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Bhairahawa Jumla



Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani (centre right), with President Ramchandra Paudel as he receives a guard of honour at the airport in Kathmandu on Tuesday.

President asks emir for Bipin Joshi's release from Hamas captivity

The Gulf emirate of Qatar is keen on diversifying areas of cooperation with Nepal and investing in hydropower projects.

ANIL GIRI
KATHMANDU, APRIL 23

Qatar Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani arrived in Kathmandu on Tuesday afternoon on a two-day state visit in what is the most high-profile visit from the emirate to Nepal since the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1977.

Al Thani had arrived at the invitation of President Ramchandra Paudel, who welcomed the guest at the Tribhuvan International Airport upon his arrival from Dhaka, Bangladesh. Vice President Ramsahay Prasad Yadav, Speaker Dev Raj Ghimire, Chairman of the National Assembly Narayan Dahal, ministers and heads of the security agencies were present at the special function organised at the airport upon the emir's arrival, a statement issued by the Office of the President said.

Al Thani is the highest-ranking head of state visiting Nepal from the West Asia or Gulf region.

After the ceremony, the emir left for Sheel Niwas for a courtesy meeting with President Paudel. The government declared a public holiday on Tuesday in honour of the state visit by the emir. Heavy security has been deployed in Kathmandu for the safety of the state guest. Nepal Army Lieutenant General Ashok Sigdel is leading the security deployment that comprises security personnel from the Nepal Army, the Armed Police Force, the Nepal Police and the National Intelligence Department, said a senior security official.

Upon the emir's arrival at Sheel Niwas, he was welcomed by President Paudel. According to the Office of the President, besides President Paudel, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Minister for Energy and Water Resources Shakti Basnet, Foreign Secretary Sewa Lamsal, Secretary at President's Office Dilliram Poudel, as well as advisers to President Paudel, among others, were present at the meeting.

President Paudel appealed to the emir for his support and intervention in securing a safe release of Bipin Joshi, who is believed to be in Hamas captivity following their October 7 attack on Israel. Nepal has made repeated requests to Qatar and other nations and international humanitarian organisations to help with Joshi's release.

Responding to the President's request, the emir assured that he would try his best to secure Joshi's safe release, Suresh Chalise, foreign relations adviser to President Paudel, told the Post.

"Joshi's safe release is one of our prime concerns, and the President asked for the emir's support in securing it," Kiran Pokhrel, press adviser to President Paudel, told the Post.

Qatar maintains good relations with Palestine and Hamas and has been working to broker a deal to end the fighting between Hamas and Israel.

Qatar has been working to broker a deal to end the fighting between Hamas militants and Israel.

The National Human Rights Commission also had requested Qatar's Human Rights Committee to take the initiative to locate Joshi. The commission made the request in writing and also during face-to-face meetings with the officials from the Qatari committee, according to Surya Dhungel, a commissioner at the constitutional human rights watchdog.

In the meeting with President Paudel, the emir vowed to boost bilateral engagements with Nepal and gradually increase investments, according to Chalise. "We will diversify the socio-economic support provided to Nepal," Chalise quoted the emir as saying during the meeting with the President.

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TODAY

NATIONAL

In a bid to ensure their quality, the Department of Drug Administration is preparing to carry out on-site tests of medicines. The DDA has trained 28 drugs inspectors and technicians for the purpose. Pg 2

The Supreme Court has scrapped a provision in the Electronic Procurement System Directive-2023, which made it mandatory to publish procurement notices only in the electronic medium. Pg 3

OPINION

The Maoist leadership has realised that Nepal is India-locked for all practical purposes, CK Lal argues. Pg 4



WORLD

Asia was the world's most disaster-hit region from climate and weather hazards in 2023, the United Nations said on Tuesday, with floods and storms the chief cause of casualties and economic losses. Pg 6

SPORTS

Inter Milan have dominated Italian football this season and when the final whistle blew on their 2-1 win at AC Milan, marking the club's 20th Serie A title, it was a moment of sweet triumph for Simone Inzaghi's men. Pg 7



Mallory's last letter from Everest: Odds of reaching top were '50 to 1 against us'

Mallory and Irvine were last seen alive on June 8, 1924 when they were said to be still going strong some 900 feet beneath the summit.

BRIAN MELLEY/ASSOCIATED PRESS
LOS ANGELES, APRIL 23

In his final letter to his wife before he vanished on Mount Everest a century ago, George Mallory tried to ease her worries even as he said his chances of reaching the world's highest peak were "50 to 1 against us".

The letter, digitised for the first time and published online on Monday by his Cambridge University alma mater, expressed a mix of optimism, exhaustion and the difficulties his expedition encountered on their quest to be the first party to conquer the peak.

"Darling I wish you the best I can—that your anxiety will be at an end before you get this—with the best news," he wrote to Ruth Mallory on May 27, 1924 from Camp I. "It is 50 to 1 against us but we'll have a whack yet & do ourselves proud."

It remains a mystery whether Mallory, who once famously said he wanted to conquer Everest "because it's there", and climbing partner Andrew Irvine reached the summit and died on the way down or never made it that far. Mallory's body was found 75 years later far below the peak, but Irvine's has never been located.

The first documented ascent came nearly three decades later when New Zealander Edmund Hillary and Nepal's Sherpa Tenzing Norgay scaled the mountain on May 29, 1953. Magdalene College posted the letters



British mountaineer George Mallory with Andrew Irvine at the base camp as they get ready to climb Everest in June, 1924.

online to mark the centenary of Mallory's ill-fated attempt to stand atop the world.

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Chhau sheds reappear. Deep-rooted tradition, failed campaign blamed

Four years ago, a one-off campaign was launched by the government to dismantle menstruation sheds, but there was no follow-up.



POST PHOTO: MENUKA DHUNGANA

A woman with her child pictured outside a makeshift chhau goth (menstruation shed) in Biratoli village in Mangalsen Municipality of Achham in this recent photo.

MENUKA DHUNGANA
ACHHAM, APRIL 23

In ward 5 of Dhakari Rural Municipality in Achham district, a 23-year-old woman lives in a chhau

shed outside her house for three days every month during her menstrual period.

"Four years ago, with the help of security personnel and all three levels of government, a campaign

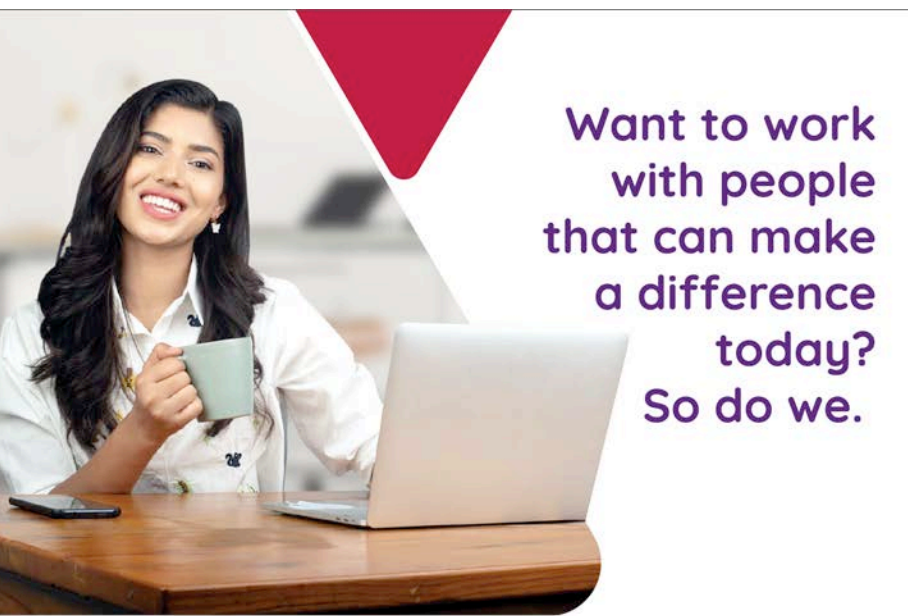
was launched to demolish chhau goth [menstruation sheds] and put an end to this deep-rooted practice," said Thapa.

