

# THE KATHMANDU POST

Nepal's largest selling English daily

Printed simultaneously in Kathmandu, Biratnagar, Bharatpur and Nepalgunj

























### कान्तिपुर **30** asianpaints Ncell

#### **Opening Keynote Address**

This keynote addresses the larger discourse on reimagining connectivity and understanding Nepal's position and potential within the region. Nepal is land linked and connected to China and India, the two giant economies which are poised to become the world's largest economies by 2040. The country also has an immense opportunity in connecting to countries like Bangladesh, which is separated from Nepal by just 27 kilometers.



#### **Lessons from the East**

**Connecting Global Nepalis** 

Speakers

नेपाल: अजाडि कि प्रषाडि?

पनि असर गर्नेष्ठ, के हुनसक्ष यसको असर?

Anushka Shrestha

Southeast Asia, after the European Union, is considered as the most connected region in the world. The region, which is booming with economic growth and prosperity, can unfold some valuable lessons for Nepal, which, in terms of consumer behavior, adaptability and outlook, resembles countries in Southeast Asia rather than South Asia. What learnings can Nepal derive from a region that has benefited from substantial connectivity?



In the last three decades, Nepalis have spread to more than 150 countries around the world. They have become

successful entrepreneurs, politicians, professionals - no longer just immigrant workers and students. Instead

of dwelling upon its brain drain, the time has come for Nepal to expand its influence and connect with its sprawling diaspora. What are the lessons that these influential figures bring to Nepal? How can Nepal leverage

the knowledge and skills of this diaspora to achieve its targeted growth and prosperity?



February 08, 2020

#### **Opening Keynote Address**



#### The Future of Digital World

Technology, social media and communication platforms are connecting the globe like never before. Every day, we wake up to breakthrough innovations in data, machine learning, fintech, cryptocurrencies, artificial intelligence and beyond. Where and how does cyber security, defense capabilities and data privacy fit in this new technological reality? Where is the world headed with this unprecedented digital revolution and what is the role of Nepal amidst this explosion in connectivity?



### Arpana Rayamajhi

नेपालमा 'मी टू' किन अगाडि बह्न सकेन?

यौन दुर्ज्यवहार विरुद्ध विश्ववयापी रूपमा चलेको 'मी टू' अभियानले नेपालमा पनि प्रवेश पायो, तर त्यसले यहाँ किन अपेक्षित प्रभाव पार्न सकेन ? समाजका केही स्थापित व्यक्तिहरूने गरेका यस्ता दुर्व्यवहार पीडितने साहसका साथ सार्वजनिक गरे, केही समय त्यसबारे चर्चा पनि चल्यो तर बिस्तारै त्यो सेलाउँदै गयो । 'मी टू' मा मुख्यिका अधिकांशले पूर्ववत्: सामाजिक हैसियत र जिम्मेवारी पाए । यस्तो किन भयो ?

**Prajwal Parajuly** 

Sagar Tamang



जनआन्दोलन, शान्तिप्रक्रिया र संविधान निर्माणको सफलतासँजै नेपाल राजनीतिक परिवर्तनका दृष्टिले अजािड बढेको छ, तर संविधानको कार्यान्वयनसँगै मुलुकलाई उदारवादी मुल्य-मान्यताबाट पष्ठांडि फर्काउन खोजिएको हो? खासगरी वर्तमान सरकारको ठाठन पिछ आएका कतिपय कानून एवम् नीति-नियम नियन्त्रणमुखी भएको र प्रहरी-प्रशासनको

व्यवहार ऋमशः कठोर बन्दै गएको अवस्थाले के देखाउँछ? उदारवादलाई थाती राखी संकृचित मनसायले अर्थतन्त्रमा

Narayani Devkota

### **Mitigating Climate Change - The Big Connector**

If there is one topic that countries will have to think beyond boundaries, it is the threat from climate change. It is that which will shape our collective future and where all our destinies are bound together. When we discuss the future, the issue of climate change forms an integral part. Will the issue of climate change push us to connect with each other in constructive spirits and find ways to adapt to the rapidly changing future? Can Nepal take the leadership in this discourse as one of the biggest custodians of the Himalayas?



हाती, ड्यां जन र तरुल - बद्लिदो भू-राजनीतिमा नेपाल

नेपालका दुई ष्ठिमेकी-चीन नयाँ विश्वशक्ति र भारत क्षेत्रीय शक्तिका रूपमा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय रंगमञ्चमा उदाएका छन् । हाती र ड्याजन भनिने यी शक्तिराष्ट्रको बीचमा रहेको नेपालले उनीहरूको पुनरुदयबाट फाइदा लिने कि विज्ञातमा भैं 'तरुल' जस्तो बनेर राजनीतिक चेपुवामा पिल्सिरहने ?



सशस्त्र संघर्षको पृष्ठभुमिबाट शक्तिपूर्ण राजनीतिमा आएका तटकालीन माओवादीका प्रमुख नेता पृष्पकमल दाहाल 'प्रचण्ड'

यसबीचमा दुई पटक प्रधानमन्त्री भइसकेका छन् र हाल सतारुढ दलको कार्यकारी अध्यक्षका रुपमा क्रियाशील छन् ।

उनले आफ्नो विज्ञात, वर्तमान र भविष्यलाई आफैंले कसरी हेरेका छन् ? यो परिसंवादमा उनको राजनीतिक र व्यक्तिज्ञात

### **Bridging through Literature and Arts**

The internet plays a monumental role in the democratization of knowledge and learning with its access to a wide variety of books, events and dialogues. More and more platforms like literary and art festivals are emerging for people to express their feelings, all of which uphold the fabric of connectivity in charming and inexplicable ways. In this context, what role does the world of literature and arts play in the broader discussions around connectivity? Can Kathmandu continue to thrive as the cosmopolitan capital of South Asia attracting artists, writers, musicians and creative folks from around the world?













प्रचण्डसँग परिसंवाद







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20.7° C -2.2° C



A child plays at a brick factory in Bungamati, Lalitpur. Sight of children playing around brick kilns is common in Kathmandu, as they come along with parents who are seasonal workers.



CULTURE & ARTS | 08

Metal sculptors have a new enemy-technology



WHEELS | 14

Hyundai Venue is a with value



### Deadline arrives but sugar mills still owe farmers Rs800 million

Farmers have been duped by sugar mill owners in the past but this time they were betrayed by the government too, they say.

#### KRISHANA PRASAIN KATHMANDU, JAN 21

Earlier this month, when the government promised sugarcane farmers from Sarlahi that their dues would be cleared in three weeks, they didn't have much to say—except hope that the authorities would keep their word. But as the weeks passed with only a few payments cleared, their hopes started to fade. On Tuesday, January 21, the day of the deadline, farmers were still owed over ment had no answers.

Of the total Rs1 billion owed to farmers by various sugar mill owners, they were paid just Rs150 million. Lekhraj Bhatta, the minister for industry, commerce and supplies, said that his ministry will assess the overall progress made so far on Wednesday and

then decide on the course of action. But farmers had seen this coming ever since the deal was struck, given that this is not the first time sugarcane farmers have been duped by sugar mill owners. Since the government rarely takes punitive action against sugar mills who fail to pay farmers for their crops, farmers, who usually take out bank loans to grow sugarcane, are at the receiving end.

Kapil Muni Mainali, president of Nepal Sugarcane Producers Federation, said that every time the government reaches an agreement, it just raises false hopes among farmers.

"Each time the deadline arrives, officials say sugar mills owners have gone out of contact," Mainali told the Post.

Annapurna Sugar Mill, Shreeram Sugar Mill and Bagmati Sugar Mill have been the biggest defaulters for years. Some of the 100 who marched to farmers Kathmandu in December demanding their payments have not been paid for three-four years.

Babu Lal Ray from Ramnagar in Sarlahi told the Post last week that he had received a foreclosure notice from his bank for not repaying a loan he had taken three

>> Continued on page 4

## Congress does not claim Speaker post, showing that there's a larger game afoot

Party insiders say that Sapkota for Speaker is part of a larger deal among Deuba, Dahal and Oli that includes transitional justice and the Constitutional Council.

KATHMANDU, JAN 21

The primary opposition Nepali Congress did not field any candidate for Speaker on Tuesday to challenge the Nepal Communist Party's candidate Agni Sapkota, paving the way for the ruling party leader's election to the post unopposed. The party is also unlikely to file candidacy for the post of deputy Speaker.

Ruling party co-chairs KP Sharma Oli and Pushpa Kamal Dahal had reached a deal on Sunday to put up Sapkota for the Speaker of the House of Representatives after month-long negotiations. That deal came a day after Oli, Dahal and Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba decided on officials for the two transitional justice commissions that are tasked with investigating conflict-era cases.

Now that the Congress has allowed Sapkota, who faces a murder charge for a conflict-era killing, to get elected unopposed, party insiders say is part of a larger deal between Oli, Dahal and Deuba.

Congress leaders admit that Deuba made a concession in return for a stronger say on the Constitutional Council, where he is a member in his capacity as the leader of the opposition. The Constitutional Council is an important body that appoints ambassadors and officials to constitutional

Ram Chandra Poudel, a senior Congress leader, affirmed that a deal had been struck among Deuba, Oli and Dahal regarding the Speaker's post and the transitional justice bodies. "I had a meeting scheduled with

Deuba to discuss ways to make the transitional justice process more credible," Poudel told the Post. "But instead, he asked me if we should file candidacy for Speaker. I told him we should, but he declined, saying we have to make an agreement with the ruling party for various appointments. Constitutional Council meetings in

the past have been deferred several times after Deuba failed to show up. On one occasion, it decided on a few appointments in his absence, prompting the Congress party to boycott a hearing committee meeting.

Apart from a deal on appointments, there are other pressing concerns due to which Deuba is not opposed to the ruling party, say insiders.

When it comes to the transitional justice process, Deuba and Dahal are the major parties—one as leader of the government during the insurgency and the other as supreme commander of the Maoist army.

>> Continued on page 4



### Even as coronavirus cases rise, no mandatory screenings at airport

A large number of Chinese tourists and Nepalis living and working in China arrive at the airport every day, but health screenings remain the passengers' prerogative.



Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu

#### **ARJUN POUDEL** KATHMANDU, JAN 21

At a time when many Asian countries have stepped up measures at international ports of entry to prevent possible transmission of a new strain of coronavirus, health screening of passengers at the Tribhuvan International Airport, the only international airport in the country, remains voluntary. A health desk at the airport has simply placed a signboard that urges passengers to contact personnel if they have a fever or other health com-

"We provide a form for those air passengers who contact us about any kind of health complications," Dr Nishant Thakur, who has been

International Airport health desk, told the Post. "No one has contacted us

Since the new strain of coronavirus was first detected in the Chinese city of Wuhan, Singapore, Thailand, Japan and South Korea, among other Asian countries, have introduced mandatory screenings at airports, especially for arrivals from Wuhan and other major Chinese cities. Chinese health authorities are even conducting individual temperature checks on passengers.

The Chinese authorities on Tuesday confirmed that at least six people have died and over 290 had been infected with the deadly virus. Two people were infected through human-to-human transmission.

According to the BBC, the World Health Organisation is calling a rare emergency meeting and is likely to declare an international public health emergency. In the past, the UN health agency had declared a similar international public health emergency over Swine flu and Ebola outbreaks.

Web: www.presidential.edu.np

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Compete with yourself



### MEDLEY

### Inside the Post

#### National

Around 5,000 hectares of agricultural land in Rajapur, Bardiya, is parched this winter. The Karnali River Management Project could not supply water to the area because of a sharp decline in the Geruwa river's water flow.

The non-regenerative energy resources possessed by our planet is shrinking every day. The global energy consumption in 1960 was 3.4 Gtoe (Gigatonne of Oil Equivalent), whereas, in 2018, it increased to 13.82 Gtoe, a four-fold increase.

#### Life & Style

Many dog owners feel that because dogs have a coat of fur, they can tolerate the cold better than humans. But that's a misconception. Here are a few winter care tips you can follow to protect your faithful four-legged family member to keep them cheerful as the mercury drops.

Money The appointment process of the chief executive officer of the Nepal Tourism Board hangs in the balance with Baluwatar and the Tourism Ministry jockeying to get their man in the coveted position, according to sources privy to the matter.

### Sports

Tribhuvan Army Club have opened a three-point lead atop the standings after contenders Machhindra were handed a shock 2-0 defeat by Himalayan Sherpa Club and the defending champions Manang Marshyangdi Club were held at a 2-2 draw by Three Star Club

### News Quiz

- The number of water birds increased which artificial lake?
- a. Jagdishpur lake
- b. Indra Sarovar
- c. Ghodaghodi lake



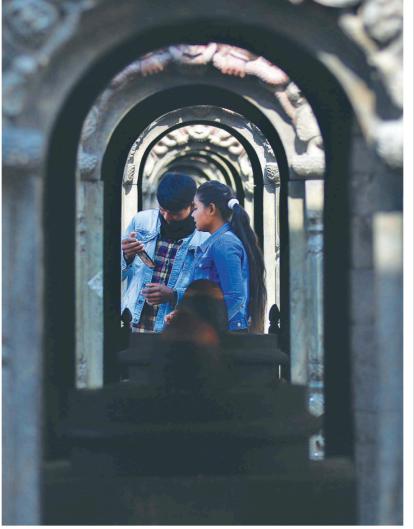
- Which province has opposed the federal government's plan to construct short distance roads?
  - a. Province 5
  - b. Province 3
- d. Gandaki province
- Who is the new president of Bharatiya Janata Party? a. Amit Shah

- b. Jagat Prakash Nadda
- d. Nitin Gadkari
- According to Charity Oxfam, the world's billionaires have become richer than the global population by what percentage in the past decade?
- b. 40 percent
- c. 50 percent d. 60 percent
- How long did the construction of the Biratnagar Jogbani transit point take?

  - d. 6 years
- a. Transcultural
- Organization
- c. Chhahari Nepal

- c. Rajnath Singh

- a. 1 years
  - b. 3 years
  - c. 5 years
- 6. Which organisation offers hotline psychosocial support for those having suicidal thoughts?
  - Psychosocial
  - b. Koshish National Mental Health
- d. Center for Mental Health



A young boy and a girl look at a cellphone at Pashupati, in Kathmandu.

POST PHOTO: FLITE IOSHI

### On this day in history

#### Govt committed to promote journalism

TANSEN - "Journalism has become a begging bowl in Nepal. Journalism, as is ill-facedly encouraged, has given rise to a negative impact to its very existence. Now, with the advent of the CPN-UML government, the ill-practices that are meted out to journalism, will be completely discontinued. The government will seriously analyse newspapers and classify them into grades based on their performance. So much so that, I will disapprove gradings to those newspapers which do not mandatorily abide by the spirit of facts and figures to be maintained in newspapers"

The aforementioned words were categorically stated by Minister of Information and Communication Pradip Nepal Saturday while addressing a function organised here by Nepal Journalist Association, Palpa branch.

Kathmandu Post January 22, 1995

Answers to News Quiz: 1 (a), 2 (c), 3 (b), 4 (d), 5 (b), 6 (a)

### Quote of the day

Metal sculptors have a new enemy—technology, Page 8

"We need a university which teaches this craft [metal sculpting]. You don't learn how to cast sculptures by studying. You do so by practising. And unless those in power realise this, the future of traditional handicraft is dark."

Bishram Singh, president of Lalitpur Handicraft Association, believes that the government needs to immediately invest time and effort to save this traditional art form.

### Most read online

#### They speak Nepal Bhasa and celebrate Ya:Mari Punhi. But they're not Newar

With heavy Nepal Bhasa accent in their speech, anyone would confuse 59-year-old Nirmal Kumar Mishra (Jha) and his son Aashish Mishra for Newars. From observing jatras and nakhas to even living in the core Newar settlement of Patan, the Mishra family has been living alongside the Newar community for generations.

### Biratnagar integrated check post slated to be inaugurated today

A second integrated check post on the Nepal-India border at Biratnagar is slated to commence formal operations from Tuesday, three years after construction started. The integrated check post is expected to facilitate Nepal-India commerce. It also houses quarantine and lab facilities which will reduce hassles for Nepali traders by eliminating the need to travel to Kolkata to get their products tested.

#### Sapkota for House Speaker is a win for the Maoist faction of ruling party

After a month-long negotiation, Nepal Communist Party Co-chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal on Sunday managed to extract a concession from Co-chair KP Sharma Oli—Agni Sapkota for the House Speaker.

#### For those having suicidal thoughts, helplines offer an empathic ear and emotional support

Dr Nabin Lekhak was going about his day at Patan Hospital's outpatient psychiatry department when he got a phone call. The person on the other end told Lekhak that he didn't want to live anymore and was about to kill himself. But Lekhak had been trained to handle such situations and he knew that he needed to keep the person talking.

### Corrections

In the photo carried on the news story 'For those having suicidal thoughts, helplines offer an empathic ear and emotional support' (published on January 21, Page 1), clinical psychologist Bharat Gautam is counselling a caller through a helpline run by Transcultural Psychosocial Organization instead of what was inadvertently published.

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.

### HOROSCOPE

A smile will turn out to be more valuable than a big wad of cash today. So, go ahead and use your charm to get what you want. It's a great way to

and talents that are in high demand. Utilise what you have.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

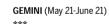
ARIES (March 21-April 19)



Your daily routine won't seem so dull. The universe has a few wrenches to throw into the works, and you'll enjoy every hiccup you encounter. Embrace the chaos. After all, it's stimulating your mind in a new way. If you let yourself become anxious, you'll be putting yourself through distress for no real reason.

make someone else happy while also making

yourself happy. Everybody wins. You have skills





As a concept, love may be important to you right now, but you might be having some anti-romance feelings. It would be wise for you to avoid any cooing couples. They're likely to get on your very last nerve. But try not to get too angry. Get away from it all and treat yourself to some luxurious solitude.

56 Formerly

peel 62 Small remnant

59 Europe-Asia

61 Remove the

63 String-quartet

64 False witness

66 Per — (yearly) 67 Plumbing bends

**DOWN** 

member

65 Novelist

Ferber

68 Guy 69 Must-haves

mountain range



You may be confused when someone close to you espouses two seemingly contradictory ideas. To you, it sounds as though this person is talking out of both sides of their mouth. But don't start poking holes in these notions just yet. It's not always up to you to organise your loved ones' thoughts. Let them do it themselves



CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Your opinions have extra weight right now, so vocalise them loudly and proudly if you really want to make some changes in your world. Get involved, and when someone says something that you don't agree with, speak up. You should not be surprised when others join you in battle. After all, you're right, aren't you?

VIRGO (August 23-September 22)

AMEBA

LURES

PORTENT

TOSSED

LAGGED

49 A Little Woman

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

HEDGE

E P S O M

I NERT SALAMI

OMITSHIJACK

INLET SKIRT

|P|A|T|S|Y|

28 Far East land

— out (relax)

8-22-19

46 Real

48 Onassis

nickname

27 Black tea

AYLABRIEFTEAL

IDEALS LANCE

ERADON IMSO AROUSE SNAIL

THOS

Getting your ideas across to a room full of people merely by explaining yourself with words is so uncreative. If you want a deep and meaningful exchange, you need to get creative and have the courage to act in an unusual or unexpected manner. You need to get their attention. Sometimes style is as important as substance.



