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THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL

PM KARKI, OLI DISCUSS MARCH ELECTIONS

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5

Prime Minister Sushila Karki and CPN-UML Chairman KP Sharma discussed the upcoming House of Representatives elections, scheduled for March 5, at a meeting on Thursday.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister assured that the election would be free and fair, according to her press advisor, Ram Bahadur Rawal. Prime Minister Karki further clarified that the elections would take place in a single phase, with vote counting beginning immediately after polling concludes across the country on March 5.

"We are not in favour of delaying the election. Our goal is to complete it as soon as possible in a peaceful and credible environment, and transfer power to the newly elected government," Rawal quoted Prime Minister Karki as saying.

She also emphasised that everyone's role is vital in ensuring a peaceful election, and expressed hope for cooperation in achieving this objective.

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GOVT DECIDES TO MARK DEMOCRACY DAY FOR 3 DAYS

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5

The government has decided to mark the National Democracy Day for three days this year.

Commemorating the establishment of democracy with the overthrow of the family rule of the Ranas on February 18, 1951 (Falgun 7, 2007 BS), the government has decided to observe the occasion on February 18, 19 and 20.

A meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sushila Karki on Thursday decided to observe National Democracy Day for three days. The meeting also formed a main organising committee.

The committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, includes Cabinet ministers, mayors of all municipalities in the Kathmandu Valley, the Chief Secretary, the Chief of the Army Staff, secretaries, and the heads of Nepal Police, the Armed Police Force, and the National Investigation Department as members.

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Today's Supplement Highlight

Nipah virus, regional warning in South Asia.





PHOTO COURTESY: PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
Prime Minister Sushila Karki with media persons after observing the progress made in ballot printing at Janak Education Materials Centre in Sano Thimi, Bhaktapur, on Thursday.

Former prime ministers facing tough contenders

BY ARPANA ADHIKARI
Kathmandu, Feb. 5


KP Sharma Oli


Prachanda


Madhav Kumar Nepal

Three former Prime Ministers are in the race for the upcoming House of Representatives elections scheduled for March 5.

CPN-UML Chairman and former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, Nepali Communist Party (NCP) Coordinator and former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', and NCP Co-Coordinator and former Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal are contesting the elections. Oli is running from Jhapa-5, Prachanda from Rukum East, and Madhav Nepal from Rautahat-1.

Former Prime Minister and Pragatisheel Loktantrik Party leader Dr. Baburam Bhattarai had initially filed his candidacy from Gorkha-2, he withdrew it later. Two other former Prime Ministers, Sher Bahadur Deuba and Jhalanath Khanal, are not contesting. Deuba, who won seven elections from 1990 to 2002, was denied an election ticket, while Khanal has chosen not to stand in the polls.

Nation's attention in Jhapa-5

Oli is contesting the elections from his traditional Jhapa-5, and former Kathmandu mayor and Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) leader Balendra Shah 'Balen' has challenged him, making it one of the most closely watched constituencies.

The race, widely framed as "Oli versus Balen," is seen as more than a local contest, with many viewing it as a test of the country's future political direction.

Oli is campaigning on his extensive political experience, party organization, and development record, while Balen is positioning himself as a symbol of change, youth aspiration, and anti-establishment politics, relying heavily on direct public engagement and social media outreach.

While the Oli–Balen rivalry dominates national attention, the constituency has 24 candidates in total. The Nepali Congress has fielded Mandhara Paudel, while the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) has nominated youth leader Ranjit Tamang. The Rastriya Prajatantra Party and other smaller parties are also in the fray, but they are largely overshadowed by the two frontrunners.

Both Oli and Balen have been forwarded as the prime ministerial candidates of their respective parties. Oli is contesting Jhapa-5 for the eighth time, losing only the 2008 Constituent Assembly election. Following the Gen-Z protests on September 8–9, Oli has faced wide criticism and public backlash over the handling of the movement and the deaths of young protesters, making what was once considered his safest constituency far more competitive.

With 163,379 registered voters, including about 10,000 new ones, the outcome in Jhapa-5 is expected to have political significance well beyond eastern Nepal.

Prachanda in Rukum East

NCP Coordinator and former Prime Minister Prachanda is contesting election from Rukum East, marking another shift in his electoral constituencies.

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PM Karki inspects ballot printing

Not a drop of blood will be shed in polls: Minister Aryal

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5

Prime Minister Sushila Karki has been briefed on the progress of ballot printing for the upcoming general election.

Prime Minister Karki visited the printing press of Janak Education Materials Centre Limited in Sano Thimi, Bhaktapur, on Thursday to observe the printing process and receive updates on the ballot printing.

Home Minister Om Prakash Aryal, Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Anil Kumar Sinha, Chief Election Commissioner Ram Prasad Bhandari, and other Election Commission officials accompanied the Prime Minister.

Speaking on the occasion, Home Minister Om Prakash Aryal announced that more robust security measures will be implemented than in previous elections to ensure a clean, fair, and fear-free voting environment.

He said that electoral constituencies have been categorised into three levels of sensitivity - highly sensitive, sensitive, and normal -- and security arrangements will be made accordingly.

He said that special security plans, including prior preparation, will be enforced in the highly sensitive and sensitive areas.

Minister Aryal also called on the public to have confidence that the elections will be held on the scheduled date, noting that political violence and conflict in the country have gone down and a peaceful electoral atmosphere is developing.

Recalling the severe crisis that affected the nation and its citizens on September 8 and 9, he emphasised that the current government is committed to ensuring the safety of the country and its people.

"We have divided the electoral constituencies into three categories. For highly sensitive and sensitive areas, we will proceed with prior preparation. This election will be conducted with stronger security measures than before," Minister Aryal said. "On September 8 and 9, our country and people faced a grave crisis. We have come a long way since then, and we are determined to prevent any insecurity. Political violence and conflict have been reduced, and the election environment is improving, so we have prepared accordingly."

The Prime Minister has stated that not a single drop of blood will be shed in the elections, and we will make that our guiding principle. "Appropriate arrangements will also be made for movement and accommodation based on the weather at that time."

Minister Aryal reiterated that the commitment to prevent any bloodshed in the elections, as expressed by the Prime Minister, will be the cornerstone of the upcoming electoral process.

BALLOT PRINTING COMPLETES FOR 74 CONSTITUENCIES

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5

With just 28 days before the House of Representatives (HoR) election, the Election Commission (EC) has completed printing the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) ballot papers for 74 electoral constituencies.

According to Baburam Koirala, Printing Officer at the EC, a total of 8,490,000 FPTP ballot papers were printed as of 7:00 pm Thursday, marking the completion of ballot printing for 74 constituencies.

Although more than eight million ballots have been printed, 7,260,000 ballots for 60 constituencies have been packed into 42,825 boxes and are ready to be dispatched to the respective constituencies, he added.

So far, printing and packing have been completed for 25 districts, including Dolpa, Mugu, Jumla, Kalikot, Humla, Jajarkot, Dailekh, Rukum (West), Salyan, Surkhet, Bajura, Achham, Bajhang, Doti, Dadeldhura, Darchula, Baitadi, Kailali, Kanchanpur, Panchthar, Ilam, Tehrathum, Bhojpur, Okhaldhunga, and Sunsari, EC Joint-Spokesperson Narayan Prasad Bhattarai said.

Nationwide, a total of 20,323,000 FPTP ballots are to be printed. Printing of the FPTP ballots began on January 30. Printing of ballot papers for the Proportional Representation (PR) system has already been completed, with 20,830,000 ballots packed and ready for distribution.

All printing works are being carried out at Janak Educational Materials Centre in Sanothimi. Likewise, sample ballots for voter education have also been printed, with 1,098,200 copies dispatched nationwide.

Voter education programme

The EC is set to launch a special voter education programme ahead of the elections to generate awareness about voting procedures. Each ward will have one volunteer assigned to educate locals across the area, EC Joint-Spokesperson Kul GC said.

According to GC, volunteers will be selected from child development facilitators, maternal and child health workers, local health volunteers, and coordinators of community study centres. District Election Offices will appoint the volunteers, with priority given to candidates holding at least a School Education Examination (SEE) certificate and prior experience, he added. Orientation sessions for volunteers will be held from February 15–16 in all provinces.

Once trained, the volunteers will be deployed to their respective wards to carry out voter education programmes and demonstrate voting procedures using sample ballots. Each volunteer will receive a salary of Rs. 10,000 for the entire election period, GC added.

'Elections all across country simultaneously'

BY HARI KRISHNA SHARMA
Muktinath (Mustang), Feb. 5

Finance Minister Rameshore Prasad Khanal has said that only areas with snowfall on the day of the upcoming House of Representatives elections, scheduled for March 5, will be eligible to hold the election in the second phase.

Amid discussions about holding the election in the mountainous districts due to extreme cold, Minister Khanal clarified that the government has no plans other than holding the elections across the country simultaneously.

While reviewing the preparations and security arrangements for the election in Parbat, Baglung and Myagdi districts in the Dhaulagiri region, he said that heavy snowfall in the Himalayan districts, including Mustang, could impact polling stations. In such cases, a decision would be made immediately.

"Currently, the weather is clear in areas where snowfall has occurred, and we aim to complete the election in one go and fulfil our responsibilities," said FM Khanal.

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Popular showbiz figures contesting March 5 polls

BY RENUKA DHAKAL
Kathmandu, Feb. 5


Balendra Shah


Nisha Adhikari


Prakash Saput

A number of figures from entertainment industry joining the polls fray -- both under proportional representation and direct seats -- has added glamour to the upcoming House of Representatives elections scheduled for March 5.

One of the most popular candidates is Balendra Shah (Balen), a rapper-turned-politician. He is contesting from Jhapa constituency-5 from the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP). Interestingly, he is running in the same constituency as former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli. Although Shah is the outgoing Mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City, he stepped down from his mayoral responsibilities to contest the upcoming election.

Actress and model Nisha Adhikari is contesting as a direct candidate from Kathmandu Constituency - 5 representing the Gatisheel Loktantrik Party.

She said she has long been interested in social issues and Nepal's position in global politics. She has completed her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in political science and is currently pursuing an MPhil at Tribhuvan University in Conflict, Peace, and Development Studies. She said her decision to enter politics was not sudden. "I had planned to contest the 2084 election after completing my MPhil, but I feel that now is the right time."

The main agenda of her Gatisheel Loktantrik Party is economic transformation. To achieve this, the party has outlined major action plans focusing on agriculture, hydropower, information technology, education, transportation and tourism. The party has adopted the slogan 'Sustainable employment in every ward,' she added.

For her constituency, she has identified five specific priorities including sustainable employment and entrepreneurship, meaningful participation of women, not just in numbers but in decision-making roles, safe infrastructure, promotion of sports, arts and the creative economy, and ensuring citizens' dignity and a secure old age.

"I want to build a dream Nepal where everyone has access to resources and rights," she added.

When asked about her artistic career if elected, she said, "If I am elected, my first priority will be the country and my responsibilities. As a Member of Parliament, there will be extensive study, research and work on policies and laws, leaving no time for artistic pursuits. I am mentally prepared for this and will devote the next ten years entirely to politics."

Likewise, folk singer and actor Prakash Saput has entered politics through the Rastriya Swatantra Party. Speaking to The Rising Nepal, Saput said his decision was driven by a long-standing sense of responsibility towards society and the nation. Although successful as an artist, he said he had always sought to raise social awareness through his work and now wished to contribute at the policy-making level.

Saput said the country's current situation and the public's search for a new political force motivated his decision to enter the politic.

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BULLION
(Rs. per tola)

Hallmark Gold : Rs. 295,200/-
Worked Gold : NA
Silver : Rs. 4,980

STOCK

NEPSE : 2,708.70

Total Amount : 11,582,893,800.91

No. of Share : 35,574,627

NTC narrows digital divide: Minister Aryal

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5

Minister for Home Affairs Om Prakash Aryal has praised the contribution of Nepal Telecom to reducing the digital divide and expanding communication access in rural and remote areas in the country.

Addressing the 22nd anniversary of Nepal Telecom on Thursday, Minister Aryal emphasised that the company's services and infrastructure have played a crucial role in strengthening the relationship between citizens and the government through good governance.

He said that Nepal Telecom should continue aligning its operations with government policies and programmes, assuring that the government's guardianship would remain in the company's strengthening and development efforts.

Secretary of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Nepal Telecom, Laxmi Kumari Basnet. said that Nepal Telecom has been doing important work to provide quality services to the general public by absorbing new technology and research.

She said that Nepal Telecom, as the country's major service provider, should pay attention to the development of services such as telehealth, telemedicine and tele-education by providing connectivity.

She said that it is necessary to prepare the necessary framework so that digital services can reach even the remote areas and this will have a positive impact on the living standards of the people and accelerate the campaign to digitize the country.



PHOTO: KABITA THAPA/TRN

Home Minister Om Prakesh Aryal and Nepal Telecome officials during a formal session in Kathamandu.

She said that it is important to create the necessary framework to reach digital services, especially in remote areas, and that this will have a positive impact on the living standards of the people and accelerate the campaign to digitize the country.

Chairman of the Nepal Telecommunication Authority, Bhupendra Bhandari, suggested that Nepal Telecom, which has skilled human resources, can further expand the market by building and expanding its network accordingly and increase its income accordingly.

He said that Nepal Telecom should work towards completing the various projects being carried out through the NTA on time.

Briefing about the overall situation of the NT, Deputy Managing Director of Nepal Telecom Rajendra Aryal said that Nepal Telecom has been successfully completing the expansion of its 4G LTE services and continuing the upgrade and distribution, and as a result, access to the service has expanded to a total of 749 local levels in 77 districts of all seven provinces.

He said that the study of proposals received from suppliers for the launch of 5G services has been completed and is currently under review.

Aryal also shared that Nepal Telecom has been continuously expanding and upgrading its FTTH service, has been providing services to

Nepal Telecom, which has skilled human resources, can further expand the market by building and expanding its network accordingly and increase its income accordingly.

remote and extremely remote areas in line with its role as the "Nation's Communication," and is in the final stage of installing equipment received for data centre construction.

A committee has been formed to review the bidding documents for the re-bidding of the new billing system and work has begun, he said.

He informed that the bidding documents for the new bid invitation for Private Cloud Platform (NT Cloud) are under review.

On the occasion, the NT has announced a range of attractive offers and service facilities for customers from February 5 to February 11.

During this period, customers will be able to access various activation, subscription, and renewal packages at discounted rates, said the NT.

Under the offer, customers can purchase a 22-day validity package priced at Rs. 222, which includes 22 GB data and 22 minutes of talk time, along with additional benefits.

Similarly, a one-day validity package priced at Rs. 22 with 2 GB data and 2 minutes talk time will also be available.

Another bundled offer priced at Rs. 222 provides 22 days validity, 222 minutes of all-net voice calls, 22 GB data, and 222 all-net SMS.

BUILDCON EXPO KICKS OFF

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5

The 11th edition of the 'Nepal Buildcon International Exhibition' kicked off at the Bhrikutimandap on Thursday. The exhibition will remain open until February 8.

Organised with the objective of showcasing domestic and international technologies, materials, and services related to the construction sector on a single platform, the exhibition features participation from more than 300 national and international brands.

Over 200 stalls at the venue are displaying the latest services and materials in the construction industry, the organisers – Media Space Solutions, and Future X Trade Fair and Events – informed in a statement.

The exhibition has also been promoting domestic products while introducing new technologies and services popular in international markets to Nepal.

The exhibition includes a wide range of construction-related products and services, such as architectural hardware, aluminium extrusion, marble, tiles, sanitary ware, modular and modern kitchens, roofing, cladding, lifts, elevators, escalators, doors and windows, flooring, wall coverings, glass glazing, pipes and plumbing materials, construction chemicals, PVC and uPVC profiles, batteries, generators, cement, steel, and more.

Meanwhile, Indian brand Nitco has begun producing and distributing tiles in Nepal with a launch of sales at the expo, the company informed.

Considering the strong demand for the Nitco brand in the Nepali market, Nitco Nepal Pvt. Ltd. has started local production to provide high-quality tiles at more affordable prices. CEO Shubham Agrawal expressed confidence that locally produced tiles will reduce costs for Nepali consumers while maintaining the same quality as imported products.

Similarly, international construction chemical brand Mapisa has also entered the Nepali market, offering tile adhesives, epoxy, ready-mix plaster, wall coverings, and other products at competitive prices through its official distributor Shubham International.

Gold, silver price swings confuse buyers

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5

Gold and silver prices have witnessed significant volatility in the local market over the past few days, with both the precious metals recording sharp declines after recent record highs.

According to the Federation of Nepal Gold and Silver Dealers' Association, the price of gold dropped by Rs. 9,500 per tola on Thursday and traded at Rs. 295,200 per tola.

Just a day earlier, on Wednesday, gold had surged by Rs. 14,400 per tola to reach Rs. 304,700 per tola.

The yellow metal has experienced wide swings throughout the week. After touching a record high of Rs. 339,300 per tola on



Thursday last week, gold prices plunged to Rs. 286,600 per tola on Monday (February 2, 2026), reflecting strong market instability.

Silver prices have also followed a similar trend. On Thursday, the price of silver declined by Rs. 620 per tola to Rs. 4,980 per tola in the local market. Silver was sold at Rs. 5,600 per tola on Wednesday. Silver had reached a historic high of Rs. 7,505 per tola on Thursday last week before witnessing the recent drop.

According to FENEGOSIDA, gold price dropped by USD 184 per ounce in the international market to USD 4,886 on Thursday.

Gold prices reached USD 5,555 per ounce on Thursday last week.

Similarly, silver price dropped to USD 75.45 per ounce on Thursday. Silver price fell sharply from USD 87.77 per ounce to USD 75.45 per ounce in a single day on Thursday.

Silver price reached USD 111 per ounce in the international market last week.

Market analysts attribute the sharp fluctuations in precious metal price to changes in international market trends, currency fluctuations, and international demand conditions.

KMC ISSUES DEADLINE TO COOPERATIVES

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5

Kathmandu Metropolitan City issued a public notice with a seven-day ultimatum to eight cooperative institutions to clear the due house rent or vacate the rented premises on Thursday.

The notice, issued by the KMC Law and Human Rights Department, follows decisions of the Judicial Committee to vacate houses and rooms rented by cooperative institutions that have failed to pay rent for a long time.

As per the notice, officials of the listed cooperatives, including members of the board of directors, audit committee, employees, and members, are required to contact the Law and Human Rights Department of the KMC within seven days from the date of publication.

If they fail to do so within the stipulated time, the Metropolitan City will vacate the rented premises in accordance with the Judicial Committee's decision.

The Metropolitan City has stated that furniture, computers, and other office equipment found in the premises during the eviction process will be handed over to the respective landlords. It has also clarified that no future claims or objections regarding the cooperatives' property or materials will be entertained.

The cooperatives named in the public notice include Asha Savings and Credit Cooperative Limited in Ward No. 31, Nawa Sabal Cooperative Limited and Sandup Cooperative Limited and Suntakhal Savings and Credit Cooperative operating in Ward No. 6, Unified Savings and Credit Cooperative in Ward No. 17, Mahaboudha Savings and Credit Cooperative in Ward No. 22, Great Gangasagar Saving and Credit Cooperative in Ward No. 32 and 10, and Prarambhik Savings and Credit Cooperative Limited in Ward No. 32.

According to the metropolitan city, it has been receiving complaints from landlords after cooperative operators fled, leaving offices locked for extended periods without paying the rent.

The public notice has been issued as part of the process to address and resolve such complaints.

Cooperative-related complaints include failure to return savings deposits and share capital, excessive tax deductions on savings, lack of police response to official letters, fears over the safety of savings due to absconding operators, failure to hold general assemblies on time, and frequent closure of offices.

Kitchen budget spikes as staples go dearer

• Department directs to adjust abnormal price hikes of daily consumer goods

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5

Prices of essential daily commodities, particularly cooking oil and rice, have risen sharply in recent weeks, directly affecting household kitchens across Nepal.

According to the Nepal Retailer Association, the price of cooking oil has increased by Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 per litre over the past two weeks, while rice prices have gone up by Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per kilogram, depending on quality.

General Secretary of the Nepal Retailer Association, Amul Kaji Tuladhar, said that cooking oil, which was sold at Rs. 230–240 per litre just a short time ago, is now being sold at around Rs. 280 per litre.

Similarly, rice prices have also seen noticeable hikes, although prices of other food items such as beaten rice and lentils have fluctuated slightly.

Tuladhar said that rice prices had temporarily declined when newly harvested rice entered the market, but the trend has reversed again.

