



# THE KATHMANDU POST

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

Nepal's largest selling English daily  
Printed simultaneously in Kathmandu, Biratnagar, Bharatpur and Nepalgunj

Vol XXX No. 182 | 8 pages | Rs.5  
Friday, August 19, 2022 | 03-05-2079

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Bhairahawa Jomsom



Jagadishpur Lake in Kapilvastu pictured on Monday. The Ramsar-listed wetland is believed to host the second largest number of birds and the highest number of water bird species in Nepal. Spread over 157 hectares, the lake area is home to 167 bird species, records show.

## Nepal clears India to develop \$2.4 billion hydropower projects left by China

The 1,200MW projects, mooted as storage type on the Seti river, are located in far-western Nepal, and sprawl over four districts—Bajhang, Doti, Dadeldhura and Achham.

SANGAM PRASAIN  
KATHMANDU, AUG 18

Nepal has formally awarded the much-touted West Seti Hydropower Project and Seti River Project in western Nepal to India through a negotiation window, nearly four years after China withdrew from it.

Investment Board Nepal on Thursday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with India's state-owned NHPC Limited to develop the two projects—West Seti and Seti River (SR6)—joint storage projects totalling 1200MW.

Thursday's development may be seen as an attempt to mend soured relations with India by Sher Bahadur Deuba after his election as prime minister in July last year. The 750MW West Seti and 450MW SR6 projects cover four districts—Bajhang, Doti, Dadeldhura and Achham in far-western Nepal.

As per a 2007 study, the West Seti project has been envisaged to generate energy throughout the year, storing excess wet season river flows in the reservoir, and using this water to generate energy during peak demand periods in the dry season (December-May). Sushil Bhatta,

As per a 2007 study, the West Seti project has been envisaged to generate energy throughout the year.

CEO of the Investment Board Nepal and Abhay Kumar Singh, chairman and managing director of NHPC Ltd, signed the MoU on behalf of their respective organisations, in Kathmandu on Thursday.

On the occasion, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba said the agreement would serve as an important instrument in enhancing Nepal-India energy cooperation. "Implementation of these projects will help expand and strengthen bilateral trade and investments," the prime minister said.

"During my recent visit to India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and I agreed on a vision statement on cooperation in the power sector, underlining the need for strengthening mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation in this sector.

>> Continued on page 5

## INSIDE

### Madhesh parties fighting for relevance in their own base

**KATHMANDU:** As seat-sharing negotiations are underway in the ruling coalition, two major Madhes-based parties are also working out strategies to improve their poll prospects. While the Janata Samajbadi Party, which is part of the coalition, is mulling over quitting the ruling alliance and joining hands with other parties, including the CPN-UML, the Loktantrik Samajbadi Party is wondering if it should join the ruling alliance. Even the Nepali Congress, the leader of the ruling coalition, appears willing to bring the Loktantrik Samajbadi on board. Complexities, however, remain. The two Madhesh-based parties are likely to face a tough time during the polls, even if their leaders maintain they are in a comfortable position.

(Details on Pg 3)

### Erdogan throws Turkey's support behind Ukraine

**LVIV:** President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday threw Turkey's support behind Ukraine and warned of the danger of "another Chernobyl" disaster erupting at a nuclear power plant held by invading Russian forces. The Turkish leader met his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky in Lviv just two weeks after flying to Sochi for talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin during which the two sides pledged to boost economic cooperation. But Erdogan told reporters that NATO member Turkey remained firmly on Ukraine's side in the conflict and would continue its diplomatic efforts to end the fighting.

(Related report on Pg 6)

## Citizenship Bill, returned by President, passed by House without change

The bill will be sent to President Bhandari again once it is endorsed by the National Assembly.



POST PHOTO: ANGAD DHAKAL

The House passed the Citizenship Amendment Bill with majority votes on Thursday.

BINOD GHIMIRE  
KATHMANDU, AUG 18

The House of Representatives on Thursday endorsed the bill to amend the Citizenship Act 2006, which was returned by President Bidya Devi Bhandari for a review, without any changes.

The bill that was endorsed with a majority vote will be sent to the President's Office again for authentication after it gets through the National Assembly.

After sitting on the bill for 14 days, Bhandari on Sunday returned it to the

lower house with a 15-point message and comments on seven provisions of the bill, urging Parliament to review it.

However, the House didn't review it as the ruling parties decided to resend it for authentication without any changes.

"The bill to amend the Citizenship Act returned by the President for review with comments has been endorsed by majority votes," announced Speaker Agni Sapkota.

"Of the total 195 lawmakers present, 135 voted in favour while 60 voted against."

>> Continued on page 2

## The bill that was and the bill this is

What did King Birendra do with the bill to amend Citizenship Act 1964 that became a topic of discussion after President Bhandari returned the bill to amend Citizenship Act 2006?

TIKA R PRADHAN & TUFAN NEUPANE  
KATHMANDU, AUG 18

Days after President Bidya Devi Bhandari returned the bill to amend Citizenship Act 2006 with a 15-point message, the House of Representatives on Thursday passed the bill in its existing form. Once the National Assembly passes the bill, it will be sent back to the President again for authentication.

This time, the President will have to authenticate it within 15 days from the date of receiving it as per the constitutional provisions.

The President's move of returning the bill left politicians divided, with those from the ruling parties taking exception to it while those from the opposition hailing the action.

There, however, is no denying that the President exercised her constitutional powers to return the bill. One key issue, however, got buried in the political brouhaha.

While returning the bill, the President called on the House of Representatives to take a historical



REUTERS

King Birendra is said to have returned the citizenship bill in 2000. But did he?

overview of issues surrounding citizenship and reminded lawmakers of an incident from 2000. She referred to the amendment bill to the Citizenship Act 1964, which was passed by the lower house on June 11, 2000 but was rejected by the upper house on June 13 that year. The lower house, however,

rejected the upper house proposal for a review on July 26 that year.

It is known to all that the bill failed to take the form of an Act, the President said in her message to the House.

The Post inquired with the Parliament Secretariat about the incident. Officials said they had no documents regarding that amendment bill.

"We have long been trying to locate the documents but haven't found them," Narayan Dhakal, chief at the bills section of the secretariat, told the Post.

Some documents that are available, however, show that then Speaker Taranath Ranabhat had certified the citizenship bill as a "money bill," and he had sent the bill to King Birendra—the then head of the state—for authentication on December 1, 2000.

When the Post reached out to Ranabhat, he said he could not exactly recall the incident and that there must have been some circumstances that prompted him to certify the citizenship amendment bill as a "money bill."

>> Continued on page 2

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NATIONAL

Mid-day meal budget misused in Kalikot

Government schools in the district say they are spending the meal money to pay salaries to privately-hired teachers.

TULARAM PANDEY  
KALIKOT, AUG 18

When Man Bahadur Bishwakarma first heard about the mid-day meal programme at local schools, he was relieved because he no longer had to worry, or so he thought, about what his children would eat while in school.

But he soon learnt that his children were not getting the promised daily meal.

Already running his household on a shoestring budget, Man Bahadur said he feels dejected and let down by the system.

“I have seven children to feed. Four of them go to school so I was hoping at least they wouldn’t go hungry. But that’s not the case,” said the 41-year-old farmer from Khandachakra Municipality-4, Kalikot.

Four among seven of Man Bahadur’s children study at the local Navajyoti Basic School. His eldest daughter is an eighth grader in another school while two others are not yet of school-going age.

“I asked the school administration about it, but the school said that the money meant for mid-day meal is being spent on teachers’ salaries,” Man Bahadur said.

The mid-day meal programme was introduced in 2017 in collaboration with the World Food Programme to ensure children in community schools get a healthy, nutritious diet and control malnutrition. The programme has also been helpful to make school kids regular to their classes.

But most people from the target population are deprived of such facilities. The state also provides scholarships to the children of poor and needy people like Man Bahadur.

Community schools in Kalikot, meanwhile, say they have no alternative to using the mid-day meal budget to pay teachers since the authorities have left several teachers’ posts vacant.

“We have to hire private teachers to run the school and we have to pay them their salaries,” said Ram Bahadur Bogati, headmaster of Navajyoti Basic School. “The authorities are yet to manage teacher posts at the school, so we have to use the funds meant for the mid-day meal and scholarships to pay them.”

Navajyoti Basic School, which currently has five teachers appointed through private sources, received Rs543,720 for the mid-day meal programme in the last academic session. The entire amount was spent to provide salaries to the teachers, according to Bogati.

