



PHOTO: PASANG TENZING SHERPA

For this season’s Everest climbers, it’s all systems go—except the weather

Bad weather may force a record number of climbers to rush up and down the summit

SANGAM PRASAIN
KATHMANDU, APRIL 18

Heavy footfalls are expected on Mount Everest this spring, as a record 374 fee-paying climbers—12 of them Nepalis—have been cleared to scale the world’s highest peak. And given the erratic weather pattern this season, many climbers are concerned that they could be left with a small window to make it to the top, and face a traffic jam during the final days of ascent.

Ang Tshiring Sherpa, former president of Nepal Mountaineering Association,

said considering a large number of Everest aspirants waiting for a chance to mount a bid for the summit, a “traffic jam” on the slopes cannot be ruled out this year.

“It will depend on weather. If the weather does not behave well, all climbers could scramble to climb the peak during a short weather window causing a traffic jam,” he said.

An official at the Meteorological Forecasting Division told the Post that they don’t forecast multi-day weather event and are not able to predict the changes in weather pattern in May.

Normally, there is a two-week window for the sumiteers to complete their climb before monsoon begins. But as weather conditions continue to fluctuate, some sumiteers say the climbing window could get even narrower, pushing them to attempt the climb within a week, and increasing the chances of a traffic jam.

A traffic jam is potentially dangerous particularly at the Hillary Step, a vertical rock face at 8,790m, which many climbers said was dislodged in the 2015 earthquake. This is the last steep challenge, when

exhausted climbers are forced to wait there for several hours, awaiting their turn to climb up or come down on a single rope.

According to the Department of Tourism, the authority that issues climbing permits, this year has the highest number of climbing permits issued for Everest in a single season.

“Applications have stopped coming but we have estimated that the number of fee-paying Everest aspirants could reach 380 this season,” said Surendra Thapa, spokesperson for the department. “With each climber hiring at least one local

climbing guide, the total number of individuals on the mountain may reach 1,000 this season,” he said. Normally, permits are issued until April-end.

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Chinese payment platforms are illegal, but officials say they can’t control them

Majority of the Chinese-run businesses use popular Chinese digital wallets to sell goods and services

TSERING D GURUNG
KATHMANDU, APRIL 18

Ask any shopkeeper in Thamel if they accept payments via WeChat or Alipay, and there’s a fairly good chance that they do. The answer is in the affirmative especially among Chinese-owned and operated businesses along the Amrit Marg, which has earned the moniker ‘Little China,’ owing to an influx of Chinese establishments in the area.

From a bijou noodle shop to a big hotel, the majority of businesses in the area accept payments via WeChat and Alipay, two of China’s most popular mobile payment platforms. Together, the two digital payment systems control over 90 percent of the country’s domestic market share.

“I was pleasantly surprised to learn that I could pay for a meal here using WeChat Pay,” said Tenzin, a Chengdu-based businessman who regularly travels to Kathmandu for

work. “So far all the Chinese restaurants I have visited in Thamel have accepted WeChat Pay.”

Like Tenzin, who asked only to be identified by his first name, a growing number of Chinese visitors are using their digital wallets to pay for goods and services in Nepal, particularly while dealing with fellow Chinese nationals who already have access to WeChat Pay and Alipay. But while the acceptance of such payment methods has made life convenient for Chinese tourists, these transactions bypass formal banking channels, and as such are in violation of the country’s Foreign Direct Investment and Foreign Exchange laws, say experts.

Under Nepali law, any outbound transaction from the country must be first approved by Nepal Rastra Bank, the country’s central bank. When people use these platforms, the transaction is made from one Chinese account to another which means the money

technically doesn’t enter Nepal.

“It’s just a matter of convenience,” said one store owner in Thamel who refused to be named fearing backlash from his customers who are primarily Chinese. “In China, people rarely use cash these days so they find it cumbersome to carry cash while travelling.”

The store owner, who deals in antiques, said he doesn’t have an account on either of the two platforms as one needs to have a Chinese bank account to avail of their services. So he relies on assistance from his Chinese friends and businessmen in the area whenever a customer wants to pay using the mobile platforms.

“The customer will transfer money to my friend’s WeChat Pay account who will then pay me in Nepali rupees here,” said the store owner. “I don’t know if it’s legal or illegal. I do it because if I don’t accept such payments, then I lose business.”

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UN letter on transitional justice process puts government in a bind

Officials say the agency has tried to portray Nepal in a way that inaccurately shows the country has done nothing

ANIL GIRI
KATHMANDU, APRIL 18

A letter from the United Nations addressed to Foreign Minister Pradeep Gyawali in relation to Nepal’s transitional justice process has put the government in a bind, as officials said the agency should have waited for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to acknowledge the receipt of the missive before it was put into the public domain.

Five special rapporteurs under Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner on April 12 wrote to the Nepal government, seeking transparency in the selection of leadership of two transitional justice bodies and asking to amend the existing Transitional Justice Act at par with international standards. The letter was sent through the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations Office in Geneva.

Senior officials at the Prime Minister’s

Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have also objected to the content of the letter, which came to public notice on Wednesday.

“The letter wrongly tries to portray that nothing has been done so far in the transitional justice process. We have reservations about it,” a senior official at the Prime Minister’s Office told the Post on condition of anonymity because he was not allowed to speak to the media.

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Nepal has a hockey team. But it doesn’t have a single hockey field.

The National Games in Nepalgunj is a reminder of how pathetic infrastructure and lacklustre organisation have abandoned a promising sport in the region

ADARSHA DHAKAL
NEPALGUNJ, APRIL 18

When Satya Narayan Chaudhary, the captain of the Army Club’s hockey team, took up the sport over a decade ago, he had imagined playing in a smooth green field—just like they do in most countries where the sport is popular. But to his dismay, Chaudhary has never had a chance to see a proper hockey field at home.

“My entire career in hockey has been spent playing on a terrible field,” Chaudhary said. “It is only during international tournaments we get to see a proper, green hockey field.”

This week, 38-year-old Chaudhary was playing his



POST PHOTO: KESHAB THAPA

Hockey matches were played on poor fields during National Games.

last domestic game in the National Games final. He led the Army team to its eighth National Games gold on Tuesday, beating their depart-

mental arch-rivals Nepal Police Club in a penalty shoot-out after the game ended in a tie during the regular 70 minutes.

For a moment, the Army

dugout at the Mangal Prasad Higher Secondary School ground went through a jubilant celebration, but soon, the reality hit them. For the Army team and most Nepali hockey players, it’s a routine thing—the game has always been organised in haste and without proper infrastructure for decades. No one knows what’s next in store for the hockey players after the National Games are over.

Hockey is played in Nepal without a proper field. Chaudhary says the ground where his team usually trains, at the Army Physical Fitness and Training Centre in Lalitpur, has the best surface for the game. But it’s not a hockey field—it’s for football.

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Government to administer vitamin A, deworming tablets to 2.6m children

Department of Health Services, however, says coverage rate has declined in city areas, particularly in comparison to last year

ARJUN POUDEL
KATHMANDU, APRIL 18

As many as 2.6 million children aged six months to five years are expected to be administered with vitamin A supplements and deworming tablets as part of a nationwide campaign to be held on Friday and Saturday.

Nutrition Section under the Family Welfare Division of the Department of Health Services, which is responsible to run the campaign, said all necessary preparations to administer the supplement and deworming tablets have been completed.

“We would like to request all parents to make sure that their children aged six months to five years are administered with the vitamin A and deworming tablets,” Kedar Parajuli, chief of nutrition

section of the division said. The section estimates that there are 2.6 million children aged six months to five years in the country, who need vitamin A supplement and deworming tablets.

The vitamin A campaign is largely a success story in Nepal, as it has immensely helped tackle the issue of vitamin A deficiency among children, which used to be a major public health problem in the country.

The coverage rate, however, has been declining by the year. The programme had a coverage rate of over 94 per cent, the highest among health campaigns and programmes in the country in the past. But last year, only 85 per cent children were administered the vitamin A supplement and deworming tablets.

The nutrition section said

that the coverage rate was much lower in big cities, metropolises and submetropolises in comparison to remote districts and far-flung villages.

“Reaching out to elite groups, educated people and people residing in apartments and colonies has emerged as a main challenge to us,” said Parajuli. “They neither give access to female community health volunteers nor listen to them.”

Likewise, floating population, slum settlements and lack of exact data are some of the other issues that have hindered the drug administration process, according to Narendra Bajracharya, chief of Health Department at Kathmandu Metropolitan City. “We do not know exact number of children in our metropolis,” said Bajracharya. “We have been setting targets on

the basis of 2011’s census data.” In Kathmandu, of the estimated 80,000 children aged six months and five years, only 62,000 (77 per cent) were administered vitamin A and deworming tablets last year.

The government has been conducting such nationwide campaigns twice a year since 2003—in October and in April. This year, the Health Ministry requested UNICEF for vitamin A supplements and deworming tablets after provincial governments failed to procure it on time. Out of seven provinces throughout the country only Sudurpaschim Province managed to purchase the vitamin A supplement and deworming tablets. Except Province 2, all the other provinces sought help of children in our metropolis,” said Bajracharya. “We have been setting targets on

Former lawmaker Yadav, RJP-N leader Mandal held for forgery

ABADHESH KUMAR JHA
RAJBIRAJ, APRIL 18

Saptari police has arrested BP Yadav, former lawmaker of then Madhesi Janadhikar Forum-Nepal, and Hari Narayan Mandal, central member of Rastriya Janata Party-Nepal, in a forgery case.

Yadav and Mandal were arrested on Thursday on charges of forging government stamps and documents, and forming a fake consumer committee to receive government budget.

Superintendent of Police Rajendra Bista said Yadav and Mandal were taken into custody after investigation found that the duo was involved in forging government documents and stamps.

Bista and Yadav had also formed a fake consumer committee to mobilise Rs 2.5 million budget issued by the Physical Infrastructure Development Ministry in Province 2.

Police said they had forged letter pads and stamps of Krishnasawaran Rural Municipality with the intent of misappropriating the budget.

The District Court has remanded Yadav and Mandal to judicial custody pending further investigation.

Police suspect that some employees of Siraha Infrastructures Development Division Office might have helped Yadav and Mandal.

SP Bista said police were investigating the possible involvement of other individuals in the case.

UN letter on transitional justice process puts government ...

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In the letter, the UN rapporteurs have sought the Nepal government’s clarification on any measure it has taken or intends to take to bring Nepal’s legislation in conformity with international norms and standards and what it has done or is planning to do to enhance the effectiveness of the two transitional justice bodies. They have also sought information regarding the measures Nepal government has taken or is planning to take for effective participation of victims in the design and implementation of the transitional justice processes.

The letter was sent a little over a month after Gyawali, during his speech at the Human Rights Commission in Geneva, assured the international community that Nepal would amend its Transitional Justice Act in line with the Supreme Court ruling and international commitments. He had also said that there would be no blanket amnesty in cases of serious human rights violations.

The UN concern over selection of members and chairpersons of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission on the Investigation of Enforced Disappeared Persons comes weeks after the government formed a recommendation committee led by former chief justice Om Prakash Mishra to select the members and chairpersons of the commissions. The committee has called for applications from candidates to work as chairpersons and members of the two commissions.

More than a decade after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, conflict victims are still waiting for justice.

The UN rapporteurs, in their letter, have asked the

Nepal government to recall the ruling from the Supreme Court. Even as the government has extended the terms of the two transitional justice bodies, it is yet to amend the Transitional Justice Act in line with the Supreme Court ruling and international obligations, despite repeated promises.

In 2015, the Supreme Court struck down the amnesty provision and said the consent of the victims was necessary for any reconciliation.

Though the letter has stopped short of making a direct reference, it does carry a hint that there has been a lack of consistency in the government’s claims and its actions.

The international community in the past also called on the government to take the transitional process to a logical conclusion by amending the Act and taking the victims into confidence.

In January, nine foreign embassies based in Kathmandu, at the initiative of the UN, issued a statement asking the government to clarify its plans to take the transitional justice process forward in 2019 and ensure broader consultation with the stakeholders.

“Without broad public trust in the process, Nepal will not be able to bring closure to the wounds and grievances that persist from the conflict era, nor be able to complete the peace process,” the foreign missions said.

In the latest strongly-worded letter, the UN has also nudged Nepali officials about the pending requests for a visit from the Special Rapporteur: “We look forward to receiving your invitation to visit the country soon,” the letter said.

A senior government official, however, told the

Post that Nepal has always been open to inviting the rapporteurs.

“Two UN special rapporteurs came last year alone. We will take necessary decision about the request soon,” said the official. He also said that Nepal is serious about concluding the transitional justice process adhering to the international standards and the Supreme Court’s ruling.

In his brief comment on the UN letter, Minister for Communication and Information Technology Gokul Banskota said on Thursday that there would be no blanket amnesty in cases of human rights violations committed during the decade-long insurgency.

“Nepal is capable of handling the transitional justice process on its own,” Banskota told reporters during the weekly media briefing at Singha Durbar.

Government officials said they received the letter only on Wednesday evening. It was not clear yet when the government is planning to respond to the United Nations.

The officials said the government will study the letter and reply to the high commissioner’s office at an appropriate time. “We will reply to all concerned after studying the letter,” Bharat Raj Paudyal, spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told the Post.

The official at the Prime Minister’s Office said the government is open to taking technical support, if need be, from the UN, which could be for, say, forensic study. “We are open to the UN’s support if we need, but the transitional process will move ahead on the homegrown modality,” he said.

Binod Ghimire contributed to the report.

For this season’s Everest climbers, it’s all systems go—except ...

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The highest number of climbers are from India (87), followed by the United States (68) and China (62) and the United Kingdom (42).

Climbing will start from mid-May, and the mountaineers have already started spending time on the lower reaches of the Himalayas acclimatising themselves.

During the final phase of ascent, climbers are exposed to risks of thin air and many could run out of oxygen as well.

In May 2012, four climbers—Ha Wenyi from China, Eberhard Schaaf of Germany, Nepal-born Canadian Shriya Shah and South Korean mountaineer Song Won-bin—died from exhaustion and altitude sickness while descending from the summit.

An estimated 150 climbers had left for the summit on a single day—May 18, 2012, that had caused a traffic jam on the tallest peak in the world.

One of the reasons Everest sees a huge number of climbers is the fee they pay to the government and the money they spend. Foreigners pay \$11,000 to obtain the climbing permit and spend between \$40,000 and \$90,000 to climb Everest. As all expenditures are non-refundable, climbers scramble to climb the peak at any cost, which often could lead to overcrowding on top of the world.

Some climbers say that they don’t anticipate a traffic jam this spring because of a fixed climbing timetable for each expedition. “To avoid traffic jams, there is a mechanism in place. Climbing leaders and high-altitude guides meet and fix departure timetables for each team,” said Kami Rita Sherpa, one of the most experienced climbers who plans to break his own record by scaling Everest for a 23rd time this season.

Despite the risks, the number of climbers continues to grow every year, and for Nepal, that’s at least a positive news. According to the department, it collected Rs436 million in royalty by issuing



PHOTO : PASANG TENZING SHERPA

The government has issued permits to a record 374 climbers to scale the Everest this year.

climbing permits for Everest alone. The climbing season also generates hundreds of well-paying jobs.

“As climbing Everest has become much safer with improved climbing gears and weather technology, the number of people who apply for a permit has been rising,” said Thapa.

According to the department’s statistics, 863 individuals were issued the climbing permits last year, including 349 fee-paying climbers and 514 high-altitude climbing guides. A record 563 people, including 261 fee-paying climbers, stood atop the hal-lowest peak. The high-altitude climbing guides do not need to pay climbing fees.

For the last three years, the success rate of climbing Everest has averaged at 70 per cent. In 2015, 356 mountaineers had acquired climbing permits. But there were no Everest bids in the spring of 2015, due to avalanches set off by the devastating April 25 earthquake that killed 20 climbers, including guides and helpers at the base camp. The government had then

extended their permits for two years until 2017.

According to the expedition organisers, icefall doctors mobilised by the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee have already opened a climbing route from base camp to Camp I (6,400m).

“Climbers have started acclimatising up to camp II after the route was opened,” said Mingma Sherpa, chairman of Seven Summit Treks, one of the leading expedition companies. “We are expecting the first climb to take place on May 10 if the weather behaves well.”

The climbing time from base camp (at 5,364 metres) to Camp I (5,943 metres) is five hours. The Khumbu Icefall, the most treacherous part of the route, lies between these two camps.

Most of the climbers try to cross the Khumbu Icefall during the early morning, before the sunrise. As sunlight warms up the ice, the chances of crevasses opening up or ice blocks falling become much greater.

It takes four hours to reach Camp II (6,400 metres) from

Camp I, which expeditionists describe as the most exciting and easiest part of the route. From Camp II to Camp III (7,162 metres), the average walking time is seven hours, while from Camp III to Camp IV (8,000 metres) or South Col, the average walking time is nine hours.

