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TODAY

■ NATIONAL

There are some 200 displaced people living in shelters in Ghyangual of Helambu. Those who could afford have moved out but people who have nowhere else to go are left behind amid the risk of more disasters. Pg 2

Jack Ma, founder of tech conglomerate Alibaba and once the richest business leader in China, arrived in Kathmandu on Tuesday afternoon. He landed at the Kathmandu airport on a special flight at 2:30 pm. Pg 3

OPINION

Community management policies should prioritise harvesting mature trees and using timber for various wood products rather than allowing trees to decay, says Bijesh Mishra. Pg 4



■ MONEY

Chinese Premier Li Qiang slammed efforts in the West to "de-risk" their economies as a "false proposition" on Tuesday, hitting back against US and EU policy aimed at reducing their reliance on China. Pg 6

■ SPORTS

Aashish Chaudhary struck late in the second half as Nepal defeated Pakistan 1-0 at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium in their last Group A match to exit the SAFF Championship with a consolation win. Pg 7



CULTURE

'Charulata' and 'Savitri,' the women feel an emptiness in their lives and find ways to fill it up-daring to tread forbidden routes. For Savitri, it's relishing Navaraj's gaze as they sit across each other having lunch. Pg 8



A weaver bird hovers close to its nest at Balkhu in Kathmandu on Monday.

Top court orders relief for conflict-era victims of torture and sexual violence

17 years since Peace Accord, torture victims lack adequate means to seek justice and hold perpetrators to account.

BINOD GHIMIRE KATHMANDU, JUNE 27

The Supreme Court has directed the government to include the victims of torture and sexual violence from the Maoist insurgency in its interim relief programme. Passing verdicts in two different writ petitions that challenged the 'discriminatory provisions' in the working procedure for relief distribution, a division of justices Sapana Pradhan Malla and Hari Prasad Phuyal on Monday concluded that the victims of the insurgency-era torture and sexual violence should not be excluded from the relief package.

Although successive governments have on different occasions brought various relief packages for conflict victims, those who faced torture and sexual violence at the hands of the state security forces or the Maoist insurgents have not received any Kashiram Dhungana, who represented the petitioners, said the court has done some justice to the victims who had so far been excluded from the government's relief programmes.

"The Supreme Court has issued a ruling as demanded by the petitioners. The government will have to provide relief to victims of torture and sexual violence although the details of the verdict will be known only after the court releases the full text of the verdict," he told the Post. It generally takes a few days to months for the court to issue full texts.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in its report says at least 2,500 inci-

dents of torture happened during the insurgency. Advocacy Forum, a non-governmental organisation working on human rights advocacy, recorded 1,251 cases of torture between 2001 and 2006 and most of them were committed by state actors

In its annual report published on the occasion of the International Day against Torture on Monday, the forum said electric shocks, rape and various other forms of sexual abuse, burying people alive, depriving them of basic needs like food, water, and access to bathrooms, severe beatings with iron rods and bamboo sticks on their feet

UNHCR report says at least 2,500 incidents of torture happened during the insurgency.

and back, rolling wooden logs on thighs, pushing heads under water and death threats were the commonly used methods of torture applied by the state security forces during the insurgency. Similarly, the Maoist side also used some of the torture methods.

Seventeen years since the Comprehensive Peace Accord, torture victims lack adequate means to seek justice and hold perpetrators to account and are constantly being deprived of effective redresses, such as reparations, acknowledgment and truth, reads the report.

>> Continued on page 2

Seven held in Lalita Niwas land scam

Former election commissioner Shah and Bhatbhateni supermarket owner Gurung are among those caught.

□ PRITHVI MAN SHRESTHA & ANUP OJHA KATHMANDU, JUNE 27

The Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) of Nepal Police has started arresting people allegedly involved in the forgery of government documents with the intent to transfer the ownership of government land located at Lalita Niwas, Baluwatar, in the name of private individuals.

The police said the CIB on Tuesday had arrested seven individuals including ex-election commissioner Sudhir Shah, owner of Bhatbhateni supermarket Min Bahadur Gurung and former government officials including Kaladhar Deuja, then chief of the Dillibazar Land Revenue Office.

The others arrested are Surendra Kapali, Dharma Prasad Gautam, Hupendra Mani KC and Gopal Karki.

Citing last year's Supreme Court order, the CIB, however, released Deuja, KC and Kapali later in the day.

The Supreme Court, on August 4 last year had issued an interim order to initiate investigations against them without detaining them.

"More arrests will follow," a CIB source told the Post. Except Gopal Karki, the other six are also defend-

ants in a corruption case filed by the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) on February 5, 2020 in connection with the land scam.

CIB chief Additional Inspector General Kiran Bajracharya told the Post that seven people were arrested on Tuesday after the District Court, Kathmandu issued an arrest warrant against them at CIB's request. "They will be investigated for possible prosecution in connection with the forgery of government documents," said Bajracharya. "We will consult the District Attorney Office, Kathmandu, to explore if any additional accusa-

Nearly a year and a half after the District Attorney Office, Kathmandu returned the investigation report to the CIB requesting further investigation, police have again started appre hending people on the charge of their involvement in the land grab scam.

Police said new arrests were made based on separate investigations against the persons involved in the forgery of government documents.

Police say new arrests were based on probe against persons charged with document forgery.

Even though the former election commissioner Shah was not made a defendant in the corruption case filed by the CIAA, his wife Urmila Shah was. The anti-graft body had filed cases against 175 people. Of them, 110 were accused of graft while 65 faced cases as the government sought to reclaim the lands illegally transferred.

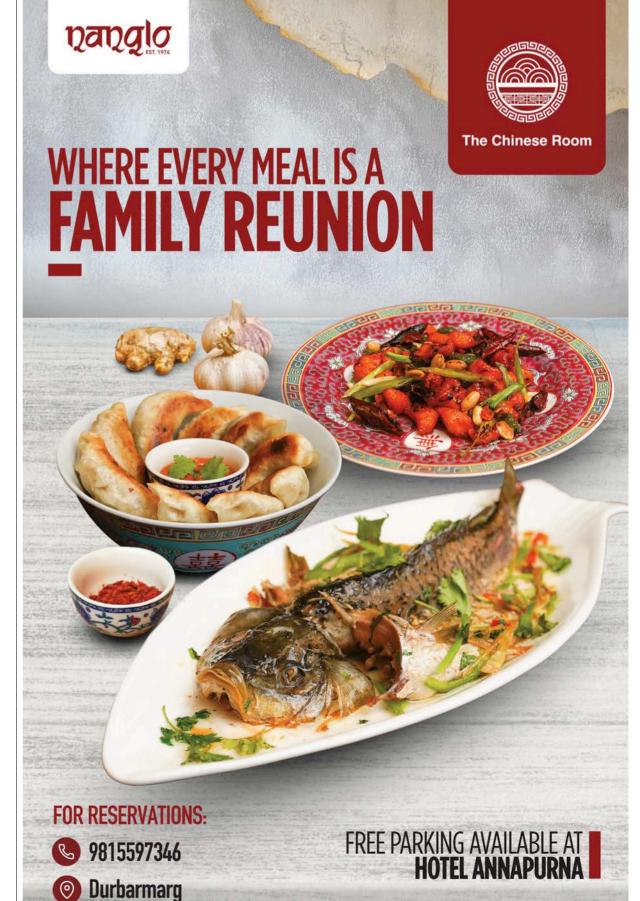
Former deputy prime minister and minister for physical infrastructure and transport Bijay Kumar Gachhadar, and two former land reforms ministers Dambar Shrestha and Chandra Dev Joshi, along with three former government secretaries, are among those accused of corruption over the illegal transfer of government lands.

>> Continued on page 2



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Civil aviation boss hauled up over Yeti Airlines crash

Tourism ministry accuses the director general of consistently failing to ensure aviation safety, with five aircraft incidents and accidents on his watch.

SANGAM PRASAIN KATHMANDU, JUNE 27

The Tourism Ministry has accused the civil aviation regulator of neglect resulting in the crash of Yeti Airlines Flight 691 last January. The ATR 72 plunged to the ground while coming in to land at newly opened Pokhara International Airport, killing all 72 persons on board.

At that time, experts had demanded a criminal investigation alleging that a serious crime and mass murder had

On Monday, Pradeep Adhikari, director general of the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal, was hauled up by the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation and told to submit an explanation over the disaster.

"Adhikari has been asked to furnish clarification on nine points," said Rajendra Kumar KC, spokesman for the ministry. "We have given him

seven days to do so." The nine-point clarification note, which has gone viral, states that the



Pradeep Adhikari, director general of the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal.

director general's actions violated government policy. He has been charged with misusing his position and failing in his duty.

The ministry has accused the director general of consistently failing to ensure aviation safety as there have been five aircraft incidents and accidents on his watch, including two major disasters.

"As serious incidents and accidents continue to happen, the country is suffering losses, and serious questions are being raised about Nepal's aviation safety. As an accountable executive for the state safety programme, why shouldn't we charge you that you failed to fulfil your responsibility to make aviation safety effective?" the note stated. "Without receiving the final report

of the flight calibration and without completing all the preliminary preparations for the operation of the international airport, including the flight safety assessment, why did the test flight of the airport take place without receiving the report?" the note stated. Adhikari has been asked to explain

why he allowed a Himalaya Airlines Airbus A320 to land under visual flight rules at Pokhara International Airport during its inauguration on January 1, even though the airport had not been tested.

>> Continued on page 6

NATIONAL

□ DISTRICT DIGEST

Flood-damaged road reopens after 10 days

PANCHTHAR: Transportation along Phidim-Taplejung section of the Mechi Highway resumed after 10 days on Tuesday. The road was disrupted after the flooding of the Hewakhola river swept away a bridge on June 17 According to Bidur Pokharel, chief at Division Road Office in Ilam, a makeshift bridge has been installed across the stream by using concrete pipes. We decided to construct the diversion as it takes time to install a Bailey bridge," said Pokharel. Taplejung and some parts of Panchthar were reeling under shortage of essentials due to the road disruption.

1,200 apple saplings planted in Dhorpatan

BAGLUNG: Dhorpatan Municipality has completed the task of planting 1,200 apple tree saplings in the current fiscal year for commercial apple cultivation in the area under the Prime Minister Agricultural Modernisation Project (PMAMP). According to Sujit Poudel, district head of the PMAMP, the saplings were planted on 80 ropani [4.07 hectares] by local farmers in Nabi village in ward 9 of Dhorpatan Municipality, and the apple trees they planted are in good condition. "Additional subsidies such as water and fertilisers, among other things, will also be provided under the project. And during the harvest time, the project will help find the market for the produce and make arrangements for transportation. More apple trees will be planted in the coming days,' said Poudel.