The federal government provides Rs20 per day to each student studying up to grade five in community schools through the local units in Karnali Province.

With this scheme, the government aims to provide a nutritious diet to children and control malnutrition in the province. The programme is also expected to reduce absenteeism among students in rural areas.

The community school mid-day meal programme is being run in 42 out of 77 districts in the country.

However, most of the community schools in remote areas have redirected the amount for mid-day meals to manage the salary of the teachers.

“We have recently dispatched letters to all community schools instructing them to prepare mid-



Children of Saldanda Basic School at Khandachakra in Kalikot having their mid-day meal in this undated photo.

day meal compulsorily in the school and to feed the children,” said Jasi Prasad Chaulagain, chief at the education, youth and sports unit of Khandachakra Municipality. According to him, the budget for the mid-day meal has been released for the students of grade six this year.

Khandachakra Municipality released a total of Rs1.9 million for 711 students of the child development centre and Rs11.5 million for 4,188 students studying up to grade five in the last fiscal year.

Children of Tilagupha, another municipality in Kalikot, also do not get mid-day meals at school. Ramkala Bohora, 31, a resident of Tilagupha-2, has three children studying at Durga Secondary School in Ratada. The school informed her that the amount released for the mid-day meal programme is used to manage the salaries of the teachers appointed through private sources.

There are just five teachers under the posts managed by the government in Durga Secondary School. “Secondary classes are being run somehow by appointing six teachers through a private source. The amount meant for the mid-day meal is used to provide salary to those teachers,” said Sarpalal Bohora, the headmaster.

Guardians of students at Kalika Secondary School at Khalla in Tulagupha-5 complain that their wards have been deprived of mid-day meals and scholarships for the past five years.

In this school, too, the budget released for the mid-day meal programme and scholarships are used to manage salary to the teachers appointed through private sources, according to Debilal Neupane, guardian of a student studying at the school.

Tilagupha Municipality issued Rs18 million for the mid-day meal programme in the last fiscal year. In the current fiscal, a total of Rs 26 million has been released for the programme, according to deputy Mayor Mahendra Bahadur Shahi. He urged the

government to manage the teacher posts in the schools so that the educational institutions would not use the budget on paying salaries to the teachers. According to Shahi, the local unit decided to open the bank account of each student to deposit amounts for the mid-day meal and scholarship in a bid to avoid the misuse of the amounts.

“Preparations are on to deposit the scholarship and mid-day meal money directly in the student’s account,” he said.

There are a total of 294 community schools in Kalikot, a remote district in Karnali Province. The majority of the schools in all nine local units are found using the budget for the mid-day meal programme and scholarships to manage salaries for the teachers.

There are around 100 community schools in the district that do not have even a single post of government teachers.

Malnutrition is a serious health problem in all 10 districts of Karnali Province. The Multiple Indicator Survey-2019 showed that the prevalence of wasting among the children in Karnali was 17.6, the highest in the country, followed by Province 1 (14.3 percent), Sudurpaschim Province (14.1 percent), Province 2 (13.9 percent), Lumbini Province (13.7 percent), Gandaki Province (8 percent), and Bagmati Province (4.7 percent).

According to the Provincial Health Directorate in Surkhet, the majority of people in Karnali, which regularly faces food scarcity, are deprived of nutritious foods.

Kiran Adhikary, a civil society leader, said it is ironic that the schools are compelled to use the budgets for scholarship and mid-day meal programmes to provide salaries to teachers.

“The schools are doing bad work for a good purpose,” Adhikary said. “The problem will be resolved only if the government manages teacher posts in the community school.”

Citizenship bill, returned ...

>> Continued from page 1

While the ruling party lawmakers voted for the bill, the main opposition CPN-UML stood against it arguing that a national consensus must be forged before its endorsement.

It was put to a vote after some 80 cross-party lawmakers participated in the deliberations giving their views for and against an immediate endorsement of the bill. While most ruling party lawmakers demanded it needs to be endorsed without revision, the opposition lawmakers insisted on a review.

“The President could have returned the bill if it contradicted the constitution. However, the note from her nowhere mentions it contradicts the statute,” said Barsha Man Pun, a CPN (Maoist Centre) lawmaker, while taking part in the deliberations. “The constitutional provision on revision can be used when there is contradiction [in the bill] with the constitution.” Article 113(3) of the constitution allows the President to return any bill for the review if s/he deems it necessary.

Expressing his views, Nepali Congress lawmaker Gagan Thapa said delaying the endorsement of the bill meant that thousands of children born to the parents who have acquired citizenship by birth would be deprived of citizenship, and so would those waiting to acquire citizenship through their mothers.

“The President is for having a common understanding on naturalised citizenship by marriage but we have failed to do so,” Thapa said. “The present bill doesn’t talk about naturalised citizenship by marriage. Whether or not the present bill gets endorsed, a foreign woman married to a Nepali man would be getting naturalised citizenship.”

Thapa said that some 440,000 foreign women married to Nepali men have acquired naturalised citizenship so far.

CPN-UML lawmakers, however, said the five-party alliance has turned the Parliament into a rubber stamp. “The discussion in Parliament was just for formality. It was decided that it would be endorsed as dictated by the ruling alliance,” said Bishal Bhattarai, chief whip of the UML, in Parliament.

“We had expected that the lawmakers would be allowed to propose amendments and due procedure would be followed for endorsement. Where is parliamentary supremacy when it functions as dictated by a few leaders of the five parties?”

The ruling alliance on Tuesday had decided to endorse the bill without revision against the request of the President. Presenting the bill for endorsement, Minister for Home Affairs Bal Krishna Khand said the bill is targeted at opening the door to children of the parents who got citizenship by birth to acquire citizenship by descent and those whose fathers are unidentified.

“We can always revise the Act if it is necessary,” he said. “Let’s have a common understanding on the issue of mar-

ital naturalised citizenship and amend the Act again,” the minister said.

Article 11 (3) of the constitution says a child of a citizen who has acquired the citizenship of Nepal by birth before the commencement of the constitution, shall acquire the citizenship of Nepal by descent. The existing Act allows everyone born within Nepal’s territory before April 12, 1990 to acquire citizenship by birth.

However, their children haven’t got citizenship by descent in the absence of a law as the constitution said the provision to grant them citizenship would be guided by a federal law. Some 190,000 persons have acquired citizenship by birth so far.

Similarly, the bill also paves the way for a child born in Nepal to a Nepali woman and whose father is unidentified to get citizenship by descent. However, the applicant’s mother must make a self-declaration that the father “cannot be identified.” She will be liable for action if it is found that the claim that the father “cannot be identified” turns out to be wrong.

For the first time, the bill also paves the way for Non-Resident Nepalis to acquire citizenship. However, they will not be eligible to enjoy political and administrative rights. The provision will be applicable only to those who reside outside the South Asian region.

As per the bill, children can choose either the surname and address of their mother or the father while acquiring citizenship. Similarly, one can get citizenship through gender identity in line with the constitution. Article 12 of the constitution says a person who obtains the citizenship of Nepal by descent in accordance with the constitution may obtain a certificate of citizenship of Nepal with gender identity in the name of his or her mother or father.

The House of Representatives will now send the bill for endorsement from the National Assembly. It will then be sent to the President’s Office for presidential seal. President Bhandari has no option but to authenticate it within 15 days. Article 113 (4) of the constitution says if the President sends back a Bill along with her remarks and if both the Houses reconsider the bill as it was presented or with amendments, and pass it and present it again to the President, the Bill shall be certified by the President within 15 days of its submission.

Constitutional experts say both the President and parliament have taken decisions as prescribed by the constitution. “It would have been better had the House of Representatives discussed it in the House committee in detail as the President had returned the bill with some comments,” senior advocate Chandra Kant Gyawali, who specialises on constitutional law, told the Post. “However, it was the House’s prerogative to endorse the way it liked.”

The bill that was and the bill this is

>> Continued from page 1

But why would the Speaker certify any other bill as a “money bill”? And why did the bill in 2000 fail to take the form of an Act?

In interviews with the Post, experts and officials called it one of the many idiosyncrasies of the parliamentary system, saying that such practices happen in other democracies too.

What is a money bill?

A money bill is defined by Article 110 (3) as matters concerning imposition, collection, abolition, remission, alteration or regulation of taxes, among others. Article 68 (3) of the 1990 Constitution also had a similar definition for the bill.

