

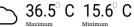
THE KATHMANDU POST

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BRUNCH WITH

THE POST | 16

Arpana Rayamajhi:

You can't make

everyone happy

People engage in various activities at Tundikhel in the Capital following a pause in rain on Saturday. As the Valley's open spaces shrink, people have fewer places to walk around and play.

In ruling party, a cornered Oli yields to Dahal's manoeuvrings

Party insiders say the two leaders have realised that there is no option but to reconcile.



Nepal Communist Party (NCP) Co-chairmen Pushpa Kamal Dahal and KP Sharma Oli.

TIKA R PRADHAN KATHMANDU, JULY 20

Just as concerns were growing among ruling party leaders over a widening rift and trust deficit between the two top leaders, KP Sharma Oli and Pushpa Kamal Dahal appear to have found common ground.

According to party leaders, the two co-chairmen have finalised after several rounds of talks tentative work divisions for the central members, departments and committees between the leaders of the former CPN-UML and Maoist party.

According to the leaders, the two chairmen will decide the names of

heads of 32 departments—18 allocated for the former UML and 14 for the former Maoist Centre-during the secretariat meeting scheduled for Sunday. The two chairmen are expected to zero in on the gentleman's agreement reached between them in May last year after completing the outstanding

works related to the party unification. While reconciliation between the two top leaders is good for the party, insiders say they were not sure what prompted this.

have reached some sort of understanding on the gentleman's agreement. "The sudden change could be the result of an understanding on moving ahead with the gentleman's agreement," said Hemraj Bhandari, a central member who represents the former Maoists.

The agreement between Oli and Dahal, made last year just ahead of the announcement of party unification, has it that both would run the government in turn.

However, it became a bone of contention only recently, when Dahal went public, insinuating Oli should

honour the agreement. >> Continued on page 4

Telemedicine service, once a boon for rural population, is almost defunct now

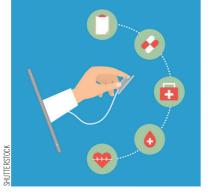
Officials admit its effectiveness but say lack of funds resulted in a halt to a potential game-changer in rural health care.

ARJUN POUDEL KATHMANDU, JULY 20

When a woman was brought to Bajura District Hospital at Kolti nine years ago, it did not take long for Dr Gunraja Awasthi, who was then a medical officer, and his team to figure out that her condition was critical. Family members had taken the woman, who was in her teens, first to shamans and then to the nearby health post and primary health centre before bringing her to the district hospital, a two-anda-half-day walk from her village.

"The baby had already died in the womb. The case was complicated. Her condition was deteriorating by the minute," Dr Awasthi, who is currently the chief of the Sudurpaschim Regional Health Directorate, recounted. "Our immediate concern was saving the mother.'

At a hospital in a remote region like Bajura, where there is a lack of specialists, the only resort for Dr Awashi was telemedicine. "Our team got in touch with a team of gynaecologists at



Patan Hospital, who instructed us through video conferencing on how we could detach the foetus from the womb," Dr Awasthi told the Post last

week. "We saved the woman." When the Health Ministry started telemedicine service from 25 districts-and later added another five districts-it had announced that it would be expanded throughout the country. Around 25 hospitals of

remote districts of Nepal used to consult the Lalitpur-based Patan Hospital for telemedicine services.

Today, none of the hospitals or health facilities in the nine districts of Sudurpaschim is using telemedicine service, said Dr Awasthi

In a country like Nepal where ensuring affordable and accessible community health care is a major challenge, telemedicine can be a game changer, say officials and health workers. But as countries around the globe embrace this model of health care, Nepal is losing ground.

The long-distance medicine service was popular and quite effective," said Dr Bishnu Sharma, director at Patan Hospital.

"But video conferencing service has been stopped for years. It is not because of us. Government health facilities are not using it anymore."

Telemedicine centre at Patan Hospital used to be in operation round the clock with seven doctors dedicated

>> Continued on page 4

Congress lawmaker's move of supporting governing parties' motion puts main opposition in a dilemma

Amresh Kumar Singh goes against his own party which has been raising voice against the government in Parliament.

BINOD GHIMIRE

KATHMANDU, JULY 20

A week after the Nepali Congress joined hands with the Rastriya Janata Party-Nepal to strengthen its opposition to the government in the federal parliament, one of its lawmakers, Amresh Kumar Singh, has backed the ruling parties in registering a motion of public importance in the Lower House, prompting the main opposition to find a face-saver and discuss the code of ethics for its parliamentarians.

Singh, along with Nepal Communist Party (NCP) leader Prabhu Sah and Samajbadi Party Nepal Chief Whip Uma Shankar Argariya, on Friday registered a motion which envisions short- and longterm government actions to support and rehabilitate flood and landslide victims.

Pushpa Bhusal, the Nepali Congress whip, said Singh had made his move without the party's consent. "It is purely his personal decision," said Bhusal. It's a general practice for a member of parliament to take permission from the chief whip or whip of the party before making any move in Parliament.

"The party learned about Singh's move only after the motion was registered," Bhusal told the Post. "The party will decide what should be done next

She said it wasn't a right step by Singh to support the motion moved by the ruling party while the opposition forces were uniting against the government.

While discussing Singh's move, the



Amresh Kumar Singh

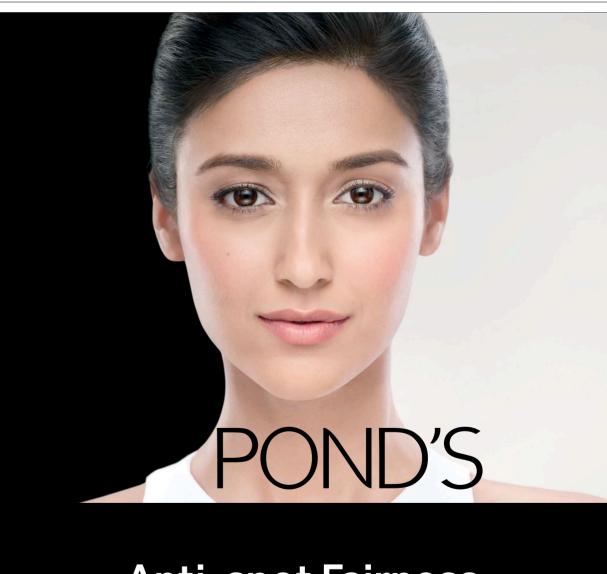
party will also seek to develop a code of ethics for its lawmakers, according to Bhusal. But Singh's move has put the main opposition in a dilemma.

Voting against the motion would mean standing against its own lawmaker and standing in favour would mean supporting the ruling party.

Bhusal said the party could ask Singh to withdraw his support to the motion.

The Post's repeated attempts to reach out to Singh for comments went unanswered. The Congress and Rastriya Janata Party last week decided to jointly raise their voice against the government. They have even jointly obstructed the House of Representatives at least three times.

>> Continued on page 3



Anti-spot Fairness



WHITE BEAUTY day cream

MEDLEY

Inside the Post

National

Syarpu Lake, the crown jewel of Bafikot Rural Municipality in Rukum (West), is changing and not in a good way. The lake, which is spread over 2.6 sq km area, is shrinking at a great pace. And to a great extent, human activities are responsible.

The country's growing economy and its insatiable hunger for land have altered the flood plains into paved areas, while the rainfall pattern seems to have changed due to climate change.

Culture & Arts

'Microcosm', curated by Lina Vincent, brings together printmaking works of 40 artists from 14 different countries as part of the ongoing sixth International Art Exchange Program 2018. However, not everyone who visits the exhibition will resonate with the printworks on display.

Money

Nepal's rising trade deficit is taking a toll on the country's foreign currency reserves which fell by 8.2 percent to \$9.25 billion, according to the Current Macroeconomic Report of Nepal Rastra Bank.

Sports

Ravinder Kumar Malik of India clinched the Mr South Asia title as Afghanistan won team championship finishing ahead of hosts Nepal in the 12th South Asian Bodybuilding and Physique Sports Championships in Kathmandu on Saturday.

5. Which country won the Africa

Cup of Nations 2019?

a) Senegal

b) Algeria

c) Nigeria

c) Ivory Coast

News Quiz

- 1. Who is the author of 'A Song of
- Ice and Fire'?
- a) Stephen King
- b) George R R Martin c) Jane Austin
- d) John Keats What is the national sport of
- Nepal?
- a) Kabaddi
- b) Dandi-biyo c) Volleyball
- d) Cricket What is the national animal of
- Bhutan? a. Royal Bengal Tiger
- b. Red Panda
- d. Takir
- 4. When did the government of India and Nepal sign the Koshi Agreement?
- a) April 25, 1954
- c) January 12, 1951 d) December 3, 1960
- b) May 7, 1964



Children swim in a pond as it rains, in Bangalamukhi, Patan, on Saturday.

POST PHOTO: BEEJU MAHARJAN

On this day in history

Qian visit a boost to bilateral relations

KATHMANDU - Vice Premier and Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China Qian Qichen left here Wednesday afternoon after completing a two-day visit to Nepal. The government of the People's Republic of China agreed to provide His Majesty's Government a grant assistance equivalent to about Rs340 million under an economic and technical co-operation agreement signed between the two governments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Wednesday.

A spokesman for the Chinese foreign ministry information department, Shew Guo Fang, told journalists that Qian gretly appreciated Nepal's cooperation regarding Tibet and the Nepali government's assurance that it will maintain close contacts with China on the issue.

The Kathmandu Post July 20, 1994

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

LEO (July 23-August 22)

Answers to News Quiz: 1(b), 2(c), 3(d), 4(a), 5(b)

Quote of the day

 $Telemedicine\ service,\ once\ a\ boon\ for\ rural\ population,\ is\ almost\ defunct\ now$

"Until a few years ago, telemedicine was quite effective. Patients and doctors from remote regions benefited a lot. But for such services to sustain, the Department of Health Services needs to take the lead."

> Mahendra Prasad Shrestha, spokesperson for the Ministry of Health

Most read online

Most local judicial committees in Province 5 idle for lack of office space

Eight cases were registered at the judicial committee of Rambha Rural Municipality in Palpa district this fiscal year. Three cases seeking divorce were forwarded to the district court while five others were settled in agreement between the disputants without holding a bench.

Unintended border battle to address food toxins

An unintended border battle erupted when Nepal attempted to test pesticide residues in foods imported from India due to public health concerns. This stemmed largely from an increased awareness about pesticide-free or organic foods in Nepal. For instance, Karnali Province has attempted to support organic crop production. Organic food could be a long-term goal in Nepal, but the country does not have the structure to monitor or certify such foods.

A lot more needs to be done to support gender inclusion in the labour force

The case of Harmita Shrestha, Sajha Yatayat's only female driver, is an intriguing and informational one. On the one hand, we have to laud a woman who broke down barriers and societal norms to become one of the first female public transport drivers, and then to become arguably the first Nepali woman to drive a large-body bus.

Change is slowly seeping into ancient Bungamati

As the Valley's hustle slowly starts to fade, the road to Bungamati comes in view and exudes calm. The monsoon's incessant drizzle shrouds the Newar town in a faint mist, but the petrichor springing from the damp earth is invigorating. Many locals, perhaps because of the gloomy weather, seem to have slowed in their usual drills; they aren't in a hurry to reach anywhere.

Corrections

Our reporters and editors do their best to make sure our reporting is free from errors. But when we make mistakes that warrant correction, we will be transparent and clarify at the bottom of the specific article.

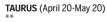
If you believe we have got something wrong and it requires correction, please email us at kpost@kmg.com.np with "correction" in the subject line. For the most recent corrections, visit kathmandupost.com/corrections.

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21-April 19)



Today it might be wise to play it safe while entering a new situation or group. It will take you time to get your bearings, so it's best for you to avoid any conflict. Avoid doing anything that could sully your reputation. Your image has taken a lot of work and time to build, but your one misstep can cause significant damage





If you are looking for support and end up getting judged by your friend, don't blame him or her. Blame yourself for talking to a preacher type of person instead of someone who knows that no one is perfect. Plenty of people are looking out for you. Their advice may hurt to hear sometimes, but they are truly trying to help you.





While riding the tides of life, be mindful of the undercurrents because they are what will actually lead you to your destination. There's not much you can do to change the direction you're traveling in, so just relax and enjoy the ride. It's full of surprises, as well as twists and turns that will leave you feeling exhilarated.



A very tough choice is coming your way today, and you might not know how to handle it. Take your ego out of the equation, and then you will be able to make the right decision easily. Sometimes you may not know what's best for you and that's okay. Forgetting 'what's in it for you' is a smart way to go.

It's more important than ever for you to balance

your life now, if not it could send some bad

vibes your way. Take a look at how you spend

your free time, and you will quickly see that you

are neglecting some things and some people.

Call up that friend you haven't seen in a while—

your relationship needs maintenance

VIRGO (August 23-September 22)



Since most of your hard work and tasks are over, feel free to kick back and relax. Let yourself get distracted by the silly today. You can't schedule laughter, but you can look at the funny side of things-there almost always is one! Your sense of humour will get quite a wonderful workout today.



You should know your limits today, and yield to them. The mystery you're intrigued by won't be solvable today, so stop wasting time on searching for clues. The people you're talking to don't really know anything, so stop asking. Stop focusing on other people's lives, and focus on

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21)

LIBRA (September 23-October 22)



There are many temptations around you today, but not all of them are healthy for you. Things that used to intimidate you now hold a strange and powerful attraction, but should satisfy your curiosity from the sidelines. Stay close to home today. When a friend invites you on a trip, see if you can take a rain check.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21)



Why go along with the crowd when you've got such an original mind and an incredible gift for self-expression? When everyone is enthusiastic about a lame-brained plan, take a stand. Trust your gut and don't hesitate to listen to it, even if you have to separate yourself from people who can't think independently.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19)



One of your recent failed attempts at matchmaking might be working out after all, although not in you had anticipated it to. There is a domino effect at work here, and you should be prepared to be thanked for initiating it. Remember that you are a positive influence in other people's lives, now more than ever.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18)



Things are starting to get complicated between you and a friend because of someone they are interested in who is actually more interested in you. Don't try to fight the guilty feelings creep ing up on you. Just make sure you're not doing anything to make things more confusing. Friends are more valuable than crushes any day.

PISCES (February 19-March 20)



It might be time for your group to find a new leader or director and one of your friends might nominate you for the job. If you're not interested, let them know right away to avoid creating any discord. Taking on more responsibility is not what you need to do right now. Besides, you know who needs to step up, encourage them.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS support

Large parrot 10 Gourmet cook 14 Family member 15 Acid in proteins

16 Coating of frost 17 With, to Maurice 18 Pilot's aid 19 Similar 20 Make the

most of 22 Pop bottle sizes 24 TV dial 25 Female

antelope 29 Drank noisily 33 Tips off 34 Dude

35 Historian's word 36 Potters' ovens Gridiron's Montana

38 Pungent spice 40 Night before 41 Energy 42 Gretel's brother 43 Interview a spy

46 Full 47 Pitches

48 Capital of Egypt 49 Snob, often 52 More nutritious 56 Pickling herb 57 Miffed, plus 59 Actress —

Sedgwick 60 Efficient Frees from anxiety or care

62 Revise text 63 Middle Ages quaff

64 Long grasses 65 Hockey feint **DOWN**

1 Hormel product 2 Fluid rock Peak Reluctant to talk

Leathernecks

Astonished Fruity drink 8 Literary collection

Sophisticated 10 Volcano's

mouth

11 Long walk 12 Arab prince 13 Marshy areas

31 White heron

34 DDE's party 37 Peter Pan rival

Holmes creator

32 Sherlock

21 Obligations 23 Debtor's note 26 Not genuine

27 Dull green "People" person against 29 Prefer charges 30 Examine closely

shouted 48 Put a stop to 49 Holland export

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

R|A|M|ECEDE RONGRAIL IRITSTTVA E M M A A H E M SOMBRERO HEALYARD M E M L O U D E R HALOS URSA A L D A |S|E|A|N

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38 Island off 51 Earthen jar 53 Dr. Jekyll and Naples 39 Opened up

41 Livelier 42 Fortune recipient 44 Inveighed

45 Badges and 46 Screamed and

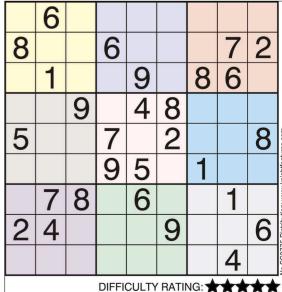
50 Derisive remark

54 Composer — Satie 55 An evening out 58 "Norma

15 18 19 25 27 29 32 36 38 40 48 50 59 61 62 60 64 65

SUDOKU

4 2 5 6 9 8 3 7 1 7 3 8 4 1 2 9 6 5 9 6 1 5 3 7 4 2 8 3 8 4 9 2 6 1 5 7 1 5 7 8 4 3 6 9 2 6 9 2 7 5 1 8 3 4 5 4 3 1 7 9 2 8 6 8 7 9 2 6 4 5 1 3 2 1 6 3 8 5 7 4 9 YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



NATIONAL

Soaring prices and fall in demand see bankers struggle to sell gold

The yellow metal traded at Rs65,500 per tola on Friday—on par with an all-time high price first recorded on June 25.

KRISHANA PRASAIN KATHMANDU, JULY 20

Banks are left with around 750kg of unsold gold in stock after traders are reluctant to purchase the precious yellow metal, citing the fall in market demand amid soaring prices, according to Nepal Bankers' Association.

On Friday, gold traded at Rs65,500 per tola—on par with an all-time high price first recorded on June 25.

The bullion market had opened with the price of Rs64,500 per tola last Sunday, and closed at Rs65,500 per tola on Friday—up by Rs1,000 a tola in

Anil Sharma, executive director of the association, said the banks were forced to stop importing gold as bullion traders stopped buying gold. "Over the past month gold has hit a record high price," he said.

Nepal Rastra Bank has allowed 24 banks to import 20kg of gold on a daily basis to sell in the domestic market. The central bank allows the banks to import up to 25kg of gold when its demand soars during the festive and

The bullion traders said the increasing price has created a reverse trend in bullion market as buyers are selling more gold than bullion traders. "With the successive price increases, bullion market in Kathmandu Valley is flooded with sellers, with almost no buyers," said Tej Ratna Shakya, for mer president of the Federation of Nepal Gold and Silver Dealers' Association. Traders are not buying raw gold from banks as they have replenished their stock by buying gold from individual sellers, Shakya said. "Surprisingly, the rush to sell gold by individuals increased even during the wedding season that lasted until

In the domestic market, the gold surged after it was announced during the budget presentation on May 29 to raise the import duty on the yellow metal by Rs800 per 10 grams.

According to Shakya, the demand for gold started to decline after the price crossed Rs60,000 per tola. Traders across the country have been struggling to sell even 10kg of gold a said Shakya, adding that the gold price has been escalating mainly due to the rising price in the interna tional market. Nepal imports gold from Dubai and Switzerland



Participants of the Kathmandu Kora Cycling Challenge-2019 are seen at the start of the annual event in Patan Durbar Square, Lalitpur, on Saturday.

Congress lawmaker's ...

>> Continued from page 1

The two opposition parties have agreed not to allow the Lower House to function unless the ruling communist party agrees to form a parliamentary panel to look into two incidents of death in Sarlahi district

Kumar Paudel, a member of the Communist Party of Nepal led by Netra Bikram Chand, was killed on June 20 in police action.

On June 30, Saroj Mahato died when police opened fire on a group of villagers who were demonstrating against illegal sand mining in Banke river. The protest began after a boy fell to his death in a sand pit. The opposition parties maintain that both incidents were suspicious.

The Rastriya Janata Party-Nepal is also demanding that the government make public the study report in the cases of violence during the 2015 Tarai protests. Despite a ruling from Speaker Krishna Bahadur Mahara, the government has not released the report prepared by a high-level panel led by Girish Chandra Lal, a former Supreme Court justice. Amid this, opposition parties fear Singh's support

to a motion moved by the ruling parties could dilute the ongoing anti-government protests. Asked how the ruling parties had convinced a lawmaker from a party that is obstructing the House to

support their motion, Argariya said Singh decided "to stand for a good cause

"What's wrong when all the parties come together in matters of national importance?" Agariya asked. The motion demands residences for those who lost

their homes in the recent floods and landslides, at least Rs500,000 for the families of the deceased and free treatment for the injured immediately. It has asked the government to build proper embankments along the rivers, control river encroachment and save the Chure belt as a long-term solution to the perennial problem of flooding in the Tarai.

At least 90 people were killed and 29 others have gone missing in the floods and landslides triggered by torrential rains across the country a few days ago.

House rejects National Assembly's decision to scrap administrative court, inviting conflict

In May, the House's move to send the Passport Bill to the President for authentication without waiting for National Assembly's decision had sparked controversy.