"After the authorities demolished the sheds, I started staying in a room at my house during my periods, but after a couple of months, I was compelled to stay in a tarpaulin tent outside the house every month. Later, everyone in our village erected chhau sheds again, and currently all the girls of the village live in sheds during three days of menstruation," Thapa added.

Despite various functions and campaigns organised by the government and international and local development organisations, the chhaupadi tradition—an outdated social practice in which menstruating girls, women, and postpartum mothers are deemed impure and banished into seclusion for three days—still prevails in various districts of the Sudurpaschim and Karnali provinces.

The civil and criminal codes enforced in 2017 have criminalised chhaupadi.

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DISTRICT DIGEST

Arsonist arrested after 20 years of crime
MAHOTTARI: Police have arrested a fugitive after 20 years of the crime in Mahottari district. According to Deputy Superintendent of Police Santulal Jaiswal, Rakesh Yadav, 40, was arrested from his residence in ward 8 of Loharpatti Municipality. The Supreme Court had sentenced him to seven years in prison on December 31, 2018, for setting fire to 12 houses at Khuttapipradhi in 2004. Police apprehended him based on a tip-off. According to Jaiswal, Yadav was presented before the Mahottari District Court on Monday before being sent to prison to serve his term.

Bardiya Hospital launches dialysis service
BARDIYA: Bardiya Hospital in Gulariya has started providing dialysis service. Health Minister of Lumbini Province Dipendra Kumar Pun formally initiated the service amid a function on Tuesday. According to Dr Subhash Pandey, the medical superintendent at the hospital, two doctors and 10 staff nurses have been deployed to run the dialysis service round-the-clock. “The patients need not to go to other districts or neighbouring India for dialysis service now onwards. The federal and provincial governments provided financial support to operate the service,” said Pandey.

Ilam ready to conduct by-election

ILAM: The Office of Chief Election Officer in Ilam, a hill district of Koshi Province, is all set to conduct the by-election slated for Saturday in constituency No 2. The polling officers, assistant polling officers and election employees set off for the designated places after receiving election materials and other logistics on Tuesday. According to the election office, a total of 745 employees and around 3,000 security personnel have been mobilised for the by-election in Ilam-2.

Nepal drugs regulator to conduct on-site testing of medicines

Ensuring medicine quality remains a challenge due to chronic deficiencies at the Department of Drug Administration.

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, APRIL 23

In a bid to ensure the quality of medicines being prescribed to patients, the Department of Drug Administration (DDA) has been preparing to carry out on-site tests of medicines.

For that the national drugs regulatory body has imparted training to its 28 drugs inspectors and technicians, who will be deployed to hospitals across the country.

“A four-day field-based screening training for drug inspectors has been completed today,” said DDA Director General Narayan Prasad Dhakal. “Our drug inspectors carried out testing of drugs at Bir Hospital as a demonstration on Tuesday.”

Officials at the department said many countries have been practicing drug testing outside the laboratory, which gives immediate results within minutes of the collection of samples. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided technical as well as financial support to carry out field based screening training.

Officials said that basic qualities of the drugs—identification, disintegration, visual inspection for cracks, splitting, capping and cavitation, as well as contamination, foreign matter, presence of empty capsule, stickiness, color and odor of the solution, taste of liquid, labeling, brand name, generic name, among others, will be examined during on-site testing.

During demonstration testing carried out at Bir hospital on Tuesday, metronidazole of three different companies—two Nepali companies and one of Indian companies were examined. Officials said that they did not find any problems in the medicine samples collected randomly from pharmacies operating near the hospital.

Ensuring quality of medicine in Nepal has always become an issue, as the national drug regulatory body strug-

gles with a shortage of staff, and its laboratory doesn’t have capacity to carry out testing on time.

Drug inspectors deployed from the DDA collect drugs through the random sampling methods and send them for testing in the government’s laboratory. If drugs are found problematic or sub-standard, the department directs the manufacturing companies concerned to recall those drugs from the market. However, the department does not have an effective mechanism to ensure the recall.

The drugs regulator has been struggling with shortage of staff and inadequate lab facilities.

In most cases, delays in testing at the laboratory mean that results come in only after all the substandard drugs have been sold in the market.

Experts say the use of substandard medicines could adversely affect the patients’ health.

While thousands of medicines manufactured by national as well as international pharma companies and are being sold from pharmacies across the country, DDA inspectors collect only around 1,000 samples from the market in a year. The inspection work is especially daunting because DDA has just around two dozen drug inspectors tasked with monitoring over 21,000 registered pharmacies and thousands of others unregistered pharmacies.

And it takes several months to examine some medicines as the DDA’s laboratory is understaffed with several posts for technicians remaining vacant. The department allows the drug manufacturing companies to supply medicines into the market directly from the factory.

George Mallory held dim hopes of summitting Everest, his last letter shows

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The collection, which had previously been available to researchers, also includes letters he wrote from the battlefield in World War I and correspondence he received from others, including his wife.

The only surviving letter his wife wrote from England during the expedition was sent as his party sailed toward Bombay. It recounts a recent snowstorm, how her bank account was overdrawn and how she fell off a ladder before telling him how much she missed him.

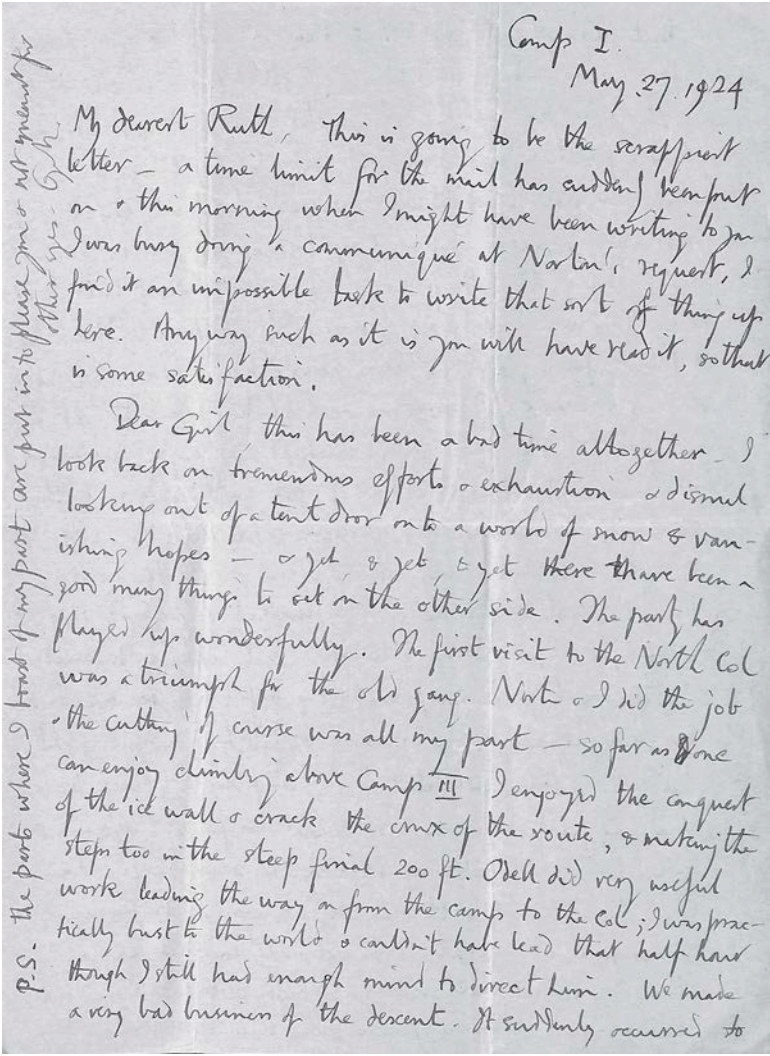
“I know I have rather often been cross and not nice and I am very sorry but the bottom reason has nearly always been because I was unhappy at getting so little of you,” Ruth Mallory wrote on March 3, 1924. “I know it is pretty stupid to spoil the times I do have you for those when I don’t.”