The peculiarity of the money bill is that it needs to be introduced only in the lower house and there is no upper house veto on it—it is deemed passed by both the houses if it’s endorsed by the lower house—and it cannot be returned by the head of state.

A statement issued by the Office of the President on Sunday said: “The President has sent the Citizenship Act amendment bill to the House of Representatives as per Article 113(3) of the constitution, along with a message that it needs a review.”

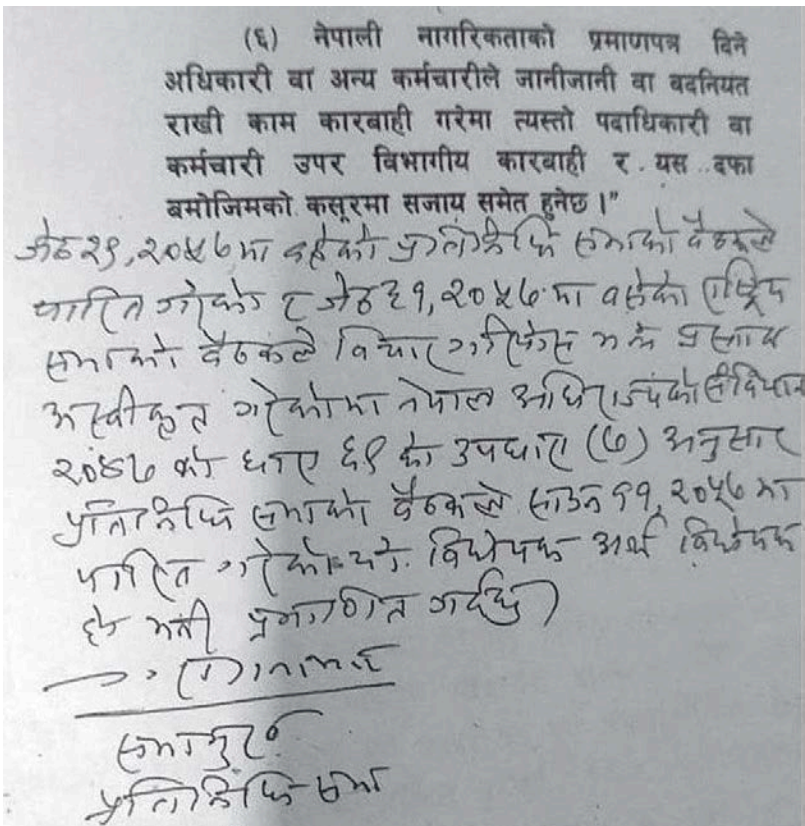
Article 113(3) says: “In case the President is of the opinion that any Bill, except a Money Bill, presented for authentication needs reconsideration, he or she may, within 15 days from the date of submission of such Bill, send back the Bill along with his or her message to the House in which the Bill originated.”

Radheshyam Adhikari, an advocate, two-time member of the Constituent Assembly and former National Assembly member, said the parliamentarians in 1990 appear to have misused the constitutional provision so as to ensure that the king did not return the bill.

“As far as my memory serves me right, King Birendra didn’t return the bill, or let’s say there was no message from the palace regarding the bill,” Adhikari told the Post. “Nonetheless, a citizenship bill, or any other bill, should not be certified as a money bill.”

Ranabhat, however, said that any bill involving tax, fine or any financial issues could be certified as a money bill. “You should better ask the general secretary of the Parliament Secretariat, he could explain it better,” he told the Post.

Mukunda Sharma, a former secretary at the Parliament Secretariat, told the Post that there was a tendency to certify most of the bills as a money bill.



In 2000, then Speaker Taranath Ranabhat using his prerogative authenticated the bill on sixth amendment to the Citizenship Act as a money bill.

“There was a trend in the 1990s to certify any bill that involved even a single rupee of fine or tax as a money bill so that the upper house did not have a veto on it,” said Sharma. “That could be the reason the citizenship amendment bill must have been certified as a money bill.”

After the restoration of democracy in 1990, the king became a constitutional monarch, but the upper house continued to have the majority of members from the palace.

“It was a tactical move to nullify the role of the national assembly,” Sharma told the Post. “The Speaker’s role hence became powerful.”

According to Sharma, discussions were also held over whether every other bill should be introduced as and certified as a money bill.

Both the 1990 Constitution and the 2015 Constitution have similar provisions regarding a money bill, except for one addition in the 2015 charter—“provided that any bill shall not be deemed to be a Money Bill only by the reason that it provides for the levying of any charges, fees or tariff such as licence fee, application fee, renewal fee or for the imposition of

fines or penalty of imprisonment.”

Article 68 (4) of the 1990 Constitution says: “If any question arises whether a bill is a money bill or not, the decision of the Speaker shall be final.” This provision has been retained in the 2015 Constitution as well.

The Post could not independently verify if any controversy had arisen in 2000 on whether the citizenship bill was a money bill or not.

People familiar with the matter in 2000 say the king had held consultations with the Supreme Court but they could not exactly say what followed. The 1990 Constitution allowed the king such consultations. Article 88 (5) of the 1990 Constitution says: “If His Majesty wishes to have an opinion of the Supreme Court on any complicated legal question of interpretation of this constitution or of any other law, the court shall, upon consideration on the question, report to His Majesty its opinion thereon.”

Badri Bahadur Karki, a senior advocate who was the attorney general at that time, said King Birendra had sought the opinion of the Supreme Court.

“The Supreme Court used to con-

duct hearings on issues on which the king sought the court’s opinion,” Karki told the Post. “I can’t remember who participated in the hearing then and what all happened.”

The provision that a money bill cannot be returned by the President for a review is in the Indian constitution as well.

Article 111 of the Indian constitution says that the President may return any bill, if it is not a money bill, to the Parliament for a review. If the bill is passed again by the Houses with or without amendment and presented to the President for assent, the President shall not withhold assent therefrom, the Indian constitution says.

The Indian government in 2016 had introduced the Aadhaar Bill as a

money bill in the Lok Sabha (lower house). It was endorsed as the Bharatiya Janata Party enjoyed a majority. But it led to a row. The opposition didn’t agree with the government’s classification of the Aadhaar Bill as a money bill, in which the Rajya Sabha (upper house) has no power to veto. In 2018, a five-judge Supreme Court bench held its constitutional validity.

The question, however, remains why the constitution empowers the Speaker to certify any bill as money bill, and why is there another provision that says “the President can return any other bill except the money bill to the Parliament for a review.”

Rameshore Khanal, a former finance secretary, said such provisions are put in the constitution so as

to rescue the governments during difficulties. “The problem is politicians tend to ignore the good intent of the provision and misuse it for their political interests,” Khanal told the Post.

Khanal offered the example of the ordinance provision.

“Ordinances have been provisioned in the constitution with good intent. Who had imagined the provision of ordinance would be misused,” Khanal told the Post. “Both KP Oli and Sher Bahadur Deuba misused it for their petty interests.”

Back to the money bill.

Since there is no constitutional provision for the President to return the money bill because such a bill is introduced to the lower house with prior notice to the President, the President has no option but to authenticate it. But what happens when any bill certified by the Speaker as a money bill is sent to the head of state for authentication and the head of state does not agree with it or its provisions?

Nothing has been specified in the constitution about it.

Since there’s no provision of returning, the President may not act—won’t authenticate it, leading to automatic termination of the bill. Since no documents are available relating to the citizenship bill amendment case of 2000, the general assumption is the king didn’t act on it—and it lapsed.

The last amendment to the Citizenship Act 1964 was made on May 30, 1991. In 2006, a new law was enacted for amendment and integration of matters relating to the Nepal Citizenship Act.