TIKA R PRADHAN

KATHMANDU, JULY 20

With the House of Representatives refusing to accept the provision of scrapping administrative court that was endorsed by the National Assembly, a conflict has surfaced between the two Houses of federal parliament.

On Tuesday, a meeting of the parliamentary Law, Justice and Human Rights Committee rejected the provision of having an administrative bench at each High Court instead of administrative Kathmandu. The committee of the Lower House had revived the proposal of the government to have a powerful administrative court in Kathmandu, which was rejected by the Upper House.

The National Assembly had endorsed its Legislative Management Committee's decision to reject the gov-

ernment's proposal to establish a powerful administrative court in Kathmandu. An administrative court led by Kashiraj Dahal is already in place here. Anxious with the NA's chairman Administrative Court, Dahal had been lobbying for reviving the court.

The Upper House committee, however, had decided to place an administrative bench at the High Courts of all the provinces instead of a separate court in the Capital claiming that it would make it difficult for civil servants outside the Valley to file cases.

The rejection of the Assembly's decision by the Law, Justice and Human Rights Committee of the Lower House, some lawmakers say, could lead to a confrontation between the two Houses. "If the National Assembly refused to accept the decision of the Lower House, it could lead to a confrontation," said Ram Narayan Bidari, a lawmaker from the Upper

House, who represents ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP).

Asked how the NA lawmakers are taking the rejection of its decision Bidari said he was not aware. "It depends on how individual lawmakers would take the decision.

Now with the change in the provisions that it had endorsed, the bill now must be taken to the Assembly for endorsement. If members of the National Assembly took the issue as an offence, it would be the first case that leads the federal parliament to form a joint panel to resolve the issue.

"If the NA refused to accept the change, a joint meeting of the Houses would discuss the issue and a joint panel could also be formed to resolve it," said Brikhesh Chandra Lal, an Assembly member from the Rastriya Janata Party-Nepal.

Given that the ruling party has a majority in both the Houses, Lal said the communist party could endorse

the bill through a majority if it wanted. A number of National Assembly members said the Lower House committee could have been influenced by the lobbying of those who benefit from the administrative court and leaders who wish to serve their interests by appointing their people.

However, the Lower House members said they have only corrected the NA's decision instead of opposing it. "We wanted an administrative court in each of the seven provinces that would reduce the pressure of cases," said Umashankar Argariya, a Lower House member from the Samajbadi Party Nepal.

This is not the first time that a conflict between the two Houses has emerged. In May, claiming that the National Assembly failed to return the bill within its deadline of two months, the House of Representatives had sent the Passport Bill to the President for authentication while a committee of the Assembly was The move had sparked controversy

as members of the Assembly had vehemently criticised the act claiming that laws cannot be endorsed bypassing the Upper House. On May 22, President Bidya Devi

Bhandari returned the bill to the federal parliament without authentication, requesting a review of its provision that could restrict citizens from getting a passport. The president's office had cited "unclear provisions over the issuance and usage of different types of passports" as the reason for sending the bill back. This had caused confusion among the authorities on how to move ahead with the bill.

Since that was the first time the President had ever sent a bill back without authentication, the House of Representatives has tabled the bill after a few months.

More than 18 months after Karki report, government yet to take action

NAYAK PAUDEL KATHMANDU, JULY 20

More than 18 months after a high-level commission formed to investigate irregularities in medical education and suggest solutions submitted its report, the government has not taken action against 43 individuals accused by the report.

On July 6 last year, the three-member commission led by Gauri Bahadur Karki, former chairperson of the Special Court, submitted its report to then-prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba

The late Dr Upendra Devkota and Surya Prasad Gautam, then joint-secretary at the education ministry, were the members.

In the report, the commission accused 43 individuals, including top Tribhuvan University officials, former Nepal Medical Council officials and senior doctors and professors for their dubious roles in granting affiliations to medical colleges, conducting entrance examinations, setting up fee structures, allocating seats and inspecting colleges.

But the government has neither made its report public nor has taken any action against the accused.

According to government officials, they are still seeking suggestions from the concerned authorities regarding action against the accused.

"We are consulting the Office of Attorney General and the law ministry," Hari Lamsal, joint-secretary at the education ministry, told the Post.

However, an official at the education ministry said they were not clear who should take action against the officials accused in the report, explaining the reason behind the delay.

"Top-level officials of universities have been accused in the report and the universities are autonomous organisations in which the education ministry cannot interfere. In the case of doctors, they come under the health ministry," said the ministry official on condition of anonymity because he was not allowed to speak to the media.

Tribhuvan University Vicechancellor Tirtha Raj Khaniya, Rector Sudha Tripathi, Registrar Dilli Upreti, Dean at the Institute of Science Technology Ram Prasad Khatiwada and Dean at the Faculty of Law Tara Prasad Sapkota are among those accused of committing the irregularities.

"Tribhuvan University has its senate, chaired by the prime minister, which can take action against the accused officials. But it has not," said the official. "It is true that it's unclear over who should take action but the government can clear the confusion, which it has not done.'

The top university officials were found to have played a dubious role in granting affiliations to the Kathmandu National Medical College despite its lack of required infrastructure.

In the report, a copy of which was seen by the Post, the commission has suggested that the government remove Khaniya, Tripathi and Upreti from their posts and not appoint them to any government or quasi-government offices in future.

"The government can discuss in the Cabinet and clarify who should take action against whom. The prime minister holds the power to select officials for top university posts and to take action against them as well," Karki told the Post. The report also accused the ousted

chief of the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority Lokman Singh Karki to have interfered in the entrance examination of Kathmandu University. However, the accused officials have

legitimacy. Issuing a statement, the Tribhuvan University registrar's office said in July last year that the report was sub-

been expressing strong reservations

over the report by questioning its

mitted despite a lack of majority as it came as per Karki's decision alone.

According to the registrar's office, Gautam, a member of the commission, registered a note of dissent, while Devkota was not present during the drafting of the report and when it was submitted.

However, Karki said Devkota, who was then undergoing treatment in London, sent him an email giving his consent to submit the report.

Recently, former registrar of Nepal Medical Council Dr Nilmani Upadhyay, one of the top names among the 43 individuals accused in the report, had applied for the post of vice-chair of the Medical Education Commission.

In the report, Upadhyay is alleged to have been associated with two government organisations—the Nepalese Army Institute of Health Sciences and the Nepal Medical Council—at once and received salaries, perks and facilities from both. He is also accused of pressuring Gandaki Medical College, while he was the registrar at the council, to employ his wife.

According to experts who demand quality education, the government needs to take action against the corrupt officials rather than letting the report gather dust.

"As there is a question over the legitimacy of the Karki report, the government needs to take a stand. The government should either say it cannot take action as per the report or it should be able to take action," Kedar Bhakta Mathema, former vice-chancellor of Tribhuvan University, told

"The government can form a committee to look into the matter. As the officials were found to have been playing a dubious role, the government needs to address the report seriously,' said Mathema, who also coordinated the high-level committee formed to recommend a national policy on medical education.



NATIONAL



Residents and conservationists burn building materials in protest against encroachment of a guthi-owned land in Teku, Kathmandu, on Saturday.

Nearly 20,000 illegal Nepalis in Malaysia have a chance to return home with the local authorities announcing amnesty

Last year nearly 15,000 undocumented Nepali workers had used a similar scheme to avoid legal actions.

CHANDAN KUMAR MANDAI KATHMANDU, JULY 20

Thousands of Nepali migrant workers, who have violated immigration rules in Malaysia and are liable to legal action, will be able to return home because the Malaysian government has announced a general amnesty scheme for undocumented immi-

five-month-long amnesty scheme—called Program Back for Good-will provide illegal immigrants, including thousands of Nepali workers, an opportunity to return to their respective home countries before the Malaysian government cracks

down on them and makes arrests. An estimated 15,000-20,000 Nepali migrant workers who are overstaying their visit or are living without valid documents in Malaysia can make use of the latest amnesty.

"There is no exact data on the number of Nepali workers who have overstayed in Malaysia; however, this amnesty is a good opportunity for

to Nepal," Maheshwar Mani Tripathi, second secretary at the Embassy of Nepal in Malaysia, told the Post over the phone. "We encourage them to take this amnesty and return home."

As per Malaysian rules, foreign workers with expired visas and those absconding from their original employers and working elsewhere without valid work permits are termed illegal.

The amnesty will be applicable from August 1 to December 31.

According to the scheme, undocumented immigrants will have to pay Malaysian Ringgit 700 (equivalent Rs18, 737) in fine and get the special exit pass from the Malaysian Immigration Department.

Nepali workers without any valid documents or passports will have to first get the one-way travel document from the Nepal Embassy after paying Ringgit 160. "The embassy will issue the travel document, but the worker will have to bear the airfare cost themselves," added Tripathi.

In the past, the Malaysian authori-

country. Hundreds of Nepali workers had been arrested from various parts of the country. Over the years, Malaysia has remained one of the top destinations for Nepali migrant workers. However, workers turning undocumented had been a cause of concern

down on illegal immigrants in the

that hire workers. According to the Malaysian Immigration Department statistics, there were 385,000 documented Nepali workers as of July 2018. The department had also estimated more than 1.7

for the embassy and the employers

in Malaysia during the same period. "There is no third party or outsourcing company involved this time. The immigration department will set up 80 counters across the country where applicants can register for repatriation under the amnesty,' Tripathi said.

million immigrants legally working

The Malaysian government had iterated on many occasions in the past that there would not be another similar amnesty for expatriates violating the previous amnesty expired in July

During the previous Voluntary Deportation Programme, also called 3-plus-1 programme, Malaysia had given options to illegal immigrants to either avoid legal actions by choosing to return to their home countries or obtain legal status through the rehiring programme.

The amnesty had also permitted undocumented workers, who could not rejoin their workplace or failed to find a new employer, to leave the country by August 30 last year without facing any legal actions. This year, however, illegal immigrants will be blacklisted and barred from entering Malaysia for an indefinite

Thousands of Nepali workers had availed the amnesty last year. According to the Nepal Embassy, nearly 15,000 illegal Nepali workers had used the amnesty last year. The Malaysian government could repatriate a total of 840,000 illegal immigrants during the last

Despite protests, Public Service Commission continues exams to hire staff for the local level

Protesters say the vacancy notice is against the principle of inclusion.

PRITHVI MAN SHRESTHA

Protesters tore question papers at an exam centre to protest against the Public Service Commission's decision to carry out exams to recruit local level staff in Khotang on Saturday.

Sukbir Thami, secretary of Nepal Federation of Indegenous Nationalities, claimed that four protesters, including Rabin Khambu and LB Magar, district joint secretary and joint secretary of the federation respectively, and two other protesters were arrested in the incident.

Ten others were arrested in Sunsari, according to Thami. Disgruntled groups enforced strikes in Province 1 and held protests in various places across the country while the commission conducted the 'biggest' recruitment exam (in terms of the number of attendees) on Saturday.

According to the commission, 70 percent of total applicants (out of total 440,163) took the exams on Saturday alone. The commission started taking exams from Friday, and will take exams until the next three weeks in different dates

Indigenous groups, Dalits, Madhesis and women's groups among others have formed a joint struggle committee against the ongoing exams, saying the decision failed to ensure adequate representation of marginalised communities as per the Civil Service Act.

As per the Civil Service Act, 33 percent quotas should be allocated for women, followed by 27 percent for indigenous nationalities, 22 percent for Madhesis, 9 percent for Dalits, 5 percent for the disabled and 4 percent for backward regions. But when the commission issued a vacancy notice on May 29 for 9,161 seats at 515 local governments, it failed to ensure the 45 percent seats reserved for marginalised communities, which invited con-

Nepal Police's Information Officer DIG Bishwaraj Pokharel said the headquarters had not received any information about protesters being detained anywhere in the country. "Some might have been detained briefly in a few places to prevent them from disrupting the exams," he told the Post. Commission's chairman Umesh Mainali claimed that exams were held peacefully. "There has been hardly any obstruction to the exams anywhere in the country as there was little participation in protests," he told

After the Supreme Court, on July 1,



According to the commission, 440,163 service seekers took the exams on Saturday alone.

Service Commission, the commission started taking the exam to recruit staff for local governments as per its exam schedule. Their reasoning was that over 400,000 applicants cannot be deprived from their rights to sit for the exams. The Supreme Court too refused to an issue interim order to halt the recruitment drive.

Protesters are complaining that the Supreme Court didn't even try to examine whether the Public Service Commission's move sought to undermine the very spirit of the constitution which aims to promote inclusive

None of the provincial governments except Province 2 has come out openly to protest against the exams being conducted. Province 2 Chief Minister Lal Babu Raut told the Post on Saturday that the exams being taken by the commission were against the constitution and law.

"The federal government is using the commission as a pawn against the inclusion principle of constitution in line with its mentality of promoting 'single caste and one culture',

He, however, expressed his helpless ness to stop the exams.

"What can we do when the federal government is moving ahead with its decisions bulldozing opposing views, Raut told the Post. But, the commission, in its defense, said that it worked as per the Section 12 (5) of the Employees Adjustment Act, which states that the federal government can request the commission to start the recruitment process for filling vacant posts until Provincial Public Service

In ruling party, a cornered Oli ...

Just as Dahal kept on bringing up the issue, he tried to cultivate some leaders, especially those from the former UML, prompting concerns in the

"I am not sure what the understanding [between the two leaders] is, but things seem to have changed in the recent days," said Bhandari.

The growing trust deficit between the two leaders had become a cause for concern among the party members, as it was delaying the unification process and stoking disenchantment in the party rank and file. Leaders had started expressing their anger publicly as well as in party meetings. "They [Oli and Dahal] were left with no option

but to reconcile as further delay in the unification process could have led the party towards disintegration," said Narayan Kaji Shrestha, a secretariat member. According to multiple leaders the Post spoke to,

Dahal in recent months had been involved in subtle manoeuverings, as he was increasingly getting concerned over his diminished role in the party, while Oli continued to run the government unilaterally.

Dahal had even intensified meetings with several leaders from the former UML, including Nepal and Jhala Nath Khanal, especially at a time when Oli was travelling abroad.

A central member who spoke on the condition of anonymity told the Post that Oli, who has been facing widespread criticism for his administration's failure and some controversial decisions, was finding it hard to maintain his influence. Even senior leaders like Madhav Kumar Nepal appeared to have been siding with Dahal, the leader said.

Name: Nurendra Bahadur Saru Magar

|Age: 66 Gender: Male Height: 5'2" Medium Built/Ex Indian Army Missing from: Thali-5, Kathmandu **Date missing:** 2070/01/15 If in case of any information

Please inform the nearest police office or Contact: 9861563884

Oli, according to the leader, had to make a deal with Dahal as he feared Dahal-Nepal bond would relegate his camp to the minority.

"Actually Oli wanted to have his hold in all the party committees, bypassing Nepal which led to the delay in unification works for more than a year," said Bishnu Rijal, a central member close to Nepal. "But ultimately he could not resist as he had only two options left-either to move ahead hand-in-hand with Nepal or face the consequences in the event of a unity between Dahal and Nepal."

When Oli became prime minister and led a unified party, he appeared invincible—he enjoyed majority both in Parliament and the party.

But one year since the unification announcement, he feels cornered, largely after Dahal started flexing his muscles.

"Oli, by his own admission, was compelled to move ahead with the remaining tasks of unification because he was beset from all sides,' said Ghanashyam Bhusal, a standing committee member who recently held an hours-long meeting with Oli. "Oli was under such tremendous pressure that he was not in a position to refuse [Bamdev] Gautam as the chief of organisational

After the discussions on Thursday and Friday to finalise the 18 departments that were under the former UML, six secretariat members-Oli, Nepal, Khanal, Bamdev Gautam, Ishwar Pokhrel and Bishnu Poudel—have agreed that Nepal will lead the International Department, and Gautam the Organisational Department, while Khanal will lead the party's Policy and Research Department. Earlier, Oli was averse to letting Gautam lead the Organisation Department and wanted Ram Bahadur Thapa instead.

Gautam, a long-time rival of Oli, is considered to have close relations with Dahal.

But no matter what, according to a leader, the two leaders coming together is a good sign for the party. If there is any hidden motive, then it's a cause for concern.

"The conflict between them emanated from the intent to be in power; to be in control," said Bhandari. "It's good that the party is moving towards completing the unification process. But the leaders must keep in mind they should rise above their personal interest and work in the party's larger interest.



Women lay down clay on the basin of Rani Pokhari on Saturday. The mud is being brought in from Bhaktapur, Sankhu, and Panauti to plaster the base of the historical pond because a layering of clay in water bodies prevents seepage, thus retaining water.

Telemedicine service, once a boon for rural population ...

Doctors deployed at the telemedicine centre used to collect cases, and specialists at the hospital used to advise doctors serving in remote districts.

Ashok Kumar Singh, a senior auxiliary health worker who is also the acting chief of District Public Health Office, Bajura, said poor patients of remote districts have been hit hard by the lack of telemedicine services.

"Doctors and auxiliary health workers have to refer patients to an advanced hospital for consultant service," said Singh. "We cannot even fix the drug amount needed for pediatric cases and mental health issues. Had the service been there, patients from

remote areas would have benefited a lot." While government officials admitted that telemedicine was quite effective, they

stopped short of giving particular reasons for stopping the service.

Dr Sushilnath Pyakurel, director general of the Department of Health Services, said telemedicine service had been stopped due to financial constraints. "The programme should have been expanded to the health-post level," said Pyakurel. "But we have not been able to continue the service even in the hospitals where it was earlier available.

But Mahendra Prasad Shrestha, spokesperson for the Ministry of Health, blamed ineffective leadership at the department.

"Until a few years ago, telemedicine was quite effective," said Shrestha. "Patients and doctors from remote regions benefited a lot. But for such services to sustain, the Department of Health Services needs to take

the lead. It has neither allocated budget nor has come up with any programme." Amid this blame game between

government agencies, patients from remote regions like Bajura are left with no option than to travel to Dhangadhi, Nepalgunj or Kathmandu. In Kolti, where Dr Awasthi had saved the life of a woman nine years ago, doctors now wonder why the government shut such a life-saving means of providing health care services to the rural population.

"I have been here for the last three years. Telemedicine service has not been in operation since I came here," said Dr Rupchandra BK, acting medical superintendent at Kolti hospital. "Doctors like us, who have been serving in remote districts, need such services the most to save lives.

NATIONAL

BRIEFING

Families displaced in Bhojpur

BHOJPUR: Recent floods and landslides in Bhojpur have displaced some 100 families in the district. Sixteen houses were destroyed and 58 sustained partial damage in the disasters.

Body found in flooded stream

MAHOTTARI: A body was recovered Mahottari on Saturday. A man, who appears to be in his mid-thirties, was found dead in the rain-swollen stream. Police suspect that the man might have been swept away while crossing the stream.

Employees held on graft charge

DOLAKHA: The Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority arrested two employees of the Irrigation Development Division office in Dolakha on graft charge on Friday. The CIAA team detained office chief Prakash Adhikari with Rs 1.3 million and engineer Bhogendra Sah with Rs 130.000.

Mechi Highway disrupted for past five days

PANCHTHAR: A massive landslide in Panchthar has obstructed the Mechi Highway, acutely affecting the residents of Ilam, Panchthar and Taplejung districts. The highway has been closed for the past five days. Three excavators have been mobilised





Flood-displaced people stand in a queue to get relief materials in Ishnath Municipality, Rautahat district, on Saturday. Almost 700 affected people were provided with relief.

Sarlahi halts relief distribution

OM PRAKASH THAKUR

The District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) in Sarlahi has postponed the relief distribution programme, suspecting that some fake flood victims were collecting aid.

The committee's move, however, has saddened many genuine flood victims who are staying under tarpaulin

Officials at the DDMC said they had stopped relief distribution to collect the details of the destruction. According to initial data of the committee, 2,400 families were affected by the floods in mid-July.

A committee meeting in Malangawa, the district headquarters of Sarlahi, decided on Friday to stop relief distri-

The meeting also decided to repair damaged parts of Postal Highway and other feeder roads.

Laldhari Paswan, a displaced flood Dhankaul Municipality-3, said they are waiting for relief materials. "How can we stay for a long time under a flimsy makeshift?" asked Paswan.

Another Paspati Devi, a local woman, who was displaced due to the flooded stream some 10 days ago, said that they had to wait for at least two weeks to receive relief

Chief District Officer Krishna Bahadur Raut, who is also chairman at the committee, said that the meeting had decided to provide immediate relief to those rendered homeless. "Others will receive relief only after the survey," said Raut.

lected data of the flood victims only by asking the ward chairman about the

"Now, we will gather details of destruction by identifying victim's names, their family members and property loss," said Raut, adding that they have to conduct the survey as they received complaints that fake flood victims are also receiving relief materials.