In his final six-page correspondence to his wife, addressed to “My dearest Ruth,” George Mallory speaks of trials and triumphs as the party slowly made its way up the mountain, setting up higher camps and then retreating to lower elevation to recover.

“This has been a bad time altogether,” Mallory wrote 12 days before he was last seen alive. “I look back on tremendous efforts & exhaustion & dismal looking out of a tent door onto a world of snow & vanishing hopes — & yet, & yet, & yet there have been a good many things to set on the other side. The party has played up wonderfully. The first visit to the North Col was a triumph for the old gang. North & I did the job — the cutting of course was all my part — so far as I can enjoy climbing above Camp III I enjoyed the conquest of the ice wall & cracks the crux of the route, & making the steps too in the steep final 200 ft. Orell did very useful work leading the way on from the camp to the Col; I was practically lost to the world & couldn’t have led that half hour though I still had enough mind to direct him. We made a very bad business of the descent. It suddenly occurred to

“In I went with the snow tumbling all around me, down luckily only about 10 feet before I fetched up half-blind & breathless to find myself most precariously supported only by my ice axe somehow caught across the crevasse & still held in my right hand,” he said. “Below was a very unpleasant black hole.”

Mallory said only one member of the party remained “plum fit” and they planned to rest up for two days before pushing for the summit, which was expected to take six days.




This is an undated photo provided by Magdalene College Cambridge on Monday of part of the final letter that mountaineer George Mallory wrote to his wife before he vanished on Mount Everest a century ago. The letter has been digitised. In the letter, Mallory tried to ease her worries though he said his chances of reaching the world’s highest peak were ‘50 to 1 against us.’

Mallory and Irvine were last seen alive June 8, 1924 when they were said to be still going strong some 900 feet (274 metres) beneath the 29,035 feet (8,850 metres) summit. Mallory’s body was found at 26,700 feet (8,138 metres).

A group of mountaineers who tried in 2007 to reconstruct Mallory’s ascent were unable to determine if the pair made it to the top.

“I still believe the possibility is there they made it to the top, but it is very unlikely,” said Conrad Anker, who participated in a documentary recreating the climb and who had discovered Mallory’s body in 1999.

In Mallory’s final letter to his wife, he says, “the candle is burning out & I must stop.” He signs off: “Great love to you. Ever your loving, George.”



Nepal Oil Corporation Limited

Aviation Fuel Depot

Sinamangal, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: +977-1-4111135, Email: nocafsfinance@gmail.com

Contract Identification Number: NOC/AFD/ICB/G/2023/24-01

Date of Notice Publication: 24 April 2024

- The Nepal Oil Corporation Limited (NOC), Aviation Fuel Depot (AFD), Sinamangal, Kathmandu invites **Electronic Bids** from eligible bidders for the procurement of Goods “**Supply, Delivery, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Refueller Parts at NOC/AFD, Sinamangal, Kathmandu, Nepal**” under **International Competitive Bidding (ICB) – Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure**.
- Under the Single Stage, Two Envelope Procedure, Bidders are required to submit simultaneously two separate Bids, one containing (i) the Technical Bid and the other (ii) the Price Bid as per the provision of ITB 23 of the Bidding Document.
- Eligible Bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the office of **NOC/AFD, Sinamangal, Kathmandu, Nepal** or or may visit e-GP system of PPMO: **www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp**.
- A complete set of Bidding Document for the task in English is available online and may be downloaded for e-submission from the e-GP system of PPMO: **www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp**. Bidders, submitting their bid electronically, should deposit the cost of the Bidding Document (non-refundable fee) of **Nepalese Rupees 3,000.00 or equivalent United States Dollars (USD)** to the **NOC/AFD’s Current Account Number: 1690100000047001, Rastriya Banijya Bank Ltd., Trivuvan Antarastriya Bimansthal, Airport Gauchar, Kathmandu** branch and scanned copy in PDF format of the voucher/receipt of the deposited amount must be submitted/uploaded along with the Electronic Bid.
- Pre-bid meeting shall be held at **NOC/AFD, Sinamangal, Kathmandu, Nepal** at **1:00 P.M. local time on 24 May 2024**.
- Interested eligible and qualified Bidders are required to submit the Electronic Bids through e-GP system of PPMO: **www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp** on or before **1:00 P.M. local time on 9 June 2024**.
- Submitted Electronic Bids will be opened in the presence of Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at **1:15 P.M. local time on 9 June 2024** at the office of **NOC/AFD, Sinamangal, Kathmandu, Nepal**.
- Bids must be valid for a period of 90 days counting from the date of bid opening and must be accompanied by a scanned copy of the bid security in PDF format, amounting to a minimum of **Nepalese Rupees 370,000.00 or equivalent USD**, which shall be valid for a minimum of 30 days beyond the bid validity period (i.e., Valid up to a minimum of **6 October 2024**).
- If Bidder wishes to submit the bid security in the form of cash, the cash should be deposited in **NOC/AFD’s Current Account Number: 1690100000047001, Rastriya Banijya Bank Ltd., Trivuvan Antarastriya Bimansthal, Airport Gauchar, Kathmandu** branch and scanned copy in PDF format of the voucher/receipt of the deposited amount must be submitted/uploaded along with the Electronic Bid.
- Other details are available in the e-GP system of PPMO: **www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp**.

Chhaupadi tradition persists despite ban

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The practice of chhaupadi is not only discriminatory against women, but is also life-threatening, as seen from reports of girls and women dying in chhau sheds due to cold, suffocation, snakebites, and wildlife attacks surfacing frequently.

In Achham, the sheds that were demolished four years ago have started to be built again, and women have resumed living in them during menstruation due to lack of attention from local units and government agencies.

Four years ago, Parbati Budha Rawat, a 20-year-old woman from Siddheshwari in ward 3 of Sanphebagar Municipality of the district, died in a chhau shed due to asphyxiation caused by a woodfire she had lit to keep warm before going to bed.

According to the police, after Parbati’s death, her brother-in-law Chhatra Rawat, was arrested by the police after finding out he had forced her to live in the shed during her menstruation. But the police failed to build a strong case against him because nobody from the family or outside registered any complaint.