It is the Camp IV from where, climbers say, the ultimate thrill begins, as it is the last point from where the Everest push starts. It takes climbers up to 10 hours to reach the summit (8,848 metres) from Camp IV. Normally, the summit push begins at 11 pm or midnight, so that climbers can reach the summit and begin their descent during the day.

Expeditionists said the difficulty level of climbing would depend also on whether the snow up in the region is fresh or frozen.

“The winter season dropped large amounts of snow on Everest areas and if it’s frozen, it could make climbing relatively easy,” said Ang Tshiring. “But if there is fresh snow, it could make climbing difficult.”

Chinese payment platforms are illegal, but officials say they ...

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Along with the possibility of Chinese business owners using these platforms to repatriate money and evade taxes in Nepal, economists say the unregulated use of such platforms will also have a significant impact on the country’s earnings from Chinese tourists.

“A large number of Chinese tourists visit Nepal but if in-country per capita Chinese tourist spending goes down, then it will have a negative impact in terms of forex earning and balance of payment accounting,” said Chandan Sapkota, an economist currently based in Tokyo.

More than 150,000 Chinese tourists visited Nepal last year, a nearly 50 per cent rise from 2017. And the number is only expected to grow as infrastructure projects linking the two countries complete.

In recent years, Chinese tourists have been known to be the biggest spenders. In 2017, Chinese visitors spent \$258 billion, nearly double of what Americans spent the same year, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

Experts say that for the local economy to benefit from Chinese tourists, the gov-

ernment has to monitor, and control, Chinese-owned businesses’ transactions via WeChat Pay and Alipay. Otherwise, the country will lose much of its revenue as the income goes directly to China.

“The tourism sector is considered to have a multiplier effect in terms of growth, income and employment,” said Sapkota. “If money is paid in China via WeChat, then we won’t realise those benefits here.”

One possible solution could be for local banks and companies to partner with WeChat Pay and Alipay, something that an increasing number of countries around the world are already doing, to accommodate Chinese buyers’ preference for mobile payment while ensuring the money passes through the country’s formal banking channels.

Last year, Nabil Bank signed an agreement with Union Pay International to facilitate QR code payment service in Nepal. As per the agreement, Chinese tourists will be able to use their Union Pay app to pay for goods and services at thousands of businesses under Nabil’s network across the country, said Anil

Keshari Shah, CEO of Nabil Bank.

“We want Chinese tourists to spend money in the country,” said Shah, “and we hope that by adapting to their payment habits they will be encouraged to spend their money here.”

In a phone interview with the Post, Bhisma Dhungana, chief of forex division at Nepal Rastra Bank, said his office is aware of Chinese businesses using mobile payment platforms. But authorities still have not figured out how to bring them under the central bank’s control.

“We are working on a solution to monitor and regularise such transactions,” said Dhungana. “It’s not that easy because we are dealing with technology-based transactions.” Dhungana said the bank is currently reviewing the application of SwiftPass, the Chinese mobile payment technology company, which supports WeChat Pay, Alipay and UnionPay. But until SwiftPass receives a licence to operate in Nepal, he said transactions via WeChat Pay and Alipay are illegal.

“Anyone caught engaging in such transactions will be held accountable,” he said.

Nepal has a hockey team. But it doesn’t have a single hockey field.

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“This is the worst surface we have ever played on,” said Chaudhary, after his team’s gold medal triumph at the high school ground that has barely any grass. On any other day, the ground also plays host to cricket or football tournaments. It is, in fact, so overused and least looked after that the ground is not suitable for any sports. “The surface is very hard because there is no grass. We don’t have any idea when the ball bounces. On a surface like this, we can’t make a proper run and have a high chance of getting injured,” Chaudhary said.

If the condition of hockey infrastructure is any indication, then it’s no surprise that Nepal’s international appearance in hockey—especially in the South Asian Games—has equally been a debacle. The national team conceded 79 goals when men’s hockey was last included in the 2010 edition in Dhaka. Their biggest defeat so far is 24-0 against Bangladesh in 2010,



A glimpse from a hockey match during the eighth National Games in Nepalgunj.

when they scored only one goal throughout the tournament.

In modern-day hockey, the game is played in three surfaces, all of which have to be extraordinarily smooth. For outdoor hockey, traditionally, the grass makes the best field; indoor hockey is played on a synthetic surface. In recent years, astroturfs have replaced the grass field in outdoor hockey.

At the National Games, the women’s hockey field, hosted at the Shukra Secondary School, was comparatively worse. Athletes could not even spot the ball during an on-field challenge because it would get invisible in the puff of dust. But it is not just the scarcity of a proper field Nepali hockey players have to deal with. Today, the sport neither has quality players nor coaches or match officials. The final between the Army and the Police was officiated by a referee imported from India. The Police team includes a few Nepalis who were raised in India and play the

sport there. Many Hindi-speaking Nepalis crossed the border just to play in the National Games.

Former national player Shafiq Ahmed Siddiqui, now a treasurer with Banke District Hockey Association, said getting players from India during big games won’t help the sport’s future in the country. “These boys play in India because there are better opportunities for them,” said Siddiqui. “Nepal has to produce its own players to make sure the game goes on.”

For Siddiqui, it’s a frustrating sign that none of the representatives from the local organising committee of the National Games was present to monitor the tournament. “The district association doesn’t have a bank account and the central body doesn’t have any plan,” Siddiqui told the Post. “The National Sports Council has no idea how it needs to think about hockey.”

The country hosted its eighth National Games after the govern-

ment finally released Rs850 million to the local organising committee. But hockey, for which an astroturf could have been procured for Rs3.5 to Rs4 million, only received around Rs 250,000.

“That was the only budget allocated for hockey and we had to make do with the grounds that were available,” said Bhim Oli, coordinator of the venue management committee. Later this year, Nepal is supposed to host the South Asian Games—but only if the country can complete the construction of all infrastructure on time. Even if most facilities will be finished on time, Nepal will still not have a proper field designated for hockey—one of the 27 games in the event.

“We are hosting a big tournament but I don’t know where we’re going to play hockey,” Chaudhary said. “But if the government actually wanted, it’s not too late to build a proper facility before the impending games.”

Asset verification process of transport operators set to become free of hassles

Public transport operators are yet to register as companies under new rules

CHANDAN KUMAR MANDAL
KATHMANDU, APRIL 18

The government has said it is making efforts to minimise procedural hassles for registering erstwhile public transport committees as companies to encourage the public transport operators to become tax-paying companies.

A seven-member committee, formed under Director General of the Department of Transport Management Kumar Prasad Dahal, has recommended that the government ease the registration process for transport companies.

As per the recommendation of the committee, the government should allow verification of the property belonging to previous transport committees by officials at any transport management offices in the country before making them register as companies at the Office of the Company Registrar.

“According to the existing laws, verification of properties of such committees should be done by courts, which is likely to take long,” Dahal told the Post. “We have tried to remove the policy obstacles through this recommendation.”

Public transport committees are reluctant to register as companies since the government launched a crackdown on their syndicates. As part of the action, transport operators were required to register as companies at the Office of the Company Registrar as per the amendment made to the Transport Management Directives-2004 last year.

The amendment made it mandatory for transport entrepreneurs to register as private companies, which were earlier listed with several transport committees and associations nationwide.

However, a year into the

government decision, a majority of transport operators have yet to register as companies on various pretexts while the government kept on extending the deadlines on several occasions. The new deadline for registration as companies is set for June 1.

“They had said it would be difficult for their 300,000 stakeholders or members to go for registration as companies in a short timeframe. And also the task of property verification is tough. Therefore, we decided to make it simpler,” added Dahal.

As there are only three company registrars—in Kathmandu, Itahari and Butwal, public transport entrepreneurs spread around the country had said that all of them cannot travel to these offices for registration while verification of the property also remains a tough task, according to Dahal.

Now onwards, all the mem-

bers of transport committees can register at any of the transport management offices and submit their property documents for verification. The chief of the transport management office or a section officer can verify the property and initiate the process for company registration.

The government hopes that simplifying the procedure will persuade transport entrepreneurs to register at the company registrar’s office soon.

“Members of the transport committees can agree that they are ready to hand over their property to a certain company. The years-long practice of having property under the committee is now being transferred to companies. This takes time,” said Dahal. “The transport committee representatives are satisfied with the latest facilitation. We are positive they will soon register as private companies.”

Kathmandu metropolis unveils master plan and mobile app for 2.2 km heritage trail

ANUP OJHA
KATHMANDU, APRIL 18

Marking the World Heritage Day on Thursday, the Kathmandu Metropolitan City unveiled a master plan to link two world heritage sites—Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square and Swayambhunath Stupa which lies in 2.2km walking distance.

The city also unveiled a new mobile app “World Heritage to World Heritage Trail” where a visitors can get the information about historical monuments that fall along the trail without the need for a human guide.

Addressing the master plan unveiling ceremony, Kathmandu Mayor Bidya Sundar Shakya said opening of the trail will help connect the locals with tourists and improve their socio-economic status.

“We want to connect locals and their everyday lifestyle to preserve the heritage, art and culture. This time we have a master plan, and we are in its execution phase,” said Shakya.



POST PHOTO: ELITE JOSHI

Kathmandu Metropolitan City officials unveil the master plan for the 2.2km heritage trail linking Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square and Swayambhunath Stupa, two of Kathmandu’s UNESCO world heritage sites, on Thursday.

The metropolis has set itself a three-year target to implement the master plan.

The 2.2 km trail hosts around 400 households, 80 percent of them belong to the Newar community.

The master plan talks about giving a traditional look to the trail; offering subsidies to locals to renovate their houses into traditional from; promoting local arts, culture and the way of life; and establishing library and museum and information help desk for visitors.

Lawmaker Jeevan Ram Shrestha said there are 20 historical monuments between two different UNESCO world heritage sites.

“If we could only show visitors the monuments and cul-

tures, it will further promote our culture and heritage globally,” he said.

The trail passes through Maru Ganesh, Maru Hiti, Banja Hiti, Dami Tole, Sunta Galli, Michya Galli, Bhelu Mahadev, Dallu, Nipu Hiti and Bhuikhel before ending at Swayambhunath.

The entire length of the trail connects the ward 15, 18, 19, 20, 23 and 24 of Kathmandu. The metropolis has allocated Rs 100 million for the construction of infrastructure in the first phase of the master plan.

“The metropolis has also come up with several new plans to improve the trail and attract visitors in view of the tourism year 2020,” said Ward Chairperson of Kathmandu-18 Nuchhe Kaji Maharjan, also the coordinator of the Cultural and Tourism Committee of the metropolis.

Before unveiling the master plan, officials from the metropolis, locals and heritage conservationists had organised a march from Bhuikhel from Swayambhunath to Hanuman Dhoka.

Nepal has failed to ensure full press freedom: Reporters Without Borders

NAVAK PAUDEL
KATHMANDU, APRIL 18

Nepal’s position in the World Press Freedom Index 2019 has remained unchanged at 106, according to Reporters Without Borders, which says the environment for journalists working for independent media outlets in the country is still extremely difficult.

“In late 2017, the first local, provincial and parliamentary elections in 20 years were marked by many violations of the freedom to inform. But the government formed in 2018 under KP Oli failed to take

steps to ensure respect for the ‘full freedom of the press’ enshrined in the preamble of Nepal’s 2015 constitution,” Reporters Without Borders, an advocacy group on issues relating to freedom of information and freedom of the press, said on Nepal’s press freedom situation, which it described as “victim of political vicissitudes”.

The report comes amid growing concerns among journalists over the government crackdown on press freedom. Government authorities earlier this week arrested Arjun Giri, an editor of a weekly in Pokhara, for publishing a story

online about a local businessman under laws intended to authenticate electronic transactions and discourage cyber crime and not related to journalists or media.

Last year, Ram Sarraf, a Birgunj-based journalist, was accused of cyber crime under the Electronic Transaction Act and taken to court for publishing a story online.

Reporters Without Borders has also expressed concern over the new criminal code the government has introduced. “The new criminal code adopted in August 2018 poses major new threats to press freedom because several of its provisions

hamper investigative reporting and restrict criticism of public figures,” Reporters Without Borders said. “Another disturbing development was the anti-media rhetoric which government representatives began using and which was widely reproduced in the government’s newspapers, radio stations and TV channels.”

Last year, Minister for Communication and Information Technology Gokul Banskota ordered state media to muzzle-and counter-news items related to Nirmala Pant, a 13-year-old girl from Kanchanpur who was raped

and murdered, and Dr Govinda KC, who was then staging a hunger strike demanding reforms in the medical education sector.

The minister, who had summoned editors of five state media outlets, had gone to the extent of ordering them to counter reports published by private media, and effectively discredit and mitigate their trenchant coverage of government’s inaction in both cases.

The Oli administration had met with severe criticism from public and the media for failing to nab the culprit(s) in the rape and murder

case. The government was also criticised for not paying heed to Dr KC’s hunger strike and the former agreements.

Experts said Nepal can further slip in press freedom index if the government continues to take harsh measures against the media and mediapersons.

“A stable government must be able to form policies to ensure press freedom,” said Taranath Dahal, chairman of Freedom Forum, a civil liberty group. “While Nepal’s position has remained unchanged this year, there are already concerns over press freedom in Nepal.”

Nepal had fallen six places to 106 in the 2018 report.

“With the threat of prosecution and continuing violence in the field, the environment for journalists working for independent media outlets is extremely difficult,” Reporters Without Borders said.

Among the South Asian countries, Nepal ranks third after Bhutan (80) and Maldives (98) followed by Afghanistan (121), Sri Lanka (126), India (140), Pakistan (142) and Bangladesh (150).

Norway tops the World Press Freedom Index 2019 while Turkmenistan ranks last.



NIC ASIA

एन आई सी एशिया बैंक लि.

२२ औं वर्षको २२ चमत्कार



चमत्कारिक
बचत खाता



चमत्कारिक
नारी बचत खाता



चमत्कारिक
जेष्ठ नागरिक बचत खाता

आकर्षक चमत्कारिक फाईदाहरू

३ बीमा सम्बन्धी चमत्कारिक फाईदाहरू

- रु. १५ लाखसम्मको १८ घातक रोगहरुको बीमा सुविधा ।
- रु. १५ लाखसम्मको दुर्घटना बीमा सुविधा (Accidental Death/Permanent Disability)
- रु. १ लाख ५० हजारसम्मको औषधी उपचार सुविधा ।

२ कर्जा सम्बन्धी चमत्कारिक फाईदाहरू

- कर्जाको ब्याजदरमा विशेष सहूलियत ।
- कर्जासँग सम्बन्धित प्रशासनिक शुल्कमा ०.२५% सम्म छुट ।

१७ अन्य आकर्षक चमत्कारिक फाईदाहरू

- खातामा रहेको मौज्जात अनुसार ५ ग्रामसम्मको सुन/२५ ग्रामसम्मको चाँदीका सिक्काहरु प्रदान गरिने ।
- देशभरी रहेका कुनै पनि बैंकको कुनै पनि ATM बाट रकम निकाल्दा शुल्क नलाग्ने ।
- शून्य मार्जिन डिपोजिटमा निःशुल्क लकर सुविधा प्रदान गरिने ।
- नेपालमै पहिलो पटक Sweep In-Sweep Out को सुविधाबाट बचत खाताबाटै मुद्दती खाताको समेत फाईदा पाईने ।
- Home Banking को सुविधा ।
- अन्य १२ चमत्कारिक फाईदाहरु समेत प्रदान गरिने ।

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यस बैंकको देशभरी रहेका २८१ शाखा कार्यालय वा ४० विस्तारीत काउन्टरहरुमा आउने सम्पर्क गर्नुहोस् ।

बैंक पनि, साथी पनि

राम्रो पनि, ताम्रो पनि

१२औं बचत खाताहरुमा सर्वोत्तम लागू हुनेछैन

CANICO (Portugal): The Portuguese island of Madeira on Thursday began three days of mourning after 29 German tourists died after their bus spun off the road and tumbled down a slope before crashing into a house. Drone footage of the aftermath of the accident near the town of Canico showed the badly mangled wreckage resting precariously on its side against a building on a hillside, the vehicle's roof partially crushed and front window smashed. Rescue workers attended to injured passengers among the undergrowth where the bus came to a halt, some of them bearing bloodied head bandages and bloodstained clothes, others appearing to be more seriously hurt. Local authorities said most of the dead were in their 40s and 50s. There were 11 men and 18 women were among the victims and all of them were German. They were among the more than one million tourists who visit the Atlantic islands off the coast of Morocco each year, attracted by its subtropical climate and rugged volcanic terrain. (AGENCIES)

An electric 4WD vehicle designed to represent a vehicle used for an imagined Mars exploration drives near the C-Space Project Mars simulation base in the Gobi Desert outside Jinchang, Gansu Province, China, on Thursday.

Pyongyang demands Pompeo's removal from US nuclear talks

When the secretary of state

AFF

“The US cannot move us one iota by its current way of thinking. In his previous vis-

“By agreeing that Kim is a tyrant, Pompeo basically insulted the North’s ‘highest majesty,’” said Koh Yu-hwan, professor of North Korean

South Korea had not detected anything on radar so it was unlikely to have been a missile, a military official told AFP.

