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## TODAY

### NATIONAL

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**Congress boss Sher Bahadur Deuba says the CPN-UML-led coalition that involves his party has no intention of weakening other parties. This government was not formed with a plan to weaken other parties, he said. Pg 3**

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**As Nepal's engagements with the US grew in the post-WWII era, collections of related official documents have ended up in the state archives of Nepal and the US, writes Pratyoush Onta. Pg 4**

### NEPSE THIS WEEK



Starting this week, every Friday, the Post will bring to you a compact summary of the weekly Nepali stock market movements. Pg 5



Students pictured at a zebra crossing as it rains at Mahalaxmishan in Lalitpur on Thursday.

POST PHOTO: SAFAL PRAKASH SHRESTHA

## 12 dead, 59 others infected as Japanese Encephalitis spreads across Nepal

Health officials say they are working to secure JE vaccines for all vulnerable populations.

ARJUN POUDEL  
KATHMANDU, SEPT 12

Twelve people, including children, have died, and 59 others have been infected with the Japanese encephalitis (JE) virus since the start of the monsoon in June this year.

Twenty-nine districts, including those in the Kathmandu Valley, have reported infection from the deadly virus, while eight districts—Kailali, Kapilvastu, Palpa, Chitwan,

Rautahat, Sarlahi, Siraha, and Sunsari—have reported deaths from the infection.

“September and October are the peak months for outbreaks of the JE virus,” said Dr Bibek Kumar Lal, director of the Family Welfare Division at the Department of Health Services. “We have already stepped up surveillance and activated measures to break the transmission cycle of the deadly virus.”

Japanese encephalitis is a viral

brain infection caused by the JE virus, which is endemic in Asia and parts of the Western Pacific.

According to the World Health Organization, it is a mosquito-borne flavivirus, belonging to the same family as dengue, Zika, yellow fever, and West Nile viruses. The virus kills a third of those who fall ill and leaves up to half of those who survive with severe life-long disabilities, according to the UN health body.

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## Panel set up to settle dispute over widening CIAA's jurisdiction

Congress and UML lawmakers are at odds over a bill expanding anti-graft body's oversight to private sector.

BINOD GHIMIRE  
KATHMANDU, SEPT 12

The State Affairs and Good Governance Committee of Parliament has formed a nine-member panel to decide whether corruption in private entities should fall under the ambit of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA).

The panel was constituted as cross-party lawmakers were divided over a provision in the bill to amend the Corruption Prevention Act of 2002 that proposes bringing the private sector under the purview of the anti-graft body. While Nepali Congress lawmakers are strongly opposed to the provision, CPN-UML lawmakers said the commission should be allowed to scrutinise private organisations that get any form of government grants.

Amendment to Clause (2) of the Act says banks and medical colleges would fall under the commission's purview. The National Assembly endorsed the bill in April last year and sent it to the lower house for a decision. However, lawmakers in the House committee are still divided on the provision.

“The commission cannot be allowed to interfere in the private sector. We have other mechanisms to oversee the sector,” said Hridaya Ram Thani of the Congress while taking part in the deliberations on Thursday. The CPN (Unified Socialist) lawmakers seconded Thani's view.

However, Raghuji Pant from the UML said the constitutional commission should be allowed to investigate financial wrongdoings in the private sector entities that get government support. The Rastriya Swatantra

Party President Rabi Lamichhane had echoed Pant.

Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak, who was present in the House committee, urged lawmakers to find common ground on the provision. He said the government was ready to accept the committee's decision.

“I see no problem in allowing the commission to scrutinise the private sector. But this committee should first agree on whether the commission should be allowed to investigate private entities that receive government grants,” he said.

“The government is ready to take ownership of whatever decision is made.”

**Commission cannot be allowed to interfere in private sector, Congress lawmaker Thani says.**

Following Lekhak's comment, the committee chair, Ram Hari Khatriwada, announced the formation of a sub-committee to seek consensus on the provision. Along with Thani and Pant, CPN (Maoist Centre)'s Hitraj Pandey, Ashok Rai of Janata Samajbadi Party, Rajendra Pandey of Unified Socialist, Rastriya Swatantra Party's Chanda Karki, and Sarbendra Nath Shukla of Loktantrik Samajbadi Party are members of the sub-committee. It has been given a week to make recommendations.

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## A fighter and thinker, Yechury leaves behind a towering legacy

He was a cementing force in Indian polity when communal and profit-greedy forces registered their presence like never before.



Sitaram Yechury (1952-2024).

AJOY ASHIRWAD  
MAHAPRASHASTA/THE WIRE

Sometime in August 2003, Sitaram Yechury, then a senior leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)), was invited by his party's student wing, the Students' Federation of India (SFI), to speak in New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).

Newly-admitted students had filled all the front rows of an otherwise packed-to-the-brim hall where Yechury would soon speak on how the then-Bharatiya Janata Party's policies had not only targeted minority groups but all of the Indian working class.

Yechury appeared almost suddenly, without the fanfare that normally accompanies a national leader, and apologised for running slightly behind schedule. He wore a plain white shirt unbuttoned at the top and tailored trousers that went casually with nondescript sandals. For scores of students who had little exposure to communist leaders, Yechury's self-effacing and friendly demeanour was remarkable and heartwarming at the same time.

Five minutes into his speech, however, he had the hall spellbound—the new students intently listening to his point-by-point unpacking of the anti-people policies of the BJP government, leaving almost everyone, even those who were critical of his party, in awe and inspired.

In his 45-minute speech—mellow, matter-of-fact and impeccably argumentative—he simplified complex thoughts on communalism and the liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG) policies of the

government, presented the Left as the most legitimate political force to combat anti-people policies and left the students with questions that they all ought to have grappled with during their stay at a publicly funded university.

All of this, all at once. By the time he finished amidst a deafening round of applause, Yechury had successfully left a permanent imprint of not only himself but also of the Left as a political force in the country.

As he rushed to leave campus for another meeting, he also left behind a chaotic hall with students theatrically exchanging thoughts on his speech, debating some of the ideas that he touched upon and, above all, immersing themselves in the world of political and philosophical questions with no easy answers. Their JNU life had begun with a bang.

Yechury personified the characteristic JNU student all his life—thoughtful, critical, curious, with an unending grit to forge solidarities and alliances.

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# मेरो सुन्दर घर ULTIMA को भर

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NATIONAL

DISTRICT DIGEST

**Bangladeshi without travel documents arrested in Birgunj**  
**PARSA:** Police have arrested a Bangladeshi youth from a Birgunj-based hotel on Wednesday night on the charge of travelling without a visa. According to Deputy Superintendent of Police Deepak Bharati, the Bangladeshi man named Mohammad Sahadat Hussein, 29, was detained as he did not have travel documents. The security personnel found the Bangladeshi during a security check at the hotel. The accused was handed over to the immigration office in Parsa.

**Students padlock school over teacher shortage**  
**DARCHULA:** Students of Mallikarjun Model Secondary School in ward 7 of Mahakali Municipality in Darchula, padlocked the school's main gate on Thursday demanding urgent appointment of an English teacher. The students of grade 11 and 12 resorted to the harsh action as the school has been without a secondary-level English teacher for the past five months. Frustrated by the delay, the students have warned that they would picket the municipality office if their demand is not met.

**Two held with brown sugar**  
**BARDIYA:** Armed Police Force personnel on Thursday detained two people in possession of brown sugar from Phutaha along Nepal-India border in Bardiya district. Manoj Airi, aged 26, resident of ward 3 of Dhangadhi Municipality in Kailai and Nabin Hamal, 27, of ward 9 of Khajura Rural Municipality in Banke were held with 5.5 grams of brown sugar. The two were handed over to the Nepal Police for further investigation.

**TIA discourages scarfs, garlands**  
**KATHMANDU:** The Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) has urged passengers to refrain from wearing khadas (traditional scarves) and garlands during security checks, citing damage to screening equipment. Officials further said discarded scarves and garlands left by passengers throughout the airport have also affected its cleanliness.

# Panchthar's Chiwabhanjyang-Darimba road crumbling due to contractor's neglect

Of the 114 km of the Mid-Hill Highway in Panchthar district, 63 km has been blacktopped, but 51 km from Chiwabhanjyang to Darimba remains incomplete despite several deadline extensions.

**LAXMI GAUTAM**  
 PANCHTHAR, SEPT 12

The Chiwabhanjyang-Darimba road, the easternmost section of the Mid-Hill Highway in Panchthar district, was supposed to be upgraded and blacktopped by April 2022. But the contractor, Roshan Shiva Shakti JV, failed to even start the work by deadline. Although the project's deadline was first extended to July 2024, progress was almost zero.

The road project extended the deadline for a second time, now by an additional one year. Yet, the construction company has not brought the necessary tools, equipment and manpower.

"There are only a handful of workers in some places along the road section making gabion nets. But the number of workers is not enough to complete the road project within the new deadline," said Bhim Bahadur Yongya, the chairman of Yangbarak Rural Municipality. He criticised the contractor for continued neglect.

The Tharpu-Chiwabhanjyang road along the 51-km Chiwabhanjyang-Darimba section is now in a sorry state. Landslides have blocked the road in several places, while other areas have caved in. The road is muddy and riddled with potholes.

"Travelling along the Chiwabhanjyang-Darimba road has been quite risky due to the negligence of the contractor," said Yongya. It now takes almost a full day to cover the 51 kilometres from Chiwabhanjyang to Darimba.

The construction of Pushpal Mid-Hill Highway began in the fiscal year 2007-08 with an aim to complete the national pride project by 2017-18. Stretching 1,879 kilometres, the highway connects Chiwabhanjyang of Panchthar in the east to Jhulaghat of Baitadi in the farwest of the country.

Out of the total 114 kilometres of the highway in Panchthar, 63 kilometres have already been blacktopped. The remaining 51 kilometres, between Chiwabhanjyang and Darimba road remain in limbo.

The Mid-Hill Highway Project had signed an agreement with Roshan Shiva Shakti JV in 2020 to widen and blacktop the 51-km stretch within two years, with a budget of Rs1.25 billion. "However, progress has been sluggish, with only about 20 percent completed over multiple deadlines," said Raj Narayan Sardar, information



The 21-km Tharpu-Chyangthapu road has been damaged by landslides and flooding at several places. A driver says it takes around 10 hours to cross the section.

officer at Phidim office of the Mid-Hill Highway Project.

The Chiwabhanjyang-Darimba road was barely motorable till mid-June. Travellers face significant risks due to the lack of roadside drainage, with water flowing over the road and making conditions worse. The situation worsened when floods on June 16 swept away bridges in the Oyam, Osam and Phalamkhola streams. The floods and landslides triggered by heavy rains damaged the road sections at several places, making travel full of risks.

"Before the monsoon, it took around two hours to travel along the 21-km Tharpu-Chyangthapu road. Now it takes almost 10 hours" said Mohan Limbu, a regular driver.

Due to the poor condition of the road, the Tharpu-Chyangthapu section has become accident-prone. Road mishaps are reported quite frequently mainly during the rainy season. "The contractor left the work incomplete along the road section. Road accidents occur almost every

day here," said Bigyan Prasai of ward 3 of Yangbarak. He sustained serious injuries when his motorcycle met with an accident a few weeks ago. "The dilapidated Chiwabhanjyang-Darimba road has also been a major obstacle to carrying out other development activities," said Prasain.

The road upgrade work began by dividing the Darimba-Chiwabhanjyang stretch into three sections. Vehicles run along the recently gravelled Darimba-Chyangthapu road section, but driving along the 30 km from Chyangthapu to the Nepal-India border is dangerous due to the poor condition of the road.