Based on the police report, Chhatra was presented at the Achham District Court and was only sentenced to serve 45 days in prison for forcing the victim to live in a shed, said police.

Clause 168 (3) of the Civil and Criminal Code provisions three-month jail and a fine of Rs3,000 against anyone found guilty of forcing a woman to live in a chhau shed during menstruation. The punishment is more severe for those holding public positions.

After the formation of local governments under the federal structure in 2017, the trend of destroying chhau sheds gained momentum with sporadic campaigns aimed at ridding the villages of menstrual taboos.

On January 22, 2020, the federal Ministry of Home Affairs directed the administration in 19 districts of Sudurpaschim and Karnali provinces to dismantle chhau sheds.

According to the District Administration Office of Achham, under the instruction of the federal Ministry of Home Affairs, more than 10,000 chhau sheds were torn down in 91 wards of ten local units of the district in around a month. Similarly, the local people’s representatives, police, and local residents came forward to support the campaign, but it was later stopped after a couple of months.

Neither the police administration nor the local units gave continuity to the campaign.

Bindu Rawal, deputy chair of Bannigadi Jayagad Rural Municipality, said that currently her office has no plan to dismantle chhau sheds, or monitor them, or conduct any awareness programmes.

“How can we stop such a deep-root-



This recent photo shows people rebuilding a menstruation shed, which was dismantled during a government campaign four years ago, in ward 5 of Kamalabazar Municipality in Achham.

ed tradition without coordinated efforts and federal funding? Due to lack of budget the rural municipality is unable to launch any effective programmes to end the practice,” said Rawal.

Meanwhile, Netrakala Devi Shahi, deputy chair of the Dhakari Rural Municipality of the district, said that nobody in her local unit has rebuilt chhau sheds after they were dismantled a few years ago. But some people still send their women to animal sheds during the period of menstruation.

“Women are still living in barns or under tarpaulin tents after the chhau sheds were demolished, and if we take any action about it, it can cause a major dispute in the rural municipality because of their old beliefs,” said Shahi.

According to the officials of other local units in the district, currently, nobody is conducting awareness campaigns or making efforts to tackle the chhaupadi tradition.

Srijana Saud, a 24-year-old woman from ward 3 of Mangalsen Municipality, said until four years ago, due to the fear of the law and legal action, women in the district used to stay at home during their periods, and nobody would force them to live outside.

“But women are returning to sheds, barns, and tents again because the campaign was discontinued. If the campaign had been given continuity, things would have been much better by now,” said Saud. “The provincial and federal governments only seem to show concern about the Chhaupadi issue when a serious incident occurs. Women always suffer in this patriarchal society, especially in the rural

areas where getting help from anybody is very hard,” Saud added.

“The monsoon and winter are very difficult for the people living in higher altitudes, and in such harsh weather conditions, women are forced to live outside during menstruation. However, some women willingly go to live in chhau sheds as well due to superstition and old beliefs,” said Shushila Thapa, a women’s rights activist from Sudurpaschim. “This practice can only be stopped if all three governments and government authorities work in coordination. The practice is widely followed in the remote areas of Achham, Doti, Bajura, and Bajhang districts. The government should work continuously in those areas to educate and make people aware until the people themselves put an end to the practice,” said Thapa.

Senior Superintendent of Police Prajwal Maharjan, spokesperson of Sudurpaschim Provincial Police, said that there is not official data on how many women died in chhau sheds, but since the fiscal year 2006-2007, at least 19 women died, and almost all of them were from remote areas.

“Since the fiscal year 2006-7, altogether 14 women died in Achham, two in Doti, and three in Bajura. Even after the tragic deaths, nobody has lodged any complaints, so police could not do anything,” said Maharjan. “We have not conducted any monitoring programme since the last campaign to demolish chhaupadi sheds because we have not received new instructions from higher authorities, agencies, or the local units where the practice continues. Also, police cannot intervene in such matters because that could spark social disputes,” Maharjan added.

Court scraps provision to publish public procurement notices only through e-medium

A division bench of the top court repealed the provision as it contradicted the existing legal provision.

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, APRIL 23

The Supreme Court has scrapped a provision in the Electronic Procurement System Directive-2023 which made it mandatory to publish procurement notices only through the electronic medium.

A division bench of the top court repealed the provision as it contradicted the existing legal provision. The Advertising Association of Nepal had challenged the controversial directive in the top court.

“The provision to limit public procurement only to the electronic medium contradicts the Public Procurement Act,” reads the full text of the January verdict released on Monday. “The provision is, therefore, scrapped.”

With the court order, notice of all the public procurements must be published in national and international newspapers.

A division bench of Justices Sushma Lata Mathema and Abdul Ajij Musalman had ruled the directive cannot supersede any Act. The Act says the notice of the national level bidding must be published in a national newspaper while the one related to the international bidding must be published in an international newspaper.

The Public Procurement Monitoring Office issued the directives with the

provision to exclude the newspapers from publishing the bidding notice. The office planned to publish the notice only in the electronic procurement system. Defending the move before the court, the government had argued that the electronic procurement process is more transparent and reliable. It had also argued that accessing the notice from the electronic medium was easier than it was in the newspaper.

The Mathema-led bench, however, didn't buy the argument and issued the verdict as demanded by the advertising association. The plaintiffs had argued that limiting the procurement only to the electronic medium in countries like Nepal where internet penetration and the digital literacy is low can not be justified on any ground.

The umbrella body of the advertising agencies had moved the top court on November 29, 2023. The directive came into implementation with the start of the current fiscal year in mid-July. The verdict was issued two months after the writ petition was filed. However, it took another three months for its full text to be out. The advertising companies had criticised the directive, claiming it contradicted the Act.

In its petition, the advertising association also had demanded an order to scrap the Advertisement Board. The court, however, refused to act as per its demand.



People walk past bougainvillea blossoms in front of the Supreme Court at Ramshahpath in Kathmandu on Monday.

No immediate chance of Congress, UML partnering for poll reforms, leaders hint

As rumours swirl of two biggest parties uniting to topple Maoist-led government soon, UML leaders defend the coalition.

PURUSHOTTAM POUDEL
KATHMANDU, APRIL 23

With a fractured election mandate resulting in political instability from federal to provincial governments, there is growing sentiment in favour of amending the constitution to change the current electoral system.

Soon after the change in power-sharing at the centre, almost all provincial governments have faced the problem. The CPN (Maoist Centre) ditched its earlier coalition partner Nepali Congress on March 4 and stitched a new ruling coalition with the CPN-UML.

The electoral system is the reason behind the political instability, argue some political leaders. They also point to the need for constitutional amendment to address the issue. For instance, the mixed electoral system is often blamed for unstable governments.

“The electoral system we are practising has been giving us fractured mandates, resulting in no single party winning a majority in Parliament,” chief whip of the Congress Ramesh Lekhak told the Post. “Therefore, public sentiment is building in favour of amending the constitution to reform the electoral system.”

The UML chief whip, Mahesh Bartaula, also stands on the same ground as Lekhak on electoral reforms. But, Bartaula said, constitutional amendments to reform the electoral system would not happen immediately.

“Indeed, the mixed electoral system that we are practising is not yielding desired results. Instead, it is causing political instability,” the UML chief whip told the Post. “If needed, our party is open to discussing its remedy.”