Sporadic violence as millions vote in second phase of India's election

- PM Modi's party runs aggressive campaign, courts nationalist base
- Opposition eyes promise of handouts to poor to lure votes

The BJP would be looking to make gains in Karnataka, he added.

Congress, which is focusing on concerns about growing joblessness and farmers' distress, is staking its chances on a promise of generous hand-outs to India's poorest families.

Charges of vote-rigging and intimidating supporters.

The election panel has banned campaigning for a few days by a firebrand Hindu ascetic from the BJP, who governs northern Uttar Pradesh, over his anti-Muslim comments.

lies. "People are talking about national issues," said Manjunath Munirathnappa, a voter in Bengaluru, who hoped lawmakers would resolve infrastructure woes, such as traffic congestion and inadequate water supply.

"But only when they fix the local issues will there be progress."

Police in the West Bengal constituency of Darjeeling also fired tear gas at protesters who complained they had not been allowed to vote, said the top district official, Arvind Kumar Mina.

Poppies bloom across Afghanistan as drought eases

AFP/RSS

Afghan farmers harvest opium sap from a poppy field in the Gereshk district of Helmand province.

have no other way to earn money, this is the only income for us," labourer Mohammad Ghous told AFP.

Conflict is also providing a surprising boon for the industry. "(The) government was destroying poppy fields in previous years, but this year due to the ongoing war they couldn't," Mohammad said. Most poppy production in Afghanistan is in the Taliban-

International donors have spent billions of dollars on counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan over the past decade, including efforts to encourage farmers to switch to other cash crops such as saffron.

Nepal's National Newspaper

The Kathmandu Post

Since 1993

EDITORIAL

Intimidation game

The criminalisation of legitimate journalistic activity should not be taken lightly

On Monday, Arjun Karki, editor of Tandav News, a Pokhara-based weekly, was detained for publishing a story online about a local businessman. Karki was arrested under the Electronic Transaction Act, a broad and vaguely-worded law intended to authenticate electronic transactions. This Act, along with other legal tools, has been used consistently by the government to curtail journalistic freedom, considerably shrinking the environment for free and safe reportage.

The new Criminal Code, for example, includes a number of articles that many human rights agencies say will severely hinder the ability of journalists to engage in free and fair reporting. Karki's arrest in Pokhara was made under the provisions of the Electronic Transaction Act using tenuous arguments. This Act is already set to be replaced by the IT Bill, which is currently being discussed in Parliament. The new bill has been criticised for containing even more draconian loopholes that could potentially be used to curtail freedom of the press. One provision in the bill mentions that 'inappropriate use of the electronic system' could invite fines ranging from Rs 300,000 to Rs 1 million and jail time between one and 10 years, or both. This is worrying, as the provision's vague wording leads it to be open to interpretation—and authorities could do so to suit their own interests.

Four journalists were detained under the Electronic Transaction Act in 2018, according to the Freedom Forum, a civil liberty group that advocates for free speech. According to the same report, in the last year, there have been 98 incidents of press freedom violations, the highest in the last six years, as compared to 66 cases of similar violations reported in 2017.

The criminalisation of legitimate journalistic activity should not be taken lightly. Cybersecurity is necessary, but authorities should not use safety as a weapon to gag the press. Any cybercrime legislation that possesses a threat to press freedom must be revised. Fear is a critical component of curtailing freedom, and recent studies on press freedom have shown a worldwide downward trend in access to unbiased media, along with an increase in attacks on journalists. Reporters Without Borders—an organisation advocating for freedom of expression—in its 2019 Press Freedom Index concluded that global press freedom is deteriorating wherein the situation for free media is considered satisfactory only in 24 percent of the nations. The authorities must allow a free flow of information, including criticism, as it is critical to the functioning of a vibrant democracy.

This government's penchant for controlling information and muzzling the press is particularly disappointing, since the KP Sharma Oli-led administration has repeatedly touted its commitment to transparency. The tendency to suppress the free press often has unforeseen consequences, and if the state continues to do so, whatever achievements Nepal as a country has achieved so far will be offset by this seemingly precipitous slide towards authoritarianism.

Tracing the ups and downs of the Nepal-India relationship



AMISH RAJ MULMI

The visit of Indian foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale to Kathmandu last month served as a reminder that Indo-Nepal relations have arisen from the trough that was 2015. That this bilateral relationship has its ups and downs is a constant in the modern history of the two neighbours. A trend can be established; certain events cause a deterioration in relations, followed by a cooling of ties, a period in which terse words are spoken on both sides. Subsequent to Indian concessions and Nepal's withdrawals on its erstwhile positions, ties slowly crawl back to a state of relative normalcy, despite the shadows of the past affecting future ties.

The collection of US state department cables published by Wikileaks allows us to chart one such period between 1974-1976, when events in Sikkim that led to the former Himalayan kingdom being integrated into India as a state resulted in tensions between Nepal and India. The spectre of 'Sikkimikaran', or 'Sikkimisation', haunts Nepali commentators and policymakers to this day, the analogy between Nepal and Sikkim ever-present in their discussions. While the bilateral relationship between Sikkim, then ruled by the Chogyal dynasty, and India is not the focus of this essay, it should suffice to say tensions erupted in April 1974, when the Chogyal rejected state elections that won the Sikkim Congress 31 out of 32 seats after a history of polarisation between the Chogyal and popular leaders. Sikkim Congress leader Kaji Lhendup Dorji demanded a more representative constitution that reduced the Chogyal's role. The Government of Sikkim Bill 1974, drafted with the help of India, 'largely gave the Chogyal a constitutional role without tampering with precedence or personal privileges.' This bill, also the new constitution, was passed in June 1974 and called for an economic integration with India.

Fear of encroachment

At the time, Nepali ministers and the press vociferously recorded its protest at what they saw as Indian manipulation of Sikkimese events. After the Sikkim government brought a bill that declared Sikkim would be 'associated with India', student demonstrations erupted outside the Indian embassy on 3 September 1974, shouting slogans such as 'Nepalese are one', 'Indira Ghandi [sic] stay home' and 'India out of Sikkim'. As a Wikileaks cable recorded, 'Following abortive attempt to burn down [a] movie theater owned by Indians, [the 500-strong] group marched to [the] gates of [the] Indian compound where they were stopped by troops.' Fourteen students were arrested, and while foreign minister Gyanendra Karki rushed to assure all that 'traditional Indian-Nepali friendship would not be adversely affected by recent events.'



King Birendra meeting with Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi in New Delhi, 1975.

Nepal had made its point, and now began to withdraw itself from the Sikkim affair. But, as the US embassy noted, much depended on the Indian reaction.

When the then Indian ambassador MK Rasgotra flew to Delhi on September 23 that year, Nepalis feared a 'prolonged period of tension including [the] possibility that India may impose some form of economic and/or political pressure designed to achieve more submissive and malleable GON attitude towards India', and the government instructed the media to back down. Three editors were asked to explain anti-Indian articles published in their papers, 'a none too subtle warning that there were limits to what Delhi or Kathmandu would tolerate.'

Once Rasgotra returned from Delhi in November, he explained the Indian position in a conversation with unnamed US officials. 'He insisted that while [India] had been deeply angered by [Nepal government's] position on Sikkim, India had not made and did not plan to make any significant changes in its relations with Nepal.' In an oblique reference to the then banned Nepali Congress party's members operating out of India, he assured US officials it was up to Nepal to decide its political system, and 'if there was political trouble in Nepal in the future it would not be related to any steps which India could take.' But most importantly, Rasgotra 'repeatedly' insisted that Nepal needed to recognise the new realities of the bilateral relationship. If some Nepali officials believed India should be grateful its 'defence perimeter began at Kodari and not Raxaul', Rasgotra said this would have been the Indian view in the early 60s, but no longer. In a candid expression that also has relevance today, he said 'if Nepal wished a closer relationship with China, India would not object but it could not then expect the past special relationship to continue unchanged.'

Return to normalcy

By April 1975, one senses that ties had

improved, despite the shadow of the Sikkimese referendum that had voted in favour of joining India. The then acting deputy chief of the Nepali mission in Delhi, Jai Rana, told US officials on April 23 that India had taken a 'softer line' on its decision earlier that month to raise the prices of essential commodities as India did not want to 'seriously hurt' the Nepali economy. 'Jai Rana also noted that problems the Nepalese were having in getting berths for ships which had been standing off Calcutta for several weeks with loads of cement and other commodities for Nepal had been suddenly solved.' By May that year, the outgoing Nepali ambassador to India, Yadunath Khanal, agreed relations had 'passed [the] low point', and while 'Nepal could not undo [the] situation' in Sikkim, he hoped 'India would understand Nepalese nervousness in spite of Indian assurances that what happened in Sikkim would not happen in Nepal.' On May 16, 1975, Sikkim became the 22nd state of India.

In September that year, King Birendra visited India on an official visit. Following an hour-long meeting on 30 September between him and Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, which took place 'without advisors', the US embassy in Kathmandu tried to summarise the meeting through a 'variety of official and unofficial sources'. Terming its summary as 'probably speculative' or 'at best' a version the Nepal palace released to lower-level functionaries, the embassy noted the meeting was 'cordial and productive' according to Nepali sources, and 'frank and realistic' according to Indian sources. 'Most persons agree that [the] king made genuine effort to be conciliatory and that he expressed his oral support for Madame Gandhi's Emergency measures.' Gandhi had imposed the Emergency in June 1975.

Gandhi continued to refuse Birendra's pet Zone of Peace (ZoP) proposal, but India agreed to increase economic assistance. A few weeks later, US officials in Delhi met with royal counselor Narendra Bikram

Shah, who provided a more detailed explanation of the meeting. The Indian view was that the ZoP proposal would fundamentally change the relationship between the two countries, which Shah acknowledged was correct. Senior Nepali officials did not trust Gandhi, he said, 'specifically' excluding the king. But he agreed the visit had 'cleared the air' between the two countries post the Sikkim distrust.

The rest is history

By 1976, it was apparent that the question of Sikkim had been seen as a *fate accompli* in Nepal, despite dissatisfactions within the popular press. A November 1976 cable from the Delhi embassy suggests Nepali officials were more displeased about 'rigid Indian positions' in the trade and transit treaty negotiations, which reflected Delhi's attempts to preserve its economic leverage over Nepal. There were also discussions over recent Indian attempts to impose travel restrictions on Nepalis, but these issues were tied to the larger ZoP proposal that had irritated India. Note that this was also during the Emergency, a time in which Indian political processes were notoriously authoritarian.

From the cables (and a third-country perspective, albeit an American one), it seems the cooling of ties had originally resulted from Nepal's attempts to carve out a new relationship via the ZoP proposal, which India (correctly) surmised as Nepal's attempts to change the 'fundamental nature' of the bilateral relationship. The referendum in Sikkim only helped to stoke Nepali fears of Indian hegemony, especially after the 1971 break-up of Pakistan that resulted in the creation of Bangladesh. As in 2015, India used its economic leverage to suggest Nepal could not demand special privileges if it was not willing to recognise India's security interests. The downturn in the bilateral relationship was the result of 'conflicting foreign policy objectives' of the two countries. Although these cables do not provide the complete picture, they allow us to get a sense of Nepali fears and Indian concerns that still find credence in the modern day, and tell us why, despite close cultural and social connections, the two governments rarely see eye to eye.

Finally, despite the royal counselor's view that Indira Gandhi could not be trusted, an ex-Indian intelligence official in his memoir recalled a most interesting offer by King Birendra. In 1977, after the lifting of the Emergency and the electoral defeat of Gandhi, King Birendra sent her a message 'through an intermediary' advising her to shift to Nepal with her family. The official recalled Gandhi did not want to shift herself, but asked her sons Sanjay and Rajiv to move with their families. However, her advisor Rameshwar Nath Kao, ex-spymaster and the first head of the Research and Analysis Wing, said no. 'He felt this could damage her political career beyond repair. She gave up the idea.'

Like they say, in international relations, there are no permanent friends or enemies, only permanent interests.

Mulmi tweets at @amish973.

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Conservation agriculture results in better health, better soil and a better environment.



NABIN BHANDARI

Agriculture experts globally are reluctant to recommend the conventional method of farming, where the main task is to plough the land again and again to loosen the soil before planting the seed. Experts are more focused on alternative methods of production and advise pursuing sustainable production rather than bumper harvests in one season. Sustained production is the major aim of conservation agriculture, which incorporates a number of apparently counterintuitive and often unrecognised elements that simultaneously promote soil health, productive capacity and ecosystem services.

Conventional agriculture, also known as industrial agriculture, is highly resource and energy intensive and has an adverse impact on the sustainable yield capacity of natural land. Conservation agriculture, on the other hand, is a concept for resource-saving agricultural crop production that strives to achieve acceptable profits together with high and sustained production levels while concurrently conserving the environment, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation. It aims to minimise soil disturbance and encourage crop rotation, and retains the soil crop residue to reduce soil and environmental degradation.

The first principle of conservational agriculture, minimum tillage and soil disturbance, protects the soil against water and wind erosion, saves fuel, labour and time, and improves infiltration and conservation of soil moisture and organic matter.



In the long run, this method of agriculture has the benefit of reducing the amount of fertiliser needed per hectare of land. The second principle is permanent soil cover with crop residues and live mulches, which protects the soil from erosion by water or wind, suppresses weed germination and growth, improves recycling of nutrients, and improves organic matter accumulation and carbon sequestration.

The third principle is crop rotation and intercropping, a practice of altering different crops in the same field. Crop rotation and intercropping techniques give unique benefits to the grower. First, crops with different rooting systems utilise the soil water at different soil depths and help to increase

the efficiency of water use. Second, since different crops are susceptible to different diseases and pest agents, growing such crops in rotation will reduce incidences of disease and pests at no cost. Third, crops with different rooting patterns take up nutrients at different soil depths. The addition of legumes helps to increase the nitrogen level in the soil because they are biologically nitrogen-fixing agents.

This system of agriculture is not only feasible but should be applied urgently. This farming practice has long been practiced, knowingly or unknowingly, by our ancestors and is easy, cost-effective and environment-friendly. Nepal's growing population means more mouths to

feed by utilising the limited cultivated land, but intensive farming cannot be a permanent solution. The adverse repercussions of continuous application of synthetic compounds to increase yield is irreparable.

One may argue that there are few people who can switch from conventional farming to conservation agriculture, as it takes time and money. Novices can even encounter a financial loss. Furthermore, a financial crisis can occur due to the need to buy new equipment such as zero tiller and transplanter. But meticulously analysing the direct and indirect benefits of conservation agriculture shows that the results are far better as compared to conventional farming. And, in the long run, the approach is cost-effective.

The adoption and spread of conservation agriculture requires a change in the mindset and behaviour of all stakeholders, from small farmers to top-level decision makers. For farmers, a mechanism that encourages learning and adapting to local conditions within the constraints faced by them, and a guarantee of higher production from conservation agriculture, are a prerequisite. Fully understanding the economic, social, environmental and health benefits offered by conservation agriculture is essential to convince policymakers, planners and leaders to adopt this system of farming.

With the increasing responsibility to feed the world today and in the days to come, the conservation agriculture system is the only way to fulfil this task by maintaining soil, human and environmental health—using the same amount of land that we are using today. It is high time that we designed agriculture programmes, conducted awareness programmes and implemented strategies related to agriculture which allow us to conserve the environment while reaping the benefits provided by it.

Bhandari is an agriculture extension officer at the Department of Agriculture.

Tools for better seismic detection



SUMESH SHIWAKOTY

With all that is going on politically and economically, it seems we have started to forget that Nepal sits on a high seismic zone. As per geologists, Nepal lies atop a major fault line between two tectonic plates. Since the unbroken upper part of the fault is continuously building more pressure over time, researchers at Oxford University in recent years have predicted that another ‘major tremor could hit Nepal’s Gorkha district within years or decades rather than the centuries that typically elapse between quakes.’ If a major quake were to hit Nepal today, we are not in any better position to deal with its impact than we were on that darkest of days in April, 2015.

In recent years, many countries that sit in high seismic zones, like Nepal, are turning to artificial intelligence (AI) to build resiliency against future earthquakes. There is a broader consensus in the scientific community that AI can drastically reduce the loss of life and property during future quakes. This is because AI can analyse massive amounts of seismic data that can help better understand earthquakes and thus can provide faster and reliable early warnings. For instance, scientists have concluded that AI is more accurate in processing seismic data than the most useful existing model, referred to as the Coulomb stress transfer prediction model. As per their assessment of accuracy, on a scale of 0 to 1, where 1 is perfectly accurate, and 0.5 is as accurate as flipping a coin, scientists found that the Coulomb model scored 0.583, while the AI prediction model tested scored 0.849.