The border outpost of the Armed Police Force (APF) at Chiwabhanjyang has a tough time transporting food and other essentials due to the poor condition of the road. People who keep yak and sheep sheds in the Chiwa area, which lies at an altitude of around 3,200 metres, also face difficulties managing food and supplying their products.

# Private sector warns CIAA oversight will deter investors

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The private sector has consistently opposed the provision, arguing that it would create a climate of intimidation and discourage investment. Various organisations and business houses have been lobbying the government and parliamentarians to revise the provision. They have submitted a memorandum to the prime minister and ministers claiming that allowing the commission to enter the private sector would put off investment.

The provision in the bill was included in line with a request of the commission's leadership, which has been pushing to expand its jurisdiction as per the spirit of the UN Convention Against Corruption.

According to the convention, to which Nepal is a signatory, member countries should take measures to prevent corruption in the private sector, enhance accounting and auditing standards, and, where appropriate, impose effective, proportionate and dissuasive civil, administrative or criminal penalties for failure to comply with such measures.

In order to achieve these ends, the convention also calls for deeper cooperation between law enforcement agencies and relevant private entities and the development of standards and procedures including codes of conduct to safeguard the integrity of private entities, including codes of conduct.

Other measures include prevention of conflicts of interest, promotion of good commercial practices among businesses and in the contractual relations of businesses with the state, and prevention of the misuse of procedures regulating private entities.

Anti-corruption campaigners say while it is true that the commission's jurisdiction can be expanded as per the convention, it would be wrong to increase the burden on the anti-graft body that has struggled to fulfil its current duties.

"The commission has failed even to properly investigate government agencies. It neither has the capacity nor the expertise to oversee the private sector," Padmini Pradhananga, president of the Transparency International, Nepal, told the Post. "We already have enough mechanisms to regulate private entities." She said the Nepal Rastra Bank can regulate banks, and there is Nepal Medical Council to regulate medical colleges and the tax offices to monitor their financial reports.

"Rather than lobbying to expand its jurisdiction, the commission should focus on how to carry out its current duties effectively," she said.

# Japanese encephalitis killed 12 and infected 59 so far this monsoon

>> Continued from page 1

Health officials say this year's death rate from the JE virus has exceeded 20 percent, and among the deceased, the number of children under 15 years of age is very high.

Nepal has included the vaccine in its routine immunisation list, which the government provides free of cost to all children.

The country started administering the vaccine doses in 2006, eight years before the World Health Organization officially issued prequalification certification, as the infection and death rates of the JE virus were very high then.

In 2005, JE infections killed nearly 2,000 people in Nepal—mostly children from the districts of Tarai region.

In the first phase, all populations of the highly-affected four districts, Banke, Bardia, Dang, and Kailali, were inoculated with the JE vaccine. Later, the vaccination programme was expanded to 19 other affected districts, and children under 15 were inoculated.

The government integrated the JE vaccine into the routine immunisation list in 2015. However, data provided by the Health Ministry shows that only 50 percent of the infected patients were inoculated with the vaccine.

Doctors say the disease has no cure, so treatment focuses on managing symptoms. However, safe and effective vaccines are available to prevent infection.

Even though the vaccine is included in the regular immunisation list, several people still die and dozens get infected by the deadly

virus every year.

"Now is the right time to vaccinate all those at risk," said Dr Shyam Raj Upreti, an expert on immunisation. "Even if the vaccine does not help in outbreak management, it provides immunity from future infections. Authorities concerned must explore sources to finance vaccines and immunisation."

Health officials said they are aware of the deadly disease outbreak and have already started consulting aid agencies for help to finance the JE vaccination programme.

"We have raised the issue with officials from the Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunisation and requested their support," said Lal. "We are also exploring other options to secure vaccine doses to help prevent future outbreaks."

Health officials said they have stepped up surveillance measures and requested help from other agencies concerned to break the chain of disease transmission. The JE virus is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected Culex mosquitoes. Pigs and ducks are considered natural reservoirs of the virus.

Doctors advise taking precautions to avoid mosquito bites, such as using mosquito repellents, wearing long-sleeved clothes, and getting vaccinated if one lives in or is travelling to disease-endemic areas. They also stress the importance of awareness and timely treatment to prevent infections and deaths.

An estimated 12.5 million people are thought to be at high risk of JE infection in Nepal.

# Indian communist leader Sitaram Yechury, 72, dies after long battle with respiratory illness

>> Continued from page 1

Even as he rose through the ranks to become his party's general secretary, contending with multi-layered national and international political concerns and even struggling to bring back the lost glory of his party, his core remained the same.

At 72, Yechury breathed his last in New Delhi's AIIMS on September 12, 2024 after a long bout of crippling respiratory infection. He will be known as one of the most accessible and friendly political leaders who played instrumental roles in India's landmark events.

Despite his lifetime commitment to communism, his doors were always open to people from across the political spectrum. He kept his political aura so tightly under wraps that commoners and even journalists never hesitated in reaching out to him, sometimes to his own discomfort.

Yechury came of age politically in the seventies, which saw India's most energetic students' assertions. Born in a Telugu-speaking family, he was exposed to India's demographic diversity quite early in his life while spending his childhood with his parents who worked as officers in the government.

A meritorious student throughout, he joined St Stephens College in New Delhi and then JNU in 1973 to study economics.

At JNU, he studied under the legendary professor Krishna Bharadwaj. It was at this university that both Yechury and Prakash Karat, whom he succeeded as the party's general secretary, cut their teeth in Left politics, campaigning and pressing students' concerns around education, health and existing inequities.

He was elected president of the JNU students' union thrice in a row after the Emergency was lifted, cementing the Left's position in the newly opened university along with Karat and the likes of DP Tripathi.

His temporary arrest during the Emergency disrupted his plans to finish his PhD, following which he became a full-timer in the party, leading the SFI nationally. His national role really helped him mature as a national leader; he travelled widely, making connections with different students' movements across the country, forging solidarities on common issues and helping the SFI become a mammoth students' organisation.

His constructive role during the post-Emergency euphoria was noticed by the senior leaders of the party, and he was soon inducted into the party's central committee as part of an effort by its leaders to infuse young blood into its decision-making mechanisms.

Yechury's initiation in national politics also coincided with the time when the CPI(M) was making serious efforts to expand itself in the heartland. Although those attempts remained half-baked, Yechury had emerged as a leader bred in the concerns and issues of the CPI(M)'s national politics. This differentiated him and Karat from other young CPI(M) lead-



This photo from September 2016 shows Sitaram Yechuri (left) with then prime minister, Pushpa Kamal Dahal. Also seen is Dahal's late wife Sita Dahal.

ers of the time, who remained solely involved in party strongholds like Kerala and West Bengal.

It was around the same time that Yechury became the party's nominee to represent the CPI(M) internationally in meetings of the communist parties of eastern European countries and other such nations, playing a crucial role in forcing his own party to engage with world politics.

The eclectic experience helped Yechury frame his political concerns not only around national issues but also the international developments of the time, placing him among those rare Indian political leaders with a definitive understanding of foreign policy matters.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the demolition of the Babri Masjid and an impending bankruptcy forcing India to adopt LPG policies in the early nineties, the Left movement in India faced a setback. It was around this time when the CPI(M) leadership, with Yechury as its integral part, really put in all the effort to build alliances with different political parties to keep the BJP at bay and create a strong political foundation for Indian secularism.

Yechury, under the mentorship of the then-general secretary Harkishan Singh Surjeet, bloomed as a leader who could effortlessly become a bridge between the CPI(M) and other parties in trying to forge strong secular alliances with not only political parties, but also a range of civil society groups.

Surjeet, a master of coalition politics, helped Yechury to come to his own, where

he could wear his friendly and accessible demeanour and drop his communist uprightness to build bridges between forces that no one had imagined could come together.

Yechury was an avid reader, extremely deft with repartee and also a huge fan of old Hindi film songs. His friends will tell you how he could remember the songwriters and musicians of nearly all songs from decades before the eighties, and even had a huge collection of Hindi songs. He had shown this side of his personality even during his time as an editor of the party's different magazines, where he not only published political articles but also experimented with interviews of novelists, poets and artists.

As the JNU students' union president, he initiated the concept of having wall magazines, which published scholarly and literary pamphlets. Until his end, he did not stop writing for many publications, intervening in significant matters urgently and even lightening up the mood with a witty comment or piece on generally serious issues.

His nearly two-decade record as a parliamentarian bears testimony to his seriousness not only as a committed communist, but also as a skilful negotiator and interventionist.

Remarkable also were Yechury's small gestures towards others, which earned him the respect of all politicians. His emphasis on effective communication was so much that he picked up regional languages like Bengali and Marathi, too.

In his last leg of life, much was said about his rivalry with Karat, which was not entirely untrue. But any old CPI(M) observer will tell you that both these leaders inherited leadership at a stage when stalwarts who built the party from scratch like Jyoti Basu, EMS, Nambudiripad and Surjeet has either retired or died, leaving a huge vacuum within the party.

Karat inherited a role to build the party's organisation, while Yechury emerged as the party's face to deal with the complexities of India's parliamentary democracy. Both had different roles, and could have complemented each other, like they did in their JNU life, in a different situation and context. Yet, both represented the party during the crucial time of its transition in the nineties, and both hold the distinction of having emerged as national leaders from a vibrant students' movement of the seventies.

As general secretary of the party, Yechury represented the section that believed in broader coalitions against the BJP, and remained consistently committed to his non-dogmatic approach to lead a parliamentary Left force. Yechury will be remembered always as a slow but steady fighter who doggedly fought both fundamentalism and globalisation at a time, and who became a cementing force in the Indian polity when communal and profit-greedy forces registered their presence like never before.

(Published in special arrangement with thewire.in)

**मोटरसाइकल हरायो**  
 मिति २०८१/०५/३० गते विहान ०८:०० बजेको मध्यपुर टिमी न.पा.-५ दुईपोखरीबाट बा प्र ०२ ०८४ ट प ०९१६ नं. को १४९ CC हरियो रङ्गको FZ यामाहा मोटरसाइकल हराएको हुँदा पाउनु हुने महात्माबहरूले फोन ८८४१३६३२४ वा नजिको प्रहरी चौकमा बुझाई दिनु हुन अनुरोध गर्दछु।  
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# Congress-UML coalition not working to weaken other parties: Deuba

General Secretary Thapa says flaws in the constitution will be corrected through amendments.

POST REPORT  
KATHMANDU, SEPT 12

Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba has said that the CPN-UML-led coalition government that involves his party has no intention of weakening other parties.

This government was not formed with a plan to weaken other parties, Deuba said, addressing a function at the party office on Thursday. "I urge leaders from other parties not to have fears that the two big parties will bulldoze them."

Ever since the formation of the Congress-UML government in July, some leaders from the CPN (Maoist Centre), the Rastriya Swatantra Party and other outfits have suspected that the two largest parties are planning to crack down on the smaller parties by imposing new provisions through electoral laws.

They accuse the Congress-UML coalition of trying to go against the spirit of pluralism, as some ruling party leaders also argue that political stability could not be achieved due to the mushrooming of smaller parties and their unreasonable bargaining while forming governments—at the centre as well as in the provinces.

"We the Nepali Congress and the UML have no policy of weakening another party," Deuba said, felicitating the best performers from the



Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba

Congress in local governments. "We want to collaborate with all political parties."

The Congress and the UML leaders have announced that they would make some amendments to the constitution and electoral laws to ensure political stability in the country. Leaders from some fringe parties have fears that the two largest parties may increase the threshold for political forces to become a national party and to qualify for seats under the proportional representation (PR) category of election. Under the existing electoral laws, those who secure at least three percent of total valid votes in the federal parliament and 1.5 percent in the

provinces qualify for seats under the PR category.

Congress and UML leaders say there is a need to raise the threshold bar to control the number of fringe parties, arguing that such a move would help ensure political stability in the country.