For one, the parties whose political agendas do not align should not be allowed to form poll alliances, says Bartaula. “If we can control this practice of parties with differing ideologies forming alliances, this electoral system too can function well,” added Bartaula.

Though some leaders are in favour of immediate constitutional amendment in order to give the country a semblance of stability, a two-thirds majority in the lower house of parliament is needed to do so.

This means 182 seats in the 275-strong House. For that, Nepali Congress, the largest party in Parliament with 88 seats, and the UML, the second largest with 78 seats, need to come together. Even after that 16 more MPs' support is needed, but there will be a possibility of gaining that support if the two big parties make a joint effort, experts say.

“Constitutional amendment is necessary to address the political instability that we are facing today,” political analyst Arun Kumar Subedi told the Post. “If the Congress allies with political forces other than the UML, chances of a constitutional amendment will be slim. Therefore, if the political parties are considering changing the electoral system by amending the constitution, the Congress and the UML should come together.”

A question naturally arises: why should the Congress and the UML agree to power-sharing to amend the constitution and reform the electoral system, if it is a need of the day? It can



History suggests that the Congress and the UML have cooperated only in special cases.

also be done even if one among the two big parties sit in an oppositional bench.

But a close aide of Deuba, on condition of anonymity, claims that should the Congress and UML stand together for constitutional amendment it will not be only for electoral reform, they will also address other pressing issues of the country.

But Bartaula ruled out a power alliance with the Congress. “Reforming the election law might be one thing which will take its due course; it is not a matter of a day or two. However, our party is not considering a power equation with the Congress anytime soon,” Bartaula stressed.

At an event organised by the UML to mark the Diamond Jubilee of the formation of the Nepal Communist Party on Monday, Maoist chair Dahal

ment led by Girija Prasad Koirala, and in the 2015, the two parties shared power in the government led by Sushil Koirala that promulgated the constitution of Nepal through the second constituent assembly.

Congress president Sher Bahadur Deuba's close aide NP Saud told the Post that the two major political parties in the nation only work together on exceptional conditions.

UML vice-chair Surendra Pandey, too, denied the possibility of forming an alliance with the Congress. “Congress General Secretary Gagan Thapa has been talking about cooperation between the two parties, but we have had no concrete discussion on the matter,” Pandey told the post. “Politics is a game of possibility and we cannot completely rule out the prospect of future cooperation.”

At an event organised to mark the Diamond Jubilee of the formation of the Nepal Communist Party on Monday, Maoist chair Dahal and UML chair Oli stood together to strengthen their cooperation.

and UML chief KP Sharma Oli stood together to strengthen the cooperation between the communist parties. Amid the rumoured possibility of a governing partnership between the Congress and the UML in the near future, the chairmen of two communist parties vowed to strengthen the ties between the two communist forces.

But the Congress leaders claim that the channel of discussion with the UML is open.

History suggests that the Congress and the UML have cooperated only in special cases. The two parties first cooperated in the Krishna Prasad Bhattarai-led government during the promulgation of the constitution of Nepal back in 1990. Similarly, for the second time in the 1996 election, the two parties cooperated in the govern-

ment led by Girija Prasad Koirala, and in the 2015, the two parties shared power in the government led by Sushil Koirala that promulgated the constitution of Nepal through the second constituent assembly.

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Following the election in November 2022, the government has been headed by the CPN (Maoist Centre), the third largest party in Parliament with 32

PM Dahal will seek Qatari investment for major project, hydropower

>> Continued from page 1

The Qatari side showed keen interest in increasing investment in Nepal's hydropower sector, according to Chalise.

During the meeting, President Paudel praised Qatar's role in maintaining global peace, particularly in the West Asia region. The emir praised the role of Nepali nationals living and working in Qatar for their contribution in building infrastructure of Qatar and for their continued work even during the Covid pandemic.

According to the Office of the President, Paudel and Al Thani discussed protecting mountains, water resources conservation and climate change.

President Paudel stressed the need for collaboration between Nepal and Qatar in order to mitigate adverse effects of climate change, protect mountains, save water resources and maintain environmental balance, according to a statement issued by the Office of the President.

“The common challenge of the present world is how to save the earth from the adverse effect of climate change, how to protect the mountains, sources of water and how to save the environment. This is the issue of human existence and particularly developing countries should be sensitive towards this issue. All the countries of this world should come together on these pressing issues,” Paudel said at the meeting, according to the statement.

Paudel expressed his concerns about the escalating conflict in the Middle East and told the emir that Nepal is in favour of peace while praising the role being played by

Qatar as a peace broker, said Kiran Pokhrel, press adviser to the President.

In response, the emir said the entire world has been impacted by climate change and countries should work together to adhere to the agreements and accords to mitigate its adverse effects.

“If all countries adhere to past agreements in mitigating the adverse effect of climate change, it will give positive results and create a happier situation,” the statement issued in Nepali by the Office of the President said, quoting the emir.

The emir stated that his visit would be fruitful in exploring more avenues of cooperation, and further strengthening bilateral ties between Nepal and Qatar, said the statement issued by the office.

The emir also praised the contribution of Nepali citizens to the development of Qatar and thanked President Paudel for their efforts.

As many as 400,000 Nepalis are currently living and working in Qatar.

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Dahal and Emir of Qatar will hold delegation level talks where the two sides will explore, discuss and reach some understanding in areas like hydropower, agriculture and



Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal welcomes Qatar Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani at Kathmandu airport on Tuesday.

tourism.

The prime minister and Emir Al Thani are expected to discuss several issues of bilateral interest including inviting Qatari investments in various sectors of Nepal, and renewal of labour agreement, among other things, according to officials.

The prime minister is likely to make a request for Qatari investment for a big project, either the construction of an international airport or a hydropower project, according to officials privy to the meeting's agenda.

During Tuesday's meeting, Paudel stated that Nepal and Qatar should

work together in areas like trade, tourism, and investment, and reminded the role of Nepali migrant workers in Qatar's prosperity.

After the delegation level talks, President Paudel hosted a state banquet in the honour of the Qatari Emir and the visiting delegation.

From the Qatari side, Sheikh Saoud Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, the chief of the Amiri Diwan, Jassim bin Saif Al Sultani, Minister of Transport, Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Qassim Al Thani, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Soltan bin Saad Al Muraikhi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Saad bin Nasser Kabbi, Director of Studies and Research Department of Amiri Diwan, Sheikh Faisal bin Thani Al Thani, Chief of Asia and Africa Investments of Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), Yousef Sultan Laram, Director of Asian Affairs Department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs are accompanying the Emir.

Similarly, Sultan Bin Ghanim Alhodaifi, chief of Emir's private affairs office, Talal bin Almas Al Sulaiti, assistant director of the Amiri Ceremonies department and Mansour Faleh Al Hajri, personal assistant of Amir are accompanying the Qatari Emir on the visit.

Emir Al Thani arrived in Kathmandu after completing a state visit to Bangladesh leading a delegation of over 150 people, according to a security official in Kathmandu.

Besides his special private jet, three other planes carrying members of the delegation, officials, members of the business communities and security personnel also landed in Kathmandu on Tuesday afternoon.

Al Thani is scheduled to depart on Wednesday afternoon following delegation level talks with Prime Minister Dahal and a luncheon hosted by the prime minister in honour of the emir and his delegation.