The future holds promise
The type of AI that researchers are using for processing seismic data is

referred to as deep learning, a more advanced kind of machine learning that utilises a neural network. A neural network is a complex mathematical system, modeled like a web of neurons in the human brain, that mimic the thinking processes of the brain and learn new tasks on its own, like neurons in a human brain would. Scientists maintain that this particular type of artificial intelligence is better suited to process complex seismic signals. With so many complex variables to consider, from the position of the tectonic plates to the type of ground involved, scientists believe that neural networks can promptly analyse a massive amount of data, pulling out only relevant patterns and signals that could be relevant for earthquake forecasting.

Further, researchers have also concluded that AI can use previously underestimated signals, such as a particular sound made by the fault which can tell when an earthquake would arrive. This signal was previously assumed to be meaningless. In recent days, researchers at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico have stated that AI can learn to discern a very specific pattern in the sound emitted by the fault before it ruptures. This pattern, researchers say, can tell us how much stress the fault is undergoing, and with the help of AI, can make an accurate prediction of the time remaining before tremors begin. Thus, with these discoveries, it is certain that AI will revolutionise early warning systems in the days to come.

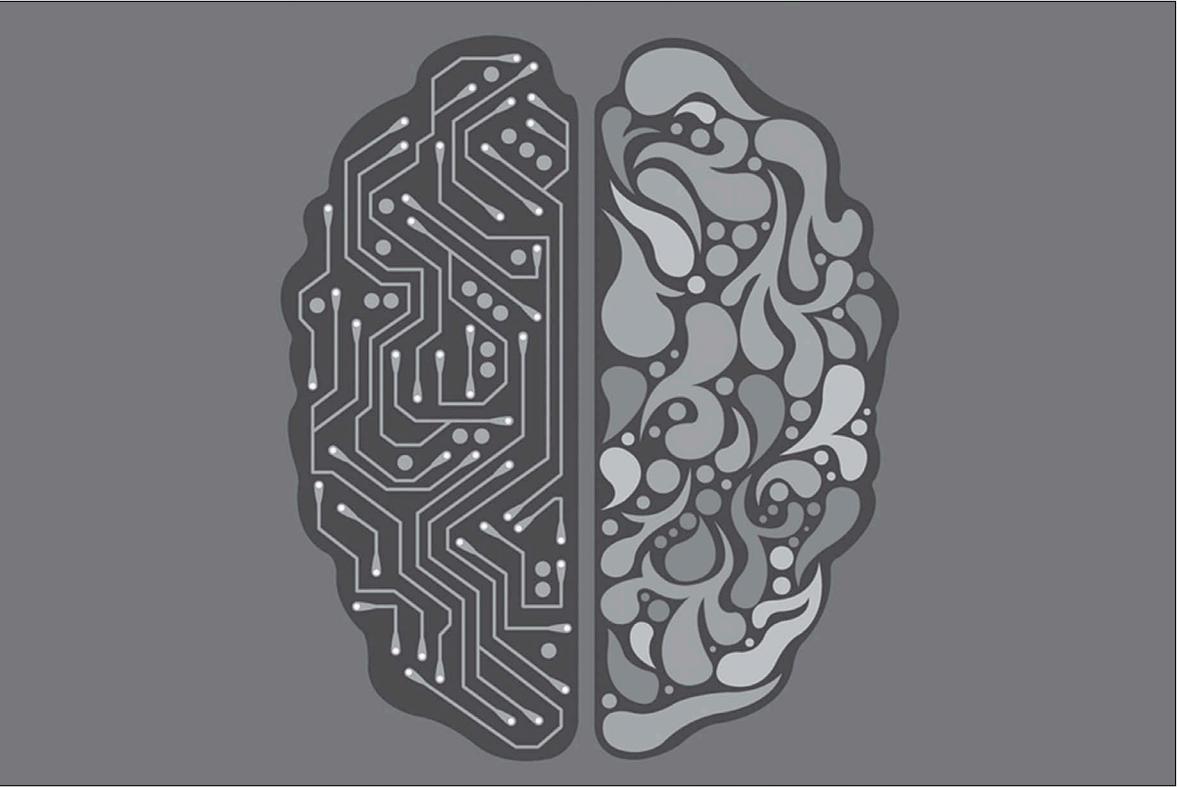
Lagging behind
Although Nepal installed its first batch of earthquake early warning sensors in June 2015, there are neither robust nor adequate. The Nepal Academy of Science and Technology has estimated that Nepal will need 320 sensors to cover the entire country while, with the Chinese assistance, Nepal only installed its first 80 sensors in 2015. It has also been estimated that we would require approximately \$20 million for setting up supercomputers and sophisticated broadband seismometers for this purpose. Since the use of AI is

expected to dramatically raise the accuracy of the early warning system, Nepal should consider investing in it. Of course, it would be an expensive project for Nepal, but the benefits would far outweigh the costs. For example, Japan’s early warning system prevented the derailment of high-speed trains during a 9.1 magnitude earthquake in 2011.

Nepal should also keep an eye on how other countries that are located in high seismic zones are utilising newer technologies for early warning purposes. The government should partner with the private sector and non-governmental organisations to adopt innovative solutions that are adaptable to our needs. Earlier this year, the Los Angeles city council, in partnership with telecom company AT&T, launched a mobile phone app called ShakeAlertLA, which is designed to give users location-based early warning alerts. Closer to home, Build Change, a US based entity, is working on creating a smart-phone-based artificial intelligence that aims to inform rural Nepalis on whether their houses can be seismically retrofitted. The main ambition of this app is to provide free engineering advice to poor homeowners whose houses are vulnerable to seismic events. Recently, this project was selected as one of the top three finalists for the global Call for Code Developer Challenge, hosted by IBM.

Newer technologies, like artificial intelligence, are expected to minimise the loss of life and property during future earthquakes. Many countries which are located in seismic zones are already investing in these technologies. It is high time for Nepal to seriously consider investing in these newer technologies for building resilience against future earthquakes. While this will require significant investment, when the lives and property of our people and the future of our cultural heritage are at stake, the benefits trump any costs of implementation.

Shiwakoty is a 2015 Andrew W Mellon Foundation environmental analysis research fellow.



How climate became Germany’s new culture war

For years, migration tore the country apart. Now it’s the environment.



Marchers protesting a ban on driving older diesel cars in Stuttgart, Germany, a center of the German car industry. Their banner says, “We are diesel” and “a stupid policy.”

ANNA SAUERBREY

Berlin—When Christian Lindner, the head of Germany’s Liberal party, recently said that there was a “culture war on cars” in his country, people laughed it off as an exaggeration. After all, the Liberals are Germany’s most pro-business, anti-regulation party, and they take particular aim at environmental policies.

But here’s the thing: In a way, Mr. Lindner is right. For the last several years, Germany has been embroiled in a cultural war over immigration, refugees and diversity. But as those fires burn out, a new one is building. The environment is becoming the new migration—a deeply polarizing issue, and one that the populist right is gearing up to exploit.

Migration remains a contested issue in Germany, of course. But the hysteria of 2015 and 2016 has subsided. The number of people seeking asylum in Germany has dropped significantly—last year there were only 186,000, down from a high of 746,000 in 2016.

And while the far-right Alternative for Germany party, known as the AfD, continues to focus on immigration, the mainstream has begun to set it aside. For much of 2018, the Christian Social Union, the conservative, Bavarian branch of the center-right Christian Democrats, waged an internal party war against Chancellor Angela Merkel’s relatively open position on migration. But after painful losses in the Bavarian election last year, in which the party ran on a hard-line immigration platform, the C.S.U. decided to let it go. At the same time, debates on environmental issues are getting more heated, both in public and in private. Be it the reality of global warming, limits on greenhouse gases, the future of mobility in cities or the protection of bees—the debate is growing polemical and emotional, as people are beginning to feel the consequences of environmental policies in their everyday lives.

This year, for example, several large German cities will ban cars with older diesel engines from their urban core,

based on European Union limits on nitrogen dioxide in the air. The bans, announced last year, incited public outrage. In January, a group of physicians led by the lung specialist Dieter Köhler added to the anger by questioning the validity of the European Union limits. For weeks, Dr. Köhler toured the talk shows, and the AfD celebrated him as a hero for daring to speak up against what it sees as ecological paternalism. Even Andreas Scheuer, the minister of transportation, embraced the doctors’ statement—despite warnings from the scientific community that Dr. Köhler, not an epidemiologist, lacked the necessary expertise to make it.

In fact, it later emerged that some of Dr. Köhler’s key points were erroneous. But by then it didn’t matter; the diesel bans had become politically toxic. Germans love their cars—not just as personal property and symbols of personal expression, but as national symbols of German ingenuity and manufacturing prowess. So it makes sense that the clash over the environment would center on the automobile. When Regine Günther, the senator for transportation and the environment in Berlin’s city government, recently said, “We would like people to dispose of their cars,” she was denounced as a “car hater” and a “green Communist” on social media. When a preliminary report for the federal Transportation Ministry recommended speed limits on the autobahn and higher gas prices to lower carbon emissions, the public response was so hostile that the ministry disavowed it.

Even children are considered fair game: Greta Thunberg, the 16-year-old Swedish climate activist, is a favorite target of the German right, with the secretary general of the Christian Democrats calling her political stance “pure ideology.”

How did the environment become so hot, so fast?

First, there are good reasons to be angry when the German government calls for significant sacrifices by everyday citizens for the health of the planet—even as it let Volkswagen and other carmakers get away with cheating on

emissions data. At the same time, populist parties in Germany and Europe are increasingly campaigning against environmental rules. Such opposition perfectly fits into populist narratives and patterns: skepticism about science, anger over “political correctness” and a libertarian reflex against government regulations in general. The mainstream right is following suit, claiming to try to cut off the far right but in reality taking advantage of a suddenly attractive political target.

Environmental issues produce the same fundamental cleavages as migration. Both migration and environmental policies are aiming at global and moral goals that citizens profit from only in the abstract, while the costs are immediate. Accepting asylum seekers is a global moral responsibility; the “costs”—overcrowded kindergartens and schools, neighborhood tensions—are local. Getting rid of old diesel cars might be a vital step toward fighting climate change, but how are you supposed to get to work?

On immigration or the environment, where you stand is a matter of your worldview. Whether you drive a car or ride a bike has become a symbol for embracing or rejecting a whole set of values connected to the notion of global responsibility. Conservatives and traditionalists feel they are being pressured by the cultural imperialism of urban liberal elites who can afford not to have a car. And it’s on this divide, more than on any particular policy, where the clash is hottest. Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, the new head of the Christian Democrats, recently lashed out against Berlin’s “latte machiato drinkers,” while Mr. Scheuer, the minister of transportation, said in an interview, “In Berlin’s political scene, people are gloating over discussions which often have nothing to do with the everyday realities of people outside the capital.”

It’s 2015 all over again: Back then, it was the naïve open-border idealists against the xenophobes. This time it’s the sentimental urban tree-hugger ideologues against ignorant Joe Diesel.

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Not giving up on the Republican Party

In an increasingly diverse country, the GOP can’t afford to alienate voters like me—the child of immigrants.

DIEGO CIFUENTES

I was drawn to the Republican Party because of my conservative principles—family-oriented, religious and socially conservative. But it has been difficult to reconcile my allegiance to the party with its devolving evermore into a mouthpiece for President Trump’s dangerous views and policies, especially with regard to immigration. This is deeply disturbing. It has forced me to reconsider my affiliation and it could prove to be the thing that drives me away from the party for good.

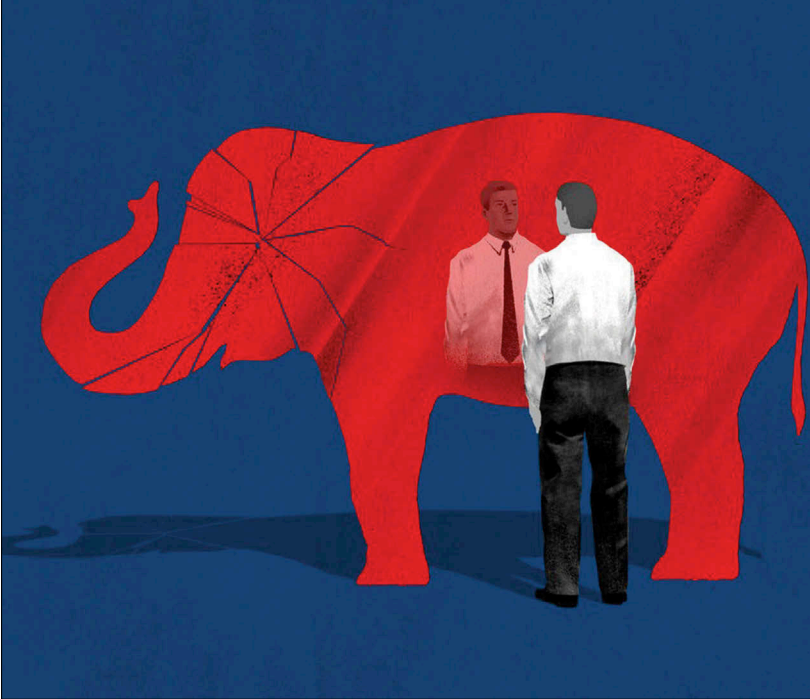
Immigration isn’t just a political issue to me. It’s personal. Members of my extended family in the United States are DACA recipients. My parents immigrated to Miami from El Salvador and Guatemala in the late 1980s and early ’90s. The Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act gave them a pathway to citizenship and a chance at a better life. They worked their way up from dishwashers to restaurant managers while raising me and my two siblings. During the run-up to the midterm election last year, I saw how the toxic national rhetoric around immigration trickled down to local communities. In

Oklahoma’s fifth district, where my family is now living, the Republican incumbent, Steve Russell, ran ads that stoked fears of “pipe bombs, shootings, migrant caravans,” equating migrants with criminals. And so last year I found myself doing something I never thought I’d do: I gave up my Republican Party affiliation.

I not only voted Democrat but also actively campaigned for Kendra Horn, the first female Democrat elected to Congress from Oklahoma. Ms. Horn was an advocate for families like mine. She understood that a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers doesn’t compromise border security and that millions of taxpayer dollars would be much better spent on health care and education than on building an ineffective, expensive wall.

A lot of people thought she couldn’t win in a deeply conservative state. But what her Republican opponent failed to see and account for is that the state has become increasingly diverse. According to a report by New American Economy, since 2016 Oklahoma’s fifth district alone added more than 6,000 Hispanic and Asian-American voters, and lost more than 2,050 white voters.

Indeed nearly 30 percent of Latinos



who cast a ballot in 2018 said they were voting in a midterm for the first time. I watched many of my classmates and

peers who had supported the Republican ticket switch parties as I did. I’m also not alone in being

personally affected by the politics of immigration. Republicans don’t seem to understand that they can’t afford to alienate voters like me.

Research by the Center for American Progress and the University of Southern California’s Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration found that nationwide about 16.7 million people live in a household with at least one unauthorized family member. Young voters also tend to favor sensible and humane immigration policy reform. A study by GenForward at the University of Chicago found that more than 80 percent of 18-to 34-year-olds in all racial and ethnic groups support a pathway to citizenship for all law-abiding undocumented immigrants. And according to the Pew Research Center, 76 percent of millennials believe that immigrants make the country stronger.

When I look at our current leaders, I don’t see any of the values—Christian or otherwise—that originally drew me to the Republican Party. Instead, I see Mr. Trump’s reprehensible calculation to separate children from their parents and his callous indifference to 800,000 Dreamers, many of whom know no country but the United States.

This country—especially young voters like me are tired of partisan, negative rhetoric. That’s why 43 House seats flipped from Republican to Democratic in November. That’s why young people like me have switched parties.

Last year I took the Spring semester off to work as a legislative intern for Republican Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida. It was deeply meaningful for me, as a young Republican, to have the opportunity to work for the first Latina elected to Congress, in the very district I grew up in. Ms. Ros-Lehtinen worked for her constituents, even if it meant breaking with party lines. I admired that.

I am not ready to give up on the Republican Party altogether. I’ve realigned with the party, with the hope of helping to foster the kind of compassionate conservatism I believe in. I’ve worked in both parties, and I know change is possible. I hope to follow the example set by politicians like Ms. Ros-Lehtinen and Ms. Horn, unafraid to work across the aisle, put partisan politics aside and fight for what they believe in. It’s time to put country over party.

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Surreal landscapes and abundant wildlife await visitors at Shuklaphanta National Park

Tucked away in the south-western corner of Nepal, the park is famed for its deer, tigers, rhinos and other exotic species.

BHAWANI BHATTA
KANCHANPUR, APRIL 18

Shuklaphanta National Park is composed of surreal landscapes—expansive grasslands vie for dominance with dense forests and tropical wetlands. A rangale of deer, a streak of tigers, a flight of butterflies—all tread the same spaces. This untouched wilderness, spread out over 305 square kilometres north of India's Lagg-Bagg and east of the mighty Mahakali, is Nepal's best-kept secret.

