandu, Jan. 13

A project to upgrade Nepal's first and largest pediatric hospital into a 1,000-bed high-tech facility has been derailed after the government offices were set on fire during the Gen-Z Movement in September last year

In 2023, Kanti Children's Hospital, which was established 64 years ago, launched a project to upgrade the hospital into a 1,000-bed facility equipped with modern technologies. However, the project has been halted after its important documents were destroyed in vandalism during the Gen-Z movement on September 9.

Government officials said that the project could not move forward smoothly, even though Rs. 80 million was allocated by the government. Every year since 2023, the government has allocated a budget for this project.

Addressing the 64th anniversary of Kanti Children's Hospital, Minister for Health and Population Dr. Sudha Sharma Gautam also reiterated the ministry's commitment to developing the hospital as an Institute of Child Health. Last week, Minister Dr. Gautam said that the government was working to transform the hospital into a 1,000-bed facility.

Earlier, former Minister for Urban Development Prakash Man Singh had initiated the construction of a new building for the Kanti Children's Hospital.

Presenting a document on the occasion of the hospital's 64th anniversary, Hospital Director Dr. Pankaj Ray stressed that the hospital would be upgraded to a 1,000-bed facility in the near future.

Dr. Ray also expressed hope to further enhance the historic health institution. However, speaking to The Rising Nepal, Dr. Ray stated that several reasons had halted the project.

"We planned the project three years ago. The government has also allocated the budget. However, the project has not moved forward," said Dr. Ray.

Other officials involved in the project also said that millions of rupees in allocated funds could not be utilised because the project was not running smoothly.

"For the last three years, the government has been allocating millions of rupees for this project. In the meantime, we have repeatedly requested the Ministry of Urban Development to run the project as soon as possible. However, the Building Department of the ministry has been unable to carry on the project forward," said Roshan Shrestha, Maintenance Officer at Kanti Children's Hospital.

> Government officials said that the project could not move forward smoothly, even though Rs. 80 million was allocated by the government. Every year since 2023, the government has allocated a budget for this project.

Shrestha also said that he visited the Building Department a few weeks ago, requesting that the department start the project smoothly.

However, senior officials at the Building Department stated that important project documents were destroyed in the arson on September 9.

While the project was initiated and a budget allocated, the government has not officially recognised it as a multi-year project. For this reason, the budget for this year is also expected to freeze, said Shrestha.

"The work for this project was expected to run smoothly before the Gen-Z movement. When the vandalism occurred at the Building Department, no one knew where the project documents remained," said Shrestha.

Kanti Children's Hospital, which serves as a referral centre for pediatric patients from across the country, provided services to approximately 225,000 individuals last year.

In recent years, the hospital has been struggling with shortages of manpower, modern technology, and quality equipment.

Established in 1963 with the support of the former Soviet Union, the hospital has served millions of children across the country. Currently, neonatal intermediate care, cardiology, and oncology services with a capacity of 300 beds are in operation. The hospital is set to grow into a 100-bed facility, featuring improved service and upgraded infrastructure.

Govt approves National...

The government will provide USD 350,000 in financial assistance for the reconstruction of the Mahamuni Faya (Buddhist Pagoda) archives in Myanmar, damaged in the March 2025 earthquake, and the reconstruction of the Gangaghat Temple.

The government has also approved resignation tendered by Uddhav Prasad Timalsina, a member of the management committee responsible for handling the assets and liabilities of problematic institutions or organisations and appointed Madhukar Rana of Lalitpur to the position.

The Cabinet meeting also promoted three Colonels of the Nepali Army to the rank of Brigadier Generals, along with the transfer of two Colonels.

The government approved the principles for translating the Bill on Dalit Rights and Development. Approval was also granted for establishing Land Revenue and Survey Offices in Fikkal (Ilam), Sotang (Solukhumbu), Kolti (Bajura), and Ramtadi (Mugu), along with the organisational structure and staffing of these offices.

Meanwhile, Ram Bahadur Rawal from Bajura has been appointed as the Press Advisor to the Prime Minister.

175 PR candidates...

The final PR closed lists will be made public on February 3.

A total of 64 political parties have submitted the closed lists of their candidates for the March 5 election. Of them, 54 parties filed under their own election symbols, while 10 parties submitted lists under four shared symbols, according to the Commission.

The House of Representatives has 275 members and 110 of them are elected through PR system and 165 through the First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system.

Nomination registration for the FPTP system is scheduled for January 19.

NC convention makes...

Discussions within the central working committee were temporarily postponed as negotiations continued, and the meeting has been rescheduled for Wednesday morning.

Meanwhile, Senior leader Dr. Shekhar Koirala held discussions with close central members, district presidents and senior advocates, reaffirming his commitment to party unity. He said he was in continuous dialogue with all factions to prevent any split, describing his efforts as a last-ditch attempt to preserve unity.

Koirala said he had urged the party president, acting president and general secretaries to ensure the party does not divide, and asked cadres not to lose confidence. Legal experts present said only the Central Working Committee can call a special general convention. Participants urged Koirala to mediate and unite the party.

The election committee announced that nominations for central leadership posts, with voting scheduled for Wednesday. Elections will be held for 134 positions, including the president, vice presidents, general secretaries and central members, in line with the existing statute. A total of 4,638 voters have been registered for the special general convention, although only about 63 per cent of eligible delegates are participating.

