



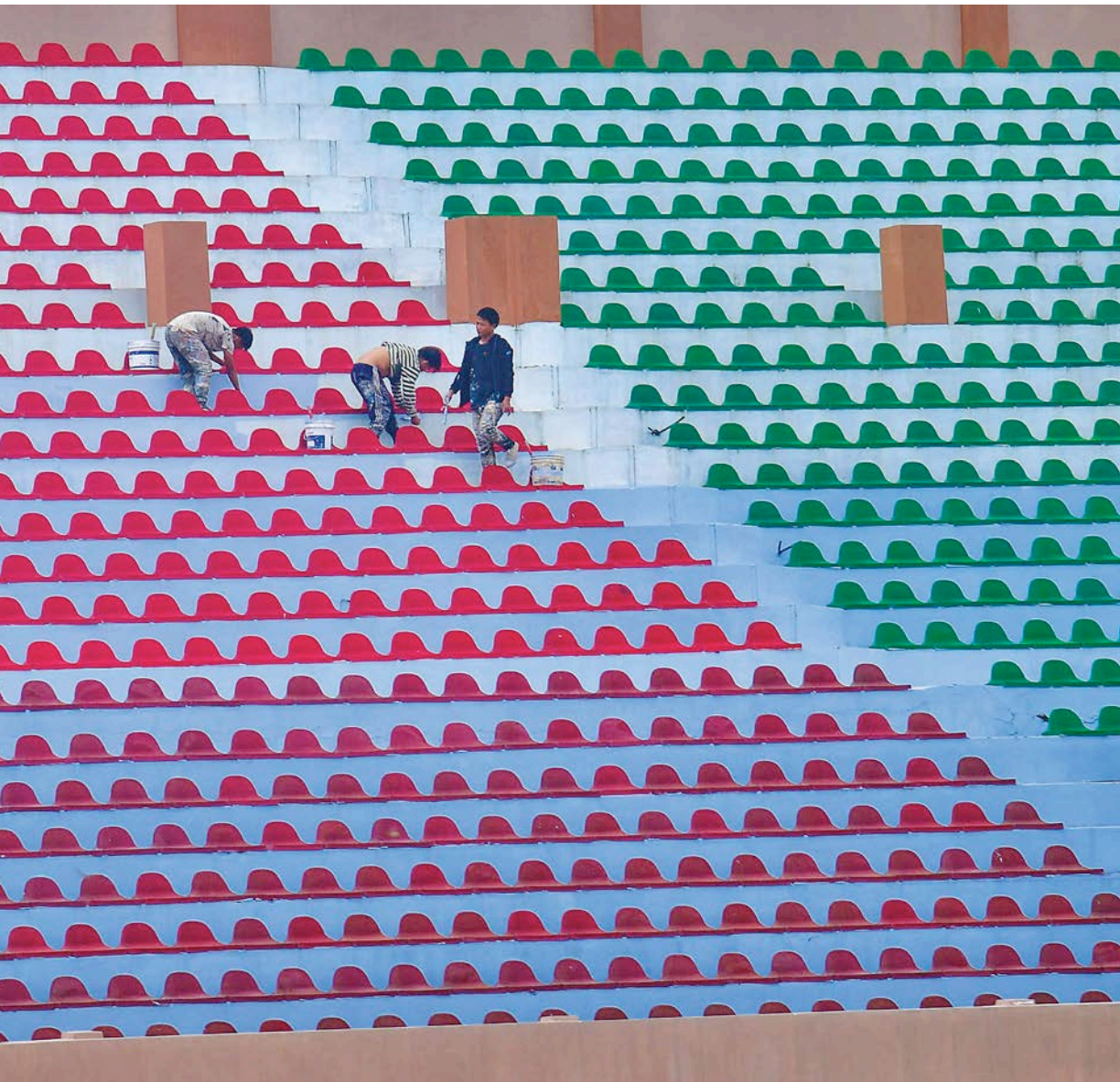
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Dipayal Jomsom



POST PHOTO: DEEPAK KC

Workers paint the seats on the grandstand of the Chyasal football stadium, which is undergoing renovation, in Lalitpur on Wednesday.

Sharma could return to the ministry, many say citing the turn of events

Maoists say Sharma likely to come back after probe; some in Congress don't rule that out.

ANIL GIRI
KATHMANDU, JULY 6

With the resignation of Janardan Sharma as finance minister "to pave the way for a probe" into charges against him, questions have arisen who will lead the Finance Ministry now.

For the time being, Prime Minister Deuba himself will head the ministry.

Sharma announced his resignation during his address to Wednesday's meeting of the House, which was boycotted by the main opposition CPN-UML.