Established as a national park in 1976, Shuklaphanta is the country's second youngest national park, after Parsa National Park. Located in the south-western corner of Nepal in the Sudurpaschim province, this park was once a hunting reserve, famed for its abundance of deer, tigers, rhinos and other exotic species. But ever since its conversion into a national park, its animal, bird and fish species have multiplied. The park is now home to 2,500 swamp deer, 17 tigers, as many rhinos, 12 species of reptiles, 20 species of amphibians, 424 bird species, 24 fish species, 35 species of butterflies; the flora extends to 665 plant species from 118 different families. Rare bird species like the Lesser Adjutant, Bengal Florican, White-rumped Vulture, Sarus Crane, and Finn's Weaver also make for exciting bird watching.

However, this park has often been eclipsed by other, more popular reserves, especially the Chitwan National Park. Most tourists, both local and foreign, are not

even aware of the park's existence, let alone its abundance of flora and fauna. Only about 2,000 to 2,500 people visit the park annually. But perhaps that is its charm. Away from the madding crowd, this park offers untouched wilderness and serenity.

One of the few patrons who made their way to the park last year, former Finnish ambassador to Nepal Jorma Suvanto, likened the park's grasslands to the Savanna, Africa's massive tropical grassland.

"This is untouched territory," said Suvanto. "Those who come to Nepal must visit Shuklaphanta. I'll advise tourists from my own country to pay a visit to Nepal and the Shuklaphanta National Park."

The park lies close to the Indian border and thus is located strategically close to popular Indian national parks like the Dudhwa and Jim Corbett national parks. India's Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary, a specially designated tiger reserve, lies contiguous to the south of Shuklaphanta, together making up 439 square kilometres of a protected tiger conservation unit. Shuklaphanta is also part of the Tarai Arc Landscape, five million hectares of protected land from both India and Nepal.

Despite this proximity to the Indian border and its teeming wildlife, the park hosts comparatively fewer visitors.

"Of course, you have national parks that may offer more but Shuklaphanta offers you one thing that others don't—a personal space you can share with nature," said

Ravi KC, a Kathmandu-based entrepreneur who was visiting Shuklaphanta this March. "It makes you feel as if you're the only one who is given the privilege to enjoy nature in its full glory. And there is just so much to do here."

Tourism entrepreneurs are of the opinion that a lack of publicity and inadequate transportation and accommodation options are hindering the park's growth into thriving tourist destination.

"Shuklaphanta is a virgin territory in terms of tourism," said KC. "That so few people visit is a blessing in disguise, but of course, the more people visit, the easier it

will be for the park to sustain itself in the long-term."

Laxman Prasad Paudel, chief conservation officer at the SNP, understands the importance of attracting more tourists to the park but also underscores the lack of infrastructure on the park's premises. "It's good for the park to have visitors but we also have to look at our own capacity to host," he said. "People come here for safaris but we only have a limited number of vehicles, so we can only entertain a certain number of tourists at a time."

Paramananda Bhandari, a Kanchanpur-based tourism entrepreneur, also pointed out that the Majhgaun Airport adjoining the park has been closed for some time now.

"The lack of air connectivity has contributed to the dwindling number of tourists at the park," said Bhandari. "If the physical infrastructure is developed then I'm certain that the park will see more visitors."

Infrastructural shortcomings aside, visitors say that the park is definitely worth a visit at least once in your lifetime. For visitors like KC, the best thing about the park is that you get to enjoy something outside of the mainstream, and leisurely soak in every sight the park offers, because the one thing the park does best is that it makes you stop in your tracks and take notice of nature's bounty.

Entry fee for Nepali citizens is Rs 100; SAARC nationals Rs 750 and Rs 1,500 for others. The closest airport is Geta Airport in Dhangadhi, Kailali, about 55 km from Shuklaphanta. There are numerous homestays around the national park that provide accomodation. The best time to visit is during April-May. Approximate costs are Rs 5,000 for Nepalis and Rs 8,000 for others, per day.



POST PHOTO: HEMANTA SRESTHA

Keeping up with the world's largest Passover Seder in Kathmandu

What started with a hundred people over 30 years ago has grown to 2,000 Jewish people gathering in Kathmandu for the annual Passover Seder.

ROSE SINGH
KATHMANDU, APRIL 18

On April 19, nearly 2,000 Jewish people from across Asia will gather in Kathmandu for the annual Passover festival, one of the most important Jewish holidays. They come from India, Thailand, Australia, Israel, the US and Europe, and are mostly young backpackers in the region for hiking, trekking and general touring. But for the first two days of the festival, they all congregate in Kathmandu for the Passover Seder, a feast that marks the beginning of Passover.

Passover, a traditional Jewish festival, is celebrated by Jewish people all around the world to commemorate their emancipation from slavery in ancient Egypt by the God Jehovah himself and their liberation as a nation under the leadership of Moses over 3000 years ago. It also harkens the onset of spring.

"We believe in the importance of togetherness in the Jewish community because we are who we have for us and it's really important for us to protect ourselves and our culture," says Chani Lifshitz, founder and co-director of the Chabad House of Kathmandu, which hosts the annual celebration.

The Seder begins in the evening, when everyone sits together and eats from a traditional Seder plate, which consists of three *matzos* (unleavened flatbread) on top of each other, *zeroa* (roasted lamb shankbone), *maror* (grated horseradish), *charoset* (a mixture of chopped apples, nuts and wine), *karpas* (green, non-bitter vegetables), fruits, bitter herbs, salt-water and four glasses of red wine each.

All of the food on the *kosher* Seder plate has its own symbolism. For instance, the stacking of the three *matzos* represents the haste of the Jews while leaving Egypt, as well as symbolising the importance of the Trinity, while the bitter herbs symbolise the bitterness that slavery carried. During the ceremonial meal, each dish on the Seder plate is eaten in a particular order and in specific combinations.

Apart from the widespread significance of Passover celebrating the liberation of Jews from slavery, it is also believed that the Hebrew slaves were in such a haste to leave that they had to bake dough into hard crackers in the desert sun, rather than waiting for the bread to rise, which is *matzo*.



CHAMELEONSEY/SHUTTERSTOCK

The matzo, seen here as a ball, is a traditional bread eaten during the annual Passover festival, which starts today, April 19.

Passover is also seen as an opportunity to educate young people about the rich culture of the Jewish people have been carrying for thousands of years.

The tradition of celebrating Passover in Nepal dates to 1989, when Jewish travellers first came to Nepal and started celebrating Passover among themselves. Over the years, the celebration continued to grow, with volunteers ensuring that the food was kosher and there was enough matzo and wine to go around. In 2000, when Chani and Rabbi Chezki Lifshitz came to Kathmandu and started the Chabad House in Thamel, they took over the organisation of the festival.

In 2006, Nepal saw around 1,500 Jewish people come together to celebrate the festival and the numbers have been growing ever since. Although there was a decline in numbers during the 2015 earthquake, the festival is now celebrated by over 2,000 people and is marked by a coming together, special Passover songs, reciting the holy text of the Haggadah, and of course, the Seder meal.

This year, the festival will be taking place from April 19 to 27, at a location that hasn't been made public yet for security reasons. But Jewish people have already started to fly to Nepal and most foods have been imported.

The preparations for the festival begin by bringing in

rabbis from Israel to prepare for the arrival of thousands of Jewish backpackers. The rabbis dispatched to Nepal arrive at the Chabad House with hundreds of pounds of kosher matzo, kosher foods and the religious Seder prayer book, the Haggadah. They prepare the food and take part in cleaning, which is also part of the prohibition on *chametz*, leavened breads and foods.

"In order to prevent the grains from mixing with water and rising to take the form of *chametz*, wherein the food grain is allowed to rise, which is strictly not allowed in the festival, the entire house or surroundings where the celebration takes place is cleaned," says Chani. "This also symbolises the removal of egotism and spiritual coarseness from life."

Chametz can also be understood as any bread or food that takes longer than 18 minutes to prepare. This includes wheat, barley, rye, oats, fish without scales, yeast, beer, and whiskey.

"This is another reason why matzo became such an important part of the tradition, because it takes less than 18 minutes to cook. Matzo is the food of hurry," says Hodaya, 28, a Passover volunteer at the Chabad House.

This significance and popularity of matzo and the increasing number of Jews coming in to celebrate the festival has seen its import grow from 1,100 pounds in 2012 to 4,500 pounds in 2019, says Chani.

Due to the large number of Jews visiting Nepal, the Lifshitzs have also started a Chabad House in Pokhara and Manang. The Passover celebration in Manang is known as the world's highest celebration.

As such, Chabad House has become a home away from home for many young Jewish people from all over the world. "People come here to trek up the Himalayas but their first stop after reaching Nepal is Chabad House," says Hodaya. "I come here myself because of the warm and welcoming environment. It's just like home."

The popularity of the Seder in Kathmandu has meant that many other Chabad Houses have sprung up around Asia. One new celebration in Thailand promises to have even more attendees than the one in Kathmandu. But wherever it may take place, Passover is a time for the Jewish people to come together, make merry, and celebrate and safeguard their religion and culture.

"Our rabbi has always preached to us the importance of being together and saving each other," says Chani.

Welcome to eastern Nepal. Now let’s eat.

Newar food might be considered one of Nepal’s most distinct cuisines, but Limbu and Rai food are equally diverse and exciting.

THOMAS HEATON
LALITPUR, APRIL 18

Wild lichen, chicken feathers, pork blood and stinky soybeans—there is so much more to eastern Nepali cuisine than *tongba* and barbecued pork. Despite pork and millet beer being delicious in their own right, the Limbu and Rai communities have a rich culinary heritage that is far more eclectic and adventurous than pigs and millet grog.

Eastern cuisine uses wild ingredients, curious cooking methods and cunning fermenta-

tion to create a very distinct set of flavours. When it comes to finding this cuisine in the valley, however, it’s relatively slim pickings. The food can mostly be found in Nakhipot, where many Limbu and Rai families have settled—both cuisines while distinct, share some similarities—but both cuisine have generally been reserved for households.

Local eateries pour litres of *tongba* and equal amounts of smokey grilled pork *seku-*

wa, but there are plenty of other dishes worth asking for.

Two distinctive ingredients that these communities are known for are *yangben*, a wild lichen found on trees in the eastern jungles, and *kinema*, fermented soybeans. Both these curious things are hard to find in Kathmandu, generally requiring one to ‘know a guy’. However, if you’re lucky, you can find *yangben* being sold at some shops in bags for about Rs 300.

At the Tareba Khaja Ghar in Nakhipot, the brother-sister duo of Ithang Limbu and Manu Hangma Limbu is among a small group of cooks bringing their cultural cuisine from Taplejung to Kathmandu.

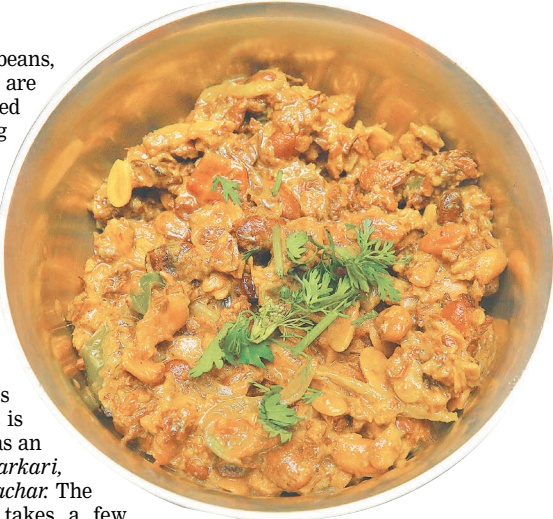
Ithang, considered a great Limbu chef within the community, was always fascinated with food. Among the dishes that are most popular is *sargemba*, a blood sausage, which is a specialty of their restaurant. At this Limbu *khaja ghar*, patrons prefer their sausage sliced

and sizzled, served alongside a prickly tim-mur-chilli sauce. The nuances of Limbu cuisine cannot be described in one dish, however; there are many different dishes that make up this unsung cuisine.

The Tareba Khaja Ghar opened four years ago and now has swathes of loyal customers frequenting their restaurant for *tongba* and *sekuwa*—their two most popular dishes—but they cooked the Post some delights they think everyone should seek out.

Kinema

Fermented soy beans, most often white, are boiled and crushed before being wrapped in leaves to sit for a few days. This ferments and becomes an extremely smelly and sour mixture—its stench is akin to the durian fruit’s strength. *Kinema* is most often used as an ingredient in *tarkari*, curry, soup and *achar*. The potent mixture takes a few tastes to get used to, for the uninitiated game enough to try. But its even divisive within the Limbu and Rai communities themselves.



Yangben

Plucked off trees throughout Nepal’s eastern jungles, this wild lichen is traditionally cleaned and boiled ingeniously with charcoal. Once dried, it becomes a seaweed-like substance and turns from mossy grey to black, with the spindly tufts resembling *gundruk*. And like that ubiquitous Nepali favourite, *yangben* is steeped in warm water before cooking. The taste is resoundingly bitter, compared to *gundruk*’s fermented flavour, but it mellows when cooked and has a slight mushroomy aroma. It finds its way into several dishes, such as pork and *yangben* curry, and *sargemba* sausage.

It’s typically a difficult and expensive find in the country’s capital, costing about Rs 300 per bag. That’s because finding the fungus is difficult and takes a shrewd eye, given it only grows on three trees and looks similar to other slightly intoxicating varieties of lichen.

The aforementioned rich pork dish is stewed in its own blood. This *yangben* and blood curry follows a quintessential spice mix to start, but the later addition of blood makes for a distinctly rich flavour. When cooked, the blood turns the dish almost black, and the slightly bitter addition of *yangben* balances it out.



Dharane kalo bangur

To properly be introduced to Limbu or Rai cuisine, one must understand how important the pig is—specifically black porkers from the south-east. Hailing from Dharan, these pigs are as well-known for their flavour as their cultural and religious importance to the Limbu community. Pigs are used as *prasad*, as well as traditionally for bride prices. So it’s only natural that pigs find their way into many dishes, in the form of blood, offal or meat—or all together.

Sargemba

Sargemba is one of the better-known dishes in Limbu cuisine. The sausage is a potent mixture of pork blood, meat, offal and spices, like English black pudding. Rice can also be added as a filler, depending on who makes it, like Korean *soondae*. The sausage is typically boiled, to cook and solidify the blood, before being hung for later use. While the patrons of the Tareba Khaja Ghar prefer theirs fried, it’s not uncommon for members of the Limbu community to have it freshly boiled and served with a spicy *achar*. In Rai communities, there is a similar sausage that comes under several monikers.



POST PHOTOS: ANISH REGMI

Sisnu ko tarkari and philinge ko achar

Stinging nettle, or *sisnu*, *tarkari* can often be found in the *dal bhat* of Limbu and Rai families, in lieu of lentils.

While the harvest might prove difficult, the cooking of the *saag* is relatively straightforward. Boiled with cornflour, and sometimes okra, to thicken, the soup is later tempered with a mixture of garlic, *timmur* and chillies. The result is a somewhat bitter and spicy soup to be mixed with rice and *achar*. Alongside this dish, *philinge ko achar* might be found—a nutty, salty and spicy mixture made up of niger seeds, dried chilli, garlic, and ginger. The addition of a super-strong lemon concentrate, a black tincture known as *chuk amilo*, helps give a rubble-like appearance and texture, while bitter spices *chinming* (Nepali hogweed) and *khanukpa* lend their distinct flavours.



Titte

The key ingredient in this dish is burnt chicken feathers, which lend a distinctly bitter flavour to the offal mixture. While the once-maligned nose-to-tail eating has become all the rage around the world, Limbu communities have been taking it further for a long time. Also popular in Rai communities, and often rolled out at special occasions, this dish starts with the plucking of a local chicken and burning of the softer feathers. Once collected, minced neck and skull, wings and legs of the chicken are added alongside other spices to create an *achar*. While it could be grim for some, the dish is slightly bitter and spicy with a distinct offal flavour and a unique texture thanks to the cartilage from the wings.