There is absolutely nothing wrong with being more intrigued by the way something looks than by its practicality. Having an eye for beauty is important, and it will help you create your own style. Choose things based on the way their appearance makes you feel. Develop your sense of beauty by consciously moving toward it.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21)

LIBRA (September 23-October 22)



If you're trying to get someone's attention today, you should opt for an illogical approach. Instead of making yourself as noticeable as a neon sign, try to be more elusive. Don't be too easy to get hold of. Don't jump into a conversation with this person. You have better things to do. Make them work a bit.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21)



15

There is no denying that several people working together can be a far greater force than individuals working alone. History shows that major change can happen when people unite for a cause. You have to come to grips with that fact and admit that it's time to join forces if you really want to accomplish things.

16



Today, a friend's invitation could help you learn more about a foreign culture that you've always been curious about. This is a wonderful day for you to go exploring and learn about as many different aspects of this unique culture as possible. Do some research about the place. You're curious. That's great. Keep it up.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18)

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19)

In the past, when you saw something you wanted to do, you didn't wait for an engraved invitation before getting involved. Why are you being so shy about embracing a new experience? Today, you must stop hiding away from this adventure If you focus on failures you'll stop growing, and you'll never reach your full potential.

PISCES (February 19-March 20)



You are certainly not lacking options right now. Your primary task today will be to try to figure out how to choose which one to take advantage of first. The good news is that picking a path is not an exact science. It's an art. Just go with your gut and pick the road that promises you the most fulfilment.

### **CROSSWORD**

- 6 Bakerv
- 14 Mix-up
- 15 Place of 16 Pronto
- 20 Huff and puff 21 Having a gentle
- 23 Tribal healer
- kid 26 Tease 27 Melodramas29 Mars explorer
- 32 Table extender 33 Spot 37 — kwon do
- 38 Left the runway (2 wds.) 41 "The Raven
- 42 Joule fractions
- 45 Over
- 47 Coffee and steamed milk
- 49 Yes vote 50 Uphold
- author 44 Unexplained sightings
- 53 Changes for the bette

- **ACROSS** Cookie quantity
- purchase 10 Pigeon talk
- 17 Paper quantities 18 Claw badly 19 Gather leaves
- voice (hyph.) 25 AWOL school
- Ice floe 2 Survey findings 3 Rubbish 4 Liken
- Box-score fig. Seafood garnish Norwegian
- monarch Lean against Shakespeare's
- fat knight 10 Live it up 11 Honshu port 12 Of durable
- 13 Shelled out 21 Give in the middle 22 Snoop

24 Trading center

- 29 1-90 30 Paddle cousin 32 Garret 34 Resort
- 35 Taro-root paste 36 Itch wood 39 Passe 40 Ms. Dunaway 43 Splinters
- SOGGY © 2019 UFS, Dist. by Andrews McMeel for UFS

50 Pome fruit

- 51 Delicate 52 Untamed 53 Pond scum 54 Bagpipe sound Cantina toast Pakistan's
- 58 Transmit 60 Makes a getaway 63 FedEx truck

language

25 23 30 33 35 36 32 38 40 45 48 60 62 63 65 66 68 69

### **SUDOKU**

3 5 8 7 4 2 6 9 478962315 962315748 8 5 1 2 4 3 9 7 6 2 4 3 6 9 7 8 5 1 7 9 6 1 5 8 4 3 2 96158432 3 8 7 5 2 6 1 9 4 6 1 4 7 8 9 5 2 3 529431687

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



### **NATIONAL**



A blind person is assisted by his friend as they walk along a muddy road section in Thapathali, Kathmandu

### Murder convict arrested after five years on the run

SHUVAM DHUNGANA

The Metropolitan Crime Division, Teku, on Monday arrested a murder convict from Gongabu, Kathmandu, who had been on the run for the last

Acting on a tip-off, a special team from the division arrested Kamal BK, 25, of Dhading, who had been found guilty by the court of killing Yurung Tamang on January 14, 2015.

'BK in 2015, had murdered Tamang by hitting him with a stone. He had been on the run since," Superintendent of Police Mukesh Kumar Singh of the division told the Post. "The Patan High Court on 7 July 2015 had convicted BK with the murder and sentenced him to 10 years in prison.' BK was sent to Kathmandu District

Court on Tuesday for necessary While there has been an increase in

the arrests of fugitive criminals across the country, Nepal has also witnessed a steady rise in murder cases over the last five years.

As per data provided by the Nepal Police, 5,172 murder cases were filed in the fiscal year 2014/15, while that number rose to 5,367 in the fiscal year 2015/16. It rose further to 5,904 in the fiscal year 2016/17.

In the fiscal year 2017/18, the number of murder cases in the country reached 6,405. However, the number of murders saw a marginal decline to 6.233 in the fiscal year 2018/19.

### Thirteen years on, Madhes movements, despite some momentum, remain incomplete

Institutionalisation of representation, inclusion and federalism continue to be contested, analysts say.

**CHANDAN KUMAR MANDAL** KATHMANDU, JAN 21

When a small group of Madhesi activists from a little-known socio-intellectual organisation burned copies of the interim constitution on January 16, 2007, few could have imagined that their actions would set the entire country down a path of deep structur-

The spark ignited by the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum and its leader Upendra Yadav would spread across the Madhes. On January 19 that year, 17-year-old Ramesh Mahato was killed during the protests in Lahan. This was the first Madhes movement and it deal with the state while also demanding their rights. Second, they failed to generate inter-community dialogue

and gain support from other groups." Despite the nation-wide influence of the movement, the returns were not as significant as expected, according to Chandrakishore.

In successive years, Madhes-based parties would rise to power and join several governments, securing lucrative ministries. Riding on the achievements of the Madhes movements, they made claims in the political arena, but were not committed to institutionalising those achievements, even for Madhesi communities. Their popularity slowly faded, and credibility was

"Most people who lost their lives during the Madhes movements came from lower sections of the society, but those enjoying powerful positions are from higher castes and classes," said Chandrakishore, a journalist who has followed Madhes politics for decades. "Their rights and representation are not seen in the Madhes as well. Calling these groups Madhesi is not enough. Restructuring is required inside the

Untouchability, dowry and discrimination continue in many districts of the Madhes and even Province 2, the only province that is led by two Madhes-based parties which have 16 achievement of the Madhes movement and needs to be protected at any

However, institutionalising all the achievements of the Madhes movements requires a larger strategy, said

"We cannot always be guided by sentiment. We need a strategy to protect these achievements and regain what has been lost via constitutional amendments," said Yadav. "This can either be done politically, for which we need support from others as well, or through the streets, which is the last

The two parties that are still demanding constitutional amendments are the Rastriya Janata Party Nepal and Samajbadi Party. Both supported the KP Sharma Oli administration after reaching a two-point deal on constitutional amendments, but the March last year after its lawmaker Resham Chaudhary was handed a life sentence by a district court for masterminding Tikapur violence in August 2015. Samajbadi Party, born out of a merger between Upendra Yadav's Sanghiya Samajbadi Forum and Baburam Bhattarai's Naya Shakti, quit the government only recently, in December.

The two Madhesi parties have long been talking about building a united force to put pressure for constitutional amendments, but there has been no substantial progress. Earlier, the Janata Party had made Samajbadi Party's withdrawal from the government a precondition for merger. But in a recent turn of events, Oli's Nepal Communist Party seems to have cultivated its leaders—first by forging an electoral alliance for the National Assembly and now dangling the bait of deputy speaker.

As far as the Samajbadi Party is concerned, its sudden exit from the government has left it without any future plans.

Analysts say Madhesi parties easily fall for power and position and tend to forget the agenda they were carrying when they were protesting on the

Federalism might be a force for good but even it has been co-opted by local elites and has become a pathway for corruption, says Chandrakishore.

"All the Madhes-based parties" aspire to become national political parties and have removed the 'Madhes' from their names," he said. "This shows that they are not committed to the cause of the Madhes.'

The Madhes movements gave Madhes-based parties and their leaders the political capital to bargain with the state and other political forces, but personal interests and an ineffective leadership have not only caused the loss of credibility of Madhesi leaders among Madhesi society but have also sidelined them from the central stage of national politics.

"Madhes movements gave the Madhesi parties and their leaders authority and placed them at the forefront," said Chandrakishore. "But there will be a drop in the coming decade and Madhesi forces will no longer be a decisive force in Nepali politics even though Madhesi issues remain alive.'

### Government prioritises compensatory plantation in areas with limited forest

Forest ministry says there is also a policy in place to maintain at least 10 percent forest cover in all local units.

CHANDAN KUMAR MANDAL

KATHMANDU, JAN 21

The government has prioritised plantation in areas with limited forest coverage while planting compensatory trees to offset the deforestation carried out for development projects.

As per the existing laws, developers are asked to plant trees for felling trees while building their projects. However, most of the time, such plantations are done haphazardly in areas where there is already forest coverage.

According to Sindhu Prasad Dhungana, spokesperson for the Ministry of Forest and Environment, such project developers will be asked to plant trees in areas with inadequate forest cover.

planted trees in forest areas, which is difficult for us to confirm," said Dhungana. "In some cases, we have found them planting exotic trees, which could do more harm than good to forests.' In a random inspection, a team from

the Forest Ministry had found that a developer had planted Gum trees in a Sal tree (Shorea robusta) forest. "Natural forest ecosystem should

not be disturbed by planted forest," said Dhungana. "Felling of trees means there should be a new forest area which has not been happening. Therefore, the developers would be asked to do plantation elsewhere.

The country boasts a forest cover of 44.74 percent. However, according to the Forest Ministry, 137 local units-106 in Province 2-have zero forest

The government has come up with a policy to ensure and maintain a minimum of 10 percent forest cover in all local units to address the issue of unequal forest cover distribution.

Felling of tens of thousands of trees for mega-projects like hydropower and roads without compensatory afforestation programmes has threatened the country's forest cover.

The new Forest Clearance Guidelines, 2019 has revised the ratio of trees to be planted against the trees felled at project sites. As per the new rules, a project developer has to plant only 10 trees against each tree cut down for the project. Earlier, the project developer had to plant 25 trees per tree—a provision mentioned in the Forest Clearance Guidelines, 2017.

The new rule has made the tree planting uniform for all kinds of projects. Earlier, hydropower projects had to plant only two trees to compensate for every tree felled, whereas all other cts nad to plant 25 saplin

"The ratio was not scientific even then and was decided arbitrarily," said Dhungana. "It's still arbitrarily fixed, but decided after consultation with project developers. They have agreed to this ratio.' The new changes in the guidelines

also provide two options to the project developers while planting trees. Either they can plant those saplings, take care of the area for the next five years and then hand it over to the government, or deposit the required amount at the Forest Development Fund for plantation and rearing.

The amount will vary and will be calculated based on the nature of the forest area, its plant species and the area of plantation.

"If they [project developers] think it's not their expertise in planting and taking care of trees and lack the resources, they can hand over the required money for the same purpose," said Dhungana. "The government will plant and take care of the



A old man sits among tree logs that were chopped to make way for a road expansion project in Kathmandu. According to the new Forest Clearance Guidelines, 10 compensatory trees must be planted for every tree felled for development projects.



Federalism, one of the major demands of the Madhes movements, has been implemented but the demand for 'One Madhes, One Province' has now been reduced to the eight districts of Province 2.

was followed by the second in 2008 and the third in 2015, with each iteration demanding that which Madhesis have long desired-equitable representation for the politics, culture and language of the Madhes. Mahato was later declared a martyr-the first martyr of the Madhes movement-and since January 19 is observed as its anniversary.

"If we retrospect about the Madhes movement, it was waged for identity, representation of Madhesi people in the country's state apparatus and for autonomy," said Rajkishor Rajak, a political commentator. "The Madhes movement brought the issues of state restructuring, identity, representation and federalism to the fore of national

But 13 years on, the Madhes movement remains incomplete, with their agendas for equality, proportional representation, an inclusive state and federalism yet to be fully realised.

"With the Madhes movement, the Madhesi people won but Madhesi leaders lost," said Chandrakishore, a Madhes-based journalist."They failed on two fronts. One, Madhesi leaders lacked negotiation skills and could not lost, even among their constituencies,

"Leadership in Madhes politics turned out to be corrupt," said Rajak. "Political leaders, who were once trained in various other political parties, turned out to be opportunists and traded the movement for their own political goals."

For Tula Narayan Shah, a political analyst, it was the Constitution of 2015, promulgated when the Madhes was burning and Madhesi forces were not in a position to assert their claims, that diluted the achievements of the Madhes movements.

"But we cannot call the Madhes movements unsuccessful or say that it failed to achieve its major agendas," said Shah. "The effects of the Madhes movements can be felt across all social and political levels. The movements challenged the established political

But the socio-political agenda of the Madhes remained in the hands of a few upper-caste male leaders, with the issues of women, Dalits and Muslims marginalised once again. Benefits were milked by a handful of leaders, their family members and close aides,

seats each in the federal Parliament, continues to fall behind on development indicators.

"Madhesi communities fought together, but have not evolved as a democratic society. It still is a castebased society," said Rajak. "The traditional power structure remains alive in Madhes and that is reflected in its politics as well. The upper castes are leading the political ideology whereas other marginalised communities are merely following suit.'

Federalism, one of the major demands of the movement, has finally been implemented but the Madhes' demand for 'One-Madhes, One Province' has now been reduced to the eight districts of Province 2. The provincial government, the only one not led by the ruling Nepal Communist Party, is often at odds with the federal

"Constitutionally, we are a federal democratic state, but if we look at the content, it still looks like we are guided by a centralised mentality," said Gyanendra Yadav, minister for internal affairs and law for Province 2. "Those against federalism are actively trying to ruin federalism, which is the

### NATIONAL



Sadhus draped in shawls sit at Pashupatinath temple in Kathmandu.

## Sanothimi Campus let off with warning for violating procurement, hiring rules

National Vigilance Centre had probed after it received a complaint about several alleged irregularities at the Campus.

**PRITHVI MAN SHRESTHA** KATHMANDU, JAN 2

Sanothimi Campus failed to abide by the Financial Management and Procurement Rule of the Tribhuvan University while procuring mobile phones, water purification machines and sports items and publishing a memorial book, an investigation by the National Vigilance Centre has

The Centre had conducted an investigation after it received a complaint about several alleged irregularities at the Campus. The Centre gave a clean chit to a number of alleged irregularities, including the contract for an under-construction building. However, it did find that some activities at the Campus were done without following due procedures.

The Campus did not follow rule 58 of the Financial Management and Procurement Rule of Tribhuvan University while procuring a Rs Aryan Technology. As per the rule, a sealed quotation should be called and the best option from among at least three short-listed firms should be chosen before the procurement of anything above Rs25,000.

As per the Tribhuvan University

Executive Council meeting on February 22, 2017, the Campus chief can purchase a mobile phone worth up to Rs15,000. But the Campus procured an iPhone-8 worth Rs 119,780 for its Chief Ram Chandra Ghimire. As it is a procurement made by crossing the limit set by the Tribhuvan University Executive Council, the Office of the Auditor-General has categorised it as

an irregularity. In the complaint, the current officiating Campus Chief Homnath Dahal was accused of financial irregularities worth Rs1 million by submitting fake bills as per the instructions of the Campus Chief Ghimire.

The Campus Chief was also accused of taking payments from the Public Service Commission for letting the latter conduct exams on the campus. The Centre's investigation found that Rs34,560 paid by the Commission to the Campus in the previous two years was deposited in the Campus's account only after a complaint was found that under the leadership of Dahal, the campus had purchased sports equipment, but it was not worth the billed amount of Rs1 million. Dahal had received a reimbursement for spending Rs253,210 to run various sporting events. The Campus was supCampus chief was accused of financial irregularities worth Rs1 million.

posed to prepare a proposal before holding sporting events, but it was found to have ignored this procedure. Although an expense of Rs68,170 was categorized under tiffin expenditure, no names were forthcoming as for whom the tiffins had been prepared.

The necessary process as defined by the Financial Management and Procurement Rule was not followed while making a payment of Rs286,737 to Shree Nepal Mega Printing House Private Limited for the publication of a memorial book published by the Free Student Union

The Campus administration on May one for teaching mathematics and two for teaching English-on contract. The complaint stated that the appointments were made without following the Tribhuvan University's rules. After the investigation, the Centre said the Campus had failed to take prior approval from the Office of the Registrar at the Tribhuvan University

Another complaint registered against the Campus leadership was that two teachers appointed on a contract basis were allowed to lead various departments, going against the Tribhuvan University Organization and Educational Administration Rules. The investigation by the Centre found the appointments go against Rule 19 (2) and (3).

In its recommendation, the vigilance Centre suggested action against those who made procurement decisions going against the rules and those who made the recruitment of teachers on a contract basis without taking approval from the Office of the Registrar, Tribhuvan University. But the Centre recommended suspending further investigation in the case and warned the Campus administration of further action if it is not found following due procedures in the future.

making payment of a bill to a contractor after the completion of work on an under-construction multi-purpose building. The chief had not taken the approval of the procurement committee of the campus before making the payment.

### Deadline arrives but sugar mills still owe farmers Rs800 million

>> Continued from page 1

Annapurna Sugar Mill owes Ray Rs275,000. The 67-year-old farmer has so far repaid Rs 500,000 to the bank and had hoped to pay back the remaining loan with the money from the mill. He never received the money he was owed, said Ray.

Annapurna Sugar Mills owes more than Rs420 million to farmers and has so far only paid Rs 30 million.

Government officials said the mill operator has gone out of contact, but farmers do not believe them.

According to Mainali, government officials are complicit in defrauding

'Why would they pay millions of rupees to the poor farmers when they can easily lobby with politicians and government officials by paying a certain amount?" Mainali told the Post. "We don't have much hope from this government, which was said to be the strongest in years.

With the government doing nothing to ensure their payment over the past three weeks, farmers are unsure of what to do next.

"I am in big trouble as the bank has started sending me notices to pay back the loan," a distraught Ray told the Post. "How will I pay my loan when I have not received my payment?"

According to Mainali, Annapurna Sugar Mill, Mahalaxmi Sugar Mill, Bagmati Sugar Mill, Indira Sugar Mill and Lumbini Sugar Mill have all yet to clear their dues. Mahalaxmi owes farmers Rs100 mil-

lion, Lumbini Rs100 million, Bagmati around Rs60 million, and Indira around Rs90 million. Farmers who have sugarcane ready for harvest now have nowhere to sell

shop in order to avoid paying farmers. According to ministry officials, Shreeram Sugar Mill has committed

their crops as sugar mills have shut up

Mahalaxmi is in the process of obtaining a bank loan to pay farmers.

Rajesh Yadav, a sugarcane farmer from Sarlahi who is also a member of the Sugarcane Farmer Struggle Committee, accused the government of siding with sugar mill operators instead of listening to their plight.

Yadav said he had called Birendra Basnet, Minister Bhatta's personal secretary, on Tuesday, only to be told that sugar mill owners still have two months to clear their dues.