Sharma is facing charges of bringing in two unauthorised persons in the Finance Ministry on the night of May 28 to change tax rates. A parliamentary committee also has been formed to investigate the allegations he faces.

Just as Sharma stepped down, the Election Commission recommended November 18 as the date for the federal and provincial elections.

A minister from the Nepali Congress said that since the economy is in bad shape and the new budget was announced only recently, the prime minister must be careful while choosing a new finance minister.

"We have advised the prime

minister to pick an experienced hand as soon as possible," the minister told the Post on condition of anonymity.

The way Prime Minister Deuba, also the Congress president, maintained silence despite Sharma facing criticism for failing to address the economic crisis and charges that he had changed the tax regime to benefit certain interest groups, some say, indicates he was reluctant to remove him.

Insiders say there was pressure also from Maoist chair Dahal, Deuba's key coalition partner, not to initiate action against Sharma.

As per a power-sharing deal among the five coalition partners, the Finance Ministry was given to the Maoist Centre.

Sharma was appointed finance minister on July 13, the day Deuba took oath as prime minister and formed a four-member Cabinet.

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Finance minister resigns after public outcry and probe panel

Main opposition UML boycotts the House meeting where Janardan Sharma announced his resignation. Parliamentary panel has 10 days to submit its investigation report.

BINOD GHIMIRE
KATHMANDU, JULY 6

Finance Minister Janardan Sharma resigned on Wednesday, weeks after allegations that he allowed two unauthorised persons to tweak tax rates on May 28, a day before he presented the national budget in Parliament.

There was public outcry and widespread criticism after Annapurna Post, a vernacular daily, on June 20 reported that Sharma had directed the officials at his ministry to follow suggestions of the two individuals in changing tax rates.

However, he had rubbished the allegations, claiming that he hadn't done anything wrong.

Sharma has been charged with breaching the budgetary discipline, which experts say amounts to financial crime.

He announced his resignation in an address to the House of Representatives on Wednesday soon after an 11-member parliamentary committee was announced to probe the charges against him.

Pressure was building on Sharma to resign after the Finance Ministry said that the CCTV footage of the night of May 28 got erased as the system could store only 13 days of recording. It was viewed as Sharma's attempt to destroy the evidence.

Political parties earlier on Wednesday deliberated on forming a parliamentary probe committee, a demand by the main opposition CPN-UML, for the last few weeks. On Tuesday, Nepali Congress President and Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and CPN (Maoist Centre) chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal also discussed



POST PHOTO: ELITE JOSHI

Finance Minister Janardan Sharma had been defiant despite growing calls for his resignation.

the controversy surrounding Sharma.

Sharma represents the Maoist Centre. Soon after the probe committee was formed, Sharma was allowed to address the House. The UML, however, objected to it, saying its lawmakers would boycott the meeting if he was allowed to speak in the capacity of finance minister.

As Sharma proceeded towards the rostrum, UML lawmakers walked out of the chamber.

While addressing the House, Sharma said that he had not done anything wrong.

"While I completely refute the allegations against me, I have decided to cooperate in the investigation," said Sharma. "I announce my resignation

to facilitate the probe process."

Sharma has been embroiled in a series of controversies ever since he took the charge of the Finance Ministry on July 14 last year. In the latest one, he was accused of inviting two unauthorised persons to the ministry to change tax rates and deleting the CCTV footage.

In his 10-minute address, Sharma said a fabricated story was brought to the public domain to defame him. He also claimed that only authorised persons—secretaries, joint secretaries and director generals from the Department of Customs and the Department of Revenue—were involved in finalising the budget on the eve of the budget day.

>> Continued on page 2

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POST FILE PHOTO

The Election Commission has put forth its proposal to use electronic voting machines.

PRITHVI MAN SHRESTHA
KATHMANDU, JULY 6

The Election Commission on Wednesday recommended the government hold federal and provincial elections on November 18.

Although the last federal and provincial and local elections in 2017 were conducted on two different

dates—November 26 and December 7—the commission this time is aiming the two polls in a single phase.

The commission recommended the date during the meeting with Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Wednesday.

"We recommended November 18 for federal and provincial elections," Chief Election Commissioner Dinesh

Thapaliya confirmed to the Post. "We can hold both elections in a single day across the country."

The commission said in a statement that holding the elections in a single phase would be cost effective as well as easier from the management point of view.

As per the Election Commission Act 2017, the government announces election dates in consultation with the Election Commission.

The commission said that election date was recommended also assuming that tenure of the existing House of Representatives and Provincial Assembly would end on December 8, the day when the commission had declared the winners of the second phase of the elections in federal and provincial elections in 2017 under the first-past-the-post system.

"The prime minister also agreed to hold elections in a single phase," Thapaliya said.

He said that they suggested the date considering that it would be convenient for the commission because there would be enough time for the commission to make preparations.