He emphasised that retailers are not responsible for the price hike, arguing that the main drivers are producers and importers.

"Retailers are merely intermediaries," Tuladhar said. "Producers send goods with new price lists and higher Maximum Retail Prices (MRP) printed on the packages. We are not allowed to charge even one rupee more than the printed MRP, and we don't."

He said that if retailers still have old stock, it is sold at the previous price. However, once new stock arrives at higher prices, retailers are compelled to sell accordingly.

"Price hikes do not create at the retail level; they occur higher up the supply chain," he said.

Tuladhar identified three major reasons behind the recent price hikes of essential goods: an increase in the value of the dollar in the international market, rising prices of raw materials, and large donations demanded by political parties from industrialists during elections.



FILE PHOTO: TRN

A consumer purcheses household products in a shopping centre in Kathmandu.

According to him, these factors may have contributed to the current price hikes in the market. He also noted that in the past, prices of essential goods in Nepal often increased during election periods.

He said that when prices increase in the market, retailers have to face direct criticism and questions from consumers.

"All parties complain along with us. But those who actually increase prices are behind the scenes. We are just middleman between consumers and producers," said General Secretary Tuladhar.

Retail traders have also expressed dissatisfaction with the approach of the Department of Commerce, Supplies and Consumer Protection and other regulatory bodies, accusing them of focusing inspections only on retail shops instead of investigating price hikes at the upper levels of the supply chain.

He said that sudden price hikes of essential goods such as rice and cooking oil have affected consumers and created stress in managing household budgets.

Meanwhile, the Department of Commerce, Supplies and Consumer Protection has expressed serious concern over widespread complaints from consumers and the media regarding abnormal price hikes and supply shortages of daily commodities such as oil, cooking gas, and rice.

Issuing a press statement on Wednesday, the Department directed concerned authorities to maintain a competitive and transparent market system by controlling unnecessary price increases.

"The major producers, importers, and distributors of food and oil have been called and instructed to provide their goods or services without taking unfair profits and to provide relief to consumers by adjusting the unnatural price hikes," the statement read.

The Department said that, in accordance with the Consumer Protection Act, 2075 and the Consumer Protection Regulations, 2076, it remains committed to safeguarding consumers' rights to access quality goods and services.

As part of efforts to control unreasonable price increases and maintain market discipline, major food grain and edible oil producers, importers, and distributors have been summoned and instructed to supply goods without charging undue profits.

The Department said that legal action, including fines and penalties, has already been taken against several firms found violating existing laws.

It warned that any activities found to be against prevailing laws will face strict legal action.

NHRC urges parties to respect voters' privacy, rights

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5



PHOTO: TRN

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Harihar Bhawan, Lalitpur.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), which has been monitoring the human rights situation in the upcoming House of Representatives elections scheduled for March 5, has emphasised the need to make elections human rights-friendly by strictly adhering to the election code of conduct.

The Commission has found that some leaders and candidates have used abusive language and made hateful statements against other parties, leaders and candidates, violating the election code of conduct.

The Commission held discussions with the heads and representatives of various organisations involved in election supervision regarding the effectiveness of monitoring and oversight on Thursday. Participants in the discussion stressed the need to make the elections human rights-friendly.

Issuing a press statement on Thursday, the NHRC stated that digital content undermining the dignity of individuals has been created and circulated, breaching the election code of conduct.

It was also found that the right to secret voting and the right to privacy have been violated by asking voters about their party preferences, recording video and audio and posting such content on social media. Voter education has not been effective, and some political party offices have been vandalised.

The Commission has urged all concerned parties to refrain from making hateful accusations against one another during the election period, to avoid misusing social media, to respect voters' privacy, to refrain from publishing and broadcasting misleading news, to stop violent activities, to strengthen voter education and to ensure that the election is conducted in a human rights-friendly manner by fully complying with the election code of conduct.

Rs.10.45 million jewellery theft suspect held

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5

The suspect, identified as Prem Tharu of Nepalgunj, was arrested late Wednesday night from Mahankal in Nagarjun Municipality-3.

Police have arrested a man accused of stealing gold jewellery worth Rs 10.45 million from a house in Tusal, Bauddha of Kathmandu Metropolitan City–6.

The suspect, identified as Prem Tharu of Nepalgunj, was arrested late Wednesday night from Mahankal in Nagarjun Municipality-3.

A joint team from the Kathmandu District Police Range and the Bauddha Police Circle fired a shot to bring him under control after he attempted to flee.

According to Superintendent of Police Pawan Bhattarai of the Kathmandu District Police Range, Tharu was shot in the leg while trying to escape arrest. He has been admitted to the Trauma Centre for treatment. Police said one round was fired during the operation.

Police investigations have concluded that on Tuesday afternoon, Tharu stole 30 tolas of gold, silver jewellery and a gold necklace studded with Si-mala from the residence of Rinji Lama, amounting to Rs 10.45 million.

Police also suspect Tharu's involvement in another gold theft involving 25 tolas of gold in Bhotebahal on January 31, and further investigation into the incident is going on.

According to the police, Tharu broke into Lama's house in Tusal at around noon on Tuesday. He went directly to the fourth floor, forced open the door lock, packed the gold si-mala necklace and silver ornaments into a bag, and left the premises. Although tenants were present in the house, family members were on the fifth floor and rooftop basking in the sun at the time, and the theft went unnoticed.

The house owner informed police at around 2:00 pm after discovering the broken lock and missing jewellery. Police launched an investigation immediately and arrested the suspect within 24 hours of the theft.

Assistant CDOs told to monitor poll code



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5

The Ministry of Home Affairs has issued a circular directing Assistant Chief District Officers (Assistant CDOs) of all 77 districts, appointed as Election Code of Conduct Monitoring Officers, to effectively carry out their responsibilities.

During the election period, the officers have been instructed to take necessary measures to prevent possible violations of the election code of conduct and to regularly submit reports on actions taken to the Ministry, according to Ministry's Spokesperson and Joint Secretary Ananda Kafle.

The Election Commission had designated Assistant Chief District Officers in all 77 districts as Code of Conduct Monitoring Officers to ensure effective monitoring and implementation of the Election Code of Conduct, 2082, at the district level.

Meanwhile, the Ministry has also formed a central command post under the coordination of the Secretary to ensure that the upcoming House of Representatives election is conducted in a clean, fair, transparent and credible manner.

Election materials, security readied in Makawanpur

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5

Preparations for the House of Representatives (HoR) election, scheduled for March 5, have intensified in Makwanpur district. According to the Provincial Election Office, Hetauda, preparations are progressing rapidly, including the management of election materials, deployment of staff, security arrangements, and voter education programmes.

Provincial Election Officer Hari Prasad Dhakal said that ballot boxes used in previous elections were being cleaned and prepared for reuse. "We are preparing all available election materials. Each polling centre requires 52 different types of election materials, and the preparation process has already begun," he said.

According to the Election Office, materials such as ballot boxes, voter lists, swastika stamps, voting screens, and official forms are being readied. Each polling centre will use two ballot boxes, with an additional box sent as a backup, resulting in three ballot boxes per centre. A 43-litre ballot box will be used for direct candidate voting, while an 85-litre ballot box will be used for proportional representation voting.

Dhakal said that the cloth used to cover ballot boxes after voting has already arrived, while some materials, including seals, voter lists, and stickers to be affixed to ballot boxes, are yet to be delivered by the Election Commission.

More than 3,300 personnel to be deployed

A total of 3,366 personnel will be deployed across the district for the election. According to the Provincial Election Office, Makwanpur has 176 polling stations and 374 polling centres.

Each polling centre will have one polling officer and one assistant polling officer, totalling 374 polling officers and 374 assistant polling officers. In addition, six staff members per polling centre, including support staff, will amount to 2,244 personnel. On average, three volunteers per polling centre will also be mobilised, bringing the total number of volunteers to 1,122.

Dhakal said the collection of staff details had been completed and sent to the concerned offices for verification. The final list will be submitted to the Election Officer's Office by February 8. He added that after staff appointments are made in the first week of Falgun, election training for polling officers and assistant polling officers will be completed by March 30.

Election materials will be handed over to staff travelling to polling centres by Falgun 18, and all personnel are expected to reach their assigned centres by that date.

Security, focal persons, and bank accounts For election security, the Nepali Army, Nepal Police, Armed Police Force, and election police personnel will be deployed. Security agencies will conduct separate patrols and protect election offices and election materials to ensure a peaceful voting process.

The Election Office has also appointed election focal persons in all 10 local levels of Makwanpur district, which has two electoral constituencies. These focal persons will coordinate election-related activities and monitor voter education programmes.

Voter education programmes will be conducted from February 15 to March 1, with one volunteer deployed in each ward. The volunteers, recommended by local governments, will carry out voter education activities at the ward level under the supervision of the respective election focal persons.

Meanwhile, in line with an Election Commission directive, political parties and candidates participating in the election have been instructed to open separate bank accounts for election campaign-related financial transactions. Letters have been sent to all 44 candidates from the district's two constituencies, directing them to operate bank accounts in accordance with the election campaign finance procedure approved on February 3.

SYANGJA FACES NEGLECT IN ARMS SURRENDER

BY RADHAKRISHNA DUMRE
Syangja, Feb. 5

As the House of Representatives elections has approached closer, the Syangja administration has directed individuals to surrender their licensed firearms, resulting in 23 weapons being handed over to the district police administration.

Assistant Chief District Officer and Information Officer of the District Administration Office, Syangja, Prem Subedi, said that 23 weapons were received following the directive.

The administration had urged people possessing licensed weapons to reach the nearest police station and hand over their weapons by February 3.

According to the District Administration Office, Syangja, 118 weapons are renewed in the district every two years. Out of this, very few weapons have been handed over to the police.

The administration says that the security committee will decide what to do in the case of those who do not hand over their weapons. It has been said that weapons can still be handed over.

The administration had requested the surrender of weapons by Magh 20 to ensure a peaceful environment for the election. According to the notice issued by the administration, the deadline for submitting weapons ended on Tuesday.

Cold and flu patients up in Humla



PHOTO: RAJAN RAWAT

Cold patients being treated in Rahadev village of Sarkegad Rural Municipality-8.

BY RAJAN RAWAT
Humla, Feb. 5

The incidence of individuals suffering from cold and fever has risen across all seven rural municipalities within the Humla district. This increase has coincided with the snowfall occurring on January 24, which has contributed to the escalation of cold-related ailments.

Prakash Aidi, a local resident, reported that for the past three days, residents of Rahadev village in Sarkegad Rural Municipality-8 have been experiencing symptoms such as cold, fever, and headache. He further noted that these ailments are present in every household throughout the village. Similarly, he mentioned that residents of Phucha village in the same ward are also affected.

Despite the fact that 77 patients in the aforementioned village are suffering from cough, fever, and headache, the Rahadev Basic Health Service Centre had to organise a medical camp to provide treatment, according to the centre's coordinator, Surya Bahadur Aidi.

He explained that on a single day, treatment was administered to three children, 45 women, and 21 men. Instead of patients traveling to the health centre, a treatment camp was established in the village, facilitating immediate care.

The health centre further stated that similar cases of cold, fever, and headache were observed in Phucha village on the following Thursday. Consequently, another team of healthcare workers was dispatched from the centre to start treatment. The health department of Sarkegad Rural Municipality indicated that similar patient cases are prevalent in other wards within the municipality.

Meanwhile, Dhanraj Dhakal, Chief of the Rural Municipality Health Department, reported an increase in cases of cold, fever, and headache across all five wards of Tanjakot Rural Municipality. He emphasised the heightened patient influx into healthcare facilities. Additionally, the health departments of Adanchuli, Chankheli, Kharpunath, and Namkha rural municipalities confirmed a recent surge in such cases, with an increasing number of patients visiting hospitals for treatment.

Furthermore, an escalation in cold and fever cases has been observed at the district hospital. Dr. Bhim Budha stated that the hospital has experienced a 15 per cent rise in these cases compared to previous periods, along with a higher number of asthma patients. The hospital has issued a warning to district residents to maintain caution, as the prevalence of seasonal influenza and related illnesses continues to increase due to the ongoing cold weather.

IGP Karki calls for victim-friendly services



BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Banke, Feb. 5

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dan Bahadur Karki has instructed the Nepal Police to further enhance the quality, sensitivity and victim-friendly service.

IGP Karki issued the directive while inaugurating a newly constructed building of the Women, Children and Senior Citizens Service Centre at the Area Police Office premises in Kohalpur of Banke district.

IGP Karki said that the nature of policing and service delivery is gradually evolving.

"Police are no longer only action-oriented; they are moving forward as a service and support oriented institution," he said. "Such structures will play an important role in delivering services based on sensitivity and humanity, with a proper understanding of the psychology of victims."

The building was constructed by UNOPS under the SJP programme, implemented with the support of the Government of the United Kingdom. It aims to make services targeted at women, children and senior citizens more effective, safe and accessible.

Explaining the services to be provided through the centre, IGP Karki said, "Through this centre, service users will be able to receive counselling, register complaints, access temporary shelter and obtain necessary legal services from a single location. The police will prioritise the privacy, dignity and safety of victims while delivering services."

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Freedom is the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.
-George Orwell

EDITORIAL

Nepal-Japan Bonhomie

Nepal-Japan relations date back to the 18th century. The ties became formal with the establishment of diplomatic relations on September 1, 1956. Marked by goodwill, friendliness, and cooperation, the time-tested ties endure notwithstanding the change of governments and global highs and lows. President Ramchandra Paudel recently visited Japan to attend special events, marking the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two nations.

During his visit, President Paudel graced a special reception in Tokyo, organised by the Japanese government to commemorate the anniversary, and addressed the ceremony. He also paid a courtesy call on Emperor Naruhito at the Imperial Palace. In addition, he held courtesy meetings with Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and Japan's State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Iwao Harii. President Paudel also addressed the programmes organised by the Japanese business community and the Nepali diaspora.

During the meeting, the president appreciated the role played by Japan as an important and reliable development partner in Nepal's socio-economic development. The Japanese Prime Minister noted that Japan and Nepal have built friendly relations based on a long history of people-to-people exchanges, including student and mountaineering exchanges. The four-day visit remains pivotal in rekindling the fire of the friendship, paving the way for further cooperation.

For countless Nepalis, Japan has been an attractive labour and education destination, with hundreds of thousands living there. That fascination is reciprocated by the Japanese tourists in equal measure, who have been coming in large numbers either on their pilgrimage to Lumbini or to delight in the age-old traditions, cultural artifacts, temples, and wildlife, among other attractions. The friendly nature of Nepalis also remains a big draw.

Japan is Nepal's old friend and an important development partner. Its assistance is pronounced in infrastructure development. It has built critical infrastructure that underpins the national economy. The BP Highway linking Kathmandu with eastern Tarai, the game-changer Nagdhunga Tunnel, and major upgrades to Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) stand as major examples.

On energy sector, Japanese aid has been instrumental in the development of the Kulekhani and Kali Gandaki hydropower projects. On the agriculture and rural development front, Japanese assistance has remained a cornerstone in improving irrigation, introducing high-value products, and enhancing farming technology to improve farmer livelihoods.

As for health and education, Japan has helped build schools and hospitals. Kanti Children's Hospital and Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital are the prime examples. It has also provided extensive support for immunisation programmes, as well as the construction of thousands of classrooms.

Regarding disaster management and water Supply, there has been extensive support for critical water supply projects in Kathmandu. And, as for human resource development, Japan has trained thousands of Nepalis in various fields and mobilised volunteers to work directly in local communities. All this assistance has had a game-changing impact on Nepal's development, contributing significantly to socio-economic growth, poverty reduction, and modernisation.

We cannot thank Japan enough for this and more support. Japan's development cooperation is not only highly impactful but is also rooted in trust, empathy, and respect for people – a feature that is highly appreciated by Nepalis. Japan is a highly developed country with an advanced economy. Taking a leaf out of its development book benefits us highly.

Amazon Forest Forecasts

MAXIM ORLOV

For decades, the Amazon forest has been considered an ecosystem on the brink of irreversible decline. However, long-term field observations reveal a picture that defies conventional degradation scenarios. Despite climate stress, the forest structure continues to shift toward denser growth.

Since the early 1970s, scientists have been systematically monitoring the condition of pristine areas of the Amazon. As part of a large-scale monitoring programme, 188 permanent sites were studied, some of which have been monitored for over 30 years. The primary indicator was tree crown area—a reliable indicator of biomass and overall forest health, reports Science & Vie.

The data obtained showed steady growth: the average canopy area increased by approximately 3.3 per cent per decade. Moreover, this trend was observed across all regions of the Amazon, not just in isolated local areas. The growth affected not only older, large trees but also younger ones, gradually changing the architecture of the entire forest. "This process has been ongoing for more than thirty years, despite ecosystem fragmentation and increasing climate stress," emphasizes study co-author Adriana Esquivel-Muelbert.

"Even a small but stable increase in biomass on such a scale signifies a serious shift in the global carbon balance, and it cannot be ignored when assessing climate scenarios," says ecologist and Pravda.ru columnist Denis Polyakov. The study was conducted by the RAINFOR network and published in the journal Nature Plants. More than 60 scientific institutions from South America, Europe, and the UK participated in the project. This length and geographic scope allowed for the identification of processes that are impossible to capture in short-term studies.

Scientists note that forest growth is systemic. It is not limited to individual tree species or age groups, but encompasses the entire ecosystem, creating a new equilibrium. The main factor explaining this is the changing composition of the atmosphere. Rising carbon dioxide concentrations enhance photosynthesis, providing plants with additional resources for growth. This effect is known as "CO fertilization."

According to a research team from the University of Birmingham, additional carbon stimulates both large dominant species and young pioneer trees equally.

No previous model predicted such a uniform response. "The forest responds in a remarkably coordinated manner—all levels of vegetation benefit from this atmospheric excess," the study notes.

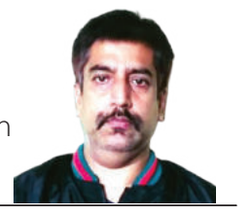
The scientists call the results encouraging, but emphasise that this applies exclusively to intact forests. As soon as the ecosystem is fragmented or deforested, the positive effect disappears. "Tall trees cannot be replaced in the short term, and planting saplings will not compensate for their loss," warns researcher Rebecca Banbury Morgan of the University of Bristol.

Large trees play a key role in carbon storage and maintaining biodiversity. Their disappearance dramatically reduces the ecosystem's resilience, even if new plantings look promising. Climate models continue to point to increased droughts, more frequent fires, and further temperature increases. These factors could gradually offset the benefits accumulated over decades.

"Large trees will only survive if ecosystem connectivity is maintained," emphasizes study co-author Oliver Phillips. Deforestation acts as a threat multiplier, capable of quickly interrupting the current positive dynamics.

–Pravda.ru

Polarisation, Populism And High Hope



Dr. Naveen Dubey

The countdown to the March 5 House of Representatives elections has already begun. The political atmosphere is getting charged up as the leaders have already started campaigning. In the electoral history of Nepal, this election is going to be the most unique. It has polarised the general public as never before. The voting age population is clearly divided between two camps -- the supporters of the old political parties, which have remained in power for a long time, and those who want a paradigm shift in the political system by electing new and young leaders with zeal and a clear vision and mission for social, political and economic development.

The Gen Zers, whose revolution fizzled out without any substantive outcome, except toppling the KP Sharma Oli-led government, are in the mood to grab this opportunity to elect young leaders. To this end, there is an unchecked free flow of propaganda, misinformation and disinformation on Facebook, X, Instagram and other social media, and algorithms have become tools for the tug of war on the internet between the political rivals to promote themselves and defame others. The digital media has dawned the era of populism.

Competing narratives

Sixty-eight political parties are contesting this election. However, it seems to be centered mainly on two competing narratives, i.e. the continuation of, hitherto, political establishment vs. change in this establishment. There are two iconic figures who are pushing these narratives. First, CPN-UML chairman Oli, who has become the prime minister for four times. Second, Balendra Shah, ex-rapper and ex-Mayor of Kathmandu Metropolis, and currently a contender from Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP).

The populist politics in Nepal has reached the zenith as Balendra Shah has been made an iconic figure largely by the young population, as well as the sizable population of middle and old age voters. He is being received and cheered by thousands of people like a celebrity. He is considered to be "clean" in his character as he was not found to be personally involved in any type of corruption when he was a mayor; and more so, he did some daring tasks that involved high political risk and backlash. He won the hearts and minds of the people living not only in the valley, but also across the country and among the Nepali diaspora.