Authorities said that they needed to conduct the survey to make relief distribution process effective. All of the stakeholders concerned have agreed to distribute relief through a one-door

The local administration was distributing food grains and tarpaulins to the flood affected households in the

Tarai floods damage medicines worth millions of rupees

Health authorities report a rise in cases of diarrhoeal disease and snakebite.

ARJUN POUDEL

Essential medicines worth millions of rupees stocked at various health facilities in Province 2 have been damaged in recent floods that inundated most parts of the eight Tarai dis-

Officials say health facilities in Rautahat, Mahottari, Sarlahi and Saptari are now facing shortages of medicines.

'Medicines stored in over 25 health facilities have been damaged by floodwaters," Mahesh Sah, chief of the Rautahat District Public Health Office, told the Post over the

Torrential monsoon rains caused massive flooding in the Tarai districts in the past few weeks, claiming at least 90 lives.

As floodwater recedes, there are concerns over the spread of diseases and health officials have called for ensuring immediate supply of medicines. Sah said health workers have been assessing the

The district public health office has communicated with the Regional under the Health Directorate provincial Social Development Ministry and the government agencies regarding the shortage of medicines, according to

"Representatives of several interna-

tional agencies—WHO, UNICEF and the UNFPA—have approached us and assured the supply of essential medicines," said Sah. "We will supply medicines to health facilities from Sunday."

The Health Emergency Operation Centre set up by the Ministry of Health and Population said that the public health offices in Sarlahi, Saptari and Mahottari have also reported the damage of medicines in health facilities by floodwaters.

"We have dispatched essential medicines, reagents for laboratory use and anti-snake venom, along with our teams," Chudamani Bhandari, chief of the Centre, told the Post. He said the team deputed from Kathmandu has been coordinating with the provincial and local health agencies to provide treatment and

The Ministry of Health and Population had earlier urged the international aid agencies to supply essential medicines in the flood- and landslide-hit districts. Meanwhile, the number of diar-

rhoeal patients and snakebite cases has surged in the flood-hit districts of Tarai region. "We have attended six diarrhoeal

ases since this morning," said Dr Krishna Sah of the District Hospital in Gaur. "Among them, two were seriously dehydrated. We are treating

Hetauda faces blood shortage

The city has a high demand for blood every monsoon, but blood donation programmes are rare.

Hetauda, the capital of Province 3, is reeling from a shortage of blood for the past few weeks, affecting health services in

According to the Blood Transfusion Centre in Hetauda, the city needs some 20 pints of blood on a daily basis, but the centre is unable to provide the needed "We are unable to provide blood to

patients as demanded due to the shortage of blood. For emergency cases, we are collecting blood from regular donors," said Tanka Dahal, the in-charge of the centre. "We can hardly collect 10 pints of blood

non in Hetauda, which experiences a short supply in monsoon every year. According to Dahal, Hetauda reels from blood shortage from mid-June to mid-August every year, as the city runs few blood donation programmes but has a high demand for blood during the period.

As per the data of the centre, about onethird of supplied blood is provided to patients who are receiving treatment in various health institutions in Makwanpur, while two-thirds

is for the patients from Makwanpur who go to Chitwan for treatment.

"We had been providing blood to the patients who go to neighbouring Chitwan district. But because of the shortage, we are no longer able to supply them with blood," said Dahal. He, however, said the centre has managed to get blood for emergency cases. "We have 80 regular blood donors. We will request them whenever we need blood for emergency purpose," he told

Following the shortage, the blood transfusion centre has urged various social organisations, political organisations and individuals to launch blood donation programmes in the city.

Makwanpur district conducted only two Nepali month of Ashadh (mid-June to

Seventy-three blood donation programmes were organised throughout the district in the last fiscal year.

"With the increase in the demand for blood, more people have been coming forward to donate blood in recent years. However, there's a blood shortage now mainly because blood donation programmes are rarely organised during the rainy season," Dahal said.

Syarpu Lake is shrinking due to human activity

Authorities had introduced a master plan to conserve the lake some nine years ago, but the project never took off.

HARI GAUTAM RUKUM (WEST), JULY 20

Syarpu Lake, the crown jewel of Bafikot Rural Municipality in Rukum (West), is changing but not The lake, which is spread over 2.6

sq km area, is shrinking at a great

pace. And to a great extent, human activities are responsible. In the recent years, the lake area has witnessed several landslides, which conservationists say are the result of deforestation and unplanned construction projects. Eighty-four-year old

Khatri grew up admiring the lake's beauty. He remembers being in awe of the lake's vastness and its inspir-"I have lived here for so long that

it is impossible not to see the changes that the lake has undergone over time. There was a time when one would be overwhelmed by the sheer size of the lake. Today, the lake is one-tenth of its original size," Khatri said.

Conservationists say the ongoing construction works and deforestation at places like Dammana, Dhajahalne, Thumlek, Samija Seta



Conservationists say the ongoing construction works and deforestation should be stopped in order to conserve the lake.

Bodle, Nigalpani, Kalachula, Siubang, Okhren, Simpatla, Netilek and Buki Odar should be stopped in order to

preserve the lake.

Construction works of a ring road project surrounding Syarpu Lake have also contributed to the lake's degradation.

"The use of heavy equipment for the road project has had a severe impact on the lake and its immediate surroundings," said Sherbir Dahal, a local school teacher.

Although the District Soil Conservation Office had introduced a master plan to conserve the lake some nine years ago, the project never took off.

"The master plan had proposed erosion control, tree plantation and wetland protection, among other programmes, to preserve Syarpu Lake. That was nine years ago. Not a single programme has been implemented till date," said Gopal KC, a former staff at the District Tourism Development Committee.

for the conservation of the lake in the last fiscal year. The amount was spent to build a wall near the lake's

water source. "The wall is poorly built and it could collapse into the lake any time," said Man Bahadur KC, a

local man. Bafikot Rural Municipality itself has never allocated a budget for the lake's conservation.



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OPINION

Water scarcity and flooding

The growing economy and its insatiable hunger for land have altered the flood plains into paved areas.

MADHUKAR UPADHYA

STARTING POINT



At the end of June, when the monsoon was delayed by almost four weeks in Nepal, farmers were praying for the rains to begin so they could plant paddy before it was too late. However, within two weeks of its arrival, the heavy rains started causing widespread damage. The emerging scenarios of contrasting water scarcity and flooding seem to have increased in their intensity to cause trouble. The question on everyone's mind is: is there any respite from water scarcity during the winter and from flooding in the summer? The answer would be yes; but only if we understand why these phenomena have become more intense and, then, act accordingly. After all, water scarcity and flooding are two sides of the same coin.

What needs to be understood is that when water begins to disappear at existing sources over a wider area in the dry period, like we have witnessed lately across the mountains, or when floods become increasingly hostile, like that of Hanumante in 2018 or Balkhu now, it is time to realise that years of neglect, misuse and mismanagement of land have finally manifested. These severe impacts have started to surface, indicating that our actions against natural processes have surpassed nature's resilient ability to bounce back. The fault lies largely with the encroachment of the flood plains in the valleys by land mongers for shortterm benefits, or the destruction of waterways in the hills by politicians who carry out development works with the next elections in mind. Both scenes cost dearly in the long-term.

Instead of correcting the path of mismanagement, which may even include accepting the wrongs done for years and reversing it, policymakers start to address the problem with quick-fix solutions such as, in the case of water scarcity, tapping the last remaining aquifers by means of deep boring or investing in plastic-lined



ponds to catch rainwater. These short-sighted actions have long-term consequences in nature. Deep boring takes away the last ounce of water in the lower aquifers that continue to feed the streams during the driest months, while plastic-lined ponds keep rainwater from entering the groundwater system. Similarly, embankments are constructed to control floods, which only provide a sense of protection for a short period. In the longer term, as we have seen time and again, they are not effective.

Grave misconception

Let's remind ourselves that the streams and rivers of mid-mountains and valleys are fed entirely by water stored in the mountains and groundwater, which are replenished every year by the monsoon rain, and not by snowmelt as is generally believed. Every bit of open space on the ground is actually a gateway through which monsoon rainwater seeps in and is held as groundwater. For this, the rainwater must have adequate time to seep into the ground. Unfortunately, we have disrupted the process of groundwater replenishment in the valley by sealing most of the open spaces by either paving them over or erecting buildings on them. What little wetland was left has been drained and occupied by buildings, while waterways in the mountains have been damaged or altered by roads and other

Short-sighted actions have long-term consequences in nature.

infrastructure.

The distressing stories about water scarcity coming out of Chennai, the southern Indian city which is also flooded frequently, are a reminder of how policymakers who have been neglecting years of warnings made by experts can result in extreme conditions of water scarcity. The government has been forced to run water trains to bring water to the affected residents. Experts have, for decades, warned that groundwater, by nature, is a limited source; however, the growing economy of the ever-expanding city flour ished by exploiting groundwater for all its needs. As a result, Chennai, which gets two monsoons, has gone so dry that it dominated most headlines globally.

Kathmandu has been reeling under similar water shortages for over two decades. Like in Chennai, where more than three-fourths of the water demand is met by the commercial water suppliers, a large part of the water in Katmandu is currently supplied by private vendors, who extract groundwater and supply it in jars. Water suppliers will continue to exploit groundwater even Melamchi, a trans-basin water project being constructed to bring water to the valley, arrives because it won't reach everywhere. In addition, the encroachment of flood plains and its sealing by buildings and roads will continue unabated. Continued extraction without any plan to replenish will lead to unrelenting depletion of groundwater. With more pumps sucking groundwater out, we may also start making headlines soon.

Two sides of the same coin

The encroachment of flood plains has two consecutive results: It seals the flood plain restricting the floodwater from seeping in, adding more water to the floods, while the narrow river channel increases the velocity of floodwater which has already increased in volume due to the sealing of the flood plains. Consequently, the high-volume, high-velocity flood water causes more damage to the structures and properties on the flood plains, while, on the other hand, when the rainwater flows out as floods, water stands no chance to go into the ground. But why have policymakers ignored this seemingly simple fact that these problems are two sides of the same coin? There is a reason.

Rivers, streams, springs and water pools are often misunderstood as independent and unlimited sources of water. But they are not. Rather they are an outcome of multiple aspects such as the climate, rainfall, topography, geology, elevation, and, finally, vegetation as icing on the cake. The combination of these factors, which are as varied as the landscape, makes the presence of water in any area incredibly unique. Change in any of these factors has a direct bearing on the water-scape in a particular area.

The growing economy and its insatiable hunger for land have altered the flood plains into paved areas, while the rainfall pattern seems to have changed due to climate change. The combination of these two changes has resulted in a new land-water dynamic. The overwhelming amount of water dumped by intense rain over a paved area is forced to flow out as soon as it hits the ground, which is evident instantly in small watersheds, such as that of Hanumante and Balkhu, in the form of intense floods and, of course, followed by acute water shortages later.

Since we failed to recognise the disruption we caused to the land–water relation and its consequences in the valley, we moved to foothills for sand mining and destroyed the hillocks without any hesitation. Now, mountains further up are being targeted for developing recreational projects. It won't be surprising if intense floods also begin to occur in the bigger watersheds of Bagmati and Bishnumati in the years ahead. It seems like we have our own hubris to contend with before we manage scarcity and flooding.

Madhukar tweets at @madhukaru.

Views from the grandstand

Without spectators to cheer, half of the charm connected to victory is lost.

SUMAN DC



'Which team are you backing?' asked my cousin who is closely following the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2019. Despite having been following cricket matches since my teenage years, I replied, 'I don't have any particular team that I support; I just love watching the game of every team equally well.' My answer surprised my cousin, who is a big fan of the Australian cricket team, and he remained silent for a while.

Not only cricket but the whole sporting world has a huge fandom. Millions of fans follow their teams on the field, and billions of people do so in the media. In the case of Nepal, football has won a huge mass, but the fan following of the Nepali cricket team is not small either. National cricket players including the current captain, Paras Khadka, never forget to give credit to their fans whether they play at home or away. The presence of Nepali fans at the Tribhuvan University International Cricket Ground, in particular, looks spectacular when our national team is playing against an international

But spectatorship is the most neglected topic in sports. According to Mike McNamee, professor of sports science at Swansea University, Wales, 'Spectators are indispensable, since without them the victory, which should be the only reward, would lose half of its power.' According to academicians like McNamee, sports fans have been categorised into several

The first is the 'gambler' who follows a sport particularly for betting. Some gamble on the overall results while others bet on a particular part of the game, such as which team scores first or which bowler delivers an illegal delivery at which moment of the game. This is known as spot fixing. The second type of fan, known as 'partisan', follows a particular club or a player. Such fans don't have logical reasons to follow the team. They create fan clubs, join them, chant club songs, and regularly meet likeminded people to discuss their club's players and performances.



Fans have shown that they can stand against social injustices in sport.

Another type of fan is the 'patriot' who strongly backs their national team. Examples of patriot fans can be seen whenever there is a cricket match between Pakistan and India. The tickets of a match between these two teams are almost always sold out early. These types of fans sometimes even get involved in extreme behaviour like vandalism and hooliganism. The last type of fan is known as 'purist' who does not follow any team in particular, but enjoy the aesthetics or beauty of the game. They appreciate fair play and every aesthetic movement by the players. They simply enjoy

the overall game.

The best example of this can be observed if you watch a cricket match between England and India at Lords Cricket Ground in the UK. One group of fans clearly cheers for the Indian cricket team. Another type of fan gives a round of applause whenever a player of any team shows a particular skill whether it is in fielding, bowling or batting.

Some claim that the world of sport is purely male dominated. This claim was strengthened at the recently concluded FIFA Women's World Cup 2019 in France. The final match was between the US and the Netherlands, the reigning European champions. The US won the World Cup convincingly. At the same time, the fans at the stadium chanted 'equal pay' for women players as reports show that women footballers are paid only 38 percent of what male players receive. It has also been reported that the US women players sued the US Soccer Federation for discrimination in other cases as well, such as medical

care and sports facilities. Here, it shows that the fans are also in favour of social justice: They can stand against social injustices through sports. This may be one of the best displays of sport aestheticism

Different types of people enjoy sports at different levels of the games. All types of fans exist in the sporting world. The followers widely follow their favourite games and players, so the world of sports must be ethical, and the players need to apply their integrity both in and off field for the betterment of sports as well as society because the followers closely watch and follow what their role models do. If the players are the heart of sports, the spectators are the blood of sports. If the players are obliged to follow the norms of sports, so do the followers to make the sporting world a better place to follow.

DC is pursuing a Master's degree in sports ethics and integrity at Swansea University, UK.

THE KATHMANDU POST

Dharmaraj Thapa's musical odyssey

The melody of early modern Nepali history inspires us to look into our own times today.

ABHI SUBEDI

WORDS & ECHOES



This article draws from a discourse I presented on the birth anniversary of Dharmaraj Thapa (1924-2014) in Kathmandu recently. In my view, Thapa's journey represents the rainbow of the early modern Nepali historical times experienced after the country became free from the Rana oligarchy in 1950. A humble, somewhat village-oriented, confident and charismatic poet, collector and singer of folk songs, Thapa was a mirror of history because he was a witness to the crises, metamorphoses, political sincerities, bravados and apogee of monarchical power. Thapa also took the early anthropological initiatives. I have written articles about him, given seminars on his contribution to Nepali singing and folk song collections, and emulated his voice and style for light-hearted moments in public. Here I will look at the features of the early modern Nepali history by alluding to poet Thapa's various interests and associations.

When Dharmaraj Thapa set out on a bard's journey Nepal was just waking up to the amorphous, yet, powerful possibilities opened up by the end of the Rana oligarchy in 1950. That transformation opened Nepal to the wider world putting an end to a century of censorship and restrictions. The youth, mostly guided by democracy or left-oriented principles, followed the political path. They adopted multiple methods to express the euphoria of the changing times. Writing poetry and lyrics was one prominent interest at that time. Not only that, taking one's invention to the audience was another guiding principle which was performed by singing songs or reading poetry about the social or revolutionary change in society. Dharmaraj Thapa wrote lyrical poems and sang; he collected folk songs and sang them effectively. He created music for his words.

Thapa felt the words and understood



the sensitivity of the times when he wrote them. One telling historical episode is in order. Dharmaraj Thapa wrote a song about the rebellious political leader named KI Singh (1906-1982) who, unhappy with the Delhi Agreement of 1950 between the Ranas and the Nepali Congress leaders that ended Ranacracy and created the first civilian controlled government, continued the so-called revolution, got arrested for that and was put in the Singh Durbar prison. KI Singh escaped the prison with the help of the security guards on 22 February 1952 and fled to China seeking political asylum. Thapa serenaded a revolutionary song krantikaari hain vira ki singh or 'oh, brave KI Singh where did you go after breaking the prison!' He sang about KI Singh's virtue, honesty and revolutionary spirit. Thapa visited different places singing this song. He said to me in a personal interview that police came to disrupt his singing, and even beat him up.

He recalled that with a sense of pride.

Thapa had taken umbrage at one incident

Like Rabindranath Tagore, on a small scale, Dharmaraj Thapa wrote music for his poems. though. KI Singh returned after staying in China for three years and eight months, in 1955. Progressive writers like Laxmi Prasad Devkota and Hridaya Chandra Singh Pradhan met Singh in Chabahil and drove him on a jeep to Tundikhel or the open greens, with great fanfare. They gave speeches there, but the bard Dharmaraj Thapa was nowhere to be seen. He was not invited to meet KI Singh let alone serenade the song about him. But Dharmaraj Thapa said such incidents made no difference to him because he sang for the people and the nation

One important quality of Dharmaraj Thapa's music was that this folk singer, this poet without any training could create music for his songs according to the mood and genius of the times. For example, the now lost KI Singh song is sung in high pitch; the sharp rise and fall of tone is orchestrated with the words of the song that represents the revolutionary spirit of the times. Thapa could change the tone

and melody according to the subject of the song. His famous song about Buddha janmecha buddha nepalma written for the international Buddhist conference in Nepal many years ago is an example of that. His singing here is totally different from the KI Singh song. The cadence that he employs in this song brilliantly captures the serenity evoked by the Buddha. I am very impressed and surprised by Thapa's musical talent. He had the great musical sensibility to give music to his words according to the mood of the historical times. His measuring scale for that was a combination of poetic strength, his voice and melody.

The other quality of his music came from his visceral relationship with the land, geography, and the passion with which he wrote and sang. He got this sense, this sensation of proximity with the land through his body, his legs mainly. He measured this scale of music through his countless travels across the country from where he picked up the tones, melodies, words and the power of the folkloristics. He sang songs directly drawn from his extensive travels all over the country. That was the first category. The second category of his songs was his own poetic creation. Like Rabindranath Tagore, on a small scale, Dharmaraj Thapa wrote music for his poems. But I do not have enough space here to cite them. The songs he wrote and sang under this category were message-oriented like dhuru dhuru narou aama, 'our Shukraraj Shastri got arrested/ people got the news that he was going to be hanged', 'can you douse the flames of hunger with tears of lamentations'? And so on. Dharmaraj Thapa looked for leaders, heroes; from KI Singh to king Mahendra, but he never put anyone but Nepal on his head when confronted with the challenge of choice. But in later times, he remained disillusioned on this score. One impressive song goes like this: siramathi nepala amaalai or 'I keep mother Nepal on my head, and king Mahendra on my shoulders'. He measured music, words, politics and love through his body, through his walks.

Dharamaraj Thapa visited the Indian Nepalis of various places serenading Nepalile maya maryo barilai or 'oh, how the Nepalis have forgotten us'! A Darjeeling poet Agamsingh Giri's song naulakha tara udae that Ambar Gurung made very famous by composing music and rendering his voice, was an inverse nostalgia, a metaphorical response to Thapa's song nepalile maya maryo barilai.

The melody of early modern Nepali history inspires us to look into our own times today.

Bastille Day and the global populist uprising

The recent protests in Hong Kong reflect deep identity differences that must be resolved.

ANDREW SHENG



July 14 is celebrated in France as Bastille Day, on which day 230 years ago, French peasants stormed the Bastille prison in Paris and sparked off the French Revolution. Thus began the populist movement that overturned the Ancien Regime (old order) of absolute monarchy and replaced it with the popular creed of liberty, equality and fraternity.

There is a popular story that when Henry Kissinger asked the late Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in 1972 what was his view of the French Revolution, he said it was too early to tell. The American translator at that meeting, today Professor Chas Freeman, has stated that the correct question was not about the 1789 revolution, but the 1968 French student uprising in Paris. Zhou Enlai was, of course, French-trained and himself an active participant of the Chinese students' revolt in Lyon in 1921. Born out of student protests, the Chinese Communist Party has a deep understanding of how protests work.