>> Continued on page 2

EDITORIAL

Women in budget

Despite significant strides, some gaps in mobility and entrepreneurship remain.

Over the years, Nepal has made great strides in closing gender-based gaps. According to a report released by the World Bank in March 2022, Nepal made the fastest progress among South Asian countries. In fact, among the eight indicators measured, Nepal scored a maximum of 100 in three areas—workplace (that analyses laws affecting women’s decisions to work), pay (laws and regulations affecting women’s pay) and marriage (legal constraints related to marriage). Despite these significant strides, there are glaring gaps in other areas, such as parenthood, mobility and entrepreneurship, which require immediate redressal.

Adopting gender-responsive budgeting and thus incorporating gender into the framework of the national budgeting system has undoubtedly made the government more accountable in its commitment to women’s empowerment. Still, there seems to be a callous slant taken in the implementation of the existing policies. It follows a standard tick-box approach to addressing any particular issue of women and gender inequality. For example, concerning gender-based violence, the focus has remained on making safe houses. Still, no further steps such as social integration and initiatives to ensure healthcare and psychological well-being of the victims are being integrated into the programmes taken to mitigate the glaring disparities.

In the last 15 years, there has been a marked increase in direct gender-responsive budgeting, from a meagre 11.03 percent in 2007-08 to 40.25 percent in 2022-23. Gender-responsive budgeting has led to increased participation of women in the labour force as teachers, within the security apparatus and as entrepreneurs in running micro and small-scale businesses. It has also helped bridge the gap, increasing women’s land ownership. Despite these achievements, these approaches have been classed as superficial and are divergent from the core problems at hand.

Measures should not be designed as reactive. The issue of rescuing expectant mothers by helicopter, though useful, would instead be better served by addressing maternity health by establishing health care centres so that the needs are taken care of without much fuss of a rather supercilious grand idea of transporting the ill through means which are often riddled with complications. There may be rules preventing workplace harassment of women. Still, without a proper reporting channel, such laws merely exist to the satisfaction of the authorities who quickly point out their existence but do little to examine their effectiveness in tackling the issues on the ground.

As it stands, the implementation of policies has been at a snail’s pace across the sectors, not just those concerning proposals related to gender-responsive budgeting. The existence of policies on paper rarely matches their implementation in reality. Despite what has been achieved, the government’s actions need to show that empowering women is more than detailing procedures on paper. Instead of focusing on reactive responses, there is a need to implement policies that will prevent crises in the first place.

China-Nepal relations have achieved significant progress since the establishment of diplomatic ties.

HOU YANQI



In late June, Chinese President Xi Jinping chaired the 14th BRICS Summit (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and a high-level dialogue on global development and delivered important speeches via video, and delivered the keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the BRICS Business Forum. Many important propositions and initiatives on the issue of peace and development have been proposed.

First, to defend fairness and justice and safeguard world peace and stability. We in the international community should reject zero-sum games, practice genuine multilateralism, and build a new type of international relations based on mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation. Second, to focus on the development theme and set the orientation for global development cooperation.

A push to jointly create a development pattern featuring benefits shared by all, balance, coordination, inclusiveness, win-win cooperation and shared prosperity, and put forward a four-point development proposal. Third, promote win-win cooperation and provide solutions for improving the global governance system.

Equal opportunities

We must adhere to extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, increase the representation and say of emerging markets and developing countries, and ensure that all countries enjoy equal rights, follow the rules as equals, and share equal opportunities. And finally, to continue reform and opening up and inject Chinese impetus into the recovery of the world economy. China will strive to deliver the economic and social development goals for the whole year and will pursue opening up against higher standards and develop systems for a higher-standard open economy.

The world has entered a new period of instability and change, the recovery of the global economy remains sluggish, and security challenges are becoming more prominent. Against this background, the series of initiatives and propositions put forward by President Xi, with his historical responsibility as the leader of a major country and aspiration for the world, has grasped the general trend of the world and is of great historical significance in leading the development direction of the BRICS cooperation mechanism. The BRICS cooperation mechanism has always taken the development theme as its starting point. President Xi’s speeches elaborate on China’s strategic thinking on the BRICS cooperation mechanism and lay out the direc-



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tion of BRICS future cooperation on multilateralism, international justice, and anti-pandemic collaboration, among others.

There is also the need to hold high the banner of global development. Development issues have been placed on top of the international agenda to promote in-depth and pragmatic implementation of the Global Development Initiative and set the direction for implementing the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and promoting the building of a global community of development.

