athmandubo CAPITAL EDITION • PRINTED SIMULTANEOUSLY IN KATHMANDU, BIRATNAGAR, BHARATPUR AND NEPALGUNJ MONDAY, MAY 27, 2019 (13-02-2076) NEPAL'S LARGEST SELLING ENGLISH DAILY

As temperatures soar, children dive into a pond in Pimbahal, Lalitpur to beat the heat, on Sunday.

Four killed, at least three injured in separate blasts in the Capital

Police suspect the involvement of Chand outfit, which has called a general strike today

NAYAK PAUDEL KATHMANDU, MAY 26

Four people died and at least three others were injured in two separate explosions in the Capital on Sunday in a sudden escalation of violence and a grim reminder of the days during the Maoist insurgency before the 2006 peace agreement.

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According to police, three people died when a cooking gas cylinder exploded inside a hair salon in Sukedhara and the fourth person died in another cylinder

explosion in Ghattekulo. The names of the victims were not immediately known.

Police suspect those killed might be associated with the Netra Bikram Chandled Communist Party of Nepal and that the exploded cylinders could have been rigged as explosives, possibly to be planted somewhere in the Capital, ahead of the group's plans to enforce a nationwide general strike on Monday.

"It appears that both explosions were caused by accidental setting off of improvised explosive devices," SSP Uttam Raj Subedi, chief of the Metropolitan Police

Range, told the Post. Sunday's explosions were the second



POST PHOTO: KESHAV THAPA The scene after a blast at Dhalanpul in Sukedhara-4, Kathmandu, on Sunday.

deadliest blasts this year since February, when the Chand-led outfit detonated a pressure cooker bomb in Nakkhu, killing

one person and injuring two others. In March, the Chand party had carried out yet another blast in Basundhara, after which the government banned the outfit's activities, and labelled Chand's Communist Party of Nepal a criminal

POST PHOTO: BEEJU MAHARJAN

"Preliminary investigation shows that one person injured in the blast in Ghattekulo was a cadre of the Chand outfit. We are still investigating," SSP Shyam Gyawali, spokesperson for the Metropolitan Police Office, told the Post.

The deadly explosions come just a day ahead of the Chand outfit's announcement for a nationwide strike, demanding an investigation into the death of its cadre Tirtha Raj Ghimire.

Ghimire, who had sustained injuries in police firing in Bhojpur, died while undergoing treatment at the BP Koirala

The Chand party, a breakaway faction of the erstwhile Maoist party that waged a decade-long insurgency which took nearly 17,000 lives, has vowed to launch a new form of movement—"unified revolution"—saying revolution in Nepal was still not complete.

Following the series of explosions, Home Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa, who was Chand's one-time comrade in arms, called an emergency meeting and asked the security agencies to remain on high alert ahead of the planned strike.

Following Google's ban, Huawei sales see sharp drop, local retailers say

'Customers who were considering buying Huawei smartphones are now looking at other brands'

KRISHANA PRASAIN KATHMANDU, MAY 26

Huawei smartphone sales in Kathmandu are starting to slow down after reports over Google's suspension of the Chinese multinational company's access to the Android updating system last week, according to local smartphone retailers. Google decided to cut off Huawei after the US government added the Shenzhen-based company to a trade blacklist last week.

Huawei, the number two smartphone producer in the world, had a 50 percent growth in phone sales and was making waves in the wireless industry with its 5G equipment. But the company ran into trouble after the US accused the company of using its equipment to spy on other countries and companies, and stealing intellectual property.

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With abortion pills easily available, men are refusing to use condom

Maternity Hospital in Thapathali reports 50 cases monthly of complications resulting from the use of abortion pills

When I

ARJUN POUDEL

KATHMANDU, MAY 26

In early May, a 28-year-old woman was brought to Thapathali's Paropakar Maternity Hospital in a critical condition. She had attempted to use what is colloquially known as a 'medical abortion kit'-a series of pills that will abort a pregnancy after nine weeks—and was bleeding profusely.

"She was brought to our hospital in a life-threatening condition," Suku Lama, in charge of the post-abortion unit, told the Post. "We transfused several pints of blood to save her

According to Lama, this was the second time in 18 months that the woman, from Tokha municipality

expressed worries of getting pregnant, my husband said that he would buy me an abortion kit.

in Kathmandu, had used an abortion kit to get rid of an unwanted pregnancy. When hospital staff asked her why she had used abortion kits so frequently, instead of other easily available contraceptives, she replied that her husband didn't like to use

condoms since he didn't get much pleasure from sex. He had also forbidden her from using other means of contraception, like the Copper-T, an intrauterine device, as it apparently 'poked' him. "When I expressed wor-

ries of getting pregnant, my husband said that he would buy me an abortion kit," Lama recalled the woman telling her.

Even as safe medical abortions are being contested globally as emblematic of women's rights to reproductive health and bodily autonomy, in Kathmandu, men are increasingly refusing to use other means of contraception and forcing their wives to undergo abor-

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Government should widen tax base and strengthen tax regime, analysts say

Economists lay emphasis on putting sustainable and broad-based systems in place rather than implementing ad hoc measures

RAJESH KHANAL

KATHMANDU, MAY 26

Revenue generation is a perennial problem the government has to deal with, and to make up for the shortfall, it often tends to resort to ad hoc measures. One of the major sources of revenue is tax and if the government can get it right, experts and analysts say, it can put development activities on a faster pace and reduce income inequality.

Just as Finance Minister Yubaraj Khatiwada prepares to present the budget for the fiscal year 2019/20, the analysts say the government should focus on putting in place sustainable and broadbased systems—expanding tax bases and strengthening the tax administration—to ensure they could deliver predictable

According to them, tax overburden, if imposed on the private sectors and salary earners, can reduce the aggregate demand, taking down economic activities, which will directly hit the annual economic

Similarly, failure to meet the revenue target can lead to the rise in the budget deficit



The finance minister will present the budget on Wednesday.

for which the government may have to depend excessively on the foreign borrowing to meet the state expenditure—a situation that could plunge the country into a debt trap.

In addition, it could give rise to serious resource crunch at a time when the government is aiming to expedite development activities.

Govind Nepal, who teaches economics at Tribhuvan University, said the government could enforce an integrated tax system to expand ne tax bases

"Single tax policy could help bring the informal economic activities to the tax bracket," Nepal told the Post. Giving an example of the house rent tax, which is largely unimplemented at present, Nepal said the federal government's budget could also make the sub-national governments more liable to collect such

Almost every year, the government jacks up tax on products such as alcoholic beverages and tobacco products to raise revenue collection. Last year, the government heavily revised the excise duty on vehicles and the slab on income taxes.

taxes at the grassroots level.

But economists say these may help in generating revenue, but they are not the sus-

tainable tools. Chandan Sapkota, an economist who writes extensively on economy and finance, said the sensible tax regime is one of the key factors to drive a

country's economy. "It is also helpful to create an enabling environment to promote the right kind of industries," said Sapkota.

Sapkota laid stress on the need to reduce the tax rate while strengthening the tax administration to help bring individuals and businesses to operate their works via the formal channel.

A small tax is also a result of the informal nature of the economies, hence analysts say reducing individual and corporate taxes could encourage more people and business to operate formally, which will generate more tax in a systematic manner.

"Plugging the loopholes in tax collection measures, exempting tax on the import of industrial raw materials and making electronic billing system more effective are some of the measures the government can adopt to improve the tax regime," said Sapkota.

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No regulation in place to control sale and distribution of acid

Steps have not been taken yet to form regulations, officials say

NAYAK PAUDEL

KATHMANDU, MAY 26

On May 15, at around 8 pm, 20-year-old Jenny Khadka was doused with acid by her husband, Bishnu Bhujel, in Kalopul. The couple had a strained one-year marriage.

After the incident, Bhujel was on the run. But the police tracked him and arrested him from Kadaghari the

interrogation, Bhujel said that he had come to Kathmandu from Banepa, where he worked at a motorcycle garage, with only one intention: to hurl acid over

Metropolitan Police Circle, Ranipokhari, who is investigating the case, Bhujel had obtained the acid from a jewel-

lery shop in Banepa. "Bhujel said that he had got the acid from a jewellery shop. He knew the owner and had asked for the acid on the pretext of removing a splinter Superintendent of Police Rabindra Nath Paudel, in-charge of the circle, told

Once he received the acid, he rode his bike and came to the Capital, police said.

This is the fourth case of acid attack recorded in the fiscal year 2018/19. A total of 12 cases have been reported across the country till date from 2014/15.

"Acid is used in different sectors for different purposes, and is easily available," Senior Superintendent of Police Uttam Raj Subedi, chief of the Metropolitan Police Range, Kathmandu, told the Post. While it is true that there is no stringent law to regulate the sale of acid, it is also the responsibility of the selling the acid to be mindful of whom they are giving such hazardous substance to. The shop that gave acid to Bhujel will also face investigation.'

On February 22, 2015, a group of four masked people

hurled acid on Sangita Magar and Sima Basnet, who were returning from a tuition centre in Basantapur. The investigation on the case showed that the perpetrator had received acid from a hardware shop.

"One can buy or have access to acid from a jewellery shop to a hardware store. Several cases point towards the perpetrators having easy access to acid from such shops, but no laws have yet been introduced to regulate the open sale of Additional Inspector General of Police Pushkar Karki, and executive director of Nepal Police Academy, told

"Along with regulating the sale of acid, the government should also introduce stringent legal action against perpetrators. The cases of acid attacks should be kept in high priority by the courts so that the culprits don't walk off scot free," said Karki, who had probed the case of the acid attack in Basantapur.

According to the prevailing Criminal Code, a perpetrator can be sentenced to jail time for up to eight years and face a maximum fine of Rs500,000 in cases where the victim's face is injured in an acid or any chemical attack. Similarly, perpetrators can face three years in jail and a fine of Rs300,000 if the victim sustains injuries on other

On August 2017, the Supreme Court had issued an order to the government to regulate the sale and distribution of acids. The order was issued over a petition filed by advocate Sashi Basnet along with Justice and Rights Institute Nepal, an organisation working for human rights and social justice.

However, despite the order from the apex court nearly two years ago, the government is yet to make regulations to contain such crimes.

According to the officials at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, there are no laws yet to regulate the

Government should widen

tax base and strengthen

sale and distribution of acids.

"No steps have been taken yet in regards to the issue by the ministry and I don't know about its development. Since acids are imported for different sectors such as agriculture and health as well, there are other government authorities related to it as well, Navaraj Dhakal, spokesperson of the ministry, told the Post.

Last year on September The Himalayan Times had quoted Dhakal in a story 'Harmful chemicals law not enacted despite SC order' in which Dhakal had said that the ministry was ready to follow the Supreme Court's order but they had not received the copy of the order yet.

However, activists have argued that the government's move of waiting for a written order to bring a regulation to regulate sale and distribution of acid was itself ridiculous.

"Regulating the sale and distribution of acid is a way to control the incidents of acid attack and it is the government's responsibility. How can they take such a grave matter lightly by waiting for a copy of the order in order to bring a regulation?" Basnet told the Post. "When I enquired about the delay in sending the copy of the order, I was told that it was on its way."

"Bangladesh and India had many cases of acid attacks following which their respective governments brought rules to regulate the sale and distribution of acid. So why can we not do the same?' said Basnet.

"The cases of acid attack have shown that the perpetrators have acquired acid on the pretext of using the substance for other purposes. A strict regulation would prevent shop owners from selling acids eas ily to would be perpetrators, Tej Ratna Shakya, past presi dent of the Federation of Nepal Gold and Silver Dealers Association, told the Post "The shops should be able to



Chhotu Thakur, 56, one of victims of a cooking gas cylinder blast in Sukedhara, is brought to Trauma Centre Bir Hospital, in Kathmandu on Sunday.

Activists express concerns over meagre financial support to wildfire victims

Stakeholders call for revising the relief amount for victims of wildfires that claim 10 lives annually

CHANDAN KUMAR MANDAL KATHMANDU, MAY 26

When Khagendra Bohora, a Chhatreshwori Municipality-6, saw a massive forest fire approaching the settlement, situated downhill of the Bhuwaneshwori Community Forest, he rushed to douse

The wildfire, which started in the adjoining Indreni Community Forest on May 9, Bhuwaneshwori Forest on May 11 and threatened the Tusare Simpani set-

While trying to douse the fire and to save Penti Bohara, 65, another local resident, who ultimately died due to the blaze, he got critically injured.

Bohora was soon rushed to Salyan District Hospital for treatment. After his treatment was not possible at the district hospital, he was referred to while undergoing treatment in Kirtipur Hospital, where he was finally brought, because of massive burns he had sustained.

"He lost his own life while trying to save the settlements and the old woman from the Chudamani Dashaudi, ward 6 chairperson of the rural municipality, told the Post. "His family comes from a poor background and had been relying on agriculture. Loss of the sole breadwinner of the family has left the family in a difficulty."

The forest fire engulfed a total of ten houses including cowsheds. Chhatreswori Municipality distributed some cash and relief materials to the affected families.

The deceased's family members got Rs25,000 from the Administration Office, Salyan for the final



A part of the Salleri forest burns near Sharada Municipality-11 in Salyan district

rites and other Rs20,000 from killed 49 people, including 13 Pathak. "In return, the state handed over Rs100,000 to the families that lost family member to the wildfire.

"The relief amount means nothing to the family who has lost its head. He is survived by children," Dashaudi.

In the same week, another life—third for this wildfire season in the country-was lost in the neighbouring locality of Chhatreswori Rural Municipality. Gobardhan Pun

Sharada Nagarpalika, Salyan also died in the forest fire. Besides tens of thousands of hectares of green forest burning due to wildfires across the country, lives are lost every year while either trying to douse the fire or fleeing from it.

Uncontrolled forest fires across the country have killed 10 persons every year on an average since 2005. The deadliest forest fire of 2009 alone

cerned after seeing a number of bruis-

The police were called, said Lama,

call the local women's group or the

police if he got violent with her again.

Department of Health Services is

aware of the issue and is concerned,

said Kabita Aryal, chief of the family

planning and reproductive health at

Although data on the number of

would refuse to use condom.

her hospitalisation.

the rural municipality. Later Nepal Army personnel and does almost nothing. If the saw another massive forest fire season when nearly 1.3million hectare forest was lost, 15 people were reported dead.

With wildfire claiming lives every year, forest conservationists and community forestry activists voice their concerns about the state not doing enough for those who risk their lives protecting the country's forests.

Bharati Kumari Pathak, chairperson of the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal—the umbrella organisation of 22,226 forest user groups, told the Post that the country has failed to recognise the contribution of the forest

"First, they grow a forest and when it is burning they jump in to protect it. Without any safety gear or insurance cover, they voluntarily go ahead to conserve the country's natural resource," said

is meagre."

Most of the lives lost to forest fires are because of untrained and ill-equipped locals rushing in to douse fire either to protect the forest or to stop it from reaching the nearby settlements, according to Sundar Prasad Sharma, an under-secretary Department of Forest and Soil Conservation.

Forest Management Strategy, 2010, which envisages developing and strengthening necessary policy and institutions for controlling forest fires, also has the provision of providing compensation for forest fire victims and their families.

The department official says lack of proper guidelines on how the relief amount will be distributed has created confusion and deprived victims of justified financial support.

"There are no directives or

separate working procedures for distribution of such amounts. In the absence of such arrangements, victims and their families are relying on small amounts given by local units, forest user groups or other authorities," added Sharma. "Their contribution to protecting forests should be glorified and given accolade as 'conservation martyr'.'

Sindhu Prasad Dhungana, spokesperson for the Ministry of Forest and Environment told the Post that the ministry had once proposed a hike in the relief amount, but the agenda did not pass.

"Since the Home Ministry oversees disaster incidents including fire and compensation issues, the matter is beyond our jurisdiction," said Dhungana, a joint-secretary Ministry. "Last time, we had increased the compensation amount to be given to the victims of human-wildlife con-

with any other agency." The ministry official also said that the financial assistance given by any government authorities to the victim and their families should be considered as relief since two authorities cannot provide aid separately for the same incident. "Wherever the money is provided from, it is going from the state fund," Dhungana.

Pathak accused the forest ministry of running away from its responsibilities by making other bodies responsible for helping locals who got injured or died while protecting a forest. "The forest ministry cannot even speak on behalf of those who gave everything of theirs to protect forest. Then what is the use of the ministry calling itself an agency making laws and doing everything to conserve the same forest?" added Pathak.

tax regime ...

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Based on the ground, there is little room to alter the income tax slab and excise duty, said the analysts who stressed that the government needs to explore more areas where tax can be imposed in a sustainable and deliverable man-

Ram Sharan Mahat, a former finance minister, said the government has little room to raise the tax rate in the upcoming budget. "As the tax rates were raised heavily in a number of sectors in this year's budget, the government should focus on finding new sectors to impose the tax," said Mahat.

Giving an example of the slow growth rate of manufacturing and service sectors this year, Mahat said high tax rates also affect the growth of the sub-sectors and it could also increase the

chances of tax evasions. According to officials of the Finance Ministry, the budget panel at the ministry has formed a separate mechanism to identify the

potential areas to impose the tax. "The government is seeking to bring businesses such as the realty sector, education consultancies, manpower companies, legal consultant services and media houses under the tax bracket via next year's budget," said an official on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak with the media.

Of the government budget worth Rs1.31 trillion announced for the current fiscal year, it has aimed to raise Rs838 billion from

Expansion of tax base of non-tax revenue, revision of tax rates, control of tax evasion and

leakage through effective tax administration were among the targeted tools to meet the revenue target, reads the budget document of the government for the current fiscal year.

Implementing stringent tax policy at the customs points, imposing road tax based on the principle of road user pay, enforcing box office system with electronic ticketing for film distribution and implementing the central billing monitoring system for the large tax payers were among the government's proposed tasks for effective tax collection.

Despite the announcement, the government has fallen short of the target this year.

The mid-term review of the annual budget in March lowered the target to Rs730 billion. But still, the government has been able to collect only Rs570 billion as tax revenue as of

The Department of Customs attributed the shortfall in revenue collection to the fall in import of vehicles and construction materials, among others, with slow capital expenditure and high interest rate charged by banks.

The 10-month statistics of the department shows that the import revenue surged by 20 percent to Rs293.57 billion.

Rameshwor Dangal, director general of the department, said the rise in the customs reve-

nue is not on par with the government target. This year, the government has set the target to collect tax revenue 28 percent more than the amount of the last fiscal year, which experts say is a bit too ambitious.

In a bid to boost revenue, the government since mid-April has made personal account number mandatory for those investing more than Rs500,000 in stocks. Now, the government is considering imposing 7.5 to 10 percent capital gains tax on stock traders from the next budget announcement. In addition, social media platforms such as Facebook and Viber, among others, could be the new tax bases, said

the source at the Finance Ministry. Dipendra Bahadur Chhetri, vice-chairman of the National Planning government said the should make the functioning of the tax authorities more effective and expand tax bases to generate more financial resources via tax

"The budget needs to prioritise taxing the earnings of high-skilled professionals such as lawyers, doctors and engineers who are still out of the tax bracket in many cases," he said.

With abortion pills easily available, men are ...

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

About 50 such cases of complications resulting from the frequent use of medical abortion pills are seen every month at the Maternity Hospital's post-abortion unit, said Lama. In the Nepali month of Baishakh, the hospital recorded 48 such cases, she said. In most of these cases, the husband refused to use condom, relying on the easily available pills to abort pregnancies.

The frequent use of such medical abortion pills-and the emergency contraceptive, or 'morning after' pill-can have serious health consequences, said Dr Punya Poudel, focal person for the Safe Motherhood Programme at the Family Welfare Division of the Department of Health Services. Emergency pills are used after having unsafe sex to prevent pregnancies while medical abortion kits are used after getting pregnant.

Last month, a 32-year-old woman from Bhaktapur arrived at the

Maternity Hospital's emergency unit the Family Welfare Division. after an abortion kit failed to abort her Abortions were legalised in Nepal in foetus completely. Nurses were con-2002, a milestone for women's repro-

es on her thighs and other parts of the and their right to bodily autonomy. body. The woman reported that her With legalisation, persecution and husband would get violent if she jail terms for women who terminated refused to have sex with him, and unwanted pregnancies stopped and unsafe abortions decreased The woman had already had two dramatically. children and did not want a third, so Between 1996 and 2016, the maternal her family had suggested that she take

mortality rate fell from 539 to 239, abortion pills. But this time, the pills achieving the Millennium Development did not work as intended, resulting in Goal—a feat for which the legalisation of abortions played a significant role, doctors say. But the frequency of such and the hospital advised the woman to cases at the Maternity Hospital raises questions over whether women are undergoing abortions out of choice or are being compelled to because their abortions or abortion-related complihusbands prefer pills over condoms cations are difficult to come by, the and other means of contraception.

ductive rights, their empowerment,

"In my experience, even educated women residing in the cities have difficulties saying no to their husbands," Dr Kiran Regmi, a former health secre-

tary and consulting gynaecologist, told the Post. "We have legalised abortion but have failed to launch a awareness campaign simultaneously.'

Since most people are either unaware of the risks or in the case of husbands, unconcerned, there is a need for an awareness campaign aimed more at men than women, says Regmi.