Bastille Day this year was celebrated with a show of French military might, as if they need that to deal with the Yellow Vest protests. Perhaps they remember the violent history of the French Revolution, which had to deal with both internal and external fighting, as it was opposed by the monarchies in Britain, Austria and other European states. From 1793-94, there was a Reign of Terror, in which many nobles and 'enemies of the people' were publicly tried and guillotined. Order was only restored internally when Napoleon effectively took power but spent the next twenty years fighting Britain and the rest of monarchic Europe.

Is populism defined by economics or culture? Since the Brexit referendum in 2016, experts have sought to understand populism, defined as a mass movement with anti-elite, authoritarian and often nationalist elements that are rooted in economic insecurity and identity politics.

If it is economics alone, Harvard Professor Dani Rodrik thinks that the right economic policies can deal with economic inequalities and regional imbalances. But if it is culture and val-



 $\label{thm:condition} \mbox{Hong Kong residents gathered at the anti-extradition bill protest on June 9, 2019.}$

ues, then there are fewer policy options, making the structural changes much tougher to solve.

The real problem is that even if there are good policies available to deal with inequities, the politics have become so polarised that it seems impossible to arrive at the right mix of policies. To prevent populism sliding into chaos, it will take careful diagnosis before the right way forward toward reconciliation, compromise and rebuilding of trust can occur

Professor Julia Azari (Foreign Affairs 2019) argues that American democracy is dysfunctional because of three legacy deficiencies. First, modern political issues exist largely at the national level, but voting is based at the local level, which means that the older, rural white population is endowed with more Senate seats than the urban, increasingly racially mixed voters. Second, the party politics has changed dramatically along very polarised and entrenched lines, with the Republican Party increasingly willing to take hostile measures to prevent reforms demanded by the

Democrats, and also block judiciary appointments and legislative action along ideological lines, often favouring the rich, but espousing Christian-Judaic religious fervour. Third, even though the American Civil War was fought over slavery, race remains a divisive factor in American politics, as shown by Congress's recently rebuke of President Trump's asking four non-white Democrat Congress-women 'to go back to where they come from'.

The issue of race, religion and identity lies at the heart of recent populism.

Like the US, the rise of the right wing in populist politics in Britain and Europe reflect these identity issues. First, there is a generational difference in voting patterns. During the Brexit referendum, the young who would have preferred to Remain did not vote, whereas the older generation voted more for Leave. The preference for British identity and sovereignty meant an underlying resentment of the growing loss of sovereign power to the European Commission. It was this deep-seated concern about British sovereignty and identity that prompts the

170,000 mostly white and older members of the Conservative Party who will decide on not just the next British Prime Minister, but also the fate of the Brexit negotiations.

In Europe, ethnic and religious factors underlie the fears of right-wing conservatives who have also voiced their loss of vereignty seat of the European Commission), as well as fears of being overwhelmed by growing immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East. The Hungarian and Italian right-wing parties, for example, are more comfortable with working with Russia, but much more against immigration. Even as Europe struggles to revive economic growth, how to hold Europe together as populist interests diverge is precisely the divide between local politics and national interests.

This divide exists also in Hong Kong. It is clear that after 156 years under British colonial rule, there are cultural differences between Hong Kongers and Mainlanders. The recent protests in Hong Kong reflect deep identity differences that must be resolved before the One Country, Two Systems mandate expires by 2047.

Thus both the Mainland and the Hong Kong community must arrive at a new social understanding on how to stay together as one nation that can also accommodate diverse opinions and cultural differences.

The Azari analysis of the national-local divide has excluded the geo-political dimension. Globalisation has already eroded the lines of national sovereignty as defined by the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, because of the rapid spread of knowledge and trade. Nevertheless, national governments still resent any foreign intervention in what they construe as domestic concerns.

This is why the young protesters in Hong Kong have no appreciation of the serious implications of calling on G20 intervention for their cause. By escalating a 'within-family quarrel' to an 'outside-family' dispute, the risk of 'Balkanisation' (fragmentation that invites foreign intervention, including war in the case of the Balkans) is something no one in the region would want.

In short, if we fail to deal with domestic economic inequalities through the right policies early enough, and we allow the more deep-seated cultural differences to surface, then the problems become more intractable than expected.

Getting the political wisdom to see that prevention is better than the cure is the tough part. Now the reconciliation and healing process becomes the real political test ahead.

Sheng writes on global issues for Asia News Network, of which The Kathmandu Post is a member. Politics have become so polarised that it seems impossible to arrive at the right mix of policies.

The last dance

BIBEK KHANAL

To the slightest change of beat we changed the movement of our arms. Every time the octave changed, we kept our feet on the different part of the grass. Every time she saw me smile, she came into my arms and I made her fly like a swan dancing over a lake

It was supposed to be our last dance. The sky also seemed sad in our farewell dance. To hide its sadness, the sky had already covered itself with clouds, and the moon was not able to see us dancing. Later that night the moon showed up and it was brighter than ever. The moon looked as if the sun had arrived in the darkness.

I felt her hands tickling me. Her

Infinite as if we were together there in that particular moment. A moment in which you could live in forever. That second, so long that you could live your entire life in it. The stare from her eyes where I could see our stories being told. I didn't want that dance to end. I wanted to keep dancing forever. However, I had to go, as every perfect thing eventually comes to an end.

She crossed her arms and rested her head on my chest. My heart felt the warmth of the moment. With her forehead resting over mine I struggled to look at her eyes. What I felt was her breathing, and I fell more in love with her.

I knew I was in love. I was in love for the first and the last time.



hands weren't sweaty neither were they warm. It was perfect to hold onto. I wished her hands were tied to me forever. But that was not going to happen. I was thinking too much. This was the last dance and nothing more. Every time I looked at her eyes, my mind couldn't stop thinking about the lyrics of the song, *Oh*, *Susan'* by Mark Whalen.

I need to go now I don't even know how I see it in your eyes

Maybe she wanted us to part happily like a piece of music, which is why she might have wanted me to go away after the dance.

But at that moment I felt infinite.

The rain came to an end. And the moon cried watching us dance. The stars mimicked our moves, and they twinkled along. That's how we danced for the last time.

She took my heart with her. Probably it is still dancing within her ribs. That rainy day took all my tears. Now, I am left with her touches.

Now, she is gone, with the end of the music.

I need to go now I don't even know how I see it in your eyes

Khanal is a twelfth grader at St Xavier's College

Grieving heart



MAMINA SHRESTHA

The normalcy of things isn't always a thing that gives us the solace we need. The last time I met Maa, I wanted to ask her to tell me random stories from her childhood, any piece from the past that she could scrap off. "Maa..." was the only word that escaped my mouth. I was never the granddaughter who would ask things like that. That week too, I stopped myself midway

The folds in her skin were darkened by the wounds she earned every time she visited the hospital. The brown patches had increased over the past few weeks. The afternoon sun was bouncing off her clear, pale skin. She looked luminous. The dull brown patches on her wrists and feet seemed out of place, like wrong strokes on a canvas. They didn't belong there. She didn't deserve them.

A few strands on her forehead were now silver white. The recent hospital stays had been long and tiring. She had no chance to paint them black. Three days after she was discharged, I had pointed to her hair and teased her

"Now you finally look like a grandmother, Maa! The silver hair suits you well. Don't colour it now, okay?" I had said. "Really? The silver hair looks nice on me? Okay, now I will let all of my hair become like this," Maa had answered back with a lingering smile.

The last time I met Maa she was complaining about how this winter had been hard on her. "I feel too weak for anything this year. I feel like I have been sick forever," she said. After a while, she rested her head on the armrest of the sofa that served as a makeshift bed in the newly refurbished living room. That was when I noticed that the room was warmer and airier than the other room Maa slept in. Maa woke up after a few minutes and asked me about work. I told her about the

classes I taught the week before. Maa asked me if it was hard having to manage college early in the morning and then working till late in the evening. "You were sick last week weren't you? Your mother told me you had fever. Are you good now?" Maa inquired. My head was buzzing and I felt warm and tingly and cold, all at the same time. My fever wasn't entirely gone. "I am a lot better now. But I want to go home early today," I answered.

In silence, Maa and I drifted back to our own train of thoughts. There was nothing to feel weird about in the comforting silence. I had denied Maa's offer for lunch. It was a rare day for me to deny samosas. But that day, I just wanted to sit close to Maa and read my book.

Now as I think of that day, there are only block of memories that I can put together. There are so many gaps which I will want to fill in with well-versed dialogues that never really happened. Memories are a tricky place to be at. They are never ull. But Maa, today was a slow fire. It ached. It hurt. It broke. It rose in smoke in all shades of grey and it was weird.

One moment I was smiling thinking that now Baa and you were not alone anymore. On the other hand, I remembered how you had so many dreams and wishes besides Baa that you had left undiscovered.

They brought in the colourful shawl you had lent me in a particularly chilly fall afternoon and set it to flames right next to you. In that moment, the warmth the shawl gave me that day vanished, and I choked on my own breath. It hurt.

I always told you looked lovely in all colors. But Maa, today they hid your body in yellow piece of cloth and I almost didn't recognise you from afar. Maa, I don't think you look good in yellow.

Shrestha is an undergraduate student at St Xavier's College

FICTION PARK

KASHI BK

Yuvraj was only 8 years old when he and his family sold their house in Naudanda Village in Kaski district and moved to Kathmandu. At 20, he left for the United States for his undergraduate degree, and by 28, he had completed his master's degree in psychology from the University of Illinois.

In the 20 years since he left his village, he hadn't returned home once. So, when he visited Nepal after his post graduation and told his parents that he would like to visit his village during his stay in the country, they were pleasantly surprised.

Yuvraj was seven when his father took him to Kathmandu for the first time. Yuvraj cried the entire return journey to the villge. He cried saying he didn't want to return to the village. Sympathetic passengers tried coaxing young Yuvraj into not crying by giving him candies and making funny faces. But Yuvraj would have none of it. The not-so-sympathetic passengers looked at the father-son duo disapprovingly and some even made comments like "kasto naterne baccha ho, baccha bhaeko bus ma ta chadnai hundaina, kasto dhukha diney bachha." As young Yuvraj kept on with his mournful wail, his father kept apologising profusely to fellow passengers.

After moving to Kathmandu, his parents visited the village every year, but Yuvraj never went with them. They never insisted him to. They were worried that if they forced him to go with them, he would cry the entire journey and disturb everybody. When Yuvraj was 12, his father asked him if he would like to go to the village with him during Dashain, Yuvrja flatly refused, like he always had.

That evening at the dinner table, Yuvraj out of the blue told his parents that he doesn't like visiting the village because the place reminds him of his paternal grandmother a lot. She passed away when Yuvraj was seven.
A few weeks after her death
Yuvraj's father took him to
Kathmandu. The two visited all

the major temples in the city and

prayed for the departed soul.

Yuvraj was very close to his grandmother and loved her deeply. He slept with her until she passed away. He only went to school if she took him, ate his medicines only when she fed them to him. Every Monday, the two visited the temple at the end of the village, and every summer Saturday, the two went to Phedi Khola, an hour walk from the village. There, the two spent the whole day bathing, washing clothes, and fishing.

When she passed away, it was a shock to everybody in the village. She wasn't suffering from any life threatening illnesses. One night,

Delayed goodbye

she went to bed with Yuvraj, just
like she had for many years and
their respects to the familyth

like she had for many years, and didn't wake up the next day. When Yuvraj woke up in the morning and found his grandmother still in bed, he nudged her and told her to wake up. When she didn't respond, a worried Yuvraj alarmed his parents. Everything after that happened in a blur. His mother cried, his father sobbed, and young Yuvraj had trouble understanding what had happened. He knew something terrible had happened to his beloved grandmother, but death was a concept he hadn't grasped yet. He kept telling everyone who visited the house to pay their respects to the familythat his grandmother will come back again. He told them that she loved him too much to just leave forever. On the seventh day of her death, Yuvraj told his parents that he didn't think his grandmother was coming back again. That night, he told them he did'nt want to sleep in her room, and that he would like to sleep alone in the room on the ground floor of the house. When his father placed a photo of his grandmother beside his bed, Yuvraj asked him to remove it. It was his favourite photo of her. In

the photo, his late grandmother was in her 20s and wore a bright red sari. She carried a bunch of marigold flowers in her hand. Marigold was her favourite flower, and as a result it became Yuvraj's favourite flower, too.

Yuvraj took the last flight from Kathmandu to Pokhara. From the city, his village was a two-hour drive. He rented a motorcycle from Lakeside, and set out for his destination. It was a cold November evening, and the wind was bone-chilling cold. Yuvraj regretted his decision to ride a motorcycle to his village. hour into the ride, stopped at a small tea beside the road. It was getting dark. He learned from the tea shop owner that the name of the place was Phedi, a

name it got from the river that flowed via the village. The name didn't register with him. He had been away for 20 years, which was long enough time for one's memory to start forgetting things.

At the corner of the shop, Yuvraj saw a young woman waiting. She told her that she was waiting for a bus to Naudanda. He told her that he was originally from the village and was going there and that he can drop her as well. Yuvraj found it a bit surprising when she didn't ask him who his parents were. When the two passed by the temple at the end of the village, Yuvraj, in an attempt to strike a conversation, said that he used to visit the temple every week when he was a kid. The woman didn't say anything. A few minutes later she asked him to stop the motorcycle in front of the house that he grew up in.

"Twenty years is too long to be away from one's home, babu. But I am glad you are finally here," she said. Yuvraj was taken back. He didn't remember mentioning to the woman how long he had been away, and he also found it odd that she referred to her as babu even though she clearly looked younger than him.

When he reached his uncle's house in the village later that night, he noticed a lone photo hanging on the wall of the living room. It was his favourite photo of his late grandmother. When he looked at the photo closely, he was shocked. The woman he had just dropped infront of his old house looked exactly the same as his grandmother in the photo. Even the sari was the same. Everything that had happened earlier that day began to make sense. That night, he called his parents and told them what had happened. He said, "Remember how I used to tell you guys that my grandmother loved me too much to leave just like that and that she would come again. Looks like she had been waiting for me all these years. I wish I had come sooner."

The little worlds that are part of a larger whole

Microcosm brings together interpretations of 40 artists, but not everyone will resonate with the printworks on display.



The exhibition curated by Lina Vincent brings together printmaking works of artists from 14 different countries as part of the ongoing sixth International Art Exchange Program 2018.

POST PHOTOS: BEEJU MAHARJAN

SRIZU BAJRACHARYA

We all live in different worlds but everything is interconnected. What happens in one world affects the other. This is the underlying theme of the 'Microcosm' exhibition that is currently being displayed at the newly opened Tara Art Gallery, Patan Dhoka.

The exhibition curated by Lina Vincent brings together printmaking works of 40 artists from 14 different countries as part of the ongoing sixth International Art Exchange Program 2018. It is themed under 'microcosm and macrocosm', an interpretation of little worlds that are interlinked to a vast universe. The show traces different understandings of various artists, mainly in abstracts. The various artworks use different printmaking techniques such as etching, mezzotint, serigraph, photopolymer etching and relief, photo intaglio, woodcut, drypoint, platography, aquatint, linocut and laser-cut acrylic.

At the Tara Art Gallery, the square artworks are framed individually with a blue-grey paper and are neatly arranged symmetrically on the walls. But onlookers will have to take time to understand the meanings behind these prints. They will have to spend time analysing the prints carefully, and for some, this could be time-consuming and even incomprehensible.

Although programmes like International Art Exchange Program are strengthening the global networks of artists by exchanging their works and has amassed the attention of a larger audience, it doesn't seem to have been able to communicate ideas properly to audiences, especially in Nepal where people admire the beauty of artworks but take less from the experience itself.

experience itself.

The 40 selected artists of the International Art Exchange Program are all provided with the 40 selected works each, including their own, that they are required to exhibit in their respective countries. In Nepal, the exhibition has been put together jointly by Sushma Shakya, Saurganga Darshandhari and Sunita Maharjan, Nepali participants of the exchange programme.

"This programme is interesting because each artist will have the works of all the other artists with them, and it's special because you can share your work with people who value and understand your work. Although we haven't met these artists in person, we are now connected through a social media group," says Sunita Maharjan.

'Microcosm' is unusual and therefore appeal-





ing. Sushma Shakya's 'element of creation' uses etching technique and delves into the five elements of creation using a womb as a symbol. The womb has a baby developing inside it in a layered circumvent. The different layers if pon-

dered upon deeply looks like water, fire and air.
Another artist, Saurganga Darshandhari,
has his artwork exploring kinship or social
engagement as one of the forms of microcosm
as one would interpret from the work that uses

etching and aquatint technique. The dominant blue colour seems to represent water, and the birds and the sky represent freedom. The artist, in the exhibition's brochure explains that the different elements in his print have various representations, for instance a dog symbolises loyalty and the lotus excitement.

Sunita Maharjan's Terrace series, which uses woodcut, perhaps, stands out because they represent an outline of Kathmandu's terraces.

Upon studying it carefully one will notice water tanks, wires, drums, and the compactness of these terraces, which in many parts of Kathmandu are built so close together that they look conjoined.

Of the many international artists' printworks, people will also be drawn towards Seema Kohli's 'the golden womb' in which a woman is encircled with layers of leaves' vines. The artwork's colour resembles that of soil although it's actually gold and it seems to represent feminism. Most printworks that are part of the exhibition, which work on similar concepts, seem to represent a boy in the womb, but Kohli's print is distinct because it shows a full grown woman inside the womb.

The exhibition is admirable. One can notice the details that the artists have put in their printworks and can imagine how tiring the process might have been. However, there are some mind-boggling pieces as well, where onlookers are left numb. Like, Maria Joana Santos' 'fresh', which uses etching. There's almost nothing in the printwork except a sprinkled lemon colour silhouette which seems to be wilting.

"I was surprised when I saw the artwork, but later, when I understood the depth of the concept, I felt inspired. The artist tries to express how there is affinity even with things that are not identified," says Sushma Shakya who admires the artwork.

But how many will understand this concept is a question that needs to be pecked upon, both by artists and curators.

"Artists usually explain their work of art, but sometimes it is left open-ended to the audiences because we all perceive art in different ways and sometimes the purpose of the art itself is to explore different ideas," says Sunita Maharjan.

"The art scene in Nepal today has gained momentum and printmaking has become a contemporary art style that many are exploring" she cove

There is no doubt that 'Microcosm' has helped artists do just that. And for those who love art and like speculating the depth of the philosophies embedded in them, this is an exhibition worth your time. But the ones who are still new to art, and are still trying to figure out 'what art is', may leave the exhibition more confused.

Microcosm will be on display until July 22 at Tara Art Gallery, Patan Dhoka.

Game of Thrones cast defend final season at Comic-Con

AGENCE-FRANCE PRESSE SAN DIEGO, JULY 20

The Game of Thrones cast leapt to the defense of its much-maligned final season in front of a boisterous crowd at San Diego Comic-Con on Friday, blaming the backlash on negative media coverage.

The HBO fantasy epic's conclusion enraged fans around the world, and organizers of the pop culture convention reminded attendees before the retrospective panel to make the cast "feel welcome."

While the cast drew a rapturous reception, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau—who played Jaime Lannister—was booed after describing his character's death in the arms of his sister and lover Cersei as "perfect."

"It made sense to me" said the

"It made sense to me," said the actor, before being interrupted by a heckler.

"This show has brought so many people together, watching it, loving it. So obviously when it comes to an end it's going to piss you off no matter what... just don't call people names," he added.

An online petition to HBO to remake the final season with "competent writers" was signed by 1.6 million people.

The panel was billed as the show creators' first public outing following the backlash.

But showrunners David

Benioff and Dan Weiss quietly withdrew along with two cast members earlier in the week. The remaining members

expressed support for the final season. Conleth Hill—who played Varys—described the fan response to the show over the years as extremely positive, referring to the negativity as a "media-led hate campaign."

The atmosphere quickly lightened as cast members joked about stealing props from the set. John Bradley, known to fans as Samwell Tarly, addressed another controversy, shooting down theories that he was to blame for a plastic water bottle accidentally left in shot during the final season. "Pardon me for being thirsty," he joked.

TV takes over

After Hollywood film stars Tom Cruise and Arnold Schwarzenegger dominated Thursday's opening day, television took center stage at Comic-Con Friday.

Netflix surprised attendees by screening the first episode of The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance, its upcoming prequel series to Jim Henson's classic 1982 fantasy film.

Its combination of old-fashioned puppetry and cutting-edge visual effects aims to cast a spell on old and young alike.

Mark Hamill and *Rocketman* star Taron Egerton—who both provide voices—appeared in a panel discussion.

Fan favorite Hamill was presented with Comic-Con's "Icon Award," telling the audience he felt lucky "to be able to do all the things I loved as a kid and get paid for it." "This is just seems wildly excessive," the Star Wars actor joked about the accolade, before serenading the crowd with his Buddi song from the film Child's Play." Amazon Prime wheeled out Carnival Row starring Orlando Bloom and Cara Delevingne, which is set in a fantastical Victorian-esque world filled with mythological immigrant

creatures.