China’s various initiatives unequivocally stand for multilateralism while opposing hegemony and supporting opening-up and cooperation against secession. They reflect the interests and demands of emerging markets and developing countries and represent the broadest opinion of the international community. To provide solutions of China, President Xi’s speeches, combined with the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiatives, contribute Chinese wisdom in improving global governance, promoting economic recovery, cooperating to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, enhancing people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and thus answering the fundamental question of “where is the world going”.

China and Nepal have been friendly neighbours for generations. Both are developing countries facing the historic task of promoting economic and social development and improving people’s living standards. The Nepali side actively supports and responds to the Global Development and Security Initiative. China and Nepal share the same or similar views and propositions in adhering to the priority of development, the harmonious coexistence of man and nature, and the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security.

With the care and promotion of the two countries’ leaders, China-Nepal relations have achieved significant progress since the establishment of diplomatic ties. High-level interactions are

frequent, and political mutual trust has been increasingly consolidated. The two countries understand and support each other on issues concerning their respective core interests.

We have joined hands to fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, and China has become Nepal’s biggest supplier of anti-pandemic materials and vaccines. The total trade volume between China and Nepal increased 67 percent and reached \$1.977 billion in 2021, of which Nepal’s export to China rose 63 percent. Large-scale projects including the China-Nepal Cross-Border Railway, Pokhara Regional International Airport and Kathmandu Ring Road are under steady progress. These have further enriched the connotation of the Strategic Partnership of Cooperation, Featuring Ever-lasting Friendship for Development and Prosperity between our two countries and bringing tangible benefits to our two peoples.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, exchanges and interactions between the two countries have been adversely affected in recent years. Nevertheless, the two sides have made ongoing efforts to enhance cooperation in various fields and boost economic recovery. State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi successfully visited Nepal in March. The two sides reached many consensus on moving ahead on bilateral relations. They also signed nine cooperation documents, including development assistant infrastructure connectivity, energy, medical and health cooperation and other fields. Recently, the relevant authorities of the two countries have actively implemented the consensus and agreements mentioned above. The two sides have successfully opened and resumed direct flights between Kathmandu and Kunming and between Kathmandu and Chengdu.

China has further optimised the visa policy for foreigners to China, and personnel exchanges between us have become increasingly smooth. The Chinese side has promptly reviewed and approved the application of the first batch of Nepali students to

return to universities in China. Some students have already arrived in China to continue their studies. The two sides held the 14th meeting of the China-Nepal Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism and a video conference on Border Law Enforcement Cooperation. China has also increased the volume of one-way freight transport at the China-Nepal border ports, and is working on a two-way transport plan. The exchanges and cooperation between us in various fields have shown sound momentum of recovery and development.

New historical starting point

In the second half of this year, China will hold the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, and Nepal will hold provincial and federal elections. In the first half of next year, China will hold the 14th National People’s Congress, and Nepal will form a new government. China-Nepal relations have reached a new historical starting point. As President Xi put it, we must “respond to people’s concerns, pursue the larger interests of all countries” and “firm up confidence, and act in unison”.

Guided by the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative, we shall further strengthen policy coordination, connectivity of infrastructure, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and closer people-to-people ties and promote practical cooperation in various fields such as infrastructure connectivity, development and poverty alleviation, resources and energy, and environmental protection, and work together to build a China-Nepal community with a shared future. I am confident that under the guidance of the two countries’ leaders, we will undoubtedly overcome the difficulties posed by the pandemic, and jointly promote bilateral relations and practical cooperation in various fields for greater gains and an even brighter future.

Hou currently serves as Chinese ambassador to Nepal.

Funding the fight against NCDs

Reducing the burden of non-communicable disease sustainably is a goal the world cannot miss.

STEPHEN OGWENO



Noncommunicable diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, lung disease, diabetes, obesity, and mental disorders, are often chronic and develop over a long period. Collectively, NCDs account for about 70 percent of all deaths globally (and 60 percent of deaths in Sub-Saharan Africa, where they account for over 55 percent of hospital admissions in countries such as Kenya). Developing countries thus face a double burden of illness, with communicable diseases like malaria, HIV, and tuberculosis still presenting a huge challenge alongside the rising incidence of NCDs.

One might expect that the large and increasing burden of NCDs would lead to more funding and resources being channelled toward addressing them. But the fight is chronically underfunded and remains a low priority compared to efforts to tackle infectious diseases.

There is no global fund for any NCD: In 2019, over 40 percent of NCD development assistance came from private institutions. But efforts to combat communicable diseases, the burden of which has declined significantly over the years, have several



SHUTTERSTOCK

dedicated international funding institutions, including the Global Fund, Gavi, the United Nations Population Fund, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. And although NCDs are the leading cause of death worldwide, they account for less than 10 percent of the global health budget.