Meanwhile, the Central Working Committee meeting could not convene at party office as planned on Tuesday. As leaders remained busy in talks, vice president Dhanraj Gurung led a brief meeting deciding to hold another meeting on Wednesday morning.

Tokha's Chaku factories...

At present, the town has 18 large and small traditional Chaku factories. During the peak season, each factory produces around 7,000 kilograms of molasses daily, offering varieties ranging from plain, masala and liquid Chaku to **Dallo Chaku** (one-kilogram blocks).

"Simple Chaku is sold at Rs. 140 per packet, while masala Chaku is priced at Rs. 150 per packet," he informed.

Shrestha said the current demand for Chaku cannot be fully met. One of the major challenges in production is a shortage of workers during the peak season, as many people have left for foreign employment.

His factory also produces additional varieties, including cut Chaku (Chaku in pieces), special nutritious Chaku and **gundpak,** a sweet made from thickened milk and various ingredients for new mothers.

Traditionally, **Dallo Chaku** holds special significance in Newari family life. As Shrestha explained, it was sent to the homes of daughters-in-law's parents to inform them that their daughter had given birth.

Chaku is a traditional Newari food item made from concentrated sugarcane juice, ghee and nuts.

The preparation process begins by boiling sugarcane and jiggery-mixed syrup in a large cauldron before allowing it to cool. Once set, the mixture is whipped, slapped and stretched repeatedly until it turns dark brown. Peanuts and cardamom are added for extra flavour before packaging.

Despite the large-scale production, Shrestha noted that Chaku remains a seasonal business. Factories increase output during the Maghe Sankranti peak season the first day of the Nepali month of Magh and reduce production for the rest of the year.

Many people consume Chaku during the cold months as it is believed to keep the body warm.

Madhes University begins preparations for federalism course

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Jan. 13



The Madhes University (MU) is set to launch a course on 'Federal Governance System'.

In an interaction on 'Developing curriculum on federal governance system' organised by the Federalism and Localization Centre (FLC) and Federalism Study Centre (FSC) of the Madhes University (MU) in Lalitpur on Tuesday, the university stressed on the need for the courses on federalism in higher education.

Discussion on the course on federalism is initiated after a decade since the country adopted the federal structure and amidst the ongoing debate whether the country should adopt two-tier structure by shedding off the provinces from the system.

Two political parties voiced their policies against the federal structure, especially the provinces in the pretext of extra financial burden.

The MU was established in September 2022 after the formulation of Madhes University Act in the same year. It is offering courses on BALLB, BPAM, BEM and MPA. The FSC was established in September 2024.

Experts suggested that the curriculum should include the basic elements of federal system, its merits and demerits in the Nepali context, divisions of power, relations among different levels of the government, administrative and fiscal federalism, and practices in other countries adopting the similar system.

Senior researcher at the Policy Research Institute Dr. Kalpana Khanal suggested that the curriculum should include provisions for real-time learning through the visit of the political and economic institutions at the different levels of the government and interactions with the people's representatives and bureaucrats.

She said that although people have an impression that the provinces have caused extra financial burden, it actually has reduced the cost following the scrapping of the district and regional-level administrative structures.

Likewise, Mayor of Hetaunda Sub-Metropolitan City Mina Kumari Lama said that the planned course should be able to create human resources that are capable to fulfill the need of the subnational governments in different areas.

Stating that the local bodies need more competent leaders and bureaucrats, she appreciated the attention of the MU to the critical issue like the federal governance system.

Prem Narayan Aryal, former VC of the Pokhara University, suggested to begin with a chapter of a portion of content at the Bachelor's level and a subject at the Master's degree.

Dr. Tula Narayan Shah, Executive Director of Nepal Madhes Foundation, suggested to bridge the gap among the governments and pay attention to the development challenges.

Skills like negotiations, conflict management, information system, leadership, sustainable development and climate change, inter-governmental relations and cooperation are recommended in the course of study.

The course should have a clear focus on one of the various aspects of federalism – such as fiscal, administrative, resource management and political. Proper mix of practical and philosophical elements should be included in the curricula, academicians and experts suggested.

Chairperson of the FLC Dr. Khim Lal Devkota, who also chairs the FSC at the MU, said that the university aims at offering the course not only to meet the academic need but also market demand.

"Alongside the full-fledged degree courses on federalism, we also aim to develop short-term courses to facilitate those who have interest and need to have the knowledge on the subject," he said.

Vice-Chancellor of the MU, Prof. Dr. Deepak Bahadur Shakya, said that the university is planning to introduce subjects in new areas that are the need of the society.

Currently, the Tribhuvan University is offering a subject on federalism in Bachelor's degree while the Kathmandu University has specialisation option in federalism and local governance under the Masters in Public Policy and Management course. Likewise, the Staff College also runs training under its Centre for Federalism.

Yam Baral returns with fresh melodies

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Jan. 13



Three songs sung by Yam Baral were released amid a programme held in Kathmandu on Monday. The songs, 'Yo Saanjh Feri', 'Jun Ra Sunko', and 'Tender Maya', were officially released at the event.

The songs and their music videos were launched by veteran artist Madan Krishna Shrestha, along with senior music composer Deepak Jangam, renowned director and actress Dipashree Niraula, senior journalist Rishi Dhamala, and other guests.