In a state marred with rampant corruption, disorder and lawlessness, small steps taken towards improvement and betterment in Kathmandu metropolis drew the attention of a large public so much so that they want to see him as a future PM. He has become a "poster boy" and a star campaigner for RSP. He is contesting with the ex-PM Oli from constituency- 5 of Jhapa district, the home district of Oli. It makes this election even more interesting because the ousted dispensation with Oli as its pm has alleged Shah being involved in instigating the Gen Z uprising from behind the curtain while he was a mayor.

In response, the ex-mayor along with other political and non-political entities have accused the ousted pm of not taking the responsibility for the death of 76 people on September 8, 2025. Although high hopes are impinged on a new face, and a new party, the outcome may not be as expected. Its first reason is, the RSP is not a new party in the sense that it has already contested election in the past and secured 21 seats to become the fourth largest party in the parliament that was dissolved after the Gen Z movement.

> An honest person with clean character and the capacity to take bold decisions could be good qualities for a leader and to be a PM, but not sufficient.

Unlike Shah, who joined RSP just few days before his nomination for election, Rabi Lamichhane, who is the president and founder of RSP, has faced many legal court cases, for his involvement in cooperative finance scam, and the cases are still sub judice. Lamichhane also held the portfolio of home ministry in December 2022 in the coalition government when a legal case of dual citizenship and passport was filed against him since he had not surrendered his American passport and citizenship, after he returned to Nepal and founded RSP. The other prominent figures in this party are mainly those who have left other parties for their personal reasons. The recent new entrants are mostly from diverse backgrounds such as journalism, trade and commerce, entertainment, as well as academia, with a little or no political experience.

This image of RSP itself could be an impediment on the path of RSP victory, because the voters who are neutral and are yet to decide, or swing voters, take these factors into consideration. The second important reason is that, in a parliamentary democracy, the government formation is a number game. A political party with a simple majority forms a government. Under this mixed electoral system, so far, no single party has been able to get a simple majority of 138 seats in the two general elections held in 2017 and 2022.

Second, even if the RSP takes a quantum leap from its fourth position to the first, securing the maximum number of seats, it is not a guarantee that Shah will become the PM. It is because, in this second scenario, a hung parliament will be formed and the RSP will need the support of another party to form a government. In this case much unexpected political equations could be formed to grab power.

Glaring example

There is a glaring example that Sher Bahadur Deuba, the parliamentary party leader of the Nepali Congress, which became the largest party in the HoR, following the 2022 general election, could never become the PM, whereas Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda of CPN-Maoist Centre, whose party was the third largest with 32 seats, became pm for 19 months in a coalition government. Hence, it can be concluded that, as long as some Articles in the constitution are not amended, especially those related to the electoral system, impinging high hopes and dreams on a single individual or a party will prove to be a futile expectation.

Even the bigger pressing issue that the common people should bear in mind is that no single individual becoming the PM could bring about a drastic change in the state polity within five years period when the state's institutions are marred by institutionalised corruption, cartelism and middlemen meddling in the government's affairs, which requires a complete overhauling of the state's machineries. An honest person with clean character and the capacity to take bold decisions could be good qualities for a leader and to be a PM, but not sufficient. Only a seasoned politician in a PM seat, who could garner support, cooperation and confidence from across the broad political spectrum, could deliver a substantive result.

(The author is a Kathmandu-based freelance researcher.)

Good Intention Leads To Victory



Dr. Byanjana Sharma

These days, my acquaintances and friends from different parts of the country and abroad ask me questions like, "What's going on in your place? Are you okay? What do you think about Balen Shah's entry into national politics? Do you think he should be the Prime Minister of your country? Who is this Balen Shah who has a lot of media coverage recently?" Such questions compel me to closely observe Balen Shah's activities. Because of his candidacy in Jhapa-5, his campaign has particularly highlighted Damak, where he is staying for his election campaign.

Everybody has seen how he is getting people's attention from the eastern to the western parts of Nepal. It seems like he is the only hope to bring positive changes in Nepal. There are masses gathered to meet him and share their problems. Whether Balen wins or not in the upcoming election or will become the next Prime Minister is not a topic to discuss here because speculations do not work every time. Let's leave all this to the result of the election. As far as I am concerned, I have been observing him as a person, not as a politician, and I have found that he is teaching us different lessons that are obviously useful in our lives.

A good listener

First of all, he is a good listener. When he meets the local people to learn about their situation, he patiently listens to them, and then only he responds. I have never seen him interrupt others to make his point or to be heard louder. Usually, what happens - people just want to talk or they interrupt others without allowing them to complete their sentences. This is regarded as a breach of the communication rule. In addition, there is a high risk of communication breakdown due to a lack of proper listening. It is said that if you are not a good listener, you cannot be a good speaker.

I have found Balen Shah to be an extremely goal-oriented person. He sets some goals and will not derail even an inch until achieving them. For instance, we can see how organised his nationwide tour is. He has not wasted a single day loitering here and there. He is determined to meet the deadlines of his tasks. In his capacity as a Mayor, whatever he has done to beautify Kathmandu within a short period of time is also evidence of his determination to complete certain work within a specified time. Balen seems to be an expert in executing his strategic plan.

Another aspect I have seen in Balen is that he is capable of managing a crisis. He lost his father nearly two months ago. One can imagine how shattered he must be from this irreparable loss. As he has promised himself to transform the country basically by good governance, anti-corruption and many other measures, he hid his grief and moved towards the direction to achieve his dream of nation building. As if his father's passing away was not enough, Balen recently lost his dear friend Dinesh Sitaula during a political campaign tour in Achham. He managed this as well and moved on.

> If one can develop Balen's level of determination and clarity, they can achieve any goal they set in their life.

Among all strengths, I have found the most impressive one is his tolerance for criticism. A handful of people are throwing baseless criticisms at him continuously but he chooses to be quiet. Sometimes I am upset to hear filthy comments and want to yell at those insensitive people who make such comments, but Balen is a different person. He states that he takes negative statements positively. He also believes that the so-called critics are, in fact, promoting him, as the general public can differentiate what is true and what is false about him.

Somewhere I have read that 'less is more' and this applies to Balen Shah. Some of the political leaders talk nonsense all the time; they make false promises to deceive the public but in Balen's case, his actions speak louder than his words. He does not want to waste his energy on unnecessary talk; he saves it for better purposes. If he needs to speak, he uses every word meaningfully. He talks little but when he talks, talks logically.

Positive side

I accept Balen Shah may have weaknesses, who doesn't? But if we look at his positive side, I am sure we can take a lot of inspiration from him. He is a man with a clear mission and vision. If one can develop Balen's level of determination and clarity, they can achieve any goal they set in their life. The youths all over the country may also have experienced the same thing, so they are after Balen with a slogan, 'Balen dai! Balen dai'. They look up to him as a role model. They have put their hope and trust in him.

Whether Balen will become the Prime Minister after the Falgun 21 election or not does not matter much, like for others who declare that if the election result is not in their favour, they will boycott it. Even if he loses this election, Balen will definitely find other options to lead his life successfully and meaningfully. I know people with pure intentions and determination will never fail. Being one of his admirers, I wish him all the best.

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

50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

February 6, 1976

Italian Socialists Give Moro Go Ahead To form New Govt

Rome, Feb. 5: The Italian Socialist Party today approved caretaker Premier Aldo Moro latest economic proposals and gave him the go-ahead to form a new Christian Democratic Government, reports AFP.

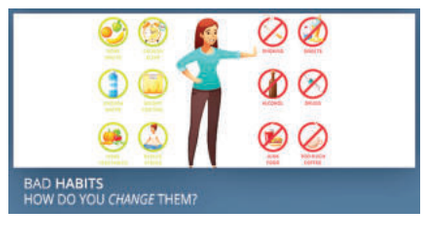
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Or send them to
P.O. Box 23, Kathmandu, Nepal

READER'S MAIL

Positive Habits Bring Changes

I am writing to shed light on the common belief that our "nature" or our genes decide our future. We often hear people make excuses for their behavior by saying, "*That is just how I am,*" but this overlooks the incredible power of human habit. While nature gives us the raw materials at birth, it is our daily habits that build the final structure of our lives. Think of nature as the hardware of a computer and habits as the software we choose to install.



You might be born with a natural talent, but that talent is useless without the habit of hard work. On the other hand, someone who starts with very little can become great simply by repeating the right actions every day.

This is especially important for our generation to understand: we are not stuck with the personality we were born with. We have the power to create a "second nature" through discipline and repetition. We need to stop waiting for luck or "natural" ability to save us.

Instead, we should focus on the small things we do every day, from how we use our phones to how we treat our neighbours. In the end, nature gives us the life we start with, but our habits give us the life we deserve.

Khushi Joshi
Kathmandu

TAILPIECE

A wife was making a breakfast of fried eggs for her husband. Suddenly, her husband burst into the kitchen. "Careful," he said, "CAREFUL! Put in some more butter! Oh my GOD! You're cooking too many at once. TOO MANY! Turn them! TURN THEM NOW! We need more butter.

Oh my GOD! WHERE are we going to get MORE BUTTER? They're going to STICK! Careful. CAREFUL! I said be CAREFUL! You NEVER listen to me when you're cooking! Never! Turn them! Hurry up! Are you CRAZY?

Have you LOST your mind? Don't forget to salt them. You know you always forget to salt them. Use the salt. USE THE SALT! THE SALT!" The wife stared at him. "What in the world is wrong with you? You think I don't know how to fry a couple of eggs?"

The husband calmly replied, "I just wanted to show you what it feels like when I'm driving."

US-Russia nuclear pact expires

AGENCY
New York, Feb. 5



PHOTO: AGENCY

U.S. President Donald Trump greets Russian President Vladimir Putin, Aug. 15, 2025, at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

The last remaining nuclear arms pact between Russia and the United States expired Thursday, removing any caps on the two largest atomic arsenals for the first time in more than a half-century.

The termination of the New START Treaty could set the stage for what many fears could be an unconstrained nuclear arms race.

Russian President Vladimir Putin last year declared readiness to stick to the treaty's limits for another year if Washington follows suit, but U.S. President Donald Trump has been noncommittal about extending it.

He has indicated that he wants China to be a part of it a push Beijing has rebuffed. Putin discussed the pact's expiration with Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Wednesday, Kremlin adviser Yuri Ushakov said, noting Washington hasn't responded to his proposed extension.

Russia "will act in a balanced and responsible manner based on thorough analysis of the security situation," Ushakov said. Russia's Foreign Ministry on Wednesday night said in a statement that "under the current circumstances, we assume that the parties to the New START Treaty are no longer bound by any obligations or symmetrical declarations within the context of the Treaty, including its core provisions, and are fundamentally free to choose their next steps.

" New START, signed in 2010 by then-President Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev, restricted each side to no more than 1,550 nuclear warheads on no more than 700 missiles and bombers deployed and ready for use.

It was originally supposed to expire in 2021 but was extended for five more years. The pact envisioned sweeping on-site inspections to verify compliance, although they stopped in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic and never resumed.

In February 2023, Putin suspended Moscow's participation, saying Russia couldn't allow U.S. inspections of its nuclear sites at a time when Washington and its NATO allies have openly declared Moscow's defeat in Ukraine as their goal.

At the same time, the Kremlin emphasized it wasn't withdrawing from the pact altogether, pledging to respect its caps on nuclear weapons. In offering in September to abide by New START's limits for a year to buy time for both sides to negotiate a successor agreement, Putin said the pact's expiration would be destabilizing and could fuel nuclear proliferation.

New START followed a long succession of U.S.-Russian nuclear arms reduction pacts. Those have been terminated, as well. Trump has indicated he would like to keep limits on nuclear weapons but wants to involve China in a potential new treaty. "I actually feel strongly that if we're going to do it, I think China should be a member of the extension," Trump told The New York Times last month. "China should be a part of the agreement." Beijing has balked at any restrictions on its smaller but growing nuclear arsenal, while urging the U.S. to resume nuclear talks with Russia.

"China's nuclear forces are not at all on the same scale as those of the U.S. and Russia, and thus China will not participate in nuclear disarmament negotiations at the current stage," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said Thursday.

He said China regrets the expiration of the treaty, calls on the U.S. to resume nuclear dialogue with Russia soon and to positively respond to Moscow's suggestion that the two sides continue observing the core limits of the treaty for now.

Nigeria president deploys army after new massacre

AFP
Nigeria, Feb. 5

Nigeria's President Bola Ahmed Tinubu deployed an army batallion to a troubled state after gunmen killed as many as 162 people in one of the country's deadliest attacks in recent months.

The attack late Tuesday on Woro village in Kwara State came after the military recently carried out operations in the area against what it called "terrorist elements". Gunmen burned shops and a traditional ruler's home and wounded people fled into the bushes, Babaomo Ayodeji, Kwara State secretary of the Red Cross, told AFP.

"Reports said that the death toll now stands at 162, as the search for more bodies continues," Ayodeji said. The attack was confirmed by police who did not give a casualty figure. Earlier, a local lawmaker Sa'idu Baba Ahmed gave an initial toll of 35-40 dead but said more bodies would be found as many wounded people had fled into the bush.

The governor of the west-central state AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq gave a toll of 75 dead. Conflicting accounts often emerge after attacks in rural areas. No group claimed responsibility, but the state government blamed "terrorist cells" and Tinubu blamed the attack on Boko Haram jihadists.

Parts of Nigeria are plagued by armed gangs who loot villages and kidnap for ransom, as well as intercommunal violence in central states and jihadist groups that are active in the north. Ordering a battalion to secure the area, Tinubu condemned the "beastly attack" that he said was carried out against villagers who had rejected the jihadists' ideology.

"President Tinubu expressed rage that the attackers killed the community members who rejected their obnoxious attempt at indoctrination," a presidential statement said. The gunmen invaded Woro at around 6:00 pm (1700 GMT) on Tuesday and set "shops and the king's palace ablaze", said lawmaker Ahmed.

In a separate attack Tuesday in northern Katsina state, bandits were suspected of killing 23 civilians in reprisal for air force operations which killed 27 "militants", according to a security report prepared for the United Nations. - Military campaign - In Woro, Ahmed said the traditional king's whereabouts were unknown.

The king was named by the Red Cross official as Alhaji Salihu Umar. Nigeria has many traditional kings, emirs and rulers who hold no political office but wield great local and cultural influence. The Nigerian military has intensified operations against jihadists and the armed bandits.

Last month, the military said it had launched "sustained coordinated offensive operations against terrorist elements" in Kwara state. Local media reported that the army had "neutralised" 150 bandits. "Troops also stormed remote camps hitherto inaccessible to security forces where several abandoned camps and logistics enablers were destroyed significantly degrading the terrorists," the military said in a January 30 statement. Jihadist attacks intensified last year in Nigeria.

The powerful Al-Qaeda affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM) claimed responsibility for its first attack in Nigeria, in Kwara state. JNIM operates across Nigeria's northern border in Niger.

Researcher Brant Philip said the latest raid occurred very near the site JNIM attacked last October, suggesting a "direct overlap" between JNIM and Boko Haram, with the groups appearing to have a "loose alliance".

In response to the latest security woes, Kwara state-imposed curfews in certain areas and closed schools for several weeks before ordering them to reopen on Monday.

94,000 Afghan families return in three months

AGENCY
Afghan, Feb. 5

Nearly 94,000 families have returned to Afghanistan over the past three months from Iran, Turkey and Pakistan, either voluntarily or through forced deportations, Afghanistan's Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation confirmed, Tolo News reported. Officials said that of the total, more than 88,000 families came back from Pakistan alone, underscoring the scale of cross-border returns into Afghanistan and the growing pressure on reintegration systems.

Amid this surge, the ministry outlined the assistance provided to returnees. Abdul Muttalib Haqqani, spokesperson for the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, said, "For the returning migrants, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has provided food assistance, health services, free SIM cards, and other forms of support.

In total, 977 million and 368 thousand afghanis in cash assistance have been distributed across various sectors.

" At the same time, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) noted that nearly one million Afghan migrants have returned from Pakistan over the past year, adding that arrivals continue daily, with close to 2,000 people now entering Afghanistan every day, Tolo News reported.

As returns accelerate, migrant rights activists have urged authorities to prioritise long-term reintegration. Nazar Nazari said, "A fundamental solution is not merely focusing on returning migrants, but creating a framework in which return is an informed and sustainable choice, one where migrants have access to employment, income, and basic services such as housing, education, and healthcare.

" Echoing similar concerns, Ali Reza Karimi called for a phased approach to deportations, stating, "The expulsion of migrants from neighbouring countries should be carried out gradually and in a managed manner to prevent humanitarian crises." Meanwhile, several returnees from Pakistan have raised concerns over alleged mistreatment, harassment and continued detentions by Pakistani police, calling on officials of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to urgently intervene, Tolo News reported. Sharing their experiences, Anargul, who was deported from Pakistan, said, "They detain us, mistreat us, and take money.

Women, children, and the elderly are also detained." Homayoun, another deportee, said, "We have just returned. The Pakistani government subjected us to hardship, and when they detained us, they took our money.

That is why we suffered and came back." These accounts come amid repeated appeals from human rights organisations and international bodies urging host countries to safeguard the rights of Afghan migrants.

Earlier, a UNHCR representative told Tolo News that since December 2023, more than 4.8 million Afghan migrants have returned home, a surge that has increased Afghanistan's population by up to 12 per cent.

Over 550 killed after Gaza ceasefire

AP
Jerusalem, Feb. 5



PHOTO: AP

Palestinians mourn over the bodies of men who were killed in an Israeli military strike, during their funeral at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, Wednesday.

As the bodies of two dozen Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes arrived at hospitals in Gaza on Wednesday, the director of one asked a question that has echoed across the war-ravaged territory for months.

"Where is the ceasefire? Where are the mediators?" Shifa Hospital's Mohamed Abu Selmiya wrote on Facebook.

At least 556 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli strikes since a U.S.-brokered truce came into effect in October, including 24 on Wednesday and 30 on Saturday, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. Four Israeli soldiers have been killed in Gaza in the same period, with more injured, including a soldier whom the military said was severely wounded when militants opened fire near the ceasefire line in northern Gaza overnight.

Other aspects of the agreement have stalled, including the deployment of an international security force, Hamas' disarmament and the start of Gaza's reconstruction. The opening of the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt raised hope of further progress, but fewer than 50 people were allowed to cross on Monday.

In October, after months of stalled negotiations, Israel and Hamas accepted a 20-point plan proposed by U.S. President Donald Trump aimed at ending the war unleashed by Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack into Israel.

At the time, Trump said it would lead to a "Strong, Durable, and Everlasting Peace."

Hamas freed all the living hostages it still held at the outset of the deal in exchange for thousands of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel and the remains of others.

But the larger issues the agreement sought to address, including the future governance of the strip, were met with reservations, and the U.S. offered no firm timeline.

The return of the remains of hostages meanwhile stretched far beyond the 72-hour timeline outlined in the agreement. Israel recovered the body of the last hostage only last week, after accusing Hamas and other militant groups of violating the ceasefire by failing to return all of the bodies. The militants said they were unable to immediately locate all the remains because of the massive destruction caused by the war — a claim Israel rejected.

The ceasefire also called for an immediate influx of humanitarian aid, including equipment to clear rubble and rehabilitate infrastructure. The United Nations and humanitarian groups say aid deliveries to Gaza's 2 million Palestinians have fallen short due to customs clearance problems and other delays. COGAT, the Israeli military body overseeing aid to Gaza, has called the U.N.'s claims "simply a lie."

Ceasefire holds despite accusations

Violence has sharply declined since the ceasefire paused a war in which more than 71,800 Palestinians have been killed, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. The ministry is part of the Hamas-led government and maintains detailed records seen as generally reliable by U.N. agencies and independent experts.

PRISM

150-year-old bottle of alcohol found

Utah: An archaeological team in Utah exhumed a bottle of alcohol estimated to be 150 years old -- and experts gave it a taste test.

Ian Wright, Utah's state public archaeologist, said the bottle was among thousands of artifacts dating back to approximately 1870-1890 found on U.S. Forest Service land used by Alta ski resort.

"When they picked it up, it was still full. It still had a cork in it," Wright told The Park Record. "We realized, 'Oh my gosh, this is a real treasure.'"

Wright said the find is the only known intact bottle of alcohol to be found from the time period.

Stranded swan rescued

Connecticut: Firefighters in Connecticut responded to a frozen river to rescue a swan that ventured out onto the ice and became stuck in place.

The Norwalk Fire Department said on social media that crews were called Tuesday to the area of the Wall Street Bridge on a report of a swan stuck to the ice covering the Norwalk River.

