



THE KATHMANDU POST

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

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

Vol XXXII No. 160 | 8 pages | Rs.5
Saturday, July 27, 2024 | 12-04-2081

38.0° C 16.0° C
Janakpur Jomsom

With Palestinian deal and Ukrainian foreign minister's visit, Beijing shows its rising influence
China is now doing what US and Russia traditionally did.

HUIZHONG WU & DIDI TANG/AP
WASHINGTON, JULY 26

In consecutive days this week, China brokered a deal between rival Palestinian factions and hosted Ukraine's foreign minister at a moment when pressure is mounting on the country to negotiate an end to the grinding war there.

While it's unclear if the agreement between Hamas and Fatah will succeed where others have failed and there is little concrete progress towards peace in Ukraine, China emerged a winner, further cementing its role as a diplomatic force on the global stage, not just an economic powerhouse.

As Beijing and Washington vie for influence around the world, China is increasingly playing a role that had previously been the domain of world powers like the US and Russia. Earlier this month, Western countries called some of China's activities worrying and labelled Beijing a troublemaker. But the events of this week—and the China-brokered deal last year to re-establish relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia—show that international players are seeking Beijing's help, an acknowledgment that it is a diplomatic force to reckon with.

"China is now offering itself as a broker on the global stage, and countries are responding," said Carla Freeman, a senior expert for China at the United States Institute of Peace.

>> Continued on page 2



Refugee Olympic Team's boat parades along the Seine river in Paris during the opening ceremony of the 2024 Summer Olympics on Friday.

Three-party taskforce 'near deal' on transitional justice law amendments

Activists, victims decry reduced sentencing citing threats to judicial independence.

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, JULY 26

The three-party mechanism formed to iron out differences on the amendment bill to Enforced Disappearances Enquiry, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act has decided to submit its report to the top leaders of three major political parties—the Nepali Congress, the CPN-UML and

the Maoist Centre—but only after final rounds of consultations with the stakeholders.

A meeting of the mechanism comprising Ramesh Lekhak of the Nepali Congress, Mahesh Bartaula of the CPN-UML, and Janardan Sharma of the Maoist Centre, on Friday claimed that they are very close to an 'agreement in principle'.

On Monday, the mechanism will

hold discussions with Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Ajay Kumar Chaurasiya, secretary at the ministry, chairperson of the Law, Justice and Human Rights Committee of the lower house, and secretaries of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons.

>> Continued on page 2

Rate cuts, payment extension as Nepal moves to 'easing'

For the first time, central bank admits the country suffered an 'economic slowdown' in the past two consecutive years.

SANGAM PRASAIN
KATHMANDU, JULY 26

Nepal's private sector has been sailing in troubled waters.

The central bank responded to the problem experienced for the past two fiscal years by easing monetary policy and cutting rates to keep credit flowing. For the first time, the bank has admitted that the country suffered an "economic slowdown" for two consecutive years.

The private sector welcomed the monetary policy for the fiscal year 2024-25, unveiled by Nepal Rastra Bank Governor Maha Prasad Adhikari on Friday.

The policy aims to ramp up support for the economy, which has been slowing, said Adhikari. "The policy targets gradual economic recovery by controlling inflation, stabilising interest rates, and ensuring credit demand."

The central bank said monetary policy had transitioned to an "easing, cautious" mode to address the demand of the private sector, which is the driver of economic growth.

With easing measures, the central bank expects a double-digit private sector credit growth, increasing by 12.5 per cent year-on-year in 2024-25.

"The monetary policy is favourable for the private sector. It aims at economic recovery through productive use of pri-

vate-sector credit," said Chandra Dhakal, president of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the apex private sector body.

The private sector pumped Rs5.27 trillion into the economy in the last fiscal year.

"There was a problem. Money had piled up in banks, and businesses were not getting it to invest. The policy has untied the knot."

The central bank said the private sector pumped Rs5.27 trillion into the economy in the last fiscal year, which ended on July 15. This accounts for 92 percent of Nepal's economy.

>> Continued on page 5



standard chartered

Scan, pay and go with QR Payments now using SC Mobile App

Download SC Mobile App now

*TSC Apply
*Payment facility available with Nepalgpay

Scan to download





SEAMASTER DIVER 300M
Co-Axial Master Chronometer

OFFICIAL TIMEKEEPER

At the Olympic and Paralympic Games Paris 2024, focus will be on the athletes striving for gold. Ma Long is a five-time Olympic winner and the reigning singles champion in Table Tennis, and will be hoping to extend his legacy on the greatest sporting stage. OMEGA is proud to support Ma and all the athletes as they pursue their dreams. For the 31st time in history, our role as Official Timekeeper will ensure precision and expert performance at the critical moments that count.



REGENCY WATCH • Annapurna Arcade, Durbar Marg
1 Durbar Mall, Thamsherku Center, Durbar Marg.
MGA International Pvt Ltd

Maoist Centre pulls out of Koshi government



Outgoing Maoist ministers with Chief Minister Karki (left) after resignation.