Bloom said it was a "great gift and opportunity" to be in a show which was "so timely and... spoke to a lot of the issues with relevance to what's happening in the world today."

AMC used its annual Walking Dead franchise panels to confirm veteran Danai Gurira—who appeared in the recent blockbuster Avengers movies—



the series in 201:
ft standing ovation.
Plans were also
series of films sta

Plans were also teased for a series of films starring Andrew Lincoln, who announced his own departure from the show—the highest rated series in cable television history—at last year's Comic-Con.

Avengers eye record
Earlier, Avengers: Endgame



Fans react as they watch HBO's Game of Thrones series finale at a viewing party at Brennan's bar in Marina del Rey, California.

directors Joe and Anthony

will depart the zombie show.
Gurira, who first appeared on the series in 2012, received a standing ovation

Russo said it would be a "big thrill" to pass the all-time box office record held by *Avatar*, as they set out plans to collaborate with a number of different stars from the Marvel superhero universe. *Endgame* is inching ever closer to surpassing James Cameron's \$2.788 billion haul. It is currently just \$5 million short, and was still playing in 1,400 US

theaters at the weekend despite

being released in April.

"James Cameron has always been an idol of ours... to be so close to one of his great films is really special," said Anthony.

The filmmaking brothers said their next project *Cherry*, starring *Spider-Man* actor Tom Holland, will be a "mature" and "complicated" look at the US opioid crisis.

"It's touched our families, the crisis, so it's a deeply personal movie for us," said Anthony. Filming will begin in October.

WORLD

BRIEFING

Vatican opens burial chambers in hunt for princesses and missing teen

VATICAN CITY: The Vatican on Saturday opened two burial chambers discovered under a trapdoor as it attempts to get to the bottom of a riddle involving two 19th century princesses and a teenager who went missing 36 years ago. The ossuaries were found last week under the floor of the Pontifical Teutonic College after the shock discovery earlier this month that the bones of the princesses had disap peared from two tombs in the Teutonic Cemetery. The graves of Princess Sophie von Hohenlohe and Princess Charlotte Federica of Mecklenburg, who died in 1836 and 1840, had been exhumed after an anonymous tip-off that they may hold the remains of an Italian youngster.

Scotland Yard Twitter and emails hacked

LONDON: London's Metropolitan Police apologised on Saturday after its Twitter, emails and news pages were targeted by hackers and began pumping out a series of bizarre messages. After a series of messages late Friday that read simply "test" or seemingly random letters, the police sites began using foul language with anti-police sentiment and calling for a jailed rapper to be released. "Free Digga D," said one such message. The Met Police's Twitter account has 1.22 million followers. Scotland Yard police headquarters said its internal IT infrastructure had not been hacked, explaining the issue was limited to its press office's online provider, MyNewsDesk, which put news releases online to the public. "Unauthorised messages appeared on the news section of our website," it

Trump says Johnson would do 'great job' as British PM

es they have received.

said, as well as on its Twitter feed and emails. "We apologise to our subscribers and followers for the messag-

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has said that Boris Johnson, the frontrunner to be Britain's next prime minister, would do a "great job" in the post after the pair had a telephone conversation. "I like him," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. "I spoke to him yesterday." "He is going to do a great job," the Republican president added. "We get along well." Johnson is tipped to replace Theresa May as prime minister next week, when the results of a postal ballot by the governing Conservative Party are revealed. Trump renewed his long-standing criticisms of May, saying she had done "a very poor job" of taking Britain out of the EU and predicting that Brexit hardliner Johnson would fix the "disaster." "He's a different kind of a guy, but they say I'm a different kind of a guy too. We get along well." Trump told reporters.

Last Kadhafi PM freed in Libva for 'health reasons'

TRIPOLI: Baghdadi al-Mahmoudi, Libya's last prime minister under ousted dictator Moamer Kadhafi, has been released from jail for health reasons four years after being sentenced to death, Tripoli's justice ministry said on Saturday. Mahmoudi, in his 70s, was premier when a NATObacked uprising in 2011 toppled and killed Kadhafi. He was handed the death sentence in July 2014 along with eight other Kadhafi-era officials including the leader's son Seif al-Islam, over their alleged role in a bloody crackdown on protesters. The justice ministry said Mahmoudi was released "for health reasons" at the recommendation of a medical commission "so that he could be treated at specialised medical centres'

(AGENCIES)



People take part in a rally in support of independent candidates for elections to Moscowo City Duma, the capital's regional parliament, in Moscow, Russia on Saturday.

US putting troops back in Saudi Arabia

Saudi King Salman approved hosting US forces in the country to boost regional security and stability: State news agency

ASSOCIATED PRESS

With Iranian military threats in mind, the United States is sending American forces, including fighter aircraft, air defense missiles and likely more than 500 troops, to a Saudi air base that became a hub of American air power in the Middle East in the 1990s but was abandoned by Washington after it toppled Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein

Saudi Arabia's King Salman approved hosting US forces in the country to boost regional security and stability, the state news agency (SPA) reported on Friday.

The US Defense Department confirmed the move in a statement, saying it would deploy troops and resources to Saudi Arabia to "provide an additional deterrent" in the face of "emergent, credible threats."

The gesture comes amid rising tenin the Gulf that have impacted global

Senior American defense officials said some US troops and Patriot air defense missile systems have already arrived at Prince Sultan Air Base, south of Riyadh, where the troops have been preparing for the arrival of aircraft later this summer as well as additional troops. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity in order to details announced.

The agreement has been in the works for many weeks and is not a response specifically to Friday's seizure by Iran of a British tanker in the Persian Gulf. Tensions with Iran have spiked since May when the Trump administration said it had detected increased Iranian preparations for possible attacks on US forces and



Senior American defense officials said some US troops and Patriot air defense missile systems have already arrived at Prince Sultan Air Base, south of Riyadh.

interests in the Gulf area.

In a written statement Friday the deployments to Saudi Arabia had been approved by the Pentagon.

"This movement of forces provides an additional deterrent, and ensures our ability to defend our forces and interests in the region from emergent, credible threats," Central Command "This movement creates improvement of operational depth and logistical networks. US Central Command continually assesses force posture in the region and is working with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia authorities to base US assets at the appropriate locations."

Putting US combat forces back in Saudi Arabia, after an absence of more than a decade, adds depth to the regional alignment of US military power, which is mostly in locations on the Persian Gulf that are more vulnerable to Iranian missile attack

But it also introduces a political and diplomatic complication for the critics of coddling the Saudis even after the murder last fall of dissident writer Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents. Many in Congress now question the decades-old US-Saudi security alliance and oppose major new arms sales to the kingdom.

Starting with the January 1991 air war against Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait the previous summer, the US flew a wide range of aircraft from Prince Sultan air base, originally known as al-Kharj. Supported by an all-American array of creature comforts like fast-food restaurants and swimming pools, US forces there flew and maintained Air Force fighters and other warplanes.

The base also served as a launch pad for the December 1998 bombing of Iraq, code-named Operation Desert Fox, which targeted sites believed to

Western allies back UK over tanker seizure

PARIS: Iran's seizure of a UK-flagged tanker in the Strait of Hormuz has further heightened tensions in the Gulf region after the US military claimed it had downed an Iranian

Britain's allies have called for the release of the vessel, warning of the danger of escalation.

US President Donald Trump said he would hold talks with Britain about the tanker's seizure Revolutionary Guards.

"And this only goes to show what I'm saying about Iran: trouble. Nothing but trouble," he told reporters at the White House on Friday.

He again denounced the 2015 deal between Iran and Western powers aimed at curbing Tehran's nuclear ambitions, describing it as a "ridicucessor Barack Obama.

British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said Tehran's seizure of the tanker showed "worrying signs Iran may be choosing a dangerous path of illegal and destabilising behaviour".

The incident came hours after a court in the British territory of Gibraltar extended the detention of an Iranian tanker seized two weeks ago on allegations of breaching EU sanctions against Syria. (AFP)

be associated with Iraq's nuclear and missile programs. In 2001, the base became home to the US military's main air control organization, known as the Combined Air Operations Center, which orchestrated the air war in Afghanistan until it was relocated in 2003 to al-Udeid air base in Qatar.

Mexico fulfills migration enforcement pledge ahead of US deadline

REUTERS SAN SALVADOR, JULY 20

Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard said on Friday that Mexico has followed through on its commitment to the United States to reduce migration from Central America, as a deadline in a bilateral pact approaches.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is scheduled to travel to Mexico City to discuss migration and trade with Ebrard on Sunday, a day before the end of a 45-day period in which the Mexican government pledged to significantly lower the number of people trying to cross the US border

avert punitive trade tariffs. Under the deal, if the United States deems that Mexico has not done enough, the two countries will begin talks over changing rules to make most asylum seekers apply for refuge in Mexico, not the United States.

Mexico has long resisted US pressure to accept this "safe third country" status

The number of apprehensions of migrants on the southern US border dropped by roughly a third to about 100,000 in June, after Mexico deployed some 21,000 militarized National Guard police to stem the flows.

'We have complied (with the deal), so I don't see a problem," Ebrard said. Speaking to reporters in El Salvador, Ebrard also said Mexico had fulfilled its pledge to support economic development in Central America.

One-stop clinics, a rare lifesaver for Zimbabwe's sick

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Blessing Chingwaru could barely walk without support when he arrived at the specialist Rutsanana clinic in Harare complaining of chest pains and fatigue.

Weighing a skeletal 37 kilogrammes (82 pounds), the HIV-positive motor mechanic knew something was wrong.

He was immediately given a number of tests and told the bad news: He was also suffering from advanced-stage tuberculosis. Dual infection by HIV and TB is a notorious killer. "My health was deteriorating and I kept wondering why," Chingwaru, 29, recalled at the clinic.

Within hours of the diagnosis Chingwaru was given free treatment and nursing care

In a country where more than a dozen people die each day from TB-related sicknesses, it was a rare example of efficient public healthcare

The Rutsanana Polyclinic in Harare's poor suburb of Glen Norah, which Chingwaru visited, is one of 10 pilot clinics in the country offering free diagnosis and treatment for TB, diabetes and HIV.

The clinic, which opened in 2016, is staffed by 24 nurses and currently treats 120 TB patients. Among the million-plus people living with HIV in Zimbabwe, TB is the most common cause of death, according to the World Health Organization.

HIV-positive people, and others with weakened immune systems, are particularly vulnerable to contracting the infection. After Chingwaru's initial visit in February, doctors had feared for his life. But following five months of careful treatment Chingwaru has gained 15 kilos. "Everything I need, I get here," said Chingwaru, forming fists with both hands to show off his regained strength.

In a country where public health services have practically collapsed, containing the spread of TB has been a persistent

Zimbabwe has been stuck in a catastrophic economic and financial crisis for decades and its doctors are underpaid and

Although TB treatment is free, the annual number of TB infections in Zimbabwe remains among the highest in the world.

The contagious infection is usually found in the lungs and is caught by breathing in the bacteria from tiny droplets sneezed or coughed out.

As HIV-positive people are so vulnerable to TB, the clinics have followed the advice of WHO officials to link TB testing and treatment with HIV prevention programs.

Close to the main gate of the Rutsanana clinic, a green self-testing HIV tent has been erected to encourage people to check their status

The clinic also offers voluntary HIV counselling and antiretroviral treatment. Sithabiso Dube, a doctor with the medi-

cal charity International Union Against TB who heads the TB and HIV programme, said people with diabetes also have a higher risk of developing TB, so patients are tested for both diseases. "Instead of going to seek diabetic care at one clinic and TB care at another, they are able to get these services in one place," Dube told AFP. Because services are free "they are able

to cut down on what we call catastrophic costs to the TB patients," she said.

Largely funded by a US Agency for International Development (USAID) programme, the pilot clinics have become lifesavers for the poor—but only if they happen to live near them. The vast majority of the population have

no access to the one-stop clinics.

tres to be rolled out across Zimbabwe. Rutsanana clinic matron Angela Chikondo said the programme was crucial to minimising complications among TB and diabetes patients.

As a result there are plans to scale up the

programme, with another 46 similar cen-



Microscopist Mazvita Chataurwa prepares slides to conduct tests on patient's sputum samples in an on-site laboratory, at Rutsanana Polyclinic in Glen Norah township, Harare.

BRIEFING

Death toll rises to 15 after China gas plant blast

BEIJING: The death toll from a huge explosion that rocked a gas plant in central China has risen to 15, state media said on Saturday. Friday's blast at the Henan Coal Gas Group factory left another 15 people seriously wounded and more with light inju ries, said the state-run People's Daily. The blast shattered windows and doors of buildings in a three-kilometre (1.9-mile) radius. It occurred in the air separation unit of Henan Coal's factory, state broadcaster CCTV said, with the official Xinhua news agency saying a device in the factory exploded at 5:45 pm on Friday. All production at the plant has been stopped. More than 270 rescuers were on the scene, Xinhua said, citing the emergency management ministry. 'Many windows and doors within a three-kilometre radius were shattered, and some interior doors were also blown out by the blast," CCTV said on its Twitter-like Weibo social media account. AFP could not immediately verify the authenticity of the footage.

India grounds pilot for sending hijack alert by mistake

NEW DELHI: India has suspended a pilot for accidentally sending a hijack alert to air traffic control during a domestic flight last month, the aviation authority said. The AirAsia India plane, flying from the capital New Delhi to Srinagar, suffered a stalled engine and the captain told first officer Ravi Raj to send an emergency code to alert authorities about the situation. Instead of the appropriate code 7700. Rai transmitted 7500the code for a hijacking—India's Director General of Civil Aviation said in a statement on Friday. Such a transmission is considered a major security alert across the world. Precise details of the response from Indian authorities during the incident were not available, but local media reported last month that proce dures for handling a hijacking were set in motion. The Airbus A320 airliner safely landed later in the city of Chandigarh. Raj was found guilty of "negligent conduct" and suspended for three months, the DGCA said.

Hong Kong police uncover 'homemade explosive lab'

HONG KONG: Hong Kong police on Saturday said they had uncovered a makeshift factory producing high-powered explosives alongside pro-independence leaflets, a discovery which comes as the city is rocked by unprecedented political protests. Police said they swooped on an indus trial building in the district of Tsuen Wan on Friday evening and arrested a 27-year-old man. "We are dealing with a homemade laboratory for the manufacture of high explosive, specifically TATP," Superintendent Alick McWhirter, a bomb squad specialist. told reporters on Saturday. "This is an extremely sensitive and an extremely powerful high explosive. It will cause exceptional amounts of damage when used," he added.

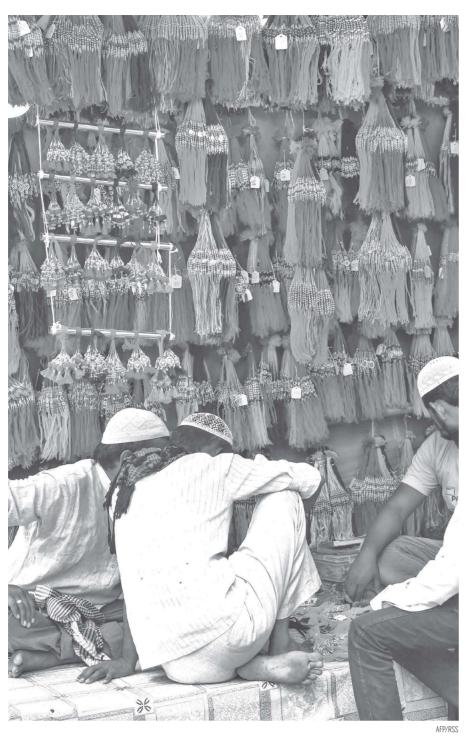
Pakistan announces religious school reform

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has said it has agreed with the country's clergy to introduce reforms in madrassa religious schools to bring them in line with conventional schools, curbing hate speech and extremist narratives The announcement came just before Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Washington for a Monday meeting with President Donald Trump, whose administration continues to press Pakistan over terrorist financing and curbing militancy. The government will register more than 30,000 madrassas, which will teach subjects like English, mathematics and science, Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Shafqat Mehmood said. He said the government will conduct their exams and is aiming for a first batch next June, although that is not a firm goal. Pakistan's madrassas have long been accused of promoting extremist narratives and have been dubbed "nurs-

Indian bartender jailed for decade over killing of British girl in Goa

eries of extremism".

PANAJI (India): An Indian court has sent a bartender to jail for 10 years over the sexual assault and killing of British schoolgirl Scarlett Keeling on a Goa beach in 2008. The Goa High Court ordered the maximum sentence against Samson D'Souza after finding him guilty on Wednesday of culpable homicide, sexual assault on a minor, provision of drugs and destruction of evidence. The 15-year-old's bruised and half-naked body was found in shallow water on a beach in Goa. Her death and her mother Fiona MacKeown's fight for justice made international headlines, shining a spotlight on the seedy side of the popular resort destination as well as on India's sluggish justice system. "Ten years is an appropriate punishment for anyone indulging in child abuse of this gravity," Vikram Varma, a lawyer for MacKeown, told AFP on Friday. (AGENCIES)



Muslim businessmen discuss prices of 'rakhis' (sacred thread) at a wholesale shop ahead of the annual Hindu festival of Raksha Bandhan in Mumbai. The annual festival of Raksha Bandhan, which commemorates the abiding ties between siblings of opposite sex, is marked by a simple ceremony in which a woman ties a rakhi, which may be a colourful thread, a simple bracelet, or a decorative string, around the wrist of her brother

Pakistan PM to meet Trump hoping to mend fences

A lot will depend on the kind of mood that President Trump and indeed Prime Minister Imran Khan find themselves in, observers say.

REUTERS ISLAMABAD, JULY 20

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan travels to the United States on Sunday hoping the arrest of a militant leader with a \$10 million US bounty on his head and progress in Afghan peace talks will

help secure a favourable reception. Khan is expected to try to mend fences and attract much needed investment during his meeting with US President Donald Trump in exchange for assurances of full cooperation in ending the war in Afghanistan and fighting militant threats.

Trump, a property developer turned reality TV star, and Khan, World Cup-winning captain of the Pakistan cricket team, both came to office after achieving fame away from politics and the personal chemistry between the two may

"A lot will depend on the kind of mood that President Trump and indeed Prime Minister Imran Khan find themselves in," said Farzana Sheikh, associate fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London.

"Neither of them is known to be particularly predictable.'

Battling to stave off a balance of payments crisis and forced to seek a bailout from the International Monetary Fund, Pakistan is badly in need of foreign investment but security is likely to be the main focus of the visit.

Khan will be accompanied by the powerful army chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa. Analysts believe he will play a key role in behind-the-scenes discussions where much of the serious business of the visit will take place, with the military looking to per-



suade Washington to restore aid and cooperation. "It's a visit which is closely being monitored by the military which is in desperate need for money," said author and analyst Ayesha Siddiqa

Last year, Trump cut off hundreds of millions of dollars in security assistance to Pakistan, accusing Islamabad of offering "nothing but lies and deceit" while giving safe haven to terrorists, a charge angrily rejected by Islamabad.

But Khan will believe the arrest on Wednesday of Hafiz Saeed, the alleged mastermind of a four-day militant attack on the Indian city of Mumbai in 2008, will send the right signals to Trump, who exuberantly welcomed the news on Twitter. More than 160 people were killed

in the four-day militant attacks. Saeed is designated a terrorist by the United States and the United Nations.

Trump said Saeed's arrest "after a 10-year search", was the result of pressure from his administra-



Donal Trump

tion on Pakistan to get tougher on militants.

But Saeed has been in and out of Pakistan prisons for the last decade and even addressed public rallies.

As well as assurances that it is cracking down on militants, Khan is likely to stress Pakistan's role in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table with the United States.

Trump has made no secret of his desire to end US military involvement in Afghanistan and Pakistan's cooperation will be essential to any deal to end the war and ensure the country does not become a base for militant groups like Islamic State.

"The United States, Russia and China know that without Pakistan's co-operation, there can be no settlement in Afghanistan, Sheikh said.

India, which in February came close to war with Pakistan over the disputed region of Kashmir and which accuses Islamabad of supporting militants, will be watching the talks closely.

Government supporters rally in Hong Kong to seek end to violence

REUTERS

Thousands gathered in Hong Kong on Saturday for a pro-government rally to call for an end to violence, after a wave of protests against an extradition bill triggered clashes between police and activists and plunged the

The rally comes a day ahead of yet another mass protest planned against the now-suspended extradition bill that would have allowed people in Hong Kong to be sent to mainland China for trial.

Hong Kong's embattled leader, Carrie Lam, has apologised for the turmoil the bill has caused and declared it "dead", although opponents say nothing short of its full withdrawal will do.