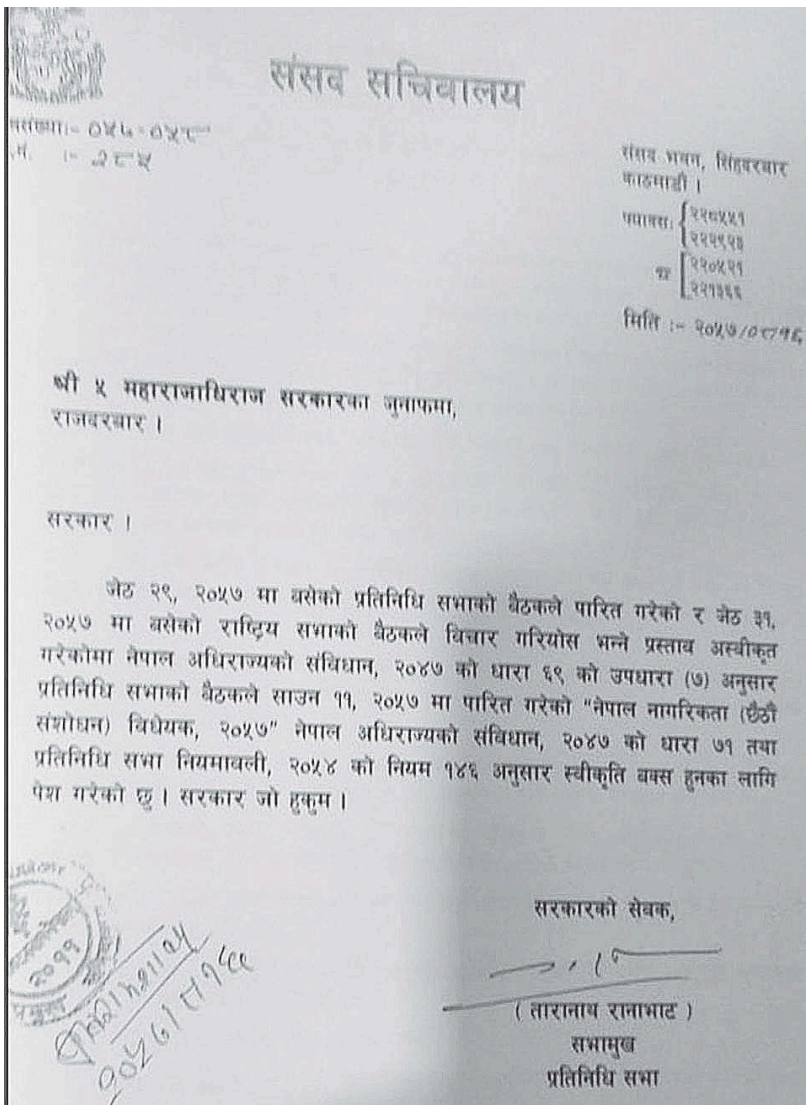
A bill to amend the Citizenship Act 2006 was introduced in the House on August 7, 2018. The State Affairs and Good Governance Committee deliberated on it for 22 months before sending it to the House. But the Sher Bahadur Deuba government earlier last month withdrew the old bill and introduced a new amendment bill, which was passed by the lower house on July 22 and the upper house on July 26.

After the passage of the bill by the lower house on Thursday, it is set to be sent to the President soon.

The President now will be left with no option than to authenticate it because she is bound by the constitution.

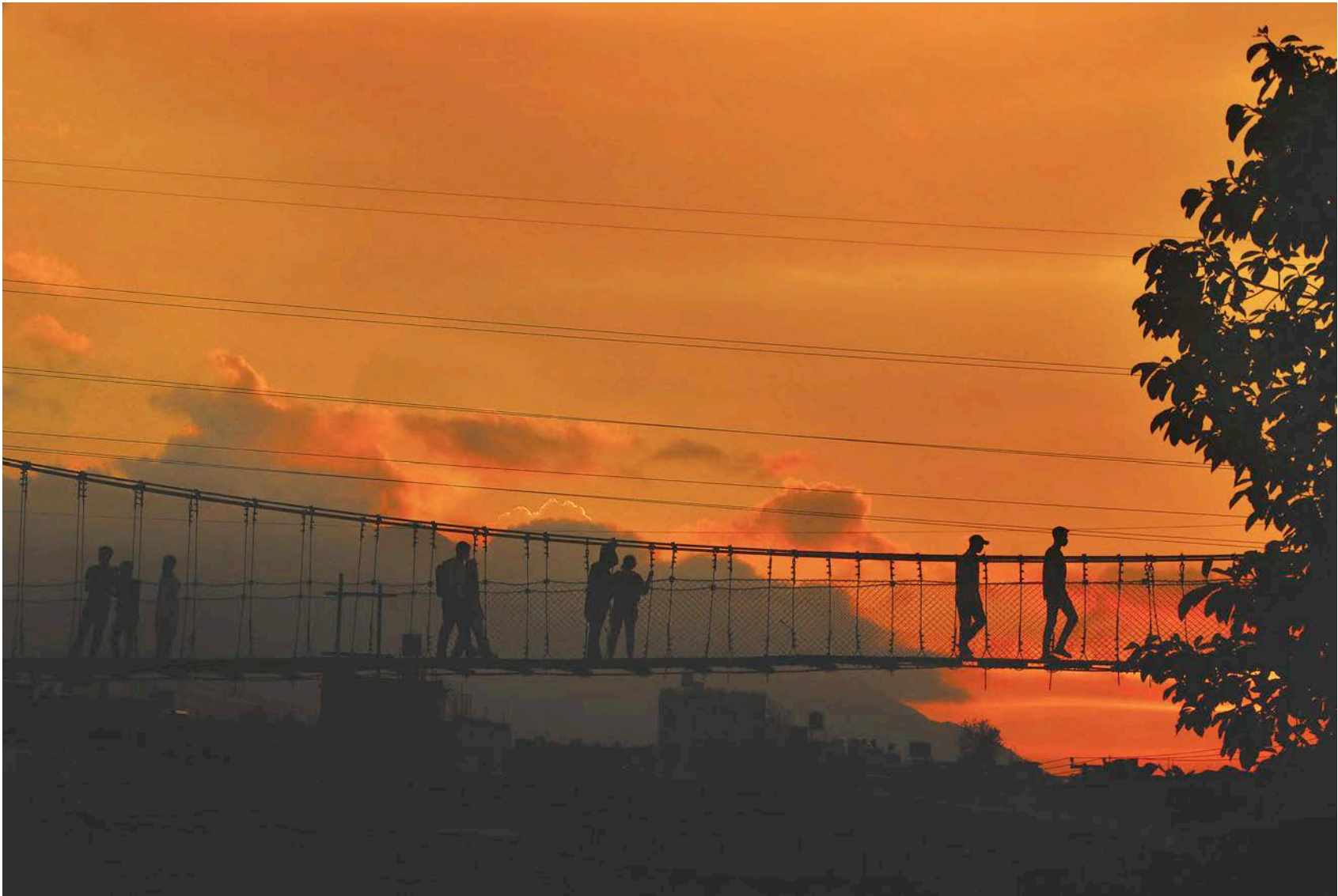
“In case any bill is sent back along with a message by the President, and both houses reconsider and adopt such a bill as it was or with amendments and present it again, the President shall authenticate that bill within 15 days of such presentation,” says Article 113(4).

(Binod Ghimire contributed reporting.)



Then Speaker Ranabhat’s letter to King Birendra requesting royal approval for the money bill.





People passing through a suspension bridge are silhouetted against a sky turned orange during sunset, at Balkumari in Lalitpur on Wednesday.

POST PHOTO: HEMANTA SHRESTHA

# Malnutrition threat for pregnant women, new mums, children displaced by disasters

ARJUN POUDEL  
KATHMANDU, AUG 18

Of the over 400 people displaced by the recent Koshi floods at Belaka Municipality in Udayapur district around a dozen are pregnant women, some are new mothers and dozens are under five years old.

Those people from wards 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9 of the municipality have been taking refuge at the community shelters constructed by the local unit for the past several days.

“Some of the children, pregnant women and new mothers have started getting sick,” Chet Nath Adhikari, an official at the municipality, told the Post over the phone from Udayapur last week. “We have been trying to mitigate the risks of an outbreak of communicable diseases at the temporary shelters of the displaced people.”

Officials deployed to the displaced camps for management said that displaced people, especially pregnant women, new mothers and small children, are not only vulnerable to communicable diseases but also are at risk of getting malnourished as they lack adequate nutritious food and access to health care services.

Experts say people displaced in natural disasters are highly vulnerable to acute malnutrition and that the displaced need additional nutritious foods and safe drinking water.

“Everyone residing in temporary shelters is vulnerable to several communicable diseases,” said Dr Ashok Bhurtyal, a nutritionist. “Infants, young children, pregnant women and lactating mothers are malnourished.”

Malnutrition is developing into a silent crisis in Nepal. The country has made significant progress in reducing stunting among children under five. Stunting decreased from 57 percent in 2001 to 32 percent in 2019, according to the recent Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS 2019).

Wasting, a debilitating disease that causes muscle and fat tissue to waste away, among children under five was 11 percent in 2001, 10 percent in 2016 and 12 percent in 2019. Wasting or low weight for one’s height is an undernutrition condition, which is a strong predictor of mortality among children under five, according to the UN health agency. Wasting in children, if not treated properly, is associated with a higher risk of death, according to it.