POST REPORT
BIRATNAGAR, JUL 26

The CPN (Maoist Centre) on Friday pulled out of the Koshi government.

Four ministers, including a state minister, of the party handed over their resignations to Chief Minister Hikmat Kumar Karki of the CPN-UML.

The Maoist Centre, however, has not withdrawn its support to the provincial government.

Maoist Centre provincial leader Indra Bahadur Angbo said their support for the government remains unchanged despite quitting the government.

“We remained in the government at the request of Chief Minister Karki. However, we were compelled to leave the government due to changes in the power dynamics at the centre,” he said.

On May 9, Karki of the CPN-UML was appointed chief minister of Koshi Province as per Article 168 (5) of the constitution.

From the Maoist Centre, Ganesh Prasad Uprety was the minister for physical infrastructure; Narayan Bahadur Magar the minister for forests, environment, and tourism; Rajendra Karki the minister of health and Bandana Jhangar the minister of state for forests, environment, and tourism in the government.

28 labourers rescued from India

BINAYA AAJAD
SIRAHA, JULY 26

A total of 28 labourers from Siraha and Dhanusha, who had been held hostage in Srinagar, India, for the past five months, have been rescued.

As many as 21 from Siraha and seven from Dhanusha were brought back to Nepal from India on Friday. A team led by Secretary Dinesh Bhattarai of the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare rescued them. They have been handed over to human trafficking control committees of respective districts.

According to the District Administration Office, Siraha, the individuals had gone to India for employment through agents and had been out of contact with their families for the past five months.

The human trafficking control committees will now hand over the labourers to their families. An investigation will be conducted into how they went and who sent them for employment, according to Rabindra Kumar Mahat, a section officer at the District Administration Office, Siraha.

“We will hand them over to their family members today,” Mahat told the Kantipur daily, the Post’s sister publication. “Immediately after that, an investigation will begin, and those involved will face the law.”

Families of five plane crash victims receive bodies

Lone survivor of Saurya Airlines crash, Captain Manish Ratna Shakya, has been shifted from ICU to general ward following improvement in his health.

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, JULY 26

Kin of five out of 18 killed in the Saurya Airlines crash have received the bodies of their relatives as of Friday afternoon.

Relatives of some of the deceased have refused to receive the bodies demanding that the government and airlines finalise compensation and insurance issues first. The officials had planned to hand over the bodies after their postmortem was complete.

According to Deputy Superintendent of Police Amar Thapa of the Metropolitan Police Circle, Maharajgunj, the bodies of Uddhav Puri, Ashwin Niraula, Shyam Bindukar, co-pilot Sushant Katuwal, and Rajaram Acharya have been received by their relatives.

Most of the bodies were identified by Friday afternoon. However, there have been issues in identifying the severely charred bodies, according to doctors.

The Forensic Department called in doctors from Patan Hospital, Dhulikhel Hospital, Bhaktapur Hospital and Pokhara to assist with the identification process. A large team of doctors worked to identify the victims as quickly as possible, according to officials.

Forensic experts said that establishing the identities of air crash victims is a complex, time-consuming process.



On Friday afternoon, family members on TUTH premises crowd an ambulance carrying one of the bodies from Wednesday's air crash.

Dr Gopal Chaudhary, head of the forensic department at the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, said

initiatives are taken to hand over the identified bodies to their relatives.

A total of 18 people, including a

crew member, were killed when a Pokhara-bound 9N-AME aircraft of Saurya Airlines crashed immediately

after takeoff at the Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu on Wednesday morning.

Saurya Airlines officials have committed that the company would provide as much support as possible to the victims' kin.

“We assure the victims' families that we will provide all possible support and assistance,” Saurya Airlines Chairman Dipak Kumar Pokharel said in a statement on Friday.

Meanwhile, Captain Manish Ratna Shakya, who was injured in the crash, has been moved from the intensive care unit (ICU) to a general ward.

Shakya is the lone survivor of Wednesday's crash.

Professor Dr Meena Thapa, director of the Kathmandu Medical College and Teaching Hospital, said that Shakya had been shifted to a general ward following improvement in his health.

Shakya was being treated in the ICU for observation after receiving initial treatment in the emergency section. The hospital said Captain Shakya's condition is now stable and improving.

According to Thapa, Shakya is being monitored by neurologists and orthopaedic specialists.

“He has injuries to his face, eyes, nose, and head. Additionally, one of his spinal bones and three ribs on the left side are fractured,” she said, adding that they were still undecided on whether to perform a surgery on him.

Sign language chatbot among Singapore innovations to get funding support from new programme

Public transport users from deaf community will get help with directions at Chinatown MRT station from a chatbot that communicates in sign language.

THE STRAITS TIMES
SINGAPORE, JULY 26

Public transport users from the deaf community will soon be able to get help with directions at Chinatown MRT station from a chatbot that communicates in sign language.

Singapore start-up FingerDance is deploying Silvia – or Sign Language Virtual Assistant – at a kiosk in the station, in a collaboration with SBS Transit.