Nagarkoti takes lead after Day I

SPORTS BUREAU
KATHMANDU, APRIL 23

Bhuvan Nagarkoti carded even-par 68 to take one-stroke lead over three golfers on the first day of the Surya Nepal Kathmandu Open, the seventh event under the Surya Nepal Golf Tour 2023-24, at the par-68 Royal Nepal Golf Club on Tuesday.

Former Nepal number one pro Nagarkoti is one shot ahead of Rabi Khadka, Bhuwan Kumar Rokka and Niraj Tamang after they played 1-over 69.

Five pros, Purna Prasad Sharma, Dhana Bahadur Thapa, Jayram Shrestha, Sanjay Lama and Dinesh Prajapati, are tied for fifth at 2-over 70. Pashupati Sharma is 10th at 3-over 71.

Tashi Tsering and Sadbhav Acharya share the lead in the amateur section after they played 4-over 72. The two amateur golfers share the overall 11th position with Subash Tamang, who made the Surya Nepal Golf Tour debut as a professional golfer.

Leader Nagarkoti played 2-over 36 on the back nine and carded 2-under 32 on the back nine. He started the day with a birdie on the first hole but faced three bogeys on the second, third and ninth holes before taking the turn. Nagarkoti carded two straight birdies on the 10th and 11th holes and added another on the 17th hole. He faced a lone bogey of the back nine on the 15th hole.

Another former top pro Khadka took the turn at 4-over 38 after he faced bogeys on the second, third, seventh and ninth holes. He bounced back strongly on the back nine carding 3-under 31 with the help of birdies on the 12th, 13th and 17th holes.

Rokka played 1-over 35 on the front nine. He faced bogeys on the first and third holes and suffered a double bogey on the seventh hole against three birdies on the second, fourth and fifth holes. Rokka saved pars on all nine holes of the back nine.

Dharan pro Tamang carded 1-under 33 on the front nine and played 2-over 36 on the back nine. He carded a birdie on the second hole and sank an eagle on the fourth hole. He dropped shots on the third and ninth. After taking the turn, he faced a double bogey on the 11th and dropped a shot on the 13th hole before carding a birdie on the 16th hole.

A total of 41 players—32 pros and nine amateurs—are taking part in the tournament.

Cut will be applied after 36 holes. 21 top scoring professionals with ties (if any) and amateurs who make the pro cut will make it to the final 36 holes.



PHOTO: NPGA
Bhuvan Nagarkoti is one stroke ahead of Rabi Khadka, Bhuwan Kumar Rokka and Niraj Tamang.



How Inter Milan won its 20th Scudetto

A 2-1 victory at San Siro lifted Nerazzurri 17 points clear of second-placed AC Milan with five matches to spare.

AFP/RSS
Inter Milan players and officials celebrate after winning the Serie A title at the San Siro Stadium in Milan on Monday.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MILAN, APRIL 23

Inter Milan stormed to a 20th Serie A title and earned a second star on the team shirts after dominating the league just like Napoli did last season.

The Italian title race was expected to be a closer fight this campaign but the defending champions stuttered from the start just as Inter impressed from the outset.

Everything appeared to click seamlessly for the Nerazzurri, who were helped by remaining relatively injury-free, and it was inevitable for a long time when they clinched the league on Monday.

It was even sweeter for Inter that they did so at city rivals AC Milan, who also started the season hoping to secure their 20th Serie A trophy.

The 2-1 victory at San Siro lifted Inter 17 points clear of second-placed Milan with five matches to spare.

Impressive Inzaghi

Inter coach Simone Inzaghi has finally graduated from his 'King of Cups' nickname.

The 48-year-old Inzaghi had never coached a team to a league title despite an impressive list of achievements.

With Lazio and then Inter, Inzaghi won three Italian Cups and five Italian Super Cups, earning him the title of "Re di Coppe" ("King of Cups"). He also steered Inter to the Champions League final last year.

The way he broke his Serie A duck has been particularly outstanding.

Inter ruled over the league. The Nerazzurri lost just one match—in

late September—and have by far the best attack as well as the best defence.

Inter have 79 league goals, 15 more than the next best attack—Milan—and went on a 13-match winning run in all competitions at the start of the year. That run was halted only last month in a shootout loss at Atletico Madrid in the second leg of the Champions League round of 16.

Timely changes

Inter have also garnered praise for their attacking flair. The team have

SERIE A							
STANDINGS (TOP SIX)							
Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PT
Inter Milan	33	27	5	1	79	18	86
AC Milan	33	21	6	6	64	39	69
Juventus	33	18	10	5	47	26	64
Bologna	33	17	11	5	48	26	62
Roma	32	16	7	9	57	38	55
Atalanta	32	16	6	10	59	37	54

INSIGHTS	
Inter Milan last won Serie A in 2021, followed by AC Milan in 2022 and Napoli last year.	
Inter have become the second team to win 20 Italian league titles and will have a second star stitched onto their jersey.	
A star is awarded for every 10 Serie A titles. Only Juventus has won more, with a record 36 and thus three stars on its jersey.	
Lautaro Martinez (league high 23 goals) and Marcus Thuram (12 goals) have provided Inter with 35 goals and 16 assists this season in Serie A, with the team scoring 79 goals in total.	
Not only has Inter conceded the least in the league (18 goals) but Yann Sommer has kept the most clean sheets, with 17 in 30 matches.	

been entertaining.

That aesthetic has been down to Inzaghi's player management.

While he tends to keep squad rotation to a minimum, he consistently uses all five substitutions available.

Inzaghi also rarely uses them before the hour mark, unless a player is on a yellow card. Inter have not had two players sent off for two bookings this season.

Smart buys

There was concern among Inter supporters when Romelu Lukaku and Edin Dzeko departed in the offseason to leave the Nerazzurri without a centre forward.

Those worries didn't last long as new signing Marcus Thuram seamlessly slotted in as Lautaro Martinez's new strike partner.

So much so, that Lautaro and Thuram have taken over from Napoli's Victor Osimhen and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia as Serie A's most dangerous strike pairing.

The 26-year-old Thuram—the son of former Parma and Juventus defender Lilian Thuram—has 12 goals and seven assists, while Inter captain Lautaro has a league-high 23 goals.

Another key signing that initially raised eyebrows was that of veteran Switzerland goalkeeper Yann Sommer for 6 million euros (then \$5.45 million) to replace Andre Onana.

That was a fraction of the 51 million euros (\$57 million) that Inter gained from selling Onana to Manchester United, and has turned into a smart business deal.

While Onana has been somewhat

of a flop in the English Premier League, Sommer has proved ever reliable between the sticks. Not only has Inter conceded the least in the league but the 35-year-old Sommer has kept the most clean sheets, with 17 in 30 matches.

Lack of challengers

Just under a year ago, Napoli were celebrating their first Serie A title in more than three decades. It must seem as if almost as much time has passed since then for their fans.

Napoli, who are on course for the worst title defence in Italian league history, are on their third coach of the campaign and sit a woeful eighth in the table.

Since 1995, only twice has a team failed to qualify for the Champions League the season after lifting the Serie A trophy.