Son arrested on charge of killing mother

WEST NAWALPARASI: On Tuesday, police arrested Shiva Kumar Musahar, a 25-year-old man from Sunwal Municipality Ward 13, on charge of killing his 50-year-old mother over a family dispute. According to Bhojraj Poudel, information officer at the District Police Office, the accused was absconding after killing his mother on Monday at around 5 pm. He was arrested in Gaidahawa Rural Municipality Ward 8 in Rupandehi district at around 11 am on Tuesday. "A preliminary investigation of the police has revealed that the accused killed his mother in a fit of rage. He had used a sharp object. Further investigation is going on by keeping the accused in custody," said Poudel

Flood-displaced people living in shelters in Sindhupalchok gripped by monsoon worries

Massive flooding of the Melamchi and Indrawati rivers two years ago displaced more than 500 families.

ANISH TIWARI

Sangdo Maya Hyolmo, a 43-year-old woman from Hyolmo Tole in ward 1 of Helambu Rural Municipality, lost her house to the floods that wreaked havoc in the rural municipality two

Hyolmo has since been living in a temporary shed at Ghyangual in the

According to Hyolmo, there are around 200 displaced people like her living in temporary shelters in Ghyangual. "Those who could afford to move out of the temporary shelters have already left. But people like me with nowhere else to go are left behind," she said. "We are waiting for the government to relocate us to safety before the monsoon rains get worse.'

Hyolmo had hoped that the government would work towards protecting the vulnerable settlements and reconstruction of the physical infrastructure, but she has begun losing hope.

"All the victims, including me, can do nothing but wait for help," she said. Floods in the Melamchi and Indrawati rivers two years ago displaced more than 500 families in Melamchi and Indrawati rural municipalities and the surrounding areas,

according to the District Police Office. The flooded Melamchi River took five lives, displaced several households in the villages in both rural municipalities and destroyed 17 fish farms, six hotels, a school, two government offices, six suspension bridges, six motorable bridges, a culvert, and a Bailey bridge connecting Helambu and Melamchi rural municipalities.

Two years after the disaster, the displaced are still living in temporary shelters and are yet to be resettled. The reconstruction of houses and infrastructure in the affected areas has not gained momentum.

According to the local unit, the lack of sufficient funds has affected the reconstruction and resettlement efforts. "The reconstruction has slowed because the budget allocated by the provincial government for the same could not be utilised on time,' said Aitaman Tamang, mayor of the Melamchi Municipality. "Funds allocated from the province and local governments have been used to build embankments and roads to control



Abandoned houses in Kiul Bazar, which was destroyed by a massive flooding of the Melamchi river two years ago, in Helambu of Sindhupalchok pictured recently. Reconstruction work has yet to gain pace.

Melamchi floods but all those efforts do not seem to be enough," he said. According to him, the municipality and the Bagmati provincial government have collectively spent Rs50 million this monsoon season to build embankments along the Melamchi River to control floods.

 $A\,Bailey\,bridge\,across\,the\,Melamchi$ river is currently under construction at the cost of Rs4 million. The bridge will connect Indrawati, Helambu, and Panchpokhari Thangpal rural municipalities with Melamchi Municipality.

Another Bailey bridge over the Melamchi River has been installed at in Helambu Rural Municipality. While those who could afford to relocate have migrated out of the district, others are still living a very hard life. Around 25 displaced families are still living in rented rooms in Melamchi Bazar in the hopes of being relocated by the authorities.

The local units say the provincial and federal governments have not done enough for the displaced.

"Apart from these bridges at Chanaute and the motorable bridge across the Indrawati River, no other physical infrastructure has

rebuilt in the disaster-affected areas. The reconstruction work would have been completed in the area if the federal and provincial governments had shared their expertise and resources with us, but they have not shown significant interest," said Tamang.

Similarly, Nimagyaljen Sherpa Helambu Rural Municipality, said that the federal and provincial governments have not done anything significant for the victims of the 2021 disaster. "I submitted a 19-point memorandum to the prime minister asking for a long-term solution to the problems faced by Sindhupalchok locals," said Sherpa. "But I don't carry much hope because he too only gave me verbal assurances like other high-level ministers.

"Temporary housing has been constructed for more than 150 displaced families out of the total 380 in Helambu. All of us are extremely worried about this monsoon season because Sindhupalchok is prone to floods and landslides," said Sagar Shrestha, a local. "The federal government does not seem to have taken the damage caused by the Melamchi floods seriously. Due to the lack of

budget, the reconstruction of public physical infrastructure and even housing for the displaced has not been able to gain momentum. Only embankment work is not going to prevent floods. We need a long-term solution to prevent future disasters.

According to Shrestha, the local people in coordination with the Nepal Army, Armed Police Force, and Nepal Police, are contributing to the construction of embankments along the river. Last year the then home minister Balkrishna Khand, who is currently in jail in connection with the Bhutanese refugee scam, assigned a team of experts and geologists to carry out a geological study in Bhemanthang, Helambu, the source of the Melamchi flood.

"The team who conducted the study highlighted the need to build dams in some areas of the Melamchi River in Ambathan to prevent landslides in Bhemathang. The report also suggested moving the headworks of the Melamchi drinking water project from Ambathan to somewhere else, said Shrestha. "The report was made public, but there has been no prepara-

Remarried insurgency widows eligible for state relief

>> Continued from page 1

Though the Criminal Code that came into effect in 2018 criminalises torture, its statutory provision that the cases must be reported in six months and lack of retrospective effect make it impossible for survivors of torture to access any remedies under the Penal Code. Records at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission show that among the 63,700 cases it has received, 314 are related to rape or sexual violence. In 2018, a study team comprising Manchala Jha and Madhabi Bhatta, then members of the commission, was formed to consult



Truth and Reconciliation Commission has received 314 complaints of rape or sexual violence.

the victims and suggest relief and reparations for them.

But that never happened. Devi Khadka, a CPN (Maoist Centre) leader who is campaigning for the justice to the victims of rape and sexual violence, said the number of rape victims stands at over 1,000 and those who suffered sexual harassment number in thousands. "The Supreme Court verdict could be a step forward towards providing justice to the victims of torture and sexual violence, Bikash Basnet, director of the Advocacy Forum, told the Post. Along with the directive for interim relief, the division bench also has asked the government to scrap the provision in the working procedure that bars the widows of those killed during the insurgency who later remarried from accessing government relief.

New arrests in Lalita Niwas land scam

Most of those charged with corruption including Gurung had earlier been released by the court

After completing a separate investigation on forgery of government documents in connection with the land had submitted its investigation report to the District Attorney Office, Kathmandu recommending prosecution of more than 300 people, including top retired officials.

The CIB, citing the statute of limitations as per the Criminal (Code) Act-2017, had recommended that the prosecutions should be made by January

Section 283 of the Criminal (Code) Act-2017, the statute of limitations for cases of forgery of government documents is two years from the date of the knowledge of the

But the District Attorney Office returned the police document recommending more investigations so that they could be prosecuted based on the General Code-2020 BS as the land grab

मिति २०७९/११/०२ गते दिक्तेलरत

गेटदेखि बेसक्याम्पसम्म आउँदा मेरो नेपाल लाइफ इन्सोरेन्स लिमिटेडको बिमालेख हराएको हँदा पाउन हने महानभावहरुले नजिकको प्रहरी कार्यालय वा फोन नं. 9817744501 खबर गरिदिन हन अनुरोध गर्दछ् नामः याँमकला तामाँङ बिमालेख नं.: 214000828 ठेगानाः दिक्तेलरुपाकोट मजवागढि न.पा. १३, नुन्थला

गा.वि.स. वडा न ६ बस्ने भूप सै.न. ५३३८३८४ पल्टन ४ जि.आर. *डि.एस.सी.* का देउ बहादुर गुरुङको श्रीमती बुडकी गुरुङ र भुक्की गुरुङ नागरिकता पत्र नं. ४५३९ जारी मिति २०४४/१२/२८ मा नामथर बुङकी गुरुङ र भुक्की गुरुङ उल्लेख भएको तर श्रीमान्को भारतीय पेन्सन अभिलेखमा नामथर भुक्की गुरुङ उल्लेख भई नामथर फरक परे तापनि व्यक्ति एउटै हो ।



at Baluwatar happened before the Criminal (Code) Act-2017 came into

Point Number 18 under the 'Forged Document or Forgery' section of the General Code states, "If a suit on any matter other than on the matter of forgery or fraud of a document beardocument held in a government office or on any matter of verbal forgery or saying or writing any false designation or of dismissal of employees [parapajani] by saying or writing so is not filed within six months of its knowledge, from the date of cause of action, the suit shall not be entertained."

So, the CIB continued with its investigation as advised by the District Attorney Office, Kathmandu. "We are now close to completing the investigation," said AIG Bajracharya. "There are certain things to be verified and some things to be clarified.'

She said that statements that the CIB would take of those arrested would be crucial to conclude the investigation.

"Those arrested are people belonging to the first layer of the accused who were involved in transferring the ownership of government lands in the names of individuals," Bajracharya

For example, Shah's wife Urmila had received a Lalita Niwas plot as a gift, allegedly in exchange for Shah's help in transferring large chunks of land in the names of the persons behind the scam.

Even though police arrested Tuesday, people Bajacharya didn't confirm immediately as to how many people would be arrested and how many would be prosecuted immediately under fresh

Early last year, the CIB had recom-

mended to the District Attorney General Kathmandu, to prosecute more than 300 people, including five former secretaries. These included Deep Basnyat, Yubaraj Bhusal, Chhabi Raj Pant, Narayan Gopal Malego and Dinesh Hari Adhikari along with Bhatbhateni store owner Gurung and Subedi and Shobhakanta Dhakal.

Bajracharya, however, hinted that the ongoing investigation would soon be completed. "The CIB in the past submitted its

investigation report to the district attorney after probing several aspects of the scam. So, there is not much to be investigated.'

The scam was initially unearthed by a probe committee led by former government secretary Sharada Prasad Trital and the case was pursued by the Central Investigation Bureau of the Nepal Police, before the anticorruption body initiated its own investigation.

Although the Panchayat regime after the royal coup in 1960 had seized a portion of land belonging to the Nepali Congress leader Subarna Sumsher Rana at Baluwatar, the regime had also acquired larger plots by paying him compensation.

A government committee in 2019 had discovered that 136 ropani 14 ana 2 paisa (6.96487 hectares) of government land had been illegally registered in the name of several individuals.

After the restoration of democracy in 1990, the Krishna Prasad Bhattarailed Cabinet decided to return the land seized by the Panchayat regime. Thereon, a scam emerged as even the legally-acquired lands were returned to the descendants of Subarna Sumsher Rana. Those plots were then sold and re-sold several times with the alleged land mafias playing an active role.



Lawmakers of Rastriya Swatantra Party disrupt the meeting of the House of Representatives on Tuesday to protest a government plan to downsize district election offices and place them under the district administration offices. Finance Minister Prakash Sharan Mahat later assured that the government would not implement the decision.