While the use of modern contraceptive means like condoms and IUDs has remained stagnant for about a decade, sales of emergency pills and medical abortion kits have risen significantly, according to ministry officials. These pills can be easily purchased over the counter, even though medical abortion pills should only be given under the supervision of health work rs, said Poudel.

Repeated abortions pose risks for future pregnancies and to the health of the woman, Lama said, but the use of such abortion pills under duress from the husband can even be considered a form of violence against women.



A woman lights an oil lamp at a temple in Patan, Lalitpur. Lighting lamps is believed to be a way of offering greetings to gods by Hindus

Ministry of Foreign Affairs has failed to implement its own criteria on ambassador appointments

Even as Minister Gyawali insists discussions are underway to appoint envoys soon, officials at the ministry say the government has adopted inconsistent policy

ANIL GIRI

As soon as KP Sharma Oli formed his Cabinet last year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced two initiatives to improve what it called haphazard system of appointing ambassadors and trim down the number of Nepali embassies abroad so as to open up the new ones as per the new

As per the announcement, a Cabinet meeting in July last year approved new criteria for the appointment of ambassadors, which aimed to ensure that none of the Nepali mis-

sions remain vacant for long. Directives Ambassadorial Appointment and its outlining criteria stated that the process of appointing an ambassador will not

exceed three months. The directive is already into force but not even one ambassadorial nomination has been made yet as per the criteria even though a number of missions have been without the

ambassadors for months. While approving the new criteria for ambassadorial Foreign appointments, Minister Pradeep Gyawali had appoint ambassadors will start three months before the

position went vacant and that he would "the haphazard practice" of picking ambassadors.

But when asked why the new criteria were yet to be implemented and when nominations will be made for the ambassadorial positions, Gyawali told the Post that discussions were underway to appoint the ambassador soon.

But two officials at the Foreign Ministry told the Post that the government has adopted inconsistent policy.

According to the officials, there is inconsistency on part of the government, as it is recalling some ambassadors the basis of "political prejudice" while giving extensions to others. Some have even been told to resign, they said.

The ambassadorial criteria were approved long ago. But officials said they had no clue why the new criteria were not being implemented, as the entire process "falls under the jurisdiction of the political leadership"

Article 3(e) of the criteria states that the process to appoint ambassadors will begin three months before the retirement of the incumbent ones and the next sub-article states that principle of inclumaking such appointments.

At least six missions are

without envoys for long and two diplomatic positions in Beijing and Guangzho are lying vacant at least for 10 months. But no initiative has been taken to fill those positions. The post of economic

> Embassy in Beijing Similarly, Nepal is yet to appoint the consulate general in Guangzho, one of the latest diplomatic openings of Nepal in the northern neighbour.

minister is lying vacant for

the last 10 months in Nepali

Nepali embassies in South Korea, Qatar, Bangladesh, Spain, Australia and South Africa have been without ambassadors for months. The top position at all six missions became vacant after the issuance of Directives for Ambassadorial Appointment.

Nepali Ambassador to the United States of America Arjun Karki was given extension whose term was over one month ago

At least half a dozen ambassadors appointed by the previous government led by Sher Bahadur Deuba were recalled, but some three ambassadors appointed by the same government-to Japan, Sri Lanka and Oman—are not likely to be recalled, according to offi-

Another serving Nepali

Ambassador to Australia,

Lucky Sherpa, was told to put

in her papers. The post has

been vacant for the last one

government recalled ambassa-

dors to South Korea, Spain

and Bangladesh saying that

The Pushpa Kamal Dahal-

led coalition had appointed

Arjun Bahadur Singh, Bharat

Rayamajhi and Chop Lal

Bhusal as ambassadors to

South Korea, Spain and

Bangladesh, respectively, in

February 2017. Singh and

Bhusal were appointed in the

Nepali Congress quota by the

Rayamajhi was appointed

under the Rastriya Prajatantra

Ambassador Amrit Kumar

Rai was transferred from

South Africa to New York as

Representative, a rare practice

The Nepali embassy in

South Africa has been vacant

since last December after Rai

was recalled and sent to New

Former foreign secretary

Madhu Raman Acharya

said that due to lack of

dorial appointments have

been a complex issue in Nepal

in Nepal's diplomacy.

government while

Permanent

Dahal

Party quota.

their performance was poor.

In December last year, the

and a half months.

"There should be a search committee to recommend qualified ambassadors. If that comes under the jurisdiction of the Foreign Ministry, then I do not see any big problem, said Acharya. "But when the appointment process gets politicised, there is no remedy." Acharya suggested that the government should rather come up with a different provision akin to what guides the appointment of governor of Nepal Rastra Bank or vice-chancellors of universi-

what is the use if they are not

"Having criteria is good, but implemented," said Acharya.

Banskota to discuss ways to move the bill forward Parliamentary Party leaders of different parties, including the main opposition Nepali Congress, have asked the government to revise the

revise Media Council Bill

Chairman of National Assembly holds meeting with ruling and

oppositions parties on Sunday in the presence of Minister

TIKA R PRADHAN

Parliament.

Chairman of

troversial bill.

Media Council Bill as per the

demands of the journalists

before moving it to the upper

house of the Federal

After widespread criticism

against the contents of the bill

ever since it was registered at

its secretariat on May 10,

Assembly Ganesh Timilsina

called the first meeting of par-

liamentary party leaders on

Sunday in the presence of

Minister for Communication

and Information Technology

Gokul Baskota to discuss ways

to move ahead with the con-

ers of the Nepali Congress

and Rastriya Janata Party

Nepal, Surendra Raj Pandey

and Brikhesh Chandra Lal,

who were present at the meet-

ing, had asked Minister

Baskota to revise the contro-

versial provisions of the bill

before forwarding it to the

there was no meaning of

Parliament if the government

was not ready to revise the

bill," said Brikhesh Chandra

Lal, parliamentary party lead-

er of the Rastriya Janata

The two leaders had also

reminded the minister about

the ongoing struggles of

journalists and protests from

all sections of society against

"We told the meeting that

outside

National Assembly.

discussions

Party-Nepal.

Parliamentary party lead-

National

Parliamentary Party

leaders ask Baskota to

However, Minister Baskota refused the proposal insisting that the government would not withdraw the bill but the lawmakers could make changes in its provisions through

amendments in Parliament. Claiming that it would muzzle the free press, the Federation of Journalists— an umbrella organisation of journalists the nation—had across launched a struggle against the controversial bill on May 12 demanding its withdrawal.

The federation has pointed out as many as 14 points to be amended in the bill that replaces the existing Press Council Act and was quietly registered at the secretariat of the Upper House skirting the crucial discussions with the stakeholders.

However, Minister Baskota had told the meeting that the ministry had ample discussions with stakeholders, including the journalists.

Even the parliamentary party leader of ruling Nepal Communist Party Dinanath Sharma had also urged the minister to make the bill widely acceptable through discussions among all stakeholders, including journalists. But he maintained at the meeting that the changes could be

दिक धन्यबाद

नेपाली शिक्षा जगतमा ऐतिहासिक सफलता प्राप्त यस बृहत शैक्षिक मेलालाई सफल तुल्याउन सहयोग गर्नुहुने

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made through amendments in the bill.

Sharma also said the bill will not be endorsed with the provisions which are against the spirit of the constitution and universal norms of democracy. "We have agreed to move ahead with the bill after holding ample discussions with the stakeholders, Sharma told the Post adding that the bill would be amended as per the demands of the journalists.

Coalition Samajbadi Party Nepal is also against the Media Council bill. Party's Co-chair Rajendra Shrestha said the provisions of the bill which are against the preamble and Articles 19 and 27 of the constitution must be corrected.

During the Minister Baskota defended the bill for more than one and a half hours explaining the National Assembly officials about the punishments at different countries including southern neighbour India, according to participants.

"He [Baskota] had tried to justify the need to control the media for more than one and a half hours but no one seemed to be convinced," Lal told the

Chairman Timilsina however, said he would hold further discussions on the bill before tabling it at Parliament after the budget presentation on Wednesday.

party leaders, including Madhav Nepal, Jhalanath Khanal and spokesperson Narayan Kaji Shrestha, have already spoken against the bill in public.

Most of the senior ruling

The call of the mountain

He made way for hundreds to reach the Everest summit, but the veteran mountaineer never stood atop his beloved mountain himself

KUMBHA RAJ RAI SOLUKHUMBU, MAY 26

The wrinkles on his face tell their own stories: of those many years he spent as a young man picking his way through the depths of the mountain he calls his 'goddess'

His face cracks open in a wide toothless grin when he talks about his heydays working as a high altitude worker in the Everest region.

A veteran high altitude worker, Aangkami Sherpa, 66, of Khumbu Pasanglhamu Municipality-3, Solukhumbu, has nearly four decades' experience of working in the world's tallest mountain.

When the mountaineering season begins, Aangkami packs his rucksack and heads towards the Everest Base Camp. He was one of the most experienced icefall doctors working in the region until he decided to retire this year.

"I have worked as an icefall doctor for 21 years. Now I'm old and not as robust and strong as I used to be," says Aangkami.

Icefall doctors are high altitude workers who make a pathway for mountaineers in the treacherous terrain through the most dangerous portion of the assent, the Khumbu Icefall in case of the Everest. They carve out a path using ropes and ladders to lift mountaineers up and over icy



Aangkami Sherpa, 66, retired as an icefall doctor this season after

stay at home during climbing

season. I need to be near the

mountains. I will stay at the

base camp and help in man-

agement. I will teach new ice-

fall doctors some survival

skills I've learned over the

years," says Aangkami, as his

eyes moved towards the moun-

tain from the window of the

Everest Pollution Control

Office at the Everest Base

he started working as a high

daily wage was Rs 28 back

then. It was a risky job but we

did it. Some of us for survival

and some for the love of the

altitude worker.

mountains," he says

He recollects the time when

"I started back in 1975. My

valleys. They are the ones who bring the rocky cliffs of Everest within the reach of climbers who follow their

An icefall doctor's job is a risky one. Many icefall doctors have perished while undertaking the dangerous job at the Khumbu Icefall.

Aangkami is among the lucky few who have survived time and again, and he thanks his stars and his goddess

Although he has retired as an icefall doctor, Aangkami says his wish is to continue working as a high altitude worker for as long as his body

"I know I won't be able to

"Many people think that high altitude workers earn lots of money but that's not true. High altitude workers can earn only during the climbing season which is around three to four months in a year, and they have to make that money last until the next climbing season."

Aangkami has made way for hundreds to reach the Everest summit, but the veteran mountaineer himself has never stood atop his beloved mountain. According to him, he has

reached up to an altitude of 8,500 metres five times as an icefall doctor to fix ropes and make the trail for climbers. "You can call it a cruel play

of fate, but I have no regrets. I am happy to serve the mountain in anyway I can," he Aangkami also remembers

the changes the Everest has undergone over the decades. "The snow would be five

feet thick in the mountains but now there's hardly a foot of snow. It could be because of the increasing number of people trying to scale the summit, I'm not sure," he says.

"We must remember that the mountain is our goddess. The Khumbu glacier has deepened now and it's getting more dangerous. I think the goddess is angry at us," says Aangkami, who has been advocating for cleaning up the Everest region and restoring the mountain's beauty.









WE ARE TOGETHER FOR A BETTER TOMORROW



Tourists enjoy a boat ride in Phewa Lake of Pokhara, Kaski. Pokhara is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Nepal, and is the starting point to many scenic trekking routes.

Darchula couple found murdered

An elderly couple was murdered at their house in Mahakali Municipality-3, Darchula district, on Saturday

According to the District Police Office, an unidentified killed Draupati Mahara, 70, and her husband Birbhan Mahara, 75. The couple's 14-year-old grandson Lokesh was injured in the attack.

"Somebody threw stones on the roof of our house. When grandfather out to see who it was, the assailant attacked him. My grandmother, who had run out of the house after my grandfather, was also killed," Lokesh told the police. According to him, the assailant, who was wearing a black shirt, beat him up and threw him into a room. Lokesh is treatment in Dhangadhi

The locals came to know about the incident on Sunday morning when the elderly couple did not come out of the house until late morning. They found Draupati dead while her husband and grandson were lying on the floor Mahara died in the district hospital while undergoing

treatment. "Nothing other than a firewood plank was recovered from the incident site," said

Rajendra Joshi, a local. It is suspected that the elderly couple might have been murdered for money Investigation into the incident is underway, said Police Inspector Rabindra Kathayat.

Body of woman recovered in a forest

SARLAHI: A woman was found dead at Dhankaul Rural Municipality-4 in Sarlahi district on Saturday evening. The woman, whose identity is yet to be ascertained, looks to be in her mid-twenties. Her body was found in a forest near the Bagmati River in Mainathpur, said police. The investigation officers suspect that she might have been murdered, as she was found bleeding from her nose. The body was taken to the district hospital for postmortem. Detailed investigation into the case is underway, said Deputy Superintendent

of Police Pratit Singh

Rathaur.

NEWS DIGEST

Three men held with muskets

CHITWAN: Police have arrested three persons in possession of muskets from Jugedi in Bharatpur Metropolitan City-13, Chitwan. Suk Bahadur Chepang, Som Bahadur Gurung and Surya Bahadur

Chepang were held with three muskets, police said on Sunday. The trio had gone to the Indreni Community Forest to hunt wild animals when Suk Bahadur Chepang accidentally fired his musket and sustained shrapnel injuries. Chepang is now receiving treatment at TU Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu under police surveillance. (PR)

Awareness drive against drugs smuggling

SARLAHI: Hariaun Municipality in Sarlahi has launched an awareness campaign against drug abuse. The local unit initiated the aware ness drive keeping in view the rising number of drug users and smugglers in the district. "Drug addiction ruins the society and the nation. The campaign will be helpful to control drug abuse and its smuggling in the district," said Mayor

Ganesh Prasain. (PR)

FORECAST: Partly cloudy in the eastern,

mainly fair in the rest of the country.						
PLACES	MAX TEMP (⁰ C)	MIN TEMP (⁰ C)	RAINFALL (MM)			
Dipayal	38.4	18.3	0.0			
Dadeldhura	28.8	15.1	0.0			
Dhangadi	40.8	22.0	0.0			
Birendranagar	37.0	20.3	0.0			
Nepalgunj	41.2	21.6	0.0			
Jumla	25.9	7.4	0.0			
Dang	36.2	23.0	0.0			
Pokhara	30.5	17.8	0.6			
Bhairahawa	37.7	25.7	0.0			
Simara	35.0	24.0	0.0			
Kathmandu	31.2	15.4	1.1			
Okhaldhunga	27.4	15.3	0.0			
Taplejung	24.8	16.2	1.0			
Dhankuta	27.3	18.4	0.0			
Biratnagar	32.9	23.6	0.0			
Jomsom	23.0	8.7	0.0			
Dharan	32.3	23.5	0.0			
Source: Meteorological forecasting Division, Department of						

जावलाखेलसम्म जाँदा मेरो निम्न व्यहोरा भएको +2 को माइग्रेसन सर्टिफिकेट हराएको हुँदा पाउनु हुने महानभावले नजिकको प्रहरी कार्यालय वा फोन नं. ९८६९७६१२१४ मा खबर गरिदिन हुन अनुरोध गर्दछु Name: Nilesh Maharjan Regd. No.: 722799130 Symbol No.: 22718793 Year: 2073

Address: Subahal-8, Lalitpur

Army mobilised to help storm-affected families in Devchuli Municipality

NARAYAN SHARMA

Nepal Army personnel have been deployed to carry out relief works in the storm-affected regions of Devchuli Municipality Nawalparasi (East). The soldiers will help rebuild the Rambas, Laxmipur, Mudhabas

Devchuli municipality. The roofs of more than 200 houses were blown away by the storm that hit the

Munde and Bishaltar of

area last week. Thirty soldiers from the Nepal Army's Shree No. 1 Battalion of Forest and **Environment Conservation** have been deployed to help locals demolish their damaged houses for reconstruc-

Duvchuli Municipality, had requested us for assistance. We have deployed 30 soldiers under the command of an officer for the task," an army personnel working on the ground said. Initial reports

that 30 houses were completely destroyed by the "Timely construction of

the houses is imperative, as the monsoon season is almost here," Khimananda Bhusal, a local Chaudhary, a Binod

member of Parliament, had provided 100 bundles of corrugated zinc sheets to the affected families within 24 hours of the

The municipality has provided Rs 20,000 each to families houses were destroyed by the storm, and Rs 10,000 each to the partially affected

"We have asked for additional relief materials from the provincial and federal government,'

27 people committed suicide in nine months due to provocation: Police data shows

Against global trend, suicide cases in Nepal are increasing, and experts say they will continue to rise until the government makes mental health issue a priority

NAYAK PAUDFI

Suicides are not always voluntary acts of self slaughter. Many suicide victims are driven to take their lives by others.

According to the data of Nepal Police, 27 cases of suicide registered until mid-April were caused by provocation or due to a situation created by others. Of the 27 dead, six were adult males, 16 were adult females, one was a teenage boy and four were teenage girls.

Police have defined mental or physical torture as a situation created by others to commit suicide.

As per the Clause 185 of the new Criminal Code, no one can provoke or generate a situation for anyone that may lead them to commit suicide.

Anyone found guilty under year jail sentence and Rs 50,000

"The reason behind a suicide attempt is known only after investigation. If the sui-

cide is found to be due to provocation or a situation created by someone, the individual found guilty of provocation will face legal action," Deputy Inspector General of Police Bishwa Raj Pokharel, spokesperson for Nepal Police, told

"There have been cases in which someone from the victims' close circle drives them to commit suicide by telling them that there is nothing for them to live for.' According to the Nepal

Police, 3,984 suicide cases have been registered across the country so far this fiscal year; there were 3,985 deaths.

The data of the previous four years shows that the number of suicide cases has been

In the fiscal year 2014/15, 4,332 cases (4,350 deaths) were cases (4,705 deaths) in 2015/16; 5,124 cases (5,131 deaths) in 2016/17; and 5,317 cases (5,346

deaths) in 2017/18. "Sometimes more than one individuals commit suicide together. In such cases, only one case is registered even when the casualties are more than one due to which the deaths are higher than the registered cases,' said Pokharel.

Nepal Police data show that hanging is the major method of suicide followed by poisoning. The other methods are jumping, self-immolation, using weapons, self electrocution and drowning.

According to the World Health Organisation, around 800,000 people across the country die due to suicide every year, and there are many more people who attempt suicide

WHO also says that many suicides are attempted after the victims feel that they can no longer deal with the probsuch as financial problems, break-ups or chronic pain and

"Suicide is attempted by people when they get no solution

to the problem they are facing. They try to find a way out but when they don't, they attempt suicide. In around 90 percent of the suicide cases, the individuals are suffering from some kind of mental health problems," Dr Ritesh Thapa, a consultant psychiatrist, told the Post.

While the cases of suicide are increasing in Nepal, the global suicide rate is said to be decreasing

According to a study 'Global, regional, and national burden of suicide mortality 1990 to 2016: systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2016' published in the British Medical Journal, the total number of deaths increased by 6.7 percent between 1990 and 2016 but the mortality rate for suicide decreased by 32.7 percent when global population.

"We cannot say if the suicide rate has decreased or not with the increase in population in the context of Nepal on the basis of the decrease in suicide cases globally. A study of similar nature in the context of Nepal can only say whether it has decreased or not, but there has been no such study,' Professor Ram Sharan Pathak, head of the Centre for Population Studies of the Tribhuvan University, told the

However, mental health experts say that the numbers of suicide cases and deaths might increase in Nepal if the government keeps on neglecting the mental health sector.

With around 2.2 million Nepalis estimated to be suffering from mental health problems, there are only 0.58 beds

per 100,000 populations in Nepal to avail mental health "There is only an estimated data of people suffering from

Nepal and the government's concern over mental health is nearly zero," said Thapa. "People are still unaware of mental health problems.'

Mothers' groups uplift women and create social awareness in rural parts of Baitadi

These groups have also been actively championing causes to create a safe and equitable society for women

TRIPTI SHAHI BAITADI, MAY 26

Samuha (mothers' Aama groups) formed in various local units of district have been making efforts to make women more independent and create social awareness on gender

equality. Women organise group meetings to discuss their problems and support one another. They have also set up a revolving fund where they contribute a certain amount of money every month. Group members in need of financial support can borrow the required sum from the fund. Each group has 20 to 25

Besides helping one another, these groups have also been actively championing causes to create a safe and equitable society for women.

Devaki Nath of Khareli Tol Dilashaini Municipality said the works done by the mother's group in her village have helped many

"We discuss various issues in the community that need improvement and plan actions to address them," Devaki said. Janaki Nath of Chausera said that she was able to admit

her children to school with the



Women attend a mothers' group meeting at Chausera in Dilashaini Rural Municipality-5, Baitadi district.

money borrowed from the group's fund.

"It is because of the mothers' group that we no longer have to rely on our husbands for money all the time," she

Some of these mothers' groups have even succeeded in organising effective

paigns against child marriage, Chhaupadi (menstrual exile), domestic violence and alcoholism in their communities.

by the mothers' groups to take necessary actions to better the Manju BK of society," Dasarathchand Municipality-2

PU 'paralysed' due to government interference

BINOD BHANDARI BIRATNAGAR MAY 26

Academic activities in the Biratnagar-based Purbanchal University (PU) have been halted for the past three months due to 'undue interference' from the government.