One reason for this disparity is the relative lack of evidence-based

research into NCDs. Funding agencies with a duty to invest in data-driven strategies have therefore tended to focus elsewhere. Moreover, NCDs are still hugely misunderstood. Many people think that these diseases are caused only by the individual, and ignore all their other social, economic, and structural determinants. Weak grassroots action and poor

public framing of the NCD problem has not helped, either.

Perhaps most significantly, NCDs were not part of the Millennium Development Goals and thus missed out on the momentum toward greater health funding in the period from 2000 to 2015. Even now, reducing premature deaths from NCDs is just one of 169 targets under the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDG 3.4), making this objective difficult to fund.

With the NCD burden likely to increase further, several urgent steps are needed to bring about a shift in global funding priorities.

The first step is to emphasise the close connections between NCDs and communicable diseases, so that some funds already being channelled to fight communicable diseases can be directed toward addressing these links. For example, many HIV patients have successfully managed their viral loads, and up to 40 percent now die of NCDs like ischemic heart disease and diabetes. Likewise, epidemiological evidence shows that NCDs contribute significantly to tuberculosis deaths. Focusing on only communicable diseases or NCDs without considering the other will result in lower long-term impact.

Second, we must strengthen universal health coverage in order to focus first on the poorest, who are most affected by NCDs. Poor people with NCDs often cannot access medication or afford out-of-pocket costs and palliative care. Only when the poor benefit from universal health coverage can we begin to address the burden of NCDs effectively. Such schemes should also have a comprehensive NCD package that focuses on health promotion and creation as well as covering treatment.

Third, countries should use relevant research and data to develop a financial case for investment at the national level. Funding priorities will vary by country and region. Some will take a disease-specific approach, while others will adopt a more preventive and promotional strategy.

But regardless of the focus, making a solid investment case requires a strong grassroots advocacy movement that holds the government accounta-

ble for its commitments. For example, most governments signed the Abuja Declaration according to which public-health expenditure should account for at least 15 percent of the total national budget. Yet, in many countries, especially in Africa, it makes up less than 5 percent.

Fourth, aligning an NCD strategy with a broader national development strategy can enable countries to reap greater benefits from both. By linking infrastructure and built-environment projects to efforts to combat NCDs, we can create public spaces that encourage walking and other physical activities and reduce air pollution. Similarly, by working together with the food industry, we can improve package labelling, eliminate trans fats, and increase taxation of sugars, salts, and unhealthy foods to encourage people to adjust their diets.

Clearly, tackling NCDs calls for a partnership approach. Contrary to the widespread popular belief that NCDs are caused by individual behaviour, research continues to demonstrate that the environment and government policies have a huge effect on these diseases as well.

All these suggestions underscore the importance of building robust health-care systems that can deliver the ultimate goal of a strong, healthy society in which NCDs are prevented, managed, and controlled. Once we look at the bigger picture, it becomes clear that reducing the global NCD burden in a sustainable manner is a goal that the world cannot afford to miss.

Ogweno is Founder and CEO of Stowelink Inc., and recently launched a mobile app, NCDs 365, to provide information about non-communicable diseases.



A general view of the Maple Leaf Cricket Ground in King City, Canada is pictured in this photograph following the rain on Tuesday. Due to persistent rain, Nepal's first one-day practice match against Canada was abandoned. Nepal are currently in Canada tour as part of their preparation for the Scotland Triangular Series of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2, set to begin from July 11.

BRIEFING

Lamichhane to play for Dambulla Giants

KATHMANDU: Dambulla Giants drafted Sandeep Lamichhane for the third edition of the Lankan Premier League on Tuesday. Dambulla picked the Nepal national cricket captain under the international Diamond 'A' category for a fee of 40,000 USD. The wrist spinner will join the likes of Australian all-rounders D'Arcy Short and Ben Cutting, New Zealand wicketkeeper batsman Tim Seifert and Pakistan batter Haider Ali in the Dambulla squad, who are led by Sri Lanka limited-over captain Dasun Shanaka. Dambulla will compete against defending champions Jaffna Kings, Colombo Stars, Galle Gladiators and Kandy Falcons in the T20 tournament, which is set to take place from July 31 to August 21 in the cities of Colombo and Hambantota. Lamichhane has also been picked by Jamaica Tallawahs for the Caribbean Premier League's 2022 season. **(SB)**

Williams switches to Ghana

MADRID: Athletic Bilbao forward Inaki Williams announced Tuesday that he will switch his allegiance from Spain to Ghana with the hope of representing the country at the 2022 World Cup. Born in Bilbao to Ghanaian parents, the 28-year-old Williams was capped once by Spain in a 2016 friendly. "I feel the moment has come for me to find my origins within myself and with Africa and Ghana," Williams said on social media. His availability for Ghana comes as a huge boost ahead of this year's World Cup, where the 2010 quarter-finalists will face Portugal, Uruguay and South Korea in Group H. **(AFP)**