"Our friends were scared when the UML and the Maoists got together to form the government. Then I spoke with Oli ji and we reached a consensus. As per my agreement with Oli ji, we formed the government. Now, he is leading it. When time comes, he will hand over the responsibility," said Deuba. The five-time prime minister urged the party colleagues to make the Congress party stronger, reminding them that he was on the verge of retirement. "Now new leaders should worry about the future of the party and the country."

Stating that the Congress was building momentum across the country, Deuba went on to say that even those who had left the party in the past were coming back to it.

"We and the UML reached an agreement and formed the government. When the UML and the Maoists were coalition partners, our friends were worried about our party's future," he said. "Therefore, we reached an agreement with the UML. After two years, for one-and-a-half years, Oli ji will hand over the baton to me."

The party honoured 21 mayors of municipalities and chairpersons of rural municipalities elected from the party for their performance.

On the occasion, General Secretary Gagan Thapa said that the Congress should prepare for the by-elections to be held in several local units. As many as 34 local governments are without their chiefs or deputy chiefs. Of them, 21 were Congress supporters, Thapa said. "We have to retain those positions and should win other seats as well," he said.

Thapa said that a review of the constitution is on the cards. That is why the seven-point agreement signed ahead of the government formation accorded constitution amendment the top priority.

"Through an amendment to the constitution, we have to strengthen federalism, inclusiveness, republicanism and proportional representation," Thapa said. "We have to review the statute and correct the mistakes made while writing the constitution."

"By the end of 2027, we should complete the legislation related to federalism and set up the necessary structure for its full-fledged implementation," Thapa added.

"Through constitutional amendments, we want to make democracy and proportional representation function better," he clarified.

# Oli's ministers sign performance contract



Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli shakes hands with Deputy Prime Minister Prakash Man Singh (left) after signing the work performance contract on Thursday.

POST REPORT  
KATHMANDU, SEPT 12

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Thursday signed work performance contracts with ministers of his Cabinet, outlining the main tasks and expected achievements from their respective ministries in the fiscal year 2024-25.

He also signed a performance agreement with Chief Secretary Eaknarayan Aryal.

"The signing of the contracts aims at achieving the national aspiration of 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali', ensuring timely completion of ongoing infrastructure projects and improvements in service delivery," Prime Minister Oli's secretariat said after the ceremony.

The performance agreement details the major tasks and targeted results to be achieved within the first 100 days of government formation (by October 22), the second 100 days (by January 25, 2025), and in the remaining period of the fiscal year 2024-25.

The ministers will now sign similar contracts with the secretaries of their respective ministries.

The ministers for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation; Forest and Environment; and Law, Justice and

Parliamentary Affairs, who were absent in the signing ceremony on Thursday, will sign the contracts at a later date, the prime minister's secretariat said.

This is not the first time the prime minister has taken such an initiative. He signed similar contracts with his ministers in August 2019 during his second stint as prime minister, asking his Cabinet members to implement projects on time and ensure efficiency in service delivery.

Nepal first instituted performance contracts in the mid-2000s, where project chiefs and heads of corporations were required to sign a pledge stating that projects would be completed in time and services would be delivered without delay.

Oli is the first prime minister to ask his ministers to sign such contracts in order to meet development and revenue targets, complete projects on time, ensure budget expenditure and move towards a clean, transparent and efficient service-oriented bureaucracy.

A seminal publication 'Bureaucrats in Business' policy report by the World Bank in 1995 defined the performance contracts in the public sector as 'the relationship between the government and government employees managing a state-owned enterprise.'

# 50 arrested from Chinese-run call centre in Lalitpur

POST REPORT  
KATHMANDU, SEPT 12

The Central Investigation Bureau of Nepal Police on Thursday arrested 50 individuals, including two Chinese nationals and a Filipino, for allegedly operating an illegal call centre at Ekantakuna of Lalitpur.

CIB spokesman, Hobindra Bogati, said that 50 people including five women were arrested after a raid. According to Bogati, the group had rented a house to run the call centre.

"The call centre, run by the Chinese nationals, is found to be involved in luring Nepalis with false promises to invest in fraudulent schemes," he said. "At present, we have detained two Chinese, one Filipino, and 47 Nepalis." The centre was allegedly involved in illegal activities, including scamming people through false promises and encouraging investment in cryptocurrency, which is illegal in Nepal.

# Norwegian MPs meet parliamentary international committee members

Visiting parliamentarians acknowledge Nepal's contribution to UN peacekeeping missions.

POST REPORT  
KATHMANDU, SEPT 12

A Norwegian parliamentary delegation, including the chairperson and members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence of the Storting, visited Nepali parliament's International Relations and Tourism Committee on Thursday.

Raj Kishor Yadav, chair of the International Relations Committee of the House of Representatives, welcomed the delegation in Kathmandu.

The Norwegian delegation comprised MPs Åsmund Aukrust, Guri Melby, Ingrid Fiskaa, Sylvi Listhaug, Hårek Elvenes, Ola Borten Moe, Bengt Færevang, Trine Lise Sundnes, and Nils-Ole Foshaug, along with officials Vibeke Rysst-Jensen and Gro Kolstad Mortvedt.

This marks the first official

exchange between similar parliamentary committees of the two nations. Both the Nepali and Norwegian sides highlighted the meeting as a significant milestone in fostering parliamentary diplomacy.

A press statement issued by the International Relations and Tourism Committee noted that discussions between the two sides reaffirmed the long-standing friendly relations and cooperative ties between Nepal and Norway.

Norwegian parliamentarians acknowledged Nepal's contribution to the Peace Keeping Mission and emphasised cooperation on the energy sector of Nepal, the release stated.

"Both delegations shared insights into their parliamentary structures, governance systems, and democratic processes, while also exchanging views on shared values such as democ-

racy, human rights, and social justice," the statement said. "Discussions also focused on global challenges, including climate change mitigation and the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals, underscoring the mutual commitment to these pressing issues."

# Nepal dispatches first shipment of vegetables to Qatar with China support

The consignment includes 1,500 kilograms of red cherry pepper chillies, flat beans, and bitter gourds cultivated by 20 farmers from Dakshinkali Municipality.



Zou Zhiqiang, country director of China Foundation for Rural Development, (right) hands over a vegetable box to Qatari Ambassador to Nepal.

POST REPORT  
KATHMANDU, SEPT 12

Nepal has sent its first shipment of vegetables to Qatar, grown with Chinese technical and financial assistance. The consignment includes 1,500 kilograms of red cherry pepper chillies, flat beans, and bitter gourds cultivated by 20 farmers from Dakshinkali Municipality. This shipment is a part of a planned 30-day continuous export to the Arab country.

At a ceremony held at Tribhuvan International Airport on Thursday, Zou Zhiqiang, country director of the China Foundation for Rural Development (CFRD), officially handed over a vegetable box to Qatari Ambassador to Nepal Mishaal Bin Mohamed Ali Al-Ansari, marking the

start of the export initiative.

Speaking at the event, Ambassador Al-Ansari highlighted the significance of the fresh vegetable supply in supporting the well-being of Qatar's people, particularly during the country's hot and dry season.

He expressed optimism for increased future imports of Nepali agricultural products, adding that the export would enhance Qatar's market and strengthen bilateral trade ties.

Wang Xin, chargé d'affaires at the Chinese Embassy in Nepal, commended CFRD's role in driving sustainable rural development projects in Nepal. He noted that Nepali agriculture plays a pivotal role in this initiative, and China's poverty alleviation strategies could be applied in Nepal to enhance community development further.

Wang emphasised that the export initiative offers a valuable opportunity for Nepali agricultural products to enter the Gulf market.

Director General of the Department of Agriculture Narahari Prasad Ghimire described the export as a motivating step for Nepali farmers, encouraging them to expand their production. Zou Zhiqiang, CFRD's country director, said the foundation has been committed to sharing China's successful disaster prevention, poverty alleviation, and rural development practices with Nepal since 2015.

According to a statement by CFRD, export to Qatar marks the first successful effort to introduce these practices in Nepal, improving agricultural techniques while connecting farmers to global markets.

# Ncell

## Entertainment पनि Insurance पनि

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सधैं ON प्याक \*123#

## OPINION



## OUR VIEW

## Save them from drowning

Local bodies should factor in these life-threatening incidents in their disaster preparedness.

Child drowning has become a common occurrence in Nepal's Madhesh Province. We are only a few months into this fiscal year, and 49 people, 39 of them children, have needlessly lost their lives in ponds, fish ponds and rain-filled pits. These incidents, unfortunately, are likely to escalate this year as the number of deaths by drowning has steadily inched up in the past few years. The figure, which was 81 in FY 2022-23, rose to 124 in FY 2023-24. This necessitates immediate preventive measures from households and governments.

But what is more alarming is that these preventable deaths are not a priority for government officials. A recent Post report highlights this glaring negligence, as deaths by drowning haven't been included in disaster preparedness programmes in any of the 136 local units of the province. Instead of addressing the issue head-on, they are busy passing the blame and pointing to the parents' supposed negligence for failing to attend to their children. This has, in turn, added to the woes of the bereaved families.

The World Health Organization has listed many ways to prevent drowning, including covering wells and fencing swimming pools. It also recommends providing childcare for pre-school children and teaching school-age children basic swimming. Conducting safe rescue skills training with safety measures is another requirement. However, these preventive measures are rare in Nepal's local units. In Chhinnamasta Rural Municipality in Spatari, authorities rely on a simple awareness campaign to mitigate the risks of drowning—a crucial but insufficient measure when it comes to saving lives.

Countries around the world, despite witnessing deaths through drowning, only recognised World Drowning Prevention Day in 2021. Nepal followed suit in 2023. With late recognition of this problem, devising plans, policies and programmes to prevent drowning incidents are in a nascent stage, and many local units are largely unequipped. However, recognition alone is not enough; authorities should at least be mindful of the goings-on in their localities.

The first order of business should thus be for local authorities to include this life-threatening incident in disaster preparedness projects, focus on fencing ponds and pools, initiate programmes to cover wells and to mandate construction workers to cover construction pits. Concomitantly, practical measures like training locals to rescue and monitor the pond/water source areas are vital. Likewise, parents and children should be educated in households about the dangers of drowning; school-going children need to be taught about water safety through school curriculum. Children under five drown even in bucket water quickly and silently and, therefore, deserve special attention. Every child has the right to protection from harm.

The provincial and federal governments must heed this problem and launch mass awareness campaigns. Of all child mortality under five, drowning accounts for 2.8 percent deaths in Nepal. The WHO's preventive measures to upskill people in rescue activities and train school-age children could be beneficial in mitigating the risk, but these programmes need big financial commitments and human resources. Federal and provincial governments can help local governments by coordinating with international aid agencies. It is incumbent on local representatives to work on this problem wholeheartedly rather than merely brushing off the issue by blaming others. Everyone should work together to put a lid on it.

## THEIR VIEW

## Ending plastic menace

Proper enforcement is the key to a successful ban on plastic.

We appreciate the environment adviser's directive to ban the use of polythene and polypropylene bags in all superstores across Bangladesh. This, we hope, will be the first of many long-needed measures to rein in plastic pollution in the country. At present, chain superstores offer free bags, made from polypropylene, for customers to pack their groceries, although thin polythene and plastic bags were banned in 2002. According to the latest directive, instead of these bags, superstores will have to make jute or cloth bags available for purchase starting from October 1.

Although the order targets a small portion of commercial plastic usage in the country, smaller steps taken in phases might actually be more effective than issuing blanket bans that lose steam over time, as previously seen. The key here is enforcement, so the administration must ensure compliance from market managers and customers. It also must ensure that low-cost alternatives are easily accessible to wean customers off their dependence on plastics. Previous attempts to encourage jute bag usage have largely failed for supply shortages and lack of proper marketing. That said, the government should also consider schemes to promote research on and commercial production of eco-friendly alternatives like Sonali bags.