The PU administration claimed that it could not execute any work except the daily administrative works after Education Minister Giriraj Mani Pokharel sent a letter in March, directing the university to not proceed any works unless its executive council got its full shape. The minister also instructed the PU to scrap the appointment of the executive committee members by the university.

There is a longstanding dispute in the PU regarding the appointment of the executive committee members. There

are only two members in the executive council due to the differences of between Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, who is the chancellor of the university, and the Vice-Chancellor Professor Ghanshyam Lal Das.

The two-member executive council appointed Rajesh Jha as the assistant registrar, and Gopal Sharma and Komal Duala as the assistant deans. However, Minister Pokharel, through the letter, directed the university to not implement the decision immediately.

Sources claim that the government exerted pressure on Das, who was appointed as the vice-chancellor of the PU under the Nepali Congress quota, to appoint all three remaining members from the ruling Nepal Communist

600-year-old bricks recovered in Chainpur

SANKHUWASABHA: Bricks that are believed to have been moulded in the 14th century have been recovered in Bazaar Sankhuwasabha. According to historian Ramesh Dhungel, some bricks that were found on the threshold of Narayan Shrestha's house in Mathillo

Bazaar are about 600 years old. Preparation is on for its carbon test, said Dhungel, an expert from the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation. He said the team has requested the Department of Archaeology to protect the bricks and to carry out the necessary investigation. (PR)

NEWS DIGEST

Strong 8.0-magnitude earthquake hits Peru, no injuries reported

LIMA: A strong 8.0-earthquake struck northern Peru in the early hours of Sunday, sending residents fleeing from their homes but there were no immediate reports of injuries. The US Geological Survey said the epicenter was at a depth of 110 kilometers (68 miles). The quake hit at 0741 GMT about 75 kilometers southeast of the town of Lagunas, along the Amazon basin near the border with Brazil. "Some casualties and damage are possible and the impact should be relatively localized," USGS said in a preliminary assessment. Quakes of similar depth "typically cause less damage on the ground surface (but)... may be felt at great distance from their epicenters," it later added. The tremors were felt in northern and central Peru, including the capital Lima. Seismologists at the Geophysics Institute of Peru said the quake, which lasted just over two minutes, measured 7.5 magnitude, revising an earlier assessment of 7.2 magnitude. Peruvian President Martin Vizcarra urged citizens "to remain calm" in a message on his official Twitter account. "We're evaluating the affected areas." he said. Initial reports on Peruvian television said some damage to buildings occurred in the city of Yurimaguas, close to the epicenter, but no injuries had been recorded. "Based on all available data... there is no tsunami threat because the earthquake is located too deep inside the earth," the US-based Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said.

Iran says US troop boost 'threat to international peace'

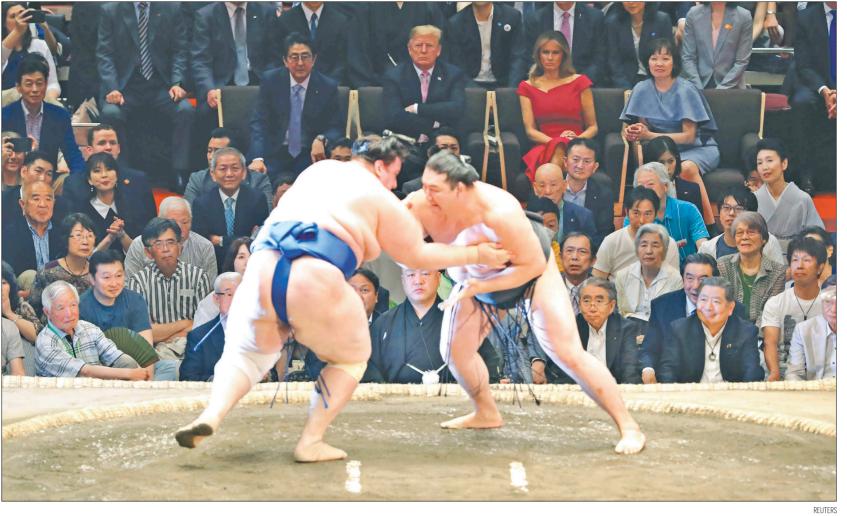
TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said a US decision to deploy 1,500 additional troops to the Middle East is a "threat to international peace," state media reported, "Increased US presence in our region is very dangerous and a threat to international peace and security and must be confronted." Zarif told the official IRNA news agency before heading home from a visit to Pakistan. Washington says the reinforcements, which come after the deployment earlier this month of an aircraft carrier task force, B-52 bombers, an amphibious assault ship and a missile defence system, are in response to a "campaign" of recent attacks approved by Iran's top leadership. Those include a rocket launched into the Green Zone in Baghdad, explosive devices that damaged four tankers near the entrance to the Gulf, and a drone attack by Yemeni rebels on a key Saudi oil pipeline. Iran has denied involvement in any of the attacks. "Americans make such claims to justify their hostile policies and to create tension in the Persian Gulf." Zarif said. The United States this month ended the last exemptions it had granted from sweeping unilateral sanctions it reimposed after abandoning a landmark 2015 nuclear between major powers and Iran in May last year.

Over 600 people test HIV positive in Pakistan village

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan said on Sunday over 600 people, most of them children, had tested HIV positive in a village in southern Sindh province. Concern grew after hundreds of people were allegedly infected by a doctor using a contaminated syringe in Rato Dero and surrounding villages of Larkana district. "Some 681 people, of which 537 were children from 2-12 years of age, had been tested positive for HIV until yesterday in Rato Dero village," special health advisor Zafar Mirza told a press conference in Islamabad. He said 21,375 people had been screened in Rato Dero, adding "the increase in the number of patients being tested positive for HIV is a matter of grave concern for the government". Mirza said the "use of unsafe sringes might be one of the causes for spread of the disease but the government is making allout efforts to ascertain the exact cause". "Prime Minister Imran Khan is going to unveil drastic measures to prevent the disease once we get ascertain the cause of the spread of disease". Parents in the area fear their children's futures have been irreparably harmed after contracting HIV, especially in a country whose masses of rural poor have little understanding of the disease or access to treatment. Pakistan was long considered a low prevalence country for HIV, but the disease is expanding at an alarming rate, particularly among intravenous drug users and sex workers. With about 20,000 new HIV infections reported in 2017 alone, Pakistan currently has the second fastest growing HIV rates across Asia, accord-

Ten dead in eastern China after ship leaks gas

BEIJING: At least ten people died and 19 were injured after carbon dioxide leaked from a cargo ship's fire prevention system in eastern China, local officials said on Sunday. The gas leak occurred at 4:00 pm (0800 GMT) Saturday at Longvan Port in Weihai, eastern Shandong province, the local government said through its official Twitter-like Weibo account. The injured are receiving medical treatment and their condition is stable, the state ment said. The cargo vessel belonged to Fujian Shipping Company and was being repaired when the gas leak hap pened. A preliminary investigation has found that the accident was the result of improper procedures by the ship's crew. Local police have the "relevant personnel" in custody, and further investigation is underway, said local authorities. Deadly chemical accidents are not uncommon in China, where safety regulations are often poorly enforced. Last month, ten people suffocated to death from smoke inhalation at a large Chinese pharmaceutical firm in Shandong province. In March, a chemical blast in eastern Jiangsu province killed 78 and left hundreds injured in one of the country's worst industrial accidents in recent years. In November, a gas leak at a plant in the northern Chinese city of Zhangjiakou—which will host the 2022 Winter Olympics—killed 24 people and injured 21 others. (AGENCIES)



US President Donald Trump, first lady Melania Trump, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and wife Akie Abe watch the Summer Grand Sumo Tournament at Ryogoku Kokigikan Sumo Hall in Tokyo,

Sri Lanka detains nearly 100 in anti-Islamist **SWOODS**

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE COLOMBO, MAY 26

Sri Lanka's military has detained nearly 100 suspects during four days of search operations against remnants of an Islamist group blamed for the Easter attacks that killed 258, officials said

Some 3,000 military personnel were deployed in and around the capital as well as other key towns for cordonand-search activities that began on Thursday, a military official said. In the first three days, security forces took 87 suspects into custody and they were handed over to police for further investigations, he added.

"The number of people detained could be around 100 by now," a security official said adding that almost all were taken in for possessing drugs and in some cases ille-

A few were also detained along with video and other propaganda material of the jihadi group, the Thowheeth National Jama'ath (NTJ) which has been blamed for the April 21 bombings. The Islamic State group has also claimed a role in the attacks. Several parts of the capital were also targeted in search operations by troops on Sunday.

Similar raids were carried out in North Western Province, north of Colombo, where anti-Muslim riots this month left one man dead and left hundreds of Muslimowned shops, homes and mosques destroyed.

Security forces have arrested scores of suspects in connection with the April 21 bombings of three hotels and three churches, as well as over what appeared to be organised violence against the island's Muslim minority.

Trump downplays North Korea launches on Japan visit

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE TOKYO, MAY 26

US President Donald Trump on Sunday downplayed recent North Korean missile launches as he teed off a state visit to Japan with a round of golf and a trip to the sumo with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Before his official schedule began, Trump tweeted that North Korea had tested "some small weapons" that had "disturbed some of my people, and others, but not me'

This appeared to be a reference to US National Security Advisor John Bolton, who said Saturday there was "no doubt" the launches had contravened UN Security Council resolutions.

But Trump said: "I have confidence that Chairman Kim will keep his promise

The American president maintains that North Korea's pledged he is serious about denuclearisation, although experts say there is still a wide gulf between the two sides over what that means.

Trump and Abe's talks are expected to touch on tensions with Pyongyang, which have mounted after a summit in February in Hanoi collapsed without an agreement, and trade negotiations as Tokyo and Washington attempt to thrash out a deal.

On trade, Trump tweeted that "great progress" was being made but "much will wait" until after Japanese upper house elections expected in July—with rumours rife Abe might also call a snap general election at the same

The serious diplomacy starts on Monday, when Trump will be the first foreign leader to meet Japan's new emperor, Naruhito, who has been on the Chrysanthemum



A file photo shows North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un (left) and US President Donald Trump talking in the garden of the Metropole hotel during the North Korea-US summit in Hanoi, Vietnam in February

following his father's historic

Sunday was about cementing diplomatic bonds between metres) that was unveiled to the two countries through the an audible murmur of appregolf and a chance for Trump to see one of Japan's most famous sports-sumo.

Trump entered the hallowed Ryogoku Kokugikan sumo stadium to loud cheersand a few scattered booswith spectators standing to take photos as the US president waved and smiled.

He and his wife Melania, accompanied by Abe and his wife Akie, sat in special seats a few rows from the sumo ring. Front-row seats at the sumo are usually on the floor, but the two couples were given modified seats with backs, and were ringed by security personnel.

Trump looked serious as he listened to explanations from Abe and others around him about the bouts between the sport's top wrestlers. The US leader then

presented tournament winner, Japanese wrestler Asanoyama, with

Throne for less than a month "President's Cup," a specially made trophy weighing 60-70 pounds (27-32 kilograms) and measuring 54 inches (1.4

A set of wooden steps lead ing up to the raised "dohyo" sumo ring were installed for Abe and Trump to walk up, with both leaders donning shiny black slippers to enter the space, which is considered sacred.

Trump read in English from a scroll, offering Asanoyama the cup "in honour of your outstanding achievement", before lifting the massive trophy with the help of a sumo official and presenting it to the wrestler with an enormous grin.

The presidential sumo visit prompted high security, with long lines forming at metal detectors in the blazing heat before the tournament kicked off. "I thought we would see some level of tight security. But I didn't realise that it was going to be this much," 76-year-old Hisato Koizumi from Tokyo told AFP as he waited.

Race to lead Britain out of EU pits old foes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

The race to become Britain's next premier heated up on Sunday as Environment Secretary Michael Gove joined a crowded field of hopefuls with competing visions of how to finally pull their divided country out of the EU.

Gove's bid for the leadership in the aftermath of the 2016 Brexit referendum scuppered the chances of his onetime ally Boris Johnson, who is also running this time around and is seen as the current favourite.

Theresa May's resignation announcement on Friday drastically raised the chances of Britain crashing out of the Europea Union without a deal on October 31—the current

deadline set by EU leaders. Some of the eight contenders to replace May have said they will seek to negotiate struck with the EU last year but would be prepared to proceed with a no-deal Brexit if refused.

The EU has said it is not prepared to renegotiate the terms of the deal.

A no-deal Brexit would face fierce opposition in parliament, including from MPs in the ruling Conservative Party who backed staying in the EU. Finance minister Philip

Hammond on Sunday warned he might even be prepared to take the drastic step of voting to bring down a future Conservative government in order to avoid no-deal. He told the BBC's Andrew

Marr Show that leaving the EU without a deal would have "very significant economic and fiscal impact on the country". "It would challenge not just me but many of my colleagues," Hammond said. May is bowing out with her

legacy in tatters and the coun-

try in agony over what to do about the voters' decision to abandon the European project after more than four decades.

Former foreign minister Johnson said on Friday in Switzerland: "We will leave the EU on October 31, deal or no deal"

Former Brexit secretary Dominic Raab, an even more committed eurosceptic, has echoed that position.

"We'd be willing to walk away from the negotiations,' he told Andrew Marr. Esther McVey, another contender, set

out a similar position. "We won't be asking for any

more extensions," she said. Raab and Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt announced their candidacies in the Sunday

Hunt had campaigned against Brexit in 2016 but has ince reversed his stance.

Gove confirmed his intention on Sunday, promising to

unite the Conservatives.

leader Andrea Leadsom, whose resignation Thursday pushed towards stepping down, has also confirmed she will run.

The contest is being held against the backdrop of European Parliament elections that the new Brexit Party of the anti-EU populist Nigel Farage is expected to win with about a third of the vote. Polls indicate the Conservatives will be punished for their bickering over Brexit and could finish as low as fifth-their worst result in a national election.

The candidates are also mindful of a party revolt over May's fateful decision to court the pro-EU opposition with the promise of a second Brexit referendum.

The concession last week was designed to help ram her withdrawal through parliament on the fourth attempt.

Istanbul's musical ferry can be a soulful experience

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE ISTANBUL, MAY 26

It's already one of the world's most original commutes—the ferry trip between Istanbul's European and Asian sides gives a daily quarter of a million passengers unforgettable views on their

way to work. Now the Turkish city is offering music to offset the seascapes, and for the amateur musicians providing it, it's a chance to make some crucial money in difficult economic times

The musicians work hard to ensure their music reflects Istanbul's unique position as a

city straddling East and West. "We travel back and forth between the two continents and we try to express emotions sparked by the two cultures: a

kind of fusion, a synthesis," Oguzhan Erdem, one of the ferry musicians, told AFP.

Until recently, ferry musicians played without authorisation, but city authorities realised they were missing an opportunity and launched a project to make them an official part of the experience.

Erdem plays the Turkish ney reed flute, an instrument traditionally used by Sufis, a mystical branch of Islam, while his band mate plays a Western-style

"It's merging the East with the West," said Erdem. In total, 82 musicians work on

the intra-city line from 9:00 am until the last ferry at 1:00 am.

Ferry musicians rely on the tips to make their living and it has offered a lifeline for those struggling with Turkey's



Musicians perform during a ferry trip on the Bosphorus from Kadikoy to Eminonu, in Istanbul.

economic downturn. Erdem, who also plays in the streets and with his band "DoguBang", had failed to find work as an interior designer.

"The job market is so bad. When I was brooding over what I will do, I saw a young girl singing in the ferry one day and asked myself 'why don't I give He has now been playing the

ney on ferries for the past nine Istanbul is full of buskers—both

Turkish and foreign—particularly on its busy shopping hub of Istiklal Avenue Eren Koc, who plays the key-

board, is a sculptor by profession and found himself playing on the ferries after visiting the city for one of his exhibitions. "There are interesting moments

on the ferries. When applause suddenly breaks out or some people stand up and dance—it is like being in a movie," he said. For some commuters, it can be

a hard day at work "The tunes speak to my soul and rest my mind. It takes me

back to the past," said Nimet, with

a truly emotional experience after

tears in her eyes as she listened to

"Like the water flowing in the Bosphorus, it is triggering a flow of emotions inside," she said, wistfully.

Erdem is happy to inspire

"In the evenings people leave work and return to their home. They empty their mind, reach a kind of serenity. I see many sleeping in peace. This is a source of great pleasure for me," he said.

Tunc Baydar, coordinator of the project for the municipality, said musicians playing in an unauthorised fashion had previously caused problems for the crew and security personnel.

'We kicked off the 'Music on the Ferry' project in 2016 so that we could create an environment for those musicians to play in the ferry with permission, more comfortably," he said. "We have turned the ferry musi-

cians into part of our brand." Baydar said that they were always on the lookout for new tal-

ented musicians. "We watch their videos on social media. We've even begun recruiting conservatoire

Many world capitals have great buskers-and some have even become megastars like Ed

Sheeran-but few cities offer as stunning a backdrop. "We listen to music in the metros in Europe but it's so beautiful on the sea," said Berker Colak, a tourist from Germany who came

"The seagulls and the music create a really authentic ambiance, a real harmony."

to Istanbul with his fiance.

Transforming construction—brick by brick

Bajra Brick is in the market to bring greener ways to the trade—manufacturing bricks and tiles through smoke and dust free method



Bikram Prajapati (bottom-left) started Bajra Brick with a vision to produce eco-friendly bricks.

ROSE SINGH

hile growing up in Chaymasingh,
Bhaktapur, Bikram Prajapati
experienced the adverse effects
of dust and smoke from the
brick kilns on environment and
human health first-hand. So, for
his final year thesis before graduating as a mechanical engineer, he made a

blueprint for the process of extracting dust from crushed stones. But it took him another seven years to put this theory into action.

Prajapati now owns Bajra Brick and Tile Industry Pvt Ltd, a company producing bricks that are lightweight, low water-absorbent and, most importantly, smoke and dust-free.

Bajra Brick is in the market to bring greener ways to the trade, so its brick-making process does not follow the traditional process.

and Tile mixed with sand and cement before being placed into moulds to produce the desired shapes.

The major factor setting these bricks apart from the rest is that Bajra's process uses sunlight and water to strengthen bricks rather

them in chimneys.

"The absence of coal from our manufacturing process is the reason why our bricks are

than using the traditional means of burning

The bricks aren't made from clay but from the

dust collected from stone crushers, which

makes them lightweight. The dust is then

eco-friendly," says Prajapati.
Once the bricks are shaped, they are sundried for 24 hours. They are then cured for another 48 hours.

Currently products include hollow blocks, concrete bricks and floor tiles, costing between Rs 40-Rs 120 per piece.

Compared to bricks manufactured in traditional brick kilns, according to Prajapati, his bricks are 40 percent stronger, have a nine percent water absorbency rate (regular bricks have a 35 percent rate) and are about 20 percent cheaper. The bricks are more environmentally friendly because they do not produce dust and smoke, rather they are used to produce more briefle.

But it wasn't smooth sailing for Prajapati to start this business. When he decided to implement the idea in 2015, which he had outlined in his college project, Prajapati realised he needed to take many things into consideration—both in technical and logistical aspects.

While searching for potential investors to back his company, Prajapati was simultaneously researching ways to incorporate technologies that guaranteed production of bricks through a dust and smoke free process. In doing this he realised many other countries had already applied healthy technologies of brick and tile production.

To start, he purchased a Chinese machine, but it had its limitations, despite working well. "The machine could produce bricks that were rectangular in shape and were very much like the normal flooring tiles. We needed vari-

ations, so we asked the company to design different shaped moulds," says Prajapati.

Although his main objective was to produce eco-friendly bricks, he did not account for

their weight, which was heavier than regular bricks in the early stage. As well as that, introducing a new product into the market was a gruelling task in itself.

In their early days, it was easier to fetch stone dust cement and sand at very chean

stone dust, cement and sand at very cheap prices. Stone dust, being a waste product for its producers, was given to Prajapati for free. But that didn't last long. With a rise in the price of cement, and other companies with similar business models to Prajapati entering the market, the previously free stone dust then required payment.

"We suddenly had to pay Rs 1,050 for a bag of cement, which earlier cost Rs 750. The cost of importing stone dust rose too and we were paying double for the raw materials," says Prajapati.

But he always believed in improving and reinventing his products. As a result, he focused not only in producing eco-friendly bricks but wanted to ensure his products were The bri but fro stone

lightweight—weight was a maj the company's product, becau were too heavy.

"Large buildings wouldn't ac as they were heavier than nor. had to do something about it," s In response, he procured a Ge which incorporated the lat

Aerated Concrete (LPAC) tech him around 20 million rupees. "Earlier in 2016 and 2017, or amounted to seven million but thousand and 10 million but the

in, we are looking forward to omillion target," he says.

This paved a way for him bricks—not just on the grounds ronmentally smart but also

solution for large buildings.
Following that, Hotel Akan
Mall and many other multi-st
used their hollow blocks and par
their buildings.

"This shed a positive light on expanded our market consi Prajapati.