Cricket is a respite for Sri Lankans in crisis

Australia's tour has become a 'mental healing' for people like Nilantha, who is struggling to provide for his family.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
GALLE, JULY 6

The sport of cricket has become a welcome distraction for Sri Lankans looking for a break from the effects of the economic crisis in the country. The cricket-crazed South Asian island nation is facing its worst economic crisis in recent memory, enduring acute shortages of food, fuel and medicine. The government has shut schools and universities and has limited fuel supplies. "Yes there is a problem in the country, people have become poor and helpless with all kinds of problems. We sometimes spent five, six seven days in fuel lines," said Ujith Nilantha, who watched the first Test between Sri Lanka and Australia with his 10-year-old son last week in the southern city of Galle. "There is no happiness for children, and we can't provide what the child needs. When we watch this (cricket) it brings a mental healing," added Nilantha, whose livelihood in the tourism sector has been disrupted after arrivals fell with the energy crisis. Cricket, a legacy from British colonizers, has become part of the local culture in Sri Lanka as in many South Asian and Caribbean nations. It is has been looked upon as a unifying factor in a country torn apart by racial, religious and political discord. Even a bloody quarter-century civil war did not hamper the progress or

the following of the sport in Sri Lanka. The now-defeated Tamil Tiger rebel group which fought for an independent state silenced their arms for the 1996 World Cup final, when Sri Lanka beat Australia to win the title. Theekshana Nethumaksila was at the scenic cricket ground in Galle. The 16-year-old Nethumaksila is scheduled to sit for public exams this year but is unable to prepare properly because the schools are closed. "We only have cricket in times of sadness," he said. "We come here to watch cricket to get it off our minds." Before going ahead with the tour, the Australian cricket team had to contemplate whether it was ethical to travel to Sri Lanka and play when local people were struggling without electricity even for basic needs. The tour involved a three-game Twenty20 international series, won by Australia, and a five-match one-day international series, won 3-2 by Sri Lanka. The Australian team's decision to go ahead with the tour earned them admiration from fans who turned up at the fifth one-day match last month dressed in yellow—the color of Australia's ODI uniform—to thank them for entertaining them and sending a positive message about Sri Lanka to the world. Australia won the first Test match by 10 wickets, leaving Sri Lanka with a chance to square the series when the tour concludes with the second Test starting Friday, also at Galle.

Halep storms into semi-finals

The former world number one sees off Amanda Anisimova 6-2, 6-4 to set up a last four meeting against Elena Rybakina, who battles back to beat Ajla Tomljanovic 4-6, 6-2, 6-3.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON, JULY 6

Former champion Simona Halep eased past Amanda Anisimova 6-2, 6-4 to reach her third Wimbledon semi-final on Wednesday without dropping a set in the tournament so far. The Romanian 16th seed, who won the title in 2019, broke the American's serve four times in the match, wrapping up victory in just over an hour. Halep said she was playing her best tennis since she won her second Grand Slam at the All England Club three years ago. "Definitely this is my best tennis," she said. "I am trying to build my confidence back, and it's good. It's great to be back in the semi-finals." said the former world number one. The 30-year-old took charge early in the match on Centre Court, racing into a 5-1 lead and taking the set 6-2. It was a similar tale in the second set, with Halep again dominating and going 5-1 up with a double break. Anisimova dug deep, earning her own break of serve when Halep served for the match but the Romanian stayed calm to serve out for the win. Halep will face Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina for a place in Saturday's women's final. Rybakina came from behind to reach her first Grand Slam semi-final when she defeated Ajla Tomljanovic of Australia, 4-6, 6-2, 6-3. The 23-year-old Moscow-born player switched nationality in 2018. This year Russian and Belarusian players are banned from Wimbledon following the invasion of Ukraine. Rybakina fired five aces in the first set but her 10 winners were cancelled out by her 10 unforced errors. The steadier Tomljanovic did not concede a break point while a single break in the third game was enough to hand her the opener. Back came Rybakina with a triple break in the second set to level the tie. She swept through the decider and despite being broken when serving for the match in the seventh game, she made no mistake in the ninth with another ace sealing the win. Halep and Rybakina have met three times so far, with the Romanian holding a 2-1 edge. Their most recent clash came at the 2021 US Open, when Halep came out on top in three sets in the third round. "It is a big challenge for me. We have already played a few times and it was a tough battle," said Rybakina.