Anaemia among children under five is still at 51 percent (NDHS 2016), which experts say is concerning.

The problem of malnutrition has been escalating quickly amidst the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, according to nutritionists.

Experts say that natural disasters, from which thousands of people get affected every year, exacerbate malnutrition problems.

“The government as well as several other agencies distribute relief materials to displaced people,” said Dr Sudha Shree Adhikari, a nutrition scientist adding, “But those agencies also distribute junk foods like noodles and biscuits as relief materials. Such foods could contribute to the increase in malnutrition cases.”

The Ministry of Health and Population has decided to distribute super cereal (fortified flour) in the displaced camps of Udayapur.

A 1.5 kg packet of fortified flour, which consists of carbohydrate, fat and other minerals, will be provided to all children between six months and 23 months, all pregnant women and new mothers, officials said.

When asked about food relief for thousands of others displaced in other parts of the country, officials said that they do not have any such programme.

“Displaced people, whether they are from Koshi flood or from any other disasters, are highly vulnerable,” said Dr Atul Upadhyay, a nutritionist. “Authorities concerned should take the issue seriously and address it accordingly.”

Experts say that nutrition has a direct link with the overall development of the country. Malnutrition affects physical as well as mental growth of children, which ultimately affects the country’s economic health, according to Upadhyay.

Malnutrition also plays a major role in the under five mortality rate, according to the nutrition section at the Family Welfare Division under the Department of Health Services.

“Distributing food relief alone is not enough as those distributing should carefully consider whether the food items are beneficial or harmful,” said Upadhyay.

# Beset by disputes and splits, Madhesh parties are fighting for relevance in their own base

Janata Samajbadi and Loktantrik Samajbadi are in negotiations with bigger parties eyeing better prospects in November polls.

NISHAN KHATIWADA  
KATHMANDU, AUG 18

As seat-sharing negotiations are underway in the ruling coalition, two major Madhesh-based parties are also working out strategies to improve their poll prospects.

While the Janata Samajbadi Party, which is part of the coalition, is mulling over quitting the ruling alliance and joining hands with other parties, including the CPN-UML, the Loktantrik Samajbadi Party is wondering if it should join the ruling alliance.

Even the Nepali Congress, the leader of the ruling coalition, appears willing to bring the Loktantrik Samajbadi on board.

Complexities, however, remain. The two Madhesh-based parties are likely to face a tough time during the polls, even if their leaders maintain they are in a comfortable position.

Keshav Jha, a Loktantrik Samajbadi leader, says since they fought local elections on their own, they don’t have any plans to partner with other parties.

He didn’t deny his party is lobbying to join the ruling coalition though.

At a time when the five parties in the coalition have been struggling to finalise seat-sharing, the entry of the Loktantrik Samajbadi may create more confusion, observers say.

For other parties, an alliance with the Janata Samajbadi and Loktantrik Samajbadi is a good bet, as they hold sway over the Madhesh Province, which sends 32 lawmakers to the House of Representatives.

The Madhesh Provincial Assembly is

107-member strong.

In the 2022 local elections, the Nepali Congress emerged as the largest party in the province. The UML too has managed to make inroads in the region.

Out of the 136 local units, Nepali Congress won 46, UML 30, Janata Samajbadi 25, Loktantrik Samajbadi 14, and the Maoist Centre won nine.

The parties are losing their stronghold because they appear to have given up their agendas, observers say.

Likewise, the CPN (Unified Socialist) won six units; as many went to other parties.

In the current House of Representatives, the Janata Samajbadi has 17 seats while Loktantrik Samajbadi Party controls 13 seats.

Baburam Bhattarai and Mahindra Ray Yadav recently parted ways with the Janata Samajbadi and launched their own Nepal Samajbadi Party. Bhattarai and Yadav, who won from Gorkha-2 and Sarlahi-4, respectively, are the only members in the House from the new party. Currently, the Janata Samajbadi has 39 lawmakers in the Madhesh Provincial Assembly while the Loktantrik Samajbadi has 16.

“Our popular votes have increased and we are now stronger in the Madhesh Province as

well,” said Ram Sahaya Prasad Yadav, a Janata Samajbadi leader who is also a member of the ruling coalition’s task force formed to finalise seat-sharing arrangements.

Jha, the Loktantrik Samajbadi leader, echoed Yadav. “The situation is not as bad for us as it has been perceived,” he said. “The real power will be tested when all the parties contest the elections on their own.”

Observers, however, say as the seat-sharing arrangements will more likely be made based on the votes obtained by the political parties in the latest local polls and the 2017 parliamentary and local elections, the Janata Samajbadi and the Loktantrik Samajbadi are not in a strong position and are left with little choices.

The only province in which these parties had a noteworthy presence was Madhesh but they are losing their stronghold because they appear to have given up their agendas and been enmeshed in power politics, observers say.

The Janata Samajbadi had secured five seats in total in the provinces other than Madhesh. Likewise, the Loktantrik Samajbadi won two seats in other provinces in total.

“As the Janata Samajbadi has already joined the electoral alliance led by the Congress, and the Loktantrik Samajbadi Party will soon join them, the fate of these political parties depends on other big parties as they are not in a strong bargaining position,” Chandra Kishore, a journalist who has closely followed Madhesh politics for decades, said.

According to him, the two parties that had fought the previous elections on their own

with Madhesh agenda had left a good impression on the electorate, but now they are dependent on other parties.

“Both parties have lost their influence. The Janata Samajbadi fared better in the latest local elections than the Loktantrik Samajbadi because the former was part of the ruling coalition,” said Chandra Kishore. “These parties got involved in power politics, thereby losing the trust of the people.”

Yet another bane of the Madhesh-based parties is they have over the years gone through frequent splits, which could help other parties like the Congress and the UML make inroads into the Madhesh region.

Tula Narayan Shah, a political analyst, said the major challenge for the Janata Samajbadi and the Loktantrik Samajbadi is retaining the seats they had won in the last elections.

“For both parties, chances of winning the same number of seats as in the last elections are slim,” Shah said. “The Madhesh movement was fresh in the minds of the people back then. They need to find agendas as well for the upcoming polls.”

With the elections a little over three months away, the two Madhesh-based parties are going through an existential crisis, according to CK Lal, a political commentator who is also a columnist for the Post.

“While struggling to save their existence, they will seek and take support from any other political parties,” Lal said.

“They are in a serious crisis—both lack agendas, credible leadership, and intact organisations.”

# Local units fear their first term may pass without federal education law

The federal government has yet to ready a bill for the law and the term of the current Parliament is ending in four months with elections announced for November 20.

BINOD GHIMIRE  
KATHMANDU, AUG 18

The jurisdiction over school education has been the most debated issue between the federal and local governments in the last five years.

While the local governments have been saying they have constitutional authority to manage education up to grade 12, the federal government is reluctant to delegate the authority. Schedule 8 of the constitution gives local governments the explicit authority of basic and secondary education while schedule 9 puts education under the concurrent authority of the federal, provincial and local governments.

The constitution lists out the authorities in broad terms which are defined clearly by the Acts and regulations. They are also the prerequisite for the implementation of the constitution. However, around seven years since the promulgation of the constitution and five years since last parliamentary elections, the government is yet to register a bill to promulgate a federal education act.

When he was appointed minister for education, science and technology in October last year, Devendra Paudel said preparing the bill for the Act would be his priority. He has reiterated his commitment on several occasions. However, over a year since he took charge, the education ministry is yet to finalise the bill.

Paudel is the fifth education minister since the promulgation of the Constitution of Nepal and third since the last general elections. And every minister who preceded Paudel has made similar claims. No minister, however, has fulfilled their claim to have the Act in place.

The officials at the Education Ministry say they have already prepared a draft of the federal education bill along with five others which are stuck at the Finance Ministry. “We have urged the Finance Ministry to give the clearance to the bills,” Education Secretary Ram Krishna Subedi, told the Post. “Education minister raised the issue in a meeting of the ministers called by the prime minister on Tuesday.”

The local representatives say they have completed their term without getting to exercise their constitutional authority in lack of the law. Even though the first term of local governments since the promulgation of the constitution is already over, there is no certainty on when the Act would be formulated. The recent local level elections were held on May 13.

“Allowing the local governments to oversee the school education was one of the most important aspects of federalism,” Bhim Prasad Dhungana, mayor of Dhading’s Neelkantha Municipality, told the Post. “We completed our full tenure in uncertainty and it doesn’t seem like the Act will be promulgated anytime soon.”