"But the agreement says that the government will ensure that sugar mill owners make their payments by January 21," Yadav told the Post. In the agreement, the government

had even said that sugar mill owners will be made to clear their dues even if they have to sell off their property. Yadav is owed Rs1.2 million by

sugar mill owners but has so far received only Rs300,000. "We have been cheated by sugar mill owners for years, but this time the government also cheated us,

Yadav told the Post over the phone from Sarlahi. According to Yadav, the struggle committee is holding a meeting on

Wednesday to chart out future plans. Minister Bhatta reiterated that his office is "serious about the sugarcane

farmers' issue" and that it will come up with "a new strategy" to address their concerns. But Bhatta took no responsibility and instead blamed 'middlemen". "Middlemen have manipulated

farmers," Bhatta told the Post. He did not elaborate on who these middlemen were or how they had manipulated

Farmers say they are at their wits'

"I don't know what we are going to do," said Yadav. "Maybe we will come to Kathmandu again to protest, but we are not sure if that will pay off.'



Sugarcane farmers from Sarlahi district had come to Kathmandu for the protest.

### Even as coronavirus cases rise, no mandatory screenings ...

### >> Continued from page 1

The Wuhan municipal health commission reported that 15 medical workers in the city had been infected with the coronavirus virus, with one in critical condition. Infections have also been reported in Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand

But in Nepal, health authorities at the airport do not appear to be taking the threat of the virus too seriously, despite the fact that the country is at a high risk of transmission, as the inflow of Chinese tourists is high. More than 169,000 Chinese tourists visited Nepal in 2009. The country aims to attract two million tourists, including 350,000 Chinese tourists, in

There are also thousands of

### **Certificate Lost**

that my Original Qualifying Examination certificate of Main Senior Secondary Examination of year 2014 and Roll No. 4651546 issued by CBSE has been actually Lost.

Name of the candidate: **Priva Chaudhary** Address: Submetropolitan city Ward No. 4, Sunsari Nepal Contact No.: +977 9819095675

Nepalis living and working in China. On January 13, a Nepali man returning from Wuhan was quarantined at the Sukraraj Tropical and Infectious Disease Hospital on the suspicion of being infected with the coronavirus. The man was released after five days of treatment, but doctors at the hospital remain unsure if he carried the virus.

Filling out the health form at the airport is voluntary, as the Health Ministry has not made the screening mandatory, according to Thakur. He conceded that passengers with fever or other health complications can easily skip the screening because there is no thermal screening system.

The Epidemiology and Disease Control Division, under the Department of Health Services, is responsible for taking preventive measures to contain the spread of the deadly virus. Officials at the division told the Post that they are in constant touch with the World Health Organization's country office

"WHO has not asked its member countries to conduct a mandatory screening," said Dr Bibek Kumar Lal, the division's director. "Some countries have been screening all passengers and planes while others are only screening passengers who arrived from

The Health Ministry deputed a doctor, two paramedics and two staff nurses at the airport's health desk last week after the UN health agency alerted all member countries, including Nepal, about the possible spread of the virus.

Lal said that his office did not have information about the number of passengers coming in from Wuhan and other cities where cases have been reported.

A team of health workers, led by Lal, visited the airport health desk on Tuesday to study the possibility of setting up a thermal scanner.

'Thermal scanners show the actual temperature of the body only if it is set up in an air-conditioned room," said Lal. "We do not have such an air-conditioned room at the airport and the airport authority did not let us set up such a room citing security reasons."

The airport once had thermal scanners at the airport but, according to doctors, they were largely ineffective since they were placed in a corridor with no air-conditioning. In such spaces, thermal scanners are unable to accurately reflect the temperature of the body.

Lal, however, said that his office is ready to follow any direction from the UN health agency to protect people from

### Congress does not claim Speaker post ...

### >> Continued from page 1

But according to one Congress leader, any such deal between the ruling and opposition parties will not bode well for the drawn-out transitional justice process.

"The peace process is a special political situation. That, however, does not mean ignoring war-era serious crimes and absolving the guilty," said Gagan Thapa, a Congress central committee member. "The NCP co-chair's statement, ruling party's decision and the opposition's support are sinister. There shouldn't be any attempt to halt the judicial process just because someone holds a special position.

Oli, according to ruling party leaders, had largely left the transitional justice issue to Dahal and Deuba.

After Saturday's meeting between Oli, Dahal and Deuba, a recommendation committee swiftly forwarded candidates for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons. All 10 names were suggested by the parties.

The ruling and opposition parties have also reached a deal on amending the Transitional Justice Act, at least two leaders familiar with

developments told the Post. Deuba then seized the opportunity to also make a deal on appointments through the Constitutional Council, according to one Congress leader who spoke on condition of anonymity. Deuba cashed in on the recent friction between Oli and Dahal in the ruling

Oli is now in a bid to give the deputy Speaker's post to the Rastriya Janata Party, as a precursor to the Madhes-based party's inclusion in government.

party, he said.

But Congress leaders say negotiations are ongoing between Dahal and Deuba to get one of their party members elected as deputy Speaker.

Leaders from both ruling and opposition parties said they were expecting more if the ruling party would agree on giving the post of deputy Speaker to the opposition. Ruling party spokesperson Narayan Kaji Shrestha, who has close relations with Dahal, said that given the myriad challenges the country is facing, there was a need for the ruling and opposition parties to agree on some pressing issues. "There was some understanding between ruling and opposition parties' leaders during negotiations over transitional justice, Shrestha told the Post. "We agreed on appointments to the two transitional justice bodies and we have also agreed on amendments to

manoeuvres in the days to come, as cracks

have already started to appear in the Janata

Party, which on Tuesday supported Sapkota's

The Janata Party's presidium is divided

with one section refusing to join the Oli gov-

ernment until a number of its demands are

met. Dahal, meanwhile, wants to prevent the

Janata Party from joining the Oli government

as he wants to take the Congress on board

with the post of deputy Speaker. In return,

Deuba had suggested that Dahal woo Poudel

so that he would not create obstacles during

recommendations to the constitutional bod-

Minendra Rijal, a Congress leader, howev-

er, said he could not say at this point of time

ies, said the Nepali Congress leader.

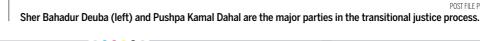
nomination for Speaker.

the Transitional Justice Act." According to Shrestha, the ruling and opposition parties have also agreed to work togeth-

er in the future as well. Political observers say that the primary opposition allowing Sapkota to get elected unopposed does indicate that there is a give-and-take between the ruling and opposition parties.

'In principle, the Nepali Congress should have filed its candidacy, even if it knows it

lacks numbers to win, just to show that it is in opposition," said Shreekrishna Aniruddh Gautam, a political commentator. "As that is not happening, it shows that the ruling and opposition parties are working together.



### **NATIONAL**

### BRIEFING

#### Seven dead, 34 injured in Dhading accident

DHADING: Seven people died and 34 others were injured when a truck overturned in Maidi Bhanjyang of Dhading on Tuesday. The crash occurred when the victims were returning home after paying homage at Dholamandali Temple in Jwalamukhi-4. Six persons died on the spot while an injured died in course of treatment at the district hospital, said police. Twelve critically injured were airlifted to Kathmandu in a Nepal Army helicopter.

#### Dipak Manange assaults Kaski Football Association president

POKHARA: Gandaki Province lawmaker Rajiv Gurung alias Dipak Manange assaulted Milan Gurung, president of Kaski District Football Association, at Bhandardhik Stadium in Pokhara on Tuesday. The two had reportedly got into an argument over an issue of accommodation for the football team visiting from Manang, lawmaker Gurung's home district, to play in the Gandaki Provincial Chief Minister Cup League. Milan, one of the league organisers, accused lawmaker Gurung of punching and kicking him. Lawmaker Gurung, however, said that he had only slapped Milan for stranding the visiting players. He also accused the league organisers of committing financial irregularities.

#### Three held with pangolin scales

MAKWANPUR: Three persons were scales from a bus park in Hetauda Sub Metropolis Ward No. 10 on Monday evening. Acting on a tip-off, police seized 2.19 kg of pangolin scales from Gaurab Gautam, Krishna Bahadur Gole and Surva Lama. Police handed over the trio to the Division Forest Office in Makwanpur for further investigation.

#### Vehicular movement halted

RASUWA: Vehicular movement along Kerung-Rasuwagadhi road section has been obstructed due to dry landslides that occurred at two different parts of the road in the Chinese side. Authorities said daily imports have come to a halt due to the blockage. There are dry landslides at two kilometres below the Thongsa area and six kilometres from the border point.

### Kalikot schools a playground for politicians

Politicisation of school management committees is creating an atmosphere that distracts students from their studies.

**TULARAM PANDEY** 

KALIKOT, JAN 21

Panchadewal Secondary School in Mehelmudi held an election on Thursday to elect the members of its School Management Committee. The candidates organised campaigns and distributed pamphlets decorated with their election symbols in the school. Jana Jyoti Secondary School in Subha Kalika Rural Municipality also held an election to elect members of its School Management Committee recently.

In both school elections, the candidates who ran for the School Management Committee memberships were affiliated to various political parties.

"During the elections for the management committee, members of various political parties tend to file their nominations," said Chief District Officer Krishna Chandra Poudel, "and we are obligated to provide security. Even though these are just school elections, the atmosphere is that of a major political election."

Party leaders participate in the school elections not only for political gain but also because their election to the committee opens avenues to financial profit, said Mahesh Devkota, Chairman of Education Development and Coordination Division.

Political meddling in schools comes at a cost, says Devkota. For instance, there are 99 community schools and 42 secondary schools in the district but none of them has a single post for government-appointed teachers. Since appointing government teachers requires consensus among the school management committee members, which is rarely achieved owing to their affiliation to various political parties, the committees prefer hiring private teachers on a contract basis in various community schools. The school, in turn, has to make adjustments in its budget allocation to pay these private teachers. "The funds for mid-day meals, textbooks and scholarships have been used to provide salaries to private teachers," said he said. "The practice of political leaders taking an active part in school elections has muddied the education system in the community schools," said Devkota.

According to the Education Act 1971 and Education Regulation 2002, the nine-member management committee



Jana Jyoti Secondary School in Subha Kalika Rural Municipality recently held a poll to appoint School Management Committee members.

must comprise four parents (guardians), one educationist, one male and one female donor who has extended financial support to the school in the past, the respective ward chairman and the principal of the school.

Aside from the financial implications, the schools also suffer from interrupted classes, and the overall political atmosphere that enshrouds the schools during campaigning leading up to the day of voting. "There are political colours everywhere during the elections. The appointment of management committee members should ideally happen through consensus," said Devkota, "But in the absence of a consensus, which happens more often than not, there is a provision to elect the members through elections." This allows members of various political parties to become a part of the school system and to meddle in the school affairs.

Most of the community schools in the district have leaders of various political parties at the helm of their School Management Committees.

Of the 62 secondary schools in the district, the leaders from ruling Nepal Communist Party have won the chairmanship of the committee in 38 schools, followed by Nepali Congress leaders, who are working as committee chairmen in 19 community

schools. while three school committees have chairmen from Rastriya Prajatantra Party and two other schools have leaders of other political parties as their chairman.

Hansha Bahadur Shahi, the general secretary of Nepal National Teachers Organisation, who is also the principal of Pili-based Kalika Secondary School, said that the political leaders enthusiastically participate in school elections to have the school funds at their disposal. "Despite holding elections being a democratic process, no one has a concrete plan to use their position in the school to work towards the betterment of that school," said Shahi, "Most of the committee chairpersons are only interested in the construction of physical infrastructure and teachers appointment for financial and political gains."

One of the prerogatives to be able to run for office in the School Management Committee is to have at least one ward as a student in the school. However, the children of the majority of the chairpersons of the community schools are not the students of the same school. "To get around to this provision, most School Management Committee members participate in the elections claiming to be the guardian of one or several of the school's students," informed Rara

Katiya-based Mahadev Secondary School Principal Durga Bahadur Shahi. Kali Bahadur Malla, a civil society leader from Rara Katiya, said that the children of over 50 percent of the committee chairpersons are studying in other schools in the cities. "Those persons whose children are not even enrolled in the community schools are serving as chairman of the school committee," said Malla, "The authorities should make it mandatory that the children of the members of the school committee who get their salaries from the government be enrolled at community schools.'

Kamal Bahadur Shahi, one of the non-guardians holding a post at the school management committee at Kalika Secondary School in Rachuli, responds to the locals' complaint of his election being "wrong.

"Although my children are not enrolled in this school, I became a member of the school management committee to serve the children of my village," he claimed. "I have personally donated Rs1.6 million to the school.'

Meanwhile, the students of various community schools in the district are not pleased with the practice of holding elections in their schools. Sunita BK, who attends Panchadewal Secondary School in Mehelmudi, is worried since she has a lot of catching up to do in her coursework. "The school management committee elections were held on Friday. Before that, I wasn't able to focus in class. This entire exercise interrupted our daily classes. We couldn't concentrate," she said. "They can hold the elections during school holidays if they must.

Likewise, the parents and guardians of these students also express their dissent over the politicisation of school elections claiming that such activities have encouraged irregularities in schools while also affecting their children. "These elections, in which the political party leaders take part, have damaged the learning and teaching environments of our children's school," said Mitthu Shahi Sailaja, whose daughter also attends Panchadewal. "The power play and politics that occur during the elections have not only hampered the studies but has also affected the mental state of our children in that they are exposed to a highly political atmosphere unsuitable for young

### Eight Indians found unconscious in a Daman resort declared dead

PRATAP BISTA

Eight Indians, including four children, who were found unconscious at a resort in Makwanpur have died.

The Indians were rescued from Panorama Resort at Simbhanjyang, Daman, in Makwanpur, and flown to Hams Hospital in Kathmandu, where doctors pronounced them dead.

Fifteen Indian tourists had booked two rooms at the resort on Monday night at 10 pm. Eight of them-four males and four femaleswere in the same room.

Makwanpur police said they might have fallen unconscious due to asphyxiation.

The resort staff had called the police after they found the Indian

Police suspect asphyxiation to be the cause of deaths but investigation is underway.

tourists unconscious in their room. A helicopter was immediately flown in from Kathmandu to airlift them, to take them to the Capital for treatment.

The Indian citizens who have passed away have been identified as Prabin Kumar Nayar, 39, Sharanya, 34, Ranjit Kumar TB, 39, Indu Ranjit, 34, Shree Bhadra, 9, Abinab Soraya, 9, Abi Nayar 7, and Baishnab Ranjit, 2.

Superintendent Sushil Rathaur of Makwanpur said the Indian ciitzens might have used gas heaters to warm their room which could have suffocated them to death.

"Investigation is underway," said Rathaur. Daman, which sits at an altitude of

nearly 2,500 metres above sea level, is a popular tourist destination. The Nepal-India border town of Raxaul is 111 kilometres south of Daman.

### Drying up of Geruwa river affects irrigation, wildlife in Bardiya

Silt deposited by floods has reduced the water flow.

KAMAL PANTHI BARDIYA, JAN 21

Around 5,000 hectares of agricultural land in Rajapur, Bardiya, is parched this winter. The Karnali River Management Project could not supply water to the area because of a sharp decline in the Geruwa river's water flow.

The project is unable to supply water in the villages of Manau, Khairichanpur, Patabhar and Pashupatinagar. The water flow in the Geruwa, an offshoot of the Karnali river a few kilometres downstream from Chisapani, has gradually declined as the Karnali changed its course because of silt formation.

According to Kedar Shrestha, chief of the Karnali River Management Project, around 90 percent of the river water now flows to the western side in Kailali district and just 10 percent flows into the Geruwa river.

"The silt should be removed to enhance the Geruwa river's water flow and run the irrigation project smoothly," said Shrestha. "We will take the necessary initiative to resolve the problem."

The Karnali river in the past decade has been gradually changing its

elephant, among others, conservationists say.

course towards the western offshoot. Water flow in the Geruwa sharply declined in the past couple of years, as the floods deposited too much silt at Lalmatiya, blocking the river.

Kamal Regi, a farmer in Geruwa Rural Municipality Ward No. 5, said farmers in Rajapur and Geruwa have been facing irrigation problems in the winter due to the sharp decline of water flow in the river. He urged the authorities concerned to clear the sil-

The Geruwa river flows through the Bardiya National Park. The wildlife in the protected area has been hugely affected because of the declining water flow in the river. According to Sandesh Paudel, a ranger at the park, animals struggle for water in the dry season. The area near the Geruwa river is the habitat of wild animals like tiger, rhino, deer and elephant, among others, conservationists say.

The Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation had allowed the park to remove the silt in the Geruwa river last year.

"It was not possible for us alone to remove the huge piles of stones, pebbles and sand. We need help from a third party to resolve this problem,'



The area near the Geruwa river is the habitat of wild animals like tiger, rhino, deer and



Workers at the construction site of the Kathmandu View Tower in Kathmandu. The construction of the 29-storey view tower—which is being carried out by Jaleshwor Swachchhanda Bkoi Builders Pvt Ltd with a budget of Rs7 billion—officially started from April 2019.

### Wildlife from Chure forests entering settlements for water

Animals like wild boars and blue bulls reach settlements that border with India, terrorising the locals.

Krishna Devi Yadav of Kachorwa sustained severe injuries when a wild boar attacked her on January 16. The 45-year-old had to be taken to National Medical College in Birgunj for treatment.

"A wild boar from the Chure forests had entered the settlement. Krishna was collecting fodder in the nearby field when the boar attacked her," said Bachchha Yadav, Krishna's uncle. According to him, wild animals frequently enter settlements and destroy crops.

Kachorwa, which lies near the Nepal-India border in Simraungadh Municipality Ward No. 8 of Bara, is around 40km south of the Chure forests. Locals say wildlife, including wild boars, blue bulls, deer and monkeys, has started entering settlements and wreaking havoc of late.

"Wild animals destroy crops planted in hectares of land. Big animals generally do not venture into the settlements; it's the smaller ones like wild boars and blue bulls that terrorise us. The forest office and the national park are indifferent towards our problems," said Pannalal Das, a farmer of Piprabirta in Mahagadhimai Municipality.

According to conservationists, wild animals have started moving south to the settlements that border India, as water sources in the Chure forest region are drying up. Rampant deforestation and haphazard extraction of sand and pebbles in the Chure range in the past few years have led to a depletion of water sources.

"Water level in various rivers and rivulets have gradually started decreasing due to rampant deforesta-

tion and exploitation of riverbed materials. Chure forests, until a few years back, had several sources of water, but most have dried up now. Wild animals are moving south in search of water," said Rabindra Singh, chairman of Halkhoriya Collaborative Forest Management Committee.

Amir Maharjan, chief of Parsa National Park, admits that a shortage of water sources is forcing wild animals to move south towards the no-man's-land.

"The population of wild animals is also on the rise, which is good news, but we must manage proper habitat to accommodate the growing number," said Maharjan. According to him, the number of animals like deer, tiger, leopard, wild boar, monkey and the blue bull has increased significantly in the past few years.