"Firefighters donned cold-water rescue suits and carefully entered the river to reach the animal," the post said. "Crews safely freed the swan from the surrounding ice and brought it to shore without incident."The swan was taken to the VCA Veterinary Referral and Emergency Center.

"The swan is stable," veterinarian Melissa Salgado told the CT Examiner. "There were blocks of ice attached to him which we had to melt off using warm water, and he was given food and water. He's doing well and warming up. He has no serious wounds."

Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

1778 – New York became the third state to ratify the Articles of Confederation.
1833 – Otto becomes the first modern King of Greece.
1840– Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, establishing New Zealand as a British colony.
1951 – The Canadian Army enters combat in the Korean War.
1944 – World War II: The Great Raids Against Helsinki begins.
1959 – Jack Kilby of Texas Instruments files the first patent for an integrated circuit.
1998 – Washington National Airport is renamed Ronald Reagan National Airport.
2006– Stephen Harper becomes Prime Minister of Canada.
2016 – An earthquake of magnitude 6.6 strikes southern Taiwan, killing 117 people.

Post- Assad anxiety shadows Syrian Shiite refugee compound

AP
Lebanon, Feb. 5



PHOTO: AP

A Syrian Shiite woman walks next to portraits of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, foreground, Hezbollah leader Sheikh Naim Kassem, centre, and the late Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, background, at the Imam Ali Housing Compound, where hundreds of mostly Lebanese and Syrian Shiite Muslims displaced from Syria reside, in Hermel, northeast Lebanon, Friday, Jan. 30, 2026.

A walled compound in Lebanon housing hundreds of people who fled their homes in Syria after the fall of Bashar Assad over a year ago has drawn allegations that the residents are Assad loyalists, which they deny.

The attention on the compound in Hermel town highlights the sensitivities around Syria's transformation after a long civil war, suspicions that can linger about identity and minorities' fear of retaliation.

The Associated Press visited the 228-unit compound in north-eastern Lebanon along Syria's border. It is decorated with posters of Assad allies including Iranian religious leaders and generals as well as fallen commanders of Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group.

The residents of the Imam Ali Housing Compound are mostly Shiite Muslims. They include scores of Lebanese who had lived for generations in Syrian villages near the Lebanese border.

Allegations by media outlets that residents were conspiring against Syria's new Sunni Islamist rulers have led to several raids by the Lebanese army, which later announced it found no armed activities.

Meanwhile, some have alleged that the Iran-backed Hezbollah is using the compound to recruit fighters after its heavy losses during and after its latest war with Israel.

Ghada Ayoub, a legislator with the anti-Hezbollah Lebanese Forces Party, said last month that she has formally asked the government about the building of the compound without state supervision "by an armed group" in a sensitive border area. Ayoub this week told the AP she did not receive any response and that she plans to follow up.

The Lebanese army last month said it conducted its latest sweep of the compound and did not find anything illegal.

Syrian citizen Mohammed Assoura, 57, and his wife moved into one of the housing units, consisting of a room, a small kitchen and a toilet, in October. Before that, they sheltered for months in a mosque and then at an apartment they rented for $150 a month, eventually leaving them broke.

"Do I look like a fuloul of the regime?" asked Assoura, smoking a cigarette as he sat cross-legged in his new home, referring to the Arabic word for "remnants." The term is widely used to refer to Assad loyalists.

Assoura said he fled with his wife on a motorcycle to Lebanon after receiving calls from relatives warning them that Assad was overthrown. Concerns were high about retaliatory attacks on anyone seen as having supported his government or Lebanon's Hezbollah.

Assoura pointed to a small bag in the corner, saying it was all he brought from Syria, with cash and identity cards. He now relies on aid from local nongovernmental organizations to survive and hopes to return to Syria soon.

During Syria's civil war that broke out in 2011, Lebanon's Hezbollah sent thousands of fighters to help Assad stay in power. They remained until insurgent groups marched into Damascus in December 2024, ending the 54-year rule of the Assad family.

MIYAN HELD WITH COUNTERFEIT CURRENCY NOTES

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Inruwa, Feb. 5

A man has been arrested with counterfeit Nepali banknotes of Rs. 1,000 in Sunsari. Bahis Miyan, 25, from Jalpapur in Inaruwa Municipality-10 was arrested in Ramnagar Bhutaha, of Harinagar Rural Municipality-1 in the district. Miyan was apprehended after it was revealed that he had paid with counterfeit notes while purchasing goods at a local grocery shop, according to Deputy Superintendent of Police, Chandra Bahadur Khadka.

Khadka said that Miyan had purchased goods from the grocery store in Bhutaha and paid with counterfeit notes. After receiving a tip-off from locals, a police team from the Ramnagar Bhutaha police post was deployed to check Miyan. During the inspection, they found 28 counterfeit 1,000-rupee notes, totalling Rs. 28,000. Miyan has been taken into custody with the counterfeit notes, and further investigations are ongoing at the Sunsari District Police Office.

'VOTING ESSENTIAL TO A PARTY COMMITTED TO NATION'S FUTURE'

RSS
Patan (Lalitpur), Feb. 5

Spokesperson of the Nepali Congress, Devraj Chalise, has said it is time to vote for a political party that is responsible for country's future.

At a press conference organized at party central office, Sanepa on Thursday, Spokesperson Chalise drew the attention of Election Commission towards the misuse of children by some political parties in electoral campaigning. Spreading hatred towards opponent candidates draws equal concern, he said at the press conference held in view of the upcoming House of Representatives election.



PHOTO: TRN

Various species of flowers on sale at a floriculture nursery in Jhigaura, Ghorahi Sub-Metropolitan City of Dang district.

POLICE NAB SUSPECT IN SINGHA DURBAR ARSON

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5

Police have arrested a man from Kathmandu on charges of involvement in the arson attack at Singha Durbar during the Gen-Z movement.

Singha Durbar was set on fire on September 9 amid protests linked to the Gen-Z movement.

While searching for those involved in the incident, a team from the District Police Range, Kathmandu, arrested one suspect on Thursday.

The arrested individual has been identified as 36-year-old Mahendra Gautam, a permanent resident of Khairahani Municipality-9 in Chitwan, currently living in Anamnagar, Kathmandu Metropolitan City-29.

According to District Police Range Spokesperson and Superintendent of Police Pawan Kumar Bhattarai, Gautam was produced before the court on Thursday, which granted police permission to keep him in custody for five days for further investigation.

SP Bhattarai said the police are investigating Gautam on charges of causing criminal disturbance.

13-day ritual expenses provided to poor families

BY ANIL PARAJULI
Hetauda, Jan. 5

Manahari Rural Municipality in West Makawanpur has provided financial support for 13-day funeral rituals to families facing economic difficulties. Since the last fiscal year, the municipality has been offering Rs. 20,000 per family to perform death rituals.

Last year, the municipality assisted 195 families with expenses for 13-day rituals. Ranjan Kalakheti, Chairperson of the Rural Municipality, stated that Rs. 3.6 million has been distributed to 180 families for performing 13-day rituals in the current fiscal year.

"A budget of Rs. 4 million has been allocated for the current fiscal year to support poor families in performing 13-day rituals. If necessary, we have arrangements to increase the budget," said Chairperson Kalakheti. The municipality's representatives visit homes to hand over death registration documents along with financial assistance. "We will provide funds to perform the 13-day rituals at the homes of the deceased, as outlined in last year's policies and programs," added Chairperson Kalakheti.

"There are some families in the ward who struggle even to perform the 13-day rituals.

Human-wildlife conflict, erosion control key poll issues in Banke

BY SIRAJ KHAN
Nepalgunj, Feb. 5

As political parties and independent candidates step up voter outreach ahead of the House of Representatives elections scheduled for March 5, Banke locals have identified human-wildlife conflict management and controlling erosion and flooding of the Rapti River as their top concerns.

The constituency-1, which includes Kohalpur Municipality, Rapti Sonari Rural Municipality and Narainapur Rural Municipality, has witnessed rising incidents of human-wildlife conflict due to the presence of Banke National Park, while erosion and inundation by the Rapti River cause extensive damage every year.

Hem Chapagain of Tallo Mahadeva, Rapti Sonari-9, said wild animals frequently enter settlements and fatal attacks have increased. He said he would vote only for the candidates who present a credible plan to manage human-wildlife conflict.

Crops in buffer zones and nearby farmlands are regularly destroyed by wild animals, while tiger attacks have claimed both human and livestock lives, he said, adding that political parties and candidates must prioritise the issue.

In the first six months of the current fiscal year alone, Indra Bahadur Khatri, 40, of Guruwagaun Model Tole, Rapti Sonari-9, and Marichman Bhandari of Sauri, Kusum, Rapti Sonari-1, were killed in separate tiger attacks. Such incidents, locals said, have become recurrent in the area.

Yam Bahadur Khadka, Chairperson of Rapti Sonari-1, said residents have been suffering heavy losses to lives, livestock and crops due to attacks by tigers and other wild animals and are now looking for leaders who can offer lasting solutions.

Meanwhile, Arun Yadav of Rapti Sonari-7 said erosion and flooding by the Rapti River have become the biggest problem for residents, prompting people to make it a central election issue this time.

Ram Lakhan Tharu, Chairperson of Rapti Sonari-7, said public sentiment favours candidates who can bring projects to control flooding and river erosion, while others are unlikely to receive support.

Narendra Pandey, a candidate of the CPN from Banke-1, has pledged during public meetings to address wildlife management. Narayan Gaudel of the Nepali Congress has made a similar commitment.

Surya Dhakal, the CPN-UML candidate and the incumbent lawmaker from the previous election, has said that fencing projects were initiated in national park areas to protect residents from wildlife, and that further plans and work will be taken forward.

Candidates Suresh Chaudhary of the Rastriya Swatantra Party and Krishna KC Namuna of Pragatisheel Loktantrik Party have also promised to work on managing human–wildlife conflict.

In the 2079 BS (2022) election, UML candidate Dhakal won Banke-1 with 25,026 votes, defeating his closest rival, Maheshwar Gahatraj of the then CPN (Maoist Centre), who secured 19,632 votes.

In the proportional representation vote, the UML received the highest number with 16,876 votes, followed by the Nepali Congress with 14,218 votes, which had supported the Maoist Centre candidate in the direct race.

PM Karki, Oli...

During the meeting, UML Chairman Oli suggested that the election be held in a single phase in a free and impartial manner. Even if any issues arise at polling stations, they should be addressed promptly without delay, said Rawal.

Additionally, Oli, along with UML leader Bishnu Rimal, briefed the Prime Minister on security concerns related to the election.

They also raised the ongoing issue of escapees, looted weapons, and the threats faced by party candidates.

They further assured the Prime Minister that the CPN-UML would adhere to the election code of conduct and maintain discipline throughout the process.

'Elections all...

He further clarified that there has been no discussion on postponing the election in the Himalayan districts, as reported in the media.

He assured that necessary election materials, including ballots, would reach the designated areas on time, whether in the Tarai, hills, or the mountains.

In the event of adverse weather, including unseasonal snowfall or heavy rain, decisions will be made based on the prevailing conditions. Minister Khanal has instructed the Chief Electoral Officer, District Administrative Officers, security agencies, and election offices to remain prepared.

Likewise, he emphasised that ensuring a peaceful, fear-free, and dignified election process is the government's primary responsibility, and the government is fully committed to managing the election preparations.

Minister Khanal also stated that the government is ready to release additional budgets for election-related expenses if needed.

Compared to Parbat, Baglung, and Myagdi, the election in Mustang faces particular challenges. In the upper regions of Mustang, including Lomanthang and Lo-Ghekar Damodarkunda rural municipalities, there are 3,553 voters, while in Thasang, Gharpajhong, and Barajung Muktichhetra rural municipalities, there are 7,775 voters.

If snowfall occurs during the election, some polling stations in Lomanthang, Lo-Ghekar Damodarkunda, and Barajung Muktichhetra could be directly affected, and the entire district might be impacted. Mustang has one electoral constituency with a total of 11,328 voters across 39 polling stations.

Govt decides to mark Democracy...

The Home Secretary will serve as the member-secretary of the committee.

As per the decision, various programmes will be organised across the country and at Nepali embassies, diplomatic missions, and consulates abroad for three days. The main programme will be held at the Tundikhel Army Pavilion in Kathmandu on February 19.

Addressing the meeting, Prime Minister Karki said that the National Democracy Day holds immense significance for Nepal and its citizens.

She said the country had to struggle repeatedly for democracy, and the day symbolises all those movements, the sacrifices made by the Nepali people and the achievements gained.

The Prime Minister said that some positive changes have recently begun to emerge in the country, stating that the movements of September 8 and 9, 2025 brought about changes. "There has been some change in the country, and there is a growing sentiment to give space to new and young people everywhere," she said.

She said democracy was not achieved through a single effort, adding that Nepali society has always remained in a state of agitation.

"We must deliver in line with the aspirations of the people and the youth. That is why we have given greater importance to Democracy Day," she said.

She called for remembering the many lives lost since 1951's democratic struggles to the Gen Z-led movement, honouring the martyrs, and committing to turning their dreams into reality.

The Prime Minister urged citizens to take a collective pledge so that future generations do not have to launch struggles again, and that all people can live in peace.

Former prime ministers...

In 2022, he was elected from Gorkha as chairman of CPN (Maoist Centre). Since entering politics in 2008, Prachanda has contested and won elections from multiple constituencies, including Rolpa, Kathmandu, Siraha, Chitwan, and Gorkha.

Defending his move, he stated that as a national leader he represents the entire country and dismissed allegations of political opportunism.

According to the Election Commission, 11 candidates are in the fray in Rukum East, including Kusumdevi Thapa Magar (Nepali Congress), Leelamani Gautam (CPN-UML), and Lakhan Kumar Thapa (Rastriya Swatantra Party). While some locals view Prachanda's candidacy as an opportunity for faster development, rivals argue that the district needs local representation.

Rukum has long been a Maoist stronghold, and its political culture remains shaped by the Maoist era, including its organisation, ideology, history, and legacy of struggle, factors that favour Prachanda.

In the 2022 election, Purna Bahadur Gharti of the then CPN (Maoist Centre), backed by the Nepali Congress alliance, defeated UML's Kailash Kumar Malla, securing 12,262 votes to Malla's 5,211.

Nepal faces tough rival in Rautahat-1

NCP co-coordinator and former Prime Minister Nepal is contesting the election from Rautahat-1, the same constituency he won in 2022.

His main rivals include Ajay Kumar Gupta of CPN-UML, Anil Kumar Jha of Nepali Congress, and Rajesh Chaudhary of RSP. The constituency has a history of supporting candidates from multiple parties, making the race highly competitive.

In 2022, Nepal had won with 33,522 votes, defeating Gupta, who received 26,922 votes, benefiting from a five-party alliance including the Nepali Congress.

Gupta, a two-term former mayor of Gaur Municipality, had narrowly lost the 2013 election under the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum.

Jha, who had won Rautahat-1 in 2017 representing the Rastriya Janata Party, joined the Nepali Congress just before filing his nomination.

RSP candidate Rajesh Chaudhary, a former Nepali Congress leader, is seen as a strong contender in the constituency, following a rise of RSP.

However, the RSP had performed poorly here in the 2022 election, when its candidate Suryadev Koirala secured only 163 votes.

Nepal's political journey has seen both wins and losses; he won Rautahat-1 in 1999 but lost Rautahat-6 and Kathmandu-2 in the 2008 Constituent Assembly election. With four major candidates in the fray this time from the Rautahat-1, the contest is expected to be closely fought.

This year's election is expected to be tougher for all former PMs, with growing public frustration toward traditional parties, particularly among younger voters influenced by the Gen Z movement. The emergence of alternative forces like the RSP boosted by Balen Shah's candidacy, Ujyalo Nepal Party-led by Kul Man Ghising and Shram Sanskriti Party-led by former Dharan Mayor Harka Sampang, has made the contest even more competitive.

Popular showbiz figures contesting...

He revealed that he had received offers from several parties during the 2079 elections but chose the RSP because it represents new ideas, youth leadership and a commitment to reforming corrupt political practices.

He clarified that he does not intend to make politics a full-time profession and will continue his artistic career after the election, using his experiences to better understand and raise public issues in politics.

Similarly, popular television journalist Rishi Dhamala and his wife, actress and model Aliza Gautam, are also participating in the March 5 election. Dhamala is contesting from Rautahat-4 representing the Aam Janata Party, while Gautam is contesting under proportional representation from the Women Khas category from the same party.

Dhamala's election campaign has drawn widespread attention on TikTok and Reels, with people creating humorous short clips imitating his actions and expressions during his election campaign.

Another popular television host and actress, Reema Bishwokarma, has also entered politics. She initially joined politics through the Kul Man Ghising-led Ujyalo Nepal Party but later joined the Rastriya Swatantra Party following a short-lived merger. She is contesting under proportional representation and is currently busy meeting voters.

In addition, former Miss Nepal Anushka Shrestha, singer Satyakala Rai and former Mr. Nepal Dr. Rupak Ghimire are also contesting in the upcoming elections.

Mithila Bihari Municipality
Office of the Municipal Executive
Tarapatti, Dhanusha
Madhesh Province
Nepal

Invitation for Electronic Bids

Date Of First Publication: 23rd Magh, 2082(2026-02-06)

1. The Mithila Bihari Municipality, Office of the Municipal Executive, Tarapatti, *Dhanusha, Madhesh Province Nepal* invites electronic bid from the eligible and qualified registered bidders for the procurement of following works under National Competitive Bidding (NCB), name and Contract identification number are mentioned below though the details are in the bidding document.

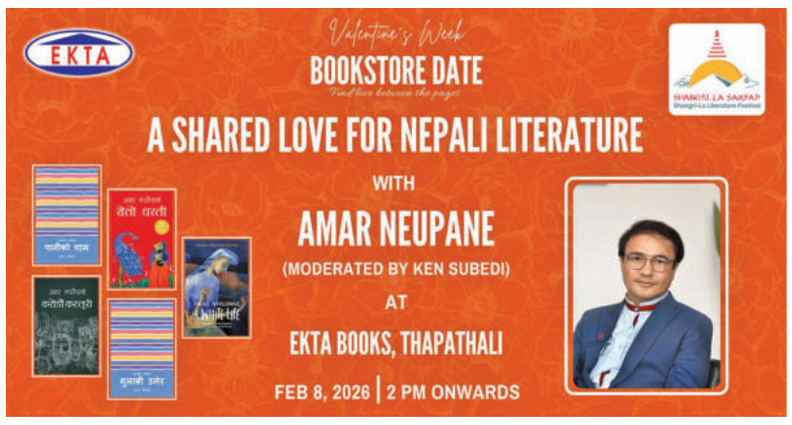
S. N.	Contract identification No.	Description of work	Estimated amount including all taxes and contingencies (NRs.)	Bid document fees NRs.	Bid security amount (NRs.)	Bid submission Deadline	Bid Opening Date
1	01/2082-83/ NCBW/ MBM	Road and Drainage Upgradin from Teteribati, Anarbati School to Alora, Mithila Bihari Municipality-6, Dhanusha District	24,99,406.05	3,000/-	65,000	24th Falgun 2082 (12;00 hour)	24th Falgun 2082 (14;00 hour)

2. For further information please refer to PPMO's website http://bolpatra.gov.np/egp. Any amendment in notice or bid document will be posted in notice of this office or PPMO's website.

Administrative Officer

Ekta Books to host Valentine's Week

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb.5



Ekta Books, Kathmandu, is set to mark Valentine's Week with its annual 'Bookstore Date' programme, scheduled from February 8 to 13. Designed as an alternative to conventional Valentine's celebrations, the week-long event brings together literature, conversation, and shared experiences in a bookstore setting.

The programme will open on February 8 with a special highlight titled 'A Shared Love for Nepali Literature,' featuring noted writer Amar Neupane, in conversation with moderator Ken Subedi, director of Shangri-la Sambad. The discussion, beginning at 2 pm, will focus on Nepali literature, reading culture, and the emotional and social themes that continue to shape contemporary writing in Nepal.

Neupane is widely regarded for his contribution to modern Nepali literature, particularly for works that reflect everyday life, human relationships, and social realities. The session aims to create space for readers to engage directly with the author, offering insights into his writing journey, the role of storytelling in society, and the evolving place of Nepali literature among today's readers.

According to Ekta Books, the event has been curated to be accessible not only to regular readers but also to those who may be exploring Nepali literature for the first time. Alongside the moderated discussion, the session will include audience interaction and a book-signing segment.

> Visitors will also receive a 20 per cent discount on all books during the event period, and will be rewarded with vouchers for participants who win the scavenger hunt games.