This also helped minimise burden. From the company's in been struggling financially, whi him, was a result of lack of p plan.

He thought after the infra taken care of, he would be able ness smoothly, however, this wa limited working capital and acc

"My idea and technology v new to the Nepali market wl potential investors not trust th pletely," says Prajapati.

He zeroed in on teaming up





How to choose a

Before splashing out on a career coach, do your research to make sure y



CLARE WHITMELL

iring a career coach is a big decision. Julian Childs, who coaches people from postgraduates to senior managers, says that most people invest in coaching because of an accumulative process – perhaps realising that their job is not a good fit – or an event, such as redundancy.

Sometimes changes in the job or company also prompt coaching. Career management coach, Ruth Winden, says that many of her clients are "survivors of restructuring", who want help to get their next position.

But, with thousands of career professionals in the UK, finding the right one can be daunting. Here are some useful criteria for narrowing down your choice.

Do your research

Be as vigilant in your search for a coach as you would for job hunting. Check LinkedIn profiles to see client recommendations and ask people in your network for suggestions and referrals.

Valerie Rowles, a career management

consultant, says that the advent of the Career Development Institute and its register of career professionals will make it easier to track down a local coach.

If you're studying, career coaching services are often available via your institution. It's also worth asking about career coaching within the professional associations for your industry.

Check accreditation and affiliations

Not all career coaches are accredited and this can act as an important differentiator, says Ruth Winden. Regular renewal procedures mean that accredited career coaches are up-to-date with best practice, which is important because the world of work and job searching is constantly changing.

Search by industry expertise or type of coaching

Some coaches have different areas of focus, such as working only with executives, or career changers. However, it isn't always necessary for your coach to have a specific sector background, although in-depth knowledge and a network in a particular industry can be an extra advan-



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r transactions even hundred LPAC coming

to market his of being envi-

orey buildings

derably," says

heir financial ch according to

Before his business could even take off, however, Prajapati still had much to learn—the hard way. Being the first from his family to start a business like this, and having previously worked for Honda, he clearly lacked procedural knowledge about establishing a business

Gokul Prasad Prajapati, who was already a

part of the brick industry, after searching high

and low for a suitable business partner. They

are now 50 percent partners. Additionally, they

took bank loan to collect Rs 15 million in seed

His lack of knowledge about the legal proceedings was the first obstacle they had to face after registering their company in 2015. The company first registered was on the Arniko Highway, but was later shifted to Dhunge Dhara when they had to re-work their legal proceedings.

"We took the opposite way. The registration of company was the end of the process, and other processes such as setting out property boundaries were to be done before it. We realised this when we were denied a license by the Office of Company Registration, so we had to start from scratch again," Prajapati says.

Around the same time, in 2016, Prajapati decided to apply for an entrepreneur accelerator programme, RockStart Impact. According to him, the programme exposed him and his business to foreign investors. He was also able to secure capital to invest further in his busi-

It took a long time for Prajapati to finally implement his dream of producing eco-friendly bricks, but he believes there is no looking back now. He shares that they have managed to maintain a steady stock of their products, despite reckoning with technical malfunctions as well as fluctuation in their labour numbers.



Evolving in a growing market

Since 1995, **Rebecca Tadikonda** has worked in several institutions, such as DHL, Bain & Company and Verisign. In 2014, however, Tadikonda became an integral part of a 150-year-old insurance company, MetLife, first as its Chief Strategic Officer, and now as its Executive Vice-President and Head of Strategic Growth Markets in South and East Asia. As part of her role, she has been travelling around countries like Hong Kong, China, India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Nepal, spending time with her leadership team, trying to understand each country's market. Tadikonda, who was visiting Nepal's MetLife office, spoke at length with the Post's Alisha Sijapati about her responsibilities and how the insurance provider has always tried to stay on top of the market. Excerpts:

What is it about the insurance sector that appeals to you?

Insurance has a noble purpose. Sometimes people think that insurance is boring, but what insurance does is it helps people live better lives. It protects them from life's downsides, helps them accomplish their goals (whether it is to send their children to universities or to have more resources when you get sick), helps them pursue the best medical treatment and be better prepared for retirement. When citizens have insurance, it makes societies

Also, there is much that has been changing in the insurance market. We are partnering with microfinance companies and digitising the way we interact with our customers. We are bringing different types of services alongside insurance products, so that people can find doctors or even access telemedicines [online medical advice]. The insurance industry is an industry that is only just opening up to opportunities, and being part of this whole process really excites me.

You were promoted to Executive Vice President for South & East Asia in MetLife around 10 months ago. What are your roles and responsibilities in the region? What are your goals?

I think about my goals as an employee, customer and shareholder. Helping our employees helps us thrive and succeed in growing our businesses. MetLife is a public company, and we look to deliver growth and profitability. I have profit and loss responsibilities for seven countries in South and East Asia. So all of our financial commitments—around growth, profitability, compliance with regulations, standards and marked markets-are my responsi-

When MetLife first came to Nepal in 2001, what was the insurance market in Nepal like? How difficult was it for the company to convince

As I understand, there were two other insurance companies at the time MetLife came to Kathmandu. We, at that time, started advocating that the market be open to it and other players. When we finally got the license here, there were three

Since its establishment MetLife has helped develop the insurance industry in Nepal, develop products for customers, and strengthen and implement practices that came from foreign companies.

In Nepal, insurance still hasn't been widely adopted. What is MetLife doing to promote the benefits of insurance? How has the

company tried to break the wheel?

Insurance penetration in Nepal is quite low and part of that is natural, given the average income and the stage of development of the country. But as more and more people enter middle-class status, insurance will start to become more affordable as people will have things to protect and put aside money for it.

To promote the benefits of insurance it is important companies connect with people wherever they are, and that is why we have a diversified distribution model, which makes use of face-to-face agencies, and that has turned out to be great for the market. Understand your situation, and your products will work with your goals.

We also pioneer in bancassurance. We recognise that many people are just starting to know of the branch. We partner with banks in order to help them. We have also partnered with microfinance institutions where we help disadvantaged people who require help in loans and

How different are MetLife's insurance packages in comparison to other insurance companies in

You never have to worry with MetLife's policies. We will be there 100 percent to make good on all of our obligations to you. MetLife follows very conservative investment strategies to be able to back those promises, and a lot of what you do see in the emerging markets is that sometimes players, who haven't been through much experience in managing insurance companies, will take risks in their investment portfolios. That will result in an inevitable downturn change in the market.

Across our markets, there are core insurance products that are relatively consistent with one another. There is the Dependent Protection Scheme (DPS), which we first piloted in Bangladesh and brought it here. Then there are the accident and critical illnesses that are core insurance products in every market across the world. There are tailored benefits and premiums to specific needs, experiences and behaviour-at the cost of providing insurance in investment strategy pay off in Nepal

How has MetLife managed to stay at the top of a competitive mar-

One of the challenges for foreign players, always, is that nobody knows you. So, how do you, as a new entrant, convince people? So one of the things we used across the market is agents. These agents interact with the customers, [they] know the story and power of MetLife. As a global company, we have sound practices around how to ensure that we are going to be in the business with a long term commitment to our customer.

Another big challenge in Nepal, and other markets as well, is: more players come on board as insurance penetration is still low. The insurance market isn't big here but, for the size of Nepal, there are a lot of players; and so what can happen, and what a sound insurance company should be careful about, is not to chase business at the expense of profitability. They should instead focus on having a long-term ability to deliv-

What are the prime qualities you look for while hiring peopleemployees as well as insurance

I would say it's a combination of data nars and invite interested people to come in and learn about what it means to be an insurance agent. A lot of times these people are invited by those who already are insurance agents. So, that puts a human touch and a little bit of 'known factor' there. That's the best way-when someone knows somebody else. We see if the employees and the agents have strong financial acumen. Are they people person? Can they connect

with them? Can they sit down and convince people about insurance

As a company grows, how important does delegation become?

Incredibly important. A manager can't be everywhere, micromanaging everything. We have more than 6,000 agents in the field, and mis-selling is something that can happen in this industry and MetLife has zero tolerance for it. To run an agency of 6,000 we are recruiting a lot of people. You have to have sound policies and people you trust who are out of there in

What advice do you have for young people who'd like to get

I would say you have a great opportunity to come in with fresh energy, ideas and new skills in the insurance industry. There are people in Nepal who have been working in this industry for more than 15 years and they understand the nuts and bolts of how to run an insurance company. But, together, we need to adapt to the digital world and so I am excited to see what the future holds.

great career coach

ou're getting the best advice. Here's our guide to exploring your options:



tage. It's worth asking your coach about their type of experience, and where they achieve their best results.

Look for chemistry

Is your coach is accessible, friendly and wise? Trust is a huge part of the relationship, not just because you're sharing personal or confidential information, but also because coaching involves being challenged and supported. A coach should play back what you say and act as a sounding board, says Julian Childs.

You may find that you respond better to some communication styles than others, such as how much you want to be challenged. Some people prefer their feedback to be gentle, where others like direct straight-talking.

Ask for a no-obligation intake session

This works both ways: you have the opportunity to find out if your coach will be a good match, while they can get a better sense of your particular needs. For coaching to be successful, both parties need

commitment from each other. Be completely honest about what you hope to achieve and the coach can tell you if this is something they can help you with. Consider what form the coaching will take, such as workshops, meetings, or even virtual coaching via Skype, phone, webinars, etc.

Try before you buy

If you're unsure whether coaching is for you, try a low-cost workshop. A participant at one run by John Lees Associates said: "It broadens your mind. I found a skill cards exercise particularly useful, especially for those who don't know about their own skill set or where to start in a

Manage your own expectations

Your coach can help you get "unstuck" and find the answers that are right for you. A coach helps you stay on track with your goals, explore options, and handle different elements of a job search - including rejection. Expect to go through a thought process to work out what's important to you, but a coach won't tell you what job to



The Kathmandu Post

EDITORIAL

Missing civil society

This group, which often led democracy movements, is nowhere to be seen

flourishing civil society is essential for democracy. But amid growing resistance against the proposed Media Council Bill, one group, which has often been in the vanguard of anti-authoritarian movements in the past, has been conspicuous by its absence-civil society. The bill raises fears of more sanctions against press freedom, and it has been roundly criticised where even political parties and a number of professional organisations have progressively mounted pressure against the proposed controversial legislation. Civil society—a concept usually translated in Nepali as 'nagarik samaj' has been a remarkable phenomenon in Nepal over the last two decades.

Since 1990, Nepal has seen an efflorescence of countless movements and organisations associated with social change at the local, regional and national levels. Gradually taking on a prominent role, civil societies have become a key element in the functioning and reshaping of Nepali society. But the once vibrant collective which never failed to demonstrate its unwavering vigilance seems to be missing from the scene this time

Civil society is that sphere that stands between the individual and the state. American political activist Thomas Paine had pointed out that civil society always acts as a counterweight against the state in a democracy. For this particular reason, they should act independently, without any affiliation or inclination towards any political party. But as experts have pointed out, this very issue has ailed our civil society of late. The omnipresence of political parties in various forms and across society is one of the major reasons behind the absence of civil society.

Therefore, its role is crucial for democracy as the current government, with each passing day, is revealing its autocratic tendencies as is evident in the different bills it has sought to introduce in Parliament.

In April 2018, for example, the government proposed the National Integrity Policy which aimed at controlling all kinds of international nongovernmental organisations and nongovernmental organisations regardless of their merit, igniting fears that the policy would shrink the space for civil society; and as a corollary, limit democracy in Nepal. This led people to think if state coercion and intimidation in the space of civil society was going to be the new normal.

Civil society is a plural, self-developing system which has the potential to influence all spheres of society. Its role in establishing a culture of deliberate decision-making cannot be overstated. Civil society as a collective entity must be free from its political affiliations, and must raise its voice as independent, autonomous bodies committed to articulating and asserting the rights of citizens. Democracy is ultimately about the rights of the people, who vote representatives into power, to speak up against abuse of power. Civil society is an important part of this

START A CONVERSATION

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Modi's 'Neighbourhood First' 2.0

Modi's next challenge will be to engage the larger neighbourhood in its fight against terrorism.



SWARAN SINGH

First' policy when he was first sworn in on 26 May 2014 itself, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had then invited national leaders from all the eight South Asian countries to the ceremony. And, not only had all of them obliged him to be present but, in less than three weeks of being him in office, Bhutan had hosted Prime Minister Modi's first foreign visit. This visit was followed by an invitation from Nepal, where Modi was to make four visits in his last five years. Afghanistan and Sri Lanka hosted Modi twice and his Act East policy also saw him engaging with India's 'extended neighbourhood' by travelling to Myanmar twice, Singapore thrice and China five times. In March 2015, in the wake of the arrest of former president Mohamed Nasheed, Modi had suddenly dropped Maldives from his Indian Ocean tour. But in November 2018, a change of government made it possible for him to visit and attend the swearing in ceremony for President Ibrahim Mohamed

Even India's arch rival Pakistan saw Modi starting his term with an indulgence, with modi making an unannounced surprise stopover in Lahore in December 2015 to attend the wedding of then Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif's grand-daughter. However, tensions soared following the terrorist attacks at Pathankot and Uri in 2016 and could never be recovered. The India-Pakistan spat has since resulted in making the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) dysfunctional, and India has moved to focus on the Bay of Bengal for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bimstec) as an alternate sub-grouping for India's neighbourhood first policy-sans Pakistan. Even with Nepal, relations had deteriorated following the economic blockade during late 2015 but were revived during subsequent exchanges of high level visits including Modi's two back-to-back visits to Nepal during May and August last year.



From commerce to culture

One fundamental change in India's policy under Modi was to avoid directly countering China's expanding commercial footprint inside India's neighbouring nations. China has created an added challenge for India in that the southern country's work with its neighbours appears diminished, even disinterested, in comparison to the high speed delivery of China's mega projects. From early 2017, Modi has not only achieved agreements termed as the'Wuhan Spirit' with China's president Xi Jinping, but also reinvented India's connect with its immediate neighbours. Along with accelerating India's trade and investments and infrastructure projects, the second half of Modi's first term saw him privileging India's religious, cultural, linguistic, historical and ethnic people-to-people connections that China clearly lacks in South Asia.

Early in May 2017, Modi was the chief guest at Sri Lanka's hosting of the 14th International Vesak Day, which celebrates the birth, enlightenment and passing away of Lord Buddha. Modi here, not only attempted to mesmerise Buddhists by his eloquent discourse on Buddhism with lavish use of Pali and Sanskrit canons and concepts but also visited famous Seema Malaka Temple in Colombo and prayed at the world

famous Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic in Kandy.A September 2017 Myanmar visit saw Modi praying at the historical and celebrated Ananda Temple in Bagan and addressing Indian community. A year later, May 2018 saw Narendra and K P Sharma Oli doing a roadshow together in celebrations at Nepal's famous Hindu shrines of Janakpur, praying at Pashupatinath and meditating at Nepal's iconic Muktinath temple in Mustang district near to China border. This of course has also led to speculations on how Modi's policies could embolden Hindu and Buddhist forces in these countries.

Terrorism and Pakistan

Terrorism remains another perennial challenge with implications for both peace and prosperity. Here, in spite of Modi's spike of assertive surgical strikes and air action. Imran Khan has incessantly pushed peace overtures and China has relented on Azhar Masood being designated as a 'global terrorist'. This does not augur well for Modi striving to build global consensus on countering terrorism so that this menace can be addressed effectively and terrorists and freedom fighters are no longer confused by any two coun-

From late the 1990s nuclear tests and violence in Xinjiang, China had distanced itself from Islamabad. However, the China-

Pakistan Economic Corridor has since emerged both as a bridge and also a barometer of the rising strength of their enduring axis. Their staying together will continue to be the most formidable challenge to Modi's Neighbourhood First 2.0 which may begin by India's being further marginalised in its own periphery. Reconciliation initiatives of major powers in Afghanistan remain perhaps the most apt case in point. Overcoming such a predicament will require building far deeper stakes from both sides than just doubling India's aid to neighbouring

After receiving this thumping mandate for his second term in office, Modi's first meeting with national leaders of China, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal will take place at the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Bishkek between July 13-14. Countering terrorism has been a top priority for successive SCO summits. Modi here will have to explore building deeper partnerships by making countering terrorism a shared challenge to regional peace and prosperity and assimilate China and Russia as integral actors to his Neighbourhood First 2.0

Singh is a professor in the School of International Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Freshwater ecosystems

The protection of these ecosystems is vital to advance any developmental paradigm.



TSEWANG NURU SHERPA

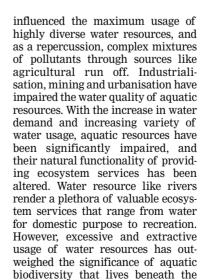
reshwater ecosystems are a biodi-

versity hotspot that encompass 2.4 percent of all the known species despite the total coverage of only 0.8 percent of the terrestrial surface. Among them, freshwater rivers contain only 0.3 percent of the overall world's water supply, but they play a significant role in contributing to both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Aquatic ecosystems are a prominent part of the global environment as they contribute immensely to ecological productivity and global biodiversity. In addition to being essential contributors, they also provide a wide array of ecosystem services that range from providing water for drinking and irrigation to providing a suitable habitat for aquatic macroinvertebrates and fishes.

Freshwater ecosystems accommodate the highest concentration of species, compared to terrestrial and marine, as the existence of extensive geographic barriers between freshwater ecosystems has led to high endemism and they cannot be isolated from terrestrial habitats in terms of the hydrologic cycle and freshwa-

Fresh water is a finite resource for which there is an increasing demand; the world population is increasing along with an increment in consumption patterns and a changing climate. The principal sources of water resources available for humans are freshwater habitats such as rivers, lakes and wetlands.

Water quality Anthropogenic interventions have



In addition, the direct appropriation of freshwater resources for human consumption, and activities such as excessive extraction of mineral and ubiquitous construction, can reduce the quality of the aquatic habitat, as they can intensify the rate of sedimentation in rivers and lakes. Although aquatic ecosystems are generally known for their resilience to maintain healthy and self-sustaining potentialities despite the extreme variation in both hydrologic and temperature conditions, the ongoing climate change exacerbated by human-induced pressures

water's surface.

and extreme environmental challenges imposed on aquatic ecosystems will outweigh the resilience of

aquatic ecosystems. Nepal is lauded for its water resources, but this fact belies the fragile nature of its water ecosystem and the occurrence of seasonal variation in water availability. Being landlocked, Nepal only possesses inland water resources that comprise river systems, lakes, reservoirs and wetlands. These inland water resources total 745,000 hectares of water surface area in Nepal, which is approximately around 54 percent of the total water bodies. Poor management of riverine ecosystems and unregulated riverbed mining in Nepal have increased the level of sedimentation, causing dam blockade and displacement of the entire river system.

Furthermore, water management in Nepal is carried out under the supervision of 10 different ministries among 27 that are dealing with different water-use aspects. The ministries and the departments within the ministries rarely coordinate, and there is very little joint planning in terms of managing freshwater resources in Nepal. The major threats to freshwater biodiversity in Nepal include the modification of water flow as a consequence of hydropower development and rampant surface and groundwater extraction. Excessive urbanisation, watershed and habitat alteration, as well as the introduction of invasive species and climate change, can also be taken as major threats to freshwater in Nepal. Furthermore, this has been exacerbated by the pollution of municipal and rural waterways.

Aquatic biodiversity

The incredible aquatic biodiversity of Nepal encompasses endemic and rare species, but the paucity of regular assessment has imposed an enormous threat to their existence. In addition, despite covering excessive local and global significance, freshwater biodiversity in Nepal, like the riverine system, has received less attention and focus than terrestrial biodiversity. Despite the clear importance drawn towards the essential component of sustainable water resources in Nepal, and to the amelioration of riverine ecosystem development, very few areas of water resources have been studied on a large scale; and the status of freshwater biodiversity in the midhills, particularly in the face of climate change, is still unknown.

Thus, the significance of comprehending the interference and interactions of anthropogenic stressors with the ecological status of water sources is very vital in ensuring the effectiveness of water quality and its related aquatic health. The smooth and proper functioning of an aquatic ecosystem is strongly influenced by water quality. Any alteration in water quality can trigger disturbances in the aquatic ecosystem that encompasses a reduction in aquatic biodiversity and shift in biological communities. Freshwater ecosystems should be assessed and protected accordingly to evaluate the present status of the riverine ecosystem, and eventually carry forward any developmental paradigm.

Sherpa is an environmental science

AMERICA

Central America's besieged women

The ability to earn a decent income and live safely within one's own community is vital not just for one's own wellbeing, but also for economic development and political stability.

LAUREN HENDRICKS

ashington, DC—Across Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, women who seek to escape poverty by launching small businesses often find that success brings more suffering – and not just for them, but also for their children. Beyond having to contend with a culture of machismo, weak protection by the state leaves successful women entrepreneurs vulnerable to armed gangs and militias. As the owner of a small cosmetics company put it, "I feel like it's better that my business doesn't progress, because if it grows, I'll suffer extortion."

Recent research confirms these fears. Women and Girls Empowered (WAGE), a United States-based initiative to reduce legal, economic, and policy barriers to female entrepreneurship in poor countries, recently held 27 focus groups across Honduras and El Salvador. Many of the barriers to women's economic empowerment that were identified—such as limited access to credit, lack of business and financial education, unequal property rights, and lack of connection to social networks and markets—are globally pervasive.