There were four tigers in the area

during the tiger census held in 2010. The latest census conducted in 2018 showed 18 tigers in the park forests. It is estimated that there are around 60 to 65 elephants and four to six rhinos in the area. The government in 2017 declared Parsa Wildlife Reserve as Parsa National Park. The park occupies 627 square kilometre area, including the forests of Parsa, Bara and Makwanpur.

Conservationists have stressed on the need to preserve water sources in the Chure region in order to conserve the wildlife and prevent them from entering human settlements.

"The authorities concerned should immediately make plans and policies to address this issue. Big animals like elephant, rhino and tiger will also start entering human settlements if the problem is not addressed at the earliest," said Baburam Gopali, a for-

mer warden of the park.

### **EDITORIAL**

### Fast gateways

The launch of the Biratnagar-Jogbani integrated check post is commendable.

Prime Minister KP Oli and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi jointly inaugurated the Biratnagar-Jogbani integrated check post on Tuesday. The border crossing being the second busiest transit point for Nepal's trade, it will surely benefit from his facility. That the Customs Department had already started to use this facility in its unfinished form, as far back as October 2018, to ease congestion shows how important the investment in integrated infrastructure is for trade to flourish.

The government should be commended for finally completing this important milestone. Still, much more remains to be done to accelerate commerce and to mitigate congestion at border points. For one, India has already approved the building of at least two more integrated check posts along the border with Nepal. More such border points, spread out geographically, makes economic sense, as they help expedite customs processing.

The integrated check posts are much more than a regular customs point at the border. Such integrated facilities have immigration, customs and border security offices, quarantine facilities, and currency exchange counters, among others, in one place, thereby eliminating the need to run around in bureaucratic circles to facilitate human and cargo movement. There is no need to rush off samples of exports or imports to urban centres for routine or suspect tests as they can be conducted right at the facility. Similarly, having customs, security and immigration offices in one place (and right at the border) is expected to smooth all kinds of movement both ways. The facilities are so helpful, over 60 percent of all trade via Birguni goes through the integrated check post there, as opposed to the traditional customs point that remains open.

In South Asia, the idea of integrated check posts first came from India, which began to construct them in 2012, starting with one with Pakistan. This isn't surprising, as India is the largest trade partner for most countries in the region; such facilities are bound to provide easier access to Indian exports as much as it provides smaller countries easier access to Indian markets. Since 2012, India has constructed over six such posts on the border with four countries—Pakistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Nepal. The integrated check post on Nepal's side at the Biratnagar-Jogbani transit point was constructed with a Rs2.8 billion grant from

Nepal can learn a lot from India's push for integrated check posts. By investing in such facilities, the southern neighbour has guaranteed better links to connect their products from landlocked, inner states with markets in the four neighbouring countries. Nepal, being landlocked, can similarly benefit with better-integrated links all along its southern border. If more such posts are constructed across the southern belt, products developed and manufactured in faraway provinces need not be routed all the way to the eastern Tarai to link to markets in India.

But to take this forward to benefit Nepal, the country can also propose such integrated posts with China. The 2015 blockade showed how dangerous it was for Nepal to rely on one major market as well as one point of transit for all third-country trade. In the short term though, simply maximising the capacity of the two operational integrated check posts would go a long way in smoothening trade. The upgradation of road links, as well as the promotion of cargo rail, up to the integrated posts from both sides would further expedite customs processing.

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Finally, please tell us who you are in a sentence or two when you send us your story ideas. We want to know where you have published before or what your expertise is on the topic you're interested in exploring.

### Palanquin bearers of the Supremo

Between humane concerns and jingoism couched as nationalism, the latter always wins.

CK LAL

**SOUTH SIDE** 



Supremo Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli recently gave a gentle rap on the knuckles of Nepali journalists. In an interaction with honchos of the business community, he claimed that Nepali editors lacked the heart and mind to praise good deeds of the government. The Nepali press dutifully reported his grievances

The achievements of the government that he cited in his outbursts were mostly of a municipal nature. About his tall promises of the past trans-Himalayan railways and introducing shipping through Nepal's rivers to the Ganges—he lied that the work had already begun. The biggest achievement of this government is that it has managed to escape all criticism despite doing almost nothing positive for the past two years.

Even when critical of the government or the Nepal Communist Party, the Nepali media treats the Supremo with kid gloves. In the hue and cry over the award and extension of the land-lease to Yeti Holdings, journalists chose to downplay his possible role in the sordid affair.

The most recent example is that of the election of the Speaker. It was clear from the beginning that he was using Deputy Speaker Shiva Maya Tumbahangphe as a pawn on the chessboard to settle some scores with his alter ego Pushpa Kamal Dahal. Once bargains had been made and contested issues settled, the incumbent dutifully resigned at the instruction of a party to which she had ceased to belong by virtue of her non-partisan post.

The Supremo has got so used to being praised by the press that he gets irritated when some journalists decide to do what they are expected to do and begin to doubt his benefits rather than give him the benefit of the doubt as a matter of course. The English media in Nepal played down frustrations of the prime minister as a matter of routine. A few Nepali journalists, however, were mighty miffed. Even an editor friendly towards the regime came out with a scathing criticism terming Premier Sharma Oli's politics as the road to Stalinism.

Wounded pride

The international image of non-parti-

sanship notwithstanding, the Nepali Service of the BBC has the same character as that of the local media. It barely hides its ethnonational sympathies behind the patina of the balance trap. It posted what it termed as the responses of some editors to the prime minister's allegations. The fact that such baseless accusations were considered worthy of seeking reactions says more about the state of the Nepali media than somewhat predictable rejoinders.

The views expressed by illustrious editors were baffling to say the least. The opinion of the government-owned newspaper can be dismissed as inevitably defensive. Other editors lured into the debate for balance didn't cover themselves with glory.

'He took a stand against India during the blockade. At that time, there was no media that did not support him,' claimed Yubaraj Ghimire without realising the fallacy of his assumptions. Even when a country is at war, the primary duty of a journalist is to keep asking questions. Ethnonational proclivities of the veteran editor are too well-known in Madhes to need substantiation, but it's precisely the 'urge to support when needed' that makes the government expect it at all times.

'It's been 13 years since I became the editor of Naya Patrika. To this day, I have not seen any prime minister thanking the media while leaving office,' declared the youthful editor Krishnajwala Devkota. His memory had evidently played tricks on him during the interview. While exiting office in 2016 to evade being ousted with a no-confidence motion, he had profusely thanked the

Among all the politicians belonging to the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxists-Leninists) after 1990, Sharma Oli emerged as the most colourful personality of the decade and managed to keep the press in good humour. When he realised that the media needed somebody from the communist ranks to denounce the Maoists, he presented himself as the harshest critic of the armed insur-

Once he lost the elections to the first-ever Constituent Assembly of the country in 2008, he began to oppose everything that the Purple Revolution had promised—republic, federalism, proportionate inclusion and positive discrimination—and managed to establish himself as the protector of the old order. Terrified at the prospect of Madhesis, Janjatis and Dalits asserting themselves, the permanent establishment of Nepal (PEON) made him its hero.

The rest is the story of the unstoppable emergence of Sharma Oli as the ethnonational chieftain of the constitutionally-created Khas-Arya category of the people of Nepal. Along with other losers of the first Constituent Assembly election, such as Sushil Koirala and Krishna Sitaula of the Nepali Congress, Sharma Oli succeeded in getting a majoritarian constitution in 2015 and established himself as the protector of the national

#### **Wobbly litter**

The classic palanquin has a comfortable box carried on two bamboo poles by at least four bearers. Its smaller version often has a single pole and the tiny litter can sit two at most. Despite the claims of Hindutva fanatics, pushpak bimans (flowery aircraft) remained in myths and palanquins were the most ubiquitous mode of transport for brides, grooms and the local elite till the middle of the last century in the Ganga plains.

In a famous poem titled Palanquin Bearers, poet Sarojini Naidu, once named the nightingale of India, sings: 'Lightly, O lightly we glide and we sing, / We bear her along like a pearl on a string.' That is exactly how the Nepali media carried its ethnonational chieftain to victory—like a pearl on a string—with a near two-thirds majority in the federal Parliament and almost total dominance over local

and provincial governments. A palanquin ride, however, has its pitfalls. When bearers change shoulders, the box shakes. That can sometimes irritate the passenger. The Supremo is perhaps infuriated that the Nepali press hasn't yet become as submissive as the Godi media in India despite its unquestionable loyalty to the saviour of the majoritarian order. His denials of truth are artful. He manages to use divertissement with considerable skill and consistency. He doesn't shy away from disseminating lies. He can sell dreams to hard-nosed realists. He continues to be at the top of everything, and considers it his right to demand unquestioned loyalty from the press

Many journalists have checked themselves since Supremo Sharma Oli publicly voiced his gripe. They probably discovered that they do have their heart intact, but it isn't always in the right place. It hardly ever beats for any community outside their ethnonational group. In every conflict of interest between humane concerns and jingoism couched as nationalism, the latter always wins

Humbert Wolfe laments in an epigram: 'You cannot hope to bribe or twist, / thank God! the British journalist. / But, seeing what the man will do unbribed, / there's no occasion to. Supremo Sharma Oli can count on the suspension of disbelief by nationalist journalists.

### Nepal needs to invest in renewables

Nepal's demographic dividend can be utilised to turn the country carbon neutral.

GIRISH CHANDRA POKHAREL



The non-regenerative energy resources possessed by our planet is shrinking every day. The global energy consumption in 1960 was 3.4 Gtoe (Gigatonne of Oil Equivalent), whereas, in 2018, energy consumption increased to 13.82 Gtoe, a four-fold increase. Indeed, there is a strong relationship between the people's living standards and the amount as well as types of energy consumed but only one planet to provide the resources.

The greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions related to energy use continued to grow in 2018, despite the growing adoption of renewable, clean energy. Governments around the world are setting policies and targets to reduce emissions. Yet, the world is not on track to meet the targets set by the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement.

A sustainable energy system must have minimal or no adverse environmental or social impact, cause no natural resource depletion and be able to supply the demand for current and future generations. The United Nations has set many targets and indicators in the energy sector to achieve sustainable development goals (SDG) and protect air, water and land by 2030. The good news is that more than one-fourth of global electricity generation is coming from renewables already.

Our region is known as the 'third pole', and it holds about 15 percent of global snow and ice; this is a vast amount of energy resource. Rampant



use of non-renewable resources, infrastructure development, tourism, and urbanisation are putting pressure on the region's resources and threatening the Himalayas. Also known as the 'water tower' of Asia, the Himalayan region has an estimated hydroelectricity generation potential of more than 500 GW. It can support the development of hydropower in the Himalayan region and along with being a supplemental source to other kinds of renewable sources such as wind and solar energy.

Carbon emitted by dirty fuels and the burning of biomass is recognised as a major concern in the climate-sensitive Himalayas due to which freshwater sources, especially ice caps and glaciers, are retreating. Temperature across the Himalayan region is projected to increase by about 1 to 2 degrees Celsius by 2050. Similarly, mountain temperatures across the

region are projected to increase by beyond 2 degrees Celsius on average. Mountains are already drying out because of the rapid melting of snow. Over 1.65 billion people live in the river basins of the Himalayas. More than 80 percent of the rural population in the Himalayan countries lack a modern energy source for cooking on the one hand; on the other, in specific locations, the use of fossil fuel is increasing. Around 85 percent of the total energy consumption is met by traditional biomass energy, and around 24 percent of households do not have access to electricity.

The Himalayan region remains energy-poor and vulnerable. The issues of energy security, climate change, and energy poverty combined posed a threat to countries in the region. To enhance Nepal's energy security, access to an adequate amount of energy that is affordable,

non-polluting and sustainable, without unduly affecting the present low carbon status, is required. Massive investment for energy transformation and access to technology is equally important. The generation of renewables sus-

tainably creates more jobs, economic activities and social amenities. In 2018 about 11 million people around the globe were employed by the renewable energy sector. With investment in renewables, Nepal can contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, focus on capacity building, transfer, and adopt knowledge and new technologies.

The major sources of renewable energy in Nepal are hydropower, solar, various forms of biomass, and wind. With an increase in renewable sources like biogas, solar, micro-hydro and wind, we can make significant strides towards mitigating environmental degradation and climate change. Solar energy is also a reliable means of energy in the context of Nepal as the country has 300 sunny days in a year, making it rich in solar power potential. Wind energy is also feasible in certain locations.

About 24 percent of people worldwide are already benefiting from small-scale renewable energy technologies. With increasing awareness, and investments in research and development in these areas, it is entirely feasible to massively reduce carbon emissions. Nepal can be made into a carbon-neutral country by 2050 as envisioned by the Nepal Planning Commission.

The country has about 10 million people between the ages of 14 and 40, and the median age is around 22.7 years. The country can achieve sustainable development goals only by utilising this huge young demographic in a green economy. Experts and researchers among youths in these fields should be prioritised and provided with the means to gain more knowledge about the necessary technological developments.

Pokharel is a research assistant at National Academy of Science and



### A data revolution for all

Transforming the role of data in addressing major social and economic issues is not a job for any one person or organisation.

**MICHAEL FROMAN & RAJIV SHAH** 

Science has revolutionised medicine and agriculture over the last 100 years, particularly for the poorest of the poor. Achievements ranging from the treatment of hookworm to the green revolution attest

Looking ahead, data science has even greater potential to revolutionise everything from how we treat disease to how we build more inclusive economies. History shows us that when the power of science and technology is brought to bear on society's greatest challenges, millions of lives can be

Pick any problem you see around the world: the raging wildfires that are devastating Australia; the opioid epidemic that is ravaging poor communities in the United States; the world's worst refugee crisis since World War II. Confronting these problems and others - from poverty and inequality to conservation and climate change—requires the responsible application of data, and the insights drawn from them.

Yet, while there have been great advances in data science in the private secmany social-sector and civic organisations are lagging behind. With proper support, they can leverage data analytics to make their work go further and faster, ultimately helping more people. Just last year, our two organisations-Mastercard and The Rockefeller Foundation—committed to addressing this gap. By becoming more data-science driven, all organisations can achieve their full

Fortunately, innovators in the field are already performing some of this work. volunteer-based organisation DataKind, for example, has connected non-profits with private-sector data scientists to solve issues facing community health workers. Community Solutions, a non-profit working in more than 80 US cities and counties, is using data science to tackle homelessness. And Benefits Data Trust, a Philadelphia-based national non-profit, leverages the power of artificial intelligence to help millions of low-income American families access the

Development interventions

UNDP'S latest quarterly research publication Development Advocate Pakistan underscores that 'peace is a key component for achieving sustainable development. A peaceful society provides a healthy socioeconomic environment for businesses and people to flourish, leading to sustainable development. However, if development is [only] concentrated in certain areas amongst a few people, it ... creates resentments leading to conflicts thereby disrupting peace.... Peace and development, thus, share a mutually reinforcing relationship; while peace is a prerequisite for sustainable development ... inclusivity of development is essential [to

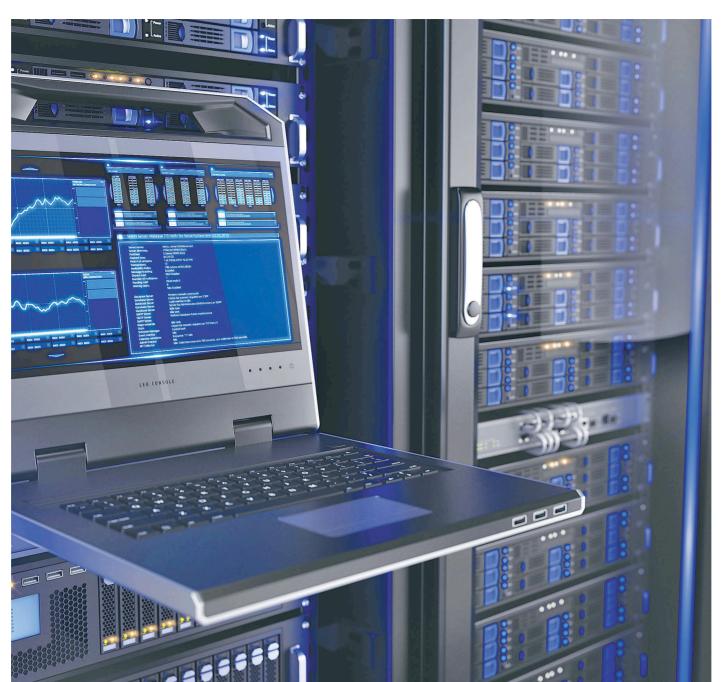
Pakistan is trying to strike a balance between this peace and development nexus to progress towards inclusive sustainable development. Despite immense potential for growth, Balochistan and former Fata in particular are unfortunate cases of stunted development—partly owing to non-inclusive development and partly to lack of peace in the region. For instance, the percentage of people living in poverty in Balochistan has reduced from 83.4 per cent in 2004-05 to 71.2pc in 2014-15. In contrast, comparatively peaceful provinces with fewer people living in poverty than in Balochistan have experienced a much higher rate of reduction in Several other factors also play a crucial role in the peace and development nexus, such as a well-functioning government, political stability, equitable distribu-

can directly contribute towards restoring peace through conflict resolution.

**IGNACIO ARTAZA** 

maintain peace].'

information.



social benefits available to help them.

Data-driven insights been used to help mayors across the US pursue strategies of inclusive economic growth, and to help government officials in Africa predict the locations and causes of at-risk pregnancies in rural communities. And yet, these efforts represent merely the starting point, not the Expanding the field of data science for social impact is a shared global effort.

final destination. There is still so much more work to do.

Transforming the role of data in addressing major social and economic issues is not a job for any one person or organisation. We must build on the successes of those who have come before. In 2002, a group of innovative social entrepreneurs, together with anti-poverty advocates and the Irish rock

musician and philanthropist Bono, launched DATA.org, a nonprofit committed to alleviating debt, fighting AIDS, and reducing trade inequalities in Africa. In what ultimately became the ONE Campaign, they galvanised support for poverty alleviation by focusing on real-world data, and by advocating evidence-based approaches to development.

At the time, these efforts broke new ground by recognising the power of data to address society's greatest challenges. In partnership with millions of activists around the world, the coalition behind DATA.org facilitated the cancellation of \$100 billion of debt owed by poor countries, marshaled \$50 billion in contributions for health and development aid, and pushed for trade deals that helped millions of vulnerable families

But, although data are ubiquitous, and the opportunities offered by the data revolution are even larger, not everyone is poised to gain from it equally. Once again, we need a bold effort to bridge the gap and ensure that the most vulnerable are not left

With that challenge in mind, and with the support of DATA.org's original founders, The Rockefeller Foundation and Mastercard are relaunching DATA.org to serve as a platform for partnerships to expand further the field of data science for social impact, and to ensure that non-profit and civic organisations are well positioned to take advantage of the data revolution.