At the same time, campaigns can be launched to create awareness about the health and environmental hazards of plastics, encouraging customers and entrepreneurs to adopt the 3Rs—reduce, reuse and recycle—of waste management. Another area that requires awareness is proper disposal of plastics. Plastic litter is not only impacting our ecosystem, polluting waterbodies, or harming aquatic lives; it is also clogging sewers, drains, and canals and thus contributing to waterlogging in urban areas. While we understand that completely phasing out plastics may not be possible, reducing its usage and ensuring proper disposal are certainly doable.

In the long run, we hope that the environment adviser, having long fought for environmental causes herself, will be able to bring some much-needed reforms in the sector. Once the plastic ban in superstores takes effect, the authorities should gradually expand the scope of the ban by targeting various related industries including restaurants and packaging as well as all governmental and non-governmental institutions. They should also clamp down on polythene production and restrict the import of plastic products.

—The Daily Star (Bangladesh)/ANN

## Archives of encounters in the 1950s

|| POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE ||

Unpublished Nepali-'videshi' engagement records have ended up across different archives worldwide.

PRATYOUSHT ONTA



At least two generations of historians who have done research on Nepal of the early 20th century have primarily relied on state archives in Nepal, India and the UK to produce their work. However, after the end of World War II and the beginning of the re-structuring of world politics—the end of the British colonial era in South Asia, the rise of the US as a superpower and the end of the Rana regime in Nepal in 1951—we saw the beginning of a new era of engagements for Nepal and Nepalis with new states, in particular the US, and with other foreign institutions and nationals. Various unpublished records of these new types of engagements have ended up across different archives worldwide. Here, I would like to point to three different types of new archival collections that we need to pay attention to if we want to write good histories of the Nepali-'videshi' encounters of the 1950s.

First, as Nepal's engagements with the US increased in the post-WWII era, collections of official documents of these engagements have ended up in the state archives of Nepal and the US. This means that US-based publicly-supported archives now hold many documents that have a direct bearing on the histories of Nepal during the long 1950s (which started before 1950 and ended after 1960). For instance, there are many US State Department documents at the US National Archives in College Park, Maryland (NARA II).

Historian Daniel W Edwards consulted these documents some time ago. He has done researchers a favour by publishing *America Meets Nepal 1944-1952: Problems, Personalities & Political Change* (2022), which contains various extracts from the "most interesting parts" of the relevant documents of the early Nepal-US encounters. Similarly, in producing several articles on US involvement in Nepal during the Cold War, environmental historian Thomas Robertson has relied not only on the

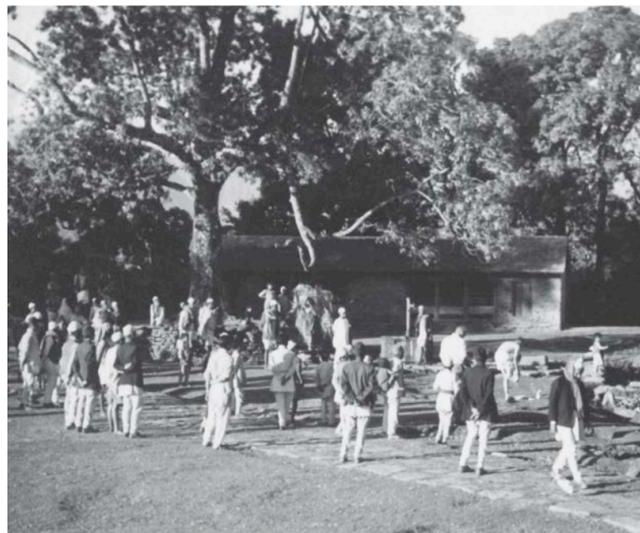


PHOTO SOURCE: HAROLD L DUSENBERRY COLLECTION, MADAN PURASKAR PUSTAKALAYA

documents in NARA II but also those held at the USAID Library in Washington, D and the Harry S Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Missouri. Some Nepal-related documents are now available in the online USAID archives.

Second, the involvement of specific foreign institutions in Nepal during the long 1950s gave birth to specific holdings in institutional archives. The University of Oregon and several of its faculty members, including Hugh B Wood, were involved in planning and implementing educational programmes in Nepal during the 1950s. In fact, Wood was the primary advisor to the first National Education Planning Commission, which produced its report in 1955. Hence, it is no surprise that an American academic who researches the history of education in Nepal, Jeremy Rappleye, has consulted the University of Oregon archives in Oregon, US, to write an interesting article on the work of Wood in Nepal. That article was published in the June 2019 issue of the journal *Studies in Nepali History and Society* (SINHAS). Rappleye reports that there are many more Nepal-related materials at the University of Oregon archives, including films, for other researchers.

Such archives also exist for other foreign institutions that became involved in Nepal in the 1950s. For example, New Zealand-based historian Susan Heydon relied on the archives of what came to be known as the International Nepal Fellowship and the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) to write

an article on foreign-Nepali medical encounters during the 1950s. These archives are now held at the Divinity School Library of Yale University in Connecticut, US. I suspect similar archives exist for other US-based institutions (e.g., Ford Foundation) and similar entities in the UK, India and elsewhere that were involved in *bikas* work in Nepal then.

Third, the involvement and action of specific individuals, both Nepalis and *videshis*, in Nepal during the 1950s can be researched through a reading of their private papers, including photographic images they might have taken or gathered. While I suspect that a majority of such papers have either been destroyed or are still held in private family collections, some have ended up in archives run by universities, and think tanks. For instance, the bulk of Robertson's sources in an article he published in the same issue of SINHAS, came from the private papers of Chester Bowles, US Ambassador to India and Nepal during the early 1950s and a graduate of Yale. These papers are now held at the Yale University Library. Similarly, Rappleye's article relies heavily on the personal papers of Hugh B Wood, now held at the Hoover Institutional Library & Archives located at Stanford University in California, US. The Wood papers, available in 42 boxes, have not yet been catalogued. These papers have also been consulted by Lokranjan Parajuli and are referred to in his forthcoming chapter on the politics of the founding of Tribhuvan University.

Such unpublished personal papers and photographs are also available in archives in Nepal. For example, about 500 photographs taken by Harold Lyle Dusenberry (1907-91) are available in the Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya (MPP) in Patan Dhoka. Dusenberry, an American, did two stints in Nepal (1952-54, 1956-58). He advised agricultural programmes and trained rural development workers (see his 1958 report available online, *Six Years of Village Development in Nepal*).

Among the 500 photographs organised in five albums held in MPP, there are many that document the Nepali-'videshi' encounter of that era in interesting ways. Once, Dusenberry and his team members visited Pokhara. While it is not clear exactly when this visit took place, these photographs document the team's temporary camp in Bindabasini *chaur* in Pokhara and various encounters in that city. In the photo above, you can see several US team members taking a bath in the open and many dozen Nepalis observing the act. There are also several photos of training sessions and technical demonstrations held in Kathmandu.

I have given examples of three types of unpublished archival records in state archives, institutional archives and personal paper holdings that came into existence due to the new Nepali-'videshi' encounters after WWII. Since some of these archives exist in Nepal, our university faculty members should encourage their students to explore them for their dissertation research. Those who hold other records of such encounters should be encouraged to deposit them at our public institutions so that younger researchers can access them.

With respect to the archives located in the US and elsewhere, Nepal-based researchers should seek travel fellowships to visit those archives. One such fellowship allowed Parajuli to visit Stanford in 2017 to study the Wood Papers. In the long run, we can also hope that these archives will put their holdings online to facilitate the work of researchers who are unable to travel for on-site consultations of those records.

There are yet other ways to facilitate the reading of such collections by researchers. What is stopping the history department at Yale University from offering a dissertation fellowship to a deserving PhD student—of any nationality—who wants to work on the above-mentioned archival collections related to Nepal that are now physically located there? Also, what is stopping the various Nepali NRN groups from supporting the doctoral research of a Nepali (from Nepal or the Nepali diaspora) on collections mentioned above at NARA II, Yale or Stanford?

## United in agenda, divided by politics

Ground level competition prevents a united front of Kashmir's regional parties.

JAVID AHMAD DAR



As Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) goes to the polls, there is just one pre-electoral alliance in place—between the National Conference (NC), a local party, and the main national Opposition party, the Indian National Congress.

There is no alliance between any of the regional political parties of J&K such as the NC, the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), the Peoples' Conference and the less grounded Apni Party.

The all-season friend of the NC, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), has not spared its pocket borough of Kulgam, in South Kashmir, either in the 2020 district level elections or in this month's legislative assembly elections.

The regional parties are united in their agenda for Kashmir but divided by politics. Take the case of the two main parties of Jammu and Kashmir—the NC and the PDP. Both derive political assertions from the same premise: the socio-cultural uniqueness of J&K and the special protection (now withdrawn) given to the region within the Constitution of India.

They also appeal to and seek support from the same electoral base. Their political canvas appeals to a limited political constituency and so competition between them trickles down even to the village level units of each party. Such rivalry is the foundation of their political existence. Yet, there are sharp political differences between the NC and the PDP.

The NC has a cadre or volunteer force of party workers which is spread far and wide and its workers have suffered the brunt of the violence of separatists.

**Religious element**

While the NC does not appeal to religious organisations, the PDP has been traditionally favoured by religious organisations in J&K.

However, the PDP's support among religious organisations has faltered after members of the banned Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) decided to contest the legislative assembly elections. The JeI aims for "Iqamat e Deen" (establishing religion-as-system) and seeks "Nizam-e-Mustafa" or sharia rule. Many of its former members are contesting as independents leaving implications primarily on PDP.

Worried about its eroding base, PDP President Mehbooba Mufti demanded "revocation" of the ban on JeI in August 2024. Earlier, she had protested against the government decision to ban JeI.

The electoral contest, which used to be primarily between the NC and the PDP, has become multi-cornered with the emergence of new political players in the past two decades. Their emergence is linked to the diminishing influence of separatist politics, espe-

cially after 2019 when the special status of the state was revoked. There are now many more parties and independent candidates in the fray.

These may seem good reasons for the two parties to come together. But ground level competition and irreconcilable social bases will make this difficult.

But there was one instance when they were able to unite.

The immediate period following the revocation of the special status of J&K and its division into two Union Territories created conditions for political consensus between the NC and the PDP, as well as other political forces. This led to the Peoples' Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), named after Gupkar Road in the capital, Srinagar, where the political elite lives and where the agreement came about.

However, the alliance was formed in an exigency without agreement on deeper political issues. In a declaration on August 4, 2019, local and national party leaders declared their political commitment to "protect" and "defend"



REUTERS

the removal of the special provisions under Article 370 and Article 35-A of the Indian Constitution.

The PAGD pledged to reverse the process. However, they were unable to maintain the alliance even in the elections for the District Development Councils in 2020. In these elections, the PAGD parties/supporters contested each other in several seats in the Kashmir Valley.

Alliance partners the PC complained of "breach of trust" against NC for

fielding proxies and left the alliance in 2021. The Jammu & Kashmir People's Movement (JKPM) followed it in 2022, reducing the alliance to an ineffectual functioning "four-party group".

The poor electoral performance also led to fissures sooner than expected, with a radical dip in the PDP's vote share in Jammu, and other parties faring badly in the Kashmir Valley.

The NC and PDP contested the general elections of 2024 separately. They have continued to do so in the ongoing legislative assembly elections as well. In effect, the PAGD did not re-group to contest these much awaited and crucial elections.