But women in Central America face added threats from gang violence and organized criminal activity. Rates of femicide—the murder of a woman or girl for gender-related reasons have reached epidemic levels. In Honduras, there were 5.8 femicides per 100,000 women in 2016. In El Salvador, the rate is an appalling 10.2 per 100,000. Gangs also force children to join and subject girls to sexual abuse.

For entrepreneurs, the threat of physical harm is compounded by gangs' demands for bribes or "taxes." To avoid attracting the attention of these groups, women forego storefronts or signage, operating quietly from inside their homes and delivering products directly to clients. They travel to faraway cities—often in the dead of night—to sell their wares, which increases business risk and transportation costs. All of this limits their businesses' growth potential.

But simply giving up on one's business is not a good option, either. Small entrepreneurship remains one of the few available paths out of poverty in Central America, especially for women, who face unemployment rates that are 50% higher than those of men, owing partly to cultural norms that impede working outside the home. As one

Salvadoran woman told WAGE, "My husband doesn't like that I work. If I don't obey him, I run the risk that he will abuse me."

When your only option for escaping poverty means placing a target on you and your family's backs, the future looks bleak. Unsurprisingly, many desperate Central American women have fled their homes—often on foot, children in tow-seeking safety and opportunity in the United States. But for every woman who leaves, many more stay behind, either in their hometown or in new towns within their country, where they can only hope that their newfound anonymity will offer some security.

The ability to earn a decent income and live safely within one's own community is vital not just for one's own wellbeing, but also for economic development and political stability. That is why initiatives that seek to promote economic growth in Central America—or anywhere, for that matter—must address head-on the needs of women entrepreneurs.

While there are no simple solutions, promising steps can be taken. At the center of any strategy for improving conditions for women entrepreneurs in Central America should be local microfinance institutions.

Women rely on MFIs for much more than start-up business funding. According to WAGE research, they also seek financial education and help with emergency planning, to facilitate a quick departure if needed—all delivered discretely.

MFIs should pay attention to the needs of women entrepreneurs and tailor their services accordingly. For example, they should provide financial products that enable women to save in secret, hidden from the prying eves of their husbands, their spouses' associates, or gang members. Loan products that offer lower interest rates or advance specific goals, such as savings for health emergencies. including physical would also help.

Global consumers also have a role to play in improving the economic prospects of women in Central America. Some 300 international companies operate in Honduras alone, in sectors ranging from textiles to electronics. Buyers of their products, in the US and elsewhere, should be leveraging their wallets to persuade those companies to drive change in the communities where they

operate.

Whether pressured by their customers or not, international companies operating in Central

America should use their clout to demand that local and national governments root out impunity—enabling corruption and enforce laws that protect women and children. At the same time, they should establish partnerships with MFIs and civil society organizations to develop and carry out corporate social responsibility initiatives that directly support local communities, especially women.

Foreign governments, beginning with the US, should support progress in the region, including through continued aid delivery. Researchers have shown that, amid severe economic shocks, foreign aid can contribute significantly to conflict prevention. Given the powerful effect this would have on migrant flows, the US should be motivated to strengthen its efforts to help reduce poverty and violence in

Central America.

As it stands now, women in the region face an impossible choice between escaping poverty and staying safe; in many cases, they achieve neither. They have the drive to build small businesses, improve their families' wellbeing, fuel local economic growth, and strengthen regional stability. But they need support. We must give it to them.

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AFRICA

Africa's secondary cities

IBRAHIM ASSANE MAYAKI

ohannesburg—In the latest Mercer Quality of Living City Rankings, the highest—ranked African city, Port Louis, Mauritius, comes in at 83rd out of 231. That appears to be in keeping with a broader pattern: in terms of the quality of life in its cities, Africa lags behind most other world regions.

African cities' poor showing is a worrying indictment of urban planning on the continent, particularly given that urbanization there is barreling ahead, regardless of whether its leaders have plans in place to manage the process. According to the OECD, because "Africa is projected to have the fastest urban growth rate in the world," its "cities will be home to an additional 950 million people" by 2050. Given these trends, African policymakers urgently need to make the region's cities more attractive to international investors, business people, and tourists, while also ensuring that urbanization remains inclusive.

Urbanization in Africa is not just about emerging megacities like Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Nairobi, Khartoum, Casablanca, and Greater Cairo, which alone will be home to an estimated 38 million people by 2050.

Secondary cities will play a pivotal role in tackling the significant social, economic, and political challenges that lie ahead. Yet they generally are not on most policymakers' radar. For example, there is a woeful lack of comprehensive data on crime and policing in African secondary cities. And when think tanks and multilateral institutions publish special reports about African urbanization, they tend to focus only on the major cities' accomplishments and challenges, while ignoring governance issues, economic conditions, and infrastructure development in lesser urban areas.

By integrating data on thousands of agglomerations of people—many with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants— Africapolis provides a base of evidence that policymakers can use to assess how urbanization processes are unfolding. For example, data from Africapolis show that when it comes to infrastructure, financial investments, land development, and urban management, few African secondary cities have the autonomy to pursue long-term strategic planning. This suggests that national governments need to delegate more power to municipal policymakers. They also need to take secondary cities into account when devising national and subnational development strategies. By locating more governmental and administrative services in secondary cities, national governments can make these urban areas more attractive and capable of meeting citizens' needs.

African megacities and secondary cities are deeply intertwined. Megacities can offer a wealth of opportunities to citizens, by streamlining the provision of public services and connecting workers to higher—skill jobs. But rapid population growth can result in lower wages, persistent poverty, housing shortages, and other problems. Owing to their size, secondary cities could mitigate some of the negative side effects of breakneck urbanization in megacities and provide more balance to the process. Secondary cities can also boost African national economies. In addition to providing public services and facilities, they can serve as processing centers for agriculture and extractive industries, or they can become export centers—as in the case of Warri in Nigeria, Garoua in Cameroon, and the Huye District in Rwanda. By capitalizing on their secondary cities' geographic advantages, policymakers can raise the national and even global profiles of these areas, and create highly competitive trade and manufacturing clusters.

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ECONOMICS

Has austerity been vindicated?

ROBERT SKIDELSKY

ondon—Harvard University Professor Alberto Alesina has returned to the debate on budget deficits, austerity, and growth. With fellow economists Carlo Favero and Francesco Giavazzi, Alesina has written a new book

Favero and Francesco Giavazzi, Alesina has written a new book entitled Austerity: When It Works and When It Doesn't, which recently received a favorable review from his Harvard colleague Kenneth Rogoff.

New book, old tune. The authors' conclusion, in a nutshell, is that "in certain cases the direct output cost of spending cuts is more than compensated for by increases in other components of aggregate demand." The implication is that austerity—cutting the budget deficit, not expanding it—may well be the right policy in a recession.

The association of fiscal retrenchment and economic growth tells us nothing about the underlying relationship between the two. Alesina's theory rests on

two conceptual pillars. The main one is that if deficits persist, businesses and consumers will expect higher taxes and will therefore invest and consume less. Spending cuts, on the other hand, signal lower taxes in the future, and thus stimulate investment and consumption.

The second, supplementary pillar is the assumption that rising public debt leads investors to expect a default. This expectation forces up interest rates on government bonds, leading to higher overall borrowing costs. Austerity, by stopping the growth of debt, can bring about a "sizeable reduction" in interest rates, and thus enable increased investment.

This supplementary case cannot be regarded as a general rule. If a country has its own central bank and issues its own currency, the government can cause interest rates to be whatever it wants them to be by ordering the central bank to print money. In this case, low interest rates will be the result not



of austerity, but rather of monetary expansion. And this, of course, is what has happened with quantitative easing in the United States, the United Kingdom, and the eurozone. Interest rates have stayed at rock bottom for years as central banks have pumped hun-

dreds of billions of dollars,

pounds, and euros into their econ-

So we are left with Alesina's main pillar: a credible commitment to public spending cuts today will boost output by removing the expectation of higher taxes tomorrow. The same argument explains why, on Alesina's view, it is better

to reduce the deficit by cutting spending than by raising taxes. Spending cuts address the "problem" of "the automatic growth of [welfare] entitlements and other spending programs," whereas tax increases do not.

Alesina writes: "Modern macroeconomics emphasizes that people's decisions about what to do today are influenced by their expectations of what will happen in the future." John Maynard Keynes, too, understood the crucial importance of expectations: he is credited by John Hicks with introducing the "method of expectations" into economics. However, Keynes's expectational map was very different from Alesina's. His investors do not form their expectations by looking at the government's deficit and calculating what effect it will have on their future tax bills. In fact, they scarcely notice the deficit at all.

What they do notice is the size of their markets. For Keynes, entrepreneurs' decisions to create jobs depend on their expected income from increasing employment. An economic downturn reduces their expected sales proceeds, causing them to lay off workers. A cut in government spending implies that they can expect still fewer sales, causing them to lay off even more workers, thus deepening the recession. Conversely, a rise in government spending, or tax cuts, increases expectations of sales and so reverses the downturn.

es the downturn.

In very simple terms, therefore, we have two opposite theories of the appropriate fiscal policy in a slump. Keynes says an announced reduction in public spending signals to businesspeople that their incomes will be reduced because fewer people will be buying the goods and services they produce. But Alesina says that an announced reduction in public spending signals to businesspeople that they can expect lower taxes tomorrow, and therefore will spend more today.

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TODAY'SHOROSCOPE



ARIES (March 21-April 19)



Someone with very opportunistic tendencies has been taking advantage of someone you love-you. The best tactic to stop this is to find a way to completely remove yourself from this person's presence. And you'll be much better off

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)



People who act as though they are better than everyone else often do not practice what they preach. Let your mind wander as this person drones on, and then go back to living your life as you

There will never be enough time in your life for planning and ambition if you are too concerned with communicating clearly with other people. People are ready to follow your lead. Show

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)



CANCER (June 22-July 22)



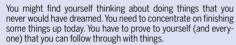
Your problems at work are about to shift. You need to look to other people for aid right now without worrying about how you're going to pay them back. Keep your eyes open for people who can

Some very exciting news will light a fire under you today, and it will get you moving in a new direction. All the information you need is right in front of you-use it to make your decision.

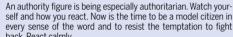
LEO (July 23-August 22)



VIRGO (August 23-September 22)

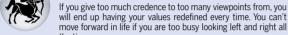








Initiating new social plans will be easy today, as long as you involve the key people who need to be involved. If planning a date, chose a location that emphasizes romance like a daylight hike or



will end up having your values redefined every time. You can't move forward in life if you are too busy looking left and right all

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19)

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21)

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21)



All the transitions you've been going through lately are not helping to create balance in your life. You'll need to figure out the answers yourself. The only way to achieve a good outcome is to **AQUARIUS** (January 20-February 18)

Sometimes other people's problems are just not yours to solve.

When someone tries to toss a problem into your lap today, stand up. Otherwise, you might get dragged into an ugly situation that will leave everyone involved feeling bad.



PISCES (February 19-March 20) You can drive yourself harder than anyone else can, because only you understand the heights you are capable of reaching. Expect the best out of yourself. Getting too comfortable where you are will get you stuck where you are.

If someone from the 1950s suddenly appeared, what would be the most difficult thing to explain about life today? One answer: "I pos-

sess a device in my pocket that is capable of accessing the entirety

of information known to man. I use it to look at pictures of cats and

get into arguments with strangers."

Cats are smarter than dogs. You can't get eight cats to pull a sled through snow

11:00 Headline News

Cinema Fest

12:00 Kantipur Samacha

14:00 Kantipur Samachar

12:30 Score Board

13:05 Samkon

14:30 Rise N Shine

15:00 Headline News

13:00 Headline News

11:05 Ukali Orali

11:30

K	5:00	Shuvarambha/
A		Bhaktisur
	5:30	Radhe Radhe
N	6:00	Jeevan Bigyan
П	6:30	Jyotish Manthan
П	6:40	Sky Shop
P	7:00	Kantipur Samachar
U	8:00	Kantipur News
R	8:30	Rise N Shine
т	9:00	Headline News
v	9:05	Sajha Sawal
	10:00	Kantipur Samachar
ANTIPUR	10:30	Market Watch

15:05 Saiha Sawal 16:00 Kantipur Samachar 16:30 New Entry 05:00 Bhakti Anusthar 12:10 06:30 Kantipur Diary 13:00 District Diary 13:05 Ke Chha Nepal 14:00

07:00 The Headliners 08:00 Development & **Economics Diary** The Goodmorning Show Kantipur Diary Traffic Update National Songs Malai Mann Parchha Sports Diary Music & More

08:05 09:00 09:10 09:15 09:20 10:00 10:05 11:00 Art & Entertainment Diary 11:05 Music & More Kantipur Diary 12:00

Youtube Trending International Diary Kantipur Diary

15:15 Longlatti 16:00 Health & Education Dairy 16:05 Sargam 17:00 District Diary The Opening Page 17:05 Baal Geet 18:00 Sports World

18:30 Kantipur Dairy 19:00 Full On Security & Crime 20:00 Diary

Songs 04:00 Non -Stop Bhajans

> 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 Soaltee Crowne Plaza

> Garden Terrace offers an authentic world cuisine, providing diners with the unique experience of observing their selected dish

es being prepared by chefs. Contact: 427399 at Soaltee Crowne Plaza Kaiser Cafe Restaurant & Bar at The

Garden of Dreams, opening time: 9 am till 9 pm, offers an international cafe menu serv-

ing breakfast, lunch, dinner, specialty tea's coffees and pastries, contact: 4425341

Embers Bar, Pulchowk, in all its sophistication and glory is happy to announce Happy Hours every 6-7pm. It will be hosting a Barbeque night every Friday from

Experience The Last Resort, the perfect place for family fun adventure and relaxation. Special packages for residents. Contact: 54 Children's classic 55 Car safety

ACROSS

Exploit Bath decor

Hocus-

15 Thor's father

16 Hums 17 Made fun of

19 Foreigner 20 Work by Keats 21 Without a

23 Used cars deals 25 Muslim mystic 26 Sorrow 27 Flooded 30 British mom

Really great Gasp of delight

36 Bullring yells 37 Glittering 38 Vanish — thin

39 Poetic adverb 40 Londoner's

truck Start 41 Start 42 Succeeded (2

44 Slicke

features 57 Bygone 58 — May Wong 59 Tiger's pegs 60 Jangle 61 Brit's

14 Radius neighbor exclamation (2 wds.) 62 Whirlpool covering 22 Pita sandwiches

DOWN Uproar
Omit, in speech
Cuzco locale
"— -Pan"
(Clavell novel)
Rug, slangily
Sits at a light

Legal claim Fun-loving 10 Gulf structure

(2 wds.)
11 Muse of history
12 All-purpose 13 Nine-digit ID 18 Tint 22 Trench 24 Overwhelms 25 Shabily 27 Miniature

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Variety

PREVIOUS PUZZI E SOLVED

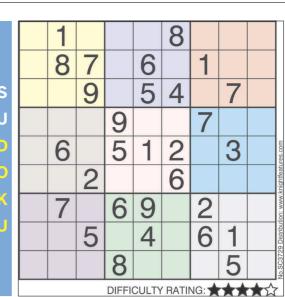
30 A Stooge 31 Novelist -47 Maneuvered slowly 48 Had lots of

Waugh
32 Prefix for
"trillion"
33 Medieval laborers 35 Extremely spicy

Corsair's quest 38 Go slowly 40 Letting use 41 Horse opera 43 Drive crazy

status
49 Not polite
50 Nautical time unit 51 Opera by Verdi 52 Pullets

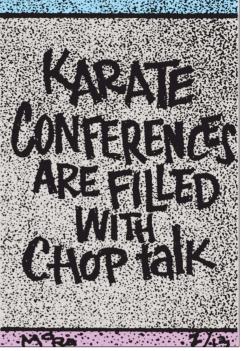
45 Diligent insects 46 Dagwood's boss 50 Villain 52 Pullets 54 In — signo vinces 55 Yes, in Yokohama 56 Summer in Cannes 43 Drive crazy 44 Lunch time 46 Rigg or Ross 52 Go to earth 53 Road-map org. 28 Vast ages 29 Be overfond



VECTEDDAY'S SOLUTION

TESTERDAT S SOLUTION								
1	2	8	7	3	5	9	6	4
7	3	6	2	9	4	8	5	1
4	5	9	1	8	6	2	7	3
3	7	4	6	2	1	5	8	9
2	9	5	8	7	3	1	4	6
6	8	1	4	5	9	7	3	2
5	1	7	3	6	2	4	9	8
8	6	2	9	4	7	3	1	5
9	4	3	5	1	8	6	2	7

GRAFFITI



RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT

WORD GAME

TODAY'S WORD -- OSTRICH (OSTRICH: AH-strich: A flightless bird of North Africa, the largest bird Average mark 17 words Time limit 30 minutes Can you find 23 or more words in OSTRICH? The list will be published tomorrow. YESTERDAY'S WORD -- ULSTER

To purchase the Word Game book, visit **WordGameBooks.com**. Order it now for just \$5 while supplies last!

RULES OF THE GAME: 1. Words must be of four or more letters. 2. Words that acquire four letters by the addition of "s," such as "bats" or "dies," are not allowed. 3. Additional words made by adding a "d" or an "s" may not be used. 4. Proper nouns, slang words, or vulgar or sexually explicit words are not allowed. Contact Word Game creator Kathleen

DILBERT



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

MY COOKIES ARE MADE WITH

OY M DOLBY ATMOS SOUND

Aladdin(3D): 9:00 am, 12:00 pm, 3:00 pm, 6:00 pm

Jatrai jatra: 8:30 am, 11:30 am, 2:30 pm, 5:30 pm, 8:30 pm

NLIC City Centre Kamalpokhari, Kathmandu

Brightburn: 10:30 am, Bir Bikram 2: 12:30 pm

Student of the year 2: 3:30 pm, 7:00 pm

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MOSTLY BECAUSE

a good chunk of

IS NOW NUTS.

IN THE NEWS TODAY, BAD

THINGS HAPPENED.

GARFIELD

WHAT IS I'M NOT EMPLOYEE ENTIRELY FNGAGE-SURE. MENT?

DEPRESSES

ME.

BIG Movies

YOU EXPECTING MEASURE A LOT OF IT? QUESTIONS SO I'M GONNA GO

HOW DO



IT'S A SECRET, YOU DON'T

GRANDMA

FIRST TIME IN NEPAL

DOLBY ATMOS SOUND

446

NOW SHOWING

HONESTLY, I WASN'T



CHILDREN DON'T HAVE TRUE N 2012, A MIGSING WOMAN ON VACATION IN ICELAND WAS UNTIL THEY ARE AROUND FOUND WHEN SHE JOINED THE SEARCH PARTY LOOKING FOR THREE YEARS OLD! HER ! NUMAN COULD SWIM

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Gongabu, Kalhmandu

www.facebook.com/bs/moviesnegal

(3D)

8:30 PM

2:30 PM

5:30 PM

11:00 AM

8:00 PM

2:00 PM

5:00 PM

ALADDIN

BIR BIKRAM

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

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

Hotel Naravani Complex. Pulchowk, Lalitpur

presents Shabnam & Cannabiz Band every

Wednesday and Rashmi & Kitcha Band every

Friday, 7:30 PM onwards @ Absolute bar P Ltd;

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Bar. Radisson Hotel. Contact: 4411818

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ambient, Wednesday tech/ 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

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Kaiser Cafe Restaurant and Bar, Thamel, offers

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venue for anything from a quiet coffee or intimate

Trisara offers food and drinks along

with good music and great times. Sunday-Live

Music by Barbeque Night, Monday, Wednesday-

by Positive vibes, Tuesday, Saturday-By Jyovan

Bhuju, Friday-Live Music by Dexterous

meal. Contact: 442534

Buddha Resturant & Bar, contact: 4700091

OFX Civil Mall 08:45/12:30/15:45/19:00 QFX Kumari: 12:00/15:30/18:45/ QFX Jai Nepal: 12:15/15:15/18:30 QFX LABIM Mall: 12:15/15:30/17:00/18:45 QFX Chhaya Center: 12:30/16:00/18:30

ALADDIN QFX Civil Mall: 08:30/11:30/15:30/18:45 OFX LABIM Mall: 12:45/15:45/19:00 QFX Chhaya Center: 13:00/19:00 OFX Kumari: 15:15

RDICHTRIIDN QFX LABIM Mall: 11:30 QFX Civil Mall: 14:30/19:45

AVENGERS: ENDGAME BIR BIKRAM 2 QFX Kumari: 12:15

QFX Chhaya Center: 15:30

QFX Kumari: 18:30 JOHN WICK--PARABELLUM

OFX Civil Mall: 12:00

QFX Chhaya Center: 14:30

QFX LABIM Mall: 20:00

STUDENT OF THE

YEAR 2 QFX LABIM Mall: 13:45

QFX Civil Mall: 16:45

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR

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MIND BODY

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The Italian restaurant serves authentic

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1230-1445 hrs, Dinner: 1900-2245 hrs,

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BBQ from 7 pm onwards at Shambala

Garden Café at Hotel Shangri La with live

musical performance by Ciney Gurung

Eniov Bubbly Brunch every Saturday from 11

am to 3 pm at Shambala Gardena and Club

Sundhara. Contact: 4412999

Contact: 4412999

reservations required. contact: 4479448

Savour the cardamom and saffron spice, slow-cooked kebabs and kormas at Indian restaurant serving Awadhi cuisine. contact: 427399, at Soaltee Crowne Plaza

17:00 Headline News

17:05 Call Kantipur

18:00 Kantipur News

19:30 Market Watch

21:00 What The Flon

22:30 Kantinur News

23:30 Market Watch

20:05

21:25

01:00

23:00 Kantipur Samachar

Recycled

News Maker Of The

21:00 Kantipur Diary

Dav

22:00 Kaljayi Geet Sangee

00:00 Youtube Trending

02:00 Non-Stop Nepali

Songs

03:00 Non-Stop Hindi

(Repeat)

Gazal (Repeat)

21:30 Indreni

23:00 Romantica

21:30 Fireside

Here I Come

19:00 Kantipur Samachar

20:00 Kantipur Samacha

18:30

garden. Open 6am-10 pm. Mid-Baneshor. Motor Rally 2019' The sixth edition of this annual event takes place on February 1. For further details: 9801166313/9801166330

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

Manny's Eatery and bar introduces a spe-

cial lunch package that is affordable, tasty,

nutritious and quick enough to fit your lunch break, Jawalakhel, Shaligram complex,

The Toran, an ideal location for all day loung-

ing and informal dining offers multi-cuisines.