By relaunching the platform, we hope to use data to tackle homelessness, improve access to social benefits, and support community health workers worldwide. Those on the front lines of efforts to improve public health, fight poverty, and solve many other problems will have improved access to data scientists who can help them maximise their impact. Most importantly, this will be done in a way that brings more people and organisations together to effect positive social change, all while adhering to principles of responsible

Expanding the field of data science for social impact is a shared global effort. It will take collaboration from all sectors to ensure that the nearly 2.5 quintillion bytes of data being produced every day have a positive social impact. Just as DATA demonstrated the promise of evidence-driven policies for development 18 years ago, the relaunch of the platform this month will create new momentum for tackling the world's biggest

The data revolution must benefit all. Together, we can make 2020 the year that partnerships began to extend the promise of a data-driven economy to everyone, every-

### Peace & development



tion of resources, good governance, well-functioning business environment, good diplomatic relations with neighbours, how to achieve it, but have also carefully low levels of corruption, high levels of considered the conflict situation to deterhuman capital, protection of fundamental mine how the projects can reduce conflict rights of all, and easy access and flow of through economic, social and environmen-

tal protection. Additionally, development interventions can also directly contribute towards restoring peace through conflict resolution and management by providing neutral spaces for interaction, positive communication outlets and mechanisms for cooperation. In short, by providing non-violent means to work together and address contentious issues, they can demonstrate alternatives to

However, which strategy should come first is debatable and varies in different situations. For instance, the question of

whether the state or development partners need to focus on restoring peace through equitable development projects or whether peace must first be restored in the region before any developmental work is implemented is context-specific.

The example of other countries must also be looked at to understand how both dynamics need to be taken forward simultaneously. Countries such as New Zealand and Iceland have always taken pride in having a peaceful society and maintaining high levels of human development. Sri Lanka managed to maintain high standards of human development despite suffering from decades of conflict, therefore implying that peace cannot necessarily be taken as a precondition to development.

Pakistan has demonstrated considerable commitment to achieving its Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs have a holistic approach that can serve as a catalyst to positively impact the peace-development nexus by addressing poverty, inequity, education, hunger, discrimination, poor governance, etc in an interconnected manner. However, a considerable and lasting change will take a far

In Pakistan's case, along with other targeted development interventions, its youth can play a critical role in maintaining and boosting peace and development in the country. The National Human Development Report 2017 also informs us of an existing demographic advantage—ie, the majority of

the population is young. If they are provided with quality education, gainful employment and meaningful engagement opportunities, Pakistan's youth can serve as positive agents

Along with the state and development partners, grass-roots organisations, civil society and local authorities are also essential for ensuring a bottom-up approach in order to achieve a peace and development balance. A holistic and inclusive approach which features all stakeholders, and which is thoroughly based on evidence-based research and ground realities, is required to achieve this balance.

This article was previously published in Dawn, a part of the Asia News Network.

a thorough peace and conflict impact assessment should be conducted before the design phase of the development intervention. This is to ensure that the projects designed, especially in conflicts and post-conflict areas, not only consider the development objective and

For countries like Pakistan with areas

affected by insecurity, along with all other

factors, development interventions can

serve as a crucial catalyst in the peace-con-

flict dynamics of these areas. However, if

not prepared or planned well, these inter-

ventions can do more harm than good. Thus,

# Metal sculptors have a new enemy—technology

The traditional art form is facing competition from Chinese market and technology.

**SHASHWAT PANT** 

In a small shop in Oku Bahal in Lalitpur, Purna Kumar Awale is laying the final touches on the head of a statue of Buddha. In a self-built workstation, the 43-year-old works carefully, the same way he has for the past 24 years.

But the more recent of those 24 years have been tough for Awale and others in the centuries-old metal-sculpting trade.

"Earlier, everyone who was into metal sculpting did really well. The money was really good. Within just three years in this business, I had managed to earn enough money to build a house and send my children to private school," said Awale. "But the business started slowing down from 2010."

That was around the time many artisans started heading to China to work there for businesses that manufactured idols. According to Bishram Singh, president of Lalitpur Handicraft Association, many artisans went to China to work because they were offered better salaries there. "When they get a better offer to provide food on the table for their families, no one is going to refuse a chance to do so," said Singh.

According to Ratna Jyoti Shakya, whose family has been in the business for more than four generations, metal sculptors earn around Rs10,000 to make an idol.

The problem for the local industry didn't just stop with the exodus of artisans to China. "On top of that, development of factories in China that produced idols from machines dealt a huge blow to the industry. While it took us days to make one statue, these machines were able to do it in a few hours," said Singh.

Both shopkeepers and artisans feel that the trade has been affected due to Chinese businesses using machines to make metal idols, and taking skilled artisans to work in their factories. The result has not only been lower prices for the pieces produced in Nepal, but it has also resulted in people giving up the traditional art form. It's simply no longer lucrative or sustainable. "I used to sell a nine inch statue for as much as Rs50,000, but now I can only fetch half of that amount for the same," said Awale.

These developments presented a huge problem because China is a major buyer of Nepali Buddhist idols. It was Chinese traders, Awale says, who bought most of his idols before then. He says it is something they continue to do, but the number of idols purchased is nothing compared to when he first started. "I remember selling as much as 50 pieces in a day to a trader. But the most I manage to



Purna Kumar Awale works on a metal Buddha idol in his shop in Oku Bahal, Patan.

sell now is around 2-3. The business has gone down," said Awale. "I never had time to work on sculptures of others. But now, people give me their sculptures to work on the face. I get paid an okay amount for it but I'd rather be doing things on my own."

The exact date of the earliest metal work from Nepal is uncertain, but many argue that it started before the 10th century. Some say it was before legendary artist Araniko's time, in the 13th century, while others argue it came after. But there is enough proof to say that the artform in Nepal started from two towns in Lalitpur—Naag Bahal and Oku Bahal

"The metal sculpting trade was also only limited to members of the Shakya community," said 75-year-old Ratna Jyoti. "But that is a thing of the past, as everyone from the Newar community, after realising how lucrative the trade was, started doing it," said Shakya.

Awale and many in the trade work directly with the wax which is later melted and evaporated in the *cire perdue* or lost-wax casting process. Initially, they produce wax models—either uncovered or already encased in a mould. Once the rough sculpture has been cast,



the sculptor hands it to another group of artisans, engravers, who smooth the rough surfaces and engrave the fine details.

Ratna Jyoti, who holds a Master's degree in Buddhist

Studies, says that the people who buy the idols are mainly Buddhists from China. And as China gets a lot more tourists than Nepal, the foreigners also buy the idols from

This mechanisation of the idol-making process, according to Bishram Singh, president of Lalitpur Handicraft Association, dealt a major blow to the local

"It takes an artisan a week to mould one wax idol which then takes further time to sculpt a metal idol. But these machines easily make around 20 idols a day. Now tell me what the artisans will do when these types of things happen?" said Singh.

Factories are not just popping up in China, however. One factory was established in Boudha last year. The factory, according to Singh, had a machine similar to ones in China.

"We were shocked when we first saw the output from the factory. Some of the work was so fine, it was better than what most make here," said Awale. "Many of us feared for our future. If a machine makes such fine products, who will buy the idols and sculptures we make?"

After complaints from artisans, Lalitpur Handicraft Association asked the Federation of Nepali Handicraft Association to do something. Singh says both the association and the federation could not turn a blind eye.

"We couldn't let that happen. What would that mean to the handicraft industry here? We, as a governing body, could not just sit and let that carry on," said Singh. "If we let things like this carry on, our traditional art form will suffer a lot. It's not easy as it is for artisans and that just made a lot of people panic."

Since the complaints were made, the factory has stopped operations, but many fear that things like that will resurface again in the near future.

"Automation is inevitable. This time we managed to stop it but who knows what is going to happen in the future," said Singh.

With business no longer as lucrative as it used to be, the younger generation are no longer interested in joining this line of work. Buddha Ratna says that his son has refused to follow in his footsteps. "I worry that the art of metal sculpting will disappear," he says.

Singh says that it's not too late to save traditional art in Nepal. He says that the government should include this in the curriculum of schools or have courses on it. "We need a university which teaches this craft. You don't learn how to cast sculptures by studying. You do so by practising. And unless those in power realise this, the future of traditional handicraft is dark."

"We are in a difficult situation now. Some want to sell momos, while others think that selling vegetables is the way to move forward," said Awale. "Handicrafts in Nepal are under threat and if people in power don't do anything about it, this craft will soon disappear."

### Survivor stories spotlight Auschwitz liberation anniversary

The anniversary comes amid a global spike in violence against Jews and in a climate in which a survey showed that 80 percent of European Jews said they felt unsafe in the continent.

### ARON HELLER

Maurice Gluck placed their only child in the care of a local Christian family. Gluck forgot his Yiddish mother tongue and that he even had parents of his own.

After the war, his devastated father came to claim him and several months later he was introduced to a weeping woman who showered him with hugs and kisses.

"My father said: 'Look Maurice, this is your mother, Helen,'" he recalled.

Only years later, did Gluck discover that his birth mother had actually perished along with more than a million other Jews in the Auschwitz death camp. Helen was in fact his aunt.

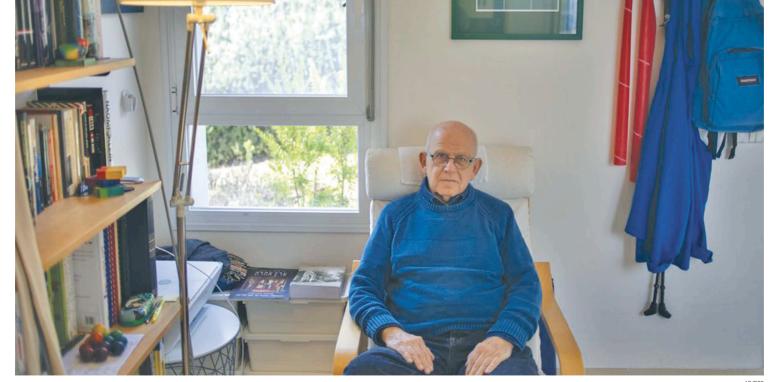
"She discovered that her sister had died so she looked for ways to find me immediately," Gluck explained, choking back tears. "She was my only mother and will always be my mother."

Seventy-five years after Auschwitz was liberated, Gluck is one of 75 Holocaust survivors featured in a commemorative photo project that Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial produced along with award-winning German portrait photographer Martin Schoeller.

The exhibition, opening Tuesday before German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the Ruhr Museum in Essen, is just one of the various events marking the anniversary and commemorating its victims as the notorious camp's few and aging survivors slowly disappear. Yad Vashem is also unveiling its online iRemember Wall, a six-language interactive platform linking users to the memo-

rial's vast database of victims.

The main ceremony will be the



Holocaust survivor Maurice Gluck, poses for a photo in his home in Ya'ad, northern Israel.

World Holocaust Forum on Thursday, in which dozens of world leaders will arrive in Jerusalem for the largest-ever gathering focused on commemorating the genocide and combating modern-day anti-Semitism. Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Emmanuel Macron, Prince Charles of England and other dignitaries who will be attending the event.

It comes amid a global spike in violence against Jews and in a climate in which a survey showed that 80 percent of European Jews said they felt unsafe in the continent. Tel Aviv University researchers reported last year that violent attacks against Jews grew significantly in 2018, with the largest reported number of Jews killed in anti-Semitic acts in decades. They recorded 400 cases, with the spike most dramatic in western Europe. In Germany, for instance, there was a 70% increase in anti-Semitic violence. In addition to the shooting attacks, assaults and vandalism, the research also noted increased anti-Semitic vitriol online and in newspapers, as extremist political parties grew in power in several countries.

"I grew up with this incredible sense of guilt and shock, which led me to question my own identity. How could people from my country commit these horrendous crimes?" said Schoeller, explaining the impetus for the photo project. "It is very scary to see what is happening in Europe right now, that anti-Semitism has come back so strongly."

Schoeller, a former assistant to Annie Leibovitz who is also renowned for his 'hyper-detailed close ups' of celebrities, took a series of intimate portraits of the 75 survivors that highlighted their weathered faces. Among those he bonded with during the photo shoots was Gluck, today an 80-year-old retired diamond merchant who lives in northern Israel.

Gluck's own life story is directly connected to Auschwitz, the notorious Nazi death camp whose very name has become almost synonymous with the Holocaust.

His parents were captured and sent there shortly after the Van den Stock family of Brussels took him in and sheltered him for three years. They were later recognized by Israel for their actions as Righteous Among the Nations, the country's highest honour for non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews. Their descendants maintain a relationship to this day with Gluck and his children.

Gluck's father, Eugene, survived

Gluck's father, Eugene, survived a series of camps and the notorious "Death March" out of Auschwitz in its waning days. His wife Sara died there in 1943, among more than 1.1 million Jews who were killed in Auschwitz and the adjacent Birkenau death camp in gas chambers or from starvation, disease and forced labour in the meticulous Nazi effort to rid Europe of its Jews. Overall, the Holocaust claimed 6 million Jewish lives, wiping out a third of world Jewry.

When Sara's sister Helen also emerged from the camp, she was determined to track down her nephew and raise him as her own. She eventually married Gluck's father, moved with him to Israel and they had two other children together. Only at Gluck's bar mitzvah, when according to Jewish tradition he became a man, did she tell him the truth.

"I ran away and cried all night," recalled Gluck, now a grandfather of 10. "But in the morning, I went back to her and told her that it didn't matter. She would always be my mother."

Despite the early life trauma, Gluck said he considers himself among the lucky ones since he was raised with love.

"Do not forget but try to forgive," he said of his lessons from the Holocaust. "In this world there are good people and bad people. Try to find the good ones."

d ones."

-Associated Pres

# How to take care of your dogs during winter

Here are some tips to make sure your pup does not get as sick as a dog.



Many dog owners feel that because dogs have a coat of fur, they can tolerate the cold better than humans. But that's a misconception, says Ramesh Bastakoti, veterinarian at Annapurna Vet Clinic.

"Like human beings, dogs also can easily suffer from cold and cough during winter. They should be given extra attention during the cold weather, especially those breeds who have less hair," says Bastakoti.

The go-to idea of every pet owner is to keep their dogs indoors. But this measure is not enough, as they need extra care and protection during the winters. According to Bastakoti, the chilly weather can make the skin of the dogs dry and on extreme situations, they can even suffer from arthritis.

In the cold, your usually cheerful and overenthusiastic pet may not have the same energy, succumbing to wintery blues, but there's no reason why they should be that way. Here are a few winter care tips you can follow to protect your faithful four-legged family member to keep them cheerful as the mercury drops.

Give them a cosy environment Most pet owners are careless when it comes to providing a comfortable bed for their canine friends. But just because your pup can't say it, doesn't mean they don't want to snuggle up like the rest of us. While the idea of having a dog sleep with you is going to be a personal decision, if you're not so keen on it, you should at least provide them with cosy bedding to provide the warmth required for them to stay healthy.

But it doesn't stop at the bed. Try to place the sleeping area or the bed of your pet away from cold



spots like uncarpeted floors or even tiles. Arrange enough blankets to cover them up, and if possible, elevate the height of their sleeping area so they don't feel the cold coming from the ground. Pawshow Nepal and Annapurna Vet Clinic Pet Shop are some stores where you can buy warm and colourful beds for your fur baby with the price ranging from Rs1,500 to 3,000.

Bastakoti says that keeping dogs in a warm bed with blankets is the safest way to protect them. One thing he warns against is the use of heaters, for the heat will affect their skin.

#### Sweater weather

While the idea of a dog donning a sweater might seem odd, it's really become normal these days—it's not just the *Legally Blonde* chihuahua

who should be afforded chic clothing. The extra layer will make a world of difference for your pup, protecting them from having direct contact with the cold and providing a layer of heat between their fur and the sweater. So, this winter do not selfishly buy warm clothes just for yourself. Make time and visit a pet store where you can buy warm clothes for your canines. Maybe you can even coor-

dinate outfits with your fur baby.

#### Moisturise

One may find it amusing but the kind of care people need is very similar to the kind of care and attention their pets need. Just like we use moisturiser to prevent dryness or cracking of skin, your dog also needs the same. Get to a nearby pet store and grab some pet friendly moisturiser and apply it

on your pup's paws, ears and tails to prevent the parts from cracking up.

You can even rub some coconut oil on your pet's skin directly as the oil has lauric acid which can help in strengthening their immune system, according to petcare website SitStay. Bastakoti also suggests using coconut oil but not on a regular basis. Additionally, be sure to clean your canine's feet regularly, to avoid build up of any nasty bits and pieces.

#### Keep them hydrated

Not only in winters, but in general, we human beings tend to overlook hydration. Because of this habit, we may also have a tendency to limit the amount of water we give our dogs. Since during the colder winter months, the humidity is low, dogs can easily become dehydrated. Make sure to fill water in your fur baby's bowl frequently. Bastakoti recommends using lukewarm water.

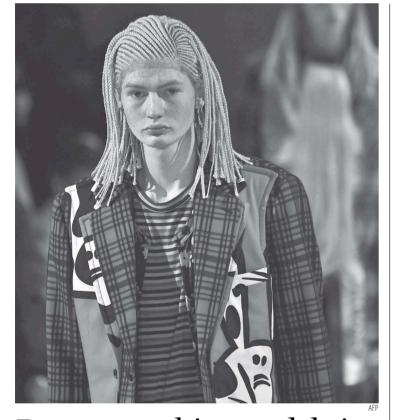
#### Calculate their caloric intake Dogs can't get enough of their

Dogs can't get enough of their food, and they're always up for a treat. But if you keep feeding them, especially on winters, then extra layers of fat can be added to their body, which on summers can trouble them. So calculate the amount of food you are providing to your pet.

What is equally important is to make sure they remain active, no matter how cold it is. If they're home bodies and don't want to venture outdoors, give them toys to play and remain active with.

If your dog is someone who runs all over the house and prefers to go out, then feed them with a diet that will provide them with enough energy. Similarly, if your pet is someone who is not that active, then don't overfeed them.

According to Bastakoti, it's better if dogs are fed with liquid food during winter.



# Row over white models in 'cornrow wigs' at Paris fashion week

The label has remained tight-lipped, but the stylist responsible took to Instagram to defend it.

### AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Japanese fashion brand Comme des Garcons was at the centre of a cultural appropriation row Sunday after it sent out white models in what appeared to be cornrow wigs at its Paris men's fashion week show.

The self-appointed fashion watchdog Diet Prada -- which has a record of pulling up labels on racial insensitivity including the notorious Gucci "blackface" jumper - accused the cult brand of "taking a step back".

Comme des Garcons was criticised in 2018 for reportedly not using a black model for more than 20 years.

Diet Prada, which has 1.7 million followers on Instagram and uses the platform to regularly chide labels, said even those taking part in the show seemed embarrassed.

"The look on the models' faces says it all," it claimed.

While the brand itself has remained tight-lipped, the French

hair stylist responsible for the look took to Instagram to defend it.

Julien Dys said it was meant as a reference to the ancient Egyptians and not cornrows.

"My inspiration for the Comme des Garcons show was an Egyptian prince, a look I found truly beautiful and inspirational," he wrote. "Never was it my intention to

hurt or offend anyone, ever. If I did I deeply apologise," he added. One black model in the Paris show Saturday also wore one of

their hair in short dreadlocks.
While several black Instagram
users supported Comme des
Garcons, they also urged the label
to "use more African men" with
their natural hair.

the wigs, while two others had

Many more, however, were offended, with the black supermodel Adwoa Aboah commenting, "Are we surprised?" Paris men's fashion week ended Sunday with a week of haute couture shows starting with Dior, Iris Van Herpen and Schiaparelli on Monday.