Among the released songs, 'Yo Saanjh Feri' features lyrics by Rakhi Gauchan and music by Shankar Thapa. The music video is directed by Keshav Raj Bhatt, with cinematography by Aman Badu and editing by Rakesh Dahal. The music video stars Juna Karki and Yam Baral.

The second song, 'Jun Ra Sunko', has lyrics by Sanjay Baral and music composed by Bikash Chaudhary. The music video was directed by lyricist Sanjay Baral himself and features Yam Baral, Shree Thapaliya, Suren Poudel, and Narayan Pradhan Saiju. Cinematography was done by Bikram DC, while editing was handled by Bikash Dhamala.

The third song, 'Tender Maya', also has lyrics by Sanjay Baral and music by Bikash Chaudhary. The music video is directed by Nitin Chand and features Sandipa Gautam, Nabin Mahatara Kshetri, Rashila Shrestha, and Yam Baral. Namit Chand Thakuri served as associate director, Manoj KC handled the cinematography, and Shukun Timilsina did the editing.

Speaking at the event, Yam Baral said that he has returned to mainstream music after a long time. Active in the music field for over 35 years, he shared that he prefers dedicated practice over following trends. Since music is what he knows best, he said he remains fully devoted to it.

Veteran artist Madan Krishna Shrestha said that Yam Baral is one of his favourite voices. He said that after losing his wife, he often feels emotional, and Baral's songs have helped comfort his ailing heart.

Likewise, Deepak Jangam discussed various aspects of the released songs, saying they were excellent from every angle and maintained a wonderful balance of lyrics, music, and voice.

KHICHADI YATRA UNDERWAY

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Sulikot, Jan. 13

The Khichadi Yatra began on Tuesday, as 50 devotees journeyed from Guru Gorakhnath Temple in Gorkha Durbar to Gorakhpur in India.

The Khichadi Yatra, carrying deep religious significance, is being organised by the National Cow Protection Association and the Guru Gorakshanath Foundation, with coordination from Gorkha Municipality and the Gorkha Durbar Care Office.

According to Hom Singh Basnet, coordinator of the National Cow Protection Association in Gorkha, the journey began with traditional musical instruments, auspicious tunes, and Swastik recitations.

Basnet said that King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the symbol of national unity, had started this Khichadi Yatra after the unification of Nepal. He added,

"After the monarchy ended in the country, this Khichadi Yatra also stopped. Now, after 20 years, it has been resumed."

He further said that the Khichadi Yatra aims to preserve lost cultural traditions, increase religious tourism in Gorkha.

This journey has received financial support of Rs. 150,000 from the Gorkha Municipality this year.

Gorkha Municipality has included this journey in its official policies and programmes and has been continuing its support, according to Mayor Krishna Bahadur Rana.

Maghi atmosphere lights up Nawalpur

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Madhyabindu, Jan. 13



The Tharu community in Nawalpur is immersed in the festive atmosphere of Maghi. The Tharu community celebrates the first day of Magh as their New Year with great enthusiasm.

Since Nawalpur district has a large Tharu population, the festive mood of Maghi begins nearly a week in advance.

In various places of Kawasoti, Devchuli, Madhyabindu, and Gaindakot municipalities, such as Danda, Pithauli, Amaltari, Kolhuwa, Prasauni, Piprahar, and other areas, Maghi is being marked with food festivals, Jhamta dance, Lathi dance, and other cultural programmes.

Traditional Tharu games like Bhodi, slow bicycle races, chair races, football, volleyball, and many other sports competitions are being organised, along with programmes for exchanging greetings and good wishes.

The Amaltari Homestay, located in Kawasoti-15, operated by the Tharu, Bote, and Majhi communities, is also filled with Maghi celebrations.

During this time, tourists visiting the area get to enjoy Tharu cultural programmes. They also savour traditional foods such as ghongi (snails), fish, chichchar, and other dishes while enjoying the festive spirit of Maghi.

According to Fansaram Mahato, Chairman of the Nawalpur Tourism Committee, special Maghi programmes are being organised in all local municipalities of the district.

He said that Khichadi festivals and greeting-exchange programmes have been taking place a week before Maghi.

The Tharu community celebrates Maghi on the first day of Magh, when the sun enters the northern hemisphere (Uttarayan).

In Nawalpur, this festival is celebrated with great joy for three days starting from Magh 1.

On the morning of Magh 1, people go to water bodies for a holy dip and worship, and then visit elders to receive blessings.

In the evening, large logs are lit at home to create a sacred fire. Family members and guests sit around the fire and eat together. This tradition was shared by Prem Shankar Mardaniya Tharu, President of the Amaltari Homestay.

Chalamet 2026 depends on Saint-Etienne's promotion



AP
Los Angeles, Jan. 13

After winning his first Golden Globe, Timothée Chalamet said it was a good start to the new year.

But making 2026 a perfect year would require more than the French-American movie star's acting skills.

Asked by French magazine Paris-Match during the ceremony whether it could be "the year of Chalamet," he was quoted as saying that "for 2026 to be truly perfect, Saint-Etienne will have to be promoted back to Ligue 1 next season."

Chalamet was referring to the soccer team he supports, a storied name in France that has lost much of its former lustre and was relegated to the second tier last season.

Saint-Etienne — which has 10 league titles to its name — dominated French soccer during the 1960s and '70s. A proud club with working-class roots, Saint-Etienne fell into mediocrity in the 1980s in the aftermath of a financial scandal.