Contact: Dwarika's Hotel, 4479488

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Dining. Boasting facilities including Private

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person. Contact: 4491234 We serve nothing but the finest Arabica coffees at great value prices at Barista Lavazza Coffee Restaurant, Lazimpat, Contact: 4005123/4005124

Bourbon Room, Lal Durbar Marg is open for

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Hotel, wide selection of mixed fresh grills and

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Radisson Hotel, Kathmandu with Hari

Maharian feat Monsif Mzibiri, 7 pm onwards.

Wednesdays & Fridays. Contact: 4411818

plus taxes per person, Contact; 4411818

with momos. Call: 4441703

Weekends brunch @ Hyatt Regency-treat

yourself with a lavish buffet lunch, splash by

the swimming pool or laze around outdoor

Jacuzzi, all for just Rs 2300 plus taxes per

Rosemary Kitchen and Coffee shop. Thamel, opening hours: 7:00 am to 10:00 pm offers an International cuisine in reasonable prices. Contact 01-4267554

> Out-of-Africa Lunch amid rural splendor: Sat & Sun from 1130 to 1630 hours at The Watering Hole, Indrawati River Valley, For prior reservation contact: indrawatire sort@gmail.com

Sandwich and Crepes: Taste the sandwich-

es and crepes at The Lounge from 11 am to 6

pm everyday. For further details call Hyatt

Regency at 4491234.

BSZ

MOVIES

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Contact: 5521408 The most delightfully awesome chicken Starry Night BBQ—every Friday Evening from momos & yummy rich chocolate cake on this 7:00 pm at Shambala Garden Café, Hotel, part of the planet @ Just Baked Bakery & Cafe. Battisputali, offering much more spe-

MUSIC

Shangri~La only @ Rs 1799 net per person and live performance by Ciney Gurung. Contact: 4412999

Experience the Gyakok @ Shambala

OTHERS from busy crowed street, offers great

music, fast wi-fi and wide menu with rea-

sonable prices. Operation hours: 7 am to 10

nm_contact: 4433630



ayurvedic treatments/ massages, sirodhara & counseling for stress, detox & rehabilitation. Dhapasi, Kathmandu: 01-4358761, Lakeside Pokhara 061-463205 Learn cardio, gym. aerobics, zumba, spa, boxing, kick-boxing, b-boying, bollywood dance at **Oyster Spa and Fitness Club,** Sinamangal. Time: Sunday to Friday from 5

01-4423888. 01-6200086

am to 8 pm. Contact: 4110554 Escape, relax and get in shape @ Hyatt **Regency**. Embark on a personal well-being at Club Oasis. Remember us for Tennis, sauna, Jacuzzi, swimming, fitness centre and Beauty

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Departmental teams secure convincing wins

Army club ease to 113-run win over Province 1 as Police beat Karnali Province by 94 runs

SPORTS BUREAU

Tribhuvan Army Club and Nepal Police Club ease to convincing wins in the PM Cup National One-Day cricket tournament on Sunday.

The Army club beat Province 1 by 113 runs at the Tribhuvan University Stadium while NPC saw off Karnali Province by 94 runs at the Mulpani cricket ground.

The Army outfits posted 204 all out in 45.3 overs thanks to a battling half century from Rajesh Pulami Magar and a fluent 41 from Hari Bahadur Chauhan. Province 1 were bowled out for 91 in 26.5 overs in reply.

Man-of-the-match Magar top scored for Army with a composed 56 off 93 deliveries while Chauhan hit four boundaries and a six in his 51-ball 41. Skipper Binod Bhandari, who opened the bat with Raju Rijal (6), contributed 30 with four fours and a six. Karan KC (26) and Kushal Malla (16) also chipped in valuable runs to the total. Dipesh Kandel took three while Mukund Yadav and Firdosh Ansari claimed two wickets

Province 1 found it tough to handle the experienced Army bowling lineup and were dismissed even before reaching the three figure mark. Tailender Rajan Magar top scored for Province 1 with 23-ball 26 as both their established names Siddhant Lohani (4) and skipper Pushpa Thapa (4) failed with the bat. Sushan Bhari claimed three and Karan KC bagged two wickets for the

In a match played on mats at the Mulpani ground, middle order batsmen Dilip Nath and Kushal Bhurtel bailed the Police club from a deep trouble to post a respectable 185 runs in 41 overs. As it turned out the total was too big for Karnali to overcame as the team was restricted

Police were in dire straits losing top five batsman to be 22-5 by the ninth over. But Nath and Bhurtel turned the match upside down putting on a massive 139 runs for the sixth wicket. Manof-the-match Nath scored 72, his 84-ball knock included five hits to the fence and a six. Bhurtel slammed 77-ball 62 with six boundaries and a six. They were the only Police batsmen to score runs in double figures

Sudan Pokharel was the chief destroyer taking out top five Police batsmen but his five-wicket haul went all in vain. Diwan Pun also took two

Karnali batsmen failed to back the excellent bowling effort from their team to be out for 91 runs with opener Sushant Thapa scoring 29 off 30 balls. Aarif Sheikh took four and Lalit Narayan Rajbanshi three wickets for

Nepal Armed Police Force Club will take on Sudurpaschim Province at the TU Stadium while Province 3 will be up against Province 5 at the Mulpani ground on Monday



Dilip Nath (left) of Nepal Police Club celebrates after scoring a half century against Karnali Province during their PM Cup National cricket tournament match at the Mulpani cricket ground on Sunday.

NSJF Sports Award on July 2

Honours sports individuals and team for their outstanding performance

SPORTS BUREAU

Nepal Sports Journalists Forum on Sunday finalised July 2 date for the annual Pulsar Sports Award.

The 16th edition of the award ceremony will be held at the Nepal Academy Hall in Kamaladi. The NSJF will award individuals and team in 10 different categories including male, female, youth and coach of the year. Other categories include para-athlete, people's choice, lifetime achievement and special award. The NSJF will also fete a team for their outstanding performance throughout

NSJF has also added international sports journalist award this year which will be presented to one best sports journalist from Asia. While the award for the journalist will be presented as per the recommendation by the AIPS-Asia, federation of Asian sports journalists, a selection committee headed by NSJF secretary Gobinda Regmi will pick up nominees for other

achievement award will be presented to a sportsperson for his/her longterm contribution towards sports and special award will presented to special achievement and contribution in sports. NSJF will pick up five nominees each in male, female, coach, youth, peoples' choice and special award categories while the winners of lifetime, para-athlete, team of the year and international journalists will be directly revealed during the award function. Peoples Choice award will be picked up on the basis of votes from sports journalists, SMS voting and Facebook likes.

The winners of male, female, coach and peoples'



Abhimanyu Golcha

choice award will be rewarded with Pulsar motorbikes while the winner of youth, special, para-athlete and lifetime achievement awards will receive Rs 50,000 each Meanwhile, NSJF inked the

sponsorship Hansaraj Hulaschand and Company Pvt Ltd for the award on Sunday. As per the Hulaschand will provide Rs 2.8 million, 1.1 million of which will be in cash apart from four Pulsar motorbikes and gift hampers. NSJF President Durga Nath Subedi and Hansaraj Hulaschand Executive Abhimanyu Golcha signed the deal. It is the ninth year that the company has been

associated with the award. "It has nearly been 10 years that we have contributing to this award and there is an increment of around 20 percent this year," said Golcha. "It is crucial to recognise achievements and contributions of athletes as sports is a strong tool that unites NSJF President Subedi said that the award has got national award recognition by the President and they face a tough challenge to

make it bigger and better.

Budhanilkantha pip

Budhanilkantha Municipality Basketball

Club beat Nepal Police Club 78-76 in a

thrilling match of the Nepal Basketball

given the see-saw nature of the contest

opened the first quarter with a three-

point lead, scoring 19 against 16 of their

hosts. Budhanilkantha came up stronger

in the second period scoring a massive 22

points while limiting their opponents to

Budhanilkantha started the third peri-

od with eight points lead (38-30) but were trailing Police by three points going in the

fourth and final quarter. The thrid quar-

ter finished at 53-56 as Budhanilkantha

netted 15 and Police poured in 26. But

Budhanilkanta scored a decisive 25 while letting in 20 to their opponents, winning

the match with slimmest of the margins.

the standings with 20 points but have just

one game left. Unbeaten Times

International Club stay atop with 22

points with three matches to play. The

Army club are in third with 19 points

from 10 games but crucially have four

more matches to play. With two games

remaining, Police are in fourth with 18

points. Top four teams qualify for playoffs.

Budhanilkantha climbed to second in

The match could have gone either way

Police in a thriller

SPORTS BUREAU

Lewandowski fires Bayern to Cup win

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE BERLIN, MAY 26

Cup final on Saturday.

Robert Lewandowski dedicated victory to departing teammates Arjen Robben and Franck Ribery after Bayern tic double with a 3-0 win over RB Leipzig in the German

Goals from Lewandowski and Kingsley Coman sealed victory for Bayern in an enthralling game at the Olympic Stadium in Berlin. Both Robben and Ribery came off the bench to make their final appearance in a Bayern and Lewandowski hailed the iconic duo after helping Bayern to victory with a goal either side of half time. "These titles are for Franck and Arjen, they have done so much for the club and we have to thank them," the Polish striker told public broadcaster ARD.

The win sees Bayern lift the golden German Cup trophy

for the 19th time in their history, just a week after securing a seventh successive Bundesliga title last Saturday. "It was a difficult season at times, but I think we can now say that in the end, it was a Lewandowski.

The campaign has been particularly tough for Bayern coach Niko Kovac, who has faced constant criticism both from inside and outside the club in his first year in charge. Yet the fans chanted Kovac's name before and after the final whistle as Bayern ended their season on a high. "It will take a few days to sink in that it is now actually over, but it was good to go out with the double," Robben told ARD.

Both sides probed rather frantically for an opener in the first half, and Manuel Neuer denied Yussuf Poulsen with a reflex save on ten minutes. It was Bayern who broke the deadlock, though, through Lewandowski.



Bayern Munich's Robert Lewandowski celebrates with the trophy after winning the German Cup in Berlin on Saturday.

Potapova 'speechless' after stunning Kerber

Potapova said she was left "speechless" after knocking out her "idol' Angelique Kerber in the first round of the French Open on Sunday.

The 18-year-old made short work of the fifth seed and reigning ding to complete a career Grand Slam at Roland Garros, winning 6-4, 6-2. Playing in the main draw of the tournament for the first time in her young career, Potapova claimed her first-ever victory over a top-10 player to set up a second-round tie against either fellow teenager Marketa Vondrousova or China's Wang Yafan.

"I was just speechless," she said. "I didn't know what to say and what to do, but, yes, I was so happy at that moment, and I'm still so happy. I live for this win, for these emotions, for these moments. I'm going to do everything to live it through again and again and again."

child. "I was really looking forward



Russia's Anastasia Potapova returns to Angelique Kerber of Germany during their French Open match in Paris on Sunday.

for this match, because Kerber, I like her very much. She's actually one of my idols, and when I was young I was looking for her game, how she's playing," said Potapova, the 2016 junior Wimbledon champion. "When you step in on the court and you know you play your, I would say idol, you've just got to show

your best. That helped me. So, yeah,

Potapova is one of several teenag-

American Amanda Anisimova reached the Australian Open last 16 and Canada's Bianca Andreescu, 18,

Potapova admitted that the attention that comes with winning such big match on Court Philippe Chatrier was something new.

French Open results Men Singles

■ S Tsitsipas bt M Marterer 6-2, 6-2, 7-6 (7/4)

■ M Cilic bt T Fabbiano 6-3, 7-5, 6-1

■ M Berrettini bt P Andujar 6-7 (3/7) 6-4, 6-4, 6-2

■ C Ruud bt E Gulbis 6-2, 7-6 (7/2), 6-0

■ 0 Otte bt M Jaziri 6-3, 6-1, 4-6, 6-0

Women's Singles

■ G Muguruza bt T Townsend 5-7, 6-2, 6-2

■ J Larsson bt M Rybarikova 6-3, 6-4

■ A Potapova bt A Kerber 6-4, 6-2

■ P Martic bt O Jabeur 6-1, 6-2

Quote of the day

I feel like I'm playing good tennis, but is it enough against the absolute top guys when it really comes to the crunch? I'm not sure if it's in my racquet. – Roger Federei



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

teenager Anastasia

Potapova hammered 28 winners past the flailing Kerber, who had been struggling with a right ankle injury in the build-up to the event. The Russian said she had looked up to Kerber, 13 years her senior, as a

was fighting for every point.

ers making their presence felt on the WTA Tour this year. Czech Vondrousova claimed a surprise win over reigning French Open champion Simona Halep last week Rome, while 17-year-old was a shock title winner at Indian Wells.

Valverde vows to carry on as Barca fall short again

Valencia stun deflated Barcelona to clinch Copa del Rey title

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SEVILLE, MAY 26

Barcelona wanted a trophy to ease their Champions League heartache but instead fell to another shock defeat as Valencia pulled off a thrilling 2-1 victory on Saturday to win the Copa del Rey. Chasing a record fifth consecu-

tive triumph, Barca were undone by a relentless and gutsy Valencia side, who hung on after Lionel Messi pulled a goal back to set up a dramatic finish in Seville. By then, Valencia were already two up, Kevin Gameiro and Rodrigo scoring twice in 13 frantic first-half minutes, after the latter spurned a golden early chance that could have spared them a nerve-shredding last 17 minutes. Messi drove the comeback effort

and Goncalo Guedes twice should

have wrapped it up for Valencia,

missing a one-on-one and then an

open goal before the final whistle sparked pandemonium. Valencia's coach Marcelino, who might have been sacked when his team were four points off relegation in January, raced around the pitch in a frenzy. Barcelona's players sank to their knees. "We always had faith," said Marcelino. "Beating Barcelona to win the cup is very special. We deserved to win." Messi admitted on Friday his

team had still not recovered from the "hard blow" suffered against Liverpool and certainly they seemed too easily disheartened here, finding their fight only once it was too late. Messi also threw his support behind Barcelona's coach Ernesto Valverde but it remains to be seen whether the backing of the board remains after two dreadful defeats have now spoiled such a

brilliant La Liga success. "I'm fine," Valverde said. "When them languishing in 15th. "We have

to fight to overcome the next challenge. I know losing for this club is hard." "I do not think it's the coach's fault," said president Josep Maria Bartomeu. "I think he has done a great job," added Gerard Pique. "But it does not depend on us." They came here as favourites, but

a coach loses you want to go again,

only just, their 1,457 consecutive days as Copa del Rey champions under threat, from their own sense of deflation, key players out injured and Valencia's recent surge. If Barca's season all but ended three weeks ago, Valencia's arguably found life a few days later, as they moved into the top four for the first time and then held on to qualify for the Champions League.

Winning their first trophy since 2008, in the club's centenary year, completes a remarkable comeback campaign that, after 15 games, had Parejo. Gameiro added: "In the difficult moments we stayed close. I don't have the words to describe it." Some saw a metaphor in Barcelona's pre-match tifo, spelling

made history," said captain Dani

out 'All Together' splitting down the middle, while there were key absentees from their starting lineup too, Marc-Andre ter Stegen, Luis Suarez and Ousmane Dembele all injured. Valencia should have been ahead within five minutes, Clement Lenglet's error sending Rodrigo

scooped off the line by the recover ing Gerard Pique. Barca, with Sergio Busquets in

clear but his finish was brilliantly

the centre of a back three, settled but lacked zip and in the 23rd minute they were behind. Jose Gaya scuttled in behind Nelson Semedo and his pull-back wrong-footed everyone except Gameiro, who

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CROSS CURRENCY

111 55 124 98 Euro 10.21 Japanese Yer Chinese Yuar Qatari Riyal Australian Dollar 77.24 26.63 Malaysian Ringit Saudi Arab Rival

FOREX

Buddha Air to launch budget flights to Kolkata on Monday

Page IV Buddha Air is launching budget flights from Kathmandu to Kolkata on Monday as part of its preparations to enter the long-haul international market by August 2020.

Following Google's ban, Huawei sales see sharp drop, local retailers say

Huawei could see its shipments decline by as much as a quarter this year and the firm faces the possibility that its smartphones will disappear from international markets

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

While the existing Huawei devices will continue to get access to Google's Google Play, Maps and Gmail, any new smartphone launched by Huawei won't have access to any Google services

Although Huawei will still have access to the Android operating system—available through open source licensing—it won't have any technical support and collaboration for Android and services from Google. Following the suspension of services, Huawei received a temporary reprieve of 90 days from the trade ban, allowing it to issue updates to

The ripple effect from Huawei's troubles abroad is now being felt in Nepal, where both its sales and growth had seen a boom in recent years. Many retailers who spoke to the Post said they would no longer recommend Huawei to customers looking for a new

"We cannot recommend Huawei smartphones amid such uncertainty because the customers will later blame us if any problem occurs," said Rabina Shrestha, a smartphone shop owner in New

Smartphones retailers say they have been recommending other devices to their customers. According to Shrestha, there are two types of Huawei customers-those who purchase the P series phone, which is priced above Rs40,000, and those opting for budget sets that sell for up to Rs20,000.

"Customers who were conbuving Huawei smartphones are now looking at other brands," said RN Tamrakar Mobile Lab



A customer browses for items in a Huawei store in Shanghai.

Research Smart Mobile Care at New Road. "Many of them seem to be aware that there will be no Google updates available for Huawei smart-

According to Ajay Lama, branch manager of KL Mobile Hub at Chabahil, until two weeks ago, two of the most popular smartphone brands customers Huawei and Samsung. "But after the news about Huawei and Google became public, the number of customers asking for Huawei smartphones has dropped sharply," he said. "We used to sell around nine Huawei smartphones daily. Now, sales have shrunk signif-

Huawei smartphones hold a 15 percent share of the domestic smartphone market, said Call Mobility, the authorised distributor of Huawei smartphones in Nepal. The company said that it would continue to provide support for the sets that had already been sold.

The Huawei P30 has been performing well in the market, but the company is now taking its smartphones off the shelves after last week's devel-

In an interview with the representatives at Huawei's office in Kathmandu said the impact of Google's decision to discontinue its services will obviously be felt in Nepal, particularly on the sales of the P series and future devices. The two officials declined to comment further about the impact over its

phone, saying they were asked not to speak to the media. Huawei reportedly has a

Plan B in case its relationship with the United States and the Silicon Valley gets worse. In an interview with CNBC last week, the head of the Chinese telecom giant said the company had developed its own operating system—called Hongmeng-for its smartphones and computers and it could be ready for use by this fall. Analysts told Reuters last week that the uncertainty over the duration of the trade blacklist could see Huawei's international shipments decline by as much as a quarter this year, and the company faces the possibility that its smartphones will disappear from international markets.

Nepal tourism generated Rs240 billion and supported 1 million jobs last year

SANGAM PRASAIN

Nepal's tourism sector generated Rs240.7 billion in revenue and supported more than 1.05 million jobs directly and indithe annual World Travel and Tourism Council research report. The London-based organisation said that travel and tourism's total contribution to the country's gross domestic product stood at 7.9 percent last year, up 3.6

This primarily reflects the economic activity generated by industries such as hotels, travel agencies, airlines and other passenger transportation services, excluding commuter services. It also includes, for example, the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported by tourists.