Government of Nepal

Ministry of Communication and Information Technology

National Information Technology Center

Singhadurbar, Kathmandu

Tender Cancellation Notice

Date of Publication: 2080/03/13(June 28, 2023)

This is to notify all bidders that the Invitation for Bids for the Supply and Delivery of Renewal of License and Support of SIEM, IFB No: NITC/G/NCB-17/079-80 published on 2080/02/08 (May 22, 2023) in "The Kathmandu Post" national daily is hereby has been cancelled.

महानगर बहुपाविधिक शिक्षालय, विराटनगर

सवारी साधन खरिदसम्बन्धी आर्थिक प्रस्ताव स्वीकृत गर्ने आशयको सूचना

सूचना प्रकाशित मिति : २०८०/०३/१३ गते

यस शिक्षालयलाई आवश्यक पर्ने विद्यालय बस खरिदका लागि द काठमाडौं पोष्ट दैनिकमा मिति २०८०।०२।२५ मा प्रकाशित प्रस्तावको सूचना र मिति २०८०।०३।०६ गते प्रेसित आर्थिक प्रस्ताव पेश गर्ने शिक्षालयको सुचना बमोजिम प्राप्त आर्थिक प्रस्तावहरूमध्ये न्युनतम मुल्यांकित सारभुत रुपमा प्रभावग्राही देखिएको तपशिलको आर्थिक प्रस्ताव स्वीकृतिका लागि छनौट भएको हुँदा सार्वजनिक खरिद ऐन २०६३ को दफा २७ उपदफा २ को प्रयोजनार्थ यो सूचना प्रकाशित गरिएको छ।

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महानगर बहुप्राविधिक शिक्षालय, विराटनगर

More than 900 people in 47 districts test positive for dengue virus

All three districts in the Valley—Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur—have reported the disease.

ARJUN POUDEL

As the monsoon sets in causing deaths and devastation, many districts across the country have started reporting outbreaks of the dengue virus

According to the Epidemiology and Disease Control Division, since the beginning of 2023, as many as 946 cases of dengue infection have been found in 47 districts, including in all three districts of the Kathmandu Valley-Kathmandu, Lalitpur and

"Most of the cases were reported in recent days," said Dr Gokarna Dahal, chief of the Vector Control Section at the division. "We suspect a cluster outbreak of the dengue virus in many

Monsoon in Nepal is a season of epidemics when thousands of people across the country get infected with water-borne and vector-borne diseases Although the post-monsoon season

is considered fertile for dengue transmission, Nepal has witnessed outbreaks of the deadly disease since the start of the year and during the pre-monsoon seasons as well. Experts say the virus has become endemic, as cases of dengue infection are being reported throughout the year.

According to the division, 46 cases of dengue virus have been reported from Kathmandu, 32 from Bhaktapur and 12 cases from Lalitpur district. Dharan Sub-metropolitan City reported 52 cases of dengue infection.

Experts say the reported dengue cases could be just the tip of the iceberg, as around 90 percent of the infected people do not show any symptoms.

Last year, at least 88 people died and over 54,000 were infected by the virus, which had spread to all 77 districts of the country. Hospitals in the Kathmandu Valley were overwhelmed with dengue patients and many complain that they were deprived of treatment. Pharmacies also lacked paracetamol at the time. The number of deaths from dengue infection in Nepal is considered too high.

Negligence in the case of management of the disease, not taking preventive measures, lack of public awareness of the risks, and delay in seeking health care services after catching the infection could be among the reasons for the high death rate from the virus, according to experts. Dengue virus serotype DENV-1, DENV-2, and DENV-3 were found responsible for the dengue epidemic in the country.

In 2019, six people had died and more than 16,000 were hospitalised from dengue infection, which gripped 68 districts.

Entomologists warn that the dengue spread could surge again, as no serious initiatives have been taken to destroy the eggs of infected mosquitoes.

'We have alerted all agencies of districts about the outbreak of the dengue virus, and have urged them to

begin a 'search and destroy' drive," said Dahal. "Testing kits have been supplied and the orientation of health workers has been completed.

Dengue is a mosquito-borne disease transmitted by female Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus mosquitoes. The same vector also transmits chikungunya, yellow fever, and Zika, according to the World Health Organisation.

According to doctors, mild to high fever, severe muscle pain, rashes, severe headache, and pain in the eyes are some of the symptoms of dengue, and the treatment should be sought immediately, if anyone experiences those symptoms. While there is no specific cure for the disease, early detection and access to proper medical care can lower fatalities.

Dengue-transmitting mosquitoes breed in clean water and bite people in daylight. Uncovered water tanks and discarded plastic cups and bottles could become breeding grounds for the dengue-carrying mosquitoes.

Chinese tycoon Jack Ma in town

His itinerary remains unknown but he has reportedly sent requests to meet with prime minister and finance minister.



Jack Ma, founder of Alibaba Group, pictured at the 'Tech for Good' Summit in Paris in 2019.

POST REPORT

KATHMANDU. JUNE 27

Jack Ma, the founder of the technology conglomerate Alibaba and once the richest business leader in China, arrived in Kathmandu on Tuesday

According to Director General of the Department of Immigration Jhalakram Adhikari, the business magnate landed at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport on a special flight at 2:30 pm. As of June 2023, Ma is the fourth wealthiest person in China with a net worth of \$34.5 billion and 39th richest person in the world, as per the Bloomberg Billionaire Index. Ma's Alibaba had acquired Daraz, the e-commerce platform popular in South and East Asia, some five years back.

Very few officials knew about his visit, said a senior government official. "When such a rich man seeks to visit Nepal, there would be no reason not to welcome him," the official said. Ma needed clearance from the civil aviation authority for his flight.

Ma was accompanied by six crew members on his flight from Bangladesh to Nepal, said CAAN Information Officer Gyanendra Bhul. Ma has sent separate requests to meet with Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Finance Minister Prakash Sharan leaders confirmed. Ma, whose business empire has been criticised by the Chinese government, marked at Immigration that he had arrived from China. Indeed, he was in Japan last week. Several international media outlets had reported that Ma had disappeared from public view between October 2020 and January 2021 after criticising China's banks and regulators. Then he toured various countries before settling in Japan. A member of Nepal's business community told the Post that Jack's visit to Kathmandu was billed as a "business trip" but no more information was available. During the Covid pandemic, Jack had donated emergency supplies including masks, test kits, protective suits, ventilators and thermometers to some Asian countries.

"Go Asia!" Jack had tweeted then. "We will donate emergency supplies (1.8 million masks, 210 thousand test kits, 36 thousand protective suits, plus ventilators and thermometers to Nepal, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Delivering fast is not easy, but we'll get it done!"

Rest of his itinerary in Nepal has been kept secret, a senior security official said. "We have heard that before leaving for Pakistan on Thursday, he will be visiting Chitwan,' the official added. "But we have yet to receive confirmation from his team.

while the KMC's intention is good as it

has announced some new and creative

plans, it should also consider how

Suman Meher Shrestha, a senior

announce a 'dust-free Kathmandu', as

the air pollution is rampant in the city.

"But what are the plans to achieve

that goal? The plans should not be

Like in earlier years, this year, too,

floated just to please the public."

He said that it's a good initiative to

urban planner.

"It's the KMC's duty to make

realistic or implementable they are.



Passengers scramble to get into a micro bus at Ratnapark in Kathmandu on Tuesday. With scant regulation, using public transport in the Valley remains a nightmare.

KMC receives kudos for its innovative plans. But will they get implemented?

Former deputy mayor Hari Prabha Khadgi says the Kathmandu Metropolitan City needs to focus on implementation of the programmes it has announced.

ANUP OJHA KATHMANDU. JUN 27

Like many local bodies, Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC), the biggest presented its financial plan for the next fiscal year on Sunday. Allocating a Rs25.54-billion budget, it came up

with some impressive plans and policies. While the experts and the public have welcomed those plans, they have doubts whether the plans would be implemented.

The KMC in its annual plans and programmes prioritised infrastructure development, health and education. It allocated Rs7 billion for infrastructure development, which is 29 percent of the total budget, Rs1.3 billion for education, and Rs926 million for health.

The KMC allocated Rs3.8 billion for pride projects under 10 thematic areas and Rs2 billion for projects in 25 the-

matic areas under its 'golden plan'. Among other things, KMC's Deputy Mayor Sunita Dangol announced that

Pressure Cooker

she has allocated the necessary budget to brand liquors popular in the local communities, in partnership with the

The KMC has allocated Rs35 million make kitchens more hygienic to individuals and businesses. It has also announced a 'labour bank' to provide employment for the youths. For this drive, it has allocated Rs100 million. Budget has also been allocated for the methods and systems being deployed to manage garbage.

"I think that it is a lofty goal," said Dinesh Suwal, 54, a resident of Jhochhen, ward 12 of the KMC, referring to the KMC's garbage management plan. "Until it materialises, I am not going to believe it."

Suwal has reasons to doubt the plan's implementation. Last year, he had complied with the KMC's order to separate biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste materials at source.

"I bought two 50-litre buckets to segregate solid wastes, but they went with their old ways, picking everything together and loading them

Tri-Ply Stainless Steel

in the same trucks," Suwal said. His ward is among the 12 wards where the KMC had announced it would collect segregated waste, as part of its pilot

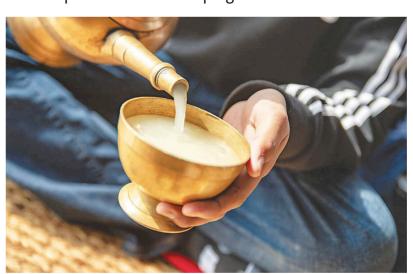
lion to install CCTV cameras in back alleys. It has also allocated Rs105 million to promote sports in all the 32 wards with the motto 'one ward, one

mayor Dangol also Deputy announced plans to build a laboratory to test pesticide residues in fruits and vegetables and an affordable pharmacy for the public.

"It's easy to make a budget plan," said former deputy mayor of KMC Hari Prabha Khadgi. "What matters is whether it will get implemented."

She said that while going for market monitoring during her tenure, her inspection team had faced a problem since the KMC didn't have its own lab. "The deputy mayor's announcement is a good thing, but again, its implementation is in doubt," said Khadgi.

Furthermore, the KMC has allocat-



The KMC has announced it will brand local beverages in partnership with the private sector.

ed Rs 100 million for a 'dust-free Kathmandu', but it has not laid out any plans on its execution. For the

health sector, it has allocated Rs926 million in the budget. Meanwhile, the urban planners say

Pressure Die-Cast

the KMC has repeated its plan to restore and maintain historical stone spouts and monuments, and construct falchas (traditional public rest houses) at various public places. Its other plans and programmes include greenery promotion, CCTV installation, women empowerment, erecting street lamps, preservation of tangible and intangible monuments within the KMC area and conservation and promotion of the tourist areas in Kathmandu.