In response to queries that are typed or spoken, it will provide real-time answers in text and sign language. Queries cannot be made via sign language.



Silvia is trained to answer questions most frequently asked by commuters, such as where the nearest bus stop is. It will also translate all MRT announcements into sign language.

“It’s just like ChatGPT... if ChatGPT had the capacity for sign language as well,” said FingerDance co-founder Gong He.

FingerDance is one of seven local start-ups that received funding from a new Technology for Sustainable Social Impact (TS2) accelerator programme established by NUS Enterprise and the Singapore Centre for Social Enterprise, which committed \$3.5 million to growing tech-based

social enterprise start-ups.

The programme provides support for such early- and growth-stage start-ups that use technology to try to solve community issues in Singapore.

On July 25, the seven start-ups presented their products to industry experts and venture capital firms at the TS2 Demo Day.

The programme was open for applications at the start of 2024 and the start-ups were chosen based on team dynamics, uniqueness of the solution, potential depth and breadth of social impact in Singapore, potential for international scaling, and sustainability of business model.

“The TS2 accelerator programme was birthed from a vision to nurture the next generation of social impact entrepreneurs, who leverage technology as the cornerstone for businesses that are both purpose-driven and financially sustainable,” said National University of Singapore deputy president Chen Tsuhan.

The programme will nurture 16 start-ups over two years, with the second batch of start-ups to be announced in 2025. Each of them will receive grant funding of up to \$95,000, as well as access to mentors, investors and impact professionals to help scale their businesses and amplify their social impact.

The programme will have a structured curriculum and a development plan tailored to the needs of each start-up.

Aside from FingerDance, the inaugural batch of start-ups also includes Tech Up Advance, an education solutions provider that aims to help students better understand and develop



PHOTO: NUS ENTERPRISE/THE STRAITS TIMES VIA ANN

Students are taught basic concepts of programming through a mini-game by Tech Up Advance.

an interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Stem).

Through mini-games on the GoTechUp website, students will explore basic concepts of robotics to connect what they learn in classrooms with real life.

Tech Up Advance co-founder and chief financial officer Sulfa Lim said a Primary 5 pupil once asked her why he had to learn about angles when all he wanted was to draw comics. “His simple question exposed a massive

disconnect between what we teach versus what’s needed for the future,” she said.

In one mini-game, students are tasked to collect potions and drive a car into a portal. To get the car moving, they have to drag and drop a sequence of instructions that control the speed and tyre direction.

Noting that different schools have their own curricula, Tech Up Advance co-founder and chief executive Ainaa Rosli said that GoTechUp should not

replace but, rather, be used to supplement each school’s main curriculum.

While the start-up currently recommends mini-games based on the school’s curriculum, teachers should eventually be comfortable enough to pick and choose the mini-game to suit their lesson plans.

“Ultimately, if (students) start having a good fundamental Stem (understanding), they will have a lot more opportunities and options,” Ms Ainaa said.

www.kathmandupost.com



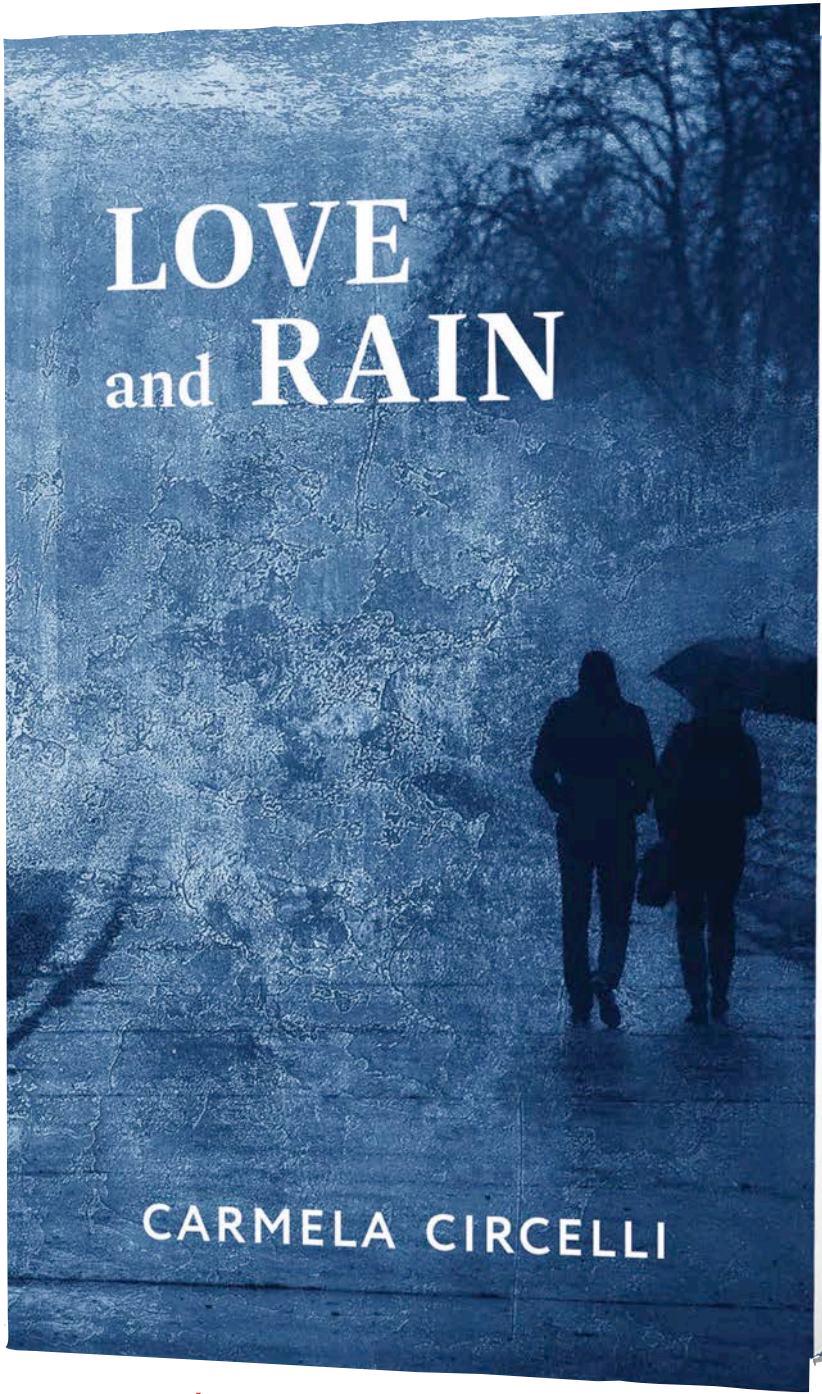
THE KATHMANDU POST
WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