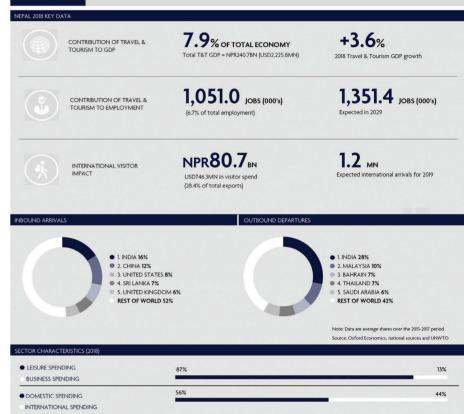
The Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2019 report released last month said the industry was expected to create more than 1.35 million jobs directly and indirectly by 2029. The total contribution of the travel and tourism industry to the gross domestic product was Rs195 billion in 2017. The report said that domestic tourists spent 56 percent of the total Rs240.7 billion revenue generated by the tourism industry last year.

Nepalis started visiting their own country after the earthquake of 2015, and there is a massive domestic tourist movement, said Deepak Raj Joshi, chief executive officer of the Nepal Tourism Board.

Apart from traditional leisure destinations like Pokhara and Chitwan, the famous Annapurna Circuit trekking route has been a big draw for domestic adventurers lately. The scenic walking trail across the Annapurna mountain range in central Nepal been pulling domestic thrill seekers in droves,

NEPAL

2019 ANNUAL RESEARCH: KEY HIGHLIGHTS



The number of sightseers travelling from Beni to Jomsom by motorcycle has also risen sharply after the construction of the road. Hordes of Nepalis travelled to Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautam Buddha, last year. More than 1.55 million tourists visited Lumbini in 2017, and among them there were 1.25 million domestic visitors.

Rara Lake, the country's biggest and deepest freshwater lake in Mugu, has also been attracting domestic visitors for the past few years. Until a few years ago, Rara used to receive only a few visitors, but it has been gradually gaining popularity among Nepalis lately. There is no actual statistic of domestic tourist movement but, according to Joshi, an estimated 5 million Nepali sightseers roamed the country last year. The figure is based on ticket sales at national parks, world heritage sites and restricted areas in the mountain regions, and tour packages, Joshi said

Foreign arrivals crossed the one-million mark for the first time in 2018 when the country hosted 1.17 million visitors from abroad. According to the Nepal Tourism Board, Nepal tourism reached the magic figure due to a jump in arrivals from India, China, the US, Sri Lanka and the UK.

The number of tourists vis iting Nepal recorded a 24.77 percent growth over last year Among the total arrivals. 969,287 individuals came by air. Arrivals from Nepal's southern neighbour grew 25.1 percent to 200,438 individuals. Indian tourists who travel to Nepal overland are not included in the tourism statistics.

>> CONTINUED ON MONEY II

India's beleaguered Jet Airways founder Goyal held at airport



Jet Airways aircraft are seen at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai, India.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MUMBAI, MAY 26

Indian Immigration authorities on Saturday stopped former Jet Airways chief Naresh Goyal and his wife from travelling to London, an official said, a month after the debt-laden company grounded

Goyal was taken into custody at Mumbai's international airport along with his wife Anita after authorities recalled the Dubai bound Emirates flight as it headed to the runway for take-off, a spokesperson for the immigration department said in a statement to AFP.

Officials gave no explanation for the couple's travel ban but some media reports said they were allowed to leave the airport later.

Goyal is not under investigation but a number of high-profile businessmen have fled India over their alleged involvement in financial crimes, causing a massive

Emirates said they were

relevant authorities. The 69-year-old stepped

"co-operating fully with the

down from the company's chairmanship and board in March following a debt restructuring pact with lenders as it reeled under a loan of \$1.2 billion.

Anita also stepped down from the board.

Once India's top airline, Jet halted its operations after a consortium of lenders declined to pay emergency cash as they failed to find a buyer for a 75 percent stake in the carrier in April.

The consortium led by State Bank of India, India's biggest state-owned bank, took control of Jet in March, pledging to give \$218 million in "immediate funding support" as part of a rescue plan.

But the lenders refused dole-out cash to the beleaguered airline that has failed to pay employees' salaries since January, forcing hundreds on to the streets as some 20,000 staff face losing

Bad investments, competi-

tion from several low-cost carriers, high oil prices and a weak rupee have led to Jet's current financial predicament. Mismanagement has also plagued the airline.

Analysts trace the start of Jet's financial problems to its 2006 purchase of Air Sahara for \$500 million in cash. Goyal, a travel-agent-turned

entrepreneur, launched Jet in 1992 after the Indian government passed a series of reforms designed to make the economy more market-driven. The Mumbai-based carrier

quickly gained a reputation for introducing new initiatives—Jet was the first Indian airline to offer a frequent flyer programme and in-flight entertainment.

But it began to take a battering from new, well-run budget airlines including IndiGo, GoAir and SpiceJet, which were founded between 2005

Another low-cost carrier, Kingfisher Airlines closed in 2012 after it failed to repay loans worth millions of dollars to state-owned banks



Shell finds light oil reserves at mountain in **Albania**

TIRANA: Shell Upstream Albania B.V. has confirmed "a significant light oil discovery' at a mountain south of the capital, Tirana. A statement Friday quoted Marc Gerrits, Shell's executive vice president in exploration, as saying that "initial tests have confirmed the potential of this discovery." The discovery at the Shpirag mountain, 120 kilometres from Tirana, has "a flow potential of several thousand barrels of oil per day ... in a fractured carbonate reservoir," an equivalent geological setting to the large Val D'Agri and Tempa Rossa fields in Italy, in which Shell holds a substantial position. Albania, on the Adriatic Sea, has other oil wells with estimated reserves of hundreds of millions of barrels. (AP)

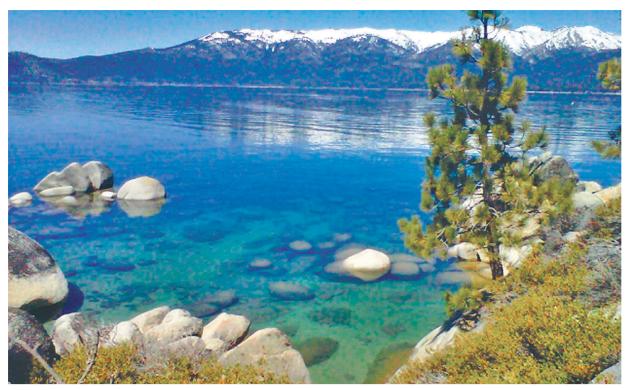
Musk's SpaceX raised over \$1 billion in six months

FLORIDA: Billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk's SpaceX has raised more than \$1 billion in financing in the last six months as it aims to roll out an ambitious high-speed internet service by using a constellation of satellites to beam signals from space. The company raised here \$486.2 million in an equity offering, starting December, and another \$535.7 million in an offering that began in April, its regulatory filings on Friday showed. The rocket company on Thursday launched the first batch of 60 small satellites into low-Earth orbit for Musk's new Starlink internet service. Musk sees the Starlink venture as an important new revenue stream for his company, whose launch service income he expects to top out at around \$3 billion a year. (REUTERS)

Mexico confirms economy shrank in Q1

MEXICO CITY: Mexico's economy contracted by 0.2 percent in the first quarter of the vear, revised government data confirmed Friday, a rough start for new President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. The contraction raises the spectre of recession just months into the anti-establishment leftist's six-year term, threatening his promise to "transform" the country and deliver average annual GDP growth of four percent. The revised number for January to March was the same as the preliminary figure released in April, which took economic analysts by surprise and triggered talk of a possible recession—two or more consecutive quarters of contraction—in Latin America's second-largest economy. (AFP)

Lake Tahoe's famed water gets clearer after all-time low



The clarity of Lake Tahoe's cobalt blue water improved last year from its worst level in a half-century as weather and runoff returned to more normal conditions. Scientists say a plate-sized disc used to measure clarity was visible at an average depth of 70.9 feet in 2018, which is an improvement of 10.5 feet from 2017

ASSOCIATED PRESS

RENO, MAY 26

The clarity of Lake Tahoe's cobalt blue water improved last year from its worst level in a half-century after weather and runoff returned to more normal conditions at the alpine lake straddling the California-Nevada line.

A dinner plate-sized disc used to measure clarity was visible at an average depth of 70.9 feet (21.6 metres) in 2018, scientists at the University of California, Davis, Tahoe Environmental Research Centre said Thursday.

That's an improvement of 10.5 feet (3.2 metres) from 2017 when a winter with unusually heavy snow followed years of drought, sending sediment into the scenic lake known for its pine tree-lined beaches and ski resorts. The research US typically releases its annuclarity findings in the spring after analyzing the data it gathers each month

in the previous year.

Scientists hope efforts to combat threats to clarity posed by development and climate change will eventually return Lake Tahoe to its historical clear depth of 100 feet (30.5 metres).

Dozens of public and private partners have been working to reduce stormwater pollution from roads and urban areas and restore streams and floodplains to reduce the amount of fine particles and nutrients that can cloud the lake, research centre director Geoffrey Schladow said.

Clarity can swing widely day to day and year to year due to weather conditions and the flow from streams that can accelerate or slow algae growth and erosion that sends sediment particles into the water, he said.

"In 2018, Lake Tahoe's clarity regained the expected seasonal patterns that were disrupted by the extreme conditions of the previous

Nuclear-powered ice breaking ship

year," Schladow said.

Scientists took 26 individual depth readings in 2018, including one in March that exceeded 100 feet (30.5 metres) of clarity. The worst readings typically are in the summer, and the best are in fall and winter.

A reading of 59.7 feet (18 metres) in 2017 was the worst in the 51 years Tahoe's clarity has officially been recorded. The second worst was 64.1 feet (20 metres) in 1997. "We are thrilled to see Lake

Tahoe's clarity improving from the all-time low of just 60 feet in 2017," said Darcie Goodman Collins, CEO of the League to Save Lake Tahoe. "These results encourage us to continue restoring critical habitat and improving our urban areas to keep pollution from entering our lake."

The new clarity measurement is in line with the fiveyear average of 70.3 feet (21.4 metres) - an improvement of nearly a foot (30 centimetres) from the previous five-year

Clarity was best when it first was recorded in 1968, with an average depth of 102.4 feet (31.2 metres). The disc used to measure it typically was visible at depths of 85 feet (30 metres) or deeper through the 1970s and hovered near the worst levels during a severe drought in the late 1990s.

Since then, efforts have been underway to restore natural wetlands and meadows displaced by past development. Those areas play an important role in filtering water before it enters the lake, Schladow said.

"Seasonal weather extremes will most likely drive greater swings in clarity from year to year in the future, so it's imperative we continue to invest in the lake's restoration to combat new and emerging threats," said Joanne Marchetta, executive director the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Court approves arrest warrants in Samsung accounting scandal

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE SEOUL, MAY 26

A South Korean court on Saturday approved arrest warrants for two vice presidents of Samsung Electronics over an accounting scandal, but

rejected one for the head of

the conglomerate's pharma-

ceutical arm, Yonhap news

agency reported. The Central District Court in Seoul said "there is room for dispute" over Samsung BioLogics CEO Kim Tae-han's supposed role in destroying

evidence in 2015, the South

Korean news agency said. Samsung BioLogics, a contract drugmaker, is the third-biggest firm of its kind in the world by market share, and one of the South's 10 most valuable companies.

In November last year, Seoul's Financial Services Commission (FSC) said the Incheon-based firm "intentionally" violated accounting rules in 2015, a year ahead of its IPO, by inflating the value of a subsidiary.

After making losses for years, Samsung BioLogics had changed the valuation method of its 85 percent stake in another group affiliate, Samsung Bioepis, raising it by 4.5 trillion won (currently \$3.8 billion) and resulting in a net profit of 1.9 trillion won.

Related to the same scandal, the Central District Court endorsed warrants for the two vice-presidents of Samsung Electronics over allegations of destroying and manipulating evidence, according to

The electronics subsidiary

SUMSING **SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS**

is the flagship of Samsung Group, the biggest of the family-controlled conglomerates that dominate business in the world's 11th-largest economy, and it is crucial to South Korea's economic health.

Yonhap reported that the investigation has intensified after prosecutors discovered a computer server and tens of notebooks concealed under the floor of a Samsung BioLogics plant in Incheon, west of Seoul, during a raid earlier this month.

The FSC in November fined Samsung BioLogics eight billion won (currently \$6.8 million) and suspended trading in its shares "for a while" to give stock market authorities time to decide whether it should be delisted.

It also asked prosecutors to investigate the firm for accounting fraud and advised Samsung BioLogics to dismiss Kim Tae-han.

Samsung BioLogics has said the firm was "confident" that it did not violate accounting rules, but apologised for "causing confusion" among investors and customers.

Samsung views pharmaceutical and healthcare businesses as a future engine for growth beyond its flagship businesses of mobile handsets and microchip production.

The electronics unit last month reported a slump in first-quarter net profits in the face of a weakening chip market and rising competition. Samsung's reputation

had taken a hit after the brib-

ery conviction of Lee Jae-

yong-the son and heir of the group's ailing current chairman Lee Kun-hee. The junior Lee was a prominent figure in the scandal

that ousted former South Korean president Park Geunhye and was sentenced to five years in jail in August 2017. He was freed in February

last year after several of his convictions were quashed

Renault in team-up talks with Fiat Chrysler: Reports



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE PARIS, MAY 26

French carmaker Renault is in talks with Fiat Chrysler Automobiles with the long-term prize a world-leading alliance including Japan's Nissan and Mitsubishi, reports say. The Financial Times posted Saturday

night that the discussions were at an "advanced" stage and could lead to "extensive The Wall Street Journal said the talks were "wide-ranging" and could include Renault and

businesses' However, The New York Times said the discussions were in early stages, the specifics

Fiat Chrysler "joining large portions of their

unclear and "could still collapse" Contacted by AFP, neither Renault nor Fiat

would comment. The Financial Times, quoting multiple people informed on the talks, said: "The agreement may ultimately lead the carmaker (Fiat-Chrysler) to join the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi the world's biggest, a title Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi currently vies for with Germany's Volkswagen. Renault holds 43 percent of Nissan which in turn owns 15 percent of its French partner

over. Such an automaker alliance would become

Renault. The imbalance causes frictions in a relationship that has been tested by the arrest of former Renault and Nissan chief Carlos Ghosn in Tokyo. He was bailed for a second time on April 25 and is now preparing for trial on four charges

of financial misconduct ranging from concealing part of his salary, to using Nissan funds for personal expenses. The reports did not spell out the level of any involvement by Nissan in the current

discussions, although one FT source said

it was absent. Early this year rumours circulated that Renault was interested in Fiat-Chrysler after its hopes for a merger with Nissan or even French competitor PSA faded.

Anger mounts at Vale in Brazil town at risk for new dam burst

REUTERS

BARAO DE COCAIS (BRAZIL), MAY 26

It was bad enough for Paulo de Morais when he was expelled in early February from the house where he lived for 22 years, in the shadow of a mining dam at risk of collapse.

De Morais was evacuated with about 450 of his neighbors under orders from Brazil's mining agency, which feared a repeat of the catastrophe at Brumadinho 65 kilometres (40

A dam collapse there in late January unleashed a wave of toxic mud that buried alive more than 240 Vale SA employ-

ees and neighbors "From one day to the next everything changed," said Morais, who lived with his wife and two children in a red house he built himself just behind a 300-year-old church in the now-abandoned Brazilian community of Socorro.

"Suddenly within five minutes we were ripped out by Vale. Ripped out, expelled from our homes," he said, leaning against a shack on a coffee farm where he moved after the evacuation. Morais now fears he will lose

that home too. A likely landslide in a pit at Vale's Gongo Soco mine in the coming days has raised the risk

of destabilizing the adjacent dam, which could unleash a torrent of toxic mud if it collapses, devastating the colonial town of Barao de Cocais.

The town, which includes the abandoned district of Socorro, sits along the so-called Royal Road, once used to transport gold to the coast from mines in

the state of Minas Gerais, now best known for its iron ore production. The main town is 15 km (9.3 miles) from Socorro but a study by Vale this week said it and two other villages would be in the path of the mud flow if the dam breaks, forcing the evacuation of some 10,000 peo-

People attend the float out ceremony of the nuclear-powered icebreaker 'Ural' at the Baltic shipyard in Saint Petersburg on Sunday. 'Ural', the

second serial universal nuclear-powered icebreaker of the project 22220, is 173.3 metres long, 34 metres wide, 52 metres heigh, and 33.54

ple, according to press reports. Residents are on edge, with the local economy paralyzed as few are willing to make any bets on the future.

"People don't want to hire anyone without knowing what's going to happen from one day to the next," said Eric Pastor, a local business representative. "They don't know if they'll have their homes tomorrow, so their

dreams are on hold." The Minas Gerais environment secretary estimated this week that the dam had a 10-15% chance of collapsing.

Vale says it is committed to residents' safety and is monitoring the Sul Superior dam and the nearby mining pit.

The miner has said it is unclear if a landslide in the mining pit would trigger a collapse, but it said last Saturday it was building a concrete structure 6 km (4 miles) downstream to contain fallout from a potential dam break.

Vale is also building a canal to redirect some of the potential mud flow, which Morais fears will cleave through his 18-hectare (44.5 acres)farm, sitting between Socorro and the main town, where horses, cattle and sheep graze.

"If Vale comes here and tells me that I also need to leave this land, I don't know if I can bear it," he said



A view of the dam at Brazilian miner Vale's Gongo Soco mine in Barao de Cocais, Minas Gerais state, Brazil.



NEWS DIGES

Brazil's aviation authority suspends Avianca **Brasil flights**

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil's aviation authority is suspending all Avianca Brasil flights out of safety concerns. The National Civil Aviation Agency said Friday that the company is obligated to either reimburse or rebook its customers It advised passengers to contact the airline. The suspension is the latest bad news for the carrier, which licenses the name from the Colombian airline but operates separately. In April, Avianca Brasil was forced to return 18 planes to leasing agencies, cancel over 1,000 flights and scrap several international routes from Sao Paulo to New York, Miami and Santiago, Chile. It is unclear how many planes it still has in its fleet. The company filed for bankruptcy in December. (AP)

Nestle still committed to confectionery, says CEO

INTERLAKEN: Nestle remains committed to confectionery despite unloading its US chocolate operations during a review of the food giant's operations, Chief Executive Mark Schneider told an event in Switzerland on Friday. "Our wide portfolio makes us strong... not everything is going to change," Schneider said. "You have to find focus and areas where you concentrate your efforts," he said, identifying water, baby food and animal food as Nestle's growth drivers "Sweets are not among those, But we also want to exploit the opportunities of that market.' Schneider said 2019 had got off to a good start, but efficiency remained important, saying unprofitable sales growth did not make sense. Nestle had to adjust because custom er preferences had changed dramatically in recent years, he added, with ever-increasing price pressure from consumers. (REUTERS)

Mexico tomato growers offer better prices. quality controls

MEXICO CITY: Mexico's **Economy Department** says the country's tomato growers have offered better prices and quality controls to regain access to the US market. The department says talks to solve the trade dispute are going well. US growers had argued Mexico was dumping tomatoes. The department said Thursday that Mexican growers were offering to increase base prices by as much as 180%, and accept the return of damaged tomatoes. In March, the US said it was ending a 2013 suspension agreement in which Mexican growers promised to sell at fair prices, and reinstating old 17.5% tariffs. (AP)

Growing shrooms



A staff member checks the growth of lingzhi mushrooms at a green house cultivating edible mushrooms in Guangchang County, east China's Jiangxi Province. Currently, more than 20 types of mushrooms are commercially cultivated worldwide, with China, the US, the Netherlands, France and Poland being the biggest producers.

High stakes for enclave as Europe's biggest casino goes bust

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE CAMPIONE D'ITALIA (ITALY), MAY 26

Campione d'Italia, a tiny Italian enclave on the shores of Switzerland's Lake Lugano, is fighting for its survival after its main source of income-a giant casino-went bankrupt.

"SOS Campione is dead' reads a giant banner hung opposite the immense casino, made up of modernistic cubicshaped blocks with darkened windows stretching 10 floors

"Rien ne va plus"—the French version of "no more bets"-reads another banner on a tent set up by the unions representing some 500 casino employees, who suddenly found themselves without

For the 1,961 inhabitants of one-square-kilometre (0.4-square-mile) sovereign ern Switzerland, the closure of the public casino has been

For decades, it guaranteed the prosperity of the town, 23 kilometres (14 miles) from

"Those who were lucky enough to be born here, were lucky enough to have a job," Fiorenzo Dorigo, who worked at the casino for 21 years, told

"Once you were done with your studies and military service, you reunited with all of your old school mates" working at the casino, he said.

But that comradery and income security evaporated last July, when a local Italian court in Como ordered the casino to close after it failed to honour its financial obligations to authorities in Campione, which is part of Como province.

The atmosphere in the com-



Slot machines are turned off inside the casino in Campione d'Italia.

munity now that the casino is shut is "sad", said Evgenia Petrova, a 52-year-old Russian artist, living in Campione since 2012.

The typical "Italian positivity", which used to distinguish the village from the surround-Swiss communities not obvious anymore," she told AFP, looking sadly out the window of her paint-splashed

But residents still hope for the casino's resurrection.

A Milan court recently overturned the Como legal ruling on the grounds of procedural inconsistencies.

And last month, the Italian government sent an expert to evaluate the possibilities of bringing the casino back to

Inhabitants are demanding that Rome comes to the rescue.