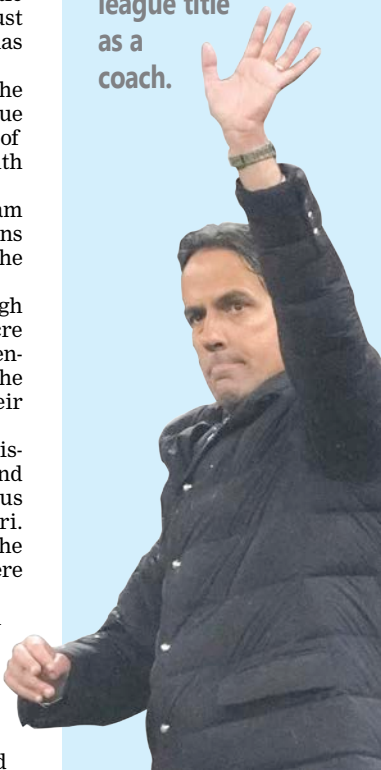
Roma and Lazio also went through coaching changes after mediocre starts to the season, and a horrendous month for Milan towards the end of last year put paid to their title hopes.

That left Juventus the last realistic challenger to Inter—far beyond expectations after a tumultuous year off the field for the Bianconeri. Juventus even moved into the lead in January while Inter were involved in the Italian Super Cup.

But Juventus spectacularly fell away as they failed to win another match for more than a month. The Bianconeri have won just two of their last 12 league matches in a miserable run.

Inter, meanwhile, have churned out the victories in a charmed season.

After winning eight other trophies (three Italian Cups and five Italian Super Cups), Simone Inzaghi claimed his first league title as a coach.



AP/RSS
Inter Milan coach Simone Inzaghi

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21-April 19)



You'll find empowerment through your closest bonds if you choose to look for it, dear Aries. Acknowledge how certain dynamics have evolved over the years, notating which have flourished in mutual respect or decayed through jealousy or miscommunications.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)



You may find it easier to let go of conflict or disappointments within your relationships. Turn over a new leaf with any peers you've butted heads with this afternoon, maintaining healthy boundaries and a fierce sense of composure.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)



You'll find yourself in an efficient and empowered headspace. Use this energy as motivation to scratch items off your to-do list, but remember to include a few agendas that revolve around fun or wellness. Trust in your experience.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)



Try to look on the lighter side of life, dearest Cancer. The day could also trigger fresh inspiration, motivating you to pull the trigger on creative projects. Consider how you might include more spiritual practices in your art.

LEO (July 23-August 22)



If you can work remotely or afford an emotional health day, consider doing so. Give yourself space to unpack emotional weight, find comfort at home, and unapologetically nurture yourself. Don't hesitate to lean on someone special later today.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22)



Speak from a place of depth to truly connect with those you encounter, dear Virgo. Moments of enlightenment that found you yesterday will seem even clearer in the light of day, helping you shed old ways of thinking.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22)



Tapping into your gratitude can also help you crystallise plans for the future, and be sure to acknowledge your ability to manifest and persevere. Good vibes flow later today making it easier to make healthy decisions.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21)



You'll feel unstoppable today sweet Scorpion. Now is the time to barrel toward the future, though it'll be important to let go of the unnecessary along the way. You can't be responsible for other people all the time.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21)



Your energy levels may feel diminished making it important that you show yourself some grace. Use this energy as an excuse to lay low, letting go of the pressure you feel to respond to socialise, or impress others.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19)



You'll sympathise with others more easily today, dear Capricorn. Don't shy away from group experiences, allowing yourself to see the true beauty within humankind. The more you search for good, the more easily you will find it.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18)



Don't apologise for all that you've had to fight for even if you're worried about coming off as slightly intense. Opportunities for prosperity could come into view making it important that you strike when the chance presents itself.

PISCES (February 19-March 20)



Take what you've learned throughout the last 24 hours, putting into practice any guidance you received from beyond. Stand up for yourself later today as it will be easy to win respect while taking an authoritative stance.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Frisbee
- Get rid of
- Window part
- One working against
- Dish
- Ohio's lake
- Diagnostic image
- Standoffish one
- Lois — of "Superman"
- Select personally
- Lazed
- Bring together
- Puerto
- Inflexible
- Ritual process
- Hippodrome
- So-so writers
- Edgar Allan — "King —"
- Category in biology
- High-maintenance star
- Actress — Gabor
- Blunder
- Less coarse
- Faith
- Takes delight
- over matter
- Sweetheart
- Makes ready

- Comfort food option
- Remarkable thing
- Ice cream choice
- Author Godwin
- Actor — Sharif
- Witch trial town
- Sicilian peak
- Prong
- Goes at a moderate pace
- Steer clear of

DOWN

- Spice amount
- Peruvian of old
- Comics legend — Lee
- Wood for a fire
- Broken arm support
- Watch
- Outright
- Had food and drink
- Pay- — -view
- Not too often
- Shrinking sea
- Trig function
- Attention
- Type size
- Covers with buttercream
- Happen more
- Annoys
- Falconry bird

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

C	H	A	P		D	A	D	S		H	A	S	P
L	A	V	E		M	E	L	E	E		E	S	P
E	V	E	R		A	N	I	S	E		M	E	A
F	E	R	V	E	N	T		I	S	O	L	A	T
			A	X	I	S				T	W	O	
F	A	D	E				B	L	A	N	C	H	E
B	L	U	E	S			O	A	R		K	I	L
E	E	G			S	H	O	W	S		R	O	E
D	E	U	S			I	A	N			S	T	E
S	T	R	U	G	G	L	E				H	I	D
					S	U	N				S	T	U
T	I	N	T										
A	V	I	A			O	L	D	E	N		L	I
R	A	N	I			S	L	E	E	T		E	D
O	N	A	N			T	A	C	K			D	E

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- Treasure —
- Of the kidney
- Body of work
- Think
- Heretofore unknown
- Periods
- Notorious king of Judea
- and bear it
- Lets slip
- Sponsorship (var.)
- Tricky deed
- Tainted

- Regions
- Cap for Pierre
- Make plans
- Noted Persian poet
- Ardor
- Venus de —
- Swear word
- Indigenous Japanese
- Custard
- Defunct airliner
- "The — of the Roses"

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17											18			
20					21						22			
26	27	28							29			30	31	32
33								34				35		
36														
39					40						41			
42					43						44			
47	48	49							50			51	52	53
54														
58								59				60		
61								62				63		

SUDOKU

7	1	4	8	5	2	9	3	6
8	9	3	1	6	4	7	5	2
5	2	6	7	9	3	1	8	4
1	7	2	9	4	5	3	6	8
9	4	8	3	1	6	5	2	7
6	3	5	2	7	8	4	1	9
2	5	7	4	8	1	6	9	3
4	8	1	6	3	9	2	7	5
3	6	9	5	2	7	8	4	1

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

		3			2		5	
4	2				5			6
9				1		4		
					9	1		
6								8
		5	8					
		4			8			3
7			4				6	2
		9		7			4	

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★



A ‘mahajatra’ indeed

The film offers a humorous yet insightful perspective on the everyday struggles and complexities of human existence.



(From left) Bipin Karki, Rabindra Singh Baniya and Rabindra Jha in a scene from the film.

SCREENGRAB VIA YOUTUBE

RISHEKA JOSHI
KATHMANDU

Four years after his film ‘Jatrai Jatra’ succeeded at the box office, Pradip Bhattarai has returned with another addition to the ‘Jatra’ franchise, ‘Mahajatra’. The smooth storyline and sincere acting makes the film worth watching. The screenplay recognises the contemporary issues of Nepal, ranging from the Kathmandu Metropolitan City’s street vendor rage to the sun and paisa kanda. Though the plotline seems a bit redundant in the second half due to stretched themes, its comedic bits effectively enamour the audience.