Know Nepal with the country's most *trusted* English *news portal*.

Politics. Economy. Sports. Health. Culture. Fashion. Food.
Interviews. Videos. Puzzles. And much more...



Log on to get the latest news, views and analysis from Nepal.



Love and Rain
Author: Carmela Circelli
Publisher: Guernica Editions
Year: 2023

Violating the power of love

In ‘Love and Rain,’ Carmela Circelli explores the complex emotions of love and betrayal, weaving a narrative that spans generations and political landscapes.

FATHIMA M

Carmela Circelli’s ‘Love and Rain’ is a gorgeous novel, so much so that critiquing it from a literary point of view feels like violating its beauty. Circelli has packed and unpacked much in this novel—history, entangled relationships, human fragility, love and relationships, beauty and resilience.

Somehow, it feels like reading John Fowles’s novel ‘The French Lieutenant’s Woman’. Sarah’s sheer beauty, resilience, and vulnerability in Fowles’s book and Mara in Circelli’s novel are hard to overlook. Still, this entanglement is an emotion, not something tangible and understandable in words.

A good response to this novel would be a poem, something that all lovers of love and literature can relate to in their peculiar ways. This is not to romanticise the “sadness” these two characters feel. On the contrary, it’s about the beauty of resilience that surpasses every otherworldly experience.

Even though it’s hard to categorise, this novel is not about romantic love nor about failed relationships. That kind of realism is never a personal preference for me.

One of the most intriguing questions that the novel evokes is betrayal. Is betrayal an absence of love, or is it possible for betrayal to exist alongside love? There are no concrete answers to this age-old question, but the contradiction remains an oxymoron, no matter what. Love and betrayal might have the ability to co-exist together, but the violence of betrayal can never be fixed by love.

The novel begins with the world of Chiara, a young woman in her thirties who is grieving over the loss of her relationship with her boyfriend, Daniel. But this is not just that—it feels like she is grieving for all her ancestors, and as if she can feel the pain of separation in her bones.

It is not just the separation from Daniel that is bothering her; she feels an unfamiliar

pain in her bones as if an entire history is stored in them. Chiara, a professional philosopher, is not interested in the professionalism of philosophy, so she leaves the academic world behind and starts working in a flower shop. That’s where she unravels the history of her lost mother, her lost love, and the betrayal her mother endured at the hands of her father.

At the backdrop is the political move-

ment and the resistance that is labelled as terrorism. The question of who is a terrorist has become a crucial question. When Chiara learns about her family history, her mother and her roots, she comprehends her pain in a better way. She realises how she relied on sex to feel connected to a lover, even though she remained disconnected throughout the relationship.

The narrative structure moves back and forth, and we get to know about Mara and her sister later in the novel in the form of letters that Paolo hands over to Chiara. She realises that it is only by making peace with your pain that people can move ahead in all the lives they might have.

The backdrop of the sea is deeply saddening, as much as it is inevitable. The intersection of life and death lies there. The sea is always lively, even during the moments of death elsewhere. Mara’s silence was a response to her lover’s betrayal. And during her moments of silence, she conversed only with the sea.

Her silence was for her fellow humans, but she found a way to speak to nature. Mara and the sea both have been betrayed by humans and they both resist in their way. This nature-woman connection encapsulated against the backdrop of love, betrayal, and resistance makes it a highly intense read.