<div><div>FOOD & DRINKS</div><div></div></div>	<p>Savour the cardamom and saffron spice, slow-cooked kebabs and kormas at Indian restaurant serving Awadhi cuisine. contact: 427399, at Soaltze Crowne Plaza</p>	<p>Dining Park Restaurant & Lounge bar with a Coffee and Bakery Hub and Bar and Fine Dining. Boasting facilities including Private VIP Lounges, a conference hall and a terrace garden. Open 6am-10 pm. Mid-Baneshor.</p>	<p>Weekends brunch @ Hyatt Regency—treat yourself with a lavish buffet lunch, splash by the swimming pool or laze around outdoors. Jacuzzi, all for just Rs 2300 plus taxes per person. Contact: 4491234</p>	<p>Sandwich and Crepes: Taste the sandwiches and crepes at The Lounge from 11 am to 6 pm everyday. For further details call Hyatt Regency at 4491234.</p>	<div><div>MUSIC</div><div></div></div>	<p>Enjoy live DJ nights, on every Sunday chill out/ ambient. Weekend/ dance/ funk/ house & Friday psy/ proggy/ full on from 6:00 pm to 10 pm at garden and 7:00 pm onwards at club at Funky Buddha Restaurant & Bar. contact: 4700951</p>	<div><div>MIND & BODY</div><div></div></div>
<p>Krishnarpan—a specialty Nepali Restaurant at Dwarika's, 6 courses to 22 courses Nepali meal served. Opening time: 6 pm-11 pm. Prior reservations required, contact: 4479448</p>	<p>China Garden offers delectable dishes from across Asia, including Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and Chinese. Timings: Lunch: 1230-1445 hrs, Dinner: 1900-2245 hrs, contact: 427399 at Soaltze Crowne Plaza</p>	<p>Waterfont Resort presents 'The Amazing Motor Rally 2019' The sixth edition of this annual event takes place on February 1. For further details: 9801166313/9801166330</p>	<p>We serve nothing but the finest Arabica coffees at great value prices at Barista Lavazza Coffee Restaurant, Lazimpat. Contact: 4005123/4005124</p>	<p>Rosemary Kitchen and Coffee shop, Thamel, opening hours: 7:00 am to 10:00 pm every day an International cuisine in reasonable prices. Contact 01-4267554</p>	<p>Enjoy snacks and drinks from 4:00 pm to 11:00 pm every day and nightly live music from 'The Corner Band'—except Tuesday and Saturday from 7 pm to 11:00 pm at Corner Bar, Radisson Hotel. Contact: 4411818</p>	<p>Set within the historic Garden of Dreams, the Kaiser Cafe Restaurant and Bar, Thamel, offers a continental menu and serves as an atmospheric venue for anything from a quiet coffee or intimate meal. Contact: 442534</p>	<p>Fastest & Proven Weight loss (Korean Treatment) for Male & Female, No-Exercise, No-Surgery, No-Medicine, No-Side Effect. Loose 1-2 kgs. in just 3 hrs #01-4017722, 9841197406</p>
<p>The Italian restaurant serves authentic Italian cuisines in an elegant ambience for both lunch and dinner. Timings: Lunch: 1230-1445 hrs, Dinner: 1900-2245 hrs, contact: 427399, at Soaltze Crowne Plaza</p>	<p>Garden Terrace offers an authentic world cuisine, providing diners with the unique experience of observing their selected dishes as being prepared by chefs. Contact: 427399 at Soaltze Crowne Plaza</p>	<p>Mako's offers traditional Japanese food served. Don't miss out on Mako's special Tempuras, and green tea ice cream. Time: 11:30-14:30 & 19:00-22:00, contact: 4479448</p>	<p>Bourbon Room, Lal Durbar Marg is open for lunch from 12 noon. Enjoy affordable and delicious meals starting from Rs 99! We are currently offering Indian & chinese combos along with momos. Call: 4447103</p>	<p>Out-of-Africa Lunch amid rural splendor: Eat & Sun from 1130 to 1630 hours at The Wataring Hotel, Indrawati River Valley. For prior reservation contact: indrawatire-sort@gmail.com</p>	<p>Every Friday BBQ from 7:00 pm at Fusion Bar & Pool side at Dwarika's Hotel with live band "Dinesh Rai and Sound of Mind". Price Rs 1600/- includes BBQ dinner and a can of beer or a soft drink. Contact: 4479448</p>	<p>Trisara offers food and drinks along with good music and great times. Sunday-Live Music by Baroque Night, Monday, Wednesday by Positive vibes, Tuesday, Saturday-By Jyovan Bhuju, Friday-Live Music by Dexterous</p>	<p>Tranquility Spa at Hotel Radisson, now offering Body Scrubs for Rs 3,000 (50 percent discount for members). Opening hour: 8:00 am-8:00 pm. Contact Number: 01-4423888, 01-6200086</p>
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President Bhandari declares Games open, officially



Olympian Surendra Hamal lights up the cauldron during the opening ceremony of the eighth National Games in Nepalgunj on Thursday.

ADARSHA DHAKAL
NEPALGUNJ, APRIL 18

President Bidya Devi Bhandari declared the eighth National Games open as the multi-sporting extravaganza of the country officially kicked off at the Nepalgunj Stadium amidst poor preparations on Thursday.

A total of 14 sports disciplines out of 35 had already concluded when the opening ceremony started. At the refurbished Nepalgunj Stadium the event witnessed a colourful inauguration partially under lights.

The opening ceremony began with the march-past of players from all seven provinces, three departmental teams-Tribhuvan Army Club, Nepal Police Club and Nepal Armed Police Club.--Non Resident Nepalese Association and tournament officials. The march-past was followed by cultural presentation from different organisations.

Youth Olympian Sonu Bhatta of judo took the oath on behalf of the players and weightlifting's Samsuddhin Siddiqui represented the referees and judges. Province 5 Chief Minister Shankar Pokhrel hoped the infrastructure prepared for the Games will set an example for all other parts of the country. "The infrastructure constructed for the National Games in Province 5 is result of hard work from every individual. I am sure the current infrastructure is going to be utilized for

the development of the region in coming days as well. I hope the infrastructure will help people from other provinces to follow the suit and get encouraged in holding National Games like this," said Pokhrel.

President Bhandari congratulated Province 5 hosting the Games saying: "This edition of the Games is result of a long preparation and intense hard work from everyone involved. I expect having regular events like these will help our athletes enhance their competitive skill." The speech from the President was followed by the eighth National Games theme song from parliamentarian Komal Oli, vote of thanks from Youth and Sports Minister Jagat Bahadur Bishwakarma, khukuri drill from Nepal Army and joint physical drill from 12 different organisations.

Olympian and Province 5 parliament member Surendra Hamal lit the Olympic cauldron before the opening ceremony was concluded with fireworks. National Sports Council Member Secretary Keshav Kumar Bista said the Games will help Nepal, as a country, and athletes prepare for the upcoming 13th South Asian Games that the country is hosting from December 1-9.

"The National Games has helped Nepal add few more sports infrastructure. This will show our preparedness to organise the regional event. Our preparation for the South Asian Games will be boosted further

after the Games. We have taken this Games as athletes' preparation for the South Asian Games and hope our players will give the best at the international level," said Bista.

Although the Games are certain to lay foundation for multiple sporting infrastructure at Province 5, the opening ceremony was blighted by under preparedness of the local organising committee. The finishing works around the 3,500-seater VIP parapet brought from China was still incomplete when the organisers welcomed the guests.

Multiple facilities at the Nepalgunj Stadium premises were completed only by 70 percent with rest of the works still in doubt to be completed even after the Games conclude on April 24. The swimming complex adjoining the Stadium still gives a barren look as it is certain to be relocated to a different venue although local organiser Bhim Oli insists otherwise.

"We cannot rule out the fact that works at the swimming pool are yet to be completed but we will get it done and hold the event there by postponing it for two days," said Oli. However, swimming is not the only venue that looks under-prepared for the Games. The covered hall that hosted fencing events and will see wushu events kicking off from Thursday is left with a huge amount of work to be done. The handball venue, also at the Stadium premises, looks substandard.

Dehydrated and without proper spikes, Kunwar's 10,000m race ends in pain



Saraswati Kunwar of Gandaki Province competes in the 10,000m race during the National Games in Beljundi, Dang, on Thursday.

DHRUBA TULADHAR
TULSIPUR (DANG), APRIL 18

Donning yellow vest, black short and conspicuously a gold star shoes, the ninth-grader Saraswati Kunwar ran energy and enthusiasm at the Beljundi Stadium track on Thursday but her 10,000m race held under the eighth National Games was cut short after completing just 4 laps. Reason: she suffered muscle cramp.

She was destined for a disappointing end to her race even before the start for multiple reasons. In the first place she was completely unfit to compete in the race because she was suffering from diarrhoea. Secondly, she was forced to compete in the event

which she never ran or trained for before Thursday. To add to her misery, she ran with ordinary shoes instead of a proper athletics spike.

Dehydration took a toll on Kunwar and she fell flat in pain clutching her thigh before the medical team attended her in the newly laid synthetic track. Kunwar hails for Phalebas in Parbat and was drafted into Gandaki Province team to compete in the 5,000m and 1,500m races. She had no prior experience of competing in greater distance than 5,000m.

She was thrust into the event as a last minute replacement for Soniya Baduwal. Gandaki had originally registered Baduwal and Dolmaya

Mahato for the 10,000-metre race but the former pulled out prompting head coach Indra Malla bring in Kunwar for the race. Malla said the athlete's coach from Parbat Jagadish Kunwar pressurized him to include her in 10,000m. "I told him (Kunwar) that she cannot compete in the event but I had to give in after intense pressure," said Malla.

Kunwar understandably herself had a little say in the matter. "We all tried to convince her not to compete in 10,000m as it was really tough and demanding race. But she said she could do it," said her Gandaki teammate Lalita Lamichhane, who is set to run in the 5,000, and 1,500m races.

Surprisingly, Kunwar defended his call to include the 15-year-old in the race. "I wanted her to race as she has potential to run the distance," said the coach. "She was complaining of a mild abdominal pain and took a medicine as well. Inquired about her health yesterday (Wednesday), she said she was totally fine," said Kunwar giving a good impression of how ill-informed he was in identifying fitness of a player. Kunwar also resorted to blaming the athlete's health poor to arduous journey from Parbat as well as the intake of junk food during the trip.

For her part, Kunwar was carried away by the big occasion of competing in the National Games and accepting to run the race which was never meant for her. She was totally unaware that running while suffering from diarrhoea was madness. Kunwar can be forgiven for her ignorance but not her coaches. On top of that she was running in synthetic track for the first time in her career, and that too without a proper athletics spikes.

It exposes the organizers' utter carelessness in implementing standard athletics norms that call for all athletes to wear professional spikes. Making an excuse, like the ones made by her Parbat coach, of weak financial background of the athlete's family would be ridiculous. It was not the first instance of an athlete running without a proper spike. In the last edition in Itahari, the organizers allowed an athlete to run bare foot.

Provided she is fit, Kunwar is set to compete in the 5,000m race on Sunday where she will try to erase the bitter disappointment of the 10,000m race. Irrespective of how she performs in Nepalgunj, Kunwar hopes to establish herself in the game. Her dream is to join the Army club in the future.

Lamgade sets national record in shot put

DHRUBA TULADHAR
TULSIPUR, APRIL 18

Chandra Kala Lamgade of Nepal Police Club (NPC) set women's national record in shot put on the first day of athletics tournament held under eighth National Games at the Beljundi Stadium in Dang on Thursday.

Lamgade hurled 12.04m to better her own mark of 11.56m set a year earlier during qualifier for national team preparations. She will get an additional Rs 25,000 award for setting the national record apart from Rs 15,000 for winning gold. Sangita Adhikari of Province 5 took silver with a hurl of 10.56 while Basanti Chaudhary of Nepal APF Club took bronze with a throw of 10.05m. Altogether 18 players competed in shot put.

Ashis Chaudhary of APF claimed the men's 100m gold while Saraswati Chaudhary of Tribhuvan Army Club clinched the women's 100m gold. Ashis clocked 11 seconds to finish ahead of national record holder Yamsajan Sunar of Province 6. Sunar holds 10.3 second (hand-timing) national record. Ananda Dev Chaudhary walked away with bronze clocking 11.15 seconds.

The women's 100m race saw Chaudhary trio claim top three spots. Saraswati clocked 12.19 to secure the gold to match the 20-year old national record held by Devi Maya Paneru. Paneru had set the national record during the eighth South Asian Games in Kathmandu in 1999. Jayarani Chaudhary (12.39) of Province 5 and Krishna Chaudhary (12.52) of Army finished completed the podium finish.

"I have achieved my goals of putting in my best performance. I am happy for that," said Saraswati who had her previous best timing of 12.40 seconds. Saraswati, who hails from Bardiya, is enrolled by Army club for the last one year. Though she failed to play the seventh National Games due to injuries two years ago, Saraswati had claimed gold medals during NSC Championship last year in Pokhara. She is yet to compete in 200m sprint and relay. "I hope to win both my remaining races," said Saraswati adding that she did not felt any discomfort running in the newly-laid track.

Bishwarupa Budha and Tek Prasad Dahal were the other athletes to add gold medals for Army. Budha claimed the women's 10,000m gold and Dahal won the men's shot put title. Budha clocked 37:30.89 to complete the 25-lap race and finish ahead of Rajpura Pachai (37:30.92). Santoshi Shrestha of Province 3 bagged bronze in 37:50.53. Pushpa Bhandari of APF and Dol Maya Mahato of Gandaki Province finished fourth and fifth respectively.

Dahal hurled 12.19-metre to bag the men's shot put gold.



(Clockwise from left) Durga Budha from Province 6 participates in the men's 10,000m during the eighth National Games in Beljundi, Dang, on Thursday. Punam Chand of Province 5 in action during the women's volleyball. Chandrakala Lamgade of Police competes in the shot put finals.



POST PHOTOS: ANISH REGMI & KESHAV THAPA

Puskal Khadka (12.04m) of NPC and Chitra Bahadur Oli (11.85m) of Army secured silver and bronze medals.

Karnali Province ended the gold drought after Durga Budha claimed the men's 10,000m title, completing the distance in 31:03.06. Anish Thapa of Gandaki Province took silver in 31:09.71 minute coming ahead of national record-holder Gopi Chandra Parki of APF, who clocked 31:58.3. Parki holds national record of 30:99 minutes set during Incheon Asian Games in 2014.

Budha said that he was happy for the achievement despite playing in a different weather condition including the untested synthetic track. "It could probably been difficult had the event been held in Nepalgunj. I could have achieved even better timing if the event was held in early morning," said Budha who had finished second in 10,000m and third in 5,000m during fifth the National Games in 2009. He did not compete in the sixth and seventh National Games in a bid to pursue career in ultra race.

Parki, the third-place finisher, had lodged complaint to athletics jury committee about Budha and Thapa. He had suspected about the district and regional qualification process about the duo. Gandaki



Province have also filed complaint expressing dissatisfaction towards the results.

Badminton

Sita Rai of Province 1 stunned third-seeded Shova Gauchan of APF to enter the women's singles badminton semi-finals in Ghorahi, Dang, on Thursday. The 11th seed Rai overcame Gauchan 21-17, 21-15 to set up semi-final clash with Nepal No 1 Nangsal Devi Tamang of Army, who edged her teammate Ranjana Bhatta 21-18, 21-12. Anumaya Rai of Army saw off Jessica Gurung of APF 21-16, 21-9 and next plays clubmate Rashila Maharjan. Maharjan dispatched Sima Rajbanshi of Province 1 21-14, 21-11.

Nepal No 1 Ratnajeev Tamang defeated Jeevan Acharya of NPC 21-10, 21-11 to storm into the men's singles semi-finals. Tamang will meet Prince Dahal of Province 1, who beat Praful Maharjan of Army 21-10, 21-10. Former

national champion Bikash Shrestha of Province 1 and Dipesh Dharmi of Sudharpaschim also made it to the semi-finals. Bikash beat Nabin Shrestha of Army 21-15, 15-21, 21-16 while Dharmi eased past Dipak Bohara of NPC 21-17, 21-15.

Football

NPC defeated Sudharpaschim Province 3-0 in the men's football at the ANFA Academy ground in Debinagar, Butwal, on Thursday. Bharat Shah, Rabi Paswan and Santosh Hemran were on targets for NPC, who played with numerical advantage for more than an hour after Sudharpaschim goalie Tikendra Thapa was sent off in the 25th minute. He was sent off for intentionally handling the ball. Shah broke the deadlock in the 36th minute and Paswan doubled their lead on the hour mark. Hemran sealed the victory with stoppage time goal.

The other match between Karnali and Province 2 ended in a 4-4 draw. Bhupendra Shahi struck twice for Karnali while Khagendra Khatri and Suraj Shahi added one each. Sunil Raut Kurmi, Nir Bahadur Ale, Sunil Kumar Raut and Ganga Bahadur Ale were on targets for Karnali.

In the women's football played in Ghorahi, Province 2 defeated Province 5 3-1. Rajani Thoka, Dil Kumari Rana

Magar and Sajani Thokar scored for Province 2 while Mamata Pun replied for Province 5. In another match, Province 3 edged Sudharpaschim 2-0 at the Beljundi Stadium. Manisha Thapa Magar scored both the goals.

Handball

Army registered double win in handball that kicked off in Nepalgunj on Thursday. The men's handball team defeated Province 5 42-17 while Gandaki thrashed Karnali 40-15. In the women's event, Army thumped Province 3 33-4 while Province 5 edged Karnali 10-7. The event features nine teams in total including seven provincial teams apart from APF and Army.

(Ghanashyam Gautam in Butwal and Durgala KC in Dang contributed to this report)

MEDALS TALLY				
Teams	G	S	D	TOTAL
Nepal Army	34	27	24	85
Nepal Police	19	17	17	53
APF Club	15	12	23	50
Province 3	7	13	32	52
Gandaki Province	6	7	18	31
Province 2	6	6	5	17
Farwest Province	6	5	11	22
Province 5	4	8	21	33
Province 1	3	5	25	33
Karnali Province	2	1	2	5
NINA	1	0	2	3
Total	103	101	180	384

Nepal fail to qualify for ICC Under-19 World Cup



Nepali cricketers huddle up before entering the field for their ICC U-19 World Cup Asia Qualifier match against Kuwait at the Kinrara Academy Oval in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday.