Demonstrators, mostly middle-aged or older, braved heavy rain and thunderstorms to gather at the city's Tamar Park, next to the Legislative Council which protesters stormed and raided on July 1 - the 22nd anniversary of Hong Kong's handover from British to Chinese rule. "Violence is intolerant. We are distressed about our home and we should absolutely stand out to support Hong Kong police, to maintain stability and rule of law in the society," said Tsol Pui, 85, president of Hong Kong Veterans' Home.

Two initially peaceful protests last weekend degenerated into running skirmishes between baton-wielding riot police and activists, resulting in scores of injuries and more than 40



Pro-government supporters participate in a rally to call for an end to violence in

arrests. The fights followed larger outbreaks of violence between police and protesters in central Hong Kong last month, with police forcing back activists with tear gas, rubber bullets and bean-bag rounds.

Activists and human rights groups have called for an independent investigation into what they describe as excessive use of force by police.

The protesters are also demanding the word "riot" be withdrawn from the government's description of demonstrations and the unconditional release of those arrested.

What started as protests over the

extradition bill has now morphed into demands for greater democracy, the resignation of leader Lam, and even curbing the number of mainland Chinese tourists to Hong Kong.

Under the terms of the handover from Britain in 1997, Hong Kong was allowed to retain extensive freedoms not enjoyed on the mainland under a "one country, two systems" formula, including an independent judiciary and right to protest.

But for many Hong Kong residents, the extradition bill is the latest step in a relentless march toward mainland control.

Sheila Dikshit, Delhi's longest-serving chief minister, dies

A veteran leader of the now-opposition Congress party, Dikshit served as chief minister of the capital for three consecutive terms, from 1998 to 2013.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Veteran Indian politician Sheila Dikshit, New Delhi's longest-serving chief minister, died on Saturday after a prolonged illness. She was 81.

Dikshit died at a hospital in New Delhi, where she had been admitted for treatment for a heart ailment, New Delhi Television channel said.

A veteran leader of the now-opposition Congress party, Dikshit served as chief minister of the capital for three consecutive terms, from 1998 to 2013.

In a tweet on Saturday, the Congress party called her a "lifelong congresswoman" who "transformed the face of Delhi."

Dikshit was elected as a member of India's Parliament in 1984, representing a seat in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. She served as a federal minister from 1986 to 1989.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrote on Twitter that Dikshit was "blessed with a warm and affable personality" and "made a noteworthy contribution to Delhi's development.

India's president, Ram Nath Kovind, tweeted that her "term in office was a period of momentous transformation



Sheila Dikshit

for the capital for which she will be

Dikshit had been undergoing treatment for multiple heart problems and underwent heart surgery in France last year. She was defeated in India's general election in May by a member of Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya

Thai farmers on the cash trail with snail slime

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

NAKHON NAYOK (THAILAND), JULY 20

Giant snails inch across a plate of pumpkin and cucumber in central Thailand, an "organic" diet to tease the prized collagen-rich mucus from the molluscs, which to some cosmetic firms are now more valuable

The snails at Phatinisiri Thangkeaw's farm were once the scourge of rice farmers, loathed for eating the buds of new crops. "Farmers used to throw them on the

road or in the rivers," Phatinisiri told AFP. "But now they sell them to me to earn extra money.' With her 1,000 snails, the teacher

makes an extra \$320 to \$650 a month. It is one of more than 80 farms in Nakhon Nayok province, two hours from the capital Bangkok, cashing in on the global snail beauty market, estimated at \$314 million, according to

research group Coherent Market

The precious slime is patiently "milked" from the glands of the snail by dripping water over it using a Its raw form is sold to Aden

International, a Thai-based cosmetics company that primarily ships its products to Korea and the US. The sole snail slime producer in Thailand, Aden was started three years ago as a business-savvy solution

Nayok, said founder Puttarathuvanun. And his bet paid off—Kitpong sells the serum under the Acha brand, but also supplies Korean and American cosmetic companies with a dried powder at 1.8 million baht (\$58,200) per

kilogram, he said. Gold is currently worth \$46,300 a

Compared to Aden's snail slime, the



A snail at the farm of Phatinisiri Thangkeaw in Nakhon Nayok province.

mucus produced in China-milked daily instead of once every three weeks in Thailand—is valued at about

80,000 baht (\$2,600) per kilogram,

Kitpong said.

'We found that our slime was very intense because the snails eat everything, including vegetables, grains and even mushrooms... producing good quality slime," he told AFP, explaining that the mucus can be used to heal sunburn and "heal

Somkamol Manchun, the doctor in charge of the purification process, said snail mucus contains collagen and elastin-ingredients that "can make skin firm with less wrinkles".

It "triggers the skin cells... and helps heal the skin".

At the moment, no scientific studies have been done on the curative qualities of snail serum and slime, but snail farmer Phatinisiri is already feeling the market heat up.

Two years ago, she was the first in the area to try farming the slime, she said, and villagers readily gave her what they considered pests

"Now I buy snails at about 25 baht to 30 baht (about \$1) per kilogram," she said. "But many people are doing snail farms now so the competition is high.'

THE KATHMANDU POST

American Airlines-Qantas joint venture wins final US approval

WASHINGTON, JULY 20

The US Department of Transportation (DOT) on Friday granted American Airlines Group Inc and Qantas Airways Ltd final approval to operate a joint venture after a prior effort was

rejected in 2016. The department last month had issued an order tentatively approving the agreement and granting antitrust immunity to the airlines covering international service.

US Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao announced the approval on Friday afternoon, noting it was the first completed review of an airline joint venture proposal during the Trump administration. Reuters was the first to report on the planned announcement earlier on Friday.

An application for a joint venture covering the United States, Australia and New Zealand was rejected in November 2016 by former President Barack Obama's DOT. It tentatively concluded after a 17-month review that the venture "would reduce competition and consumer choice.

The deal will allow the airlines to coordinate planning, pricing, sales and frequent flyer programmes, with new options and customer service improvements.

The two OneWorld alliance carriers are planning up to three new routes within the first two years as well as increased capacity on existing routes, the department has said.

American Airlines did not immediately comment on Friday, but Chief Executive Doug Parker said last month the joint venture would also create new jobs in the airlines and

In June, JetBlue Airways Corp told the DOT that it took no position on the alliance, but said it would "substantially reduce competition in relevant markets and concentrate a huge level of market share and power in the hands of immunised

It also said the three major global airline alliances—OneWorld, SkyTeam and StarAlliance—will control 86 percent of the US-Australia

The deal will allow the airlines to coordinate pricing and frequent flyer programmes.

US regulators in 2001 approved similar joint venture agreements for United Airlines and Air New Zealand Ltd, and in 2011 for Delta Air Lines Inc and Virgin Australia.

The US DOT is, however, requiring American and Qantas to perform a self-assessment of the venture's impact on competition seven years after it takes effect and report their findings to the government.

Regulators in Australia and New Zealand approved the first application for the joint venture before it was initially rejected by the US DOT.

American and Qantas in February 2018 made a second attempt to gain US permission regulatory President Donald Trump's administration for a venture that would let them coordinate prices and schedules. They threatened to cancel services if it was rejected and argued it could "unlock" up to \$310 million annually in consumer benefits.

The revised application made significant changes, including removing a provision that would have barred either carrier from code-sharing with other carriers. Code-sharing allows two or more carriers to publish and advertise a single flight under their own flight number.

The airlines argued in their 2018 application that the venture would lead to lower fares and higher capacity as a "more viable third competitor," and drive other carriers to improve quality, schedules and prices.

Qantas said last year the joint venture would allow the two airlines to "significantly improve service" and "stimulate demand."

The airlines said the agreement could generate up to 180,000 new trips between the United States and Australia and New Zealand annually.

......American

An American Airlines Boeing 737 Max 8, on a flight from Miami to New York City, comes in for



A view of the famous little red railway train of Montenvers running by the 'Mer de glace' (Sea of ice), the largest French glacier, near Chamonix Mont-Blanc, in the French Alps, eastern France. The train has served the route for over a century.

US-China officials discuss trade; Mnuchin eyes in-person talks

REUTERS

CHANTILLY (FRANCE), JULY 20

US and Chinese officials spoke by telephone on Thursday as the world's two largest economies seek to end a yearlong trade war, with US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin suggesting in-person talks could follow.

Mnuchin and US Representative Robert Lighthizer spoke with their Chinese counterparts over the phone, Lighthizer's office said on Thursday, following earlier comments by the Treasury secretary in an interview on the sidelines of the G7 meeting in Chantilly, France.

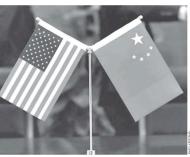
The United States and China have been embroiled in a tit-for-tat tariff battle since July 2018, as Washington presses Beijing to address what it sees as decades of unfair and illegal trad-

ing practices. China has countered that any deal needs to be fair and equitable, leaving the two sides apparently still far from an agreement to end the back-and-forth that has roiled global supply chains and upended financial

"Right now we're having principal-level calls and to the extent that it makes sense for us to set up in-person meetings, I would anticipate that we would be doing that," Mnuchin told

Asked if Thursday's call could lead to a face-to-face meeting, Mnuchin said: "It's possible, but I'm not going to speculate on the outcome.'

Lighthizer's office later confirmed that the conversation took place as scheduled, but gave no details.



China's foreign ministry said on Friday the two sides had discussed ways to implement the consensus reached by the two countries' presidents, but gave no other details.

Separately, Su Ge, former president of the China Institute of International Studies, a think tank affiliated with China's Foreign Ministry, said he expected more formal discussions to resume this month.

"These are difficult questions ... but at least they agreed to let the two negotiation teams to restart their work, so we will keep our fingers crossed," he said.

William Lee, chief economist for were simmering, with neither China nor the United States appearing ready to budge on critical issues.

"That high level of trade uncertainty is causing manufacturing firms to be reticent to make investments. That high degree of uncertainty is a drag on US growth," he said. "The real issue is that China wants respect. China wants a face-saving way of coming to the table." Global stocks were rattled this week after US President Donald Trump reiterated threats to

impose further tariffs on Chinese imports. Signs that the trade dispute was starting to take a toll on corporate earnings further unnerved investors, sending stocks lower on Thursday.

'We have a long way to go as far as tariffs, where China is concerned, if we want. We have another \$325 billion that we can put a tariff on if we want," Trump said at a cabinet meeting on Tuesday. Trump and Chinese President Xi

Jinping agreed during a Group of 20 nations summit in Japan last month to resume discussions, easing fears of escalation after talks broke down in early May. At the time of the G20, Trump

iffs on \$300 billion worth of imported Chinese consumer goods while the two sides resumed negotiations. "What they did was not appropri-

agreed to suspend a new round of tar-

ate," Trump said Tuesday. "They are supposed to be buying farm products. Let's see whether or not they do."

US government data published on Thursday showed China last week made its largest purchase of US sorghum since April. Sorghum was one which has slowed exports of soybeans and pork to China.

Asked about the role of Huawei Technologies Co Ltd, which the administration has blacklisted over national security concerns, Mnuchin said on Thursday that allowing any US sales to the Chinese telecoms equipment company was an issue independent from the trade talks.

After meeting with Xi at the G20, Trump said American firms could sell products to Huawei.

Increasingly, e-commerce companies

are looking to ship directly to US

homes from warehouses in Mexico,

Hong Kong, and Canada. Federal regu-

lations allow US -based companies to

send packages worth less than \$800 to

American homes from countries like

Some are trying not-so-legitimate

means, too. Chinese exporters have

tried to evade US tariffs by sending

honey, steel, ceramic tiles and other

goods through Vietnam and relabeling

them as Vietnamese, according to the

ive technology policies has dragged on

for more than a year and consumed 11

rounds of negotiations. Even if the

two sides forge an agreement, it's far

The standoff over Beijing's combat-

Mexico and pay no tariffs.

country's customs agency.

EU fines chipmaker Qualcomm for 'predatory pricing'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

In yet another European Union move against a US tech company, the bloc's antitrust chief on Thursday fined chipmaker Qualcomm \$271 million, accusing it of "predatory pricing" to drive a competitor out of the market.

EU Antitrust Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said Qualcomm was abusing its market dominance in 3G baseband chipsets. She said it sold them below the cost of production to force startup Icera out of the market almost a decade ago.

"Baseband chipsets are key components so mobile devices can connect to the internet. Qualcomm sold these products at a price below cost to key customers with the intention of elimi-

nating a competitor," she said. Qualcomm is facing antitrust battles on multiple fronts. In the US, a federal judge ruled in May that Qualcomm unlawfully squeezed out cellphone chip rivals and charged excessive royalties to manufacturers such as Apple.

The Justice Department, however, Juaicomm because of national-security concerns—it sees Qualcomm as instrumental to a politically sensitive "race to 5G"—a mobile network upgrade that could mean big technological changes. The US is fighting for leadership over 5G with China, a tussle that has spilled over into the trade war. The US has also punished Huawei, a Chinese tech company whose networking products are used in many countries, due to national-security concerns.

The Justice Department has asked for a pause on enforcement of the antitrust action while Qualcomm appeals the case. "Immediate implementation of the remedy could put our nation's security at risk, potentially undermining US leadership in 5G technology and standard-setting, which is vital to military readiness and other critical national interests," the Justice Department said in a court filing Tuesday.

In Europe, Vestager said the chip market was too important to tolerate abuse by Qualcomm.

The fine of 242 million euros represents 1.27 percent of Qualcomm's 2018 revenue. The EU had already fined Qualcomm \$1.23 billion last year after concluding it bribed Apple to stifle competition.

Qualcomm said it plans to appeal Thursday's fine to an EU court and denied the charges.

"This decision is unsupported by the law, economic principles or market facts, and we look forward to a reversal on appeal," Don Rosenberg, general counsel of Qualcomm, said in a statement.

'The Commission spent years investigating sales to two customers, each of whom said that they favoured Qualcomm chips not because of price but because rival chipsets technologically inferior,' Rosenberg said.

Vestager said the opposite was true and that Qualcomm offered "very targeted price concessions" to two clients that were essential to Icera if it was to make a breakthrough in the market as Qualcomm's main contender from 2009 to 2011. Icera was based in Britain and was seen as a rival that could eventually threaten Qualcomm's dominance.

"It was done on purpose to prevent Icera from gaining a foothold in the market," Vestager said.

Facing Trump's tariffs, some companies move, change or wait

ASSOCIATED PRESS WASHINGTON, JULY 20

Some are moving factories out of China. Others are strategically redesigning products. Some are seeking loopholes in trade law or even mislabelling where their goods originate all with the goal of evading President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs on goods from China.

landing at LaGuardia Airport in New York, US.

But most of the companies that stand to be hurt by Trump's tariffs are hunkering down and waiting because they don't know when, whether or how his yearlong trade war with China will end or which other countries the president might target next. Consider Xcel Brands, a New York-

based company that owns such brands as Halston, Isaac Mizrahi and C. Wonder. Two years ago, it made all its clothing in China. Now it's on the move-diversifying production to Vietnam, Cambodia, Bangladesh and Canada and considering Mexico and Central America as well. By next year, it expects to have left China completely.

"You have to keep moving things around," said CEO Robert D'Loren.

Trump launched the world's biggest trade war since the 1930s by imposing tariffs on \$250 billion in Chinese goods and threatening to tax \$300 billion more. He has pursued separate battles with America's allies, too-from South Korea, Mexico and Canada to Japan and the European Union-over trade in steel, aluminium and autos. Faced with the prospect of a forever

war with America's trading partners, numerous businesses say they're delaying investment decisions and reviewing their business relationships until they have a clearer view of how Trump's trade wars might endif they will.

Shifting to other countries could slash Xcel Brands' labour costs in half. This is crucial, D'Loren said, because fashion companies have little ability to raise prices and would have to absorb the cost of higher import taxes.

The trend of manufacturers leaving China predates Trump's trade wars. With wages and other costs in China rising, companies were already shifting toward lower-wage countries,

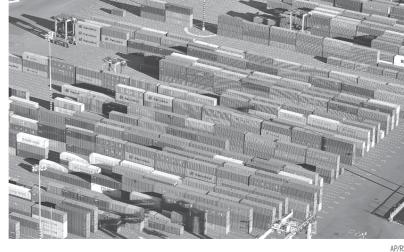
from Vietnam to Mexico. A few have considered shifting pro-

duction to the United States. Hurt by Trump tariffs on the metals used to make brass, Coins 4 U, which markets coins for awards and promotions, last year moved production from China, where it had been manufacturing since its founding in 2013, to Lake Ronkonkoma, New York.

"Our costs didn't rise too much, about 10 percent," said Sam Carter, sales manager for the company, based

in Cheyenne, Wyoming. But it isn't simple for some companies to completely abandon China, where specialised suppliers cluster in manufacturing centres and make it convenient for factories to obtain parts when they need them.

Over the past five years, Columbia Sportswear has cut its manufacturing presence in China by more than 60



Cargo containers are staged near cranes at the Port of Tacoma, in Tacoma, Washington.

percent. But some products can't be made elsewhere, the company says, because they're highly specialised and dependent on significant investments in tooling, machinery and personnel

Columbia's Sorel Style shoe, for example, features a hidden wedge heel that requires proprietary tooling and machinery. Moving its remaining production out of China, Columbia says, would cost at least \$3 million in machinery, require it to hire and train a new workforce and delay production at least a year.

Increasingly, clothing and shoe companies are trying to design their way

out of paying tariffs. Some have used a strategy called "tariff engineering." It involves altering products just enough to change how they're classified under US International Commission's Harmonised Tariff Schedule to evade or reduce import

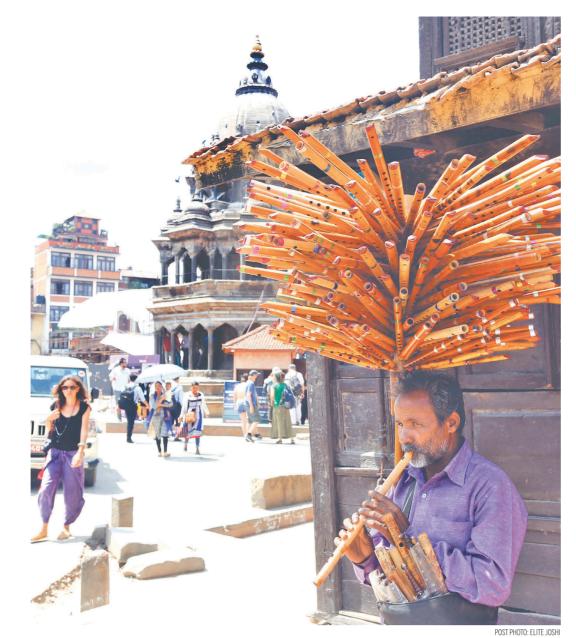
Small changes can make a big difference. Add drawstrings or pockets below the waist to a blouse and the import tax drops from 15.4 percent to 8.1 percent for a cotton version and from 26.9 percent to 16 percent for one made of polyester.

US-based companies are also scouring customs laws for loopholes.

from clear that it would stick. The uncertainty is chilling investment. Some companies worry that there may be no way out of Trump's trade wars. Disputes that seemed to have been resolved can suddenly flare up

> Less than two weeks after the US lifted steel and aluminium tariffs on Mexico-a move that seemed to signal a return to harmony in North American trade—Trump in May threatened to impose heavy tariffs on Mexican imports—to pressure Mexico to stop the flow of Central American migrants to the southern US border. Though later dropped that threat, the incident highlighted the way the mercurial president can upend the rules of trade on a whim





Visakhapatnam overtakes Kolkata in handling Nepal-bound cargo

A vendor plays the flute to attract customers in Patan Durbar Square, Lalitpur.

Visakhapatnam pulling Nepali traders with efficiency and higher capacity.



POST FILE PHOTO

A general view of Visakhapatnam port in India.

SHANKAR ACHARYA PARSA, JULY 20

Visakhapatnam port has overtaken Kolkata port in handling Nepal-bound cargo as shipments have exceeded the wagon-loading capacity at Netaji Subhas dock in Kolkata.

Even though Visakhapatnam is located 1,400 km from Birgunj, twice as far as Kolkata, lower sea freight costs from Chinese ports to Visakhapatnam and efficient porthandling are compensating for the relatively higher rail freight costs to Birgunj, traders said. Also known as

Vizag, India opened the port to Nepali traders in March 2017.

According to Himalayan Terminal which operates Sirsiya Dry Port in Birgunj, 19 railway rakes arrived from Kolkata in April while Vizag sent 20 freight trains during the same period. In May, Kolkata sent 15 rakes and Vizag sent 25. In June, there were 15 freight trains from Kolkata and 32 from Vizag.