# Nigerian artist makes dark skin prosthetics to boost patients' confidence

Most fake body parts available in the country until now have been white, or made from materials such as wood that also look unrealistic.

### SEUN SANNI & NNEKA CHILE

Michael Sunday is delighted, if a little stunned, as he admires his new right hand: a silicone glovelike prosthetic meant to help him return to normal life after he lost three fingers in a car accident a year ago.

The prosthetic has a hyper-realistic feel and, unusually, is dark in colour, matching perfectly the tone of Sunday's skin. Most fake body parts available in Nigeria until now have been white, or made from materials such as wood that also look unrealistic.

"Wow, this is lovely," Sunday said, his voice choked with emotion, as he looked at the prosthetic for the first time.

"I have my fingers back," said the 22-year-old student, who lost the thumb and fourth and fifth fingers on his right hand when the car he was riding in with his parents on Dec. 31, 2018, collided with another vehicle.

The artist behind the creation is John Amanam, a 32-year-old former movie special effects expert. He developed an interest in prosthetics after a family member lost a limb in an accident.

"I became emotional about amputees," said Amanam, who is also Nigerian.

"They had this feeling of discomfort whenever they were around other people. I saw it as a challenge. If I could give back or solve this need, it would go a long way to ease that emotional trauma and loss of confidence," he added

"I just want them to feel at home and be whole, aesthetically."

So he started making prosthetic fingers, hands, arms, legs and ears in 2017. Depending on the size and complexity of the prosthetic, it takes three weeks to two months to make one.

Amanam has no formal training in making prosthetics but studied sculpting as an art student. The pieces are sold for at least 40,000 naira (\$111).

His company, Immortal Cosmetic Art, is part of a growing services industry that has helped Nigeria's economy become the biggest in Africa

biggest in Africa.

Amanam said mismatched skin tone makes it more difficult for



Patient Michael Sunday shows his new prosthetic hand at Immortal Cosmetic Art company, in Uyo, Nigeria.

"I just want them to feel at home

to feel at home and be whole, aesthetically." to blacks all over the world as well, by making this process accessible, at an affordable rate."

Sunday, who covers a slight seam between the silicone glove and his forearm with a watch bearing a wide wristband, is certainly a satisfied customer.

"I can go about my normal life without people looking at my hand, without hiding my hands or fear of discrimination or pity," he said.

people to feel confident with their

To prepare Sunday's hand, he

took measurements, made a plas-

ter cast and mixed paints on a

palette, as any artist would,

searching for the right skin tone.

black skin prosthetics," Amanam

said. "I want this need to be met

within Africa. I want to reach out

"You rarely find people with

The result was lifelike.

artificial limbs.

### BRIEFING

#### China sentences ex-boss of Interpol to 13 years for bribes

BEIJING: China has sentenced the former president of Interpol, Meng Hongwei, to 13 years and six months in prison on charges of accepting more than \$2 million in bribes. Meng was elected president of the international police organisation in 2016, but his four-year term was cut short when he vanished after traveling to China from France in late 2018. Interpol was not informed and was forced to make a formal request to China for information about Meng's whereabouts amid suspicion he had fallen out of political favour with Chinese President Xi Jinping. Meng's wife, who is in France with their two children, has accused Chinese author ities of lying and questioned whether her husband was still alive.

#### Poland in diplomatic bind over Auschwitz anniversary

**WARSAW:** Poland's president will skip a high-profile Holocaust forum in Jerusalem on Thursday after being denied the chance to make a speech there as Warsaw struggles to counter false Russian claims about Poland's role in World War II. The forum at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial centre will mark 75 years since the Soviet Red Army liberated the Auschwitz-Birkenau German death camp, an enduring symbol of the Holocaust where the Nazis killed more than 1.1 million people. Co-organised by a close Kremlin ally, the event will notably be attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin. French President Emmanuel Macron and US Vice President Mike Pence who've been given a chance to speak.

#### Iran seeks help reading plane's black boxes in new standoff

**DUBAI:** Iran said it had asked the US and French authorities for equipment to download information from black boxes on a downed Ukrainian airliner, potentially angering countries which want the recorders analysed abroad. Canada, 57 of whose citizens were among the 176 people killed in the crash, has said France should handle the flight data and voice recorders as one of the few nations with the capability. Kiev wants the recorders sent to Ukraine. The US-built Boeing 737 flown by Ukraine International Airlines was shot down in error on January 8. (AGENCIES)

## Coronavirus claims sixth victim as infection risk heightens

Two cases have already been identified in Thailand, one in Japan and one in South Korea.

The death toll from the coronavirus outbreak in China climbed to six on Tuesday as authorities reported a surge in new cases, with fears that hundreds of millions of people travelling for the Lunar New Year holiday will accelerate the infection rate.

Officials confirmed that the new mystery virus can spread between humans and said 15 medical staff have now been infected, stoking fears about an international pandemic and prompting airport authorities around the world to step up screening of travellers arriving from China.

The latest update on the outbreak that began in the central city of Wuhan sent shivers through financial markets, as the World Health Organization called a meeting for Wednesday to consider declaring an international health emergency.

The National Health Commission (NHC) put the number of confirmed cases at 291 by the end of Monday, but individual provinces gave more up-todate information on Tuesday showing a widening geographic spread.

Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province, has confirmed 258 cases and six deaths, Mayor Zhou Xianwang told Chinese state television on Tuesday.

The NHC said another 14 cases were reported in the southern province of Guangdong, five in the capital Beijing and another two in Shanghai by the end of Monday.

But on Tuesday, the virus was confirmed to spread to more parts of the country, with the eastern province of Zhejiang reporting five cases, and the northern city of Tianjin reporting two. "Information about newly reported infections suggest there may now be sustained human to human transmission," WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific Takeshi Kasai said in an email statement.

The scare brought back bad memories of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), another coronavirus that broke out in China in 2002/2003, resulting in the death of nearly 800 people in global pandemic.

Two cases have already been identified in Thailand, one in Japan and one in South Korea, while the Philippines reported on Tuesday its first suspect-



A woman and a child wearing protective masks at Daxing international airport in Beijing

Taiwan, the self-ruled island that China claims as its own, also confirmed its first case, a woman who had returned from working in Wuhan, on

Taiwan, which has close economic and people-to-people links with China despite political tensions, on Monday set up an epidemic response command centre to coordinate the island's response to the virus. More than 1,000 beds were prepared in isolation wards in case the virus spreads further.

The virus can cause pneumonia with symptoms including fever and difficulty in breathing. As those symptoms are similar to many other respiratory diseases, extra screening is

The origin of the virus has yet to be identified, but the primary source is most likely animal, according to WHO. Chinese officials have linked the outbreak to a seafood market in Wuhan.

"The outbreak of a SARS-like coronavirus in Wuhan is developing into a major potential economic risk to the Asia-Pacific region now that there is medical evidence of human-to-human transmission," said Rajiv Biswas,

Asia Pacific Chief Economist for IHS Markit, in an email statement.

So far, the WHO has not recommended trade or travel restrictions but such measures could be discussed at Wednesday's emergency meeting.

Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said China will attend the WHO meeting and share relevant information.

"China is willing to deepen its global cooperation and work with the international community to work together to deal with the epidemic,' Geng told reporters at a regular daily

Airport authorities in the United States as well as most Asian nations also are screening passengers from

Australia on Tuesday said it would screen passengers on flights from Wuhan, while Singapore announced it would quarantine individuals with pneumonia and a history of travel to Wuhan within 14 days prior to the onset of symptoms.

Wuhan officials have been using infrared thermometers to screen passengers at airports, railway stations and other passenger terminals since

### Trump's Senate trial begins as a polarised America looks on

Donald Trump's impeachment trial begins in earnest in the Senate on Tuesday in a rare use of the constitutional mechanism for ousting a president that has only deepened the polarisation of US voters ahead of presidential elections in November.

Democrats have called on the Senate to remove the Republican president from office, describing him as a danger to American democracy and national security. Trump and his lawyers have decried his impeachment, saying he has done nothing wrong and that Democrats are simply trying to stop him from being re-elected.

The televised trial is expected to hear opening arguments in the Republican-controlled Senate this week, and votes could take place as early as Tuesday on the rules governing the trial. This would include deciding whether the Senate should at a later date consider subpoenas for witnesses, such as Trump's former national security adviser John Bolton.

The chamber's 100 members must decide whether to convict Trump on charges approved by the Democraticled House of Representatives on December 18, accusing him of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress arising from his dealings with Ukraine

"If the Senate permits President Trump to remain in office, he and future leaders would be emboldened to welcome, and even enlist, foreign interference in elections for years to come," Democrats wrote in a pre-trial document over the weekend, making the case for his removal.

Trump's legal team, in their pre-trial brief on Monday, accused Democrats of using impeachment as a "partisan, election-year political tool" and said the Senate should move speedily to acquit him.

The trial of a US president should be a moment freighted with drama, huge political risk and the potential unravelling of a presidency. But financial markets have shrugged it off, and the revelations in the months-long impeachment investigation thus far have done little to boost anti-Trump sentiment among undecided voters or shift away moderate Republican vot-



**Donald Trump** 

ers. Indeed, Trump has sought to rally his base with the impeachment issue, fund-raising off it and at raucous election rallies painting himself as the victim of a witch hunt.

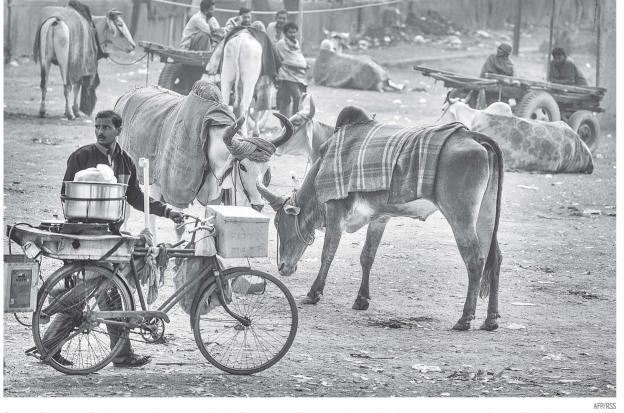
Proceedings are due to start at around 1 pm and the trial is expected to continue six days a week, Monday through Saturday, until at least the end of January.

Opening arguments could last for four days and run well into the night, with a team of Democratic House lawmakers presenting the case against Trump, and the president's legal team responding. This is only the third impeachment trial in US history. No president has ever been removed through impeachment, a mechanism the nation's founders -worried about a monarch on American soil-devised to oust a president for "treason, bribery or other high crimes and misde-

With a two-thirds majority needed in the Senate to remove Trump from office, he is almost certain to be acquitted by fellow Republicans in the chamber. But the impact of the trial on his re-election bid is far from clear.

Twelve Democrats are vying for their party's nomination to face Trump, including former Vice President Joe Biden.

Trump's request to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy last July to investigate Biden is at the heart of impeachment case. Democrats accuse Trump of pressuring a vulnerable ally to interfere in US elections at the expense of American national security. Trump's legal team says there was no pressure and that the Democrats' case is based on hearsay.



Owners (background) take rest as they sit near their bulls covered with gunnysacks and blankets to be protected from cold weather in the old quarters of New Delhi on Tuesday.

### Thunberg slams Davos elites on climate

ASSOCIATED PRESS DAVOS, JAN 21

Four young climate activists, including Greta Thunberg, told the elites at the World Economic Forum they are not doing enough to deal with the climate emergency and warned them that time was running out.

At a panel in the Swiss ski resort of they hoped their generation had found its voice and can work with those in power to bring about the necessary change to limit climate change. Yet Thunberg said not enough has been done. "We need to start listening to the science, and treat this crisis with the importance it deserves," said the 17-year-old, just as US President Donald Trump was arriving in Davos, where he later gave a speech. Trump has pulled the US out of the Paris accord to limit climate change and has traded barbs with Thunberg on social

"Without treating it as a real crisis we cannot solve it," Thunberg said.

The Swedish teenager came to fame by staging a regular strike at her school, sparking a global movement that eventually earned her Time Magazine's award as the 2019 Person



Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg attends the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on Tuesday.

of the Year.

She said that people are more aware about climate issues now. "It feels like the climate and environment is a hot topic now, thanks to young people pushing."

The others on the panel were just as forceful and passionate about the effects of global warming and how they, as young people, need to play a central role in raising awareness and insist on change.

"The older generation has a lot of experience, but we have ideas, we have energy, and we have solutions," said Natasha Wang Mwansa, an 18-year-old activist from Zambia who campaigns for girls' and women's rights. Salvador Gómez-Colón, who raised

funds and awareness after Hurricane María devastated his native Puerto Rico in 2017, said young activists are doing more than just talking. 'We're not waiting five, 10, 20 years

to take the action we want to see. We're not the future of the world, We're not waiting any longer."

Thunberg said the time for action was now, that being at the top of the agenda meant nothing if the world doesn't get to grips with the climate emergency

"I am not the person who can complain about not being heard. I'm being heard all the time," she quipped. "But in general the science and the voice of young people is not in the centre of the conversation.'

Autumn Peltier, the chief water commissioner for the Anishinabek Nation of indigenous people in Canada, said plaudits are not what they are looking for at the World Economic Forum.

"I don't want your awards. If you are going to award me, award me with helping to find solutions and helping to make change.

### Really tired': French IS women languish in Syria camp

### AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

AL-HOL CAMP, SYRIA, JAN 21

In an overcrowded desert camp for families linked to the Islamic State group in northeastern Syria, a French woman begged for another chance so she and her children could go home.

In the same settlement, two other French women were more tepid about the prospect of repatriation, with one saying she feared being separated from her child.

In the squalid camp of Al-Hol, the question of return has sparked a divide among the French wives of IS "We'd like the French government

to give us the chance to make it up to

them," 30-year-old Umm Mohammad told AFP in French. "I think it's better they repatriate us... We'll be judged in France," said the mother of four from Paris, dressed

in a black robe and face veil. After years of fighting IS, Syria's Kurds hold 4,000 women and 8,000 children from families linked to the

extremist organisation, mostly in

Inside the camp, a veiled woman pushed a child in a pram, the bottom of her black robe caked in dry mud.

Two boys in jackets and rubber boots dragged a cart over a dirt field beyond rows of white tents, a little girl in a pink coat running alongside. Umm Mohammad said that among

her compatriots in Al-Hol's section for foreigners, "a huge amount want to go "There's another half who don't want to go back, but that's their prob-

lem," said the widow, who says her French husband was killed in Hajin, once one of the last bastions of the IS France has so far been reluctant to

repatriate its nationals, allowing just a handful of children back on a caseby-case basis. But in an apparent U-turn last week, Justice Minister Nicole Belloubet said

she saw "no other solution" but to bring back jihadists. Kurdish-led forces expelled IS from its last patch of territory in eastern

Syria in March last year.

The jihadists stand accused of a wide range of crimes during their failed five-year experiment in statehood in parts of Syria and neighbour-

But Umm Mohammad claimed she



A French woman named Amal ,25, uses crutches to walk at the Kurdish-run al-Hol camp for the displaced in the al-Hasakeh governorate in northeastern Syria on January 14.

"did nothing at all" while living

"I never killed anyone," she said.

"We're really tired. Our children, we'd like them to go back to school." In the camp's makeshift market, women dressed in black examined piles of colourful clothes laid out on blankets.

A woman carried a tray of white eggs, followed by another balancing a plastic crate of oranges on her head. Away from the bustle, another French woman lamented the living

conditions. "I don't want to stay in this camp," said 23-year-old Nour, her brown eyes barely visible through the slit of her

face veil. "It's very difficult. We live in tents.

It's cold. People are sick." At least 371 children died in Al-Hol last year, the Kurdish Red Crescent has said, mainly from malnutrition, poor healthcare for newborns and hypothermia.

The Kurdish authorities have warned that conditions could deteriorate further after the UN Security Council on January 10 voted to restrict cross-border aid. The Yaroubiya crossing on the Iraqi

border was a key entry point for UN-funded medical aid reaching the area, including Al-Hol.

Nour, who said she was from the city of Montpellier in southern France, said she wanted to resume a

normal life.

"I want to live normally again with my hijab, my children, my Islam," she said.

But she insisted she did not want to be separated from her children. "If they're going to separate us, frankly I don't see the point of repatri-

ating us," she said. She too claimed she had not carried out any crimes "I stayed at home and educated my

children," she said. A third French woman-who gave her name as Amal-was more reluc-

tant to speak. "I having nothing to say," said the 25-year-old, after slowly gliding around the used clothes market on

She said she was wounded in the leg

in Baghouz, a riverside hamlet where diehard jihadists made their last stand She would not reveal the nationality of her late husband and, under her

face veil, her brown eyes avoided the "France doesn't want us... doesn't

want Daesh," she said, referring to IS

"I don't want anyone to judge me."

### Boeing seeks to borrow \$10 billion or more amid 737 MAX crisis

The company has estimated the costs of the 737 MAX grounding at more than \$9 billion to date.

Boeing Co is in talks with banks about borrowing \$10 billion or more amid rising costs for the US planemaker after two crashes involving its 737 MAX jetliner, a source told Reuters on

CNBC first reported the news on Monday, citing sources that Boeing has so far secured at least \$6 billion from banks and is talking to other lenders for more contributions.

A source confirmed the talks to Reuters, but it was still not clear how much Boeing would seek to raise and whether it would pursue the selling of new bonds. One key issue for Boeing is flexibility since it is not clear how long the 737 MAX will remain

Boeing declined to comment.

Reuters reported on Friday that the Federal Aviation Administration is now unlikely to approve the plane's return until March, but that could take until April or longer.

Boeing confirmed on Monday that it temporary halted production of the 737 MAX in Washington State in recent days. The company had said in December it would halt production at some point this month.

"MAX production has now been temporarily suspended inside the 737 factory. The Renton site remains open as our teams focus their work on several quality initiatives," Boeing said, referring to its facility in Renton,

Boeing does not get paid until it delivers the planes it manufactures.

The company has estimated the costs of the 737 MAX grounding at more than \$9 billion to date, and is expected to disclose significant additional costs during its fourth-quarter



Boeing 737 Max fuselages are seen parked outside the company's production facility in Renton, Washington, US.

earnings release on Jan. 29. Boeing faces rising costs from halting production of the plane this month, compensating airlines for lost flights and assisting its supply chain.

Analysts estimate that Boeing has been losing around \$1 billion a month because of the grounding. It reported an almost \$3 billion negative free cash flow in the third quarter.

Boeing also reported its worst annual net orders in decades last week, along with its lowest numbers for plane deliveries in 11 years.

On Friday, Boeing said it was addressing a new 737 MAX software issue discovered in Iowa during a technical review of the proposed

update for the plane.

Last week, American Airlines Group Inc and Southwest Airlines Co both said they would extend cancellations of 737 MAX flights until early June. Also this month, the FAA and Boeing said they were reviewing a wiring issue that could potentially cause a short circuit on the 737 MAX.