After losing Rs30 million in the prequel ‘Jatra’, the film’s heroes, Phadindra Prasad, Jayesh and Munna—played by Bipin Karki, Rabindra Singh Baniya and Rabindra Jha, respectively—have settled down to build a sinless life. The storyline of this film exhibits the events that follow the previous movie. Unlike other ‘so-called’ sequels of Nepali cinema—namely, ‘Nai Nabhannu La’, ‘Ae Mero Hajur’ and ‘Chhakka Panja’—where the newer versions do not follow the prequel’s story, ‘Mahajatra’ picks up right where ‘Jatra’ left off. The cleverly written screenplay also makes this movie a stand-alone and even the viewers who haven’t

watched the prequels can follow along.

The three “frenemies” cross paths with each other and their familiar friend—crime—all the time. In the prequels, they were forging banknotes and smuggling gold. Now, they get involved in hiding a big load of cash for a corrupted government official.

These characters embody the struggles of middle-class Nepalis—artists, drivers, and shopkeepers—navigating a capitalist society, often resorting to extreme measures to make ends meet. On the other hand, Hari Bansha Acharya’s portrayal of politician Punya Prasad exposes the puppeteers behind the system, highlighting the stark class divides and power dynamics prevalent in society.

The film aptly portrays how our society nurtures individuals who cannot be trusted with power. Through the character of ‘viral inspector’ Khatri, played by Divya Dev, the writer shows how an individual who wanted to make his country a better place ends up welcoming a brutal fate.

Media plays a significant role in shaping people’s opinions in the movie. ‘The Third Eye’ news channel, with its loud TV reporter, felt really close to reality. It shows how the media earns profit by disseminating sensationalised news rather than remaining intact with ethical reporting. The dramatisation of simple events persuaded the audience (in the movie) to believe a constructed reality—created



Mahajatra
Director: Pradip Bhattarai
Cast: Hari Bansha Acharya, Bipin Karki, Rabindra Singh Baniya, Barsha Raut, Rajani Gurung
Language: Nepali
Duration: 2 hours 20 mins

by the hand-puppeteers.

Additionally, both the viral inspector and Phadindra Prasad’s son, portrayed by Arbien Khadka, utilise platforms like Facebook and YouTube to disseminate the truth, underscoring the ongoing struggle between sensationalism and factual reporting in media.

The stereotypical image of women needing to clean after men is demonstrated in the movie. The leading men commit crime, once again, and the ladies—played by Barsha Raut and Rajani Gurung—are alert and save them. Multiple times in the movie Phadindra Prasad says how if his wife, Sampada (Barsha Raut), were there, she would have saved them with her wits. Though Sampada hates her husband’s stupidity, she eventually comes to his rescue.

Punya Prasad is portrayed as a doting father deeply devoted to his son. However, his paternal love drives him to indulge his son with luxuries earned through unethical means, perpetuating corruption and causing harm to others. By the end of the film, the character acknowledges that his corrupt actions were motivated by his desire to provide for his offspring. This reflects the harsh reality of our political landscape.

Besides the solid storyline, the actors’ commitment to their roles deserves praise. Karki, in particular, delivered a stellar performance with his nuanced expressions and delivery. While Rajaram Poudel

and Shisheer Bangdel’s roles felt somewhat stereotypical, the actors brought enthusiasm to their portrayals despite the familiar plotline.

The film’s comedic elements occasionally felt forced, with some scenes stretched beyond credibility, especially the frequent encounters with law enforcement experienced by the three friends. Additionally, the lacklustre sound effects during fight scenes raise questions about the technical advancements in Nepali cinema.

Towards the end, a dance number titled ‘Hamro Jodi’, featuring Aashma Biswokarma and Arun Chhetri, was introduced during an election campaign sequence. However, this felt out of place, detracting from the storyline’s coherence and serving as a needless distraction.

A run-in with crime brings Phadindra Prasad to an emotional realisation about how he (and the other characters) lack money not morals and their greed for more money is what makes them act the way they do. This line sums up the central moral of the movie. The friends are seen losing logic when an opportunity to get a lot of money shows up—which is true for many in real life, too.

The film effectively offers viewers a humorous yet insightful perspective on the everyday struggles and complexities of human existence, presenting them in a philosophical light. Overall, ‘Mahajatra’ is an entertaining watch.

Wake up, sleeping beauties. It’s almost Met Gala time



Vogue editor Anna Wintour attends The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Institute benefit gala in 2019.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK, US

True love’s kiss or an invite to the Met Gala? Those in the rarified ranks of international celebrity—and Anna Wintour’s good graces—need not choose.

Stars of film, fashion, music, sports, politics and social media will ascend the steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art on the first Monday in May —

May 6, that is—to sip cocktails, have dinner and sample the new exhibit, ‘Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion’.

So what is the point of the Met Gala?

It started in 1948 as a society midnight supper, and wasn’t even at the Met. Fast forward 70-plus years, and it’s one of the most photographed events in the world, renowned for its head-spinning red carpet—though the carpet isn’t always red.

It’s important to note, though, that the party has a purpose, raising money for the Met’s Costume Institute—nearly \$22 million last year, a record for the self-funding department—and launching the annual spring exhibit that brings hundreds of thousands of visitors to the museum.

But it’s the carpet itself that draws the world’s eyes, with the 400-strong guest list the subject of rabid speculation until the last minute—a collection of luminaries that arguably makes for the highest celebrity wattage-per-square-

foot of any party in the world.

Who’s hosting this year?

‘Anna Wintour Me Pregunto’, Bad Bunny could sing. Multi-hyphenate Jennifer Lopez adds yet another role to her busy year: And then there are two Marvel stars who have been spending a lot of time in the desert lately: Zendaya, who has continued to stun on red carpets with her ‘Dune’ and ‘Challengers’ looks, and Chris Hemsworth, who is trading in Mjolnir for the upcoming ‘Furiosa’. (Hemsworth is, in fact, a first-time gala attendee.)

And, of course, Wintour herself.

What does the Met Gala theme mean?

The theme revolves around ‘sleeping beauties’, but has little to do with fairytales. ‘Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion’, the title of the accompany-

ing exhibit, refers to garments from the Costume Institute’s collection that have been “in slumber” and now will be on display, some too fragile to hang upright lest they disintegrate. Curator Andrew Bolton picked 250 pieces spanning four centuries.

The theme is accompanied by a dress code—this year, it’s ‘The Garden of Time’. The theme and dress code are often interpreted...loosely. So there’s a chance you may see an Aurora on the carpet, after all.

How much do I have to pay for a ticket?

Wrong question. You cannot just buy a ticket. The right question is: If I were famous or powerful and got invited, how much would it cost?

Ok, if I were famous or powerful and got invited, how much would it cost?

Well, you might not pay yourself. Generally companies buy tables. A fashion label would then host its desired celebrities. Tickets have in the past cost \$50,000 for an individual, and \$300,000 or more for a table.

How can I watch?

You can watch the whole carpet unfold on a Vogue livestream. If you’re in New York, you can also join fans across the street, behind barricades, on Fifth Avenue or even further east on Madison.

What happens inside?

Entering the museum, guests walk past what is usually an impossibly enormous flower arrangement in the lobby, with perhaps an orchestra playing nearby; and over to cocktails. Or, they head to view the exhibit. Cocktails are about 6 pm to 8 pm, followed by dinner; but the most famous—or those who plan to make the biggest entrance—sometimes come (fashionably) later.



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