**Delhi's role**

The local parties of J&K also suffer from the peculiar compulsion of all regional parties in India. They constantly look to be on the right side of the central government in Delhi, in anticipation of its largesse for their states. This makes the national parties an important factor in any alliance formation.

Kashmir politics has seen many such instances. The political landscape of the erstwhile state altered significantly, for example, after the NC-Indian National Congress alliance in the mid-1980s. The alliance brought Farooq Abdullah back to power after his dismissal, but the state legislature was left without any opposition.

The current NC-INC alliance is clearly propelled by the importance of the "Jammu factor". With the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has substantial political and electoral presence in Jammu, neither the NC nor the PDP, either singly or jointly, can defeat it there.

However, the NC-Indian National Congress alliance allows for some "friendly" contests between the parties.

With or without asking for the restoration of the special status of J&K, the local parties are fighting an existential battle that has affected the pre-poll alliances in Kashmir. Their contest essentially remains among themselves, even as they face a mighty national party, the BJP.

A lot of bargaining will be necessary for a post-poll alliance, if they seriously wish to keep the BJP out.

Dar is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, India.

—360Info

**FOREX**

US Dollar	134.65
Euro	148.38
Pound Sterling	175.71
Swiss Franc	157.66
Australian Dollar	89.97
Canadian Dollar	99.18
Singapore Dollar	103.16
Japanese Yen (10)	9.45
Chinese Yuan	18.91
Saudi Arab Riyal	35.88
Qatari Riyal	36.93
Thai Bhat	3.99
UAE Dirham	36.66
Malaysian Ringgit	31.07
Korean Won (100)	10.03

Exchange rates fixed by Nepal Rastra Bank

**BULLION** PRICE PER TOLA

Fine Gold	Rs 153,300
Silver	Rs 1,795

SOURCE: FENEGOSIDA

## China, EU to hold talks on electric car tariffs next week

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE BRUSSELS, SEPT 12

China's commerce minister Wang Wentao will head to Brussels for talks with the EU's trade chief next week as Beijing makes a last-ditch effort to stop tariffs on Chinese electric cars, officials said Thursday.

The European Commission, which leads the EU's trade policy, announced last month it would slap import duties of up to 36 percent on electric vehicles imported from China.

The tariffs will become definitive and last for five years after a vote by the European Union's 27 member states, expected before the end of October.

Wang will discuss the issue with the EU's trade commissioner, Valdis Dombrovskis, on September 19, commission spokesperson, Olof Gill, said. His visit will come as divisions over duties widen in the bloc. Spanish premier Pedro Sanchez surprised many on Wednesday when he urged the EU to "reconsider" tariffs.

# GMR ropes in two Indian partners for 900MW Upper Karnali hydel project

Says collaboration with two of India's public sector undertakings will provide much-needed boost to the Rs146 billion project.

SANGAM PRASAIN KATHMANDU, SEPT 12

Indian multinational conglomerate GMR, the developer of the Upper Karnali hydropower project estimated to cost Rs146 billion, said the groundwork for its financial closure has begun in collaboration with two of India's public-sector undertakings.

The project has been on the drawing board since 2006.

GMR Upper Karnali Hydro Power Limited Nepal, a subsidiary of GMR Energy Limited, is developing a 900 MW project on the Karnali river in the Achham and Dailekh districts.

GMR Upper Karnali Hydro Power Limited Nepal, SJVNL, an Indian public sector undertaking in the Navratna Category, which is involved in hydroelectric power generation and transmission, and Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) have signed a memorandum of understanding for the development of the project through a joint venture (JV) company in Nepal.

According to Indian media reports, the SJVNL and GMR will each hold 34 percent of the shares in the proposed JV, and IREDA will have 5 percent. The Nepal Electricity Authority holds a 27 percent stake.

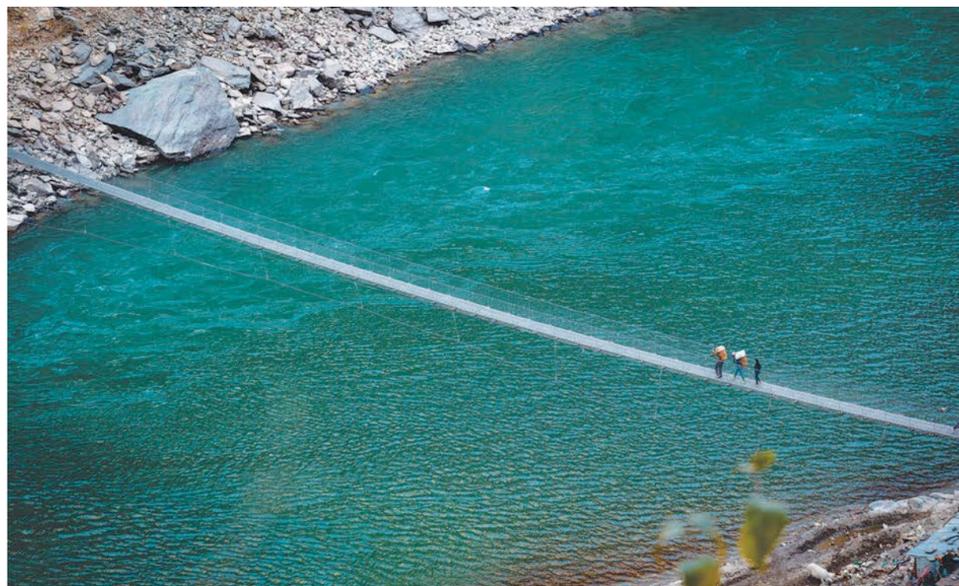
The collaboration with the two public sector undertakings will provide significant advantages to the project, said Sanjay Barde, CEO-Energy, GMR.

"Financial institutions will have increased confidence in extending debt, and power evacuation will be facilitated through India via two cross-border transmission lines."

Of the total power generation from the project, approximately 108MW will be allocated to Nepal, 500MW will be sold to Bangladesh under a long-term supply agreement with a dollar-denominated tariff, and the remaining 292MW will be available for sale in India.

"The project's development, operation, and power sale involving three countries for over 25 years will strengthen long-term relations between them," according to a statement issued by the GMR on Thursday.

The statement reads, "The trilateral project involving India, Nepal, and Bangladesh exemplifies regional economic cooperation and enhances



On January 24, 2008, the government and the GMR signed a memorandum of understanding for the survey and construction of the project.

regional power security. It has the potential to accelerate Nepal's hydropower development significantly."

The project will be developed on a build, own, operate and transfer (BOOT) basis with a 25-year concessional period after commissioning. It is proposed to be funded through a 70:30 debt-equity ratio.

"Following Nepal's Supreme Court decision in favour of the government of Nepal, we have been actively addressing all issues related to cross-border transmission lines between Nepal and India, as well as Bangladesh and India," said Barde.

On January 24, 2008, the government and the GMR signed a memorandum of understanding for the survey and construction of the project. On December 20, 2009, the GMR applied to the Department of Electricity Development to increase the capacity from 300 MW to 900 MW.

On September 19, 2014, the Investment Board and the GMR signed a Project Development Agreement

(PDA), giving the Indian company two years to conclude financial closure (generating resources to develop the project). The deadline was extended further by a year on January 8, 2017. On November 10, 2017, the Investment Board extended the deadline by another year.

The government had last extended the deadline for the financial closure of the project by two years on July 15, 2022. The extension was based on a recommendation by a government task force.

Subsequently, a writ was filed in the Supreme Court challenging the government's decision.

On November 3, 2022, the top court issued an interim order not to implement the deadline extension.

Later, on May 7, 2023, the Supreme Court's constitutional bench allowed GMR to continue working on the project. In compliance with the court's order, the government granted GMR an additional 186 days to compensate for the time lost due to the interim

order. The court, however, ordered no further extensions. GMR said it has been seeking debt from financial institutions to fund the project, which requires a substantial financial outlay.

While the GMR was progressing on these fronts, SJVNL, with existing projects in Nepal, expressed interest in acquiring an equity stake.

"GMR welcomed the proposal, and SJVNL sought permission from India's ministry of power to form the JV with a private undertaking," said Barde. "After due diligence by SJVNL, the ministry of power, and other relevant government agencies, a letter of approval was issued."

Additionally, IREDA, a leading renewable energy financing agency in India, decided to join with a minority stake of 5 percent, he said.

SJVNL is executing three hydroelectric projects in the Arun river basin with a combined capacity of 2,274 MW—the export-oriented 900MW Arun III, 695 MW Arun-IV and 679MW Lower Arun.

## With inflation slowing, ECB to cut rates again

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE FRANKFURT, SEPT 12

With inflation slowing and the economic outlook darkening, the European Central Bank is expected to cut interest rates again Thursday but is unlikely to give much away about its next moves.

After raising rates at a record pace from mid-2022 to tackle surging consumer prices, the ECB has begun to ease the pressure as inflation rates have fallen.

The Frankfurt-based central bank made its first cut in June, reducing the key deposit rate to 3.75 percent from a record high of four percent.

The ECB's governing council kept borrowing costs on hold in July but is expected to make another quarter-point cut on Thursday, providing further relief to businesses and households. It will be only the second rate reduction since 2019 from the ECB, which sets monetary policy for the 20 countries that use the euro.

"Virtually all recent ECB speakers have confirmed that they would like to lower rates," said Berenberg bank economist Holger Schmieding.

Policymakers' confidence in moving ahead with cuts has been bolstered by signs that inflation, which has been bumpy over the past year, is now on a more sustained downward trajectory.

Eurozone inflation fell to its lowest level in more than three years in August, according to official data.

Consumer price rises slowed to 2.2 percent compared to the same month last year, down from 2.6 percent in July, leaving the figure just a whisker off the ECB's target. Inflation rates had peaked at 10.6 percent in October 2022 after Russia's invasion of Ukraine and post-pandemic supply chain woes sent food and energy costs soaring.

A lacklustre performance in some parts of the eurozone has also fuelled calls for more cuts to take pressure off the single currency area. While signs in the first half of the year were positive, recent indicators have pointed to a deteriorating outlook.

The eurozone's largest economy, Germany, shrank unexpectedly in the second quarter, adding to indications that a hoped-for rebound will fail to materialise this year.

Meanwhile, wage growth, a key area of concern for the ECB, slowed markedly in the second quarter, easing fears that high labour costs could spark a resurgence in inflation.

## NEPSE this week

2,688.53 ▼ -38.83 -1.42%

Turnover Rs. 40.26 Billion

Shares Traded 77.62 Million

Gainers 78 Stocks

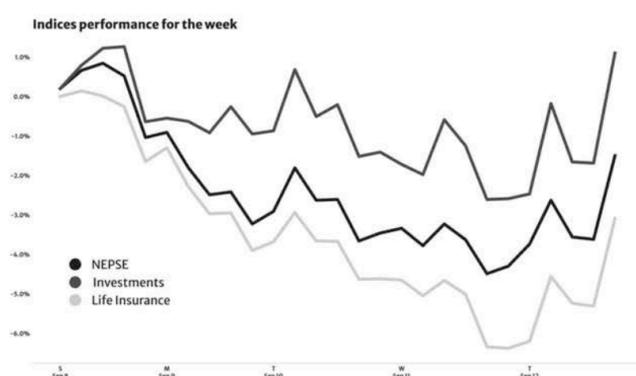
Losers 165 Stocks

Data provided by npstocks.com



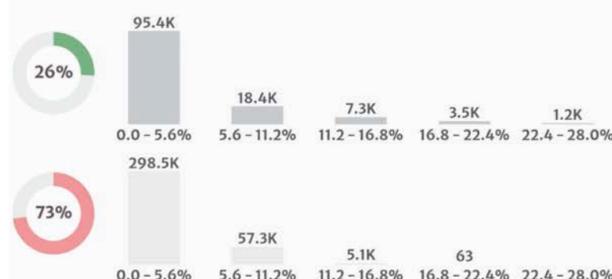
### TRENDING STOCKS

GLH	MLBS	CHDC
GFCL	NABBC	EDBL



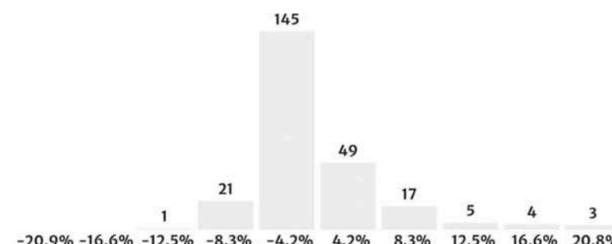
### Trade distribution

Of all transactions in the week, 26% increased prices while 73% decreased prices. 298.5K transactions decreased prices between 0.0% and -5.6%



### Price change distribution

Prices of 145 companies decreased between 0.0% and 4.2% this week.