Djokovic fights back Defending champion Novak Djokovic battled back from two sets down to reach an 11th Wimbledon semi-final on Tuesday. Djokovic triumphed 5-7, 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 over Italian 10th seed Jannik Sinner, recovering from a two-set deficit for the seventh time in his career. The Serb will face Britain's Cameron Norrie, who also needed five sets to get past David Goffin of Belgium, 3-6, 7-5, 2-6, 6-3, 7-5. Djokovic, a 20-time major winner, said he had to give himself a talking to after going two sets down. "The first two sets compared to the next three were like two different matches," he said. "But at the end of the second set I took a toilet break, gave myself a little pep talk, tried to gather my thoughts. Djokovic is no stranger to Grand Slam adversity, having twice come back from two sets down as recently as last year's French Open. The second of those stunning recoveries was in the final against Stefanos Tsitsipas. After Tuesday's bathroom break, he returned to court and grabbed a break



Romania's Simona Halep returns to Amanda Anisimova of the US during their women's singles quarter-final match of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London on Wednesday.

cit for the seventh time in his career. The Serb will face Britain's Cameron Norrie, who also needed five sets to get past David Goffin of Belgium, 3-6, 7-5, 2-6, 6-3, 7-5. Djokovic, a 20-time major winner, said he had to give himself a talking to after going two sets down. "The first two sets compared to the next three were like two different matches," he said. "But at the end of the second set I took a toilet break, gave myself a little pep talk, tried to gather my thoughts. Djokovic is no stranger to Grand Slam adversity, having twice come back from two sets down as recently as last year's French Open. The second of those stunning recoveries was in the final against Stefanos Tsitsipas. After Tuesday's bathroom break, he returned to court and grabbed a break

in the fourth game of the third set as he trimmed his quarter-final deficit. In control, the 35-year-old levelled the tie with a double break in the fourth set as Sinner took a worrying tumble on his ankle scrambling to the Centre Court net. Djokovic carved out two more breaks in the decider, the second off the back of a stunning, cross-court backhand on the stretch to go to 5-2 before calmly serving it out. **Jabeur makes history** Ons Jabeur became the first Arab woman to book a place in the last-four of a Grand Slam. World number two Jabeur of Tunisia defeated Marie Bouzkova 3-6, 6-1, 6-1. She will next face close friend and mother-of-two Tatjana Maria, who defeated fellow unseeded German Jule Niemeier, 4-6, 6-2, 7-5.

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21-April 19) ****

Look for ways to set healthy boundaries with your loved ones and social media platforms today. These vibes can also help you build steady foundations within your love life, making it a great time to discuss the future with them.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) ****

You'll have an opportunity to impress your superiors and colleagues at work today. Fully embrace these vibes by keeping a tidy appearance, managing your time well, and creating an environment that supports teamwork.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) ***

You'll have an opportunity to manifest your dreams today. However, these vibes won't bless you with a free ride, you'll need to step up and put some hard work behind your dreams. Decompress to release symptoms of stress.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) ***

The energy in your home should feel fresh. The day can help you feel safe within your space, creating an environment where you can let your guard down. Unfortunately, it could trigger feelings of jealousy or possessiveness.

LEO (July 23-August 22) ***

The universe will ask you to speak boldly and from the heart today. These vibes are perfect for creating boundaries that will support your mental wellbeing. But it could trigger elevated stress levels or other wellness issues.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22) ***

You'll awaken with some added pep in your step today. This cosmic climate will help you tap into your gratitude, helping you see beauty in simplicity. Resistance to change could cause you to hold yourself back, so stay open to change.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22) ****

Today's cosmic climate will bless you with a rush of inspiration, helping you express yourself more honestly. You'll have an opportunity to bring more structure to your personal goals, as long as you're willing to believe in yourself.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21) ***

Don't be afraid to set boundaries in order to make space for yourself. Today's skies will ask you to honor your emotions, especially if you've been pushing away your feelings. Expressing these sentiments won't come easily.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21) ****

Your attention will be in high demand. You may find that your friends are looking to you for advice or leadership as your influence gains some traction. Under today's skies, try not to waste away your morning on the phone.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19) ***

You should feel secure and stable within your professional and financial situation. It will give you an opportunity to make some serious moves, so don't be afraid to throw your weight around as it can help you get ahead in life.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18) ***

The universe will conspire to help you manifest your dreams today. It could trigger insecurities, making it important that you access your confidence and belief in yourself. Fortunately, it will help you make professional headway.