“I was sure Mara could hear the world even from our shore. Its grief and laments hounded her, pushing her, always, further in. At least that’s what I imagined, I imagined that she was done with whatever it was that had happened to her, done with the inevitable harm humans cause each other, done with the indifference of the fates, their tangled weave of beauty and horror. She wanted none of it. She wanted to drown it out. She wanted to wash it away. In this, the sea was her only ally, smashing and clearing. In this, even I was an adversary, and love, a fractured thing she had discarded” (190).

Even though much has been said about love and heartbreaks, the real intensity of love and the pain of betrayal can never be captured by words. Circelli, that way, presents us with a highly complex and delicate character through the character of Mara. Mara doesn’t just respond to the pain of betrayal but also to the beauty of resilience and dignity.

But the novel is not just a quest for a lost mother or lost love. It is about nations betraying their own people and people betraying the land that they call home. The violence of betrayal surpasses the power of love.



Fathima is an assistant professor of English at Jyoti Nivas College, Bangalore.



‘Where is Nepal?’ Solo Exhibition



Gallery Mcube invites you to the opening reception of a solo exhibition entitled ‘WHERE IS NEPAL?’ by Phil Robinson an artist from the USA. This event has a lot to offer for all art enthusiasts.

When: July 28
Where: Gallery Mcube, Mitra Road
Time: 5:00 pm
Entry: RSVP at 9860028387

Runaway Career Connect

KEC Entrance Education is hosting an event featuring musical performances by Sabin Rai and The Pharoh. The event’s major highlight will be food, game stalls, scholarships and college placements.

Where: Annapurna Hotel, Durbar Marg
When: July 27
Time: 10:00 am
Entry: Free for plus 2 graduates

Kitab Jatra 2081

An annual event symbolising and exemplifying the scenario of reading culture in Nepal, the Kitab Jatra is hosting authors, publishers and speakers from diverse backgrounds. It will feature debates with policymakers and international delegates.

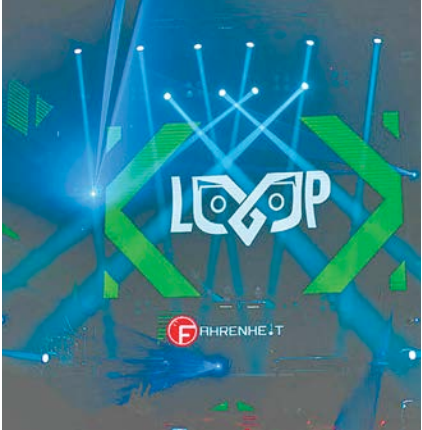
Where: Army Officer’s Club, Sundhara
When: August 2 to August 3
Time: 9:00 am onwards
Entry: Free

Magical Tarot Reading session

Alpine Crystal is organising an event on tarot reading sessions with expert tarot reader Tarotwith Samunnati. The event will offer insights and guidance on various aspects of life, including career, relationships and personal growth.

Where: Alpine Crystals, Jawalakhel
When: July 27
Time: 12:00 pm to 2:30 pm
Entry: Rs400 for 10 mins reading
Rs600 for 20 mins reading

GBOB Live at Club Fahrenheit



GBOB is going LIVE at Club Fahrenheit this Friday, August 2nd. On his Birthday, he is coming to perform his hits.

When: August 2
Where: Club Fahrenheit, Keshar Mahal Marg
Time: 6:00 pm
Entry: RSVP at Club Fahrenheit’s social media

Free Eye CheckUp

Optical House is organising a free eye checkup for everyone. The checkup will offer eye services such as eye exams and a wide range of Frames and Lenses.

When: 28 July 2024
Where: Optical house, Chawwni, Padrauna, Kushinagar.

Time: 10:45 to 7:45 pm
Entry: Free

IELTS Mock Test

Interface Education Centre is conducting an IELTS Mock Test covering all four sections: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking, simulating the actual IELTS exam. The event will provide assistance to help improve English proficiency and prepare for the IELTS exam.

When: 28 July 2024
Where: Interface Education Centre, Devkota Road
Time: 11:00 am to 2:00 pm
Entry: Rs100

Special Training for +2 Students

LA GRANDEE International College offers special training sessions in AI,



Machine Learning, and Cyber Security. The sessions are especially aimed at +2 students.

When: July 18
Where: La Grandee International College
Time: 10:00 am
Entry: Free

Sales Summit



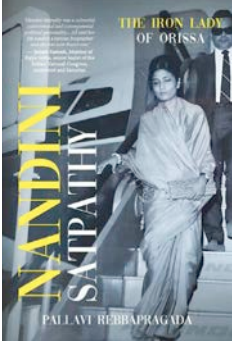
‘Sales Summit 2024’, is happening. After completing 7th edition of organising the event under diverse themes, the group is announcing the 8th edition with the theme “Innovate, Transform and Thrive”. Explore the day filled with Keynote sessions and dynamic panel discussions.