Frying Pan





Easy to clean

Excellent release properties 🗸 Cook healthy, tastier & hygienic Needs 36% less oil ✓ No PFAS, No Heavy metals













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Not spoilt by high heat

OPINION



Creeping catastrophe

Over 20 percent of Nepalis above 15 suffer from hypertension and we are not doing much to control it.

Globally, the burden of high blood pressure, also called hypertension, is increasing. The same is the case here, as shown by the Nepal Demographic Health Survey-2022. The study found that over 20 percent of Nepalis above the age of 15 suffer from this condition. Untreated hypertension is a significant risk factor for potentially fatal health problems such as cardiovascular diseases (heart disease and stroke) that account for 17.9 million deaths each year. It can also result in chronic kidney disease, dementia, and arrhythmia.

Countries around the world have, by 2030, pledged to cut hypertension rates by 33 percent. For this, several of them have policies to dissuade high intake of salt and saturated fat. Nepal too has increased taxes on the import of junk food and energy drinks; however, even with the increased prices, people are happily gulping them down. Alarmingly, 48 percent of women and 52 percent of men aged 15 and above with hypertension are not even aware they have the disease. This lack of awareness highlights a shortfall in efforts to prevent and control non-communicable diseases (NDCs) like

Reducing incidents of hypertension calls for more than governmental effort. Medical research shows a clear link between cardiovascular diseases and lifestyle choices, stressing the importance of self-care through lifestyle changes. By giving up smoking, reducing stress, exercising, getting regular checkups and consuming nutritious foods, people can greatly improve their health and well-being.

Similarly, governments and health authorities must take steps for hypertension prevention, early detection, and effective diagnosis and control. People must be educated on the risks of high blood pressure, and hypertension screening should be a top priority. In Nepal, where 15.1 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, regular health checkups may not be a feasible option for everyone. The larger trend is still for people to visit hospitals and healthcare centres only when they fall ill. Rather than only rely on occasional health camps, the goal should be to mobilise existing healthcare centres and volunteers for regular screenings at the local level. The same resources can be used to offer guidance on taking medication correctly and adopting a healthy

Although the mid-day meal provided in government schools is commendable, there are still many students who are deprived of high-quality and nutritious food. Private schools should also prioritise offering nutritious meals to their students. Giving young children healthy and nourishing food from an early age reduces their risk of developing hypertension, obesity and other non-communicable diseases. Concomitantly, false advertising of junk foods as nutritious foods must be restricted.

With an increasing focus on communicable diseases, the prevalence of NCDs has risen, resulting in 41 million annual deaths, or 74 percent of all deaths around the world, with 77 percent of deaths related to NCDs occurring in low- and middle-income countries. A 2021 WHO report also revealed that the majority of hypertension patients live in these countries. The situation right now is bad enough. If the state is not serious about controlling NCDs like hypertension even now, it could have a health catastrophe on its hands.

THEIR VIEW

Libraries for children

A single book read in a library may leave a lasting impression on a youngster.

It is locked and dark. Only old books are available. There are probably many school libraries like that. School libraries need to be developed into places where children can gather and encounter memora-

The funds that the central government grants to local governments to purchase books for public elementary and junior high schools are not being fully utilised. A total of \\$22 billion was granted in fiscal 2021, but only ¥12.6 billion was actually used to purchase books. Since the use of the funds is left to the discretion of local governments, it is believed that local governments put higher priority on the enhancement of social welfare programmes and information technology at schools. It is impossible to overlook the fact that funds that should have been allocated for the purchase of books are

being used to pursue other policies. As digitisation advances, society is inundated with a great deal of information. Reading activities are indispensable to acquire the abilities to judge the truth or falsity of information and to use information correctly. School libraries play increasingly important roles as places for inquiry-based learning that fosters the ability to think. Creating a reading environment for children is an investment in the future. The funds should be used for their original purpose, not just for immediate issues. The government may need to consider providing funds in the form of subsidies that can only be used for their

designated purpose. In some schools, old books stating that Germany is divided into East and West are still in place. Books must be sorted into those that should be kept and those that should be replaced. For this purpose, it is important to have school librarians and teachers with librarian certification who have expertise in books. They are expected to play such roles as accurately recommending books to children who come

to the library saying, "I want to read an interesting book." It is not uncommon for school libraries to be closed for many hours because there is no school librarian on duty. School libraries also have a significant function as a place for children to spend time. Librarians may be able to detect unusual behavior in children who have worries. More school librarians and other staff should be assigned to make school libraries places where children can casually

Some schools have carpeted floors, manga comic books and low kotatsu tables equipped with heaters and blankets so that students can stretch their legs and read in comfort. Each municipality and school should make their own such efforts. Earlier this month, the lawmakers leagues for print culture and school libraries jointly adopted a resolution calling for better treatment of school librarians, many of whom are hired on a nonregular basis, and the improvement of books kept at school libraries. It is hoped that they will strengthen their efforts to lobby the central and local governments and lead to reforms.

A single book encountered at a library may be deeply engraved in the mind of a child and have a great impact on their life. All people concerned must share an appreciation of how important that is.

- The Yomiuri Shimbun (Japan)/ANN

Assessing local level budget

|| GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY ||

Local governments have prioritised education. health, agriculture, livestock and roads.

KHIM LAL DEVKOTA



Nepal's metropolises, sub-metropolises and municipalities are required to present their budgets to their respective assemblies by June 25 every year, according to the provisions of the Local Government Operation Act and Inter-Governmental Fiscal Arrangement Act. These local governments have to provide detailed information about the revenue and expenditure of the previous fiscal year, revised income and expenditure for the current fiscal year, income and expenditure projections, and programmes and projects for the upcoming fiscal year. But 42 local governments have missed the deadline to present their annual financial plans, as per information provided by the local government associations.

Such failures have become a recurring phenomenon at some local levels, but it appears that the concerned authorities are not serious about identifying and addressing the underlying problem. As most representatives come from political parties, they do not show much concern towards this issue. When the budget is not passed on time, it hampers local economic activities, and as a consequence, people are unable to receive services as expected. Local employment and income are significantly affected, ultimately impacting the overall economic growth of the

Challenging task

Addressing all the issues related to the programmes and budgets is a challenging task. Based on six years of implementation experience at the local level, several problems can be pointed out. Despite these challenges, the local governments have presented their



They have allocated funds appropriately, prioritising sectors such as education, health, agriculture, livestock, roads, drinking water, cooperatives and irrigation. Notable transformations have occurred in the physical, social and economic sectors. Small-scale industries and businesses have thrived in both rural and urban areas. For instance, Dharan Municipality has announced the operation of turmeric and soap factories

To address disparity between sons and daughters, the local units have incentivised parents to adopt family planning after the birth of a daughter. They provide insurance in the name of daughters and promote marriages with a 20-year age gap. Such programmes have been initiated at many

Several local levels have implemented higher education programmes for girls and women. To reduce domestic violence, they have distributed liquor cards and decreed that liquor stores must not remain open after 7 pm. They have also provided annual financial support to parents caring for individuals with disabilities, and imposed minimal taxes on factories and businesses operated by disabled persons.

In remote areas, local governments have launched campaigns to distribute social security allowances to households. During the Covid-19 outbreak, they performed exceptionally well in distributing relief by going door to door to ensure citizens' safety.

Local governments have paid special attention to marginalised ethnic communities like Kusunda and Raute.

Scholarships and free education programmes have been provided to their children, including opportunities for higher education. Programmes aimed at improving social and economic conditions, such as eliminating untouchability, providing free education to marginalised Dalit communities, and promoting the concept of one household, one profession, one school, one garden, one pond and one playground have been implemented.

Raksirang Rural Municipality in Makwanpur district has announced gifting homes to people migrating from other areas. This programme marks a significant and ambitious milestone in the history of local governments in

Kathmandu Metropolitan City has earmarked Rs100 million for the operation of a city hospital dedicated to providing healthcare for children. Lalitpur Metropolitan City has carried out a subsidy programme for those purchasing electric vehicles.

Biratnagar Metropolitan City has launched a programme to clean the tyres of public vehicles before they enter the city, prohibited the use of plastic bags, penalised littering, improved roads and operated mobile toilets. Bharatpur Metropolitan City has set a target to attract 200,000 for eign tourists during Bharatpur Visit Year 2024. The city has also started a programme to establish one model school in each ward. It has also consistently provided subsidies to dairy farmers at the rate of Rs3 per litre of milk.

Kathmandu Metropolitan City has the highest budget of Rs25.54 billion while Birgunj has the lowest budget of

Significant improvements have been made in the teaching and learning activities of community schools. To discourage the migration of students from government schools to private English-medium schools, some local governments have implemented English-medium education in community schools. Incentive programmes like scholarships, free uniforms and midday meals have been implemented to encourage students from marginalised communities, including Dalits and indigenous groups, to attend school.

Some local governments have provided free ambulance services for home healthcare services by employing doctors and nurses, establishing vocational training centres in all wards, and introducing services like zero home delivery. Additionally, support has been provided for activities such as preventing loss of fertile land, promoting organic farming, providing vision, supporting farmers through agricultural inputs, and providing subsidies for milk production, vegetable and fruit farming, fish farming, and processing.

Pork barrel funds

Local governments with a low revenue base are facing challenges. More than two-thirds of their revenue come from federal grants. However, the allocation for fiscal equalisation grants has decreased by Rs13 billion compared to the previous year.

The more local governments invest in their revenue sources, the more their fiscal activities will grow. Along with the growth in fiscal activities, there will be changes in the entire economy, including employment generation. It is necessary to take this aspect seriously at the local level.

Just as the federal and provincial budgets allocate funds for constituency infrastructure development programmes, many local levels have allocated significant amounts of money in the names of the mayor, deputy mayor, chairman and deputy chairman. This practice of allocating pork barrel funds existed in the past. But this time, their justification is that if the federal and provincial governments can allocate funds in the name of parliamentarians, they can do the same. This reasoning is flawed because two wrongs do not make a right. A government that is closely connected to the people should set a good example instead of promoting

How do we manage community forests?

Nepal can reduce rural poverty. balance trade and earn foreign currency through sustainable forest management.



Community Nepal's Programme (CFP) has achieved remarkable success in the restoration of forests that had depleted due to overgrazing, firewood collection, livestock forage and timber harvesting. The country nearly doubled its forest cover, reaching 46 percent of its land area in 2016 from 26 percent in 1992.

The International Food Policy Research Institute indicated the dual objectives of CFP as forest conservation and poverty reduction in Nepal. While the programme has made significant strides in forest conservation, it has yet to catch up in reducing poverty primarily due to the oversight of the potential economic benefits of community forests (CFs) during implementation. Consequently, the full potential of CFs and their products has been underutilised.