"Campione is Italian. Italy cannot just abandon it. It must take all possible steps" to save the enclave, unionist Vincenzo Falanga told AFP.

Campione has a long and rich history.

In the year 777, a wealthy trader and landowner named Totone donated Campione-

later renamed Campione d'Ita-

Milan, which became part of Italy in 1797. The picturesque enclave, which with its winding walkways and hills covered in

lia under the rule of dictator

Benito Mussolini-to the mon-

astery of Sant'Ambrogio in

magnificent view of the lake, has a unique status. Inhabitants pay taxes to Italy, but almost everything else is Swiss, including the currency, car registration

number plates, telephone lines and rubbish collection. It is also a tax haven: there is no sales tax and inhabitants benefit from a generous tax

break to compensate for the cost of living, which is also very Swiss-meaning high. A gaming establishment was first opened in Campione

mats during World War I, and it closed two years later. It reopened in 1933 thanks to a decree, which remains in effect, requiring the casino proceeds to cover all munici-

in 1917, but its main purpose

was to spy on foreign diplo-

The casino, with its high-rollers, showered Campione in riches for decades, allowing the tiny enclave to dream big-too big, accord-

In 2007, after seven years of construction, a brand new, 36,000-square-metre, ochre-coloured casino, saw the light of day.

The colossus, designed by Swiss architect Mario Botta, can accommodate 3,100 gamblers at a time, offering them 56 tables and around 1,000 slot machines to choose

But new laws permitting slot machines in bars and cafes and the rise of online gambling have gradually whittled away the house winnings.

The strengthening of the Swiss franc against the euro, as well as the opening of three large Swiss casinos nearby since 2000 have also taken their toll.

Over the past decade, as the the town's fortunes

The mayor quit, the nursery school shuttered and the tourist office is preparing to do the Swiss and Italian aid groups

say that around 200 people now usually show up at their thrice monthly food and other aid distributions. "Campione has not seen a

situation this difficult since the war," said Giorgio Zanzi, the administrator sent by Rome to run things after the mayor left. His office is chilly:

Campione can no longer afford fuel to keep the heating on, and municipal employees have not been paid since February 2018.

The casino and municipality have together raked up millions in debt, Zanzi told AFP, adding, though, that he was still holding out hope for a

Trump urges greater Japanese investment in US

US President Donald Trump urged Japanese business leaders on Saturday to increase their investment in the United States while he chided Japan for having a "substantial edge" on trade that negotiators were trying to even out in a bilateral deal.

Trump arrived in Japan on Saturday for a largely ceremonial state visit meant to showcase strong ties even though trade relations are problematical. In the evening, the Tokyo Sky Tree tower was lit up red, white and blue in Trump's honour. Shortly after arriving at the

airport to a red-carpet welcome, Trump attended a reception at the residence of US Ambassador William Hagerty that the White House said included Japanese business executives from Toyota, Nissan , Honda, SoftBank and Rakuten. Trump told the company officials there had never been a better time to invest in the United States and repeated a complaint that the Federal Reserve's policies had kept US economic growth from reaching its full potential.

With trade talks ongoing, Trump also got in a dig at Japan and said he wanted a

deal to address the trade imbalance between the two countries. "Japan has had a substantial edge for many, many years, but that's OK, maybe that's why you like us so much," he said."With this deal we hope to address the trade imbalance, removing barriers to United States exports and ensure fairness and reciprocity in our relationship," Trump said. Trade is one of Trump's signature issues, and encouraging for eign investment in the United States is a hallmark of his

Trump will meet Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Sunday for a round of golf, a sumo tournament and a private dinner. The two men share a warm relationship, which the Japanese leader aims to emphasize as Washington considers tariffs on Japanese auto exports that the Trump administration views as a potential national security threat.

trips abroad.

Trade is likely to be addressed during a formal meeting on Monday between Trump and Abe, but even a partial trade agreement isn't expected, said Trade Minister Toshimitsu Motegi after meeting his counterpart, US Trade Representative

Nepal tourism generated Rs240 billion and ...

>> CONTINUED FROM MONEY I

The Travel and Tourism Economic Impact report said that Nepal is expected to receive 1.2 million foreign visitors this year. The report said that the share of Indian visitors to Nepal last year was 16 percent followed by China (12 percent), the US (8 percent), Sri Lanka (7 percent) and the UK (6 percent).

According to the report, leisure travel spending (foreign and domestic) generated 87 percent of the direct travel and tourism gross domestic product in 2018. Business spending accounted for 13 percent of the direct travel and tourism gross domestic

The travel and tourism sector grew at 3.9 percent to contribute a record \$8.8 trillion and 319 million jobs to the world economy in 2018. For the eighth consecutive year, this was above the growth rate of the world gross domestic product.

According to the report, travel and tourism accounts for one in five of all new jobs created worldwide, and is forecast to contribute 100 million new jobs globally over the next 10 years, accounting for 421 million

Sri Lanka in talks with India, Japan to build container terminal in Colombo

REUTERS

Sri Lanka is in advanced talks with India and Japan to construct a container terminal at the port in Colombo, next to a Chinese terminal built as part of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative, government officials said.

The involvement of India and Japan is the latest sign that Sri Lanka wants to neutralise the growing influence of China, which has poured money into the South Asian island under its mammoth Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) infrastructure plan, to the alarm of other Asian powers.

A source close to the Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka said a framework for the terminal project will be source said the project would cost about \$500 million and India and Japan will nominate companies that will handle the containers from their respective countries.

"The deal is being negotiated among Sri Lanka, India and Japan," Sudarshana Gunawardana, an official in Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's office told Reuters. The Sri Lankan government will have a 51 percent stake in the terminal, he said. Chinese firms have a mandate to operate Colombo International Container Terminals (CICT) and develop another terminal on a 269-hectare plot of reclaimed land

This is not the first time that Sri Lanka has held talks with India and Japan to develop a container terminal.

A previous proposal for a terminal, with the state-run



A general view of Colombo Port City construction site, which is backed by Chinese investment, in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) owning a 15% stake and the remainder held by a was scuttled last year after a backlash from trade unions.

Trade unions protested against the privatisation of state assets including those being developed by Chinese firms, a dispute that led to President Maithripala Sirisena sacking Prime Minister Wickremesinghe in October. Wickremesinghe was reinstated later after a court ruling.

A spokesman at SLPA said the company was unaware of the latest talks given they are being conducted between the governments.

"All the flash points are defused in the new deal compared to the earlier one," one Sri Lankan government source privy to the discussions said.

The three countries will set up a company to operate the terminal after the Sri Lankan cabinet approves the deal.

Japan will provide a 40-year soft loan with a 0.1 percent interest rate with a 10-year consortium of firms from grace period, this source said.

A diplomat at the Ja embassy in Colombo also confirmed negotiations on the port terminal were taking

"Japanese funding will be decided later once the framework is finalised," the diplomat said.

The sources and diplomats declined to be identified as they are not authorised to speak to the media.

India has been trying to counterbalance China's growing influence in Sri Lanka, which New Delhi has long considered its own backyard. India accounts for around 70 percent of the transshipment business in Colombo port.

China has also taken over a new \$1.5 billion port city in Hambantota, in southeast Sri Lanka-which sits on a key east-west global shipping route-after Sri Lanka was unable to service debt pay-

Equatorial Guinea struggles for place in world tourism

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE SIPOPO (EQUATORIAL GUINEA), MAY 26

Gleaming but eerily empty, the luxurious Sipopo resort with its five-star hotel and exclusive facilities rises from a tropical beach, symbolising the dilemma of Equatorial Guinea—a notoriously closed country that has turned to tourism to help fill its coffers.

The purpose-built town was carved out of an ancient forest in 2011 at a cost of 600 million euros (\$670 million), initially to host a week-long African Union summit and showcase the rise of the tiny oil-rich state.

A 16-kilometre (10-mile) drive from Equatorial Guinea's capital Malabo, the resort boasts a vast conference centre, the Sofitel Malabo Sipopo Le Golf hotel, as well as 52 luxury villas—one for every head of state to attend the summit-each

with its own swimming pool. There is also an 18-hole golf course, several restaurants and exclusive beaches guarded by police.

For almost a decade, Sipopo has been the crown jewel in a strategy to lure high-end visitors to Equatorial Guinea to diversify an economy badly hit by a slump in oil revenue.

But the town, visited by an AFP reporter two months ago, seemed quite empty—an impression strengthened by conversations with people who live or who work there.

"It's depressing, there's no-one," said a visiting Gabonese consultant.

A worker, who asked not to be named, said the complex was quiet year-round: "You can hear the sound of your own footsteps." The occasional visitors tend to be well connected, rich and in search of privacy, the sources said. Many are guests of a government

described by Human Rights Watch as corrupt and repressive. One of the villas, according to the sources, was occupied by former

Gambian dictator Yahya Jammeh after



A person sits on a chair on the artificial beach of the Sofitel Hotel, in Sipopo, nearly 16km from

he fled his country in 2017. At Easter, the 200-room hotel's guests

included a Spanish couple on honeymoon, a few families and some businessmen, who were all foreigners.

In the echoing lobby, a huge black and white portrait of the country's 76-year-old authoritarian president, Teodoro Obiang Nguema-Africa's longest-serving ruler—hung on the wall, watching over the vacant recep-

A 1.5-kilometre (nearly mile-long) beach—an artificial shore secluded from curious eyes-was virtually deserted, in contrast to a public beach near the capital. The three-lane highway leading from Malabo to Sipopo was mostly empty of

A hospital was added after the villas were built, but is unused, the sources

In 2014, a mall was built at the resort to house 50 shops, a bowling alley, two cinemas and a children's play area.

But a hotel receptionist said the complex was not open yet, adding: "If you want to buy a souvenir, you will have to go to Malabo." At night-time, shiny limousines arrived at a luxury restaurant to drop off diners.

Located on the mid-Atlantic coast of central Africa, Equatorial Guinea has flooded social media with messages of its allure as a holiday destination.

Plans to build a new passenger terminal at the airport in Bata city have also just received a 120-million-euro (\$133-million) injection from the Development Bank of Central African

Figures for visitors are unavailable, and the tourism ministry in Malabo did not respond to AFP's requests for information. In the latest global compilation of figures posted by the World Bank, the number of tourists for Equatorial Guinea has been left blank.

KNBL

2.14%

HIGHEST GAINERS

KADBL

1.65%

LEMF

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141 142	Shikhar Insurar Shine Resunga Shivam Cemen	Dev Bank Ltd ts Ltd		865 262 589	257 542	863 260 560	4702 2682 84403
143 144 145	Shree Investme	ent Finance Co Ltd ce (Bittaya Sanstha)		159 227 337	153 225 333	153 225 336	3251 130 10804
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148 149 150	Siddhartha Insi Sindhu Bikash I Soaltee Hotel L	Bank Ltd		617 142 253	584 137 243	593 138 244	995 6430 8445
151 152	Standard Chart Summit Laghu	tered Bank Ltd bitta Bittiya Sanstha	a Ltd	680 569	673 565	680 569	3801 197
153 154 155	Surya Life Insu	inance Bittiya Sansi rance Co Ltd		261 545 595	256 530 585	257 530 585	7119 250 6823
156 157 158	Suryodaya Lag Swabalamban I	hubitta Bittiya Sans Laghubitta Bittiya S ubitta Bittiya Sanstl	anstha Ltd	850 910 609	850 901 588	850 901 606	10 528 328
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161 162 163	United Modi Hy Universal Powe Unnati Micorfir		a Ltd	123 96 1061	117 94 1050	119 96 1060	3524 6955 170
164 165	Upper Tamakos	shi Hydropower Ltd ta Bittiya Sanstha Lt		291 566	274 550	275 560	133698 949
Tota	Il Traded Amou	ınt Rs.:	626,201,666	Sub-Indices	Current I	Pts Change	%Change

Total Traded Shares:

Modi keeps his job for another five years, Indians worry about theirs

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SMATA

SEOS

Asad Ahmed, one of about 1.2 million young Indians entering the cutthroat job market each month, diligently scribbles notes

at a computer class in New Delhi. While nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi won a new five-year term promising to step up his campaign for a "new India", 18-year-old Ahmed is pessimistic about getting a new job.

"There are so many people in Delhi and the competition is intense," said Ahmed, dressed like the other students in a blackand-white uniform at the threemonth community course run in a police station in Old Delhi.

"I know this stint may not be enough for me to get a job but I am trying my best.

Modi came to power in 2014 promising jobs, but delivering on that has been a challenge.

And as soon as the election euphoria settles, Modi's government will have to find ways to boost investment and revive manufacturing to create new jobs.

Like Ahmed, most of the other 60 students at the government-sponsored "skill development" classes at the Old Delhi police station, all from poor families, were also apprehensive.

Nudrat Akram, 19, signed up for the course because her family could not afford to pay for higher education. "I want a job in the retail sector where I can earn 10,000 rupees (\$143) a month,"



Indian youths attend a three-month course on computer hardware at a training centre run by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in New Delhi.

Akram said, as she practised speaking English with pretend

India's conservative prime minister came to power in 2014 on a pro-business platform, promising to create 10 million jobs a year.

The world's fastest-growing major economy has grown about 7 percent a year since, but jobs have been elusive.

in Modi's triumphant tioned re-election campaign. Nearly two-thirds of India's 1.3

The promise was barely men-

billion population are of working age, between 15 and 64, but an increasing number are in the unemployed list.

No official data has been

released for more than two years but a recent leaked report denied by the government — put the unemployment rate at a

45-year high of 6.1 percent. The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, a private research firm, estimates the jobless rate rose to 7.6 percent in April.

"The economy is going to be a huge problem. The government simply cannot create jobs for millions entering the workforce," said political analyst Parsa Venkateshwar Rao.

"Modi will rely on businesses but they are also struggling so he has a real problem on his hands." Unemployment is par-

A Deloitte consultancy report in March said female labour force participation fell to 26 percent in 2018 from 36 percent in 2005 because of poor education and socio-economic barriers.

The manifesto of Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) promised a \$1.4-trillion infrastructure boost to create jobs if it won the election. It offered metro trains for 50 cities and to double the national highway network. But analysts say the govern-

ment, which has drastically increased its debt over the past five years, will have to borrow huge new amounts to pay for

In 2015, Modi launched a Skill India programme aiming to train 500 million people by 2022. But the results have been mixed.

According to 2018 data, only a quarter of people who joined the cheme found jobs.

"The Skill India mission has not had as much success as say the highway programme," said

economist Arvind Virmani. "The real crisis is about job skills and basic education."

India's rural jobs guarantee programme offers work to about 70 million people at a minimum wage for 100 days a year, but there is no equivalent for the growing numbers of urban youth.

Experts say the government must consider an urban employment guarantee scheme in order to reap the true benefit of its economic growth.

NIMBUS Byanian

MARKET WATCH

RETAIL PRIC	E	
Vegetables	Unit	Price (Rs)
Red Potato	kg	Rs48
White Potato	kg	Rs35
Onion (Indian)	kg	Rs45
Tomato Small	kg	Rs110
Carrot	kg	Rs55
Tomato Big	kg	Rs105
Squash	kg	Rs55
Cabbage	kg	Rs35
Brinjal Long	kg	Rs65
Cow Pea	kg	Rs75
Fruits	Unit	Price (Rs)
Apple	kg	Rs190
Pomegranate	kg	Rs190
Pineapple	kg	Rs115
Cucumber	kg	Rs65
Papaya	_	
Banana		Rs115
Lime	100Pcs	Rs340

DAILY COMMODITIES

Commodities	Unit	Price (Rs)
Pokhreli Rice	kg	Rs75
Jeera Masino Rice	kg	Rs70
Indian Basmati Rice	kg	Rs100
Mansuli Rice	kg	Rs55
Sona Rice	kg	Rs50
Beaten Rice(Taichin)	kg	Rs130
Beaten Rice	kg	Rs60
Big Mas	kg	Rs260
Small Mas	kg	Rs240
Big Mung	kg	Rs180
Musuro(No. 1)	kg	Rs150
Musuro(No. 2)	kg	Rs130
Rahar	kg	Rs200
Chana(Big)	kg	Rs220
Chana(Small)	kg	Rs180
Chilli Powder	kg	Rs350

GASOLINE WATCH



BULLION PRICE PER TOLA

Rs 59,700 Fine Gold Silver Rs 710 SOURCE: FENEGOSIDA

68.69

1.37

Brent Crude Futr (Bbl)

Gold 100 Oz Futr (T Oz)

Silver Future (T.Oz)

Gas Oil Fut (Ice) (Mt)	604.75	-0.45
Gasoline Rbob Fut (Gal)		
Natural Gas Futr (Mmbtu)		
Agriculture	Price (US\$)	%Change
Cocoa Future (Mt)	2,467.00	1.69
Coffee 'C' Future (Lb)	93.3	-0.21
Corn Future (Bu)	404.25	3.72
Cotton No.2 Futr (Lb)	68.39	1.35
Rough Rice (Cbot) (Cwt)	11.56	0.04
Soybean Future (Bu)	829.75	1.00
Soybean Meal Futr (T)	300.5	1.11
Soybean Oil Futr (Lb)	27.01	0.86
Sugar #11 (World) (Lb)	11.66	0.78
Wheat Future(Cbt) (Bu)	489.5	4.09
Industrial Metals	Price (US\$)	%Change
Copper Future (Lb)	269.95	0.71
Precious Metals	Price (1988)	%Change

1.289.20

14.56

-0.40

Lack of choice



People buy chicken in a supermarket in Havana, Cuba. Shop shelves on the Caribbean's largest island have been increasingly empty of late with scarcity of basic products such as eggs, flour and chicken, and massive, hours-long queues for them whenever they come into stock.

Buddha Air to launch budget flights to Kolkata today

POST REPORT

KATHMANDU, MAY 26

Buddha Air is launching budget flights from Kathmandu to Kolkata on Monday as part of its preparations to enter the long-haul international market by August 2020.

The private carrier said it had set the promotional fare for the 1 hour-30 minute flight at Rs11,000 one-way. The special ticket price may last for at least a month. A seat on an Air India flight, which currently operates a Kathmandu-Kolkata service, costs Rs20,000 one-way.

Buddha Air has also announced flights to Guwahati, the largest city in the Indian state of Assam, starting August, as part of its ambitious all-India connectivity. "Our travel package for Bengali tourists is compatible with Bangkok packages. It's cheap," said Birendra Bahadur Basnet, managing

director of Buddha Air. Buddha will operate flights to Kolkata—an artistic and cultural hub and the capital of the Indian state of West Bengal-on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays using its short-haul regional aircraft ATR 72. The flight will depart at 8:00 am from Kathmandu's Tribhuvan

14.65

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5.38

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2.4 0.87

Banking

HvdroPowe

9,294

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International Airport. The maiden flight to Kolkata is sold out while the return trip



Buddha Air has set the promotional fare for the 1 hour-30 minute flight at Rs11,000 one-way.

has more than 90 percent occupancy, the airline said. Almost 50 percent of the seats on its flights from Kolkata to Kathmandu in June have been booked. Basnet said that the cross-border flight would be a test for Buddha. "By November this year, we will evaluate whether we can succeed in flying to international markets by procuring jets," he said.

The three flights on the Kathmandu-Kolkata sector will generate 180 seats per week. The carrier said if it succeeds in bringing 100 tourists from Kolkata weekly, it would be closer to realising its dream of flying long-haul international markets using narrow-body jetliners. By August 2020, Buddha Air plans to fly to key Indian from Tribhuvan International Airport after leas-

ing two narrow-body jets. By August 2021, the carrier plans to add two jets and begin operations from the upcoming international airport in Pokhara. The construction of the modern airport in Pokhara is expected to be completed by July 2021. As per Indian government statistics, Indian outbound tourism stood at 24 million in 2017, said Basnet.

"This number is projected to nearly double to 42 million by 2025," he said. Last year, Nepal received more than 200,000 Indian tourists who came to Nepal by air. "It's a short-term calculated risk. We don't make a profit on the route. It's a kind of preparation for us to set our course for exotic foreign destinations," he said. "The Kolkata flight accounts for only 1 percent of our total number of flights, so the risk is low," said Basnet. "If we succeed in the

Kathmandu-Kolkata project, the sky's the limit for us."

Dutch judge rules Schiphol trains must run during strike

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE THE HAGUE, MAY 26

A Dutch judge on Sunday ruled against plans by the country's largest trade union to allow train drivers serving Amsterdam's busy Schiphol airport to join a country-wide strike.

Thousands of bus, train and tram drivers are expected strike on Tuesday in protest at government plans to raise the retirement age from 66 and to demand higher pension payments

"Our right to call a 24-hour strike remains, with the exception of a limited number of trains running to and from Schiphol," the FNV union said in a statement. "There will be four trains an hour between Schiphol and Amsterdam Central station... in order to guarantee public order at the airport," the FNV said.

Last year, Schiphol was Europe's third-busiest airport with 71.5 million passengers, behind London Heathrow and Paris-Charles de Gaulle, according to figures by the Airports Council International Europe (ACI).

Apart from being the gateway to Amsterdam, Schiphol is also a major transit hub for flights from all around the globe. The decision by the judge comes after negotiations between Schiphol Airport's management and the FNV broke down earlier on Sunday "despite intensive talks," the