Where: Soaltee Hotel, Kathmandu
When: August 30
Entry: Rs9,990

BEST-SELLERS | NEW RELEASES

Fiction

- Dark Matter by Blake Crouch
- Summer Reading by Jenn McKinlay
- Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens
- The Camel Club by David Baldacci
- Kane and Abel - Jeffrey Archer



Nandini Satpathy: The Iron Lady of Orissa
Author: Pallavi Rebbapragada
Price: Rs1,438
Publisher: Simon & Schuster India

Pallavi Rebbapragada’s ‘Nandini Satpathy: The Iron Lady of Orissa’ resurrects the remarkable legacy of Odisha’s first woman Chief Minister, Nandini Satpathy. This compelling biography delves into Satpathy’s early resistance against British rule, her ascent as a prominent Rajya Sabha member, and her influential role as Information and Broadcasting Minister. Rebbapragada masterfully examines her complex relationship with Indira Gandhi, her transformative land reforms, and her bold stand against the tobacco mafia. With empathy and precision, the book also explores Satpathy’s political struggles and personal challenges. This biography focuses on political figures.

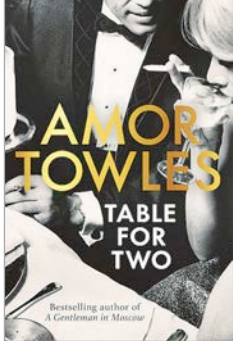
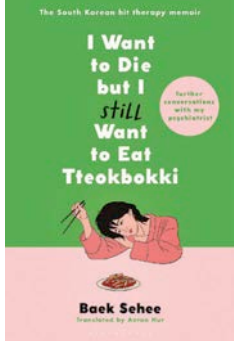


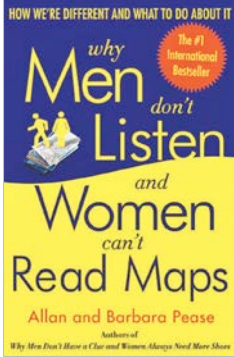
Table for Two
Author: Amor Towles
Price: Rs1,278
Publisher: Hutchinson

‘Table for Two’ by Amor Towles is a captivating collection featuring six short stories set in New York City, along with a novella that transports readers to 1938 Los Angeles. The New York stories, set around the turn of the millennium, delve into themes of ego, fleeting connections, and the intricacies of modern marriage. The novella, “Eve in Hollywood,” continues the story of Evelyn Ross from ‘Rules of Civility’, exploring her reinvention in Los Angeles through seven distinct perspectives. At the heart of this collection are the pivotal conversations held across dining tables, showcasing Towles’s profound understanding of human nature and relationships. Written with his trademark wit and elegance, ‘Table for Two’ is a delightful addition to Towles’s oeuvre.



I Want to Die but I Still Want to Eat Tteokbokki
Author: Baek Se-Hee
Price: Rs1,118
Publisher: Bloomsbury

Building on the poignant and insightful tone that resonated in her previous bestseller, Baek Se-Hee’s ‘I Want to Die but I Still Want to Eat Tteokbokki’ offers a deeper dive into her ongoing struggle with dysthymia. Expertly translated by International Booker Prize-winner Anton Hur, this memoir continues Baek’s raw and honest exploration of her psychiatric sessions and personal battles. Originally intended as a tool for introspection, Baek’s story has struck a global chord, particularly among young readers grappling with similar mental health challenges. Her unflinching portrayal of her internal conflicts during therapy sheds light on the arduous path to recovery.



Non-Fiction

- Why Men Don’t Listen and Women Can’t Read Maps by Allan and Barbara Pease
- Unlimited Power by Anthony Robbins
- Far From The Tree by Andrew Solomon
- Blue Ocean Strategy by W Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne
- Beyond Possible by NimsdaiPurja

EKTA BOOKS

A blend of mythology and modernity

'Rasa Lila', showing at The Nepal Art Council, reimagines the Mahabharata through contemporary eyes, challenging conventional norms and exploring the paradoxes of modern morality.

RISHIKA DHAKAL
KATHMANDU

According to Nietzsche, “Art helps us to know how to make things beautiful, as either creators or enjoyers; as the latter, we can be poets of our lives and give ourselves satisfaction and style, treating our own lives as a creative work and giving it aesthetic value as part of its ethical character. And this requires that we be autonomous individuals, free spirits, rejecting the restrictions that society and conventional morality seek to impose.”

The above paragraph is an extract from AC Grayling's book ‘The History of Philosophy’. The passage rightly encapsulates the essence of the ongoing exhibition at Nepal Art Council, ‘Rasa Lila: The Divine Dance.’

‘Rasa Lila’ embodies everything unconventional and unique. It doesn’t conform to typical norms but instead aligns with the authentic way an individual is likely to perceive things.

The artists behind the exhibition are Priyam Pradhan, Utsab BS Pradhan, Urza

Acharya, Binit Maharjan, Julian Shakya, Smarika Phuyal, Shristika Yonzon, and Shubi Lama, who hail from diverse disciplines.

The show is unlike any other exhibition in Kathmandu. For instance, the regular clay sculptures have been replaced by carbon steel sculptures and the use of jenga blocks, and the installed headphones act as a phone booth for the emotions embodied in the statues.