Furthermore, the dependence of Nepali society on forests has shifted from traditional use to construction materials, furniture and other home appliances. Data from the World Integrated Trade Solution reveals that Nepal imported wood worth approximately \$229,000 in 2019. The United Nations COMTRADE database further suggests that Nepal imported wood-related products amounting to \$75.96 million in 2021. These figures could rise if other wood-based products are account-

In this article, I propose a new policy to address the economic shortfall of CFs and meet the market demand of wood and wood-based products. A newly proposed policy paradigm for CF management also holds great potential for restoring forests, conserving biodiversity and building resilience against climate change. It also aims to reduce Nepal's reliance on imported wood, wood products, support local livelihoods, and strengthen the national economy. This can be achieved through a simple yet highly effective forest management policy intervention involving the perpetual cycle of tree planting or natural regeneration, management, harvesting and replanting.

Although a tree cannot grow perpet-

ually, its lifespan can span several hundred years. Trees experience rapid growth and accumulate timber volume during the early stages of their life cycle. However, the trees grow slowly as they age, leading to degradation and death and ultimately decompose as soil organic matter. Forest management aims to accelerate tree growth, allowtrees that can produce high-quality timber. In a separate research, I found that well-managed forests grown for approximately 40 years by selectively harvesting mature trees and leaving a few trees as seed sources can produce 3.5 times more marketable timber than naturally grown forests.

The success of the CFP in Nepal over the last four decades since its beginning in 1978 suggests that community forests possess the potential to produce quality trees and supply timber to the domestic market. However, if mature

cient management, and inadequate returns. Selling timber and wood products from CFs would help recoup these investments, compensate for the higher management costs partially if not wholly, meet timber market demand, and contribute to poverty reductionone of the CFP's goals. Poverty reduction through CF can be particularly regions with limited alternative income sources.

Harvesting trees creates space for new trees to grow, leading to environmental benefits such as carbon sequestration. Newly developed trees capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and convert it to woody biomass, which can be harvested as they mature. The conversion of wood into wood products ensures the long-term capturing of atmospheric carbon dioxide, thus, preventing its release into the atmosphere.

This perpetual cycle of opening



It is important to clarify that this

article proposes a policy perspective for

CF management in Nepal. However, it

is not intended as a one-fits-all solution

for managing a diverse forest ecosys

tem in the country. I acknowledge the

challenges of forest research, policy

transferable knowledge, learn from its experiences and further research to meet its needs. Gradual implementation of liberal and sustainable forest management policies, based on research findings, can create opportunities for timber businesses in Nepal.

Modern forest management practices in the US, Australia, and Canada were adapted from European practices. India, for instance, established its national-level criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management policies in 1999 through a workshop involving national and international organisations. India piloted its sustainable forest management initiative in 2000 and has continuously modified its policy to meet its social, economic, environmental and ecological needs. Chinese forest management policies have also changed significantly over the past five decades. More than 80 percent of community-owned collective forests in China have been transferred to individual households, while state-managed forests focus on conservation and discourage exploitation.

The standard practices of planting or naturally regenerating, managing, harvesting and replanting forests are in practice globally, meeting timber and wood product demands. Bigger economies such as the United States and Europe import wood products from Asia and Africa and harvest timber from their planted forests to fulfil market demand. In Nepal's case, harvesting trees from sustainably managed community forests and replanting them can be a viable strategy to fulfil its timber demand, reduce rural poverty, alleviate trade imbalances and preserve foreign currency reserves.

Mishra is an applied economist at Auburn University, USA.



trees are left unharvested, their growth slows down, and the quality of timber deteriorates. The signs of deterioration are already visible in Nepal's CFs, as evidenced by the decayed and hollow cores in harvested trees. The decline of timber can be prevented by harvesting mature trees while they are still growing and using harvested timber as construction materials, furniture and home appliances. Consequently, CF management policies should prioritise harvesting mature trees and using timber for various wood products rather than allowing trees to decay. From an economic perspective, tim-

ber harvesting would increase the availability of Nepali timber in the revenue of community forests user groups (CFUGs), reduce wood imports and trade deficits and bolster foreign currency reserves. Nepal has invested over 40 years of time, land, capital, cash, and labour in CF management. The CFP engaged over 1.6 million households through more than 14,000 Concerns have been raised on the

long-term sustainability of CFs due to high capital and labour costs, ineffiute to establishing sustainable and resilient forests in the face of climate Effective CF management also plays a vital role in biodiversity conservation and the preservation of endangered biomes. Poor forest management can lead to biodiversity deterioration, further endangering the fragile ecosystems. Forest management extends beyond tree planting, harvesting and

replanting facilitates rapid carbon

sequestration, transforming seques-

tered carbon into usable wood products

and repeating the new carbon seques-

tration cycle. These practices contrib-

replanting-it encompasses systematic research, identification of endangered species, understanding their ecological niches and habitats, their role in the ecosystem, and safeguarding air, water, and wetlands. Sound forest management policies

and practices provide opportunities for systematically harvesting mature trees while ensuring the growth of new trees in harvested areas and protecting resources such as forests, land, water, air, biodiversity, and ecosystem balance.

05 | WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2023 THE KATHMANDU POST



Real Magic

(NEB) + 2

कार्पेटको शहंशाह

FOREX 131.55 **US** Dollar 144.01 Pound Sterling 147.13 Swiss Franc Australian Dolla Canadian Dollar 100.04 Singapore Dollar Japanese Yen (10) 9.16 Chinese Yuan Saudi Arab Riyal 35.08 36.11 Qatari Riyal 3.73 Thai Bhat **UAE Dhiram** 28.19 Malaysian Ringit Korean Won (100)

SHARES								
Nepse (in percent) 2,186.36pts 2.67%								
HIGHEST GAINERS								
NUBL 10	DDBL 10	HLI 10	NLBBL 10	GBLBS 10	LLBS 10			
	M	ODERA	TE GAIN	IERS				
CHCL 0.19	SPIL 0.19	NMBHF1 0.19	SPC 0.11	EBLD86 0.11	NIFRA 0.04			
MODERATE LOSERS								
MCHL -0.28	MPFL -0.28	UNL -0.22	UPPER -0.19	KPCL -0.13	SPL -0.04			
HIGHEST LOSERS								
SIKLES -3.88	GBBD85 -3.08	RBCL -2.49	CCBD88 -1.91	BHL -1.69	EHPL -1.66			

BULLION	PRICE PER TOLA
Fine Gold	Rs 110,600
Silver	Rs 1,375
	SOURCE: FENEGOSID/

□ BIZLINE

Nabil Bank wins Infosys Finacle Innovation Award

KATHMANDU: Nabil Bank Limited has bagged the Platinum Award in Infosys Finacle Innovation Award 2023 under the Product Innovation Category for the Launch of nBank. Nabil Bank was selected as the winner out of over 200 nominations across 10 categories. Gyanendra Prasad Dhungana, CEO of the bank, stated that the award has exemplified the unwavering dedication of the bank to 'inspire better banking' with innovative strategies. He further said that the bank is committed to creating unparalleled value for its customers, employees, investors, and the wider community. nBank, Nabil Bank's mobile banking platform, is the first in Nepal to provide a completely digital banking experience to customers without having to fill out a single physical form or visit any

France tests hypersonic glider for first time

PARIS: France has for the first time tested a hypersonic glide vehicle, a warhead that defies interception thanks to its unpredictable trajectory, a source with knowledge of the test said Tuesday. The speed of HGVs can exceed Mach 5, or 6,000 kilometres per hour (3,730 mph). The technology is being developed or deployed by a small number of countries that includes China, Russia and the United States. The French glider, called V-Max, was launched from a sounding rocket—which allows precise measurements—that went airborne in southern France late Monday, the source told AFP. France issued a warning notice covering a corridor of around 2.000 kilometres (1,240 miles) for air and sea traffic ahead of the launch. Local media reported that white traces in the sky were visible from the ground Monday night. (AFP)

China censors prominent journalist who raised concerns about economy

BEIJING: A prominent Chinese financial journalist who has compared the country's economic problems to the Great Depression has been banned from social media. The Weibo account of Wu Xiaobo, an influential business journalist and author with more than 4.7 million followers, "is currently in a banned state due to violation of relevant laws and regulations", according to a banner displayed on his page on Tuesday. Content moderators on Weibo-a Twitter-like platform—said on Monday they had blocked three verified users for "spreading smears against the development of the securities market" and "hyping up the unemployment rate". Weibo did not give the full usernames of the blocked accounts, but said one of them had a three-character name starting with "Wu" and ending with "Bo". China's post-Covid economic recovery has faltered, with lacklustre data in recent weeks signalling that the rebound is running out of steam. (AFP)

Civil aviation chief accused of misusing position

"As the head of the regulatory body, why and how did you conduct such an extremely negligent act that adversely affects flight safety?" the note said.

Adhikari had planned to fly the prime minister on the Airbus on a

Experts had raised a serious question stating that with the prime minister on board, the flight would have been a blunder, a crime. This was prevented by Himalaya Airlines Vice-President Vijay Shrestha who "refused to fly the prime minister"

It has been revealed that this was not the first case of neglect.

The civil aviation body, which currently wears two hats-as regulator and service provider-had flown dozens of journalists, government officials and other dignitaries on a test flight during the opening of the Bhairahawa airport on May 16, 2022. It later described the trip as a "demo

Several unnamed experts told the Post that the civil aviation body has been misusing its authority, but no one wants to speak against it for fear of retribution.

The new international airport in Pokhara was hastily inaugurated and operated without adequate preparations to meet the January 1 project

Flight calibration, which tests all pieces of equipment at the new airport, had not recommended landing from the west. Yeti Airlines Flight 691 crashed while trying to do so.

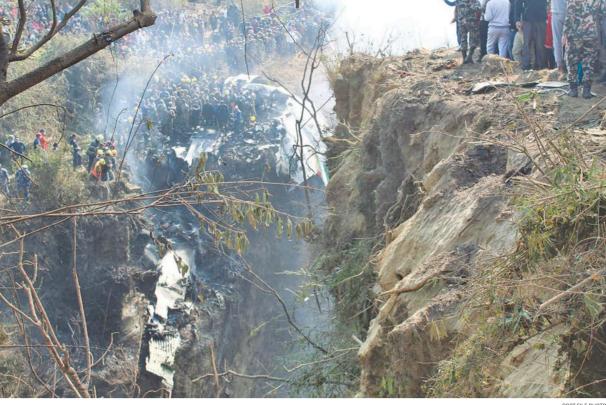
The flight procedure had not been published, and airlines had very little information about airport procedures

An evaluation as required by the "safety management system" was not carried out, neither by the civil aviation regulator, as service provider, nor by the airlines," according to a former chief of the civil aviation body.

lawyer Kukhalashvili, representing the interests of the family of one of the Russian passengers who was killed in the Yeti Airlines crash, wrote to the Post that they were preparing to file a case, together with leading US and EU-based law firms, with the French court against the ATR 72 manufacturer, Yeti Airlines and the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal.

Kukhalashvili has won a similar case relating to an ATR 72 crash in

"The families have the right to get



Flight calibration, which tests all pieces of equipment at the new Pokhara airport, had not recommended landing from the west.

more compensation by filing the claim in the French court. By filing the claim to the French court there will be a possibility to recover for them much more compensation. This is what we are going to do with regard to the families of Russian passengers," he wrote to the Post. "I want to bring this info to the Nepali families, they can also join our class action claim.