Chalamet inherited his love for the club from his father and has often spoken with passion about the team and its players.

After 18 rounds of matches this season, Saint-Etienne sits fourth in Ligue 2, just one point behind second place, which would secure promotion back to the top level.

The 30-year-old Chalamet won his first Golden Globe, for "Marty Supreme," after four previous nominations. He is considered a top contender for his first Oscar.

Actor Nathan Chasing Horse facing trial

AP
Las Vegas, Jan. 13



The jury trial for Nathan Chasing Horse, the former "Dances with Wolves" actor accused of sexually abusing Indigenous women and girls, is expected to begin Tuesday in Las Vegas.

Prosecutors allege he used his reputation as a spiritual leader and healer to take advantage of his victims over two decades. Chasing Horse has pleaded not guilty to 21 charges, including sexual assault, sexual assault with a minor, first degree kidnapping of a minor and the use of a minor in producing pornography.

The case sent shock waves across Indian Country when he was arrested and indicted in early 2023. There were many setbacks and delays, but the case finally proceeded to trial after prosecutors added allegations that he filmed himself having sex with a child.

Best known for portraying the character Smiles A Lot in the 1990 movie "Dances with Wolves," Chasing Horse was born on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, which is home to the Sicangu Sioux, one of the seven tribes of the Lakota nation.

After starring in the Oscar-winning film, according to prosecutors, Chasing Horse proclaimed himself to be a Lakota medicine man while traveling around North America to perform healing ceremonies.

Prosecutors claim Chasing Horse led a cult called The Circle, and his followers believed he could speak with spirits. His victims went to him for medical help, according to a court transcript from a grand jury hearing.

One victim was 14 years old when she approached him hoping he would heal her mother, who was diagnosed with cancer. Chasing Horse previously had treated the victim's breathing issues and her mother's spider bite, according to a court transcript. He allegedly told her the spirits wanted her to give up her virginity in exchange for her mother's health. He allegedly had sex with her and said her mother would die if she told anyone, according to the victim's testimony to the grand jury.

The original indictment was dismissed in 2024 after the Nevada Supreme Court ruled prosecutors abused the grand jury process when they provided a definition of grooming as evidence without any expert testimony.

The high court, specifying that the dismissal had nothing to do with his innocence or guilt, left open the possibility of charges being refiled. In October 2024, the charges were refiled with new allegations that he recorded himself having sex with one of his accusers when she was younger than 14.

Prosecutors have said the recordings, made in 2010 or 2011, were found on cell phones in a locked safe inside the North Las Vegas home that Chasing Horse is said to have shared with five wives, including the girl in the videos.

Jury selection will begin Tuesday. The trial is expected to last four weeks, and prosecutors plan to call 18 witnesses. A week before the trial, Chasing Horse attempted to fire his private defence attorney, saying his lawyer hadn't come to visit him. Judge Jessica Peterson removed Chasing Horse from the courtroom when he tried to interrupt her, and she denied his request.

HOROSCOPE

tarot.com

ARIES: Take the lead on a tricky promise. Your 10th House of Achievements is still under cosmic scrutiny, as Mercury reaches from there to oppose Jupiter in your home sector.

TAURUS: Measured movements are key to personal management. The Moon is supporting your psychological 8th house, while its sextile with Pluto in your vocation zone could incite some confusion around your career motivations.

GEMINI: Curiosity helps you decode a private puzzle. Clever Mercury focuses your eighth house of inheritance, while lucky Jupiter boosts your second house of income.

CANCER: Active care speaks louder than "perfect" words today. Partnerships become clearer as messenger Mercury informs your relationships, while expansive Jupiter highlights your identity needs and self-respect.

LEO: Small habits currently affect your whole ship! If maintaining the sails is crucial for nautical movement, then maintaining your physical health is crucial for life movement.

VIRGO: Let details serve joy over stress. Mercury lights your fifth house, Jupiter your eleventh. Their tension tames perfectionism, shifting goals toward pleasure and hope instead of chasing flawless results or impossible standards today for you.

LIBRA: Harmony grows when you make clear choices together. Your 4th House of Family gets busy as information-gathering Mercury stirs plans, while auspicious Jupiter highlights your 10th House of Accomplishments.

SCORPIO: Your focus is turning towards what truly matters. Smart spending feels soothing as the emotional Moon eases your 2nd House of Cash, collaborating with powerful Pluto in your 4th House of Nostalgia.

SAGITTARIUS: There's a spark to the atmosphere today! Your natural confidence is boosted by the intuitive Moon in your sign, especially once it sextiles intense Pluto in your 3rd House of Communication.