Moreover, the adjustment of light is done so skillfully that it creates the illusion of multiplying the presented figures, adding dynamism to its display.

As I perceived, the theme of the exhibition revolves around fusing the contemporary world with the mythological world of Mahabharata.

Jawaharlal Nehru, in his book ‘The Discovery of India’, mentions that myths provide insights into the thoughts and emotions of people throughout history, reflecting their aspirations, fears, and societal norms.

In a similar vein, with its aim to compare the myths of yesterday with today’s spectacle, the angles used in creating this exhibition represent contemporary



Visitors observing the painting of Devaki and the statue of the sleeping Krishna.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF SUSHIL KHAREL



perspectives, offering a fresh interpretation of timeless narratives such as Mahabharata itself.

One of the artists, Priyam Pradhan, who is ready to start his academic life abroad, said, “This exhibition marks the celebration of departure and acceptance of the fact that we will have to move away and find our footing in the world.”

Similar to his saying, the exhibition makes the spectators enter the world of Vraja, the highest domain of the heavenly world. Examining the atmosphere of the exhibition, the descriptions of the exhibit labels come to life, providing a sense of calmness and serenity as they begin their observation.

The story of the exhibition begins with Krishna dancing with the Gopis before he leaves to fulfil his duty of freeing his birth parents from the claws of Kamsa, his uncle and the tyrant ruler of Mathura.

While Krishna is fully absorbed in performing ‘Rasa Lila’, Shiva, along with his consort Parvati, arrives to participate in the dance. However, Shiva is restricted from participating. The lack of ‘Sakhibhav’—seeing onset as a companion or friend of the divine—prevents Shiva from joining in the celebration.

As somebody who was educated in an all-girls school, this particular instance transported me back to my school days, making me home-sick of the strong bond that I shared with my girlfriends.

Contrary to my current environment, which lacks that understanding and connection, especially with boys, this feeling of nostalgia gets well articulated in the concept of Sakibhav.

Adamant to participate in the zesty celebration, Shiva turns himself into Gopeshwor Mahadev, a beautiful maiden who can take part in the ‘Rasa Lila’.

With *ghungroo* tinkling in a feminine foot contrasted with the depiction of masculine dancing hands, the structure cleverly illustrates Gopeshwor Mahadev dancing with the Gopis.

The holy Yamuna river, flowing beside the beautiful Vraja, has symbolic meaning according to the way it is presented in the exhibition. The river is scattered with the jumbled letters of the names of the exhibition’s creators, hinting at civilization’s ever-flowing nature.

Just like the scattered letters represent the intertwined history, the river has long absorbed the ashes of people from various

backgrounds. This makes one realise that nature is not to be owned but to be appreciated and preserved.

The exhibition also represents Draupadi’s *vastraharan* (disrobing). In the dramatic episode of the Indian Epic, Draupadi, the wife of the Pandavas, is humiliated in the Kaurava court after the Pandavas lose a game of dice to the Kauravas.

As a punishment, the Kaurava prince Dushasana tries to disrobe Draupadi, but Lord Krishna provides her with an endless supply of cloth, preventing her from being stripped.

However, while Draupadi suffers indignity, her family members remain tight-lipped and do nothing on their part to save her from the plight she is facing.

The documentary titled ‘God of Small Things’ revolves around the inner turmoil of a woman.

A white saree symbolises Draupadi’s ordeal, and the ending of her saree after being saved by Lord Krishna is depicted in blue. A red light on the head of the statue represents Draupadi’s anger towards her family members. Similarly, to help spectators truly connect with Draupadi’s plight, a song by artist Smarika Phuyal has been installed in the exhibition, which spectators can listen to from headphones.

Rather than concentrating on the well-known discourse of Draupadi’s plight as a ‘Damsel in Distress’, the exhibition highlights a new perspective. It calls out the paradoxical nature of today’s people, who claim to uphold morals and ethics while frequently acting against these principles.

Likewise, blending contemporary fashion with classical mythology, the exhibition offers a fresh representation of the Pandavas. The innovative approach of representing the Pandava brothers with t-shirts of different colours is something that one rarely comes across in an exhibition.

The exhibition has also made a substantial effort to showcase the predicament of modern-day Draupadi through a documentary presentation.

Documentarian Urza Acharya outlines the theme of her documentary, “One cannot always dwell on happy moments. To enjoy the true embrace of delightful times, one must partake in the adventure of life, which has its challenges and less exciting aspects.”

The five-minute documentary titled ‘God of Small Things’ revolves around the inner turmoil of the protagonist, who is dressed in a pink dress with tinkling *ghungroos*.

She often pendulums between two extremes leaving a grey area. The grey area is marked with her being close with herself through the performance of mundane and small tasks.

“By fixing small things, I am confronted with my honest self, the small things end up fixing me too.”

In an era where a person’s identity is often recognised by great achievements attained through complying with the set standards of society, the documentary provides a respite from this routine.