The Valentine's Week Bookstore Date is open to couples, friends, families, and solo visitors. Throughout the week, Ekta Books will host a range of activities, including themed sessions, interactive challenges, a movie screening, and a live doodle booth. Visitors will also receive a 20 per cent discount on all books during the event period, and will be rewarded with vouchers for participants who win the scavenger hunt games.

By beginning the celebration with a literary conversation centred on Nepali writing, Ekta Books aims to foreground literature as a medium for connection and reflection. The highlight with Amar Neupane sets the tone for a week that places books and conversations at the heart of Valentine's Week.

All events will take place at Ekta Books, Thapathali, and entry is free.

DHURANDHAR 2: THE REVENGE DIGITAL RIGHTS SOLD FOR INR 1.5 BILLION

AGENCIES
Mumbai, Feb. 5

After a two-month wait, Dhurandhar finally premiered on Netflix, much to the delight of Ranveer Singh's fans. Adding to the excitement, the makers swiftly unveiled the teaser for the sequel, officially titled Dhurandhar: The Revenge. However, in a major development, it has now emerged that Part 2 will stream on a different OTT platform.

Directed by Aditya Dhar, the spy thriller has emerged as one of India's highest-grossing films, earning over INR13 billion at the global box office. Even before its theatrical release, scheduled for 19 March 2026, the sequel made headlines after the makers finalised a lucrative digital deal with Jio Hotstar.

According to Indian news, Netflix had initially attempted to acquire the digital rights for both instalments together. However, Jio Studios sealed the deal for the sequel alone at a staggering INR 1.5 billion — nearly double the INR 850 million Netflix reportedly paid for the first film's streaming rights.

A trade source revealed that Netflix had earlier offered around INR 1.75 billion for both films prior to the release of Dhurandhar. Confident in the film's potential, Jio Studios chose to wait — a move that has now paid off handsomely with one of the biggest OTT deals in recent times.

Trailer of 'Shivansh: Chapter 1' released



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5

The trailer of 'Shivansh: Chapter 1', scheduled for nationwide theatrical release on Shivaratri, February 13, has been unveiled. The film combines elements of Hindu mythology with modern-era mysteries.

Produced under the banner of Anjan Cinema Production, the trailer shows how certain individuals commit crimes while presenting themselves as yogis.

The trailer suggests that the story centres on a person involved in heinous acts such as murder, all under the guise of a yogi.

The main plot appears to revolve around a mysterious divine stone and the potential power or destruction it could unleash in the age of Kalyug.

Santosh Kumar Atreya makes his directorial debut with this film.

Another notable aspect of the film is the music and vocals by the acclaimed Indian singer Kailash Kher.

The main cast includes Prabin Khatiwoda, Tej Giri, Bimala Limbu, and Rusha Neupane, with supporting roles by Bikash Joshi, Pradip Kumar Chaudhary, Sabir Churaute, Udaya Kumar Subba, and Tika Niraula. The story is penned by Anjan KC, while the screenplay is by Barat Limbu.

Anjan KC serves as the producer, with Shobha Bhandari and Anis KC Bogati as co-producers, and Parichchhed Sen, Sambhu Thapa as the executive producers.

The film features songs composed by Viplob Pratik and Rajanraj Shiwakoti, with music direction by Nhyoo Bajracharya and Rajanraj Shiwakoti, and vocals by Rajanraj Shiwakoti, Milan Newar, and Samikshya Adhikari.

Delhi HC to protect Oberoi's personality rights



AGENCIES
New Delhi, Feb. 5

The Delhi High Court has announced it will issue orders safeguarding actor and entrepreneur Vivek Oberoi's personality rights, restraining entities from using his name, image, or likeness without his consent.

During proceedings on Thursday, a bench led by Justice Tushar Rao Gedela confirmed that Oberoi's suit would be taken seriously. The actor alleged that fake social media accounts were being created in his name, unauthorised merchandise was being sold, and AI-generated content was being circulated using his likeness.

Oberoi's petition stated that AI and deepfake technology had been used to superimpose his face into objectionable imagery, some of which he described as offensive, inappropriate, and potentially defamatory.

The suit emphasised that only Oberoi has control over the commercial use of his identity, and no one may exploit his name, image, or other identifying characteristics without his explicit consent.

The court's move follows similar protections granted this year to senior advocate Vikas Pahwa and, in previous years, to filmmakers and actors including Karan Johar, Salman Khan, Hrithik Roshan, and Amitabh Bachchan.

This ruling underscores the growing legal recognition of personality rights in India, particularly in the age of AI and deepfake content.

Bunny expected to perform in Spanish

AP
San Francisco, Feb. 5



What can viewers expect from Bad Bunny's highly anticipated Super Bowl half-time performance? So far, all that is known is that he is expected to perform entirely in Spanish, placing Latin identity at the heart of America's most-watched television event.

Bad Bunny may reveal more details on Thursday in San Francisco, when the Grammy-winning artist speaks ahead of Sunday's game.

Apple Music's Zane Lowe and Ebro Darden will interview Bad Bunny and the pregame performers from 10 a.m. Pacific time on Thursday. The Puerto Rican superstar has become one of the world's most-streamed artists, with albums such as Un Verano Sin Ti and Debí Tirar Más Fotos, the latter of which won Album of the Year at the Grammy Awards on Sunday night. It marked the first time an all-Spanish-language album has taken home the top prize.

Last year, Bad Bunny's historic residency in Puerto Rico drew more than half a million fans.

Apple Music will broadcast the interview on its platform as well as on social media sites such as YouTube and Facebook.

The pregame media session may offer some insight into the half-time performance, but headline acts often keep a few surprises under wraps. Rihanna did just that in 2023, waiting until her Super Bowl performance to reveal she was pregnant with her second child.

The Super Bowl will be held on Sunday at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, with the Seattle Seahawks facing the New England Patriots.

The pregame show will open with several standout performers from Northern California. Charlie Puth will take the stage to sing the national anthem, Brandi Carlile will perform America the Beautiful, and Coco Jones will sing Lift Every Voice and Sing.

The national anthem and Lift Every Voice and Sing will be performed in American Sign Language by deaf performing artist Fred Beam, while America the Beautiful will be signed by Julian Ortiz.

Ahead of kick-off, Green Day will perform a special set to celebrate the Super Bowl's 60th anniversary. The band, which has its roots in the Bay Area, plans to 'get loud', according to lead singer Billie Joe Armstrong.

In a historic first, the half-time show will feature a multilingual signing programme, including Puerto Rican Sign Language, led by interpreter Celimar Rivera Cosme. All signed performances during the pregame and half-time shows will be presented in collaboration with Alexis Kashar of LOVE SIGN and Howard Rosenblum of Deaf Equality.

Kristen Stewart purchases Highland Park Movie Theater



AGENCIES
Los Angeles, Feb. 5

Kristen Stewart has stepped in to save one of Los Angeles' oldest movie houses, purchasing the 100-year-old Highland Theatre in Highland Park.

The Oscar-nominated actor and filmmaker confirmed the acquisition to Architectural Digest, which featured Stewart in a photo shoot atop the venue's marquee at 5604 N. Figueroa Street. The theatre, which opened in 1925, closed in spring 2024 after struggling to recover from post-pandemic declines in cinema attendance.

"I didn't realise I was looking for a theatre until this place came to my attention," Stewart told AD. "Then it was like a gunshot went off and the race was on. I ran toward it with everything I had."

Designed by architect Lewis Arthur Smith — also responsible for the Vista Theatre in Los Feliz and the Rialto in Pasadena — the Highland Theatre was forced to shut its doors after business failed to return to pre-2020 levels. Its final screenings included Madame Web, One Love and Lisa Frankenstein.

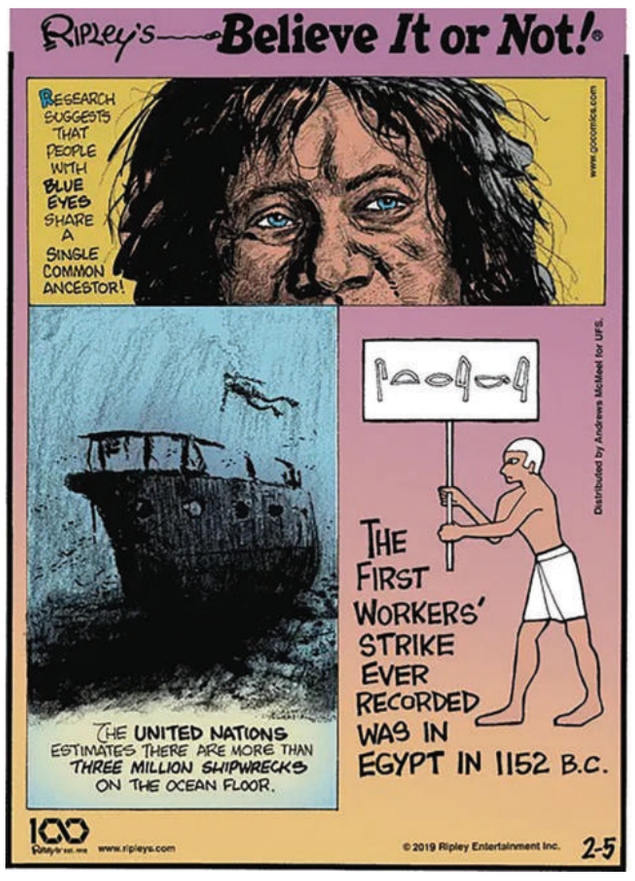
Stewart said the purchase represents an opportunity to create a community-focused cultural space.

She described the project as a place "to gather and scheme and dream together", adding that it would serve as an alternative to what she called the corporatisation of movie culture.

The actor joins a small group of Hollywood figures investing in historic cinemas. Quentin Tarantino owns the New Beverly Cinema and the Vista Theatre, while in 2024 a group of filmmakers led by Jason Reitman purchased Westwood's Village Theatre.

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'Nepal target Super Eight at T20 World Cup'

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Feb. 5


PHOTO: ICC

Nepal will play with the aim of reaching the Super Eight stage of the ICC T20 World Cup 2026, skipper Rohit Paudel said on Thursday.

Speaking at a press conference at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium during the captains' meet, Paudel declared his side was determined to break new ground after falling short in the group stage of the previous edition. "Our target is the Super Eight. In the past we struggled to get through the group stage," he said.

Nepal failed to progress beyond the group stage in both the 2014 and 2024 tournaments. This time, they are drawn in Group C alongside England, the West Indies, Scotland and Italy.

This will be Nepal's third appearance at the T20 World Cup. Paudel will lead the team at successive global events, having captained them in 2024.

Paudel added that Nepal's ambition was to defeat a Test-playing nation at the tournament, insisting such a victory would pave the way to the Super Eight. "We have defeated Test nations earlier, and we hope to repeat the same in this World Cup. The preparation has been the best so far. Everyone is excited and we are confident of reaching the Super Eight," he said.

Nepal beat Canada

Meanwhile, Nepal produced strong performances in their official warm-up matches. They recorded a comprehensive six-wicket win over Canada in their final warm-up before beginning their World Cup campaign on 8 February against England. Earlier, the Rhinos overcame the UAE by seven wickets in their first warm-up fixture on Tuesday.

Chasing a testing target of 162 at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai, Nepal reached the mark in 18 overs for the loss of four wickets, with 12 balls to spare.

Canada had won the toss and opted to bat first, posting 161 for six in their allotted 20 overs. Navneet Dhaliwal top-scored with 41, while Shreyas Movva remained unbeaten on 38. Kanwarpal Tathgur added 25, Jaskaran Singh 21 and Nicholas Kirton 10.

For Nepal, Sandeep Lamichhane and Kushal Bhurtel claimed two wickets apiece, with Sompal Kami and Nandan Yadav taking one each.

In pursuit of 162, opener Aasif Sheikh struck six fours and three sixes in a fluent 29-ball half-century, finishing on 58. Sundeep Jora contributed 44, while Gulshan Jha remained unbeaten on 31.

Opener Kushal Malla was dismissed for 12, and Sheikh retired hurt in the 11th over, bringing Jha to the crease. Captain Dipendra Singh Airee was not out on nine, with Lokesh Bam adding five.

As part of their World Cup preparations, Nepal also played two practice matches against MCA President's XI in Mumbai, following a series against Sri Lanka 'A' in Colombo.

SNIPPETS

Pokhara Int'l Marathon on Feb. 14

Lekhnath (TRN): Preparations for the 20th Pokhara International Marathon are well under way. The event, organised by the Nepal Former Players' Forum, will be staged on 14 February in the lake city of Pokhara, with runners from 17 countries, including Nepal, already registered. Forum president Dil Bahadur Gurung said arrangements were in their final stages.

The race will start from Pokhara Stadium and finish at Lakeside, taking in various city routes. In the main marathon, the winner will receive Rs. 400,000, with Rs. 200,000 for second place, Rs. 100,000 for third and Rs. 50,000 for fourth. To encourage local talent, a special 'Gandaki Excellence' category has been introduced. A new 'Marathon Nepal' category has also been added this year.

Police start with win

Kathmandu (TRN): Nepal Police Club's women's volleyball team made a winning start to their title defence at the CAVA Women's League, defeating Uzbekistan's Humo VC in Malé, the Maldives, on Friday. The defending champions edged the opening set 30–28, lost the second 21–25, but recovered to take the third and fourth sets 25–21 and 25–23.

It was Humo's second successive defeat, having gone down to Huraa Community Club 24–26, 20–25, 20–25 on Wednesday. Nepal Police will face FMS on 6 February before concluding the group stage against hosts HCC on 8 February.

Dharan into semis

Dharan (TRN): Host Dharan Football Club sailed into the semi-finals of the International Invitational Budha Subba Gold Cup on Thursday, defeating Gergion United Club of Kalimpong, India, 4–2 in a penalty shoot-out at Dharan Stadium. The match had ended 1–1 in regulation time, sending the contest to spot-kicks. Gergion struck first in the 8th minute, before Dharan captain Tapan Karki levelled in the 19th. Goalkeeper Bipul Magar was named player of the match after saving two penalties to secure Dharan's place in the last four.

City face Arsenal in Cup final

AFP
Manchester, Feb. 5


PHOTO: AP
Manchester City's Abdukodir Khusanov fight for the ball during the English League Cup semifinal soccer match against Newcastle.

Manchester City will face Arsenal in the League Cup final after ending Newcastle's reign as holders with a first-half blitz in their 3-1 victory on Wednesday.

Pep Guardiola's side were already in pole position after winning the semi-final first leg on Tyneside in January and they finished the job in ruthless fashion at the Etihad Stadium.

Omar Marmoush struck twice in the first half of the second leg before Tijjani Reijnders put the result beyond doubt.

Anthony Elanga reduced the deficit after the interval, but City's 5-1 aggregate win sent them back to the League Cup showpiece for the first time since 2021.

City's final date with Arsenal is set for March 22 at Wembley after the Premier League leaders knocked out Chelsea on Tuesday.

Reaching the final was a welcome tonic for Guardiola following the frustration of blowing a two-goal lead in a 2-2 draw at Tottenham on Sunday that delivered a major blow to their title challenge.

With a crucial trip to Liverpool looming this weekend, City trail Arsenal by six points in the Premier League title race.

The League Cup was the first silverware of Guardiola's City reign when they beat Arsenal in the 2018 final, with current Gunners boss Mikel Arteta then working as the Spaniard's assistant.

City went on to win the competition for the following three years, but haven't lifted the League Cup since 2021.

"We will travel to London again, they will wait for us there. They never travel to the north (for finals) but I am really happy to be back. Five (League Cup) finals in 10 years is a big milestone," Guardiola said.

Bilbao, Sociedad into Copa semis

Iñaki Williams scored six minutes into stoppage time as Athletic Bilbao won 2-1 at Valencia to reach the semi-finals of the Copa del Rey on Wednesday, and its Basque Country rival Real Sociedad made it to the last-four by winning 3-2 at Alaves.

Athletic will be playing in its sixth Copa semifinal in seven seasons. It won the title in 2024 and was runner-up to Barcelona in 2020-21 and to Sociedad in 2019-20.

Sociedad is unbeaten since losing 2-1 at home to Girona in the Spanish league in December.

Alaves, which lost the 2016-17 Copa final to Barcelona, hadn't made it to the quarterfinals since 2017-18. It was coming off two straight Spanish league wins.

German Cup

Defending champion Stuttgart defeated second-division club Holstein Kiel 3-0 Wednesday to reach the German Cup semifinals.

Deniz Undav broke the deadlock for the visitors in the 56th minute, then Chris Fuhrich added to the lead in the 89th and Atakan Karazor closed the scoring three minutes into stoppage time.

Stuttgart won its fourth German Cup title last season, beating third-division team Arminia Bielefeld in the final.

Holstein Kiel was playing in the quarterfinals for the first time since reaching the last four in 2020-21.

Italy Cup

Inter Milan reached the Italian Cup semifinals after beating Torino 2-1 on Wednesday with French players Ange-Yoan Bonny and Andy Diouf both scoring.

A close-range header from Bonny put Inter in the 35th minute and Diouf doubled the Nerazzurri's lead moments into the second half. Croatian striker Sandro Kulenovic pulled a goal back for Torino in the 57th.

Inter is bidding to win the Coppa Italia for the 10th time while Torino's wait goes on with its last Coppa title coming in 1993.

Italy's cricketers chase history in T20 World Cup debut

AP
Rome, Feb. 5


PHOTO: ICC

Italy is finally heading to the World Cup — just not in the sport most people might expect.

Amid dark times for the country's storied but ailing soccer team, some salvation comes in the form of the Azzurri's unheralded cricketers after their first-ever qualification for a global tournament.

Add Italy to cricketing superpowers like India, Australia, England and South Africa competing at the T20 World Cup starting Saturday.

"Just to be there and playing," Luca Bruno Malaspina, CEO of the Italian Cricket Federation, said "is the end of 45 years of hard work."

That's a reference to the formation of the sport's national federation in 1980, but cricket in Italy dates back much further than that — to the late 19th century when it was played by expatriated British textile workers.

Genoa, Italy's oldest soccer club founded in 1893, was — and still is — called Genoa Cricket and Football Club. The original name of AC Milan, the seven-time European champion, when it was founded in 1899 by an Englishman, Herbert Kilpin, was Milan Football & Cricket Club.

More than a century later, there might not be any grass cricket pitches in Italy but there are around 4,000 registered men's players, around 80 clubs in a two-tier league system, and a burgeoning national team filled with players who have Italian heritage or who are first- or second-generation immigrants from Asia.

Take for example captain Wayne Madsen, a South African who qualifies because of his Italian grandmother.

Or bowler Crishan Kalugamage, a Sri Lankan who moved to Italy when he was 15. Or wicketkeeper Marcus Campopiano, who was born in England and has an Italian father.

The 15-man World Cup squad contains two sets of Australian brothers with Italian family connections: Harry and Benjamin Manenti, and Anthony and Justin Mosca.

"The quality and the numbers are going up," said Bruno Malaspina, who also praised the largely overseas-born coaching and backroom staff for changing mindsets and raising expectations. The head coach is former Canada cricketer John Davison, who was raised in Australia and played first-class cricket there before becoming a star for Canada's national team. Former Ireland batter Kevin O'Brien is an assistant coach.

Italy qualified for the expanded 20-team World Cup via European regional qualifying, finishing second to the Netherlands, and last week beat Ireland for its first ever win over a full member of the International Cricket Council, the sport's world governing body.

Capitalizing on soccer turmoil

Contrast the national team's progress in cricket to the regression of its soccer team.

A four-time World Cup winner, Italy missed out on qualification for soccer's biggest tournament in both 2018 and 2022 after losing unexpectedly in the playoffs. The Italians are back in the playoffs again in their bid to reach the upcoming World Cup held in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Bruno Malaspina believes it's a chance for cricket to "capitalize" on Italy's shortcomings in soccer.

The World Cup "is a good way to open up cricket to Italians," he said in a video call. "We are not talking only about money ... but visibility in the Italian sport organization because they are learning now that cricket is an important sport. There are big numbers all around the world."

Better infrastructure

Italy was recognized by the ICC as an Associate member in 1995 and then by the Italian National Olympic Committee, which was a significant step because it enables cricket to receive government funding.

Getting into a World Cup marks the end of a long journey for Italian cricket but the start of another.

The lack of cricket infrastructure in the country is a major obstacle for progress — Italy currently "hosts" its international games in other European nations, such as the Netherlands and England — and he said the federation is working hard to improve the "very, very poor" cricket grounds and fund at least one turf pitch that can be the spiritual home of Italian cricket. The domestic game needs to be more professional and structured better, Bruno Malaspina added.