	At Close	% Chg	Volume (Rs.)
Investment	111.05	1.04%	4,397.2M
Trading	3,758.63	-0.02%	116.1M
Manu. & Pro.	7,155.34	-0.34%	1,412.4M
Others	2,072.53	-0.34%	1,965.8M
HydroPower	3,320.33	-0.53%	11,361.4M
Finance	3,416.16	-0.80%	4,273.7M
Microfinance	5,158.59	-1.03%	4,166.4M
Non Life Insurance	13,474.44	-2.14%	2,342.8M
Banking	1,488.69	-2.31%	4,105.8M
Hotels And Tourism	6,827.29	-2.41%	804.5M
Development Bank	5,371.47	-3.01%	3,200.2M
Life Insurance	13,169.99	-3.14%	2,109.7M

Advancers		Decliners		52wk High	52wk Low	YTD Chg
4		3		125.75	63.72	42.68%
1		1		4,296.24	2,539.41	31.07%
3		6		8,529.29	4,658.66	22.16%
4		2		2,482.45	1,351.83	32.14%
40		50		3,882.68	1,891.09	39.10%
5		10		4,129.51	1,576.63	92.63%
19		31		5,754.71	3,206.28	40.55%
		12		14,849.65	9,328.60	18.07%
1		17		1,755.38	1,008.00	24.90%
		6		7,961.22	4,620.98	20.13%
1		15		6,108.52	3,506.10	35.10%
		12		15,197.06	9,423.70	15.83%

### Top gainers

	At Close (Rs.)	% Chg	52wk High (Rs.)
CEDB Hydropower Development	2,240.00	20.75%	2,370.00
Manushi Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha	1,980.00	20.21%	2,001.00
Emerging Nepal Limited	1,319.00	18.72%	1,453.50
Wean Nepal Laghubitta	2,643.80	14.95%	2,643.80
Hathway Investment Nepal Limited	1,588.10	13.42%	1,816.00
Mahuli Samudayik Laghubitta	1,681.00	12.82%	1,689.00
Upper Syange Hydropower Limited	715.00	12.60%	769.00
Rawa Energy Development Limited	660.00	11.66%	724.00
Nepal Warehousing Company	1,054.90	9.20%	1,264.00
GreenLife Hydropower Limited	296.90	9.15%	336.00

### Top losers

	At Close (Rs.)	% Chg	52wk Low (Rs.)
Goodwill Finance	1,110.00	-10.48%	375.00
Three Star Hydropower Limited	1,039.50	-7.60%	300.30
Asian Hydropower Limited	679.10	-6.59%	288.00
Corporate Development Bank	930.00	-6.16%	303.00
Terhathum Power Company Limited	429.10	-5.90%	303.10
Taragaon Regency Hotel	1,244.00	-5.83%	607.70
Singati Hydro Energy Limited	252.80	-5.67%	143.10
National Microfinance	1,458.00	-5.63%	833.02
Green Development Bank Ltd.	805.00	-5.63%	271.72
Karnali Development Bank	664.00	-5.55%	241.10

### Top turnover

	Turnover (Rs.)	At Close (Rs.)	% Chg
CEDB Hydropower Development	1,818.5M	2,240.00	20.75%
Himalayan Reinsurance Limited	1,068.4M	834.00	-1.30%
Goodwill Finance	958.0M	1,110.00	-10.48%
Nlg Insurance	896.9M	1,268.00	-4.30%
Api Power	842.9M	328.00	-2.12%
GreenLife Hydropower Limited	785.2M	296.90	9.15%
Nepal Finance	734.8M	1,578.90	5.05%
Sanima Mai Hydropower	695.2M	538.00	-2.57%
Hathway Investment Nepal Limited	683.4M	1,588.10	13.42%
Arun Valley Hydropower	632.0M	289.00	-3.67%

### Most active

	Stocks Traded	At Close (Rs.)	% Chg
GreenLife Hydropower Limited	2.873M	296.90	9.15%
Api Power	2.612M	328.00	-2.12%
Arun Valley Hydropower	2.223M	289.00	-3.67%
Himal Dolakha Hydropower	1.874M	217.00	-2.91%
Kumari Bank	1.854M	219.00	-1.75%
Singati Hydro Energy Limited	1.824M	252.80	-5.67%
Nepal Infrastructure Bank Limited	1.754M	285.20	-1.31%
Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Ltd	1.707M	230.00	-1.29%
Hydroelectricity Investment	1.687M	285.00	-0.21%
Prabhu Bank	1.552M	240.00	-2.12%

## WORLD

## Flooding in Thailand maroons thousands in northern province

REUTERS  
BANGKOK, SEPT 12

Thailand deployed military special forces in the northern province of Chiang Rai on Thursday after flooding marooned thousands that authorities are trying to reach with boats and helicopters.

At least 33 people have died across Thailand since mid-August from a spate of rain-related incidents including landslides, with nine fatalities this week in two northern provinces hit by adverse weather brought by Typhoon Yagi, according to the government.

Yagi, the strongest storm to hit Asia this year, has killed at least 197 people in Vietnam, where it made landfall on Saturday and flooded parts of capital city Hanoi.

In Thailand's northernmost province of Chiang Rai, flood waters had started receding from some areas of the hard-hit Mai Sai district, but many riverside settlements were still flooded, said the head of the district, Narongpol Kid-an.

### 200 people were trapped in a school, waiting to be evacuated to a rescue centre.

"We are rushing to bring out people trapped inside their houses," he told Reuters. "There are still hundreds of people who need to be rescued."

Local authorities were using boats and helicopters, with support from Thai Navy SEAL special forces, to conduct rescue operations, he said.

"The situation is very delicate," Narongpol said. "When it rains, the water rises very quickly."

The Thai Navy said it deployed nine flat-bottom boats to deliver over a thousand aid packages in Chiang Rai.

Flood waters had also entered parts of Chiang Rai city, one of the largest settlements in northern Thailand, inundating key roads and urban areas.

Out of 10 scheduled flights into and out of Chiang Rai's airport on Thursday, nine had been cancelled, according to its website.

The airport itself had not been flooded but rising waters had made roads to the facility impassable, said Kornchit Chomphudeng, head of Chiang Rai's Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation.

"The flooding this time has spread over a wider area than the recent floods," he said.

A mountainous region bisected by the Kok River, Chiang Rai was one of five northern Thai provinces hit by severe floods last month.

Authorities were planning to rely on Thai Air Force helicopters to send food and water to some 3,000 people marooned in Chiang Rai's Ban Kwai Wua Dam area, the provincial office said. Another 200 people were trapped in a school, waiting to be evacuated to a rescue centre.

Thailand's Office of National Water Resources on Thursday issued a warning to 36 provinces, including the capital Bangkok, for potential flash floods due to heavy rainfall.

# Israeli strike on Gaza school draws global condemnation

The attack flattened part of the UN-run Al-Jawni school in Nuseirat on Wednesday, leaving only a charred heap of rebar and concrete.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
GAZA STRIP, PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES, SEPT 12

Israel faced international condemnation on Thursday after a strike killed 18 people at a school-turned-shelter for displaced Palestinians in war-torn Gaza, where the Israeli military said it targeted Hamas militants.

The attack flattened part of the UN-run Al-Jawni school in Nuseirat on Wednesday, leaving only a charred heap of rebar and concrete.

"For the fifth time, Israeli forces bombed the UNRWA-run Al-Jawni School, killing 18 citizens," Gaza civil defence spokesperson Mahmud Bassal wrote on Telegram, referring to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees.

UNRWA later said six of its staff had been killed in two Israeli strikes on the school and its surroundings, calling it the highest death toll among its team in a single incident.

"Among those killed was the manager of the UNRWA shelter and other team members providing assistance to displaced people," it said on X. "Schools and other civilian infrastructure must be protected at all times, they are not a target."

The Israeli military said it had conducted a "precise strike" on Hamas militants within the school grounds. It did not elaborate on the outcome, but said "numerous steps" were taken to reduce the risk to civilians.

UN chief Antonio Guterres branded the strike "totally unacceptable".

His condemnation was echoed by Israeli ally Germany, which said "humanitarian aid workers must never be victims of rockets". Jordan and the European Union also criticised the attack, while Israel's main backer the United States called on it to protect humanitarian sites.

#### EU outrage

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell



Palestinians search in the rubble for survivors at the site of an Israeli strike in the Shejaiya suburb east of Gaza City on Thursday.

said he was "outraged" by the deaths and that the strikes showed a "disregard of the basic principles" of international humanitarian law.

US Secretary of State Blinken said: "We need to see humanitarian sites protected, and that's something that we continue to raise with Israel". Israeli military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Nadav Shoshani said UNRWA had not provided the names of its killed workers, "despite repeated requests".

He said a military inquiry found that "a significant number of the names (of the dead) that have appeared in the media and on social networks are Hamas terrorist operatives".

In response, UNRWA spokeswoman Juliette Touma said the agency was "not aware of any such requests", that it provided Israel each year with a list of its staff and that it "called repeatedly" on Israel and Palestinian militants "to never use civilian facilities for military or fighting purposes".

She said the agency was "not in a position to determine" if the school had been used by Hamas for military purposes, but UNRWA had "repeatedly called for independent investigations" into "these very serious claims". Israeli government spokesman David Mencer said the school was "no longer a school" and had become "a legitimate target" as it was

used by Hamas to launch attacks.

UNRWA, which coordinates nearly all aid into Gaza, has been in crisis since Israel accused a dozen of its 30,000 employees of being involved in the October 7 Hamas attacks that sparked the war.

The UN immediately fired the implicated staff members, and a probe found some "neutrality related issues" but stressed Israel had not provided evidence for its chief allegations.

#### 'Going through hell'

Survivors of the strike scrambled to recover bodies and belongings from the rubble, saying they had to step over "shredded limbs". "I can hardly

stand up," a man holding a plastic bag of human remains told AFP.

"We've been going through hell for 340 days now, what we've seen over these days, we haven't even seen it in Hollywood movies, now we're seeing it in Gaza." UNRWA head Philippe Lazzarini said after the school strike that at least 220 members of the agency's staff had been killed in the war.

"Endless & senseless killing, day after day," he posted on X.

"Humanitarian staff, premises & operations have been blatantly & unabatedly disregarded since the beginning of the war."

Across Gaza, many school buildings have been repurposed to shelter displaced families, with the vast majority of the territory's 2.4 million people repeatedly uprooted by the war.

#### No truce breakthrough

In Gaza City, civil defence spokesman Bassal said two strikes in the Zeitun neighbourhood killed seven people—including two children.

Later, he said two people were killed in the Jabalia camp. Medical sources said five people were killed in strikes on the Khan Yunis area.

The bloodshed shows no signs of abating despite months of ceasefire negotiations mediated by Qatar, Egypt and the United States.