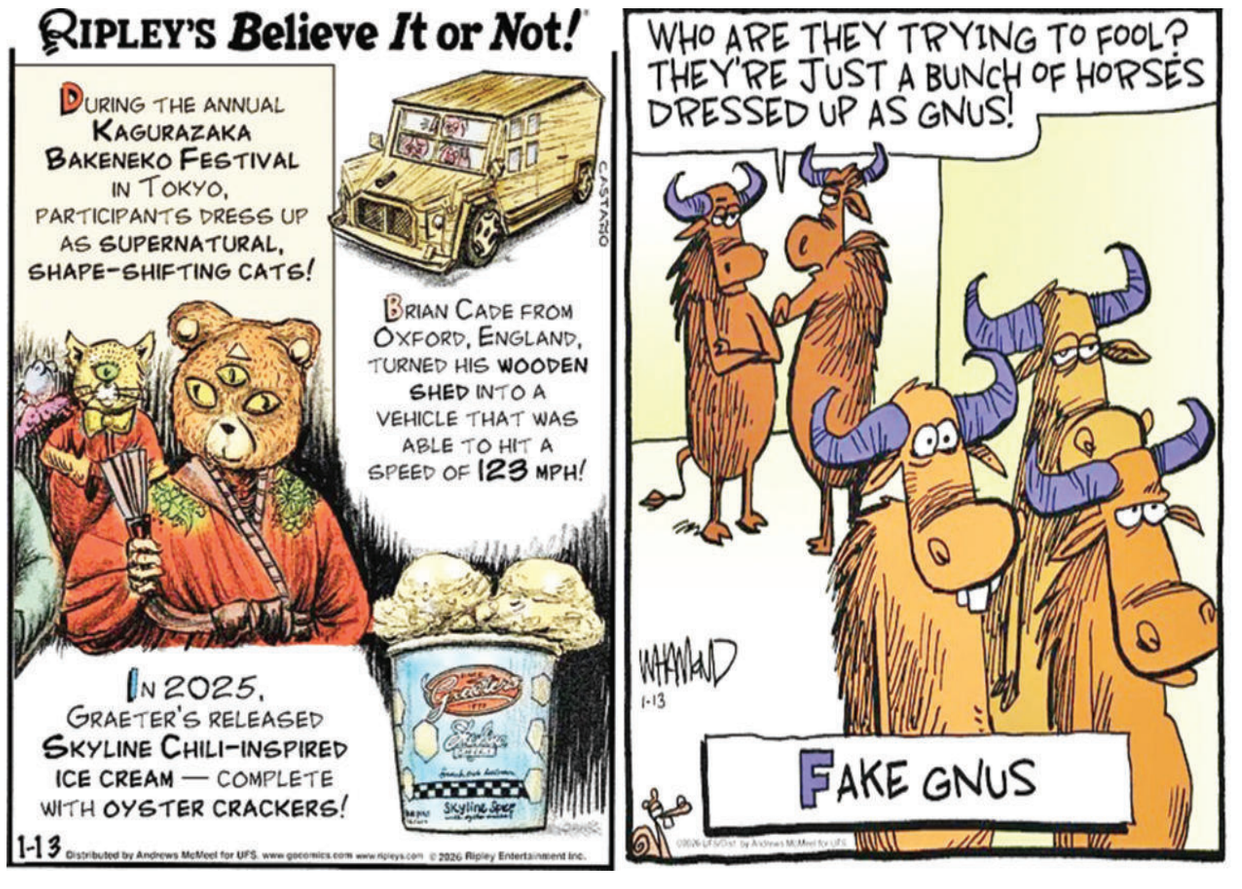
CAPRICORN: Keep your message crisp and grounded now. Clear boundaries build respect as cerebral Mercury sharpens your sign, especially as Jupiter, with all its wisdom, highlights expectations within partnerships.

AQUARIUS: Community vibes feel warm and personal as the Moon lights your eleventh house, blending with Pluto. You might join a volunteer project, spark a group brainstorm, then revive a quiet, inspiring chat with a friend today.

PISCES: Friends spark ideas that lift your mood as Mercury and Jupiter link your eleventh and fifth houses. A pal suggests a big plan, and you gently refine it to suit everyone's budget and timing perfectly.

CARTOON

gocomics.com



NEPAL TO PLAY WARM-UPS IN SRI LANKA AND INDIA



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Jan. 13

The Nepali national men's cricket team will play practice series in two phases ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup, which will be staged in India and Sri Lanka.

The Cricket Association of Nepal announced the warm-up schedule on Tuesday. After completing two closed training camps at home, the squad will travel to Sri Lanka for the first phase of practice matches.

Nepal will face the Sri Lanka 'A' side in three T20 fixtures, scheduled for 20, 22 and 24 January, with practice sessions set for 19, 21 and 23 January.

Following the Sri Lanka tour, Nepal will head to India, where they are scheduled to play two T20 practice matches against the Mumbai Cricket Association's MCA President's XI.

The first will be a day game on 29 January, followed by a day/night encounter on 31 January at the CCI ground. The team will train on 27 and 28 January in Mumbai.

The T20 World Cup begins jointly in India and Sri Lanka on 7 February. Nepal will open their campaign against England on 8 February. They are grouped with England, West Indies, Bangladesh and Italy, with all group matches to be played at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai.

National League starts today

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Jan. 13



PHOTO: BIKASH/TRN
Machhindra FC coach Prabesh Katuwal and captain Bishal Shrestha at the pre-match press conference ahead of the National League Football, starting Wednesday in Kathmandu.

The National League Football is set to kick off on Wednesday at Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu.

Kankrebihar Youth Club will face Friends Club in the opening match of the competition, where 17 clubs will vie for the title and a prize of Rs. 5 million.

ANFA, which has been unable to stage the Martyrs' Memorial 'A' Division League for the past three years, will now run the National League on a single round-robin basis. Matches will be played at Dasharath Stadium, the ANFA ground in Satdobato, and the Chyasal Stadium.