RITESH RIJAL
KATHMANDU, APRIL 18

Nepal's bid to secure a berth in the ICC U-19 World Cup for the eighth time agonisingly failed on Thursday despite winning four of their five matches in the Asia Qualifier in Kuala Lumpur.

For Nepal to qualify, they needed to beat Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to lose against Oman in the final round matches on Thursday. While Nepal did manage to win, but so did the UAE. UAE beat Oman by 10 wickets for their fifth win in as many matches to qualify for the U-19 World Cup slated for January and February next year in South Africa. The UAE join Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri

Summary
Nepal 160-2 in 28 overs (R Gautam 62, P Sarraf 53, A Sheikh 33*; H Amanullah 1-25, A Sadiq 1-17) beat Kuwait 175 in 49.4 overs (N Budroo 70, G Kumar 36; RK Paudel 3-13, K Malla 2-21, S Tamang 2-27, R Khan 2-16) by eight wickets Man-of-the-match: R Gautam

Lanka, the West Indies and Zimbabwe in the tournament proper. Nepal were dominant throughout the Qualifier winning all four matches convincingly but their unfortunate one-run loss to the UAE in the rain-affected match on April 13 sealed their fate. Had not rain intervened, Nepal were in comfortable position to beat the UAE having set 248-run target. The UAE were 122-3 in 30 overs when rain washed out the match. The Duckworth-

STANDINGS					
Teams	M	W	L	NR	Pts
UAE	5	5	0	0	10
Nepal	5	4	1	0	8
Kuwait	5	3	2	0	6
Malaysia	5	1	4	0	2
Oman	5	1	4	0	2
Singapore	5	1	4	0	2

Lewis calculation saw the UAE win the match by one run.

Apart from the UAE match, Nepal beat Singapore by 217 runs, Malaysia by eight wickets, Oman by 15- runs and finally on Thursday Kuwait by eight wickets. The Asia Qualifier allowed just the table-topper a berth in the U-19 World Cup.

At the Kinrara Academy Oval grounds on Thursday, Kuwait were bowled out for 157 in 49.4 overs and Nepal

raced to victory scoring 160-2 in just 28 overs. But their yet another convincing victory ended up just as a footnote to the UAE qualification.

Kuwait's total was built around a solid knock of No 4 batsman Noman Budroo, who was the last man out at 70. Budroo saw wickets fall at the other end but the batsman himself stood firm to help his team post a respectably total on the board. Budroo slammed eight boundaries in his 120-ball stay in the pitch.

Opener Gokul Kumar also chipped in a painstaking 36 off 66 balls. Hamoud Amanullah (17) and Meet Bhavsar (10) were the only other Kuwaiti batsmen to score in double figures. Nepal showcased their depth employing eight bowlers against Kuwait. Skipper Rohit Kumar Paudel was pick of the Nepali bowlers with fig-

ures of 3-13 from three overs. Kushal Malla, Surya Tamang and Rashid Khan also took two wickets each.

In reply openers Rit Gautam and Pawan Sarraf literally killed off the match as a contest putting on 93 runs for the first wicket. Sarraf was first to go, dismissed by Abdul Sadiq in the 20th over having scoring 53 off 61 balls with eight fours and a six. Man-of-the-match Gautam added another 47 runs for the second wicket with Aasif Sheikh but was trapped leg before wicket by Hamoud Amanullah in the 27th over.

Gautam clobbered seven boundaries in his 84-ball 62. Sheikh and Sundee Jora (5) then carried their team to the finishing line. Sheikh remained unbeaten on 33, his 20-ball cameo included five fours and a six.

We need bigger World Cup, says Lamichhane

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

Nepalese sensation Sandeep Lamichhane has called for the World Cup to be expanded to up to 16 teams, saying limiting it to 10 hurts players from emerging cricket nations.

The 18-year-old leg-spinner, who last year became the first Nepalese player to land an Indian Premier League contract, said he was frustrated to be missing out on the tournament in England and Wales starting in May. "Sorry to say but a 10-team World Cup will hurt a lot of players like me who will not be a part of it," the Delhi Capitals player said. "I think there should be 14-16 teams in the World Cup."

Lamichhane added: "World Cup comes after every four years and teams can achieve their biggest dreams there. We are an emerging nation and this is something we would love to play for our country. "Even in 2023 there are (again) only 10 teams so it will be a while before we can even think of playing in the 50-over event."

Lamichhane, who has a blond streak in his dark hair and earrings in both ears, has drawn comparisons with his hero, the flamboyant Australian great Shane Warne, for his bowling style and ability to generate wicked turn. The confident teenager is the poster boy for the rise of cricket in mountainous Nepal, which gained one-day international status last year but remains a long way from contesting a World Cup.

Cricket's showpiece tournament had 16 teams in 2007, but the field was reduced to 14 in 2011 and 2015 as the International Cricket Council sought to avoid one-sided matches. It has been slashed to just 10 teams for 2019 and 2023, featuring the top eight sides in the one-day rankings and another two coming through qualifying.

Lamichhane, who will be watching the World Cup from



Sandeep Lamichhane

afar, said he was hoping for some upsets by the smaller teams, who include Afghanistan. "I am going to watch the World Cup on TV and love to see any team that is under-rated perform well against the big nations," said Lamichhane. "It will be an inspiration for us who are just beginning their journey right now."

Test cricket is also on Lamichhane's radar as Nepal bid to follow in the footsteps of Afghanistan and Ireland, who in 2017 were elevated to the elite club of nations eligible to play the five-day game. "Two years back we were nothing," said Lamichhane. "But now we are an ODI and T20 international nation. Hopefully there will be a time when we become the next Test nation. Even if I play a Test match for my country after 10 years, it will be the proudest moment."

Nepal gained ODI status at last year's World Cup qualifying tournament in Zimbabwe despite the ICC's suspension of Nepal's national governing body since 2016 over political interference. Despite their success, the team from the

Himalayas are yet to play a top side, and have just a couple of international-standard grounds capable of hosting games.

However, individual talent has flourished and Lamichhane, a product of Nepal's Chitwan Cricket Academy, became a protege of former Australian captain Michael Clarke who spotted him at a tournament in Hong Kong. The teenager's big break came when he was snapped up by IPL's Delhi Capitals, coached by another ex-Australia captain in Ricky Ponting.

So far this season he has bagged five wickets in four IPL matches, with the Capitals often using him as a new-ball bowler on spin-friendly Indian wickets. Lamichhane, whose biggest idols are Warne and Sachin Tendulkar, is surrounded by the world's top cricketers in the IPL but insists he remains focused on his own self-improvement. "I look up only to myself because I want to be better than yesterday. I never plan something big, I always enjoy the day I am playing a game and let the life go in a flow," he said.

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NEWS DIGEST

Portugal petrol strike lifted

LISBON: Fuel haulers in Portugal lifted on Thursday a strike that caused long lines at petrol stations days before a long holiday weekend following mediation by the government. “After three difficult days of uncertainty and even insecurity the situation should progressively return to normal,” said Infrastructure Minister Pedro Nuno Santos after announcing that negotiations would be held later this month. The strike launched at the beginning of the week quickly led to shortages, with Portugese media reporting Wednesday that some 3,000 petrol stations had run dry. The government had ordered a certain number of drivers back to work in order to ensure a minimum service to airports, ports, emergency services, public transport and 40 percent of filling stations in the Lisbon and Porto regions as the country begins marking a three-day holiday weekend for Easter on Friday (AFP)

Unilever Q1 sales top expectations

LONDON: Consumer goods group Unilever reported stronger than expected quarterly underlying sales growth, helped by higher prices and volume, and strength in emerging markets. The maker of Dove soap and Ben & Jerry’s ice cream also on Thursday stood by its outlook for the full year, which calls for underlying sales growth in the lower half of a 3 to 5 percent range. Rival Nestle also reported better-than-expected first-quarter sales on Thursday. Following its first quarter under new chief executive Alan Jope, Anglo-Dutch Unilever also stood by its 2020 target for an underlying operating margin of 20 percent, set by Jope’s predecessor Paul Polman in the wake of 2017’s rebuffed \$143 billion takeover offer by Kraft Heinz. (REUTERS)

SAfrican miners end five-month wage strike

JOHANNESBURG: Thousands of gold miners at South Africa’s Sibanye-Stillwater gold mines ended a five-month strike on Wednesday after agreeing to sign a three-year wage deal, the company and a labour union announced. Some 15,000 members of the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) downed tools in November over a pay dispute. They have now agreed to a pay rise of 5.5 percent for the first year followed by 5.5 percent or the prevailing annual rate of inflation—whichever is greater—the two following years. “We are going to sign the agreement. That means the strike has come to an end officially,” AMCU leader Joseph Mathunjwa told workers. (AFP)

US trade deficit hits eight-month low on weak Chinese imports

REUTERS
WASHINGTON, APRIL 18

The US trade deficit fell to an eight-month low in February as imports from China plunged, temporarily providing a boost to President Donald Trump’s “America First” agenda and economic growth in the first quarter. The surprise second straight monthly narrowing in the trade gap reported by the Commerce Department on Wednesday was also driven by soaring aircraft exports, which are likely to reverse after Boeing halted deliveries of its troubled 737 MAX aircraft. MAX planes have been grounded indefinitely following two deadly crashes. Economists warned the trade deficit would remain elevated regardless of whether the United States and China struck a trade deal that was to the White House’s liking because of Americans’ insatiable appetite for cheaper imports. Talks between Washington and China to resolve the bitter trade war have been dragging. The United States is also embroiled in conflicts with other trading partners, including the European Union, contributing to big swings in exports and imports data in recent months. “Even if trade negotiations are resolved in such a way as to reduce the bilateral trade deficit with China, one of the Trump administration’s stated goals, this would likely divert trade flows to other countries and have little impact on the top-line US trade deficit,” said Emily Mandel, an economist at Moody’s Analytics in West



An aerial photo shows shipping containers at the Port of Seattle and the Elliott Bay waterfront in Seattle, Washington, US.

- Trade deficit falls 3.4 percent to \$49.4 billion in February
- Exports increase 1.1 percent, imports rise 0.2 percent
- China goods trade deficit drops 28.2 percent

Chester, Pennsylvania. The trade deficit tumbled 3.4 percent to \$49.4 billion in February, the lowest level since June 2018. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the trade shortfall widening to \$53.5 billion in February. The politically sensitive goods trade deficit with China—a focus of the Trump administration’s protectionist trade policy—decreased 28.2 percent to \$24.8 billion in February as imports from the world’s No. 2 economy plunged 20.2 percent. US exports to China jumped 18.2 percent in February. Washington last year imposed tariffs on \$250 billion worth of goods imported from

China, with Beijing retaliating with duties on \$110 billion worth of American products. Trump has defended the duties as necessary to protect domestic manufacturers from what he says is unfair foreign competition. Trump has delayed tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports. The White House argues that substantially reducing the trade deficit would lift annual economic growth by at least 3 percent on a sustainable basis, a feat that economists have said is impossible because of low productivity and population growth. The economy grew 2.9 percent in 2018. The dollar was little

changed against a basket of currencies, while US Treasury debt prices rose marginally. Stocks on Wall Street fell. February’s smaller trade deficit suggests the economy will probably avoid a sharp slowdown in growth that had been feared at the start of the year. The goods trade deficit declined 1.7 percent to an eight-month low of \$72.0 billion in February. When adjusted for inflation, the overall goods trade deficit fell \$1.8 billion to \$81.8 billion, also the lowest since last June. Goldman Sachs raised its first quarter gross domestic product estimate by four-tenths of a percentage point to a 2.1 percent annualised rate. The Atlanta Federal Reserve bumped up its GDP forecast to a 2.4 percent pace from a 2.3 percent rate. The economy grew at a 2.2 percent rate in

the fourth quarter. “It sounds like pencils are being sharpened in order to revise up first-quarter GDP forecasts,” said Jennifer Lee, a senior economist at BMO Capital Markets in Toronto. In February, goods exports increased 1.5 percent to \$139.5 billion. The surge in goods exports is unlikely to be sustained given slowing global economic growth. The dollar’s strength last year means US-manufactured goods are less competitive on foreign markets. Shipments of civilian aircraft soared by \$2.2 billion in February. Exports of motor vehicles and parts increased by \$0.6 billion. There was a small rise in soybean exports. Economists expect soybean exports to remain moderate because of an outbreak of swine flu that has reduced demand for soybean meal in China. In February, imports rose 0.2 percent to \$259.1 billion. Consumer goods imports increased by \$1.6 billion in February, led by a \$2.1 billion rise in imports of cellphones and other household goods. Imports of industrial supplies and materials fell by \$1.2 billion. Capital goods imports rose slightly, pointing to slower business spending on equipment. Crude oil imports fell to 173.7 million barrels, the lowest since March 1992, from 223.1 million barrels in January. An increase in domestic production has seen the United States become less dependent on foreign oil. “We see more potential for stronger imports in coming months, which would reestablish a trend toward wider deficits,” said Andrew Hollenhorst, an economist at Citigroup in New York.

Amazon to pull plug on China retail operations

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SHANGHAI, APRIL 18

Amazon plans to close down its online retail operations that cater to consumers in China in an apparent admission of defeat to local e-commerce rivals such as Alibaba and JD.com, a report said on Thursday. The US e-commerce pioneer will maintain other operations in China such as Amazon Web Services (AWS), Kindle e-books and cross-border teams that help ship goods from Chinese merchants to customers abroad, Bloomberg News said, citing unidentified people familiar with the plans. Beginning on July 18, the company’s Chinese website, Amazon.cn, will featured only diminished offerings sourced from its global network, the report said. An Amazon spokesperson did not explicitly confirm plans to throw in the towel on domestic e-commerce, but said the company was looking to focus more on cross-border sales. “Over the past few years, we have been evolving our China online retail business to increasingly emphasise cross-border sales, and in return we’ve seen a very strong response from Chinese customers,” the spokesperson said in a statement emailed to AFP. The company was making “operational adjustments to focus our efforts on cross-border sales in China”, the statement said. Founded by Jeff Bezos 25 years ago, Amazon in January became the world’s biggest publicly traded company by market value and dominates in the United States and other markets. E-commerce is just as popular with consumers in China—if not more—than it is in the United States, due to cheap delivery costs and a less-developed bricks-and-mortar retail landscape. But Amazon has struggled to make headway in China where a host of nimble rivals led by Alibaba and JD.com have capitalised on domestic supplier networks and a deeper understanding of Chinese consumers to gobble up market share before Amazon could gain a foothold. Amazon has tried to make a go of it on China retail, investing in logistics and acquiring Chinese online book seller Joyo in 2004. But it has barely made a dent. The firm occupied just 0.6 percent of Chinese business-to-consumer online retail in the fourth quarter of 2018, with Alibaba’s Tmall taking 61.5 percent, and JD.com 24.2 percent, according to China-based Internet consultancy Analysys. The Amazon statement said that “we will continue to invest and grow in China across Amazon Global Store, Global Selling, AWS, Kindle devices and content”. Bloomberg News called the move the latest sign that Amazon, due to the difficulty competing with Chinese rivals, would focus its overseas attention on India’s growing market. Amazon opened an India website in 2013 and has invested heavily in logistical infrastructure.

Pakistan’s finance minister steps down ahead of IMF deal

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ISLAMABAD, APRIL 18

Pakistan’s finance minister Asad Umar has stepped down from cabinet, he announced on Thursday, ahead of securing a crucial bailout deal with the International Monetary Fund. Umar, one of cricket-er-turned-premier Imran Khan’s most powerful ministers, had been entrusted with the task of negotiating the long-delayed bailout as Pakistan’s cash-strapped economy faces a balance-of-payments crisis. “As part of a cabinet reshuffle, PM desired that I take the energy minister portfolio instead of finance,” Asad Umar tweeted. “However, I have obtained his consent to not take any cabinet position. I strongly believe @ImranKhanPTI is the best hope for Pakistan and inshallah (God willing) will make a nayaa (new) pakistan,” he wrote. There was no immediate statement from Khan’s office or confirmation of who would replace Umar, and it was not clear how Umar’s absence

would impact the deal. Pakistan has gone to the IMF repeatedly since the late 1980s, and last received an IMF bailout in 2013 to the tune of \$6.6 billion. Umar has said often that a deal is coming soon, and that it will be the last one. Earlier this week Hamad Azhar, a state minister for revenue, tweeted that Umar had reached an “agreement in principle” on an IMF deal during a recent trip to Washington, with the agreement to be finalised later this month. Experts have warned that any tough measures imposed by the IMF could impact Khan’s grand plans for an Islamic welfare state in Pakistan. Forecasts by the IMF and World Bank suggest the Pakistani economy is likely to grow between 4.0 and 4.5 percent for the fiscal year ending June 2019, compared to 5.8 percent growth in the last fiscal year. The United Arab Emirates, Pakistan’s largest trading partner in the Middle East and a major investment source, recently offered \$3 billion to support Pakistan’s battered economy.