A Hamas delegation met Qatari and Egyptian mediators in Doha on Wednesday, the Palestinian Islamists said, though there was no indication of a breakthrough.

The October 7 Hamas attack on southern Israel resulted in the deaths of 1,205 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures. Among the dead included in that count were hostages killed in captivity.

Israel's retaliation has killed at least 41,118 people in Gaza, according to the territory's health ministry.

## Rohingya refugees in India on hunger strike over 'prolonged' detention

REUTERS

GUWAHATI, INDIA, SEPT 12

More than 100 Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar including women and children have been on hunger strike since Monday to protest at their indefinite detention at a camp in northeastern India, authorities told Reuters.

More than one million Rohingya refugees fled to countries including Bangladesh and India after a military-led crackdown in Myanmar in 2017. They have little hope of returning home, where they are largely denied citizenship and basic rights.

The protesters include about 103 Rohingya Muslims and 30 Christian Chin refugees, also from Myanmar, and many have refugee cards issued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said a Rohingya who is in touch with the protesters in Matia Transit Camp in Assam state.

The camp is India's largest detention centre for undocumented migrants who enter India illegally.

"Many of them have finished their terms, but are still stuck in detention. They are not criminals, they fled persecution," the person said, adding that 36 Rohingya protesters possessed UNHCR cards.

"The jail conditions are not good, relatives cannot even visit ... they just want to be free and shift somewhere where life is better," the person added.

The protesters want to be handed over to UNHCR and resettled in a third country, the person said, adding that they have written letters to the Assam government seeking their intervention in the last few months.

"They are demanding they be released," said Ravi Kota, Assam's most senior bureaucrat, adding that the state government has sent prison and interior ministry officials to the camp to "understand their issues" and submit a report.

"Not all were detained under a single court order, so we are trying to find out what are these orders, what are the charges, and what the legal status is," he said.

## Ukraine says Russia hit civilian grain vessel in Black Sea

REUTERS

KYIV, SEPT 12

Ukraine accused Russia on Thursday of using strategic bombers to hit a civilian grain vessel with a missile in the Black Sea in NATO member Romania's maritime economic zone, in what it described as a "brazen attack" on freedom of navigation.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the vessel carrying Ukrainian grain to Egypt had been hit by a Russian missile just after it exited Ukrainian territorial waters, and that there were no casualties according to a preliminary assessment.

There was no immediate comment from Russia.

If confirmed, the incident would mark a sharp increase in tensions between Moscow and the NATO military alliance, which has tried to tack a course between fears of escalation and supporting Ukraine in its war with Russia since Moscow's invasion in February 2022.

British maritime security company Ambrey said in a note that a Saint Kitts and Nevis-flagged bulk carrier had been struck by a Russian-launched

missile after departing from the Ukrainian port of Chornomorsk in Ukraine's Odesa region.

The vessel sustained damage to its port side, including a cargo hold and a crane, it said. Traders said the incident had contributed to stronger wheat prices by adding to concern over tightening supply in the Black

### The incident would mark a sharp increase in tensions between Moscow and the NATO military alliance.

Sea export zone. U.S. futures rose as much as 2 percent to hit a two-month peak. Zelenskyy posted images showing the twisted metal of a damaged crane and other damage.

An industry source told Reuters the strike had taken place overnight not far from the mouth of the Danube river. Dmytro Pletenchuk, spokesman for Ukraine's navy, told Reuters, the

vessel was in Romania's maritime economic zone.

Romania's Naval Authority said the vessel had not been in its territorial waters and that its assistance had not been requested in any way.

Zelenskyy wrote on X: "We are waiting for the world to react. Wheat and food security should never be targets for missiles." Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha called the strike "a brazen attack on freedom of navigation and global food security."

Ukraine is a major global grain exporter that has had to battle Russia in the Black Sea to revive its exports through its sea ports since Russia's invasion imposed a de facto blockade.

The exports were revived later that year—albeit with smaller volumes—from the three ports of greater Odesa under a deal mediated by the United Nations and Turkey that broke down last year.

In August 2023, Ukraine established its own shipping corridor—without Russia's blessing—after using naval drones and long-range weapons to strike back at Russia's Black Sea Fleet and push its vessels away from the west of the sea.

## Former Peru president Fujimori, who was convicted of human rights abuses, dies

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LIMA, PERU, SEPT 12

Alberto Fujimori, whose decade-long presidency began with triumphs righting Peru's economy and defeating a brutal insurgency only to end in autocratic excess that later sent him to prison, has died. He was 86.

His death Wednesday in the capital, Lima, was announced by his daughter, Keiko Fujimori, in a post on X.

Fujimori, who governed with an increasingly authoritarian hand in 1990-2000, was pardoned in December from his convictions for corruption and responsibility for the murder of 25 people. His daughter said in July that he was planning to run for Peru's presidency for the fourth time in 2026.

The former university president and mathematics professor was the consummate political outsider when he emerged from obscurity to win Peru's 1990 election over writer Mario Vargas Llosa. Over a tumultuous political career, he repeatedly made risky, go-for-broke decisions that alternately earned him adoration and reproach.

He took over a country ravaged by runaway inflation and guerrilla violence, mending the economy with bold actions including mass privatizations of state industries. Defeating fanatical Shining Path rebels took a little longer but also won him broad-based support. His presidency, however, collapsed just as dramatically.

After briefly shutting down Congress and elbowing himself into a controversial third term, he fled the country in disgrace in 2000 when leaked videotapes showed his spy

chief, Vladimiro Montesinos, bribing lawmakers. The president went to Japan, the land of his parents, and famously faxed in his resignation. He stunned supporters and foes alike five years later when he landed in neighboring Chile, where he was arrested and then extradited to Peru. He had hoped to run for Peru's presidency in 2006, but instead wound up in court facing charges of abuse of power.

The high-stakes political gambler would lose miserably. He became the first former president in the world to be tried and convicted in his own country for human rights violations. He was not found to have personally ordered the 25 death-squad killings for which he was convicted, but he was deemed responsible because the crimes were committed in his government's name.

His 25-year sentence did not stop Fujimori from seeking political revindication, which he planned from a prison built in a police academy on the outskirts of Lima, the capital.

His congresswoman daughter Keiko tried in 2011 to restore the family dynasty by running for the presidency but was narrowly defeated in a runoff. She ran again in 2016 and 2021, when she lost by just 44,000 votes after a campaign in which she promised to free her father.

"After a long battle with cancer, our father, Alberto Fujimori, has just departed to meet the Lord," she said on X Wednesday. "We ask those who loved him to accompany us with a prayer for the eternal rest of his soul."

Fujimori's presidency was, in fact, a brash display of outright authoritarianism, known locally as "caudillismo," in a region shakily stepping away from dictatorships toward democracy. He is survived by his four children. The oldest, Keiko, became first lady in 1996 when his father divorced his mother, Susana Higuchi, in a bitter battle in which she accused Fujimori of having her tortured.



Former Peru president Alberto Fujimori

The youngest child, Kenji, was elected a congressman. Fujimori was born July 28, 1938, Peruvian Independence Day, and his immigrant parents picked cotton until they could open a tailor's shop in downtown Lima.

He earned a degree in agricultural engineering in 1956, and then studied in France and the United States, where he received a graduate degree in mathematics from the University of Wisconsin in 1972.

In 1984 he became rector of the Agricultural University in Lima, and six years later, he ran for president without ever having held political office, billing himself as a clean alternative to Peru's corrupt, discredited political class. He soared from 6 percent in the polls a month before the 1990 election to finish second out of nine in the balloting. He went on to beat Vargas Llosa in a runoff.

The victory, he later said, came from the same frustration that fueled the Shining Path.

"My government is the product of rejection, of being fed up with Peru because of the frivolity, corruption and nonfunctioning of the traditional political class and the bureaucracy," he said.

Once in office, Fujimori's tough talk and hands-on style at first won him only plaudits, as car bombings still ripped through the capital and annual inflation approached 8,000 percent.

He applied the same economic shock therapy that Vargas Llosa had advocated but he had argued against in the campaign.

Privatizing state-owned industries, Fujimori slashed public spending and attracted record foreign investment.

Known affectionately as "El chino," due to his Asian ancestry, Fujimori often donned peasant garb to visit jungle Indigenous communities and highland farmers, while delivering electricity and drinking water to dirt-poor villages. That distinguished him from the patrician, white politicians who typically lacked his commoner's touch.

Fujimori also gave Peru's security forces free rein to take on the Shining Path. In September 1992, police captured rebel leader Abimael Guzmán. Deservedly or not, Fujimori took credit.

Taking power just years after much of the region had shed dictatorships, the former university professor ultimately represented a step back. He developed a growing taste for power and resorted to increasingly anti-democratic means to amass more of it.

In April 1992, he shut down Congress

and the courts, accusing them of shackling his efforts to defeat the Shining Path and spur economic reforms.

International pressure forced him to call elections for an assembly to replace the Congress. The new legislative body, dominated by his supporters, changed Peru's constitution to allow the president to serve two consecutive five-year terms. Fujimori was swept back into office in 1995, after a brief border war with Ecuador, in an election landslide.

Human rights advocates at home and abroad blasted him for pushing through a general amnesty law forgiving human rights abuses committed by security forces during Peru's "anti-subversive" campaign between 1980 and 1995.

The conflict would claim nearly 70,000 lives, a truth commission found, with the military responsible for more than a third of the deaths. Journalists and businessmen were kidnapped, students disappeared and at least 2,000 highland peasant women were forcibly sterilized.

In 1996, Fujimori's majority bloc in Congress put him on the path for a third term when it approved a law that determined his first five years as president didn't count because the new constitution was not yet in place when he was elected. A year later, Fujimori's Congress fired three Constitutional Tribunal judges who tried to overturn the legislation, and his foes accused him of imposing a democratically elected dictatorship.

By then, almost daily revelations were showing the monumental scale of corruption around Fujimori.

# Power struggle and chaotic player trading: What's going at Chelsea?

The club has spent more than £1 billion (\$1.3 billion) in just over two years on a bloated squad with little to show for it.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LONDON, SEPT 12

No sooner had another turbulent transfer window for Chelsea shut than reports emerged of a power struggle between chairman Todd Boehly and majority shareholder Behdad Eghbali. In just over two years since the pair joined forces to buy the Blues, the Premier League club have spent more than £1 billion (\$1.3 billion) on a bloated squad with little to show for it. AFP Sport looks at the current state of the two-time European champions, who were serial winners during the Roman Abramovich era.



Chelsea have still to lift a trophy under the new regime.

## Battle for the Bridge

LA Dodgers co-owner Boehly was the face of a 2022 takeover after sanctions imposed on Russian billionaire Abramovich forced a quick sale of the club. However, the vast majority of the world-record £2.5 billion price for a football club came from Eghbali's private equity group Clearlake Capital.

After Boehly's brief stint as the club's sporting director during the first six months of the new regime in west London, Eghbali has become the most hands-on figure within the ownership group.

The relationship between the pair is said to have deteriorated in recent months, with differing opinions over the club's recruitment policy, poor results and the failure to make progress on the building of a new stadium. One of the key disagreements came over the position of now-departed manager Mauricio Pochettino.

The Argentine oversaw a strong finish after a troubled start to his sole season in charge, with Chelsea ending

sixth in the Premier League to qualify for the Europa Conference League.

Boehly is believed to have backed Pochettino, now in charge of the US men's team.

However, Eghbali and the club's co-sporting directors Paul Winstanley and Laurence Stewart were reported to have favoured a fresh approach and Enzo Maresca became the club's fourth permanent appointment as manager in less than two years.

Bloomberg have reported that Boehly and Eghbali are looking into whether they could buy the other's Chelsea shares. Raising the money to do so would be far more onerous for Boehly, who owns just under a 13 per cent stake, compared with Clearlake's 61.5 percent.