### Bank of Japan lifts growth outlook, keeps easy money policy

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE** 

The Bank of Japan on Tuesday slightly upgraded its growth forecast for the world's third-biggest economy but kept its super easy monetary policy

The central bank said after a twoday policy gathering that it now expects a 0.9-percent expansion in the year to March 2021, an upgrade from a previous projection of 0.7 percent.

The brighter assessment came after a stimulus package launched by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe last year to prop up the economy and dampen the effects of an October hike in consumption tax from eight to 10 percent.

The decision also followed a fresh trade deal clinched between the US and China, easing a concern that had long worried global investors.

"It is true that the downside risk surrounding the global economy is slightly lower due to... the US-China trade deal and the problem of Britain leaving the EU," BoJ governor Haruhiko Kuroda told reporters.

"Investors' risk sentiment has improved and stocks and long-term interest rates have risen in many countries," he said.

World markets have returned to relative calm after the turmoil caused by the killing of top Iranian general Qasem Soleimani by the US. The strike resulted in limited retaliation and the region has so far avoided an escalation in violence.

"Japan's economy has been on a moderate expanding trend... although exports, production and business sentiment have shown some weakness, mainly affected by the slowdown in the global economy and natural

Nevertheless, the tax hike and natural disasters were weighing on domestic demand, it added.

But demand "is likely to follow an uptrend... mainly against the background of highly accommodative financial conditions and active government spending", it said.

The decision also followed a fresh trade deal clinched between the US and China.

The central bank also reiterated its pledge to continue its easy monetary programme in a drive to achieve two-percent inflation for "as long as it

However, it dropped its inflation forecast to 1.0 percent from an earlier estimate of 1.1 percent The bank "will not hesitate to take

additional easing measures" if necessary, it added.

Kuroda also said the bank will continue monitoring global risks.

"There are still conflicts between the US and China and I think the path towards the second-stage agreement is unclear. And geopolitical risk surrounding the Middle East is rising,"

"I think the downside risk is still large.'

On the outbreak of a new SARS-like virus in China, Kuroda said it is "too early to predict" any possible economic impact

### Uber sells Indian Eats business to Zomato in move to cut losses

BENGALURU, JAN 21

Uber has sold its loss-making online food-ordering business in India to local rival Zomato in exchange for a 9.99 percent stake in the backed by China's Ant

Since launching in India in 2017, Uber Eats has struggled to gain market share and is a distant third to Tencent Holdings backed Swiggy and Zomato. All three have spent heavily on deals and discounts to attract cus-

#### Uber Eats' India operations contributed just 3 percent of gross bookings globally.

The deal will allow San Franciscobased Uber to cut its losses and yet keep a stake in a market expected to be worth \$15 billion by 2023.

"For Uber, the deal means redefining competence," independent brand consultant Harish Bijoor said. "It should stick to what its competence is, in terms of being an aggregator of

Uber Eats' India operations contributed just 3 percent of gross bookings for the business globally, while accounting for a quarter of its adjusted operating losses, Uber said. It did not say how much those losses were or disclose financial details of the deal.

Zomato, valued at around \$3 billion after raising money from Ant this month, reported a loss of \$294 million for the year ended March 2019. Swiggy made a loss of \$330 million.

Uber, which has promised to be profitable at an operational level by the end of 2021, has been trying to sell the India Eats business for a year, three sources familiar with the talks told

It earlier held talks with Swiggy for a similar deal but those fell through due to valuation and regulatory issues, two of them said.

Uber and Swiggy did not respond to requests for comment.

Zomato said in a blogpost buying the Eats operations would make it "the undisputed market leaders in the food delivery category in India" Uber Eats in India will discontinue

operations and direct restaurants, delivery partners and users to the Zomato platform from Tuesday.

Zomato's orders per month should go up by 10 million from the 38 million-40 million it was clocking before the deal, a source familiar with the



Workers fill sacks with wheat flour at a mill in Karachi on Tuesday. Local media reports said that Pakistan's Economic Coordination Committee (PECC) approved a proposal to import 300,000 tons of wheat to overcome a nationwide shortage that had dramatically raised prices of the food staple.

### South Africa Airways cancels flights in bid to save cash

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Beleaguered national airline South African Airways (SAA) announced on Tuesday it was cancelling 10 domestic and one international flight in an effort to streamline services and save

The cash-strapped airline was last month placed under a state-approved business rescue plan to avoid its total collapse following a costly week-long strike by thousands of its

SAA said in was dropping 10 domestic flights between Johannesburg, Town and Durban, while ning its direct route between Johannesburg and Munich.

Passengers on cancelled domestic flights will be accommodated on its budget sister airline, Mango, while international travellers would be re-routed via its flights between Johannesburg and Frankfurt, and London Heathrow.

"These decisions are in line with SAA's usual policy of reviewing flights and consolidating services with low demand," it said in a statement.

"Furthermore, during the current process of business rescue, these cancellations represent a responsible strategy to conserve cash and optimise the airline's position ahead of any further capital investment."

### China virus sends shiver through markets as risks mount

**REUTERS** LONDON, JAN 21

Global shares took a beating on Tuesday, wiping out all gains made at the start of the week as mounting concerns about a new strain of coronavirus in China sent a ripple of risk aversion through markets.

Authorities in China confirmed that a new virus could be spread through human contact, reporting 15 medical staff had been infected and a fourth person had died.

Safe-haven bonds and the yen gained as investors were reminded of the economic damage done by the SARS virus in 2002-2003, particularly given the threat of contagion as hundreds of millions travel for the Lunar New Year holidays.

"I'm not an expert in the pandemics, but you can look at previous examples like the SARS outbreak which also originated from Asia," said Cristian Maggio, Head of Emerging Markets Strategy at TD Securities in

Noting that China had initially downplayed the full extent of the SARS outbreak, he said "I think the market might be fearing something similar."

The mood swing saw MSCI's All-Country World Index slip 0.4 percent, wiping out gains made at the start of the week on Monday. Asian markets were hit particularly hard.

Hong Kong, which suffered badly during the SARS outbreak, saw its index fall 2.8 percent. Japan's Nikkei lost 0.9 percent and

airlines under pressure. The caution spread to E-Mini futures for the S&P 500 which eased 0.5 percent. The chill in Asia carried over to European markets, where shares of luxury goods makers—which have large exposure to China—were among

the biggest fallers. Germany's 10-year government bond yield touched one-week lows.

Investors had already been guarded after the International Monetary Fund trimmed its global growth forecasts, mostly due to a surprisingly sharp slowdown in India and other emerging markets. There had been some relief as US

President Donald Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron seemed to have struck a truce over a proposed digital tax. The two agreed to hold off on a potential tariffs war until the end of

the year, a French diplomatic source Trump is due to deliver a speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos



A board shows stock information at a brokerage office in Beijing, China.

later on Tuesday, and trade and tariffs to the United States of America! We could be on the agenda. are now NUMBER ONE in the In a tweet late on Monday, Trump Universe, by FAR!!"

said he would be bringing "additional The Bank of Japan cited lessened trade risks when nudging up forecasts Hundreds of Billions of Dollars back

for economic growth after holding a policy meeting on Tuesday.

As widely expected, the BOJ maintained its short-term interest rate target at -0.1 percent and a pledge to guide 10-year government bond yields around 0 percent, by a 7-2 vote.

Japan's yen picked up a bid on the safe-haven move and the dollar dipped to 109.93 from an early 110.17. It also gained on the euro, leaving the single currency lower to the dollar at \$1.1090.

Against a basket of currencies, the dollar was steady at 97.638, just off a four-week high of 97.729.

The Australian dollar took a knock from the flu worries since it attracts large numbers of Chinese tourists, who tend to be big spenders over the Lunar New Year holidays.

Australia said it would step up screening of some flights from Wuhan. The outbreak was particularly badly timed as the tourism industry has been mauled already by bushfires sweeping the country.

Spot gold hit a 2-week high of \$1,568.35 per ounce, but traded 0.2 percent lower in early deals in London. Oil prices slid nearly 1 percent, hav-

ing earlier gained on the risk of supply disruption in Libya. Brent crude futures fell 1 percent to

\$64.60 a barrel, while US crude fell 0.92 percent to \$58.09 a barrel.

**FOREX** 

Pound Sterling Japanese Yen

Chinese Yuan

Qatari Riyal

Malaysian Ringit

Saudi Arab Rival

US Dollar

Furo

### **MONEY**

# 31.37 28.05

Exchange rates fixed by Nepal Rastra Rank

PRICE PER TOLA

Rs 75,300

SOURCE: FENEGOSIDA

Rs 895

Shares										
Nepse			1	1,320.47 <sub>pts</sub>						
HIGHEST LOSERS										
GLICL 9.82%	GBIME 9.74%	PPCL 9.52%	SPARS 5.93%	SLBSL 5.90%	KPCL 5.49%					
MODERATE LOSERS										
BFC 4.90%	LGIL 4.76%	IGI 4.33%	PLIC 4.16%	NHDL 4%	NMFBS 3.98%					
MODERATE GAINERS										
GIMES1 -3.76%	SAPDBL -3.82%	NIBLPF -3.86%	GILB -4.30%	UMHL -4.50%	UNHPL -4.91%					
HIGHEST GAINERS										
DHPL -5.08%	UPCL -5.12%	SPDL -5.66%	MSLB -5.94%	ICFC -6.07%	NICGF -6.48%					

Fine Gold

**BULLION** 

**GASOLINE WATCH** 



### Airbus to build second production line in France for A321 jets

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE** 

European aircraft maker Airbus said on Tuesday it will build a new production line for its hugely popular A321 single-aisle jet in France, adding to the output of the original plant in

From 2022, the jets will be built at Airbus's headquarters in Toulouse, southern France, as well as in Hamburg, Germany,

"We are enjoying an unprecedented high demand for our winning A320neo family," in particular the A321 longrange and extra-long-range versions, Airbus chief operating officer Michael Schoellhorn said in a statement.

Production in Toulouse will take place at facilities previously used to build the A380 superjumbo, which Airbus decided to scrap last year after airlines found it too expensive to

The company plans to increase production of planes in the A320 series to 63 a month by 2021 to fulfil back orders of more than 6,000 jets in December.

It had already announced earlier this month plans to increase production of A320 jets at its US factory in

The A320 series, introduced in 1987, has garnered more orders than any plane in commercial aviation history, industry experts say, as demand for mid-range flights soars.

The planes are also the main competitors to Boeing's 737 line, which has suffered from the uncertain future for the 737 MAX.

The MAX was grounded by regulators last March after two crashes that killed a total of 346 people-one involving Indonesia's Lion Air and the other an Ethiopian Airlines jet.



An Airbus A321 aircraft of Bamboo Airways taxis at Noi Bai airport in Hanoi, Vietnam.

# Appointment process for top job at Tourism Board hangs in the balance

At least half a dozen people in the know told the Post that the appointment had become uncertain.

SANGAM PRASAIN

The appointment process of the chief executive officer of the Nepal Tourism Board hangs in the balance with Baluwatar and the Tourism Ministry jockeying to get their man in the coveted position, according to sources privy to the matter.

The top spot at the country's tourism promotional body has remained vacant for a month even as the industry is in the midst of the Visit Nepal

At least half a dozen people in the know told the Post that the appointment had become uncertain following complaints in Baluwatar that the selection sub-committee had given higher marks to Dhananjay Regmi, who is not a ruling party 'cadre'.

As shown on a copy of the mark sheet of the top five candidates obtained by the Post, Regmi has scored 34 points, Deepak Bastakoti 26.3, Hikmat Singh Ayer 26.1, Deepak Raj Joshi 25.2 and Kashi Raj Bhandari

The marks were given by three members of the CEO selection sub-committee and two membersformer tourism secretary Krishna Prasad Devkota and tourism entrepreneur Sagar Pandey—who were appointed as invitee experts. Each member was allowed to award a maximum score of 10 points.

"We have selected the best candidate and sent his name to the board to be appointed to the post," said a board member who asked not to be named as the issue had been politicised. "If the tourism sector suffers, the private sector will suffer. So we have to be wise to



The chief executive officer of the Tourism Board, which has an annual budget of more than Rs 1 billion, is one of the most lucrative posts in the country.

The top spot at the country's tourism promotional body has remained vacant for a month.

select the proper man."

A three-member CEO selection sub-committee led by Biplab Paudel, executive director of Pokhara's Hotel Barahi, who also sits on the board of directors of the Nepal Tourism Board representing the private sector, had been entrusted with the task of recommending the new CEO after the incumbent Joshi's four-year term

ended on December 24.

'The score given to Regmi is a clear indication that the board will not be able to select the second candidate,' he said. "And we don't think the board will change our decision.

As the process of appointing the CEO was halted abruptly on Sunday, Krishna Bahadur Mahara, proprietor of the Hotel Devotee in Dhangadhi who also sits on the board and was a member of the CEO selection sub-committee, has accused Tourism Secretary Kedar Bahadur Adhikari of trampling on their intention to choose a 'good man' to lead the country's tourism promotional body.

Mahara posted on his Facebook page that the board meeting had been halted frequently without discussion. "It's my direct challenge that your

[Adhikari] intention will not be ful-

Adhikari did not respond to the Post's repeated calls. A government source said that the issue had become complicated as the four parties-tourism secretary, tourism minister, the board members representing the private sector and Baluwatar-were facing four different directions.

'This shows that the appointment process has landed in a state of

On Sunday, a meeting of the board of directors of the Nepal Tourism Board was abruptly cancelled due to 'power play'. The meeting had been called to appoint the chief of the country's tourism promotional body.

The chief executive officer of the tourism board, which has an annual budget of more than Rs1 billion, is one of the most lucrative posts in the country due to the nature of its operations to promote Nepal in overseas markets.

The board meeting was again post-

poned on Monday.

In the first week of December, the Nepal Tourism Board had extended Joshi's term by three months in an attempt to prevent a setback for tourism on the eve of the much-hyped Visit Nepal 2020 campaign. Joshi, however, did not accept the offer and applied in a bid to serve a second

The vacancy announcement was published by the selection sub-committee on December 4.

The Nepal Tourism Board's 11-member board consists of five representatives each from the the government and the private sector, besides the CEO.

### digital tax row talks

France, US

agree to extend

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Presidents Emmanuel Macron and Donald Trump have agreed to extend negotiations on a dispute over a French tax on digital giants to the end of the year, postponing Washington's threat of sanctions against Paris, French officials said on Tuesday.

French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire, speaking before a Brussels meeting with EU counterparts, said: "Macron and Trump had a very constructive discussion... and they agreed to avoid all escalation between the US and France on this digital tax issue." A French diplomatic source said the

French and US leaders, who spoke by telephone on Sunday, agreed to give negotiations a chance to "find a solution in an international framework' and avoid "a trade war that will benefit no one' Macron tweeted Monday that he

had had a "great discussion" with Trump on the issue. "We will work together on a good agreement to avoid tariff escalation," he said.

"Excellent!" replied Trump on

The White House said the two men spoke and "agreed it is important to complete successful negotiations on the digital services tax, and they also discussed other bilateral issues.

The dispute began last year when Paris approved a levy on up to three percent of revenues earned by technology companies in France, as international efforts dragged on to find a new model for taxing revenues earned via online sales and advertising.

Tech companies often pay little tax in countries in which they are not physically present.

Washington said the tax singled out US companies such as Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon and Netflix. It threatened retaliatory duties of up to 100 percent of the value of French imports of such emblematic goods as Champagne and Camembert cheese.

The European Union had said it would back France if such tariffs were levied, raising the prospect of a transatlantic trade war.

On January 7, Paris and Washington had given themselves 15 days to reach a deal to avert the US threat of duties on up to \$2.4 billion of French goods.

Le Maire, who has been conducting intensive negotiations for the last several weeks, had been scheduled to hold crunch talks on the issue with US counterpart Steven Mnuchin at the World Economic Forum in Davos on Wednesday. According to another French source, the possibility of France suspending collection of the tax "will be on the negotiating table" when the two meet. After confirming the reprieve, Le Maire told journalists in Brussels that he spoke with Mnuchin by telephone on Sunday and "our technical teams are in contact day and night to work on a solution".

difficult negotiation.... A certain number of details need to be worked out, but I believe we're going in the right direction." Le Maire declined, however, to say whether France would suspend its digital tax. "I am not going to get into the details of the negotiation. prefer that that remains between Mnuchin and myself," he said.

The French presidency said on Monday that "France is pursuing its objective of fair taxation on digital companies and finding a compromise within the framework of the OECD."



### Facebook targets UK growth with 1,000 hires this year

**REUTERS** LONDON, JAN 21

Facebook will hire 1,000 people in London this year in roles such as product development and safety as it continues to grow its biggest engineering centre outside the United States after Britain leaves the European Union.

Over half of the new jobs will be in technology, including software engineering and data science, Facebook's vice president for Europe, the Middle East and Africa Nicola Mendelsohn said in an interview.

Other roles will be in the "community integrity" team, which makes products to detect and remove harmful content from platforms like Facebook, Messenger, Instagram and

Mendelsohn said London's appeal was not only in its technology ecosystem but also the strength of its creative industries. She said that while Facebook's

enthusiasm for London was undimmed, like other tech companies it wanted certainty about Brexit. "The Johnson government has been

very clear about what that looks like,

and so we will continue to invest here in London," she said. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Facebook's growth was "great

news". "We are committed to making

the UK the safest place in the world to be online, alongside being one of the best places for technology companies to be based," he said.

Facebook's chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg will announce the new jobs, which will take its total UK employees to more than 4,000, on Tuesday before travelling to the World Economic Forum in Davos with Mendelsohn, where they will meet global leaders, regulators and other business chiefs.

The company is trying to rebuild trust in its platforms after the Cambridge Analytica scandal in 2018, in which a British political consulting firm collected data from Facebook for voter profiling and targeting.

Nick Clegg, Facebook's affairs chief and a former British politician, said on Monday that the company will do a better job of preventing bad actors from manipulating this year's US presidential election than it

did four years ago. Mendelsohn said trust would take time to rebuild.

"We also understand that this is an ongoing important conversation—we want to be part of that conversation," she said. "We want to be working with policymakers in this area to get to thoughtful policy."



Employees have lunch at the canteen at Facebook's new headquarters at Rathbone Place in central London.

### Subaru sets mid-2030s target to sell only electric vehicles

TOKYO, JAN 21

Japan's Subaru Corp set a target on Monday to sell only electric vehicles worldwide by the first half of the 2030s, in a move toward its long-term

The news comes as Subaru has strengthened capital ties with Toyota Motor Corp, in a trend of global automakers joining forces to slash development and manufacturing costs of new technology.

goal of a carbon-free society.

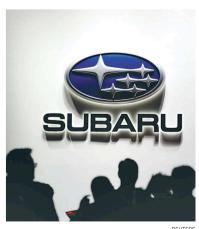
To supplement the mild hybrid and plug-in hybrid cars already in its lineup, Subaru plans to develop a so-called "strong hybrid" vehicle using Toyota technology and intended to debut later in the decade.

It is also developing an all-battery electric car with Toyota for release around the same time. "Although we're using Toyota technology, we want to make hybrids that are distinctly Subaru," Chief Technology Officer Tetsuo Onuki told a briefing. "It's not only about reducing CO2

emissions. We need to further improve vehicle safety and the performance of our all-wheel drive.