According to an official at the Tourism Ministry, the Russian lawyers have asked for the necessary documents through the Foreign Ministry.

Questions about Nepal's aviation have been raised for decades as the civil aviation body has been performing a dual role.

Global aviation watchdogs have questioned the civil aviation body's dual role and urged Nepal to split the organisation into two entities-service provider and regulator—to enhance the safety of flyers.

But the government has shown no interest in doing so, and Nepal's aviation industry is suffering the conse-

Ministry officials say that Director General Adhikari has been speaking at various forums against the government's decision to split the aviation regulatory body, which is one of the conditions for Nepal to be struck off the air safety list. Sources say Adhikari has been forc-

ing former director generals of the civil aviation body, aviation experts and media persons to lobby not to break up the Civil Aviation Authority In the clarification note, the minis-

try has accused Adhikari of not only flouting the policy of the government of Nepal but even challenging it. Speaking at an event in Pokhara

last year, Adhikari had said that he was the "state" and his decision would

A Tourism Ministry official told the Post that Tourism Minister Sudan Kiranti has taken the initiative to register in Parliament the civil aviation bills that will separate the civil aviation body after his predecessors-Prem Ale and Jeevan Ram Shresthashowed no interest in getting them passed. The bill was tabled at the Cabinet two weeks ago but it hasn't been passed.

The Cabinet is expected to pass the bills on Tuesday, according to Tourism Ministry officials.

An official at the civil aviation body told the Post that in-house trade unions were preparing to launch a protest against the government's move to pass the bills.

"They are ready to hold a protest as soon as the bills are registered in Parliament," said an official at the civil aviation body.

The Post has obtained an unsigned copy of the statement made two weeks ago which contains the plan of the five trade unions to launch the protest. In the statement, the unions have referred to the government as the

Last August, in the final report of the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) conducted in April of the same year, the United Nations International Civil Aviation

Organisation (ICAO) urged Nepal to break up the aviation regulator with a clear demarcation of its powers and responsibilities because its dual functions gave rise to a conflict of interest.

The Post has obtained a copy of the audit. The civil aviation body is yet to make the audit public though.

Insiders say there is larger politics to prevent the bills from being passed into law. They say that once the civil aviation body is separated, some top position holders stand to lose the dual benefits they have been receiving. The existing system allows the Civil

Aviation Authority of Nepal's director general and other top officials to issue tenders for multi-billion dollar projects. The same person also has the plum job of overseeing compliance with the infrastructure project and the aviation regulations governing the issuance of licences to airlines and

In the clarification note, the ministry has charged Adhikari with failing to operate the two international airports in Pokhara and Bhairahawa. The multi-billion-rupee properties don't handle a single international

Adhikari, according to his staff, is

On October 30, 2022, the regulator cancelled the scheduled flight of Nepal Airlines to Delhi as punishment for defying instructions to move some its international services to Bhairahawa's empty airport.

Nepal Airlines' jet remained on the ground, and more than 500 passengers suffered as a result of the last-minute cancellation.

"He has been grounding flights and pilots who report the problems. That's a bad safety culture as it will discourage the crew from reporting against the regulator and force them to take undue risk for fear of being grounded," said a top official at a private airline.

The ministry has also questioned the intent of the director general to lop off the tops of two hills at Ritthepani in Pokhara by 40 and 12 metres respectively while lowering the height of the runway.

"The height of the runway had to be cut, causing a financial loss to the country. It is seen that it will have an adverse effect on air safety. Why was such an action undertaken?" the note said. Responding to the Post's query, Adhikari said he would follow the legal process on the clarification sought by the ministry.

China calls West's economic de-risking a 'false proposition'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE TIANJIN (CHINA), JUNE 27

Chinese Premier Li Qiang slammed efforts in the West to "de-risk" their economies as a "false proposition" on Tuesday, hitting back against US and EU policy aimed at reducing their

The United States and the European Union have in recent months moved to "de-risk" from the world's second-largest economy.

"In the West, some people are hyping up what is called 'cutting reliance and de-risking'," Li told delegates at the opening of a World Economic Forum meeting in northern China.

"These two concepts... are a false proposition, because the development of economic globalisation is such that the world economy has become a common entity in which you and I are both intermingled," he said in a wide-ranging speech calling for deepening economic globalisation and cooperation.

"The economies of many countries

are blended with each other, rely on each other, make accomplishments because of one another, and develop together," he added.

This week's meeting of the World Economic Forum in the port city of Tianjin—known colloquially as the "Summer Davos"—is the first of its by the Covid pandemic. It will last

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in January described the EU's approach to China as "de-risking rather than decoupling" since the bloc still sought to work and trade with Beijing.

And President Joe Biden has kept former leader Donald Trump's hard line on China, and in some areas gone further, including banning exports of high-end semiconductors to the rising

Responding to Beijing's heated criticism of the move, Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Beijing last week insisted that the United States was not

seeking "economic containment" of China. "But at the same time," he said, "it's not in our interest to provide technology to China that could be used against us." China is on course to achieve its five

percent target for economic growth in 2023 set by Beijing earlier this year, Li which is being attended by leaders from New Zealand, Mongolia, Vietnam and Barbados, as well as a large delegation from Saudi Arabia.

"For the whole year, we are expected to achieve the target of about five percent economic growth set at the beginning of this year," Li said.

"We are fully confident and capable of pushing ahead the steady and longterm development of China's economy on the track of high-quality development in the relative long term.'

China is grappling with a slowing post-Covid recovery, with a number of lacklustre indicators in recent weeks signalling the rebound is running out

Climate protesters target TotalEnergies' headquarters

☐ AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LONDON, JUNE 27

Climate change campaigners targeted the UK headquarters of oil giant TotalEnergies with paint Tuesday, protesting the French firm's alleged human rights violations in the con-

Supporters of the Just Stop Oil activist organisation sprayed black paint in the lobby of the company's headquarters in London's Canary Wharf district, while others daubed orange paint outside, the protest group said. Dozens of students from a pressure group opposed to the building of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) also massed outside the building during the stunt to show support, it added.

London's Metropolitan police said officers had arrested 27 people "for a combination of suspicion of criminal damage and aggravated trespass".

TotalEnergies said in a statement

that it "fully respects the right to demonstrate and freedom of expression, but deplores all forms of violence, whether verbal, physical or material". "TotalEnergies promotes transparent and constructive dialogue with all its stakeholders," it added.

The French company is the largest African venture, which is set to carry crude oil to the Tanzanian coast through several Ugandan protected nature reserves.

Communities in the region claim the energy firm and other EACOP backers have caused serious harm to their rights to land and food in building the 1,500-kilometre (930-mile) pipeline. Critics have also called the project a "carbon bomb" which would release over 379 million tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere.

Just Stop Oil wants the UK and other governments to end all new oil and gas exploration and has promised not to let up in its high-profile protests

Indigenous defenders of oil in the Amazon

□ AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE ISHPINGO (ECUADOR), JUNE 27

A group of Indigenous Waorani women give a war cry warning that environmentalists are not welcome in their part of the Ecuadoran Amazon, where an oil field operates partly on a protected "We will not allow 'kowori' (strangers)... to

enter," said Waorani leader Felipe Ima, translating the belligerent words of the group of seven women from the Kawymeno community that supports oil extraction at the nearby Ishpingo

The community is pitted in a battle of wills against environmental group Yasunidos, which has been fighting for a decade for a referendum on leaving the oil underground.

In May, Ecuador's Constitutional Court allowed the request, and a plebiscite has been scheduled

Escorted by a spear-wielding warrior, the women from Kawymeno hold hands and dance in little clothing and feather crowns at the entrance to Ishpingo A platform. They demand that any consultation should be

with "the owners" of the land, and not with anyone that is "not even from the territory," explained Ima. In Ecuador, the Constitution recognizes Indigenous people's "collective ownership of

land as an ancestral form of territorial organization. The State, however, maintains control over

anything under the soil. Ishpingo together with the nearby fields of Tiputini and Tambococha form the so-called ITT block, or block 43, which holds an estimated 282 million of the South American country's proven crude reserves of 1.2 billion barrels.

Extraction at Tiputini and Tambococha start-

ed in 2016 after years of fraught debate over whether to drill inside the Yasuni National Park. This came after the government of then-president Rafael Correa failed to persuade the inter-



Aerial picture of the Ishpingo oil platform of state-owned Petroecuador in Yasuni National Park, northeastern Ecuador.

national community to pay former OPEC member Ecuador \$3.6 billion not to exploit the ITT block to protect the Amazon and help curb cli-

In April last year, the government announced pumping has also started at Isphingo.

At the site protected by women in the dense, green jungle, stands one of twelve platforms of the ITT block that contributed 57,000 barrels per day (bpd) to Ecuador's total production of 464,000 bpd from January to April.

It is in the Yasuni National Park—a biosphere reserve that houses some 2,000 tree, 610 bird, 204 mammal, 150 amphibian and more than 120 reptile species, according to the San Francisco University of Quito.

The Waorani community of Kawymeno, a journey of about four hours by foot and canoe

from Ishpingo, is near the border with Peru. Its 400 inhabitants have declared themselves defenders of the oil activity and its windfalls they say make up for the absence of government

"If there were no oil industry, we would not... have had education, health, family welfare," says Panenky Huabe, leader of the village where many work in the oil sector. Besides being among the most biodiverse areas

on Earth, the million-hectare (2.5-million acre) Yasuni park is home to two of the world's last uncontacted Indigenous populations.

It also holds oil fields that started operating before the ITT block.

"We see how extraction has been besieging the Yasuni for many years, since the 1970s when exploitation began," Yasunidos lawyer and spokesman Pedro Bermeo told AFP.

Nepal already looking to future despite SAFF heartbreak

Painful elimination aside, the emergence of a new crop of players such as Laken Limbu and Awash Lamichhane promises a new dawn for Nepali football.

KATHMANDU. JUNE 27

Nepal saw off Pakistan 1-0 in their last group match in Bengaluru on Tuesday to cap off their SAFF Championship 2023 journey with a consolation

Nepal had already crashed out of the biennial competition following their 3-1 loss to Kuwait and 2-0 defeat against India in their previous

Coach Vincenzo Alberto Annese's side were missing Anjan Bista— Nepal's second highest goal scorerdue to an injury which he suffered during the India clash. But Aashish Chaudhary filled that void as he came off the bench and ensured Nepal return home with at least a victory with an unstoppable half-volley late in the second half after Laken Limbu perfectly laid the ball for him. It was Chaudhary's first international goal for Nepal.

It is the first time since 2015 Nepal have failed to reach the semi-finals of a SAFF competition. But the Gorkhalis will still travel back home already looking to the future. Despite the painful exit, the emergence of a new crop of players promises a new dawn in the Nepali football.