The Indian government allowed Nepali importers to use Visakhapatnam port besides Kolkata and Haldia from February 2016. Container shipping liner Maersk delivered the first rake of cargo from Visakhapatnam to Birgunj in Nepal in mid-June 2017.

High detention and demurrage and long container dwell time are the main complaints Nepali importers have against Kolkata port. It takes up to 30 days for importers to return the container to Kolkata, and traders said they had to pay a penalty most of the time.

The delay is primarily due to capacity constraints at Netaji Subhas dock to load containers on cargo trains. While Kolkata port authorities have undertaken a project to increase the

capacity, importers are forced to take the costlier road option.

"Nepali importers have been facing a number of problems in Kolkata for a long time, and they have been looking for an alternative. Visakhapatnam port is now ahead of Kolkata port as result," said Pradip Kedia, former president of the Birgunj Chamber of Commerce and Industry. "Sooner or later, this was bound to happen."

Unlike the river port in Kolkata that can accommodate only small daughter vessels, Visakhapatnam is a deep-water sea port where large container ships can unload cargo 24 hours a day.

"As the Maersk Line has a monopoly in providing dedicated shipping service to Nepali importers, it has been frequently increasing fees, and that has worried traders," said Kedia.

Freight forwarders have been asking the government to establish a consulate general's office in Visakhapatnam like in Kolkata to deal with different issues.

Bishnu Kant Chaudhary, CEO of Himalayan Terminal, said that Maersk Line had a strong hold at Visakhapatnam, and it has been providing time-and cost-efficient services that may have attracted Nepali importers.

"Visakhapatnam now handles 70 percent of the cargo bound for Nepal," he said, adding that it was the other way around a few months ago. "The changes have been visible from the last six months." Chaudhary said that Nepal should look for other sea ports as well for trade.

According to Nepal Rastra Bank, Nepal's import bill surged 25.5 percent to Rs1,242.83 billion in the last fiscal year 2017-18. Exports to India accounted for 57.4 percent of total exports.

Plan to boost market activity sends NEPSE soaring over 20 points

Securities Board of Nepal to introduce reform measures this fiscal year.

RAJESH KHANAL

KAJESH KHANAL

Nepal Stock Exchange (NEPSE) last week escalated 23.95 points to close at 1,272.5 points, after the Securities Board of Nepal expressed its commitment to enforce a number of reform measures this fiscal year.

Despite the upswing in the market index, the average daily turnover slumped to Rs380.23 million last week from Rs526.66 million in the previous week.

The market which opened at Rs1,248.55 points on Sunday, rose marginally by 0.94 points to close at Rs1,249.49 points. The market continued to gain traction during week, gaining 5.08 points, 4.45 points and 15.84 points on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday respectively. However, the market ran out of steam on Thursday, losing 2.36 points.

Stock analysts said the investors were buoyed by the regulator unveiling its policies and programmes to boost activity in the country's only secondary bourse. "The board has expressed its commitment to enforce book building which will allow listed companies to fix premium prices for their initial public offerings and reducing the transaction settlement period, among others," said a stockbroker on condition maintaining anonymity.

The sensitive index that measures

the performance of Group A companies also went up 5.51 points to close at 273.84 points with a notable rise in stock prices of commercial banks.

An increase in share prices also saw investors gaining Rs30.03 billion in the book value of their investment portfolio.

Most of the sub-indices posted gains except for trading which remained stable at 259.85 points during the review period.

Manufacturing recorded the highest gains, adding 81.9 points to close at 2,717.5 points. Non-life insurance, life insurance, development bank, hotels, microfinance, hydropower and commercial banks picked up double-digit gains. Others' and finance companies gained 9.93 points and 7.89 points respectively.

In terms of individual companies, Nepal Bank Limited saw Rs202.13 million worth of shares exchanging hands, the largest in the segment. It was followed by Shivam Cements, Nepal Life Insurance, Nabil Bank and Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited.

Last week, stocks worth Rs1.9 billion were traded, which was 27.8 percent less than the amount in the previous week. The total number of traded shares also plummeted to 8,599,020 units from 11,387,516 units.

NEPSE listed 134,973,466.6 units of new shares from four companies during the review period.

| 1274.86 | 1272.5 | 1274.86 | 1272.5 | 1274.86 | 1272.5 | 1284.55 | 1284.57 | 1284.55 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.57 | 1284.5

RIGHT SHARES/BONUS SHARES		
COMPANY	TYPE	UNITS
Asian Life Insurance Company	Right	7,540,352.73
NMB Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha	Bonus	211,312.5
Nabil Balance Fund 2	IPO	112,000,000
Kumari Bank	Bonus	15,221,781.39

Nepal's rising trade deficit takes toll on country's foreign currency reserves

The balance of payments deficit stood at Rs90.83 billion during the review period (mid-July 2018 to mid-June 2019).

RAJESH KHANAL KATHMANDU, JULY 20

Nepal's rising trade deficit is taking a toll on the country's foreign currency reserves which fell by 8.2 percent to \$9.25 billion, according to the Current Macroeconomic Report of Nepal Rastra Bank. At this rate, Nepal has enough to cover the import of goods and services for less than eight months.

The trade deficit grew 17 percent in the first 11 months of the last fiscal year. The balance of payments deficit stood at Rs90.83 billion during the review period (mid-July 2018 to mid-June 2019)

Balance of payments records a country's financial transactions with the rest of the world under two subheadings-current account and capital account

The current account registered a deficit of Rs248.72 billion, up from a deficit of Rs210.24 billion during the same period in 2017-18. The current account involves the net value of trade in goods, trade in services, transfers and income

om abroad. Nepal's foreign income has not been able to Nepal has enough to cover the import of goods and services for less than eight months.

sustain expenses as imports have exceeded exports by a wide margin, resulting in trade deficit of a whopping Rs1,211.96 billion in the first 11 months of the 2018-19 fiscal year, which recently ended July 16. The trade deficit during the period was around 37 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

Nepal's expense on goods import surged by 17.3 percent to Rs1,299.80 billion due to soaring demand for mainly petroleum products, aircraft spare parts, readymade garments electrical goods and iron. Exports, on the other hand, was

up 18.7 percent and stood at Rs87.83 billion.

The foreign income loss triggered by a mismatch in import and export earnings is offset by

remittance inflow to some extent. Over the period, the country earned Rs799.02 billion from remittance, the major source of the country's foreign currency earnings for over two decades. Despite remittance earnings rising by 17.5 percent, the exaggerating import bills exerted pressure on the country's foreign currency reserves.

Nepal also faced net loss of Rs10.56 billion from the service trade. The central bank's statistics show that Nepalis going abroad spent Rs80.45 billion while the country earned Rs68.63 billion from tourists who visited Nepal.

Under the capital account, capital transfer-an investment in purchase of fixed assets-registered at Rs13.88 billion, down from Rs15.02 billion. The amount of foreign direct investment that the country received also went down to Rs11.81 billion from Rs15.88 billion.

Keshab Acharya, who served as an economic advisor to the Ministry of Finance, said the pressure on the foreign currency reserves could affect national pride projects that need a large amount of money to purchase equipment from abroad. "It may also affect the country's capacity to repay foreign debt and sink the country into a debt trap in the long run," said Acharya.



REUTER

A packet of US five-dollar bills is inspected at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington.

BRIEFING

Ibrahimovic nets hat-trick in upset victory

LOS ANGELES: Zlatan Ibrahimovic lived up to the bravado on Friday, scoring all three goals to power the LA Galaxy to a hard fought 3-2 victory over MLS rivals Los Angeles Football Club. The unstoppable 37-year-old showed he's still capable of astounding feats by dominating the smaller LAFC defence and scoring when it counted the most for his second career MLS hat trick. "When you play against a rival like that, in a full stadium, I get pumped. I get adrenaline. This is considered to be the biggest game in the league and I show up in the biggest games," said Ibrahimovic. Ibrahimovic, who has a flair for the dramatic since the big Swede joined the MLS in 2018, boasted prior to Friday's game that he is "by far" the best player in the league despite Carlos Vela's superior stats. (AFP)

Former Argentina coach in serious condition

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina's 1986 World Cup winning coach Carlos Bilardo is in a serious condition in hospital following brain surgery, the center treat ing him has confirmed. The 81-yearold was taken into intensive care at the Argentine Institute of Diagnosis in Buenos Aires on July 4 due to a "deterioration in his underlying disease," the center said in a report on Wednesday. He is suffering from Hakim-Adams syndrome, a neurode generative disease common in men over 60, for which he was twice hospi talized in 2018. He underwent a procedure to drain blood and puss from around his brain. (AFP)

De Rossi on verge of Boca Juniors move

BUENOS AIRES: Veteran former Italy international Daniele De Rossi is "99 percent" sure of joining Boca Juniors, the Argentine giants' president Daniel Angelici said on Friday. The 35-year-old midfielder brought down the curtain on an 18-year career with his hometown club Roma at the end of last season. The only remaining stumbling block to De Rossi joining is a cap on the number of foreigners allowed at Argentine teams. They can only have six in their squad with a maximum of five allowed on the pitch at any one time. De Rossi is the fourth most capped Italy international of all time with 117 games. (AFP)

Indian bodybuilder Ravinder Malik clinches Mr South Asia title

Men's 80kg division winner Malik pipped eight other contestants for the top honour.



Indian bodybuilder Ravinder Kumar Malik holds the Mr South Asia trophy on Saturday.

Ravinder Kumar Malik of India clinched the Mr South Asia title as Afghanistan won team championship finishing ahead of hosts Nepal in the 12th South Asian Bodybuilding and Physique Sports Championships in Kathmandu on Saturday.

Malik, the winner of men's 80kg division, was adjudged the best bodybuilder among the winners of various nine senior men's weight categories. The final day of the twoday competition saw Nepal's Naresh Munikar clinch gold in men's athletic physique. Mallika Shakya of Nepal also won the women's model physique.

Nepal finished second overall with three gold, seven silver and six bronze medals.

Nepal finished the championships with three gold, seven silver and six bronze medals. On Friday, Samir Shrestha had won the gold in men's 65kg division. Afghanistan secured six gold, four silver and five bronze medals to claim the team champion-

The Afghans finished with 535 points in total ahead of Nepal who, earned 445 points. India stood third with 380 points. India won four gold, five silver and a bronze medal. Participated by all six South Asian countries, the championships featured competitions in 17 categories.

Munikar, the winner of the athletic physique for participants with heights over 167cm, finished ahead of Nakul Kaushal of India and Mohammed Fathuhulla of Maldives. Shakya beat compatriot Pooja Shrestha for the women's model physique title while Nishrin Hitesh Parikh of India finished third.

Malik posed himself as the Mr

South Asia title contender after winning the 80kg division title earlier in the day. Malik beat Mohammad Asif Sakhi of Afghanistan to book a place for the final round, which was contested by only the winners of nine different weight divisions. Milan Sijapati of Nepal came third in the

Sefatullah Hafizi of Afghanistan won the men's 75kg division while Dharmendra Kumar of India and Ashok Maharjan of Nepal stood second and third. Maldives, Pakistan and Bhutan finished fourth to sixth respectively.

Rishikanta Singh Laitonjam of India was adjudged the men's 85kg division while Afghanistan duo Waheedullah Azimi and Abdul Saboor Sahak finished second and third. Afghani bodybuilder Guljar Jan Omar won the 90kg division, finishing ahead of Pakistani duo Muhammad Sayed and Faheem

Afghanistan's Mohammadi claimed the above 90kg category title. Vinay Kumar of India and Syed Fazal Elahi of Pakistan rounded up in second and third to miss out of the final round. Ahmed Mahil Saeed of Maldives took home the junior men's (under 21 agegroup) open title while Rishi Rajesh Athreya of India and Krishna Maharjan of Nepal finished with silver and bronze medals.

In the men's athletic physique for participants with heights upto 167cm, Ahmad Sikandar Zada of Afghanistan took gold finishing ahead of Nishan Man Pradhan of Nepal and Ahmed Fazeel of Maldives. In the men's sports physique (upto 170cm), Azeen Rashad of Maldives beat Pramod Rai of Nepal to clinch the gold medal. Hamidullah Khushdil of Afghanistan was restricted to bronze.

Usman Umar of Pakistan secured won the men's sports physique for participants with heights over 170cm. Shinu Chova of India and Tashi Tshokey of Bhutan secured and third place finish. In all, 91 bodybuilders participated in the event organised by the Nepal Bodybuilding and Fitness Association at the Nepal Academy Hall in Kamaladi.

Tomic's appeal against fine rejected, receives stinging rebuke instead

REUTERS

Australian Bernard Tomic's appeal to overturn a fine for not playing to "required professional standards" at Wimbledon earlier this month has been denied in a stinging rebuke by the Grand Slam board.

Tomic lost his first round match 6-2, 6-1, 6-4 to France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga at Wimbledon and was fined his entire winnings of £45,000 after organisers ruled he had put in minimal effort in the 58-minute defeat. The 26-year-old Tomic appealed the decision, citing the fact he was unwell before the match, while Tsonga added that he felt his victory had been devalued.

The board, however, refused to overturn their original decision and heavily criticised Tomic's attitude to tennis. "A review of your historical record of misconduct at Grand Slams, never mind elsewhere, provides little justification for an adjustment," board director Bill Babcock wrote in the decision letter that was published by the New York Times. "In your case, Bernard, I am sure you would agree there is no historical evidence to give comfort to the theory that you can reform your behaviour.'

Babcock added that if Tomic goes without a sanction in his next eight Grand Slam events then he would be refunded 25 percent of the fine. "Admittedly, I am sceptical that you can achieve this reform of Grand Slam on-court behaviour," Babcock added. "Many others, no doubt, would be even more than just sceptical. Good luck and I hope to be pleasantly surprised in the future by your successful reform." Tomic, however, said he would appeal the decision further. "I don't care about this 25 percent; I care about the right thing for players in the future," he told the newspaper.

This year's tournament was not the first time Tomic has run afoul of tennis officialdom. He was nicknamed 'Tomic the Tank Engine' after accusations he 'tanked'-or failed to try his best-in a loss to Andy Roddick at the 2012 US Open. Tomic also said after his first round loss at Wimbledon in 2017 that he was 'bored' during the match. He has also been periodically suspended from Australia's Davis Cup team over the last five years.

Dortmund sink Liverpool in US tour opener

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

internationals Thomas Delaney and Jacob Bruun Larsen scored second half goals as Borussia defeat in the opening game of the Premier League giants pre-season US tour on Friday.

In sweltering heat at Notre Dame Stadium in South Bend, Indiana, Bundesliga side Dortmund punished a rusty defensive display from the European champions, who were missing several star players. Brazilian internationals Roberto Firmino and Alisson were both absent for the Reds following their Copa America campaign along with Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane, both missing due to the African Cup of Nations.

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp opted for a youthful starting lineup against his former club before making 10 changes in the second half. "It was a very difficult game for both teams,' Klopp said afterwards. "I saw a lot of good things, and a lot of good individual performances, but obviously not We're obviously not anywhere near where we want to be," he added, referring to the goals his team

Dortmund took the lead after only three minutes when Paco Alcacer capitalised on some hesitant defending Clyne to rifle home from close range. Liverpool soon began to carve out openings of their own however, and the lively Ryan Kent and Harry Wilson always looked threatening.

Liverpool drew level with a cleverly worked goal in the 35th minute. Fabinho's pass into the area was brilliantly dummied by Kent into the path of Wilson, who calmly stroked home the finish. But despite the bright opening 45 minutes, Liverpool were soon trailing again early in the second half as Dortmund once more seized on sloppy defensive play to score two

quick goals. Delaney, one of nine Dortmund changes made at half-time, made it 2-1 in the 53rd minute. Six minutes later Bruun Larsen fired Dortmund into a 3-1 lead. A Rhian Brewster penalty in the 75th minute after Ben Woodburn was brought down cut Dortmund's lead to a single goal.

Sherpa wins Surya Nepal Gokarna Monthly Medal

SPORTS BUREAU KATHMANDU, JULY 20

Ang Dendi Sherpa clinched the fourth edition of the Surya Nepal Gokarna Monthly Medal at the par-72 Gokarna

Golf Club on Saturday. Playing with 10 handicap, Sherpa carded seven-under 65 nett points to golfer Eui Jae Lee finished second with six-under 66 nett score. Colonel Avaneesh Chambial shot four-under 68 nett points to end up as the second

Wangchen Dhondup claimed the best gross award with one-under 71 gross points. Sadbhav Acharya won the junior category award with the nett score of three-over 75. In all, 42 golfers took part in the tournament. President of Gokarna Golf Club Suhrid Ghimire gave away the prizes to the winners. The tournament was played under stroke play format with full handicap.

A total of 10 medal rounds will be played till the month of December to decide the overall club champion. In each medal round, top 10 players in nett category, top 5 players in gross category, and top 5 in the junior category are awarded points.

First place golfer in nett category



(From left) Eui Jae Lee, Ang Dendi Sherpa, Col Avaneesh Chambial, Sadbhav Acharya and Wangchen Dhondup at Gokarna Golf Club on Saturday.

from each event earns 100 points, runner-up will get 60 points, third place amateur will receives 40 points. Players finishing fourth to 10th get

35, 30, 25, 20, 15, 10 and five points respectively.

In the Gross and Junior categories top five scorer's from each event earn junior category will qualify for the final round of the championship. The final of club championship will be played over two rounds in January and February 2020. After the fourth edition on the club second at 115 points and Babu Sherpa

100, 60, 40, 35, and 30 points respective-

ly. Top 40 players in nett category, top 10 in gross category and top five in

top of the leaderboard in the nett category with 120 points. Joseph Nathan is is third with 105 points. Ang Dendi Sherpa, Rabendra Raj Pandey and Vijay Shrestha Einhaus are tied for fourth at 100 points. Wangchen Dhondup is seventh with 75 points and Pradhumna Simkhada eighth with 70 points. Dawa Sonam Sherpa and Eue Jae Lee are tied for ninth with 60

Wangchen Dhondup leads the gross category with 295 points ahead of his brother Tashi Tsering, who has 240 points. Vijay Shrestha Einhaus is third with 160 points. Tashi Dong is fourth with 65 points and Babu Sherpa fifth with 60 points. Sadbhav Acharya leads the junior category with 300 points. Mayanka Dahal is second with 160 points followed by Ang Phurba (140 pts), Shaswat Pradhan (120 pts) and Shreeyog Basnyat (40 pts).



Wolves beat City to claim Asia Trophy

In the third-place playoff, Newcastle United beat West Ham United 1-0.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE SHANGHAI, JULY 20

Goalkeeper Rui Patricio was the hero for Wolves, saving three spot-kicks after their Asia Trophy final against Manchester City went to penalties on

Saturday in Shanghai. Wolves won the exhibition tournament 3-2 on penalties after the game against the Premier League champions ended 0-0 after 90 minutes. It was a story of missed penalties for Pep Guardiola's City. Raheem Sterling missed a first-half penalty for City, who dominated at a full Hongkou Stadium but were blunt in attack with-

out Sergio Aguero and Gabriel Jesus.

Pre-season games are notoriously poor barometers for the season to come, especially when played in stifling heat like in Shanghai. But both sides fielded close to their full-strength sides and Guardiola and counterpart Nuno Espirito Santo will be glad to escape without any serious injuries to their squads. Leroy Sane, the German winger wanted by Bayern Munich, started for City and won the Sterling penalty, but otherwise had a quiet game before being substituted on the hour.

Kevin De Bruyne was Guardiola's captain for the night-the City armband is up for grabs following the departure of talisman Vincent Kompany. Sterling should have put City in the lead but instead blasted his 20th minute penalty over the bar to let Chinese-owned Wolves off the hook. The England international forward, playing through the middle, then fluffed a golden chance from close range with only goalkeeper Patricio to beat.

In the third-place playoff, Newcastle United beat West Ham United 1-0 to give Steve Bruce victory in his first match as head coach. The 58-year-old, whose appointment as head coach has gone down badly with already disillusioned Newcastle fans, was unable to be pitch-side because of Chinese visa restrictions. The former Sunderland boss is just three days into the job and this was only a pre-season friendly, but he will have been heartened by what he saw against a strong West Ham

Bruce is looking for forward reinforcements but Yoshinori Muto made his case by poking the ball in from close range in the first half after fullback Jamie Sterry crossed. In contrast to their meek 4-0 defeat to Wolverhampton Wanderers on Wednesday in Nanjing in the Asia Trophy, Newcastle were committed and bit hard into tackles.

It may have been the other side of the world, but the disenchantment among Newcastle fans was never far from the surface in humid Shanghai. They desperately want owner Mike Ashley to sell the club and in the 25th minute at Hongkou Stadium came the first chant of "we want Ashley out". There were more just before half time.

Newcastle and Bruce, who took over on Wednesday from the popular Rafael Benitez, begin their Premier League campaign proper on August 11 when they face Arsenal at home. West Ham host champions Manchester City in their opener.