"The problem is money and the bureaucratic things you have to do in Italy," he said.

The federation, according to Bruno Malaspina, is in talks with the proposed European T20 Premier League to have an Italian franchise, potentially in 2027.

It also wants to inspire the next generation by entering Italian schools, teaching children the rules and culture of cricket, getting them into local clubs.

Playing England

In the short term, though, Italian cricket is simply ready to enjoy its landmark moment. The team is in Group C at the World Cup staged jointly by India and Sri Lanka, and will meet Scotland, Nepal, England and the West Indies.

It's the match Italy is least likely to win — against England — that stands out. "For the players and people involved with cricket, it's the top of our story: Playing against England. I'm not talking about the result. It's not about result, the gap is too much," Bruno Malaspina said.

"But England is ... what can I say? England is cricket."

NZ looks to its batting depth, game-breakers at World Cup

AP
Wellington, Feb. 5



New Zealand will lean heavily on its batting depth and proven match-winners to balance a depleted attack as it attempts to win the T20 World Cup for the first time.

The Black Caps' best effort in nine editions of the tournament was in 2021 when they were well beaten by Australia in the final.

That record reflects New Zealand's love-hate relationship with a format to which it seems well adapted with its high percentage of all-rounders. New Zealand played the first-ever T20 international, against Australia, and its win-loss record in around 260 internationals is roughly 50%.

The 2026 T20 World Cup starts Saturday and will staged in India and Sri Lanka over the next month.

New Zealand heads into the tournament on the back of a humbling T20 series loss to India in India. In the fifth game, New Zealand conceded a record 271-5, which included a century from 40 balls by Ishan Kishan.

New Zealand's weakened bowling attack was under the pump throughout the series. In the third match, India chased down New Zealand's 153-9 with only two wickets down and 10 overs remaining.

Asked at the end of the series if there was anything New Zealand could have done to contain the Indian batters, skipper Mitchell Santner joked "maybe push the boundaries back a little bit!"

But Santner was happy with the intelligence New Zealand gained from the India series ahead of its World Cup opener against Afghanistan at Chennai.

"We look at the series as a whole. We learned a lot of good stuff," Santner said. "It's not easy as a bowling unit. We've got to find ways against very good batters."

New Zealand will ask much of the 31-year-old pacer Jacob Duffy, who will be playing at his first T20 World Cup. Duffy had an extraordinary breakout season in 2025, taking 81 wickets in a calendar year to break the New Zealand record held by Richard Hadlee. He is the No. 4-ranked T20 bowler in the world.

Apart from Duffy, the New Zealand pace lineup includes Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry and Kyle Jamieson, who came in as a late replacement for the injured Adam Milne. Ben Sears is the traveling reserve and may see action as Henry and Ferguson may both take short breaks for paternity leave.

Santner and Ish Sodhi are New Zealand's main spin options, with Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra and Michael Bracewell providing backup.

Sodhi said the New Zealand batters had spent some time facing spin in their tournament preparation.

"At training the boys wanted to face spinners and see what their boundary and single options were, so it was really cool that everyone is training specifically for that," he said.

New Zealand's strong batting lineup comprises Finn Allen, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Daryl Mitchell, Rachin Ravindra and Tim Seifert. Seifert will also keep wicket while the all-rounders Jimmy Neesham, who provides an extra pace option, Bracewell and Phillips balance the squad.

"As always, the balance of the squad is critical," New Zealand coach Rob Walter said. "We've got plenty of power and skill in the batting, quality bowlers who can adapt to conditions plus five all-rounders who all bring something slightly different.

"This is an experienced group and the players are no strangers to playing in the subcontinent, which will be valuable."

New Zealand's squad includes a number of players with franchise experience around the world who bring a match-winning element.

Allen has a strike rate of 165.45 in T20 internationals and 175.23 in domestic or franchise T20 cricket.

Phillips has a strike rate of 141.56 in international T20s and also provides athleticism in the field, reflected by his 52 catches.

"World Cups are special and there's few better places to play one than in India, which is very much the heartbeat of the modern game," Walter said. "I'm really happy with the skills and experience of this squad. We have a group which can make New Zealand proud."

New Zealand is drawn in Group D with Afghanistan, Canada, South Africa and the UAE.

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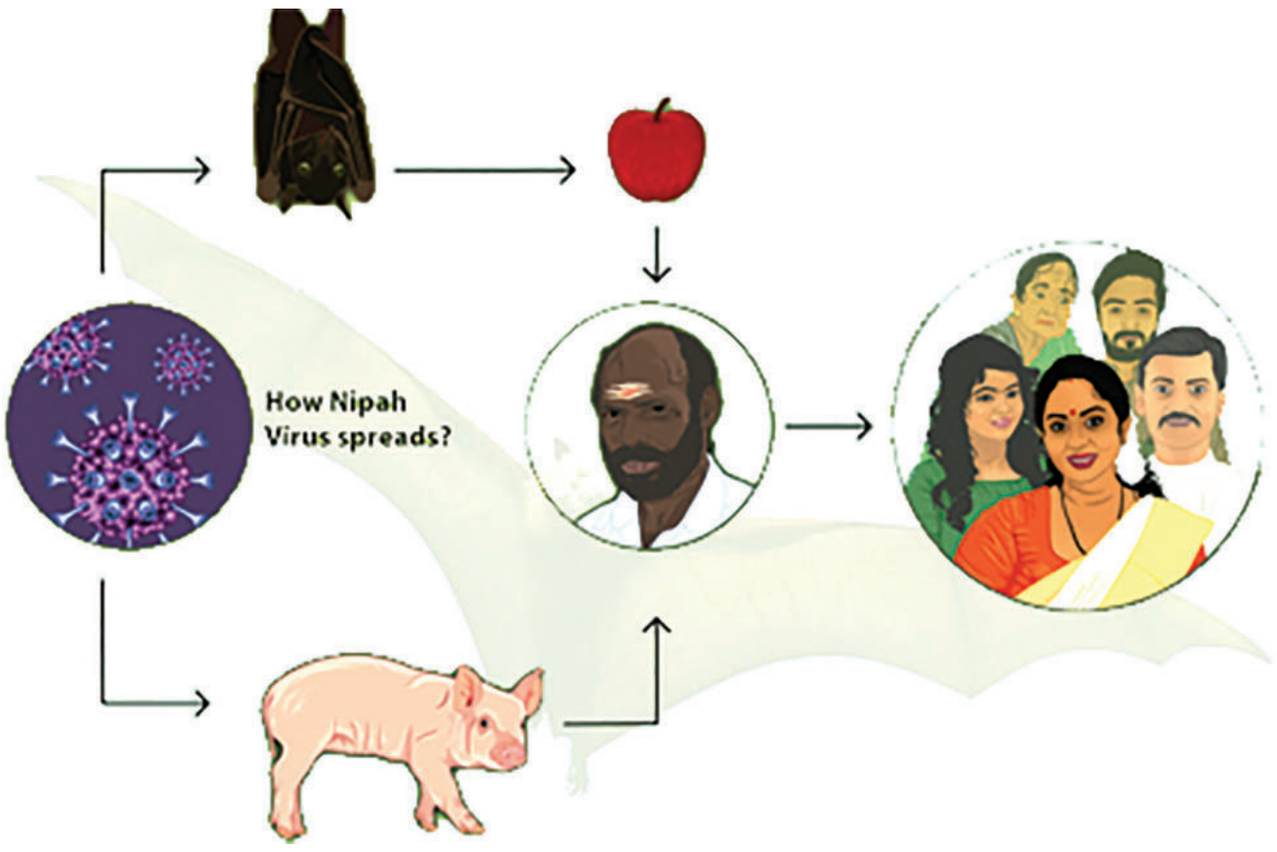
Risk Of Fatal Nipah Virus High In Nepal



Yogendra Shah



Shyam Prakash Dumre



Nipah virus (NiV) is an emerging virus causing severe zoonosis often characterised by severe respiratory disease and encephalitis. A high mortality rate of 40–75 per cent has been reported, mostly from Asia and Africa. The World Health Organization (WHO) has classified NiV as a high-risk virus requiring high containment. NiV was named after the village of Sungai Nipah (Nipah River Village) in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, where NiV was first identified in 1999. At that time, the virus crossed the species barrier from bats and infected humans, resulting in highly fatal encephalitis and residual neurological problems among survivors. The outbreak was first recognised in pigs that consumed fruit partially eaten by fruit bats and transmitted the infection to humans. There has been evidence of NiV transmission to humans from animals (bats or pigs), contaminated foods or infected fluids, and it can also be transmitted directly from human to human. In Asia, human NiV cases have been reported since 1998 to date from Malaysia, Singapore, Bangladesh, India, and the Philippines, totalling 762 confirmed cases and 438 deaths, with an overall fatality rate of 58 per cent.

Outbreaks in neighbouring countries

Several NiV outbreaks with significant morbidity and mortality have been reported in South and Southeast Asia. During 1998–1999, Malaysia and Singapore reported 246 human cases of NiV-associated febrile encephalitis, linked to infected pigs; in Singapore, 11 abattoir workers were infected, with one death.

In India, the first outbreak of NiV occurred in Siliguri, West Bengal, in 2001, followed by the 2007 outbreak in Nadia and almost every year in Kerala since 2018, with 60 deaths alone in 2018. Fruit bat species Pteropus giganteus, Pteropus lylei, and Hipposideros larvatus were confirmed as reservoir hosts of NiV and key sources of virus transmission in India and Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, NiV was first confirmed in 2004, and nine outbreaks were documented between 2004 and 2010.

Further outbreaks in 2011 in northern Bangladesh resulted in 15 deaths. High mortality was associated with the Bangladesh NiV strain. The main reason for NiV transmission in India and Bangladesh was linked to the consumption of raw date palm sap contaminated by fruit bats and partially eaten fruits contaminated by fruit bats through urine or saliva from infected bats. This year, two laboratory-confirmed NiV cases were identified among healthcare workers in Kolkata on 13 January 2026, in India, with no evidence of secondary transmission.

Risk in Nepal

The situation in Nepal differs markedly from that of other South Asian countries. Pig farming has been actively promoted by the government as a poverty alleviation strategy. Despite this, pig rearing in the country is often practised with inadequate health safety measures, creating a high risk of zoonotic disease transmission from pigs to other animals and humans. Moreover, pigs can act as amplifying hosts for multiple pathogens, including Japanese encephalitis virus, NiV, SARS-CoV-2 and rotavirus.

Certain bat species from Nepal (Pteropus giganteus, Rousettus leschenaultii, Eonycteris spelaea, Rhinolophus sinicus, R. affinis, R. ferrumequinum, Nyctalus noctula and Scotophilus sp.) reported that potential reservoir hosts for several viruses are often found in human proximity, and some of them even enter human dwellings at night. Some fruit bats, like P. giganteus and R. leschenaultii, are even consumed as bushmeat by some communities. Conversely, the situation in our country differs from that of neighbouring countries, as one of the major risks for NiV transmission from bats to humans is extensive deforestation, coupled with the growing trend of hiking, camping and human activity in mountainous and forested areas. These factors increase the human–bat interface and consequently elevate the risk of spillover transmission.

Nepal shares open and porous borders with India to the east, west, and south, which poses a high risk for the cross-border transmission of NiV to Nepal. Bangladesh is just 22 km from Nepal's eastern border (separated by the Indian Siliguri corridor), providing ample opportunity for public movement and disease transmission.

Past experience of larger epidemics and pandemics of infectious diseases like influenza and COVID-19 and preparedness plans made for deadly viruses like Ebola (though we did not face it) are great lessons for disease control authorities. Despite this, we are not fully prepared and need to work more on it.

Therefore, the government and concerned authorities should establish a routine surveillance system to monitor zoonotic diseases at pig farming sites and strengthen safety practices to reduce the risk of transmission to susceptible human populations. In particular, NiV infection in domestic animals such as pigs should be monitored regularly, and farms should be cleaned daily using appropriate disinfectants or detergents to prevent potential outbreaks. Most importantly, human or animal samples with suspected NiV infection need to be handled in a high-containment laboratory, which is not functional in Nepal. Therefore, a preparedness plan should include a clear procedure on coordination with WHO collaborating centres.

Preventive actions essential

To respond to an outbreak, specialised research teams should be established to identify suspected cases of infection in humans and further analyse the possibility of the emergence of new species as potential reservoir hosts of the virus that may be responsible for its transmission to humans from bats.

At border checkpoints between India and Nepal, domestic animals should be strictly quarantined and screened for zoonotic diseases. Furthermore, a One Health approach should be strictly implemented through integrated surveillance and quarantine of domestic animals, enabling early detection and timely warnings for both veterinary and human public health authorities. Additionally, restricting or banning the movement of animals from infected farms to other regions can significantly reduce disease spread.

We should increase public awareness on NiV risk factors and educate people on measures to prevent/reduce NiV exposure and risk of infection. Specifically, public health educational messages should focus on how to reduce bat-to-human transmission, animal-to-human transmission and human-to-human transmission.

Healthcare workers should be made aware of this risk while caring for suspected or confirmed patients or handling samples and should strictly follow the universal standard infection prevention guidelines (i.e., wearing personal protective equipment, an N95 mask, goggles and a face shield) at all times.

A One Health approach would be appropriate to reduce the risk of zoonotic disease transmission. For instance, India has adopted guidelines for the clinical management of NiV disease, using the One Health approach and integrated surveillance. Moreover, establishing mechanisms for cross-border screening, laboratory testing, and diagnostic facilities at points of entry and exit would ensure that suspected cases are referred to provincial/local government-level healthcare facilities. Availability of more reliable tests for the surveillance of communities and livestock will be vital to achieving a better understanding of the ecology of the fruit bat host and transmission risks to intermediate hosts, enabling the implementation of the One Health approach for outbreak prevention and the management of zoonotic diseases like NiV. In summary, the control and prevention of NiV is possible only if strictly endorsed guidelines and control strategies are implemented.

In conclusion, surveillance of NiV and other infectious diseases that could be at high risk of transmission from animals to humans should be carried out. High-risk areas in South and Southeast Asia along the NiV girdle should be identified and mapped, and then continual surveillance should be conducted to facilitate the early detection of virus outbreaks, identify circulating strains among fruit bats, and monitor environmental factors and the dynamics of wide-ranging transmission. A regional coordination mechanism should be developed involving India, Bangladesh and Nepal to prevent the cross-border transmission of NiV.

(Shah holds PhD in Veterinary Medicine, Hokkaido University, Japan and is an Associate Professor, Central Department of Microbiology, Tribhuvan University and Dumre has completed PhD in Biomedical Sciences, Thammasat University, Thailand.)

Technical Intelligence Possess No Boundaries



Er. Namuna Gautam

> Parents should allow girls to fix things, experiment, and make mistakes. Schools must promote STEM education for all genders, and workplaces must judge individuals by skills rather than stereotypes.

For generations, technology has been considered a male-dominated field, with an underlying assumption that we, women, were simply not 'technical' people. In IT, computers, mechanics, or driving, we are often assumed to be inferior before we can show our skills. This is especially true in South Asian countries like Nepal, which have strong traditional gender roles and social expectations about what women pursue as a career. But what we're seeing in the world around us is something very different: a narrative of competence, innovation, and quiet determination.

Across the world, women are steadily advancing in technology. Studies show that women now make up one-third of the technology workforce, and that share is gradually increasing. In South Asia, despite cultural and structural barriers, women are leading in fields such as software development, data analysis, networking, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence. In Nepal, more women than ever before are studying IT, computer engineering, and electronics, and many are building successful careers in both local and international tech enterprises.

Yet the bias does not begin in the workplace; it starts at home, in a mindset. In many Nepali and similar Asian households, sons are encouraged to fix electrical switches, repair equipment, ride motorcycles, or explore tools. Daughters, by contrast, are encouraged to do kitchen work, cleaning, and other household duties. From an early age, boys are trusted with technical tasks, while girls are rarely invited to explore how machines work. This task division teaches children that technology belongs to men and that domestic tasks belong to women, leading to career options long before adulthood.

It is almost the same in schools, where boys are praised for being smart with machines, while girls are appreciated for being careful or helpful. Even when girls show interest in computers or sports, they are sometimes disappointed with comments such as 'It's dangerous' or 'It's not suitable for girls.' Over time, this messaging starts self-doubt, not because girls lack ability, but because they lack encouragement.

In the real world, the same attitude continues. Many women in the IT field have been in a place where their skills are frequently doubted. A woman explaining a network issue may be looked at with



scepticism, while if a male colleague explains the same, it is accepted without uncertainty. Women drivers are judged more harshly for small mistakes, consolidating the stereotype that women battle with anything automated or technical. These everyday incidents may seem small, but collectively they create an environment where women are forced to prove their competence.

I have myself faced this unfairness firsthand as an IT professional. There used to be incidents when clients assumed I was not capable of handling their technical issue and asked to speak to a male colleague instead. There have been times when my ideas were overlooked until repeated by a male colleague. Such experiences are common among women who work in technology, not because they lack skills, but because society still associates technical proficiency with manhood.

Despite these hurdles, women still continue to excel and make their mark. Women in IT manage to solve complicated systems and critical problems under pressure and adapt to new technologies. Research steadily shows that diverse teams perform better, particularly in problem-solving and invention. When women are included in technical teams, products become more comprehensible, solutions more complete, and decision-making more stabilised.

In Nepal, women are seen breaking stereotypes and advancing into technical and non-traditional professions once dominated by men. Sony Rana is celebrated as the first Nepali woman pilot to hold a civilian aviation licence, flying into the skies in the early 1990s, encouraging future generations of female aviators. Rakshya Rana also made history in aviation in Nepal as a female pioneer, completing both international and domestic training at a time when few women were seen in the cockpit. On the ground, Laxmi Sharma became Nepal's first female tempo (auto-rickshaw) driver, learning mechanical skills and entering a male-dominated transport sector.

Across cities like Kathmandu, women such as Harmita Shrestha and Nisha Chaulagain are now driving buses and electric public vehicles, proving that professional driving and public transport operation are not limited by gender. In construction and heavy machinery, pioneers like Muna Ghimire Shrestha have operated dozers and excavators—roles rarely seen for women in Nepal—challenging long-held assumptions about physical and technical work. In the technology sector, women such as Jayanti Mala Chapagain, who advanced from web development to founding her own IT firm, and software professionals like Dipti, who led tech communities and advocate for inclusivity, represent the growing female leadership in computing and digital innovation. These examples prove that a noticeable shift has been seen in Nepali society where women are willing to take a risk and stand where society believed they were not suitable or competent. We can see women employees leading in different technical fields, such as aviation, transportation, engineering, and information technology, reshaping expectations and inspiring the whole next generation to follow their ambitions despite traditional beliefs.

We don't lack technical skills or knowledge, but what we really lack is opportunity, trust, and encouragement. If we are trusted and receive proper education and mentorship, we can perform as well as men. We can clearly see this in society nowadays, as there are women leading tech startups, software developers working for global companies, teaching computers, pilots and riders among others.

Changing this mindset must begin from where it was started: at home, in schools, and within society. Daughters should be encouraged to explore tools and technology and be allowed to participate in problem-solving just as much as sons. Parents should allow girls to fix things, experiment, and make mistakes. Schools must promote STEM education for all genders, and workplaces must judge individuals by skills rather than stereotypes.

We have a technical mind. We have always had it. What was lacking is our recognition, opportunities, and trust. Today women continue to rise and reshape the technical world. The myth will slowly fade, replaced by a simple and powerful truth. Technology belongs to everyone.

(Gautam is an IT officer at Agricultural Development Bank Limited.)

Professional Justice For Counsellors



Sudip Ghimire



The field of psychosocial counselling in Nepal has recently witnessed a significant shift with the emergence of collective voices demanding professional justice and policy clarity. This momentum formally began when the national counsellors conference was held in Pokhara last December, and organised voices emerged. Hot Bahadur Kunwar and Rukmani Pariyar formally submitted a written request for information to Kanchanpur Municipality under the Right to Information Act. The application, registered last November, questioned irregularities in the recruitment process for psychosocial counsellors announced by the municipality. Despite the clear qualification and training requirements mentioned in the vacancy notice, individuals without the six months of psychosocial counselling training were allowed to apply and even participate in the selection process and were selected as counsellors, even though they do not have any training background or counselling education. This problem is occurring in municipalities across the country. As a result, there are serious concerns regarding transparency, legality, and professional ethics in the counsellor's selection process.