Nepal reached their first ever SAFF Championship final in 2021 and that had already raised hopes that their long wait for the SAFF trophy could be coming soon. But things have gone the

the players including Suman Aryal, Tej Tamang, Dinesh Rajbanshi, Sujal Shrestha, Ranjit Dhimal, Gautam Shrestha, Bishal Rai, Sunil Bal and Santosh Tamang from Nepal's historic campaign in the Maldives two years ago have left the country seeking better future

That left Annese with no choice but to call up a young squad for the SAFF



PHOTO: COURTESY OF SAFE

Aashish Chaudhary (centre) struck late in the second half as Nepal beat Pakistan 1-0 in Bengaluru in their last Group A match on Tuesday to exit the SAFF Championship with a consolation win.

campaign. More than a dozen players-Deep Karki, Nabin Lama, Sanish Shrestha, Dipak Raj Singh Thakuri, Aashish Chaudhary, Awash Lamichhane, Nishant Khadka, Bishal Shrestha, Mani Kumar Lama, Bimal Pandey, Laken Limbu and Simanta Thapa—were heading to carrying less than five caps.

"We have a young team," coach Annese had said after the Kuwait "Ayush Ghalan, Awash Lamichhane and the other boys are only 20, or 21 years old. I think Nepal have a bright future if the players stay in the country.

Besides, the national team had less than 10 days to prepare for the competition due to the Martyrs Memorial 'A' Division League.

Nepal were also drawn in a group of death [Group A] that featured the likes of seasoned opponents in record-eight time champions and holders India and Kuwait

Yet, the young guns put up a spirited display that almost floored India at their home and there are a lot of positives to take from Bengaluru.

Ghalan, 19, came on as a second-half substitute after Kuwait had punished Nepal for their dismal performance with a 2-0 first-half lead in the opening game and his presence immediately changed dynamics of Nepali attack, with Bista finding the target for his 12th international goal and Nepal's only third goal overall against Kuwait

Sri Lanka down Scotland to bolster Cricket World Cup hopes

Sri Lanka defeated Scotland by 82

runs Tuesday to advance to the Super

Six stage of the Cricket World Cup

qualifiers with maximum points,

while Ireland secured a consolation

Opener Pathum Nissanka made 75

and Charith Asalanka scored 63 as Sri

Lanka were bowled out for 245 in

Bulawayo, with Scotland spinners

Chris Greaves (4-32) and Mark Watt

Scotland slid to 73-5 in reply and

were eventually dismissed for just 163

after two run outs in the same over

sealed their fate despite an enterpris-

(3-52) combining for seven wickets.

win over the United Arab Emirates.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

in their ten meetings. Bista, 25, is at his prime and will be aiming to move alongside Hari Khadka and Nirajan Rayamajhi in the all-time scoring chart for Nepal in the coming days.

Limbu-who made his debut in Nepal's friendly against the Philippines on the eve of the SAFF started all three matches. He is just 20 and has already established himself as a key playmaker in the midfield alongside Nabin Lama. Defender Shrestha, 20, is a regular at the back alongside Ananta Tamang and Rohit Chand and remained a key to Nepal's solid defence against India. Lamichhane is also among Annese's top choices and played for 45 minutes after the restart in the India game

Sri Lanka, the 1996 champions, go through as winners of Group B and

will start on four points in the next

round ahead of matches against the

Netherlands, Zimbabwe and the West

Scotland carry over two points fol-

lowing Sunday's win over Oman, the

third team to qualify from the section.

begins Thursday when hosts

Zimbabwe play Oman. The top two

finishers in the Super Six will qualify

for the World Cup in India in October

Paul Stirling clubbed 162 off 134

balls as Ireland romped to a 138-run

victory over the UAE in the other

group game between two eliminated

The next phase of the tournament

after coming on as an 83rd minute substitute against Kuwait The 21-year-old Manish Dangi, who

began his youth career in South Korea, has proved himself on key occasions. Chaudhary was a second-half sub-

stitute in the Kuwait match but did not play a single minute against India. But against Pakistan, he was a hero. Chaudhary was also a top scorer alongside Bista for Martyrs Memorial 'A' Division League champions Church Boys United.

Annese's team, formed around the next generation, could not progress to the next stage but have had invaluable experience. And they look more than ready to take over the reins.

Stirling's knock comprised 15 fours

and eight sixes but arrived too late for

an Ireland side who lost their first

Captain Andy Balbirnie added 66

UAE skipper Muhammad Waseem

His wicket triggered a collapse that

spelled the end of the UAE's hopes

despite resistance from Basil Hameed

(39) and Sanchit Sharma (44) as they

Ireland and the UAE head into the

play-offs for seventh to 10th place with

and Harry Tector struck a breezy 57 to

lift Ireland to a total of 349-4 after they

made 45 before he was bizarrely run

out after wandering out of the crease

three matches in Zimbabwe.

having been hit on the gloves

the United States and Nepal.

were put in to bat.

were all out for 211.

SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP 2023

RESULTS | 1-0 | **Pakistan**

Nepal India

Sunil Chhetri 45+2'

| 1-1 | Kuwait Anwar Ali 90+2' (OG)

		ui	(UUI				
TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PT
Kuwait	3	2	1	0	8	2	7
India	3	2	1	0	7	1	7
Nepal	3	1	0	2	2	5	3
Pakistan	3	0	0	3	0	9	0

CDUID V

GROUP B

TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PT
Lebanon	2	2	0	0	6	1	6
Bangladesh	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Maldives	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Bhutan	2	0	0	2	1	6	0

PLAYING WEDNESDAY

Lebanon vs Maldives, 15:45 NST Butan vs Bangladesh, 19:45 NST

ICC WORLD CUP QUALIFIER

GROUP B/QUEENS SPORTS CLUB TOSS: Scotland, field first

Sri Lanka 245-10 (49.3/50 overs) Pathum Nissanka 75 (85),

Charith Asalanka 63 (65) Chris Greaves 6.3-0-32-4, Mark Watt 10-0-52-3

Scotland 163-10 (29/50 overs) Chris Greaves 56* (41) Maheesh Theekshana 10-0-41-3,

Wanindu Hasaranga 6-0-42-2

Sri Lanka win by 82 runs Player of the match: Maheesh Theekshana

GROUP B/BULAWAYO ATHLETIC CLUB

TOSS: United Arab Emirates, field first, **Ireland 349-4** (50/50 overs)

Paul Stirling 162 (134), Andy Balbirnie 66 (88), Harry Tector 57 (33)/Sanchit Sharma 7-0-46-3 **United Arab Emirates 211-10** (39/50 overs)

Muhammad Waseem 45 (32), Sanchit Sharma 44 (54) Andy McBrine 7-1-34-2, George Dockrell 6-0-32-2 Ireland win by 138 runs **Player of the match:** Paul Stirling

TABLE/GROUP B

P	W	L	PI	NRK
4	4	0	8	3.047
4	3	1	6	0.540
4	2	2	4	-1.221
4	1	3	2	-0.061
4	0	4	0	-2.249
	4 4 4 4 4	r w	F W L	4 4 0 8

SUPER SIX FIXTURES Zimbabwe vs Oman June 29 June 30 Sri Lanka vs Netherlands July 1 Scotland vs West Indies

Zimbabwe vs Sri Lanka

July 3 Netherlands vs Oman Zimbabwe vs Scotland July 4 July 5 West Indies vs Oman

July 6 Scotland vs Netherlands Sri Lanka vs West Indies

July 7 July 9 Final

July 2

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21-April 19)



stress, grief, or drama you'd rather not hold onto Nurture your most intimate dynamics through the art of conversation and emotional exchange. Maintain reasonable boundaries without closing off.

Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga (centre) celebrates after dismissing Christopher McBride

of Scotland during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier in Bulawayo on Tuesday.



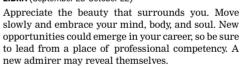
CANCER (June 22-July 22) focus to anyone who might rain on your parade. A burst of auspicious energy marks the perfect excuse to be bold. Value your worth and request to be treat-

ing 56 not out from Greaves



and November.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22)





CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19) ou should feel loved and supported by your commu? nity. Showcase your work as people will be eager to lift you. Create stable foundations within your social

sphere, especially when you operate with grace. Release emotions that don't serve you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)



Today brings a flirty vibe to the table that's perfect for striking up a conversation with your latest crush. Lead with an open heart, introduce yourself to new friends, and appreciate the ones you love. Your heart

You wake up feeling energised. Though you may not

get immediate recognition for your efforts, the work

you do now will pay off later. Themes around team-

work will come, providing a stabilizing energy. Don't



Get in touch with your emotions. Try not to fight tears if you're in need of a good cry. Step into roles or opportunities you've been building toward behind the scenes. Strengthen your connection with yourself and honour your spirituality.

Bring thoughtfulness to your words, especially

where intimate relationships, new connections, and

business matters are concerned. Let down guards at

a comfortable pace. Cleanse your energy and let go

of any baggage you're ready to release

LEO (July 23-August 22)

VIRGO (August 23-September 22)



SCORPIO (October 23-November 21) Lead with an open heart, and your intuition will also benefit from a boost when you engage the mystic within. Be sure to fight for your hopes and dreams.

Your views around work are adjusted for your suc-

You're in a secretive mood. Make time for solitude

and look for ways to nurture your heart, body, and

mind. Confide in your most trusted allies. This ener-

gy will help you peel back the layers in relationships.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21)



AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18)

habits and living mindfully.

Follow your heart in professional matters. Operate in the spirit of teamwork and community. Invest in your health and the pursuit of success. Remember that stability comes to those who prioritize balance and create healthy expectations for themselves

PISCES (February 19-March 20)



Be sure to operate from a place of faith while keeping an open mind. Implement healthy structures that will boost your confidence on the path toward success. Invest in yourself while implementing healthy

be afraid to speak honestly.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS 1 Felony 6 Passenger

14 Thin-shelled nut 15 Kind of acid 16 Rollover subj. 17 Dislike intensely 18 Violet flower 19 Fleur-de-

11 Sass

20 Due

22 Pile up, as wealth 24 Got in a fight 28 Platitude 29 Peddled anew 30 Bedouin's

mount 32 Mr. Klemperer 33 Mushers conveyances 35 Genghis

39 Ancient

ointment 40 Explorer Helen Johnson 41 Robin Cook thriller

42 Trim a photo 43 Bard's forte 45 Obligation 46 Anešthesized 48 — point (nadir) 50 "Ode to — Joe" 53 Epic journey 54 Flee to the J.P. 55 Slot machine

city

57 Brownish fruit 58 Treat a muscle

60 Canine, maybe 65 Yes, to Miss Piggy 66 Jazzman

Blake

67 Big Bird colleague Truck mkr. 69 Golf's "Slammin" Sammy' 70 Large

DOWN

1 Books pro 2 Dixie fighter I, to Wolfgang

"Little Red Book" author 5 Register Part of REM

Mrs. Bowie 8 Slight flaw Jr. naval officer "Casino –

11 Soft purple 12 South Bend team

13 Out-of-date 21 Takes the plunge

Jerseys (2 wds.) 24 Unbroken horse Fix the roof 26 Houston player 27 Paper source

(2 wds.)