Alongside 13 'A' Division clubs, Laligurans Association, Kankrebihar Youth Club, Nava Janajagriti Club and Chitlang FC from outside the capital will also take part.

At a pre-match press conference on Tuesday, coaches and captains of 15 teams pledged strong performances and expressed confidence in lifting the title despite limited preparation. Kankrebihar and Nava Janajagriti, who qualified through the President's League, were absent.

Machhindra FC head coach Prabesh Katuwal admitted his side's preparations had not gone as expected. "With players busy in the Gold Cup, we could not prepare satisfactorily. The team is good, but we have not had proper training. This time, Machhindra are not the same side people have seen before. The target, however, remains to win the title."

Captain Bishal Shrestha added: "We had just a week for preparations. Fitness is still not as expected. Until now, everyone had been playing on their own."

Tribhuvan Army FC, however, reported strong preparation. Assistant coach Jitendra Karki said: "Managed by Bal Gopal Maharjan, we have a mixture of new and senior players. We aim to win the title." Captain George Prince Karki added: "Regular training has made us strong. We also played the Durand Cup, and internal tournaments have helped us produce new players. Overall, our squad is strong."

Nepal Police Club also expressed confidence. Coach Chetan Ghimire and captain Ram Waji said they had regular training and a balanced team.APF coach Rajendra Tamang, who won the National League title with Three Star Club ten years ago, said his side aimed for a top-four finish. Captain Hari Karki believed the team was balanced and well prepared.

Church Boys United, the reigning first division champions, said they had built their squad for the AFC tournament. "We have prepared to be champions. Though we had just five days of training, we hope to bring positive results," the club stated. Captain Arik Bista admitted: "Preparation has not been good. We played a friendly match but lacked proper training."

Manang Marsyangdi Club arrive with just a week's preparation. Coach Sailesh Karmacharya said: "The team includes youth players from the second and third divisions. We are under pressure to preserve our status. We are taking the tournament as preparation for the first division league." Captain Nava Raj Gurung added: "The new players will gain valuable experience playing in the league."

Friends Club coach Ramesh Maharjan said: "Preparation has been good so far. We have built the team with youth players, trained hard, and believe the players will do their best." Captain Rupesh KC echoed confidence in their performance.

Shree Bhagwati Club coach Dhanesh Prajapati emphasised team unity and set a target of finishing in the top three. Captain Ashok Khawas, however, noted: "Preparation has felt more like for a knockout tournament than a league. We have experienced players and will try our best."

Satdobato Youth Club coach Balgopal Sahukhala said: "We have had ten days of training. My boys are fit and we have formed the team to clinch the title."

Sankata Club coach Rabindra Shilakar explained: "We could not bring in top players as registration was delayed. We have formed the team with academy players and some seniors. Junior players will debut, while foreign recruits will be added as needed."

Laligurans Association coach Kiran Shrestha said: "We trained for three weeks in Pokhara, prioritising players from Gandaki. The team is a mix of senior and junior players. We hope to play good football."

Jawalakhel Youth Club, with around a month's training, arrive with three foreign players and academy recruits. Coach Sunil Shrestha said: "Like everyone, our aim is to win the title." Captain Yunesh Chaudhary added: "We will give a tough fight to every opponent."

Chitlang FC coach Prajwal Pratip Chhetry said: "Our aim is to gain experience playing against top-tier clubs. We will produce the best football possible and play total football."

Liverpool overcome Barnsley to progress in FA Cup



PHOTO: AP
Liverpool's Hugo Ekitike reacts after scoring during the FA Cup third round soccer match against Barnsley in England.

AP
Liverpool, Jan. 13

Dominik Szoboszlai was hero and villain for Liverpool as the home side broke down a spirited Barnsley 4-1 on Monday to set up a FA Cup fourth round tie against Premier League rival Brighton.

The Hungarian midfielder gave Liverpool the lead after eight minutes when he silenced the travelling fans with a stunning 30-meter strike.

Jeremie Frimpong made it 2-0 when he cut in from the right and fired home a fierce left-foot shot.

But Szoboszlai offered Barnsley a way back into the game five minutes before halftime with a calamitous mistake that will feature in blooper reels for years to come.

His attempted backheel six meters in front of his own goal was poorly planned and shockingly executed and the chasing Adam Phillips only had to tap the ball into the empty net to make it 2-1.

"Sorry to the team," Szoboszlai told broadcaster TNT Sports. "I made it hard for us with an easy mistake. Football happens and we move on."

The midfielder was also lucky not to give away a penalty early in the second half as Barnsley made a mockery of its League 1 status.

The Yorkshire club took the game to its more storied rival and with the match still in the balance Liverpool coach Arne Slot was forced to call on his big guns, bringing on Florian Wirtz, Hugo Ekitiké and Ibrahima Konate after an hour.However, much of the action continued to revolve around Szoboszlai.

He cleared a Phillips shot off the line at one end and then set up Wirtz moments later only to see him blaze the ball over the bar.

Wirtz made amends six minutes from time when, with the visitor's energy levels dropping, he took an Ekitiké pass and curled a lovely shot into the far corner. Ekitiké made it 4-1 in stoppage time when he tapped home a Wirtz cross.

It was an unfortunate end for a visiting team that acquitted itself admirably against a team 57 places above it in the league pyramid.

"I thought we were outstanding," Barnsley manager Conor Hourihane said. "We got a bit tired at the end but we started so well. They brought on top player after top player.