The application further questioned why, in vacancies clearly announced for psychosocial counsellors, nurses and health assistants were appointed as counsellors. It also challenged the rejection of certificates issued by institutions affiliated with CTEVT, despite CTEVT being a government-recognised technical authority. The applicants demanded clarification on which laws rendered such certificates invalid and why local governments felt compelled to appoint individuals who clearly did not meet the advertised criteria. These questions were raised with reference to constitutional provisions, the Right to Information Act, and related regulations, highlighting inconsistencies between policy and practice.

Similar requests for information have since been submitted by psychosocial counsellors across the country, reflecting growing nationwide dissatisfaction. Even though all the required qualifications were met in the vacancy announcement for a psychosocial counsellor opened by Balan Bihul Rural Municipality, Saptari, the position was instead awarded to an untrained individual. When the legal basis of this decision was questioned, psychosocial counsellor Kamana Kumari Sah was repeatedly threatened through representatives of various political parties and municipal staff, and her family members were subjected to mental pressure. Following this, the counsellor's association issued an official press release on Magh 13, expressing its objection to the mental violence committed against the counsellor.

According to the CTEVT-endorsed curriculum introduced in 2011, a psychosocial counsellor is defined as a Nepali citizen aged 21 or above who has completed Grade 12 and received at least 750 hours of professional training. After completing this training, counsellors are eligible to provide services for common mental health and psychosocial problems. Certificates issued by CTEVT-affiliated institutions are legally valid, particularly when training is conducted following approved standards. Nepal, like many low-resource countries, faces a shortage of specialised mental health professionals. In this context, building the capacity of psychosocial counsellors has long been recognised as a practical and necessary approach. On this basis, CTEVT has authorised various governmental, non-governmental, and training institutions to run counselling programmes. As a result, nearly three thousand trained psychosocial counsellors are currently working across the country in NGOs, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, and schools. Despite this, the government has failed to create permanent positions for psychosocial counsellors within the public system.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2015 earthquake, and increasing migration-related stressors, the government began appointing psychosocial counsellors in local governments on a contractual basis. One major initiative is the SAMI Programme, which is implemented nationwide by the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Security. The programme aims to make foreign employment safer and more dignified through counselling, psychosocial support, legal aid, and financial literacy services, with financial and technical support from the Government of Switzerland. Psychosocial counselling is recognised as a core component of this programme.

The SAMI Programme Operational Guidelines clearly define staffing structures, levels, appointment authority, and budget responsibilities. Psychosocial counsellors are categorised at the fifth level, with recruitment authority delegated to local governments. The guidelines also specify minimum qualifications, including relevant bachelor's degrees or postgraduate diplomas and six months of training from the National Health Training Center. However, in practice, these provisions are being widely violated.

One major issue is that the workforce described in the guidelines barely exists in the labour market. Moreover, the National Health Training Center does not have the mandate to provide training to the general public; it can only train government health staff. To date, no general psychosocial counselling training has been offered to the public by this institution. Despite this reality, vacancy announcements continue to demand qualifications that are practically unattainable, exposing serious weaknesses in government policy planning. At the same time, while one government body (CTEVT) supports training and workforce production, other bodies, including local governments and the National Health Training Center, effectively undermine it. Psychosocial counsellors are caught in the middle of this institutional contradiction.

Due to the unavailability of trained personnel from the National Health Training Center, local governments have begun appointing health assistants and staff nurses as psychosocial counsellors. These individuals often lack counselling competencies and are sent for six months of training only after appointment. Until that training is completed, they are technically unqualified to provide psychosocial services. Advertising for counsellors, appointing non-counsellors, and training them afterward represents a serious policy failure and, as stated by the leadership of the Psychosocial Counsellors' Federation, amounts to institutionalised corruption. Meanwhile, capable counsellors already available in the market are excluded, while millions of rupees are repeatedly spent on training programmes run by NGOs.

Discrimination is further evident in inconsistent recognition of academic institutions. Graduates from one public university are considered acceptable, while those from another public university are rejected, despite both being government institutions. A similar contradiction applies to CTEVT and the National Health Training Center, both state bodies, yet treated unequally in recruitment processes. Most psychosocial counsellors in Nepal are trained through private or non-governmental institutions affiliated with CTEVT and operating under minimum national standards. However, these counsellors are often barred from even applying for municipal positions, leading to widespread frustration and protest.

Mental health policy development in Nepal has been heavily influenced by a small group of government and non-government actors, often driven by donor agendas rather than national needs. Despite repeated disasters and rising mental health challenges, mental health continues to be treated as a temporary or project-based issue rather than a core public responsibility. Reports of misuse of foreign aid, repeated monopolisation of policy spaces, and conflicts of interest have further eroded trust within the sector.

As a result of long-standing discrimination and policy inconsistency, psychosocial counsellors organised a national gathering in Pokhara and formally established the Psychosocial Counsellors' Federation of Nepal under the leadership of Bijaya Sharan Acharya. Provincial committees have since been formed across all seven provinces, and collective advocacy for professional rights has begun.

At a time when suicide rates are increasing and mental health needs are escalating, counsellors believe unity is essential to protect service quality and professional dignity. Excluding qualified counsellors in the name of "quality control" is not only unjust but also a violation of human rights. Recognising psychosocial counsellors within national policy and strategy frameworks is no longer optional; it is a necessity.

The author is general secretary at Psychosocial Counsellors' Federation of Nepal

> At a time when suicide rates are increasing and mental health needs are escalating, counsellors believe unity is essential to protect service quality and professional dignity.

Ancient Supernova Lights Cosmos



Dr. Rishi Shah

ASTRONOMY

Elusive planet Mercury would be fleeting low in the western sky just after sunset. It can be succinctly chased in the constellation Capricornus (sea goat). Perceiving it in solar glare would be difficult. Mercury reaches its greatest eastern elongation from the Sun on 19 February. This can be the best time to enjoy the eccentric moments of Mercury since it will be at its highest point above the horizon in the western evening sky.

Planets Venus and Mars will be out of sight this month. They are gliding gleefully in the vicinity of the Sun through the triangle resembling the constellation Capricornus during daytime.

The mighty planet Jupiter with its mysterious moons can be relished richly from evening hours in the eastern sky after sundown in the commanding constellation Gemini (twins). It would climb high in the southern sky before midnight. It will be glistening like a shiny spot of lambent light in the western sky after the wee hours of the night till it sinks towards the western horizon.

The strange stars Castor (Kasturi) and Pollux (Punerbasu) decorate Gemini distinctly. The resplendent ringed planet Saturn can be seen shortly for a few hours in the western sky as dusk fades to darkness. It would be relaxing rejoicing below the confounding circlet asterism residing in the charming constellation Pisces (fishes).

The distant planet Uranus can be glimpsed greatly in the western sky after sundown from evening twilight till after midnight. It would be obviously obvious in the northeastern sector of the congenial constellation Taurus (bull). Red giant star Aldebaran (Rohini) is scintillating below Uranus. Far-flung planet Neptune would be appearing lamely in the western sky after sunset tersely in the constellation Pisces as a nib of illumination in a similar style as Uranus. It would be evanescent thereafter. Saturn is lustrously lambent below bluish Neptune.

The full moon can be favourably fascinated on 01 February. It is popularly recognised as the snow moon because the heaviest snows usually fall during this time of the year. Since hunting is difficult during harsh winters, this moon is also dubbed demandingly as hunger full moon. The new moon will betide on 17 February. Maha Shivaratri is observed with veneration on 15 February. Gayalpu Loshar is cheerfully celebrated on 18 February.

A rare but alluring annular solar eclipse transpires terrifically on 17 February. Such an eerie eclipse exceptionally occurs when the moon is too far away from Earth to completely cover the sun. This results in a rigorous ring of light around the darkened moon. The Sun's corona is not visible during an annular eclipse. This eclipse will only be visible in Antarctica and the southern Indian Ocean.

Attempting to spot an object near the Sun through binoculars or telescopes could immediately and permanently damage eyesight. Such actions, especially during solar eclipses, should be strictly avoided. Solar eclipses could be watched indirectly on projected images or after donning reliable eye protection with legally certified eye shades. This eclipse is dubbed a member of the Saros series 121. The Sun at the moment of eclipse will be blazing in the conjuring constellation Aquarius (water bearer).

A secretive 10-second signal from one of the most distant points in the universe had been detected, and experts are still attempting to unfathom its origins. Two earth satellites had confirmed that it came from a far-off source, a whopping 13 billion light-years away from us, likely exuding from an energetically exploding supernova when the universe was utterly 730 million years old. The faraway entity requires relatively more time for its light signal to reach us.

When we acknowledge a very distant explosion or star, we are actually looking at what had happened there billions of years ago, like a tantalising time machine showing us the past. The scientists believe that this high-energy gamma-ray burst, which they had named GRB 250314A, existed from the earliest supernova ever recorded from the dawn of time. Gamma rays are invisible and ultra-powerful forms of light. They are the most energetic source of radiation known in the universe and are produced by massive stellar explosions, appearing as superbright flashes from our planet. Researchers are still unsure why this ancient supernova from the early universe behaved almost exactly like the exploding stars that are verified in our modern universe today.

If this explosion is the true source of the signal, NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA) expect early stars to be bigger, hotter and produce much more volatile explosions than the quirky signal suggested. This gamma-ray burst, GRB 250314A, is believed to be the source of the signal received from sheer 13 billion light-years away. This supernova, GRB 250314A, had probably exploded during the first billion years after the Big Bang. The signal was first identified on 14 March 2025, when the Space Variable Objects Monitor (SVOM) satellite picked it up as a sudden flash of high-energy light from deep space. Two studies on the possible source of this signal have just been released. The probe is a joint project between scientists in France and China designed to spot these kinds of bursts throughout the cosmos.

The signal recorded was a short and powerful burst of gamma rays, which are invisible waves



NIGHT SKY IN FEBRUARY 2026

of energy stronger than X-rays and capable of passing straight through the human body that could damage cells, DNA, and tissues. Since this burst likely came from the exploding star 13 billion light-years from Earth, the gamma rays that reached Earth were far too weak to pose any danger to humans. This burst lasted only about 10 seconds because gamma-ray bursts are like quick fireworks in space, releasing huge amounts of energy in a very short time before fading away.

Unlike random noise or background static in space, which is constant and weak, these gamma-ray bursts stand out as super-bright, focused beams with a unique pattern that human satellites have been built to recognise. NASA's James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) confirmed the discovery about three and a half months later, during the summer of 2025, by taking detailed pictures and measurements of the fading glow of the explosion, which could still be seen in space. The 10-second signal was recorded in 2025 by the Space Variable Objects Monitor (SVOM) satellite, operated by France and China. Only Webb could directly show that this light is from a supernova (collapsing massive star). Other sources of mysterious space noise like this might include solar flares or cosmic rays, but gamma-ray bursts are much rarer and come from massive events like star explosions that scientists are able to track down billions of years after they take place.

JWST is so advanced that it would be able to find more signals from when the universe was only 5 per cent of its current age, which is roughly 14 billion years old now. We know very little about the first billion years of the universe, what was happening in space during this time, or how stars behaved and died throughout the cosmos. Until now, it was thought that following the Big Bang, the massive explosion believed to have kick-started everything in existence, early stars lived much shorter lives and contained fewer elements than stars like our sun do today. However, in December 2025, the new studies analysed detailed observations from the Webb Telescope and found that this supernova from 730 million years after the Big Bang had the same brightness and radiation signature as exploding stars billions of years later.

GRB 250314A is a long-duration gamma-ray burst (GRB) detected on 14 March 2025, corresponding to approximately 730 million years after the Big Bang. This event is associated with the core-collapse supernova of a massive star, marking the earliest confirmed supernova explosion observed to date and surpassing the previous record holder at 1.8 billion years post-Big Bang. GRB 250314A provides critical insights into massive star formation and death during the Epoch of Reionisation, a period when the universe's neutral intergalactic medium was ionised by the first galaxies.

The burst was first detected by the Space Variable Objects Monitor (SVOM) [6][7] satellite and followed up by multiple international observatories, including NASA's James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), which confirmed the supernova and imaged the host galaxy, a compact, star-forming system resembling those from the reionisation era. The event's properties align with models of collapsars, where rapidly rotating massive stars collapse into black holes, producing relativistic jets. Discovery and observation of GRB 250314A were detected on 14 March 2025 by the French-Chinese SVOM satellite in the constellation Virgo (maiden). GRB 250314A offers direct evidence of massive star formation, explosions, and black hole seeding in the early universe, during reionization when the first galaxies ionised the neutral intergalactic medium. The supernova's similarity to modern events challenges predictions of more energetic explosions from metal-poor progenitors, implying collapsar-driven GRBs were producing black holes during one billion years post-Big Bang.

Gamma-ray bursts (GRBs) are the most powerful and violent explosions in the known universe. These brief flashes of high-energy light result from some of the universe's most explosive events, including the birth of black holes and collisions between neutron stars.

Lasting a few milliseconds to several minutes, according to NASA, GRBs can be hundreds of times brighter than an average supernova, making them as luminous as a million trillion suns. Thus, when a GRB erupts, it briefly becomes the brightest source of electromagnetic radiation in the observable universe.

NASA has announced dates for returning Americans to the moon after 53 years. It has been revealed that Artemis II, the first manned mission to the moon since 1972, will lift off earliest on 06 February from the launch pad at Kennedy Space Centre, Cape Canaveral, Florida in Orion spacecraft carried by NASA's powerful Space Launch System (SLS). However, the official launch window for Artemis II will remain open from 31 January to 14 February (Valentine's Day), with several alternate dates perhaps being picked out.

The mission will take three NASA and one Canadian astronaut on historically epic 10-day journey around the moon and back to earth. It will not land on the moon.

The lunar landing is envisaged to be undertaken by Artemis III in 2027. Artemis II will first orbit Earth a couple of times to test the life support equipment and then head toward the moon for a lunar flyby and close pass without orbiting or landing.

The spacecraft will utilise the moon's gravity to slingshot back toward Earth in so-called free-return trajectory mode, meaning if anything were to go wrong, it can safely return without the extra use of its engines. The main goal of this escapade will be to prove the rocket, spacecraft and systems work perfectly with humans on board, thus paving the way for Artemis III's landing next year.

It would land and establish a long-term presence of life on the moon led by America. What astronauts learn from the renewed missions to the moon will eventually help in future efforts to dispatch and settle mankind on Mars. The night skies of this winter month offer spectacular sights of numerous planets, stars, constellations and enchanting entities spreading superbly all over the heavens.

(Dr. Shah is an academician at NAST and patron of NASO.)

Critical Review Of Nepali Political Economy



Mukti Rijal

Manikar Karki is a young and upcoming contributor in the domain of political economy in Nepal. Based in Butwal currently, he has been a columnist for several national dailies and online media and wrote specifically on the topical issues of political economy. A quick review of his published articles, especially in the national newspapers, shows his grip, deep curiosity and interest in the issues of political economy, with particular attention to Nepal's case of retarded development and economic stagnation. The book introduced in this column is not only a testimony of his relentless pursuit of the subject but also a clear indication of the ever-expanding contours of his insight into the political and economic development of the country. The question of why Nepal has remained persistently underdeveloped has occupied scholars, policymakers, and political actors for a considerable length of time, including Sardar Bhim Bahadur Pandey, Devendra Raj Panday, Dr. Babu Ram Bhattarai, Dr. Harka Gurung, and so on. This 352-page book by Maniker Karki is a valuable addition to this long-standing discourse, and it draws heavily on the authentic works and documents on the theme.

It situates Nepal's economic stagnation within a historical framework while engaging with major propositions of economic development and underdevelopment. The book's central contribution lies in demonstrating that Nepal's underdevelopment has been not only the result of policy failures but also the manifestation of historically embedded structural constraints and bottlenecks.

The author of the book argues that Nepal entered the modern era with severe structural handicaps and hindrances. Unlike many postcolonial societies like India and other South Asian nations that experienced direct colonial rule, Nepal was not a colony but languished in "semi-isolated" status under different regimes spanning over the period. This long isolation produced a different—but equally debilitating—form of economic distortion. The Rana oligarchy, spanning from 1846 to 1951, entrenched a feudal agrarian structure. It had monopolised state power and deliberately restricted education and infrastructure to preserve the oligarchic dominance in and plunder of the state resources. From an economic-historical perspective, the Rana Period reflects what institutional economists describe as the dominance of extractive institutions designed to transfer resources from the people to the oligarchic ruling elite. Land tenure systems, taxation practices, and forced labour constrained productivity and prevented the emergence of a dynamic domestic market.

The book rightly emphasises that political absolutism and economic stagnation reinforced each other. The book engages, though implicitly, with modernisation theory, which catalysed Nepal's development planning after the 1950s. Fifteen periodic plans, foreign aid inflows, and bureaucratic expansion were expected to propel Nepal along a linear path to development. However, the author shows that these so-called socio-economic modernisation interventions failed to transform the productive base of the economy and deliver corresponding results. A particularly commendable dimension of the book under review is looking into the subject from a political economy approach. According to this approach, underdevelopment is not treated merely as an economic activity or outcome. But it is analysed as a politically reproduced condition.

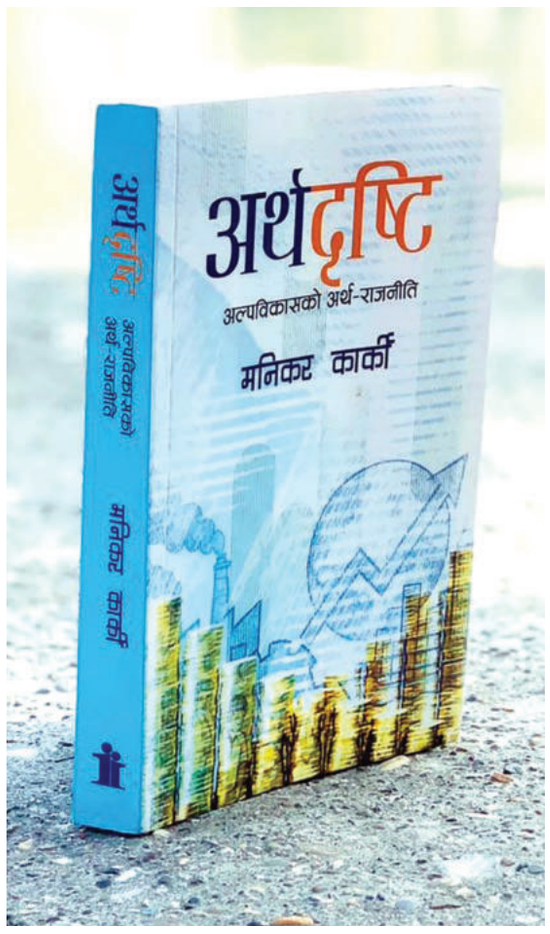
Whether under the Panchayat system or the multiparty era after 1990, including the contemporary federal republic time, ruling elites are wont to capture state resources while avoiding meaningful reform and transformation in industrial policy, the taxation of wealth and so on. The book's major strength lies in its historical references and contextual clarity. In chapter five the author makes a critical assessment of the global economic situation, characterising it as the crisis of capitalism that has resulted into economic recession, burgeoning inequality and economic deprivation.

By avoiding statistical, infographic or purely technocratic explanations, it situates Nepal's underdevelopment within enduring institutional and political constraints and limitations. Its interdisciplinary approach that combines history, economics, and political analysis tends to make it accessible and comprehensible to a wide range of readership. The interesting part of the book is the concluding chapter that proposes alternatives to the existing global economic policies that are lopsided and have given rise to the unequal world. The alternatives sound similar to the ones discussed in the well-known book Road to Freedom by Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz.

According to Stiglitz, globalisation can benefit society—but only with fair rules and practices. It is an obvious fact that current global systems favour corporations over workers and poor people. However, according to Nobel laureate Stiglitz, progressive capitalism balances markets with democratic governance to promote shared prosperity, real freedom, social justice, sustainable growth and so on. The book could have been more relevant if it could have engaged more explicitly with contemporary development discourses comprising the role of institutional infrastructures, the digital economy and ICT, regional value chains, or climate and ecological economics.

Greater attention to sub-national inequalities between hills, plains, and marginalised communities with reference to the federal reorganisation of the state would also have enriched the political economy analysis. For scholars, students, and policymakers seeking to understand Nepal beyond surface-level diagnoses, this book is an important reminder that meaningful development requires not just policies but structural transformation of institutions, power relations, and the economy itself.

(The author is presently associated with Policy Research Institute (PRI) as a senior research fellow.)



Artha Dristi (Perspectives on Political Economy: Political Economy of Underdevelopment) (second edition), authored by Maniker Karki, Printed at Indigo Ink, Kathmandu, Price: Rs.799/-

> This book is an important reminder that meaningful development requires not just policies but structural transformation of institutions, power relations, and the economy itself.