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED OHARE RAVEL TIKI ODOR OMEGAS SALARIED MONT SKIMPS SEALSHEART DIN DRAMS AVAIL SPACE SHELLED HOLE TRAIN ASIA TADA EVADE SEND REBAR

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28 1 in. = 2.54 — 30 Mr. Chavez Economist — Smith

34 Folk wisdom 36 Perfects one's 37 Entertain

38 Bad-tempered 43 JFK followed him 44 Swit co-star 47 Daughters'

cousins 49 Half-shell item 50 Obfuscate 51 Hip bone reasoning

53 Eyed rudely

55 Intuition 56 Essay byline 59 Hordé member 61 Galleon cargo 62 Lennon's wife 63 Cratchit's son

64 "Psst!"

33 65 66

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YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



69

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63 70

45

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

'Savitri' blurs the line between 'good' and 'bad' woman

Sujit Bidari's short film explores the emotions of a married woman who falls in love with a voice on the radio.



URZA ACHARYA KATHMANDU

avitri is a typist. Her job is to type out poems of the shringar ras—literature that focuses on beauty and romance-for them to be read out loud on Radio Nepal. And as she types (and later hears) these romantic verses-in these dry months, please come replenish me-she falls in love with the voice that recites them. The voice is her co-worker Navaraj's. And Savitri is

'Savitri' is a short film by Sujit Bidari, also known for directing 'Ainaa Jhyal Ko Putali,' Nepal's 2022 Oscar submission. It is based on a short story, 'Typist', by writer Bhawani Bhikshu. Bhikshu's story, which is set in the year 1995, is refreshingly modern, especially in the way it views female sexuality. Not only is the married heroine attracted to a co-worker, but she is also shown to be disenchanted by her husband, longing instead to hear the soothing

voice on the radio reciting love poems.

The story and film remind me of the rare instances where feminine desires were portrayed poignantly. Parallels can be drawn to Satyajit Ray's 'Charulata'—a film about a beautiful, intelligent but lonely wife of a newspaper editor. Charulata has everything she needs-plenty of servants at her ser-



vice; a big, gorgeous home; a loving but aloof husband-but longs for connection, one that matches her interest and intelligence. She finds that connection with her brother-in-law, Amar, who is about the same age as her. Both are rather fond of literature, and Charu develops feelings for Amar.

In 'Charulata' and 'Savitri,' the women feel an emptiness in their lives and find

ways to fill it up-daring to tread forbidden routes. For Savitri, it's relishing Navaraj's lingering gaze as they sit across each other while having lunch. Her words continually dismiss any possibility of an affair between Navaraj and her, especially when her friend Manju constantly teases her—but her eyes are a bit more daring.

As her love for the voice on the radio grows, she is thwarted by the advances by her husband. Moreover, his current unemployment and dependence on her for money is also a cause for annoyance for Savitri (which hints at the monetary expectations men are subjected to). It is not difficult to see that the marriage was possibly an arranged one, and she wishes for a more romantic partner—perhaps one that will recite poems for her.

Films (and literature) in the past have always stuck to the idea of the eternal feminine—a narrative that claims women have inherent values of nurturing, sacrifice, innocence and purity. This manifests in the glorification of motherhood or the all-forgiving, devoted wife/girlfriend. Similarly, the heroines are always passive receivers of romance, rarely shown to initiate any thing by themselves.

What 'Savitri' and 'Charulata' do is portray women beyond the 'eternal feminine' trope and hint at the complex emotions and thought processes they go through as human beings do. Moreover, the films also take a more neutral stance in depicting the women—they aren't villainised for having such emotions or seen as destroying familial values.

In films, there is a tendency to show women who actively pursue romance or express desires as the 'femme fatale'-a seductress that will take any route to have the man she wants. This character is almost always juxtaposed with the more conventional heroine, who is pure and innocent. That sort of binary-and the subsequent triumph of the 'good' heroine over the femme fatale—reflects the anxieties around feminine values, where

'Savitri' and 'Charulata' portray women beyond the 'eternal feminine' trope and hint at the complex thought processes they go through.

women who are expressive are seen as a threat to patriarchal norms. A 2017 book titled 'Bad Girls and Transgressive Women in Popular Television, Fiction, and Film argues that films show "women [who are] be passive, voiceless, and powerless-worthy of praise—or vengeful, violent, promiscuous, disruptive-[as] requiring

However, it is important to note that the femme fatale has been reclaimed (by feminist writers and filmmakers) to break the mould and portray heroines beyond their sex appeal, like in 'Jennifer's Body' and more recently, 'Promising Young Woman.'

Though 'Savitri' and 'Charulata' do not carry the typical grandiose of the femme fatale, it can be argued they are a more toned down and realistic approach to the femme fatale-in the sense that both Savitri and Charulata show instances of sexual autonomy and harbour conflicting (and perhaps even immoral) emotions. This is refreshing to see on

The films don't glorify infidelity or sit back as the women become total anarchists (not that I'll complain if such movies are made). In fact, the endings of both films are quite realistic. But in a world where women are reduced to the 'damsel-in-distress', 'the manic-pixiedream-girl' or the 'crazy-ex-girlfriend,' any inkling of a sincere portrayal feels surprisingly warm.

Savitri Language:

Cast:

Duration: 14 minutes Sujit Bidari **Director:**

Keki Adhikari, Dipesh Bhandari,

Manju Devkota Released:

A simpler approach to fitness

fitness journey and the reasons behind a surge in the numbers of gym-goers in the Valley.

Ojash Joshi, a trainer at OxStength, talks about his

ANISH GHIMIRE

jash Charan Joshi has always loved working out. From playing sports as a child to training for body-building competitions, he loves to get his heartbeat pumping. So when he saw a gym for the first time, he was transfixed. But gyms were expensive. He worked mundane jobs to pay the gym fee.



One day out of the blue, he saw an opening for an internship at The Physique Workshop. The opportunity was colossal for him as he could learn, train, and take free classes with fitness instructors. From there, his physical and personal growth took off. His shyness began to wear off as he developed social and communication skills. With time, he realised what he was truly capable of.

Joshi gives huge credit to the people around him who played their part in his growth. When he came across Mr Kathmandu Junior, an annual bodybuilding competition, he resolved to participate in the under-21 category. He trained ferociously. "I ended up winning. My team and mother came around and congratulated me, which I will never forget," he recalls. For him, a proper physique is the result of discipline and consistency.

Joshi is now a trainer. He currently works at the OxStrength online fitness coaching platform, focusing on power building.

What was your primary motivation to join

I have always been an athletic guy. I used to play various outdoor sports like basketball and table tennis. One day, my friend pointed out that I have a strong-looking build, and if I were to join the gym, I could build a good physique. The idea sounded good, but it didn't immediately bring about a spark. Slowly, when

gaining friends biceps and becoming fit after joining the gym, something clicked. I wanted abs. But soon, I realised fitness is much more than having six

How can one begin and stick to their fitness

It should start at home. If your family members are health conscious and choose nutritious food, then the process becomes a lot less tedious. Since fitness is not always about lifting heavy weights, families can push the young generation to exercise and become athletic. They can encourage children to go outside and take part in sports. While doing so, it is crucial to have consistency. It is easy to start but difficult to keep going.

Is a healthy diet important for maintaining one's physique?

In my opinion, especially in Nepal, people make a huge deal out of diet. They exaggerate the concept. You often hear people saying that you should only eat boiled stuff, avoid sugar or only eat brown rice, which is totally wrong. Each body is different, and the calorie intake required depends on that. A diet plan for me may not be suitable for others. So, one should take a good look at themselves, measure their weight, esti-



Ojash Charan Joshi, fitness trainer.

body needs, and then keep track of calories consumed. Nutrition is a vital part of the journey, and we must keep our food What can busy people do to keep

themselves fit?

mate the calories their

People live by what's important to them. If you believe something is important enough, you will find the time to do it. But if you really are really packed on schedule, you don't have to go to the gym to maintain your physique. You can play football, cycle, walk, swim, and whatnot. Separate at least one hour daily to move your body and increase your heart rate. Start with something that falls under your comfort zone and slowly look for ways to challenge it.

Joshi believes that young people creating fitness-related content on social media has inspired many to hit the gym.

What do you think is the reason behind more people joining the gym?

People have come around to the idea of going to the gym. In the past, it was not considered a place where 'decent' people went. But now, people are more open to the concept. When I started, I once saw women bring someone with them, like their mother, just to feel safe. But now, they exercise independently without fear-seeing the gym as a safe place for personal growth. Also, the gym community is super supportive and welcoming. No one mocks you for your physicality. Social media, too, has played a massive part as many young people like to make gym-related content. On top of that, many bodybuilding and weight-lifting competitions are being organised, which gives gyms visibility.

Is the gym a healthy coping mechanism

Absolutely. I recently went to Singapore and was so tired upon arriving. But after I hit the gym, my tardiness vanished, and I felt refreshed. I always look forward to feeling the adrenaline on my body while working out and then washing off the steam with a cold shower. Exercise releases dopamine which gives you a good night's sleep and assists your body in digestion. All of these are a perfect recipe for sound health-both physically and



MY PODCAST PICKS

Srichchha Pradhan



Pradhan, who was crowned Miss Nepal World 2023 last month, is the founder of Deego Pranali, a sustainable lifestyle brand. She has a bachelor's in

environmental studies from Bennington College, USA.

>> For The Wild

Founded and hosted by Ayana Young in 2014, For the Wild is a female-led collective that reveals what lies behind the consumer-conscious This is one of my favourite pod-

casts. I love it so much that a while ago, I considered sending them an application for an internship. The podcast takes a decolonised approach to understanding the environment.



Today Explained

>> Today, Explained

Today, Explained is a Vox production podcast hosted by Sean Rameshwaram and Noel King. Started in 2019, the podcast already has more than 1,300 episodes.

Whenever I want updates about the happenings of the world, I tune into Today, Explained. Because of my hectic schedule, I often do not have the time to read the news. So, this podcast is where I get my daily news digest.

>> Unlocking Us

Started in March 2020, Unlocking Us is a podcast hosted by American professor and author Brené Brown. The podcast has a total of 148 episodes.

I like this podcast because it helps me understand myself. Living in a patriarchal world, I was always a little uncomfortable being vulnerable. This podcast taught me to accept my emotions and balance softness with my headstrong personality.





>> Ted Climate Ted Climate is a podcast hosted by

Den Kwartler which started in 2020. The host shares how we can deal with and try to reduce the climate crisis.

Since childhood, I've been interested in environmental issues. The discussions on various conservation efforts and the overview it provides on new technologies being developed to combat the climate crisis are very insightful.