Iconic park



Children play in the Central Park in New York, the United States. With a history of over 160 years, the Central Park was created as the nation’s first major landscaped public park. It is one of the most frequently visited park in the United States, with over 40 million visitors per year nowadays. Set in the middle of bustling Manhattan and covering an area of 341 hectares, its grounds serve as a safe haven, not only for athletes, musicians and strollers, but also for hundreds of migratory birds each year.

Major automakers fear Trump ‘grenade’—imposing US auto tariffs

REUTERS
NEW YORK, APRIL 18

Major automakers are bullish on the outlook for the US economy and auto sales, but one big question remains—will President Donald Trump throw a grenade into the sector by imposing sweeping tariffs of up to 25 percent on car and auto parts imports? The industry is in “wait-and-see mode,” but the tariffs would be a bad idea, Bob Carter, head of US sales at Toyota Motor Corp, told Reuters on Wednesday. “If the tariff happened on the auto industry, quite frankly that’s pulling the pin out of the grenade,” he said at a conference on Tuesday held in conjunction with the New York International Auto Show. “I don’t believe the US economy can run out of the room fast enough if that happens.”

Carter said in an interview he was optimistic the Trump administration would decide against tariffs, yet “uncomfortable” given the president’s decision last year to impose tariffs on steel and aluminium imports. Trump ran for office in 2016 on a protectionist platform aimed at shoring up US manufacturing jobs. He has said in the past he was considering tariffs on autos and auto parts of up to 25 percent. In February, the US Commerce Department sent recommendations to Trump, which auto industry officials expect to include at least some tariffs on fully assembled vehicles or on critical technologies and components related to electric, automated, connected and shared vehicles. Such tariffs would have a deep impact on car prices and con-



An official New York State electric car is displayed in a New York State exhibit at the 2019 New York International Auto Show in New York City, US.

sumers than earlier metals tariffs that were imposed. The steel and aluminium tariffs cost Detroit automakers General Motors Co and Ford Motor Co \$1 billion each

and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV said they could add up to \$350 million in costs in 2019. Trump is supposed to make a decision by mid-May, but some

officials think the administration will find a way to delay final action, using the threat as leverage to try to win concessions on autos in trade talks with Japan and the European Union. Joe Eberhardt, chief executive of Jaguar Land Rover North America, said a 25 percent tariff on all imported vehicles would cost the company “billions.” If the tariffs were on parts, it would also hit US automakers hard, he noted. “We just hope that reason will prevail,” he said. Toyota and other automakers have been lobbying heavily to block any new tariffs on imported vehicles, arguing the industry’s global supply chain is so intertwined that tariffs would raise prices, hurt sales and thus damage the economy. At a conference held ahead of the New York auto show

this week, IHS Markit’s chief US economist, Joel Prakken, forecast 2019 US new vehicle sales of 16.8 million units, down about 500,000 units from 2018 but still high historically. However, tariffs could reduce sales by another 2 million vehicles and shave half to two-thirds of a percentage point off US gross domestic product, he said. “It would be horrible for the automotive industry, it will be horrible for consumers and it will be horrible for the US economy,” said Fred Diaz, the US chief executive of Mitsubishi Motors Corp. In one example, Carter said 72 percent of the parts for the Camry sedan that Toyota makes in Kentucky come from US suppliers, but 28 percent are imported. A 25 percent tariff would cause that car’s price to rise \$1,800 overnight.

“There is no such thing as a 100 percent US vehicle,” he told Reuters. According to industry estimates, broad tariffs could add an average of \$4,000 to a new car’s sticker price. Nissan Motor Co Ltd’s North American chairman, Jose Valls, said the automaker has “invested very heavily in the US and they (the Trump administration) need to take into account our customers and our employees.” “We’ll adjust,” Valls said. “But we’re not taking decisions on things that haven’t been finalised yet.” Mitsubishi’s Diaz said industry groups are lobbying hard against the tariffs. “The feedback is that we’re being heard,” he said. “But fundamentally, how do you really know?”

SHARES

Nepse

1,232.26

pts

1.25%

HIGHEST GAINERS

SBI	NCDB	LBL	NABIL	GRDBL	CBBL
6.65%	5.30%	5.04%	4.78%	4.71%	4.53%

MODERATE GAINERS

SRBL	HBL	KBL	KADBL	NEF	ADBL
4.48%	4.31%	4.26%	3.79%	3.58%	3.55%

MODERATE LOSERS

RSDC	NBBL	SMB	HPPL	RLFL	AKPL
-2.85%	-2.86%	-2.89%	-3.20%	-3.30%	-3.55%

HIGHEST LOSERS

RBCLPO	UPCL	TRH	KMCDB	WMBF	MHNL
-3.92%	-4.21%	-4.95%	-5.47%	-5.88%	-5.94%

Nepal Stock Exchange					
Singhadurbar Plaza, Kathmandu					
April 18, 2019					
TRADING INFORMATION			TRADING PRICE		
SN	COMPANY		MAX	MIN	CLOSING NO SHARES
1	Agriculture Dev Bank Ltd		338	326	338 24403
2	Ankhu Khola Jyadhitya Co Ltd		81	79	81 400
3	Api Power Co Ltd		137	132	132 19572
4	Aravaha Microfinance Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		650	630	630 320
5	Arun Kabel Power Ltd		169	162	169 173
6	Arun Valley Hydropower Dev Co Ltd		102	100	101 2886
7	Asha Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		487	469	471 2230
8	Asian Life Insurance Co Ltd		420	409	414 6387
9	Bank of Kathmandu Ltd		270	265	267 29479
10	Barun Hydropower Co Ltd		95	95	95 280
11	Bhargav Bikash Bank Ltd		172	169	169 370
12	Bhupal Power Co Ltd		378	355	369 18524
13	Central Finance Co Ltd		115	112	112 1264
14	Century Commercial Bank Ltd		174	169	170 55278
15	Chaudhari Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		520	495	505 9130
16	Chhimek Laghubittia Bikas Bank Ltd		985	955	907 7592
17	Chhyangdi Hydropower Co Ltd		103	102	102 500
18	Chhime Hydropower Co Ltd		518	506	506 6341
19	Citizen Bank International Ltd		226	225	224 54046
20	Citizen Investment Trust		2601	2523	2525 231
21	Citizens Mutual Fund-1		9.41	9.41	9.41 100
22	City Express Finance Co Ltd		104	101	102 1010
23	Civil Bank Ltd		100	167	167 154083
24	Civil Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		602	625	625 40
25	Corporate Dev Bank Ltd		97	94	94 450
26	Devores Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		685	652	655 7680
27	Deva Bikas Bank Ltd		131	128	130 19512
28	Dhyaneshwori Hydropower Ltd		82	82	82 31
29	Dhyaneshwori Hydropower Ltd		605	609	610 19566
30	Everest Insurance Co Ltd		1025	995	996 4464
31	Excel Dev Bank Ltd		290	290	290 200
32	First Micro Finance Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		398	389	389 9026
33	Forward Community Microfinance Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		1581	1529	1545 140
34	Ganesh Bikas Bank Ltd		193	187	187 4916
35	Ganika Bikas Bank Ltd		209	201	201 14866
36	Global IME Bank Ltd		290	280	286 60675
37	Global IME Samanant Scheme-1		8.70	8.70	8.70 100
38	Goodwill Finance Co Ltd		124	120	120 1200
39	Grossman Bikas Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		354	353	358 5830
40	Gross Dev Bank Ltd		106	105	105 983
41	Guheshwori Merchant Bank & Finance Co Ltd		128	128	128 20
42	Gurans Life Insurance Co Ltd		535	518	526 2300
43	Gurkhas Finance Ltd		116	114	116 370
44	Himalayan Bank Ltd		520	510	510 4030
45	Himalayan Distillery Ltd		1380	1346	1380 450
46	Himalayan General Insurance Co Ltd		397	390	392 7911
47	Himalayan Power Partner Ltd		187	180	187 1656
48	Hydroelectricity Investment and Dev Co Ltd		142	137	140 6646
49	IME Finance Ltd		195	193	194 2805
50	IME General Insurance Ltd		422	402	412 4015
51	Janaki Finance Ltd		180	179	180 110
52	Janata Bank Nepal Ltd		191	186	189 81474
53	Janathana Samudayik Laghubittia Bikas Bank Ltd		241	2096	2096 506
54	Jyoti Bikas Bank Ltd		143	138	141 9736
55	Kalash Bikas Bank Ltd		221	216	220 20927
56	Kalka Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		867	815	840 820
57	Kalka power Co Ltd		92	90	90 1160
58	Kamana Sewa Bikas Bank Ltd		148	145	146 10855
59	Kamana Sewa Bikas Bank Ltd Promoter Share		107	107	27248
60	Kanchan Dev Bank Ltd		161	158	158 526
61	Kankai Bikas Bank Ltd		129	127	129 1417
62	Karnal Dev Bank Ltd		102	102	102 252
63	Karnali Hydro Power Co Ltd		91	78	80 580
64	Kisan Microfinance Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		881	831	831 10380
65	Kumari Bank Ltd		264	258	258 149003
66	Laxmi Bank Ltd		223	215	218 56382
67	Laxmi Equity Fund		8.02	8.02	8.02 1000
68	Laxmi Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		804	804	810 533
69	Laxmi Value Fund-1		9.72	9.62	9.62 21000
70	Life Insurance Co Nepal		1600	1540	1570 2171
71	Lumbini Bikas Bank Ltd		179	174	176 18377
72	Lumbini General Insurance Co Ltd		528	512	519 8863
73	Machhapuchhre Bank Ltd		255	251	259 11878
74	Mahakali Bikas Bank Ltd		178	174	178 2947
75	Mahila Sahayatra Microfinance Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		554	534	534 144
76	Mahuli Samudayik Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		1264	1219	1227 765
77	Manjushree Finance Ltd		113	113	113 200
78	Mega Bank Nepal Ltd		381	376	377 70559
79	Mero Microfinance Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		600	585	585 947
80	Mirmire Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		959	940	940 436
81	Mitani Dev Bank Ltd		245	242	243 188
82	Mithila Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		491	490	490 842
83	Mountain Hydro Nepal Ltd		100	108	101 2280
84	Muktimathi Bikas Bank Ltd		379	364	375 1824
85	Nabil Bank Ltd		780	766	773 11183
86	NABIL Bank Ltd Promoter Share		750	735	745 14410
87	Nabil Equity Fund		8.36	785	8.36 4510
88	Naradi Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		618	610	620 7805
89	Nagbell Laghubittia Bikas Bank Ltd		635	616	628 1450
90	National Hydro Power Co Ltd		71	69	70 14980
91	National Life Insurance Co Ltd		604	590	599 4153
92	National Microfinance Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		1600	1591	1600 43
93	Naya Nepal Laghubittia Bikas Bank Ltd		444	444	440 20
94	Neco Insurance Co Ltd		533	523	525 36999
95	Nepal Bangladesh Bank Ltd		218	214	217 55869
96	Nepal Bank Ltd		302	296	299 145581
97	Nepal Community Dev Bank Ltd		135	132	132 4150
98	Nepal Credit And Commercial Bank Ltd		226	227	227 96519
99	Nepal Doorsanchar Company Ltd		686	678	680 3370
100	Nepal Hydro Developers Ltd		125	123	125 110
101	Nepal Insurance Co Ltd		390	378	378 7395
102	Nepal Investment Bank Ltd		561	548	552 42129
103	Nepal Investment Bank Ltd Promoter Share		516	516	510 376
104	Nepal Life Insurance Co Ltd		1122	1100	1110 16108
105	Nepal SBI Bank Ltd		440	427	436 20209
106	Nepal Sewa Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		506	502	502 60
107	Nepal Sewa Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		178	178	177 25538
108	NIBL Samridhi Fund-1		9.48	9.41	9.41 25000
109	NIC Asia Growth Fund		9.35	9.35	9.35 1000
110	NIC Asia Growth Fund		9.35	9.35	9.35 1000
111	Nirvan Uthari Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		127	126	126 2400
112	Nirvan Uthari Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		819	821	827 2400
113	NMB Bank Ltd		1053	1032	1032 80
114	NMB Bank Ltd		390	373	389 189582
115	NMB Bank Ltd		9.56	9.35	9.50 22456
116	NMB Hybrid Fund L-1		10.86	10.71	10.71 101935
117	Northern Finance Ltd		445	445	442 1145
118	Panchakanya Mai Hydropower Ltd		112	110	111 570
119	Pokhara Finance Ltd		138	135	135 1748
120	Prabhu Bank Ltd		271	262	269 161285
121	Prabhu Insurance Ltd		434	416	418 4278
122	Pravara Insurance Co Ltd		1035	1015	1017 4256
123	Prime Commercial Bank Ltd		347	338	341 61429
124	Prime Life Insurance Co Ltd		479	457	473 14424
125	Progressive Finance Ltd		125	125	125 50
126	Radhika Insurance Co Ltd		176	170	176 2875
127	Radii Bidyt Co Ltd		167	163	164 307
128	Rairang Hydropower Dev Co Ltd		94	93	93 250
129	Rastriya Beema Co Ltd		9220	9200	9200 79
130	Rastriya Beema Co Ltd Promoter Share		8897	8890	8897 60
131	Rastriya Finance Ltd		119	127	127 1388
132	Ridi Hydropower Dev Co Ltd		93	90	90 8147
133	RMDIC Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		595	581	584 3927
134	RSDC Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		395	383	385 3488
135	Sagarmatha Insurance Co Ltd		1336	1300	1300 750
136	Sagarmatha Bikas Bank Ltd		196	186	186 101
137	Sagarmatha Microfinance Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		1273	1273	1273 10
138	Samudayik Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		668	652	652 270
139	Sana Kisan Bikas Bank Ltd		1002	974	976 6634
140	Sanima Bank Ltd		340	329	334 41697
141	Sanima Bank Ltd		228	231	231 22334
142	Sanima Micro Hydropower Ltd		146	144	146 5912
143	Shangrila Dev Bank Ltd		899	882	890 2631
144	Shikhar Insurance Co Ltd		242	233	233 8852
145	Shine Resunga Dev Bank Ltd		216	205	205 19531
146	Shivam Cement Ltd		140	140	140 1395
147	Shree Investment Finance Co Ltd		226	223	226 510
148	Shrijana Finance (Bittiya Sanstha)		345	327	345 88521
149	Siddhartha Bank Ltd		9.50	9.41	9.43 24700
150	Siddhartha Equity Fund		10.05	10.05	10.05 4100
151	Siddhartha Insurance Ltd		65	63	65 6236
152	Siddhartha Insurance Ltd		132	127	132 3168
153	Sindhu Bikash Bank Ltd		211	210	210 2200
154	Soothee Hotel Ltd		60	597	600 4817
155	Standard Chartered Bank Ltd		640	640	640 250
156	Summit Micro Finance Dev Bank Ltd		242	242	245 68334
157	Sunrise Bank Ltd		597	586	587 50
158	Support Microfinance Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		561	543	554 13433
159	Surya Life Insurance Co Ltd		899	889	889 46
160	Suryodaya Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		919	884	884 747
161	Swakabtan Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		553	530	530 106
162	Swadishi Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		512	505	512 1191
163	Swargaraj Laghu Bittia Bikas Bank Ltd		202	196	202 120
164	United Finance Ltd		861	840	848 6646
165	United Insurance Co (Nepal) Ltd		113	112	112 342
166	United Life Hydropower Ltd		95	95	95 13900
167	Universal Power Co Ltd		1135	1120	1135 240
168	Unnati Microfinance Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		232	228	229 36025
169	Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Ltd		627	600	600 804
170	Vijaya Laghubittia Bittiya Sanstha Ltd		85	85	85 20
171	World Merchant Banking & Finance Ltd				
Total Traded Amount: Rs. 821,698,010					
Sub-Investments: Current					
Banking: 1,121.69					
Hotels: 1,784.00					
Dev Bank: 1,508.66					
HydroPower: 1,132.73					
Finance: 622.76					
Non Life Ins: 5,468.89					
Total Traded Shares: 2,801,613					
Total Transactions: 9,597					
INDEX					
Nepse					
Sensitive					
Fioat					
Base: 16/07/2006, (Adjusted on 10/04/2007) = 100					

Samsung Galaxy Fold screen under scrutiny, raises spectre of Note 7 battery fiasco

REUTERS
NEW YORK/SEOUL, APRIL 18

Samsung Electronics Co Ltd said it has received “a few” reports of damage to the displays of samples of its upcoming foldable smart-phone, raising the prospect of a less-then-smooth entry for the splashy \$1,980 handset. The Galaxy Fold, on sale from April 26 in the United States, resembles a conventional smartphone but opens like a book to reveal a second display the size of a small tablet at 7.3 inches (18.5 cm). The design, matched by Huawei Technologies Co Ltd’s Mate X, was hailed as the future in a field that has seen few surprises since Apple Inc’s iPhone in 2007.

Yet ahead of the launch, journalists supplied with review samples reported malfunctions after only a day or two of use.