Although the scoreline flattered the home side the result was Liverpool's 11th straight game without defeat and a sign of its ability to grind out results. Liverpool has not lost since November to Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League.

PSG knocked out

Paris FC knocked out Paris Saint-Germain from the French Cup after an historic snatch-and-grab triumph that marked a first ever win against its richer and more illustrious neighbor on Monday.

PSG, the record 16-time winner of the Coupe de France, has failed to make the last 32 for the first time since the 2012-13 season. Cup holder PSG dominated throughout at home but could not make its pressure count and it paid a price when Paris FC grabbed the only goal in the 74th minute.

Former PSG winger Jonathan Ikoné poked the ball home on a counterattack, a month after he scored all three goals in Paris FC's fifth-round win at US Raon-l'Étape.

Ikoné came up through PSG's youth teams and played seven times for the club during the 2016-17 season before enjoying longer spells at Lille and Fiorentina.

Juve move into third place

Juventus notched its highest score of the season in a 5-0 demolition of Cremonese that lifted it into third place in Serie A on Monday.

Juventus' fifth win in six league games took the Turin giants to equal on points with Napoli and Roma but above both on goal difference.

Inter Milan led AC Milan by three points. The top two and defending champion Napoli have a game in hand.

Cremonese, which has gone six games without a win, remained in 13th place.

SNIPPETS

Surya Nepal Eastern Open tees off today

Dharan (TRN): The second event of the Surya Nepal Golf Tour 2025–26, the Surya Nepal Eastern Open, will tee off on Wednesday at Dharan Golf Club. Sponsored by Surya Nepal Pvt. Ltd., the championship will be contested over 54 holes across three days, with a total prize fund of Rs. 1,050,000. The winner will take home Rs. 170,000, while the runner-up and third-place finisher will receive Rs. 125,000 and Rs. 100,000 respectively. Prize money will be shared among the top 18 finishers. A strong field of 29 professionals and 22 amateurs (handicap five or below) will compete for honours. Heading the line-up is current Order of Merit leader and defending champion Niraj Tamang, who will also enjoy home-course support as the local favourite. He faces stiff competition from seasoned campaigners Sukra Bahadur Rai, Bhuwan Nagarkoti, Dinesh Prajapati, Jayaram Shrestha, Sanjay Lama and Dhana Thapa.

Minister inspects Nepalgunj Stadium

Nepalgunj (TRN): Minister for Youth and Sports, Bablu Gupta, conducted an on-site inspection visit of the Nepalgunj Stadium on Tuesday. He inspected the stadium and the sports facilities within its premises, including the football ground, swimming pool, covered hall, and shooting range. Mahesh Chand, Office Chief of the former Mid-Western Regional Sports Development Committee, briefed Minister Gupta in detail about the various existing problems at the Nepalgunj Stadium, as well as the need for physical infrastructure improvement. Chief Chand also informed the Minister that the lack of a budget had created difficulties in maintaining the stadium and its infrastructure. On the occasion, Minister Gupta expressed the Ministry's commitment to provide necessary support to ensure both the preservation of the stadium's physical infrastructure and the continuity of sports activities.

Australia captain Healy to retire from cricket



Melbourne (AFP): Australia captain Alyssa Healy said on Tuesday she will to retire from cricket in March after the team's home series with India, ending a storied career. The 35-year-old wicketkeeper-batter has been playing for her country for 15 years, making her debut as a teenager. She has played almost 300 matches across all formats, blasting more than 7,000 runs and taking 275 dismissals. "It's with mixed emotions that the upcoming India series will be my last for Australia," said Healy, whose husband is Australia pace spearhead Mitchell Starc. "I'm still passionate about playing for Australia, but I've somewhat lost that competitive edge that's kept me driven since the start, so the time feels right to call it a day. "Representing my country has been an incredible honour and I'm grateful for one last series in the green and gold."

Ward Chair taekwondo on Saturday

Kathmandu (TRN): The Ward Chair Taekwondo Championship will take place on 17 January in Jayabageshwori. Organised by Shri Pingla Taekwondo Dojang with the support of Kathmandu Metropolitan City Ward No. 8, the competition will feature 13 events with the participation of 210 athletes. According to Ward 8 chair and tournament coordinator Ashaman Sangat, cash prizes of Rs. 4,000, Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 2,000 will be awarded to athletes finishing first, second and third in each event. According to the organisers, the one-day championship will be conducted under the rules of the World Taekwondo Federation and the Nepal Taekwondo Association.

Real Madrid replaces Alonso with Arbeloa

AP
Madrid, Jan. 13



Real Madrid pulled the trigger and replaced Xabi Alonso with B team manager Álvaro Arbeloa on Monday.

Madrid said Alonso left by mutual agreement but it followed a tumultuous stint that lasted less than eight months and came a day after Madrid lost to Barcelona 3-2 in the final of the Spanish Super Cup in Saudi Arabia.

Alonso was immediately replaced by Arbeloa — they were teammates for Madrid, Liverpool and Spain and won the World Cup together in 2010.

"Real Madrid wishes to announce that, by mutual agreement between the club and Xabi Alonso, it has been decided to bring his time as first team coach to an end," a statement said. "Xabi Alonso will always carry the affection and admiration of all Madridistas because he is a Real Madrid legend and has always represented the values of our club. Real Madrid will always be his home."