The Premier League proper begins on August 9.

Wolverhampton Wanderers' Diogo Jota (2nd right) is challenged by Manchester City players during their final match of the 2019 Premier League Asia Trophy football tournament at the Hongkou Stadium in Shanghai on Saturday

SPORTS

FOOTBALL FRIENDLY FIXTURES

Bayern vs Real Madrid (0545 NST, Monday) Juventus vs Spurs (1715 NST, Monday) Real Madrid vs Arsenal (0445 NST, Wednesday)

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUALIFYING

Viktoria Plzen vs Olympiakos Piraeus (1700) Saburtalo vs Dinamo Zagreb (1730) PSV vs Basel (1800) The New Saints vs Kobenhavn (1800) Sutjeska vs APOEL (1815)

EUROPA LEAGUE QUALIFYING

Ararat-Armenia vs Lincoln Red Imps (2045 NST, Tuesday) HB vs Linfield (2130 NST Tuesday) Shkendija vs F91 Dudelange (2140 NST, Tuesday) FC Santa Coloma vs Astana (2345 NST. Tuesday) Tre Penne vs Suduva (0015 NST, Wednesday)

BRITISH OPEN GOLF SCORES

- Shane Lowry (IRL) 67-67, JB Holmes (USA) 66-68 135: Tommy Fleetwood (ENG) 68-67, Lee Westwood
- Cameron Smith (AUS) 70-66, Justin Harding (RSA) 71-65, Justin Rose (ENG) 69-67
- Dylan Frittelli (RSA) 68-69, Andrew Putnam (USA) 70-67, Brooks Koepka (USA) 68-69, Jordan Spieth (USA) 70-67

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"They were so nice and so respectful. The kids were respectful, but that's not always the case when we travel around the world. We hear some rude comments from the kids. I think the adults kind of teach them that."

Tiger Woods on the reception he received from the crowds in Northern Ireland



Djamel Belmadi restores Algeria to Africa's summit

Algeria clinch second Africa Cup of Nations title on Friday, ending a 29-year drought by defeating a strong Senegal team spearheaded by Sadio Mane.



Algeria coach Djamel Belmadi (black outfit) and his team celebrate in front of their fans after winning the Africa Cup of Nations at the Cairo International Stadium on Friday.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Twelve months ago Algeria were in turmoil after the departure of former national team star Rabah Madjer, but the appointment of Djamel Belmadi proved a stroke of genius from a federation that had burned through five coaches in two turbulent years.

It was a gamble on a coach who had cut his teeth exclusively in Qatar, where he earned a reputation as a tough disciplinarian but one capable of extracting the best from his players. That punt paid off handsomely in Egypt as Algeria clinched a second Africa Cup of Nations title on Friday, ending a 29-year drought by defeating a strong Senegal team spearheaded by

Sadio Mane to lift the trophy for a first time on foreign soil.

"I said we were going to the Cup of Nations to win. I wanted to send a strong message to the players, to tell them I was committing to a strong project. Titles are what interest me, Belmadi recalled of his bold declaration ahead of the tournament. "I was asked if it was a transitional period. No, here we are (as champions)."

With a reputation for attractive football but plagued by indiscipline, Belmadi brought an element of steel and clear tactical guidance to a team that impressed at the 2014 World Cup, taking eventual champions Germany to extra time in the last 16, before a period of regression.

"The problem in the national team

was solved by Belmadi. He was preceded by five or six managers who were not able to solve it," said Algeria great Lakhdar Belloumi. "Belmadi knew that the problem is between the players, differences regarding the ball, who takes the corner, who takes the freekick or the penalty. He was able to solve the problems, he excluded some players, put others in their place,

made people join the ranks. Algeria arrived at the 2015 Cup of Nations tipped to go the distance in Equatorial Guinea but lost in the quarter-finals, and proceeded to exit at the group stage two years later before a dreadful qualifying campaign for the 2018 World Cup. Belmadi's recalling of defensive midfielder Adlene Guedioura after the best part of two years in the wilderness was particularly shrewd, while Haris Belkebla's pre-tournament exclusion for baring his backside online underlined the coach's zero-tolerance approach.

"He really knows the players and what he wants. The good thing is he knows how to get through to the players and how to listen," said Guedioura, who served as the glue at the base of Algeria's midfield. "If you don't have a good cook you can't have a good

Teenage midfielder Hicham Boudaoui said Belmadi had "won the players over" with his unwavering commitment. "He gave a spirit to the players, they love him, that's the secret of what he brought to the team.

He gives us a lot of advice, we listen to him. He won the players over.'

With a squad backing him to the hilt, Belmadi again outfoxed old friend Aliou Cisse in the first Cup of Nations final between two African coaches in 21 years as Senegal's vaunted attack floundered when it mattered most.

"It perhaps wasn't our best match in terms of what we produced, but we were the best attack in the tournament and the best defence alongside Senegal," Belmadi summarised. "It's a deserved victory if you look at the tournament. The players have done incredible work. We've prepared for this Cup of Nations for a long time. It's not easy living with this pressure every day of wanting to go all the way. They have been fabulous."

Lowry, Holmes share Open lead as Woods, McIlroy miss cut

McIlrov fell just short with a brave attempt to make the weekend after a horrendous eight-over round on Thursday.



Republic of Ireland's Shane Lowry on the 16th hole during the second round of the British Open golf championship at the Royal Portrush Golf Club in Northern on Friday.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE PORTRUSH, JULY 20

Ireland's Shane Lowry shot a four-under par 67 to claim a share of the lead with JB Holmes at the British Open as 15-time major winner Tiger Woods and pre-tournament favourite Rory McIlroy missed the cut on Friday.

Resuming on four-under, Lowry birdied four of the opening five holes and picked up another two shots on eight and 10. However, he bogeyed the 14th and 18th coming home to fall back level with overnight leader Holmes on eight-under. "There's not too many days like that on the golf course," said

Holmes consolidated his challenge with a three-under round on Friday. "You can have that great round and that day where everything goes right, but it's nice to get two rounds in a row. It shows a little consistency," said the

McIlroy fell just short with a brave attempt to make the weekend after a horrendous eight-over round on Thursday left him with a huge mountain the climb. The home favourite posted the joint best round of the day with a six-under 65 to get back to twoover, but missed out by just one shot with the cut at one-over. "I felt today I showed the real Rory McIlroy and the golf that I can play," said the world No 3. "I tried my best for them until the

very end. I just came up a little short." Woods was also made to pay for his 78 on Thursday as a one-under par round left the Masters champion still on six-over. "It's more frustrating than anything else because this is a major championship and I love playing in these events," said Woods. The American raised hopes that he could recover from a difficult opening round with his troublesome back restricting his movement in cold conditions.

Woods was two under for the day after six holes, but a bogey at the seventh stalled his fightback. Back-toback birdies at 10 and 11 gave Woods hope again but a bogey-bogey finish was a fitting end to a frustrating two days for the 43-year-old.

England's Tommy Fleetwood and Lee Westwood are just one shot off the lead on seven-under, while world No 1 Brooks Koepka also kept himself in the hunt for a fifth major on five-under. Fleetwood played a starring role in Europe's victory at the Ryder Cup last year and the world No 20 has a chance for his first major heading into the weekend as he birdied the last for a round of 67.

Westwood rolled back the years with four birdies on the back nine to shoot into contention with a 67. Playing in his 25th British Open, Westwood has finished in the top three at majors nine times without getting over the line.

India selectors face questions over Dhoni's future

REUTERS

The future of long-serving wicketkeeper-batsman MS Dhoni and finding a solution to the No 4 batting nungrum will top the ag India's selectors meet in Mumbai on Sunday to pick the squads for the team's tour of the West Indies.

Dhoni, who turned 38 this month during the Cricket World Cup, enjoys cult status in the cricket-mad country after he captained the side to the World Twenty20 title in 2007 and their second 50-over World Cup title in 2011 at home. The veteran of 350 one-dayers, however, has been the subject of intense speculation on his retirement from international cricket over the past few days since India's semi-final exit from the World Cup.

Widely considered as the best 'finisher' in contemporary cricket, Dhoni has recently struggled to start his innings while his ability to put bowlers to the sword at the end has also been on the wane. Dhoni's glovework still remains top class and questions have been raised by former cricketers, pundits and local media if it was the right time for him to step away and help India groom his successor.

The next 50-over World Cup is still four years away but the World Twenty20 will be held in 2020, leaving chief selector MSK Prasad and his colleagues to plan for the tournament in Australia. Dhoni, who quit playing Tests at the end of 2014, has not provided even a hint of what his plans are but he enjoys unwavering support from India captain Virat Kohli who has publicly backed him on numerous occasions in the past.

India will play three T20s, three ODIs and two Tests in the Caribbean and the tour will provide the opportunity for the selectors to test the fringe players while resting some who play all three formats for the team. The team have also failed to nail down the No 4 batting position in the limited overs sides, something that hurt them during the World Cup, and a new set of batsmen are expected to audition for the spot.

Allrounder Vijay Shankar, who was initially given the nod, left the World Cup through injury while KL Rahul had to move up to open the innings when Shikhar Dhawan was ruled out. India's Test wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant, the favourite to fill in Dhoni's shoes in the limited overs formats, slotted into the role during the latter stages of the World Cup, while Manish Pandey, Shreyas Iyer and Shubman Gill are also in the mix.

Adam Peaty out to deliver knockout blow

The double world record holder has not been beaten for 5 years over 100m breaststroke.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

GWANGJU. JULY 20

Britain's Olympic swimming champion Adam Peaty will channel his inner Mike Tyson as he looks to deliver a knockout blow to his world title rivals

The double world record holder has not been beaten for five years over 100 metres breaststroke in major competition—a streak rarely seen in sport and one that invites comparison to the great American hurdler Ed Moses. Moses went unbeaten for 10 years between 1977 and 1987 but Peaty chose a boxing analogy to describe his mindgoing into the Championships, which begin on Sunday in Gwangju, South Korea.

"I think it was Mike Tyson who said 'The closer I get to the ring, I'm a god'—and that really sticks in the thinking behind what I do," said Peaty. "The closer I get to a World Championships, the closer I get to an Olympics, that's where my strength really comes mentally," added the 24-year-old, who is chasing a hat-trick of world doubles in the 50m and 100m. "You almost have to turn it off. I like



Adam Peaty

going into those meets mentally fresh because by the time I get to the end of it I literally sleep for about a week."

One of swimming's most recognisable athletes with his tattoos and rippling physique, Peaty was stung by a first defeat in four years at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, where he was pipped by South African Cameron van der Burgh in the 50m final. "I'm not immune to losing," insisted Peaty. "But the greatest athletes lose and come back even stronger."

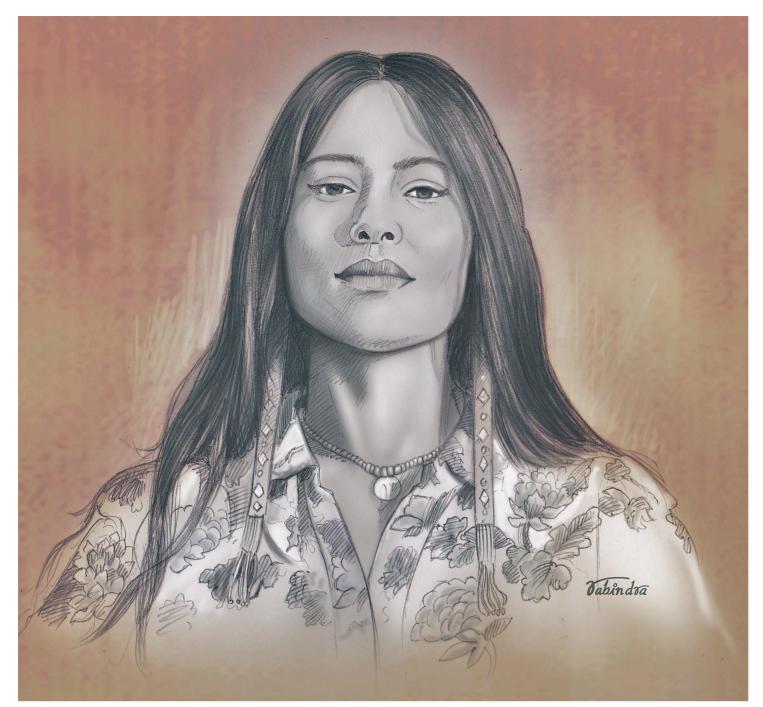
Peaty already has one eye on next year's Tokyo Olympics. "If I don't get the best out of myself it will just annoy me and make me work 10 times harder," he promised. "Even if I do lose, that's going to motivate me for takes aim at his 100m world record of 57.10 seconds on Monday. "That's my main motivation now-how do I get below that magic 57," said the Briton, who has been flirting with that mark in training. "I know it's very possible but I need to be in the right frame of mind."

While Brazil's Felipe Lima and Joao Gomes could push Peaty in the 50m, the 100m will be Peaty's to lose. "It's a World Championships so it's not going to be a walk in the park," he said. "But if I don't feel threatened I can't get the best version of myself." Mirroring Tyson's warrior mentality, Peaty noted: "When you go into a world champs it can get very tense, it can get very hostile. I've been undefeated in the last five years in the 100m and that's kind of unheard of in a sport as volatile as swimming," he added.



Israel perform their routine during the team free combination final at the World Swimming Championships in Gwangju on Saturday.

BRUNCH WITH THE POST



Arpana Rayamajhi: You can't make everyone happy

The Kathmandu-born jeweler does not shy away from the spotlight—but she doesn't cultivate it either.

PRANAYA SJB RANA

Arpana Rayamajhi has just two days left in Nepal and wants to pack in as much dal-bhat as she can before she flies off to New York. We are torn between two Thakali restaurants: the newly opened Jimbu or the more venerboth Jhamsikhel. I am not surprised when she picks Thakkhola, mid-market and low-key, as opposed to the decidedly glitzier Jimbu. The restaurant choice is in keeping with who Rayamajhi is—despite the magazine spreads and fashion photo shoots, she remains, at heart, a Nepali who grew up trawling Kathmandu's many hole-in-the-wall eateries.

I arrive early and have just finished pouring myself an icy Gorkha beer when Rayamajhi appears, with her boyfriend Bruno Levy and long-time friend and confidante Chandan Shakya in tow. After perfunctory hellos, Levy and Shakya leave us for Piano B, while Rayamajhi settles into her own beer.

It's been years since we last met but Rayamajhi looks very much the same, only more ornamented. Her slim fingers are covered in accoutrements of various sizes while two long earrings in the shapes of snake dangle from her earlobes. Her hair is impossibly long and let loose, framing her face like a photo album. Before the waiter can arrive, she already knows what she wants, a consummate purveyor of Kathmandu's thakali food offerings.

"Veg khana set and a plate of sukuti sandeko," she says, quickly. "Oh, and another beer."

The food arrives before we've gotten our introductory chatter out of the way, two steaming plates littered with rice, potato and mushroom tarkari, gundruk with fried soybeans, burnt tomato achar, bitter gourds, papad, and two bowls of dal and yogurt. And a messy pile of sukuti, liberally tossed with onions, tomatoes and chillies. Rayamajhi talks in between mouthfuls.

We speak about the jewellery she makes, her life in New York and the fame she's found since the last time we met. She was selected for The New York Times' 30 under 30, has been featured on ads for Apple and Lufthansa, appeared in numerous magazines including Vogue and Elle, and showcased her work at the

2016 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show in Paris. She might have a career that many only dream of but Rayamajhi keeps a good head on her shoulders.

"I'm very fortunate," she says.
"In terms of success, I've done
nothing. I made some jewelry,
and some magazines needed
someone new so they found me."

But why did the high fashion in New York and Paris choose her? After all, there are thousands of artists and fashion designers just looking to make a break.

"Luck," she says. "Being in the right place at the right time. But maybe, maybe they saw something different in me."

She has been celebrated for being different, as someone from Nepal, an immigrant, drawing on diverse experiences and traditions that those in the slick, mirrored corridors of Vogue magazine might not have encountered before. In this age of diversity and difference, she is someone

THAKKHOLA, JHAMSIKHEL

ON THE MENU:
Vegetarian khana set (2)
Sukuti sandeko (1)
Gorkha beer (2)
Rs 990

they can champion. But fame doesn't come without criticism, and she's had her share.

"They used to allege cultural appropriation," she says. "But I don't think I'm appropriating anything. I use beads, I use metal, I use string. If anything, I'm

inspired by everything."

There is, of course, a fine line between appropriation and celebration, peculation and inspiration. Rayamajhi understands that, but sometimes, she functions as a shield behind which to hide. When the 2016 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show was criticised for cultural appropriation, there were those who pointed to Rayamajhi's inclusion in defence.

But for Rayamajhi, focusing only on what belongs to whom misses the point.

"It's a very American thing, this desire to put labels on things," she says. "I was reading Salman Rushdie's Fury and he talks about how everything American has to be labelled as such, this American bar or this

American drink, and how that's a sign of insecurity. That's because it's easier to sell things when you categorise and label them. But these things define humanity, a history. These things are bigger than their labels."

Clearly, this is something she is passionate about and has spoken about at length before. But before we can continue, we are interrupted by the waiter who asks if we would like more of anything. Rayamajhi wants more dal, more saag and more rice. The server looks at her plate and says that he'll bring her more rice when she's finished what's on her plate. Rayamajhi laughs.

We resume talking, moving on to what inspires her these days. She's been taking acting classes, and that's opened up a whole different world for her. She hopes to get into acting, in theatre and film, one day.

"I love the idea of training or studying something new. It's exciting," she says.

She also listens to music a lot while working, she says and lists James Blake, Chicano Batman and disco music from the '70s when I ask for recommendations.

"There's also this app called Radio, that's radio with five Os, that allows you to listen to music from any part of the world," she says. "I use that and I really like music from Botswana and Malawi."

Some of Rayamajhi's jewellery is also inspired by rock and roll and punk rock and we talk about her older inspirations and how they've changed.

"Iggy Pop is now on Instagram, Kim Gordon is on Instagram," she says in reference to how rock icons too have adapted to the changing ways of the world. But they haven't lost their

essence, that which makes them who they are. They haven't sacrificed their idiosyncrasies on the altar of fame and relevance. "Iggy Pop has an instagram for

his parrot, apparently he really loves his parrot," she says to make a point.

More dal and saag arrive and

since she's almost finished with her rice, the waiter brings some more. I can barely finish the rice the thali came with and she's already on her seconds. I try the sukuti instead. It is not as spicy as one would expect but the buffalo meat is flavourful and pleasantly chewy.

She devours the dal bhat, just

"I love the idea of training or studying something new. It's exciting."

as you would expect someone who's been away from the country for years to. But even in busy New York, she keeps up with what's happening in Nepal, she says. We speak of Rishi Dhamala, who she calls a "phenomenon"—not necessarily in a good way—and we also speak of Priyanka Karki, who recently visited the Cannes Film Festival.

"We're very different people and I think we want different things out of life," she says. "But given all the shit she has to go through and deal with, it's pretty miraculous. Imagine being so popular in this tiny space and then being the person who everyone tries to scrutinise."

Rayamajhi doesn't look too fondly upon fame. She believes it is ephemeral and that it invites unwanted scrutiny. But she is also comfortable with it, as the numerous videos talking about her process exemplify. She's not someone who shies away from the spotlight, but she's not someone who cultivates it either.

Recently, her work got her an invite to speak at the United Nations as part of a panel on Nepali women and entrepreneurship, an event that was attended by President Bidhya Devi Bhandari. She relates, in breathless fashion, how she was supposed to go over to the UN building with Nepali officials but they left her behind while she was charging her phone. Then, after the event, she, along with everyone else, lined up to meet and greet the president.

"When I came up to her, I stuck out my hand for a handshake," she says, laughing. "And then I hear a bunch of 'ahems' and coughs from around me so I look up and everyone is shaking their heads. Apparently you're not supposed to touch the president."

So, she presented a polite namaste and stood for a photo-op.

"If only people with fame and popularity stood up for certain issues," she says in reference to a discussion over providing citizenship to Nepali children through the mother's name. "If the guthi protests can happen, why can't this one?" she asks. "It seems like people are more concerned when their temples are about to be taken away."

Rayamajhi speaks her mind. She is by turns funny, philosophical and nostalgic, hopping from subject to subject like a hare on the run. Towards the end of our conversation, we end up talking about our place in the world and how we tend to believe that everything directly around us is what is most

"I don't think I know anything," she says. "I'm still figuring things out. But one thing I do know is that Buddha was born in Nepal."

I ask her if she's afraid of pissing anyone off, if her opinions might get her into trouble or if her jewellery might invite harsh criticism.

"These days, I don't really care," she says. "You can't make everyone happy."



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