PISCES (February 19-March 20) ***

Take a moment for introspection and meditation. This cosmic climate will ask you to go within while tapping into your personal power. Unfortunately, issues within your social circle could come into play with some intensive drama.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Raucous laughs

5 Unwind

10 Crazy captain

14 Colorado neighbor

15 Ham it up

16 NYC art gallery

17 Old Italian bread

18 Nile dam

19 Frank

20 Split to join

22 Thundering

24 TV Tarzan

25 Chablis, for one

26 Way too properly

30 Strains the brain

35 Untold centuries

36 Opposite of "paleo"

37 Ludicrous

38 Fancy trim

41 Willowy

43 Small pansy

44 "ER" setting

45 Lib. section

46 ATM key

47 Jackson and Jordan

50 Rough it

53 Frequent 007 foe

54 1950s card game

58 In and of —

62 San — Obispo

63 Rummage through

66 A Great Lake

67 Cats do it

68 Waits in traffic

69 1899 gold rush town

70 Ship's trail

71 To date (2 wds.)

72 Cookbook amts.

DOWN

1 Gift-giving time

2 Elec. or water

3 Syrup brand

4 Gives form to

5 Gearing up

6 911 responder

7 Near the floor

8 Video-game pioneer

9 Kin of argon

10 Omnia vincit —

11 Kachina maker

12 Revival shout

13 Loud noise

21 Chicago Loop trains

23 Hawk's lair

25 Grand Teton st.

26 Irritate

27 "The Kiss" sculptor

28 Gold brick

29 Brown of big bands

31 Fay's role in "King Kong"

32 Core group

33 Pay homage

34 Castle underlings

39 Percent ender

40 DEA agents

41 Biol. or astron.

42 Most fortunate

44 Little rascal

48 Elev.

49 Somewhere else

51 Open-air lobbies

52 Motel staffers

54 Crab appendage

55 Mystique

56 Pottery flaw

57 Memorable tennis champ

59 Winged god

60 Like a wet noodle

61 Service charges

64 House buzzer

65 Spike or Ang

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

R	U	B	S		S	T	A	B		A	Y	E	S			
I	R	A	S		C	O	I	L	S		M	A	D	E		
L	A	U	N	D	R	O	M	A	T		E	L	I	A		
E	L	M		I	A	N		B	O	N	N	E	T			
			M	A	P	S		K	I	D						
A	C	O	R	N	S		S	T	I	P	E	N	D			
R	A	I	S	E		O	M	E	N		D	A	W	N		
E	L	L		A	M	O	N	G		V	E	E				
A	L	E	C		N	O	G	S		O	P	A	L	S		
A	R	R	O	Y	O	S		D	R	I	L	L	S			
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R	A	N	T		R	H	I	N	E	S	T	O	N	E		
A	S	T	A		E	A	R	N	S		D	A	V	E		
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62							63		64	65				66		
67							68							69		
70							71							72		

SUDOKU

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

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

8								
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2		7			5			
	8			4	1		9	7
								8

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★



PRESENTS



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Keynote Speaker



Dr. Ram Baran Yadav
Former President

Sessions

Speaker

Moderator

Session I

What has hindered governance?

Federalism, service delivery and local prosperity



Dipendra Jha
Chief Attorney,
Madhesh Pradesh



Jagdish Prasad Agrawal
Businessperson



Shardadevi Thapa
Member of Provincial Assembly,
Madhesh Pradesh



Dr. Achyut Wagle
Economist/Professor,
Kathmandu University School
of Management



Janakraj Sapkota
Province Bureau Chief,
Kantipur Daily

Session II

Chure: The lifeline of Madhesh

Chure degradation, water crisis and the future of Madhesh



Dr. Bhogendra Jha
Vice-Chairman, Policy and Planning
Commission, Madhesh Pradesh



Kamala Oli Shrivastava
Board Member,
President Chure Terai Madhesh
Conservation Development Board



Dr. Vijay Kumar Singh Danuwar
Chure conservation expert



Chandra Kishor
Writer and Analyst

Session III

Rejuvenating Janakpur

An opportunity to restore its glory



Manoj Kumar Sah
Mayor, Janakpurdham
Sub-Metropolitan City



Ramashish Yadav
Social Activist and Member of
Provincial Assembly of Madhesh Pradesh



Rekha Jha
Lawyer, Janakpur



Roshan Janakpuri
Writer and Analyst



Ajit Tiwari
Madhesh Pradesh Bureau Chief,
Kantipur Daily

Session IV

Has society changed or remains the same?

Issues of social transformation in Madhesh



Bharat Prasad Sah
Home and Communications Minister,
Madhesh Pradesh



Sundar Bahadur Vishwakarma
Member of Provincial Assembly



Dr. Sushma Dwivedi
Social Activist and Professor



Tula Narayan Sah
Writer and Analyst



Sanjeev Satgajanya
Editor, The Kathmandu Post

Session V

Federalism: Exercise and experience

Five years of Madhesh Province



Lalbabu Raut
Chief Minister, Madhesh Pradesh



Prof. Krishna Khanal
Political Analyst



Dr. Vimala Rai Poudyal
Member of National Assembly



CK Lal
Writer



Sudheer Sharma
Editor-in-Chief, Kantipur Daily

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