POST FILE PHOTO: ELITE JOSHI

The constitution allows local governments to make laws, but the statute also says such laws will be void if they contradict the federal law.

Local government representatives say with the federal and provincial assembly elections set to be held later this year, they are not hopeful that the present House will pass the law. The government, within a few days, is expected to make an official announcement to conduct the elections on

November 20. As it takes over a month for a bill to get through Parliament, it will not be possible to promulgate the Act from the ongoing parliamentary session if the bill is not registered soon.

The constitution allows local governments to make laws. However, the

constitution also says such laws will be void to the extent they contradict the federal law. On different occasions in the past, the federal government has issued circulars to local governments ordering them not to make laws until related federal Acts are formulated. A writ petition challenging the

circular is sub judge at the Supreme Court. “The court has not scheduled the final hearing for my petition,” advocate Sunil Ranjan Singh told the Post. “A verdict from the court would have ended the ongoing confusion.”

Education experts say lack of legal clarity has left the entire education sector in shambles. “The Act is a must to bring school education on track,” Binay Kusiya, an education expert, said. “Not just the education ministry but the successive governments must be held accountable for the delay.”

Lack of a constitutional deadline for promulgation of laws like the one related to the fundamental rights is also responsible for the delay, experts said.

The constitution made it mandatory to have laws related to fundamental rights in place within three years since its promulgation. It also said the existing Acts that contradict the constitution must be revised within a year since the first meeting of the federal parliament. The government prepared the laws within the constitutional deadline. However, as there is no such constitutional deadline for the promulgation of federal laws, successive governments have become negligent in discharging their duties, Kusiya said.

“The reluctance in promulgating laws like the Federal Education Act is one of the reasons why our federalism hasn’t been fully implemented yet,” he said.















BRIEFING

**Wolves sign midfielder Nunes**  
**LONDON:** Wolverhampton Wanderers have signed Portuguese international midfielder Matheus Nunes from Sporting Lisbon, the Premier League club said on Thursday. The fee was not disclosed, but Wolves stated it is a club record, with British media reporting it to be around 38 million pounds (\$45.8 million). The transfer fee would surpass the 35 million pounds Wolves paid for forward Fabio Silva in 2020. The 23-year-old Nunes has signed a five-year contract with Wolves, with a one-year option. He had his breakthrough in the 2020/21 season when he helped Sporting to a league and a Portuguese League Cup title. Nunes played his first game for Portugal's national side in 2021 against Qatar and has eight games and one goal for the team. After a defeat and a draw in their first two games of the new Premier League season, Nunes will be a welcome addition to Bruno Lage's squad ahead of the travel to face Tottenham.

**Simeone joins Napoli on loan**  
**ROME:** Argentine forward Giovanni Simeone has joined Napoli on loan for the rest of the season from Verona, the two clubs announced on Thursday. The 27-year-old, the son of Atletico Madrid coach Diego Simeone, is coming off his most prolific season in Serie A after scoring 17 goals for Verona last term. The deal could become permanent next summer for a fee of 12 million euros (\$12.2 million) if certain conditions are met, according to Italian media. Only Ciro Immobile, Dusan Vlahovic and Lautaro Martinez scored more goals in Serie A last season than Simeone. Napoli, who lost Lorenzo Insigne and club record scorer Dries Mertens in the close season, are also reportedly close to completing a move for Sassuolo forward Giacomo Raspadori. (AGENCIES)

New manager Humagain eyes win in Bangladesh friendly

The former Three Star boss says he got the coaching role earlier than he expected.



Nepal acting football coach Pradip Humagain meets the press in Kathmandu on Thursday.

SPORTS BUREAU  
KATHMANDU, AUG 18

Newly appointed Nepal national team acting coach Pradip Humagain said that he would start on-field training from Friday to prepare the team for an international friendly against Bangladesh scheduled for September 27 in Kathmandu. "We had theoretical training today [Thursday], the practical training will begin from tomorrow," said Humagain during a media briefing at ANFA headquarters in Sattobato. Humagain has already called 40 players for the friendly including 10 senior players expelled by Kuwaiti coach Abdullah Almutairi, who is currently on holiday, owing to a dispute over accommodation facilities. "I am not in the place to talk about (those) players," said Humagain regarding

their exclusion by Almutairi. "My concentration is on preparing the team for the Bangladesh friendly. We will not take the game just as friendly but do our best to win the game," said the former Three Star coach who obtained American citizenship a couple of years ago. "I thank All Nepal Football Association for entrusting me with crucial responsibility of the national team," said the AFC 'A' licence holder who became the surprise choice of the newly elected ANFA executive committee to look over the team against the likes of many senior and experienced coaches. "Getting the national team coaching job was a bit surprising for me as it came earlier than my expectations. However, I was already ready for the position," said Humagain who was sacked by Lalitpur City FC in the

Nepal Super League last year after four matches following a run of poor results. "I don't know why ANFA chose me. I have huge respect for the other coaches of the country. They have huge potential. I request them to visit the training and share their knowledge so that we can come up with some innovative ideas," he said. "I felt that Nepali football is at a difficult juncture now and accepted the coaching role as soon as I was offered." Humagain also said that the role at the national team was a natural journey as a coach rather than a challenge. "It's a journey and a process of life. I have neither taken it as a challenge nor do I feel pressure," he added. "Now I will focus on reducing the team from a group of 40 players very soon. Though it seems that we have plenty of preparation time for the game, the fact is that there was no domestic football for a long time." Humagain also said that he would start a new culture of welcoming fans on the training ground every Wednesday from September. "We want the fans and all stakeholders to encourage the team," Humagain said, adding that goalkeeping coach Binod Dangol and assistant coach Yugal Kishor Rai were nominated for the post as per his advice to the football governing body. Regarding recalling more than half a dozen of Nepali international players, who flew to Australia in the past couple of months for better opportunities, Humagain said that he had talked with them directly or indirectly. "I don't think they are in the situation to return back to Nepal anytime soon," he said.



Rama Singh, the first captain of Nepali national women's football team that played the first ever official international football match against Hong Kong in 1989 AFC Women's Championship, speaks at Sports Dialogue in Kathmandu on Thursday. Singh says women's football has improved in recent days but it is still not rewarding financially.

Bayern Munich and Dortmund already setting the pace in Bundesliga

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BERLIN, AUG 18

Bayern Munich has made such an impressive start to the season that few if any expect Borussia Dortmund or any other challenger to be able to keep up. The two rivals are the only teams remaining with 100% records after two games of the Bundesliga, where they already occupy the places they had at the end of last season—first and second. Bayern lead due to a superior goal difference after racking up six in their opening win at Eintracht Frankfurt and two more in last weekend's comfortable victory over Wolfsburg. The Bavarian powerhouse

next visit Bochum on Sunday, where they hope for more target practice against a team who lost both of games. Dortmund, who are banking on a mix of youth and experience for the new season, overcame tough rivals Bayer Leverkusen and Freiburg. Edin Terzic's team next host promoted Werder Bremen on Saturday. Bayern and Dortmund don't play each other until the ninth round on the weekend of October 8. Bayern are going for a record extending 11th consecutive league title since Dortmund last won it in 2012. Former Bayern great Lothar Matthaus doesn't anticipate a change after paying tribute to sporting direc-

The two rivals are the only teams remaining with perfect records after two rounds.

tor Hasan Salihamidzic for a busy summer of transfer activity. Matthaus says the squad is strong enough to challenge for the Champions League. "Based on the performances we've seen so far and my gut feeling, I think that Bayern, with this team and this

spirit, can once again have an important say when it comes to winning the most important European club trophy," Matthaus said in a column for Germany's Sky Sport. Bayern saw top-scorer Robert Lewandowski depart for Barcelona, but brought in Senegal star Sadio Mane, Dutch defender Matthijs de Ligt, Ajax stars Noussair Mazraoui and Ryan Gravenberch, and highly rated French talent Mathys Tel. Franz Beckenbauer, another former Bayern great, struggled to contain his excitement after seeing Bayern's opening game in Frankfurt. "I'll hold off congratulations for the title. But I hadn't seen such desire, such a performance in a long time," Beckenbauer told the Bild tabloid.