FUTURE WATCH

(Based on birth names)

From February 6th to 13th, 2026 - D. N. Lohani

ARIES — Undertaken assignments will be completed successfully. You may have to bear some obstacles on Monday, but the remaining period is good. The study will take a progressive course. Health condition will improve. Employees will observe the status quo.

TAURUS — Prevailing doubts will be removed. A high level of confidence will guide you ahead. Lack of support from friends and family can create some problems. You will have to rely on sole effort. Study will continue as usual. Avoid risky ventures on Thursday.

GEMINI — An ordinary week is in store. Simple tasks will consume extra. Opponents will remain active. Prayer of Sun and Ganesh will help. Business can slow down. Others will remain unimpressed with your effort.

CANCER — Travel is likely but won't yield much fruit despite expenses. Family-related expenses will rise. Parents will remain displeased with children. Darshan of Ganesh on Tuesday is a remedy.

LEO — Prevailing obstacles will be removed. Health disorders of self or family can cause concern. Job-related concerns will rise. The study will take a progressive course. Important tasks will be completed on Sunday and Monday.

VIRGO — Work will be complete after additional expenses. With additional effort, you will gain success. Travel will turn fruitful. Pleasant gatherings can take place. Businesses will face obstacles.

LIBRA — A pleasant event can occur. Success rate will be low. Expenditure level will rise. Friends will cooperate. Students will have to work harder. Lack of decisiveness can create some problems.

SCORPIO — Despite hardship, output will be low. Opponents will remain active. Recreational causes are likely to increase expenses. Religious sentiment can go down. Wrong thoughts can conquer the mind, so be careful.

SAGITTARIUS — Expenditure level will rise. Religious causes such as pilgrimage can cause expenses. You will retain progress in your love life. Marital development will reach success. With some effort, study will excel.

CAPRICORN — Prevailing fear and confusion will disappear, but you still will have to wait for progress. New friends can join the circle and provide good support. You will fail to impress others. Indecisiveness can create problems.

AQUARIUS — You will find it difficult to control expenses, especially due to family causes. Study will take a progressive course after some expenses. Friends support work for you. Employees will observe the status quo.

PISCES — Financial status will remain ordinary. Family-related expenses will rise. Employees will remain displeased with their progress. Watering the sacred fig and praying to Ganesh is a remedy to reduce malefic effects.

Kirati Folk Stories In English



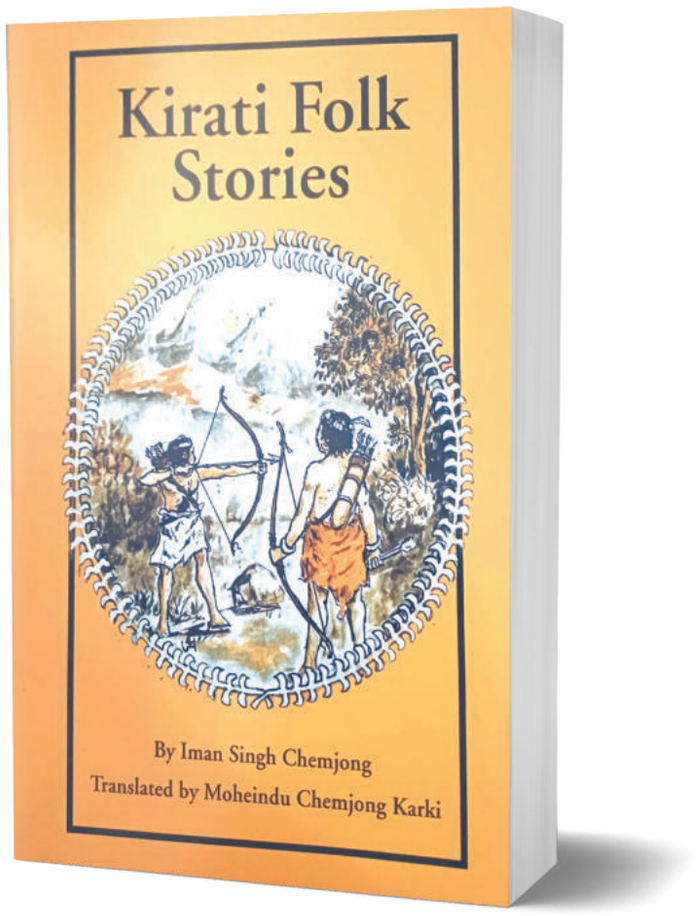
Deepak Shrestha

> Kirati Folk Stories is a meaningful contribution to Nepali and indigenous literature in English. It offers readers an imaginative window into Kirati culture and values while preserving a literary heritage for future generations.

Kirati Folk Stories is a significant literary work that brings the rich oral tradition of the Kirati community to contemporary readers in English. Written by the late historian and scholar Iman Singh Chemjong and translated by his granddaughter Moheindu Chemjong Karki, the book is an English version of Kirati Dantya Katha, first published in 1965. The translated edition was officially released on January 1, 2026, coinciding with the 122nd birth anniversary of late Chemjong, adding both symbolic and cultural value to the publication.

The book consists of 19 folk stories that reflect the beliefs, traditions, worldview, and close connection of the Kirati people with nature. These stories are not historical narratives or scholarly interpretations but imaginative folktales that have been passed down through generations. Set in a time long past, they present a world where humans, animals, birds, plants, rivers, mountains, and flowers coexist and interact meaningfully. Nature is not merely a background in these stories; it is an active participant with voice, character, and purpose.

One of the notable strengths of the book is its structure. Each story appears as an independent chapter, preserving the traditional style of oral storytelling. Most of the stories are brief and engaging, while the longest extends to about 17 pages. Despite their simplicity, the stories are layered with cultural meaning and moral insight. Titles such as The Story of Kalchunda, The Story of Mount Tandong, The Story of Koirala, The Story of the Dog, and The Story of the Nettle immediately suggest their connection to everyday life and the natural world.



These particular stories are especially relatable even today, as they explain the origins of birds, mountains, trees, animals, and plants that continue to exist in Kirati society and households. For instance, The Story of Kalchunda narrates how a bird was rewarded for fulfilling a king's wish, resulting in the golden beak and feet still seen today. Similarly, stories about Mount Tandong, the faithful dog, the koirala tree, and the nettle plant link ancient imagination with present-day belief and practice. Such narratives effectively bridge the past and the present, making the stories both familiar and meaningful.

Beyond these, several other stories explore broader themes related to ancient spiritual beliefs, the role of gods and priests, and the origin of the Himalayan landscape and medicinal flowers. Figures central to Kirati cultural and spiritual tradition—such as Sumnima and Paruhang—appear in multiple stories, reinforcing their importance in Kirati literature. The book also includes references to the Yuma religion and Yuma Sammang, the revered goddess, offering readers insight into indigenous belief systems. The personification of animals such as crows, wrens, vultures, snakes, monkeys, and mice adds imagination and vitality, making the stories lively and memorable.

The translation by Moheindu Chemjong Karki deserves special appreciation. She has carefully preserved the originality, cultural depth, and linguistic flavour of the source text while making it accessible to English readers. Although some Kirati names and terms may be unfamiliar and challenging to pronounce, they enhance the authenticity of the work and reflect the translator's commitment to cultural preservation rather than simplification. The translation clearly aims not only to reach a wider audience but also to safeguard the Kirati language, tradition, and worldview.

Illustrations by renowned artist Tek Bir Mukhiya further enrich the book. Placed throughout the text, the illustrations vividly capture key moments, characters, and emotions from the stories, adding visual appeal and helping readers—especially younger ones—engage more deeply with the narratives. Published by Ekta Books Distributors Pvt. Ltd., the book is attractively designed, reflecting the publisher's long-standing experience in producing quality books for young readers.

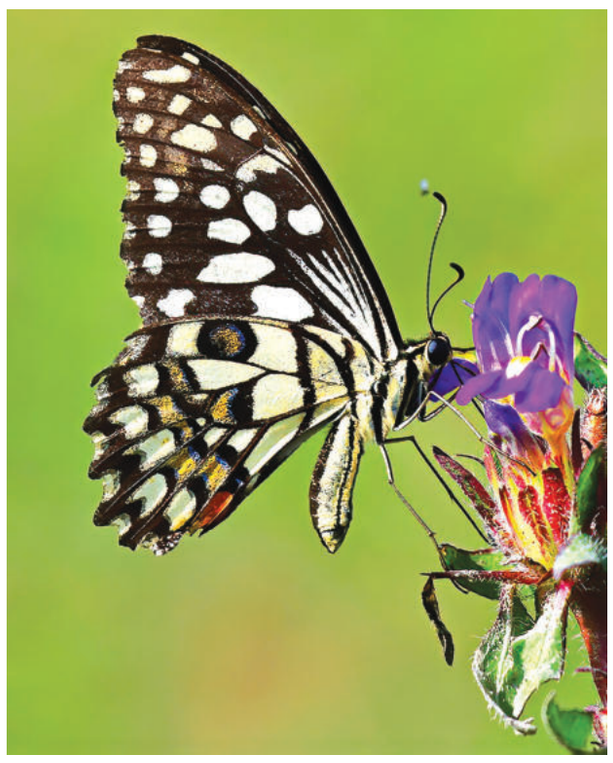
Overall, Kirati Folk Stories is a meaningful contribution to Nepali and indigenous literature in English. It offers readers an imaginative window into Kirati culture and values while preserving a literary heritage for future generations. The book will be especially valuable for students, young readers, researchers, and anyone interested in folk literature, cultural studies, and indigenous traditions.

(Shrestha is a freelance writer.)

Beautiful Butterflies Of Sankhuwasabha



Rajesh Dhungana







Sankhuwasabha, also called the Arun Valley, is known for its exceptionally rich natural heritage and biodiversity. In this region, there are various species of mammals, butterflies, rhododendrons, orchids, and rare plants and herbs. Due to the rich diversity of rhododendrons in this region, it is also called the "Rhododendron Capital of Nepal". Makalu Barun National Park and Conservation Area is also located in the district, which is designated as a biosphere reserve by UNESCO. This reserve has ecosystems such as tropical forests and alpine meadows.

As per the scientific studies, this region is famous for butterfly diversity. Around 31 species of butterflies from nine families are found in the southern part of the district. The Nymphalidae and Satyridae variants of the butterfly family are dominant here. Another scientific study conducted in this region in October 2020 identified the Pale Green Awlet (Burara gomata) in the buffer zone of Makalu Barun National Park. This butterfly species was first identified in the eastern region of Nepal in 1990 during the Japanese Expedition. The specimen of this butterfly was brought to Japan and examined.

The varied geography of Nepal, ranging from the Terai plains to the towering Himalayas, harbours a high variety of butterfly species. As per the recent update in 2024 by Dutch butterfly expert Piet van der Poel, there are 695 recorded butterfly species in Nepal, making up about 3.72 per cent of the total butterfly diversity in the world. This variety of butterfly species in Nepal has caught the attention of some of the most renowned experts in the field of butterfly research, such as British butterfly researcher Colin Philip Smith, fondly known in Nepal as "Putali Bajey". Smith spent more than five decades researching butterfly species in Nepal, documenting hundreds of species, contributing to the curriculum of school education in Nepal, and facilitating the establishment of a butterfly museum in the country. Smith left us in November 2023 in Pokhara at the old age of 88 years.

Butterflies are one of the most studied insect species in the world and are also considered to be one of the most important indicators of environmental health. Of the total butterfly species in Nepal, about 51 per cent are found in the Terai/Shivalik region, 88 per cent in the mid-hills, and 13 per cent in the highlands of Nepal. About 18 per cent of butterfly species in the central hills of Nepal are threatened due to increased human-induced pressures on the environment. Butterfly populations are directly related to climatic conditions.



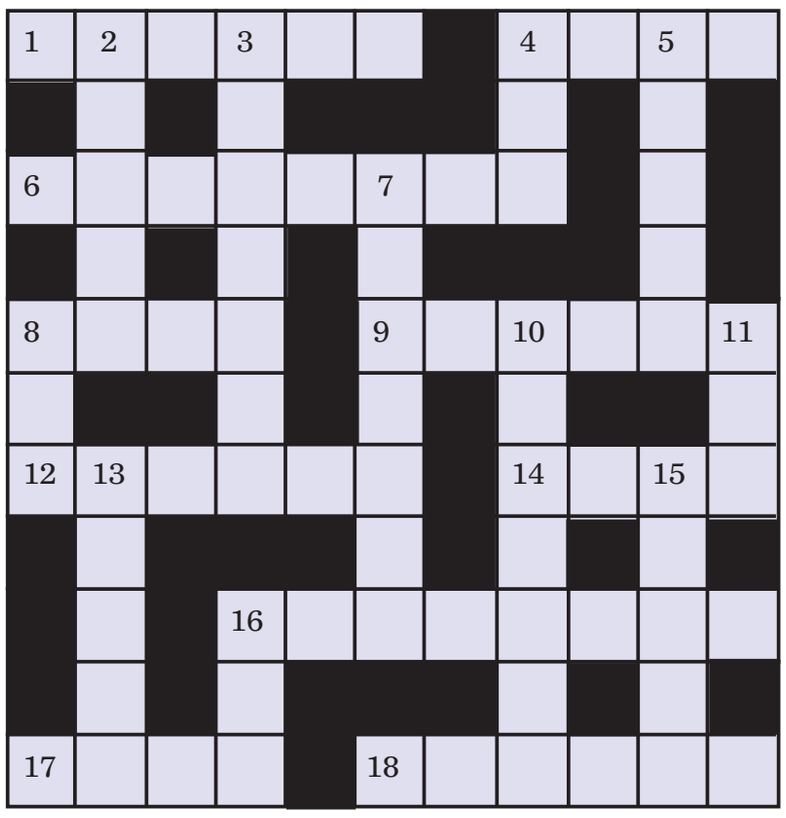


From a biological point of view, species of butterflies are also considered to be some of the most interesting creatures. They are known to eat only fluids, and for this, they have a long proboscis with which they drink fluids like nectar, water, and minerals. Some species of butterflies are known to "mud puddle" to obtain sodium and other nutrients necessary for reproduction. They are also known to land on humans to obtain sodium and other nutrients from sweat droplets containing salt. They have six legs, four wings, and one pair of antennae, with the antennae used to smell and feel the air around them and taste receptors on their legs to recognise food and host plants.

During my 17-day stay in Sankhuwasabha in August 2025, I was able to click pictures of 21 different species of butterflies found at different locations of the district. This experience proved that the district has a tremendous potential for biodiversity studies and research. It is unfortunate to note, however, that many species of butterflies are facing severe threats to their existence. According to the NRDB Biodiversity Profile Project (1995), out of a total of 142 species of butterflies facing severe threats to their existence in Nepal, 12 species are in dire need of strict protection.

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

TRN CROSSWORD PUZZLE NO. 1868



Across

1. Slightly fat.
4. A threat used for knitting.
6. Typical features of somebody or something.
8. A fair.
9. To be involved in something superficially.
12. To fold or collapse.
14. A board game.
16. A society full of suffering.
17. A precious stone.
18. A gas required for burning.

Down

2. To lift a heavy object.
3. A defensive wall.
4. A mountain animal.
5. Related to royalty.
7. To speak before a group.
8. A rowdy group of people.
10. A platform on an upper floor.
11. A sense of self.
13. Take someone's property unlawfully.
15. To operate a vehicle.
16. A dish made from lentils.

Last date of entry:
February 11, 2026

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

Name: .....

Address: .....

Solutions to TRN Crossword Puzzle No. 1867

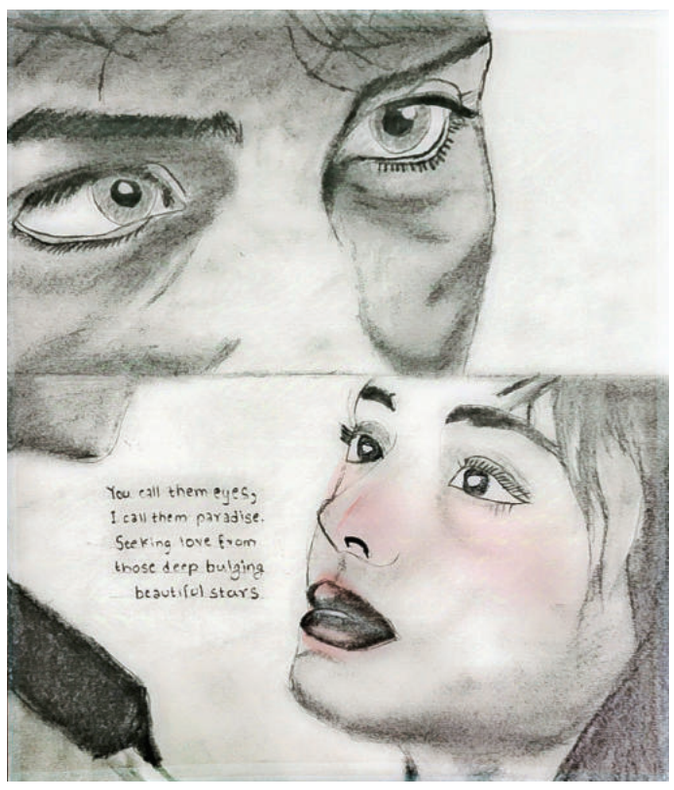
ACROSS: 1. AGHAST 4. CALM 6. RECOURSE 8. ENVY 9. DAMSEL 12. ADNEXA 14. DAMP 16. ENTRENCH 17. CRAB 18. BAMBOO

DOWN: 2. GLEAN 3. ANODYNE 4. CUEL 5. LAPSE 7. RADIANT 8. ERA 10. MIDTERM 11. LIP 13. DECOR 15. MACRO 16. EBB

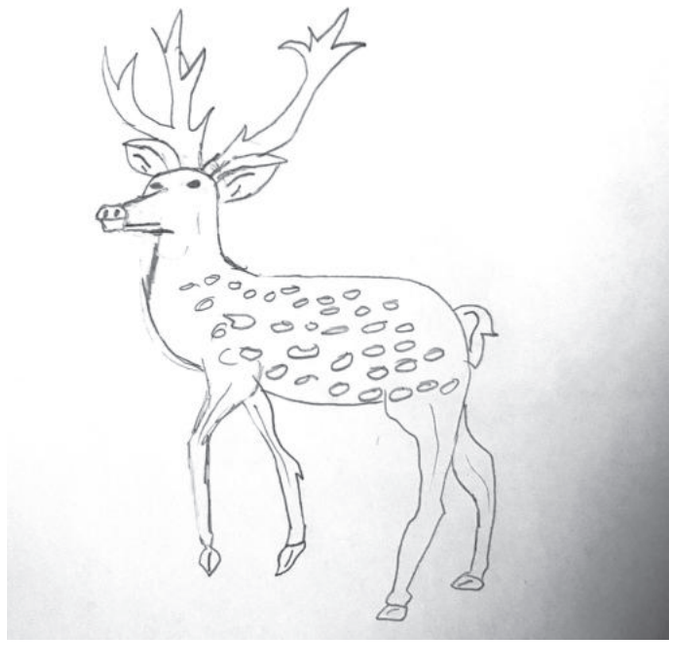
LUCKY WINNER

Singh Dongol Rabindra, Bhoye Bahal, Kathmandu
Damodar Lohani, Gyaneswor-30
Lunar Shrestha, Kumaripati, Lalitpur-20

CREATIVE CORNER



Prajwol Wagle, Grade: XII, LRI School



Sashwat Ghimire, Grade: II, Kalpabrikshya Sikshya Sadan, Kathmandu

QUIZ OF THE WEEK 34

Questions	Answers
1. When did slavery end in Nepal?	
2. In which country was the 'zero' invented in the world?	
3. How many 'national parks' are there in Nepal?	
4. How many 'metropolitan cities' are there in Nepal?	
5. Which subject is the Pythagorean theorem related to?	

LUCKY WINNER

Khagendra Nath, Bagbazar

My Mother



Anukrit Luitel

My mother works hard for me
You gives the love always free,
You are the most helpful and careful
To me you are the most beautiful and peaceful.

My mother is the best in the world
You are more valuable than the gold,
I love my mother, it can't be measure
You are my life's foremost treasure.

You constantly consume time for me
You are a caring and enduring mother I see,
You respect and care every guest
You give full time to make my future best.

You like to do fun and to travel
For me my mother is very reliable,
My mother is very fair and loyal
I shouldn't forget my mother and birth soil.

Class: IV
School: Nirvana Academy, Kathmandu.



Supriya Sapkota, Grade: VII, Ripumardini Sainik Mahavidyalaya