It instead voices the perspective that the pursuit of greatness shouldn’t be one’s core conquest in life. There is a profound wholeness to be discovered in the mundane.

To sum up, from a philosophical perspective, the exhibition can be compared to Nietzsche’s pressing question, “How were we to find meaning and purpose in a post-religious world?”

Just like philosopher Heidegger developed a new approach to address Nietzsche’s question, the eight artists of this exhibition offer a fresh perspective on interpreting mythologies.

The eight artists in this exhibition do not reject religious traditions; instead, they provide contemporary insights that reinterpret and breathe new life into these narratives.

In this way, the exhibition serves as a modern response to age-old questions, blending classical themes with innovative approaches to offer viewers a deeper understanding of both past and present.

Rasa Lila: The Divine Dance
Where: Nepal Art Council, Babarmahal
Timings: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Entry: Free
Till August 3

English translation of Muluki Ain 1854 published

Vajra Books and Publications has come out with the English translation of Nepal’s first written law, drafted by Janga Bahadur Rana.

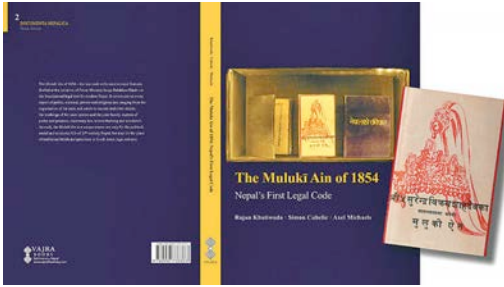


PHOTO: COURTESY OF VAJRA PUBLICATIONS

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU

Vajra Books and Publications has published the English translation and scientific analysis of the Muluki Ain, first drafted by Janga Bahadur Rana in 1854. This text, a major milestone for the archiving of Nepali historical documents, was translated by Rajan Khatiwoda, Simon Cubelic, and Axel Michaels, a team created in collaboration with Heidelberg University.

The first Muluki Ain was considered an important document not only in Nepali but also in South Asian history. It was created to replace sporadic regional law systems of various parts of the country and unify them through a single legal system.

Although the text is traditionally accredited to Janga Bahadur Rana, a fact our authors also acknowledge in this translation piece, it was most possibly drafted by a council of prominent

lawmakers.

The team behind this translated piece is especially dedicated to South Asian legal history. Khatiwoda completed his PhD on the Homicidal Law of 19th-century Nepal, based on various versions of the Muluki Ain. Cubelic, with his PhD in Hindu Legal Scriptures (Dharmashastra), and Michaels, a senior professor at Heidelberg University focusing on South Asian text culture and language, are also experts in this field.

The translation brings the various legislatures of 19th-century Nepal to the eye of a larger readership. Some highlights of the Muluki Ain are its highlighting of laws around caste and family systems, purity and sexuality, and punishment systems.

These punishment systems also include penalties for acts ranging from stealing, murder and other crimes, to smaller grievances, like punishments for spitting and farting.

The text acts as a time capsule for enthusiasts of early Rana history.

The authors believe that their text was primarily created to make Nepal’s first written law more accessible to scholars, local and Global, especially those interested in the legal and political systems of South Asia. Khatiwoda adds, “We believe that the book will assist scholars, researchers, and those with interest in related materials to comprehend the immediate social, economic, and political environment of South Asia and Nepal.”

Although initially published by Heidelberg University, Vajra Publications has now released the book to make it easily accessible to Nepalese and South Asian audiences.

Creators Mela 2024 kicks off in Kathmandu

The Mela features 19 lectures and interactive workshops designed to help aspiring creators grow their online presence.

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU

Organised by the US Embassy, the two-day Creators Mela 2024 has officially begun.

This digital conference, taking place at the Aloft Hotel in Kathmandu, is aimed to enhance the skills of both aspiring and established Nepali digital creators and influencers, empowering them to launch and grow their online presence or businesses.

Creators Mela 2024 features an impressive lineup of 19 lectures and interactive workshops combined with 12 main stage performances. Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in sessions covering crucial topics such as brand-building, monetisation, and mental health.

This year’s event has more performances and speakers than last year.

On Friday, there were sessions on Podcasting, growing social media presence across different platforms, leveraging AI for social media success, reaching social media success, art of visual storytelling, addressing social media regulations, attracting sponsors and Question and Answer sessions with Embassy Public Affairs Chief Garrett Wilkerson and Spokesperson Zehra



PHOTO: COURTESY OF US EMBASSY

Naqvi, while on the MainStage there were amazing sessions and performances by the artists.

Sessions and performances by the artists were also held. According to the organisers, over 500 content creators attended the event.

According to a statement issued by the US Embassy, “Last year, over 1,500 content creators attended the first-of-its-kind in-person event to network, experience the music festival-inspired main stage and

immersive creator zone, and enhance their skills through 17 sessions on topics like brand-building, financial literacy, and content development. This year, we have 19 interactive workshops.”

In a notable addition to this year’s program, several parliamentarians will join a session to address the concerns of content creators regarding social media regulations, providing a platform for dialogue and collaboration.