Subaru said that by 2030 at least 40 percent of its cars sold worldwide will comprise battery electric vehicles or

The Japanese automaker, which produces the Outback and Forester



The logo of Subaru Corp is pictured at the 45th Tokyo Motor Show in Tokyo.

SUVs, is known for its horizontally placed boxer engines, along with its EyeSight autonomous driver assist and all-wheel-drive technologies.

Car manufacturers worldwide are

scrambling to chase scale, manage costs and boost development of the self-driving cars, electric vehicles and new mobility services that are upending the industry. 'Subaru's strong commitment and

dedication toward car-manufacturing that we have cultivated throughout our history remain unchanged,' President Tomomi Nakamura added.

### **SPORTS**

### **BRIEFING**

#### United charged by FA over players misconduct

LONDON: Manchester United have been charged by the Football Association (FA) over misconduct of their players in the 2-0 defeat by runa way Premier League leaders Liverpool. United's players surrounded referee Craig Pawson midway through the first-half on Sunday after Liverpool's Virgil van Dijk challenged goalkeeper David De Gea.

'Manchester United has beer charged with a breach of FA Rule E20(a)," read the FA statement. "It is alleged that the club failed to ensure its players conducted themselves in an orderly fashion during the 26th minute of the Premier League fixture against Liverpool FC on Sunday.

#### West Brom's promotion push stalled again by Stoke

LONDON: West Brom's winless run in the Championship stretched to six games as they blew the chance to open up a four-point lead at the top after a 1-0 defeat at home to Stoke on Monday. Tyrese Campbell scored the only goal after just nine minutes for the visitors, who moved four points clear of the relegation zone. A poor run for both the Baggies and Leeds of late has opened up the race for promotion to the Premier League West Brom's cushion over thirdplaced Fulham is down to five points with Brentford and Nottingham Forest just a point further back. Slaven Bilic's side have now taken just four points from their last 18 available and failed to force Stoke goalkeeper Jack Butland into a seri-

#### Villa snap up Samatta

LONDON: English Premier League side Aston Villa completed the signing of Tanzanian striker Mbwana Samatta from Genk for a reported £8.5 million (\$11 million) fee on Monday. Samatta has signed a four-and-a-half year deal, subject to a work permit and international clearance being granted. The 27-year-old has scored 10 goals for Genk in all competitions this season, including against Liverpool in the Champions League at Anfield. "I'm really pleased we have managed to bring Mbwana to the club," said Villa manager Dean Smith. Smith was badly in need of reinforcements up front after Wesley was ruled out for the rest of the season due to knee ligament damage. (AGENCIES)

## Five points separate top six teams in league

Leaders Tribhuvan Army Club enjoy a three-point lead in the 'A' Division League, but tough fixtures await.



POST PHOTO: HEMANTA SHRESTHA

Tribhuvan Army Club players celebrate a goal against Chyasal Youth Club during their Martyrs Memorial 'A' Division League match at the Dashrath Stadium on Monday

PRARAMBHA DAHAL KATHMANDU, JAN 21

Only five points separate the top six teams in the Martyrs Memorial 'A' Division League after the end of the seventh round.

Tribhuvan Army Club have opened a three-point lead atop the standings after contenders Machhindra were handed a shock 2-0 defeat by Himalayan Sherpa Club and the champions Manang defending Marshyangdi Club were held at a 2-2 draw by Three Star Club. While both Machhindra and Manang are tied at 13 points, Machhindra sit second in the league table on goal difference.

Meanwhile, last season's bottom team, New Road Team are behind Manang in the fourth position with 11 points. Also with 11 points each, Three Star and Nepal Police Club are placed fifth and sixth in the table on goal dif-

The battle is close in the bottom seven positions with only four points separating the teams.

Runners up of the previous season, Sankata are in the seventh spot with nine points while Armed Police Force are 13th in the league with five points.

Saraswoti Youth Club, who have not won any of the last seven matches, sit at the bottom of the leaderboard. With one draw they have garnered just one point so far. If Saraswoti do not up their game, they could be relegated.

At the top, the Army side boast the best defensive record with only three goals conceded so far.

However, the departmental side have some tough fixtures ahead.

"It is certainly difficult to reach the top of the table. But, it is harder to sustain the position. We have yet to play against stronger sides, but we are optimistic about the future," coach Nabin Neupane said.

The eighth round of the league

begins on Wednesday, as Machhindra take on Nepal Police Club in the only match scheduled for the day. Despite recruiting top players from several clubs, Machhindra have yet to stamp their authority on the league. They have won four, drawn two and lost one match so far.

Machhindra have no shortage of talented individual players, but the team have so far lacked cohesion.

Himalayan Sherpa, fresh from their win over Machhindra, play four-time champions Three Star in the first match on Thursday. The match will be followed by a clash between Jawalakhel Youth Club and Armed Police Force.

Record eight-time champions Manang would be thinking of extending their goal difference as they take on struggling Saraswoti Youth Club on Friday before Chyasal go head to head against Brigade Boys

Leaders Army are scheduled to play

#### **STANDINGS**

Teams	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS		
Tribhuvan Army	7	5	1	1	11	3	16		
Machhindra	7	4	2	1	10	5	13*		
Manang	7	3	4	0	9	5	13		
New Road Team	7	4	1	2	10	5	11*		
Three Star	7	3	2	2	7	6	11		
Nepal Police	7	3	2	2	8	5	11		
Sankata	7	2	3	2	8	8	9		
Jawalakhel	7	2	3	2	4	4	9		
Brigade Boys	7	2	2	3	4	6	8		
Friends	7	2	2	3	7	9	8		
Himalayan Sherpa	7	1	4	2	3	4	7		
Chyasal	7	1	3	3	6	10	6		
Armed Police Force	7	1	2	4	7	12	5		
Saraswoti	7	0	1	6	2	14	1		
*As there was no relegation in the league last year one point from									

Macchindra Club (second from bottom) and two points from New Road Team

NRT on Saturday prior to the clash between Friends Club and Sankata.

### Guardiola hits out at busy schedule as injuries mount

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola believes some competitions in English football must be scrapped to protect the welfare of players and increase the quality of matches.

City face Sheffield United away on Tuesday night in the Premier League in their 17th match in 59 days since the last international break in November. Serious injuries to Tottenham's Harry Kane and Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford that could have an impact on England's chances at Euro 2020 have highlighted the issue and Guardiola believes the status quo is "unsustaina-

"The players arrive at the Euros, trying their best with their national teams then they are back here after no more than 20 days' rest because the show must go on. It's unsustainable,' Guardiola said at his pre-match press conference on Monday. "I'm sorry for Kane and Rashford because they are good for the league, but we demand a lot from the players, it's too much. They (the Premier League) should reflect on it but all the managers complained about it and they don't care."

The pressure is on England's football authorities to at least remove replays from the third and fourth round of the FA Cup and scrap the two-legged format of the League Cup semi-finals. City are still involved in both domestic cup competitions, as well as the Champions League, and have a minimum of 19 games left this season. "You have to eliminate competitions. Take them out completely, so less games," added Guardiola. "Less games, less competitions, less teams, less quantity and more quality."

Guardiola also joined Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp in ridiculing the idea of expanding the Champions League from 2024 onwards. "The solution you have is to make a year of 400 days - then we can book in another competition," he said sarcastically For the first time this season, every club in the Premier League will have a two-week break in February, but Guardiola believes that comes too late after a gruelling festive period.

"The big administration people cannot complain because it's normal this happens," he added. "Look at the injuries we have had, all the teams have had. That is normal. With that number of games, players break down. I'm not surprised, I am so sorry for them.'

### Tendulkar, Walsh to coach Aussie bushfire relief match

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE SYDNEY, JAN 21

Cricket legends Sachin Tendulkar and Courtney Walsh will coach star-studded teams in a charity match to raise funds for victims of Australia's bush-

The former Test captains are the latest players to come out of retirement for the appeal, joining Aussie greats Adam Gilchrist, Brett Lee, Michael Clarke and Shane Watson. India's Tendulkar and Windies fast bowler Walsh will coach teams skippered by Shane Warne and Ricky Ponting respectively. Steve Waugh and Australian coach Justin Langer will also have non-playing roles.

"We are absolutely honoured to be welcoming Sachin and Courtney back to Australia where they both enjoyed a lot of success as players, and we can't wait to have them involved," said Cricket Australia chief Kevin Roberts. The February 8 game will be played

as a curtain raiser to the Big Bash League final, with match profits and funds raised to go to the Australian Red Cross. Cricket Australia has also injected Aus\$2 million (US\$1.38 million) into a fund to assist community cricket clubs impacted by and destroyed more than 2,000 homes

Sports stars have stumped up memorabilia and cash in recent weeks to help the relief effort. Earlier this month, Warne's "baggy green" cap, awarded to Test players on their debut, sold at auction for more than Aus\$1 million (nearly \$700,000) with all funds aiding victims. Tennis superstar Serena Williams gave her US\$43,000 WTA Auckland Classic winners' cheque to a bushfire relief fund, while an exhibition match featuring Roger Federer and other top players in Melbourne raised money ahead of this week's Australian Open.

### 'Reforms to widen financial gulf'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

La Liga president Javier Tebas has warned Europe's top clubs of the destabilising effect seeking further riches through a revamped Champions League or FIFA's new Club World Cup

will have on national leagues. 24-team Club World Cup in June and July of 2021, while talks are ongoing over plans to reform the Champions League from 2024. However, Tebas believes increasing revenues must be more evenly redistributed to prevent the increasing dominance of a few

select clubs. European champions Liverpool have set a new record for Europe's top five leagues by taking 64 points from a possible 66 in the Premier League just two seasons on from Manchester City posting an English record 100 points. Barcelona and Real Madrid have also hit a century of points in La Liga over the past decade. Juventus have won eight Italian titles in a row, Bayern

Munich have been crowned German champions for the past seven years and Paris Saint-Germain have claimed six of the last seven Ligue 1 titles.

"I don't think we are helping football in any way if we generate wealth and it just goes straight back to the big clubs but that's what's happening, the major clubs share out the large part of income among their pia Tebas told reporters at a launch for La Liga TV in London. "In the end instead of having 12 Ferraris, they have 15. Instead of having 10 Lamborghinis they have 12. We're dealing with major clubs generating a huge amount of money. So our aim is to redistribute that wealth."

Proposals to change the Champions League to four groups of eight and introduce promotion and relegation to Europe's premier club competition have been rejected, but some reform is still expected in the coming years. Meanwhile, FIFA's Club World Cup expansion has already met opposition from top managers with Liverpool's Jurgen Klopp and Pep Guardiola of

Manchester City criticising the addition of more matches to an already congested calendar.

However, rather than player welfare, Tebas is concerned the huge prize money offered to clubs to take part in China will cause the gulf between the richest clubs and the rest to grow. "It's not just about generating like FIFA is doing with the Club World Cup, for example. Often, the implications, the ramifications, are not considered, and that can cause harm," he added. "Everything we're talking about new formats and competitions aren't going to benefit grassroots football, they're going to benefit the 10 or 15 major clubs.'

For the first time this season all of the Champions League's last 16 will consist of teams from England, Spain, Germany, Italy and France. And Tebas called for greater distribution of the booming TV revenues from UEFA to prevent the latter stages of the competition becoming a closed shop to teams outside the top five leagues.



### Nadal off to a perfect start as Sharapova hits all-time low at Australian Open

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE** MELBOURNE, JAN 21

Top seed Rafael Nadal turned on the style as he launched his bid for a record-equalling 20th Major title at the Australian Open on Tuesday, but falling star Maria Sharapova hit a

Nadal, one shy of Roger Federer's Grand Slam mark, dropped only five games as he swatted aside Bolivia's Hugo Dellien 6-2, 6-3, 6-0 in just over two hours at a sunny Rod Laver Arena. "It was a positive start," said the reigning Roland Garros and US Open champion, wearing a bright pink singlet and matching trainers. What you want in the first round is just to win, and it's better if it's in straight sets."

He joins Federer and defending champion Novak Djokovic in round two in Melbourne as the Big Three look to tighten a stranglehold that has brought them all but one of the last 14 Australian Open titles. Nadal, the first player to be world number one in three different decades, is still thriving at 33 but it's a different story for five-time Grand Slam Sharapova, 32

Sharapova, playing on a wildcard as she wrestles with a shoulder problem, lost 3-6, 4-6 to Croatian 19th seed Donna Vekic, making her an opening-round loser at three straight



Russia's Maria Sharapova returns to Croatia's Donna Vekic during their first round singles match at the Australian Open on Tuesday.

Grand Slams for the first time. The future looks uncertain for the former world number one, who won Wimbledon when she was just 17 but has not reached a Grand Slam final since she lifted the 2014 French Open

trophy. "I can speak about my struggles and the things that I've gone through with my shoulder, but it's not really in my character to," Sharapova said. "I was there, I put myself out there (playing). As tough as it was, I

finished the match—it wasn't the way that I wanted.'

Britain's Johanna Konta, a two-time Slam semi-finalist, also fell at the first hurdle as she battles to overcome a knee problem, losing 4-6, 2-6 to unseedSELECTED RESULTS

Men's singles

Rafael Nadal bt Hugo Dellien 6-2, 6-3, 6-0 Karen Khachanov bt Mario Vilella 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 Dominic Thiem bt Adrian Mannarino 6-3, 7-5, 6-2 Milos Raonic bt Lorenzo Giustino 6-2, 6-1, 6-3 Marin Cilic bt Corentin Moutet 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 Diego Schwartzman bt Lloyd Harris 6-4, 6-2, 6-2

Women's singles

Madison Keys bt Darya Kasatkina 6-3, 6-1 Arantxa Rus bt Magda Linette 1-6, 6-3, 6-4 Maria Sakkari bt Margarita Gasparyan 6-2, 6-2 Ons Jabeur bt Johanna Konta 6-4, 6-2 Jelena Ostapenko bt Liudmila Samsonova 6-1, 6-4 Donna Vekic bt Maria Sharapova 6-3, 6-4 Karolina Pliskova bt Kristina Mladenovic 6-1, 7-5

ed Tunisian Ons Jabeur. On a bumper day of 96 first-round matches, after rain wiped out half of Monday's schedule, former US Open champion Marin Cilic and Milos Raonic both moved safely through.

Italy's Fabio Fognini, two sets down against America's Reilly Opelka when their match was suspended on Monday, returned to win it in five on Tuesday after a stormy encounter when both players argued furiously with the umpire. "You're pathetic. You give me one warning after one throw (of my racquet). He's thrown his three or four times, bro," Opelka, who

stands 6ft 11ins (211cm) to Fognini's 5ft 10ins, told the chair official.

A new star emerged in 18-year-old Italian Jannik Sinner, last year's NextGen champion, who earned his first Grand Slam victory 7-6 (7/2), 6-2, 6-4 against Australia's Max Purcell.

Australia's Kyrgios, who has spear headed fundraising efforts for the country's deadly bushfire disaster, kept his notorious temper in check despite being taken to two tie-breaks in a 6-2, 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7-1) win over Lorenzo Sonego of Italy. "I feel super-comfortable, you guys are the best. I feel the support.... I am ready to go again," Kyrgios told the crowd.

Medvedev, the narrow loser to Nadal in September's US Open final, dropped the second set against Tiafoe before recovering to win 6-3, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2. Austria's Dominic Thiem, who has reached the last two French Open finals, went through in straight sets against Adrian Mannarino, while 2014 champion Stan Wawrinka needed four to get past Damir Dzumhur. There was disappointment for Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, the 2008 finalist, when he had to retire with a back injury against Australia's Alexei Popyrin.

Air pollution from the bushfires disrupted the build-up to the year's first Grand Slam, but after Monday's heavy rain the skies were clear and sunny on Tuesday.

### WHEELS



PHOTO: AUTOLIFE

### Hyundai Venue is a crossover with value

The car holds its line with composure and maintains it with relative ease.

yundai is an automomanufacturer that has left a huge impact in the Nepali market. They sell very well and hold a good resale value. Even though Hyundai has been a major player in the market they have had a gap in their lineup. The gap was between the i20 Active, which is a crossover hatchback, and the Creta, which is a compact SUV. The missing piece in the puzzle was filled when Hyundai launched the Venue, which is a sub 4 meter crossover. But the question remains. How good is the Venue?

Its solid presence, On

refreshing driving experience and connectivity make it a good ride. launched the Venue, which is a sub 4 meter crossover. But the question remains. How good is the Venue?

Exterior

On the design front, the Hyundai Venue comes with a split headlight design where the turn indicators are

above the projector headlamps and

LED daytime running lamps. The

cube-shaped headlight houses the

projector headlamps which provide a distinct look of the front end.

The front also gets the signature

Hyundai cascade grille with a chrome finish, including the door handles. The Venue sports a boxy design to give it a proper SUV feel. The 16-inch diamond-cut alloy wheels add to the car's overall appearance, giving it an appealing side profile. At the rear, Venue continues its cube design with funky tail lights. The Venue also has silver highlights, both at the front and rear bumper which makes it look like a skid plate.

### Interior

The interior is minimum, stylish and comfortable. The top end variant gets a steering wheel wrapped in leather and the seats get leather upholstery too. Techwise, the Venue offers an 8-inch touchscreen infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. A new feature in the car that is quite useful is that you can connect two mobile devices through Bluetooth simultaneously.

The Venue also gets automatic climate control, electric sunroof, wire-

less phone charging, cooled glovebox and cruise control. Talking about the space inside the Venue, the car is pretty decent for a sub 4 meter vehicle, and the boxy design ensures good headspace and decent legroom in the rear seats.

### Performance and comfort

The Venue has been equipped with a Kappa 1.0 Turbo GDi petrol engine, 1.2 Petrol engine and 1.4 Diesel engine. We took the new Kappa 1.0 Turbo GDi petrol engine for a spin and boy, it did not disappoint us.

As mentioned earlier the venue has a comfortable seating for the driver and its passengers. The suspension is also spot on. It will give you plenty of cushioning for around town drives but take it to some twisties and it will behave like a sporty handling vehicle.

The Venue holds its line with composure and maintains it with relative ease. It has ABS (Anti-lock Braking System) with EBD (Electronic Brake force Distribution), Electronic

Stability Control and Vehicle Stability Management to make sure that you don't lose control at all times.

It has a host of other standard safety features throughout the range such as dual front airbags, child safety, seatbelt alerts, rear parking sensors, speed sensing auto door lock and crash sensing auto door unlock. Other safety features include Hill Assist Control, Electronic Stability Control, Vehicle Stability Management, auto headlamps with rear camera with rear parking sensors and auto power windows.

#### **Verdict** Hyunda

Hyundai launched the Venue as its first fully connected crossover and its solid presence, refreshing driving experience and seamless connectivity make it a good ride.

This review was co-published with AutoLife, a magazine on all things



### WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

The road to the truth is difficult.

A path filled with division, diversion and danger.

A path filled with validation and temptation.

There are voices to be heard and stories to be told. The road is long and the road is hard.

But this is the road we walk.

Without fear or favour.

THE KATHMANDU POST