Dortmund are focusing on their own team and results. Sporting director Sebastian Kehl said he had watched Bayern's opening game in Frankfurt but that it had caused "little excitement" in his household. Kehl, who took over from predecessor Michael Zorc after last season, has overseen another summer of rebuilding in Dortmund. Top-scorer Erling Haaland is gone, replaced first by Sebastien Haller from Ajax, then Anthony Modeste from Cologne after Haller was found to have a testicular tumor. Dortmund also signed Germany attacker Karim Adeyemi and his national team teammates Niko Schlotterbeck and Niklas Sule for

the defence. But existing players like Marco Reus, Jude Bellingham, and youngsters Youssef Moukoko and Jamie Bynoe-Gittens are just as important. Moukoko and Bynoe-Gittens both scored in Dortmund's come-from-behind win in Freiburg last week, and Dortmund extended the 18-year-old Bynoe-Gittens' contract on Tuesday. Edin Terzic is back to coach the team following Marco Rose's inconsistent spell in charge last season. Terzic led Dortmund to the German Cup title in his first stint in 2021. After last Friday's win in Freiburg, he's also the first Dortmund coach to win nine games in a row.

HOROSCOPE

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

Today's skies elevate your mind while putting you in a social and curious mood. These vibes are perfect for catching up with old friends, so be sure to check in with your nearest and dearest when you have some free time.

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

You'll feel centered and in control of your surroundings today. This cosmic climate will give you a chance to understand the world around you in a new light, helping you master any tasks or obstacles that may fall into your lap.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21) \*\*\*\*

Your dreams may be action-packed and emotionally intense. Take a moment to regroup and center as you stir from your slumber to help shake off any intense encounters. Luckily, the day will help you reclaim your focus with ease.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22) \*\*\*

Your mind may feel a bit busier than usual today. This luminary placement will ask you to take a logical approach toward sorting through your feelings. Unfortunately, it could cause you to struggle with the idea of confrontation.

**LEO** (July 23-August 22) \*\*\*

Try not to get too sucked into your social media pages today. Though you'll be eager to converse with your nearest and dearest, it could cause trouble if you're not able to stay on task at work. Be sure to open your heart to others.

**VIRGO** (August 23-September 22) \*\*\*\*

Though the weekend is almost here, you'll have plenty of work to keep yourself busy with. Luckily, this luminary displacement will elevate your clarity and efficiency, allowing you to complete any tasks on your daily calendar.

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

The world will feel alive with more sparkle and excitement than usual. You'll be more sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of others. Keep an eye out for any energy vampires in your midst, leaning into the people who lift you up.

**SCORPIO** (October 23-November 21) \*\*\*

Your decision-making skills will benefit from a nice boost. Though you'll still want to weigh your options before making important choices, your ability to understand your options with more clarity can help you move forward boldly.

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

The sweet smell of love will seem to linger in the air today. Don't feel guilty about indulging in a bit of flirting. However, you'll want to keep tabs on your connection to reality, no matter how high the vibes feel today.

**CAPRICORN** (December 22-January 19) \*\*\*\*

Under today's cosmic landscape, you'll be hyper-focused on completing your professional tasks. Luckily, this cosmic climate will also elevate your ability to multitask and move quickly, helping the hours pass quickly at work.

**AQUARIUS** (January 20-February 18) \*\*\*

A playful energy will find you today! This luminary placement will also elevate your aura, which could attract a fiery new fling. Your voice will travel far later tonight, so remember to speak with kindness under today's skies.

**PISCES** (February 19-March 20) \*\*\*

Your heart and mind will work as a team today. Though this luminary placement will put you in a nursing and compassionate mood, try not to give too much of your energy to anyone who might take advantage of you.

CROSSWORD

**ACROSS**

1 Portended  
6 Goldfish  
10 — and kin  
14 Romance, in Rome  
15 Corrida shouts  
16 Ibsen heroine  
17 Authentic  
18 One engaged in contemplation  
20 Autographs  
22 Duck out from under  
23 Switch positions  
24 Drone  
25 Brainless  
29 Extend coverage  
34 Sister's clothes  
35 Gives temporarily  
36 Molasses-based drink  
37 Sunblock additive  
38 Bandleader  
Count —  
39 Slugger — Ruth  
40 Ostrich look-alike  
41 Asked a question  
42 Fuel tanker  
43 Not schooled  
45 Slick  
46 Half a couple  
47 Luau fare  
48 Fast horses

**DOWN**

1 Indonesian island  
2 Ominous sign  
3 Tootsies  
4 Severeid of the news  
5 Motor city  
6 Searches high and low  
7 Sheltered  
8 Tulip colors  
9 Tire pressure meas.  
10 Rascals  
11 Small amount  
12 Stepped on  
13 Mad Hatter guest  
19 They're almost grown  
21 Midwest st.  
24 Linger  
25 Sea World whale  
26 Eagle's gripper  
27 WWII movie  
staple (hyph.)

**PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED**

O	V	A	L	B	A	D	F	L	O	S	S
M	A	X	I	O	L	A	F	R	I	G	H
E	D	I	E	T	O	N	I	A	G	R	E
G	E	N	S	A	N	E	R	C	H	E	A
A	R	G	U	I	N	G	M	I	T	T	
	C	A	Y		I	N	V	A	S	I	O
R	E	A	L	M	C	R	E	E	L	B	R
E	T	N	A	P	R	E	S	S	D	I	E
D	O	N	T	O	O	N	S	P	A	S	S
O	N	E	T	O	O	N	E	D	O	M	
	W	A	L	K		P	E	E	P	I	N
Y	E	S	E	S	I	N	E	P	T	R	I
O	C	T	E	T	T	U	T		B	O	L
G	R	A	Z	E	E	T	A	T	A	N	O
A	U	G	E	R		S	L	Y	M	Y	N

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28 Slapstick missile	47 "Baloney!"
29 PC button	48 Rocket
30 Sooner city	trajectories
31 Eurasian range	49 Gather in, as crops
32 Yokos	50 Church part
33 Common abrasive	51 Sour pickle
35 Flog	52 — of Wight
38 Fens	53 Former Atlanta stadium
39 Profile	54 Hornet kin
41 Prize money	55 Winter woe
42 Famed Shakespearean actor	56 Lascivious glance
44 Walked slowly	58 San Francisco hill
45 Tibetan gazelle	

SUDOKU

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

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★



## Salman Rushdie attacker ‘surprised’ the author survived

Matar, charged with attempted murder and assault, said he had only read ‘a couple pages’ of ‘The Satanic Verses’.

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
MAYVILLE, NEW YORK

The man charged with stabbing Salman Rushdie on a lecture stage in western New York said in an interview that he was surprised to learn the accomplished author had survived the attack.

Speaking to the New York Post from jail, Hadi Matar said he decided to see Rushdie at the Chautauqua Institution after he saw a tweet last winter about the writer’s planned appearance.

## Rushdie suffered a damaged liver and severed nerves in an arm and an eye.

“I don’t like the person. I don’t think he’s a very good person,” Matar told the newspaper. “He’s someone who attacked Islam. He attacked their beliefs, the belief systems.”

Matar, 24, said he considered late Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini “a great person” but wouldn’t say whether he was follow-

ing a fatwa, or edict, issued by Khomeini in Iran in 1989 that called for Rushdie’s death after the author published “The Satanic Verses.”

Iran has denied involvement in the attack. Matar, who lives in Fairview, New Jersey, said he hadn’t had any contact with Iran’s Revolutionary Guard. He told the Post he had only read “a couple pages” of “The Satanic Verses.”

Rushdie, 75, suffered a damaged liver and severed nerves in an arm and an eye, according to his agent, in the attack Friday. His agent, Andrew Wylie, said his condition has improved, and he is on the road to recovery.

Matar, who is charged with attempted murder and assault, told the Post he took a bus to Buffalo the day before the attack and then took a Lyft to Chautauqua, about 40 miles (64 kilometres) away.

He bought a pass to the Chautauqua Institution grounds and then slept in the grass the night before Rushdie’s planned talk.

Matar was born in the US but holds dual citizenship in Lebanon, where his parents were born. His mother has told reporters in interviews that Matar came back changed from a visit to see his father in Lebanon in 2018. After that, he became moody and withdrew from his family, she said.

# Randy Rainbow, master satirist, vies with Goliaths for Emmy

In the guise of a TV reporter, Rainbow conducts mock interviews with clips of his targets before launching into a bespoke song.

LYNN ELBER  
LOS ANGELES

If Randy Rainbow is adored by the legendary Carol Burnett, and he is, what flimsy excuse could TV academy voters have to deny him an Emmy for his fourth nomination?