The club also thanked Alonso's coaching staff. Alonso arrived last May under high expectations as Carlo Ancelotti's replacement and pressure built as the team struggled to play well under his command. He had spats with players such as Vinícius Júnior and widespread media reports said he lost control of the locker room.

Vinícius, and others, complained more than once of being substituted by the coach during matches. Some players publicly supported the coach late last year but the situation didn't appear to improve much.

After Sunday's loss in Jeddah, Alonso appeared to want his team to do a guard of honor for Barcelona during the awards ceremony but Kylian Mbappé and other players called him back and walked away.

He was at Madrid's helm in 34 matches across all competitions, winning 24, losing six and drawing four. Madrid won the season's first clasico in October by 2-1 but still trails Barcelona by four points at the halfway point of La Liga.

Sabalenka favourite at Australian Open but faces Swiatek, US threats

AFP
Melbourne, Jan. 13

Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka is favourite to win a third Australian Open in four years but faces strong competition from a United States contingent led by Coco Gauff and defending champion Madison Keys.

World number two Iga Swiatek is another big threat while two-time Melbourne champion Naomi Osaka will hope to be in the mix when the first Grand Slam of the year begins on Sunday.

Keys stunned title-holder Sabalenka 12 months ago in a classic three-set final to win her first major title aged 29.

But she failed to kick on from there, not winning another tournament all year, and the world number nine will have a target on her back as the title holder.

Three other Americans are ranked inside the world's top 10: Gauff (third), Amanda Anisimova (fourth) and Jessica Pegula (sixth).

The 21-year-old Gauff last year beat Sabalenka at the French Open for her second major crown, but her best performance on the Melbourne Park hardcourts was making the semi-finals in 2024.

Speaking at the mixed-teams United Cup, where she launched her 2026 campaign, Gauff said she spent the off-season "just overall becoming better and more comfortable with my game".

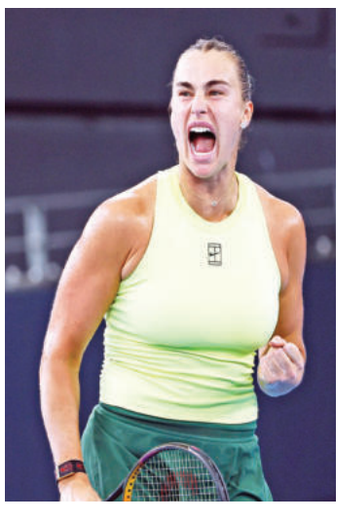
Her serve has been her biggest failing and she suffered a surprise defeat to Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro at the United Cup, but recovered to defeat Swiatek 6-4, 6-2 in a statement victory.

It was Gauff's fourth win in a row over Swiatek.The 24-year-old Anisimova has emerged as a serious threat after enjoying the best year of her career in 2025, reaching the finals of Wimbledon and the US Open, and winning 1000 titles in Beijing and Qatar.

She also made the season-ending WTA Finals for the first time, going down to Sabalenka in three sets in a high-octane semi-final.

"She always pushes me to play my best tennis," said Sabalenka.

Like Pegula, a first major title remains elusive for Anisimova despite going close.



Swiatek, Sabalenka's long-term rival for the top ranking, is overdue something special in Melbourne.

The Pole is a six-time Grand Slam champion and the Australian Open is the only major she has yet to win.

She matched her best Melbourne performance by reaching last year's semi-finals, and did so in rampant style, only to lose to an inspired Keys.

"At a Grand Slam you have to really play great for two weeks, not have any bad days, be consistent," the 24-year-old said at the United Cup.

Japan's former world number one Osaka would be a popular winner if she were to add to her 2019 and 2021 Melbourne triumphs.

Now ranked 16th, the 28-year-old must rank as an outsider, capable of conjuring up her best tennis in flashes but unable to do it consistently and stay fit for long stretches.

World number five Elena Rybakina, the Moscow-born Kazakh, is another to watch.

Imperious Sabalenka

It is hard to look beyond Sabalenka.

Having been stunned by the unfancied Keys, the Belarusian suffered more Grand Slam heartbreak in the French Open final against Gauff.

She then went down to Anisimova in the Wimbledon last four, before roaring back to get revenge over the American and retain her US Open title.

The Australian Open champion in 2023 and 2024, Sabalenka will be in an unfamiliar role when she goes into the tournament as runner-up from 12 months ago.

"Honestly, there is no difference," the hard-hitting Sabalenka said in Brisbane this month, where she won the title for a second successive year in an ominous statement of intent.

"Every time, if I'm defending champion, if I lost first round last year, the goal is always the same -- to bring my best tennis and to improve my game."

Outside the title contenders there will be fascination in how Venus Williams performs when she becomes the oldest woman to play in the main draw at Melbourne.

The seven-time Grand Slam singles champion was handed a wildcard aged 45.

The American, who has played only a limited number of singles matches in recent years, will compete at the Australian Open for the first time since 2021.

Published by General Manager **Lal Bahadur Airi** for the Gorkhapatra Corporation • Printed at G.S. Press, Kathmandu • Acting Editor-in-Chief: **Bishnu Prasad Gautam**
Phone: Editorial 5322279, trnfeatures@gmail.com • Advertisement 5327493, 5331394, E-mail: mgorkhapatra@gmail.com • Distribution 5320638 • Registered No. 29/028/022 • G.P.O. 30/053/54