Rainbow, who has raised musical parody to a political-satire art form, is again David facing Goliath. His competition in the short-form series category includes shows from James Corden, Stephen Colbert and Seth Meyers.

Corden’s “Carpool Karaoke: The Series” has nabbed the award the past three years. Does Rainbow see the British actor-comedian as his chief nemesis?

“Nemesis is a strong word,” Rainbow replied, waiting a perfectly timed beat: “Enemy,” he said, tongue-in-cheek. “No, I’m a big James Corden fan, so it’s been an honour to share the category with him. They could throw it to the little guy every once in a while.”

It’s true that the self-described little guy doesn’t have a network or its resources to draw on. But his YouTube videos—typically merciless, fearless and peppy roasts of conservative politicians and policies—have racked up more than a half-billion views, and he’s amassed 3 million-plus social media followers.

“He’s a genius,” Burnett said of Rainbow. “His lyrics are right up there with Stephen Sondheim....In fact, Steve said he’s one of the best lyricists around today. I mean, that’s a quote from Sondheim, and that’s from the master himself.”

The late Sondheim said just that. John Legend and Lin-Manuel Miranda are among Rainbow’s many other prominent admirers.

His latest Emmy nomination is for “Gay,” which takes on Florida’s GOP governor and the new law he championed that bans lessons on sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through third grade. The award will be given on September 3 as part of the creative arts Emmy ceremony that precedes the September 12 main awards show.

“It’s my send-up, tribute I guess you could call it, to Ron DeSantis and his ‘Don’t Say Gay’ bill,” Rainbow said, using the title bestowed by its critics. “That video obviously has a lot of meaning, and I was very proud that it made such an impact. It was nice to be recognised for that one.”



Randy Rainbow arrives at the Creative Arts Emmy Awards in 2019, in Los Angeles.

But it’s the desire to entertain, not punditry, that drives his career, he said.

“I didn’t get into this because of an interest in politics. I’m certainly more interested in politics now than I was when I started doing YouTube videos 11 years ago,” he said, attributing the shift to his own maturity and the times.

“But I try to stay true to my initial intent, which is only to be amusing and bring a little levity to these situations which are otherwise anything but light,” he said. “I think that that’s the reason that it continues to resonate with people and why people still get a kick out of my stuff.”

The escapism of make-believe is what helped sustain Rainbow—his real family name—as a shy and bullied youngster, along with the unstinting love of his mother, Gwen, and the grandmother he called Nanny. The three of them shared a passion for music, and Rainbow credits Nanny’s caustic humour as another key influence.

When he hit adolescence, Gwen Rainbow accepted without hesitation that her son was gay. In his touching and lively new memoir, “Playing With Myself,” Rainbow recalls his mom’s

reassurance that she “loved her gay friends.”

“I certainly didn’t remember ever meeting them,” Rainbow writes. “I mean, I’m gay five minutes and suddenly my mother’s Liza Minnelli at Studio 54?”

His musician-father was “reasonably tolerant,” Rainbow says in the book. But Gerry Rainbow dismissed young Randy’s early artistic efforts, telling him he’d never earn a living “wearing wigs and making silly videos.”

So much for predictions, with Rainbow’s YouTube success just the start. He’s on the road with his national “The Pink Glasses Tour,” named for a favourite accessory (and a song he co-wrote with composer Alan Menken). His latest album, “A Little Brains, a Little Talent,” includes duets with Bernadette Peters and Patti LuPone, Broadway stars he’d long admired from afar.

Rainbow still runs a lean video operation. The studio is in his two-bedroom New York City apartment, “where all the magic happens,” he said during a recent Zoom interview, gesturing at the modest space. A producer, arranger and musicians tailor songs to Rainbow’s specifications.



Hadi Matar, 24, arrives for an arraignment in the Chautauqua County Courthouse in Mayville, New York, on August 13.

## ‘Three Minutes’, a heartbreaking celluloid memorial

Shot in the Polish town of Nasielsk, the documentary’s story is remarkable because the majority of the town’s Jews were eventually murdered by the Nazis.

JOCELYN NOVECK

What gets you, deep in the gut, are the smiles. The broad, awkward, sometimes silly smiles of people on an unremarkable day in an unremarkable town in 1938 Poland, fascinated by this new thing called a movie camera and oblivious to the fact that one day, this amateur travel movie will become a devastating historical artefact.

Many documentaries tell vital and poignant stories. Only a few, though, simultaneously make as urgent an argument for the existence of filmmaking itself as does Bianca Stigter’s

## The film is based on some three minutes of 16mm footage taken in 1938.

“Three Minutes: A Lengthening,” a heartbreaking work based on some three minutes of 16mm footage taken by a tourist who himself had no idea what he was capturing—no idea that in a few years, nearly everyone he filmed would be dead.

David Kurtz, an American Jew, was making a “grand tour” of Europe’s big cities but also stopping in Nasielsk, the town 30 miles (50 kilometres) north of Warsaw, where he was born and lived as a child. He had a new camera for the trip and tried it out on some 150 Jewish villagers on an August day—milling in a square, spilling out of a synagogue, gathering near a grocery shop or inside a cafe. Young boys in caps, old bearded men, girls with long braids—they eagerly follow the camera, curious and amused by the strange contraption.

The story these three minutes tells is remarkable only because of what happened soon after: All Jews were



A scene from the film ‘Three Minutes: A Lengthening’.

rounded up and expelled a year later from the town and, save a lucky few, eventually murdered by the Nazis at the Treblinka death camp. This amateur travelogue becomes, then, not only a historical document—a very rare film of prewar Jewish town life in Poland—but also a memorial.

The story of the film’s discovery is remarkable in itself. The footage, mostly in colour, was discovered by Kurtz’s grandson, Glenn, in a closet in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, in 2009. He sent it to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, which had it restored and digitised only a month before its deteriorating condition would have rendered it unrecoverable. The degrading celluloid is a constant reminder of the fragility of the life it records.

Several years later, director Stigter came across Glenn Kurtz’s book, “Three Minutes in Poland: Discovering a Lost World in a 1938 Family Film,” his own four-year investigation. She

says she watched the film and wondered: “Could you make those three minutes longer, to keep the past in the present?” (The film, Stigter’s directorial debut, is co-produced by her husband, Oscar-winning filmmaker Steve McQueen.)

The result is just that: A lengthening, multiplying these three minutes by about 20 times, explaining and exploring and elaborating. “They say one picture is worth 1,000 words,” intones narrator Helena Bonham Carter. “But before that phrase makes sense, you need to know what you’re looking at.”

The film starts with the footage in full. The men and women and boys and girls in the square grin and offer awkward waves. Others pour out of the carved synagogue doors. For a few seconds inside a cafe, curious crowds stare through windows. A woman calls out from the doorway of a grocery store. Who is she? Stigter investigates.

## Marvel’s She-Hulk hopes Disney+ fans like her when she’s angry

Jen Walters, played by Tatiana Maslany, gains powers from Bruce Banner (original Hulk, played by Mark Ruffalo).

ROLLO ROSS

WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

‘She-Hulk: Attorney at Law’ is the latest Marvel Comics superhero to get the TV series treatment.

Tatiana Maslany stars as Jen Walters, who struggles to embrace her Hulk-like superpowers and instead wants to continue her life as a high-powered attorney.

Maslany, though, wishes Marvel fans don’t see it as “the female superhero show” when it begins streaming on Walt Disney Co’s Disney+ on Thursday.

“Why do we like hit it over the head that it’s like a female series or whatever?” she told Reuters in a virtual interview. “The whole idea of her existence is threatening, not even when she’s in a fighting mode,” she added.

The show features several scenes with either media or male online trolls criticising She-Hulk for her very existence.

Maslany’s character gains Hulk powers from cousin Bruce Banner (the original Hulk and an Avenger, played by Mark Ruffalo), who mentors her on being a superhero. She is also put in charge of her law firm’s superpower division, allowing the show to bring in a slew of Marvel Universe cameos.

However, it’s not all about law, cam

eos and superpowers.

“To me, it’s the like really kind of mundane, human moments that we get to experience with somebody who has superpowers that make it so special and the thing I found funniest and kind of most engaging and like compelling about the show was like just seeing Jen at a family dinner or like trying to learn to swipe-date,” Maslany said.

— Reuters



Cast members Tatiana Maslany and Mark Ruffalo attend a premiere for the television series ‘She-Hulk: Attorney at Law,’ in Los Angeles, California, on Monday.