## Money yet to buy success

Boehly and Eghbali have managed to splash out an estimated £1.1 billion on dozens of players with nothing to show for their investment.

Just over three years ago, Chelsea, then still owned by Abramovich, beat Pep Guardiola's dominant Manchester City side to win the Champions League.

With Ben Chilwell one of a number of expensive recruits deemed surplus to requirements, captain Reece James is the only survivor from the squad that won that night in Porto who is currently in Maresca's plans.

Chelsea twice smashed the British transfer in little more than six months for Enzo Fernandez and Moises Caicedo in 2023 yet the two midfielders are yet to gel.

A host of other big-money signings have been frozen out due to the stockpiling of players.

Chelsea will reportedly pay around £10 million for Raheem Sterling -- the first signing of the Boehly-Eghbali era -- to play for Arsenal this season.

During Abramovich's 19-year tenure, Chelsea won five Premier League titles and never went two straight seasons without silverware.

Yet they have still to lift a trophy under the new regime and have finished 12th and sixth in the past two Premier League campaigns.

"The club have become a laughing stock both on and off the pitch," the Chelsea Supporters' Trust said in a statement earlier this year.

## Method in the madness?

There have been some success stories from Chelsea's lavish outlay that has mainly focused on young talent from across the globe.

Cole Palmer's £40 million move from Manchester City now looks like a bargain after he was one of the standout Premier League players last season, with Noni Madueke also impressing.

And the club say they have slashed the average salary of the squad with long contracts heavily incentivised, based on performance.

Chelsea's transfer splurge has stood out even more as other Premier League clubs have become more cautious in the market to meet financial regulations.

But the Blues have so far cleverly managed to stay ahead of the rules, including by selling two hotels on the Stamford Bridge site to companies under the control of Boehly and Clearlake.

# Arsenal boss Arteta signs new contract

The Spanish coach has transformed the team into Manchester City's main English Premier League title rival.



Fans show a banner with photo of Arsenal's manager Mikel Arteta during the English Premier League match between Arsenal and Brighton, at Emirates Stadium in London, on August 31.

ASSOCIATED PRESS LONDON, SEPT 12

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta signed a new contract to 2027 on Thursday.

"I feel very inspired, I feel challenged, I feel supported and I want to do much more than what we've already done together," Arteta said.

The 42-year-old Spanish coach has been at Arsenal since December 2019 and transformed the team into Manchester City's main English Premier League title rival by finishing runner-up in the last two seasons.

His previous deal was expiring at the end of this season and speculation mentioned him as a potential successor to Pep Guardiola at City.

"We are really happy that Mikel has signed a new long-term contract. It's a very positive and proud moment for everyone at the club," Arsenal sporting director Edu said. "Mikel has shown his qualities since the very first day he joined us, not only as a

manager, but as a person with wonderful values. We have a strong belief in what we want to achieve. Mikel's new contract gives us stability and clear direction as we aim for new heights." Arteta was Guardiola's assistant at City before succeeding Unai Emery at Arsenal and going on to win the FA Cup in his first season in charge.

Two seasons ago, Arsenal spent 248 days at the top of the league but was beaten to the title by City. No other team had spent so long in first place without being crowned league champion. Last season, Arsenal pushed City even closer when taking the title race down to the last day, and eventually finished two points behind them.

"Mikel is a dynamic and passionate manager, who is relentless in the pursuit of excellence," Arsenal co-chair Josh Kroenke said. "He has a deep understanding of Arsenal's values, and since joining us as head coach in December 2019, he has taken the team to another level in an Arsenal way."



Argentina's goalkeeper Martinez holds a ball while warming up prior to a qualifying match against Colombia for the FIFA World Cup 2026 in Barranquilla, Colombia, on September 10.

# Argentina goalkeeper Martínez under fire for hitting TV cameraman after loss to Colombia

ASSOCIATED PRESS BOGOTA, COLOMBIA, SEPT 12

A TV cameraman said Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martínez "slapped me" after Colombia's 2-1 win in a World Cup qualifying match.

Jhonny Jackson told Colombian media he approached Martínez after the final whistle in Barranquilla on Tuesday as the goalkeeper greeted another player. Footage he captured shows the World Cup winner who Argentines know as Dibu hitting the

camera, which quickly shakes to the ground after the impact.

"Out of the blue he slapped me," Jackson told RCN Deportes on Wednesday. "I felt angry, very angry. I was working, just like he was. He was playing and I was shooting with my camera." He also sent a message to Martínez: "Dibu, my brother, how are you? I am Jhonny Jackson, the cameraman you assaulted in the match against Colombia. I wanted to tell you it is all good, my brother. Everyone has lost a match in their life. This

defeat clearly meant a lot to you. But look ahead, Dibu."

Jackson works for a company that delivers footage to channels Caracol Television and RCN Deportes.

Footballers have been suspended from games in similar situations, and that is what Colombia's association of sports journalists — known as ACORD — wants FIFA to do. Its president Faiver Hoyos Hernández said in a statement that Martínez attacked freedom of expression.

"As the journalistic authority in

this country, ACORD wants FIFA to produce an exemplary sanction against Mr. Emiliano Dibu Martínez, who is no role model for new generations," the statement said.

Martínez and South American soccer body CONMEBOL did not make comments. Argentina leads the South American World Cup qualifying with 18 points after eight matches, two points ahead of Colombia. All teams have two more qualifying matches next month. The top six teams will get automatic spots at the 2026 World Cup.

## HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21-April 19) You may require extra rest to find your groove this morning. Aries. Luckily, you'll perk up, helping you catch up on any slack that occurred earlier in the day. Know when to pace yourself once the afternoon sets in.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) Don't abandon your needs, dearest Cancer, especially if your morning begins with catering to others. Seek conversation with those who lift your spirits and remind you that connection is important for personal balance.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22) You may be forced to put a few plans on hold, especially if family or loved ones need your attention first. Luckily, these setbacks could be a blessing in disguise, encouraging you to pull back and edit ideas before displaying them to the world.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19) You may feel challenged or restricted as the morning kicks off. Luckily, you'll have a chance to laugh away drama and rise above these hurdles. Strained emotions could take a toll on your confidence, and you must demonstrate kindness and compassion to yourself.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) A rush of inspiration finds you this morning, though organising your ideas in tangible steps may be difficult. Allow creativity to guide the way, chasing what brings the most joy and excitement.

LEO (July 23-August 22) You could feel more sensitive than usual, especially when peers try to offer advice. Take other people's ideas and opinions with a grain of salt, focusing on centering yourself before choosing the path forward.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21) Be extra gentle with yourself, dearest Scorpio. Strive to find a mind/body connection, no matter how tempting it is to blindly charge through the remainder of the workweek. A surprise may be in store for you this evening.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18) Do what you can to maintain a positive outlook, dearest Aquarius, even when the world around you seems harsh. You'll have a chance to break free from cycles that have led to negative thinking.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) You may feel conflicted between seeking commitment or pursuing fun. Allow your emotions to speak the truth, highlighting the path forward and how it might transform your life. Avoid negativity, as jealousies and gossip could bring down the vibration of your social sphere.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22) The day starts slowly, and you may feel unlike your usual self. Luckily, you'll be reminded of your strength and sparkle, while bringing some drama to your look can help strengthen these sentiments. Be mindful of who you trust.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21) You may feel burnt out from your electronics, news feeds, and social media pages. To rise above these vibes, set boundaries with your screens and return to the present by noticing small wonders around you.

PISCES (February 19-March 20) People may seem more self-centred, authoritative, or harsh than usual. Luckily, you'll be reminded of who your true allies are, especially when you show love to and confide in your dearest companions. Avoid latching onto new stories or social media feeds.

## CROSSWORD

- ACROSS 1 About (2 wds.) 5 Confronts 10 Car for hire 13 Poultry shed 14 Town in Maine 15 Auditorium 16 Actress — Moreno 17 Fully prepared 18 Irish Gaelic 19 Smooth-spoken 21 Shout 23 Sky bear 24 Yield by treaty 25 God-given gift 28 Sneakers, British style 32 "A long time — in a galaxy ..." 33 Aim 34 Tennis term 35 Corvine cry 36 Walking aids 37 Name in Genesis 38 " — Got a Secret" 39 Sensational 40 Detestable fellow 41 "Great!" 43 Defeated 46 Lummoxes 47 Slim

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED 9-11-24 © 2024 UFS, Dist. by Andrews McMeel for UFS. Includes crossword grid and solutions for previous puzzle.

Crossword grid with numbers 1-62 and black squares.

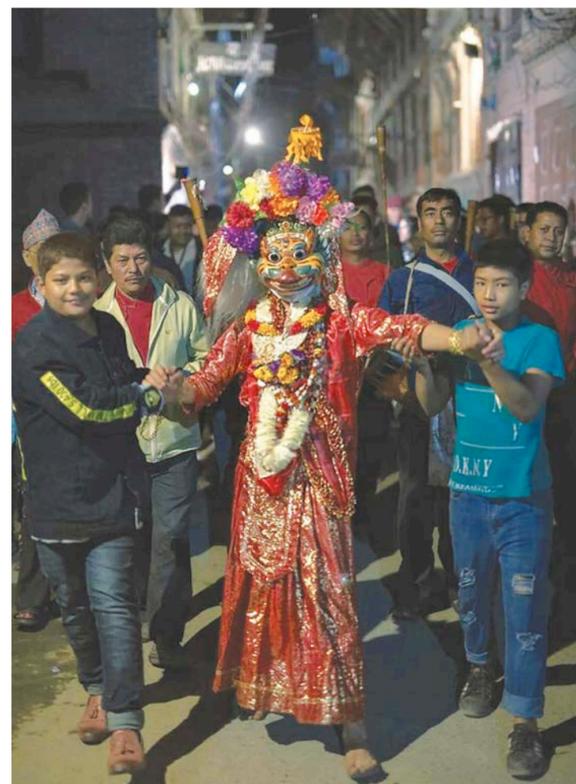
## SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzle grid with numbers 1-9 and empty cells. Includes 'YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION' and 'DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★'.



Performers playing Kumari, Bishnudevi and Bramhayani.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF PRANISH RAJ BHANDARI



One of the performers is being taken to Mangal Bazar for the dance.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF PHOTOKHICHUWA

# Financial hardships threaten the future of Asta Matrika dance

This 350-year-old traditional dance from Patan begins on Ghatasthapana and lasts throughout Dashain.

**SANSKRITI POKHAREL**  
KATHMANDU

As the weather begins to cool down and the sky transforms into a shade of clear, deep blue, the joyous season of Dashain arrives. During this time, the aroma of delicacies fills the air. Not only that, but various cultural dances bring energy and excitement. Among these captivating dance performances is the Asta Matrika dance, which adds a layer of vibrancy to the celebrations.

Asta Matrika is a 350-year-old traditional dance from Patan that begins on Ghatasthapana and lasts 11 days throughout Dashain. Similar to how certain classic works of literature and art were inspired by the dreams of poets, authors, and artists, this dance form was born from a dream that Srinivasa Malla, the King of Lalitpur at the time, had.

According to popular legend, the Malla king dreamed of the Asta Matrika Devis (Eight Mother Goddesses) and Bhairav, Simhini, Byangrini, Lord Ganesh, and Lord Kumar dancing in his palace courtyard. Intrigued and unsettled by the vision, he sought advice from his gurus, eager to understand the meaning behind the dream.

The gurus told the king, "This dream is a bad omen. You must create and perform this dance to

dispel the *Asta Maha Vaya*—the eight great fears of water, lions, fire, snakes, elephants, thieves, false imprisonment, and ghosts—that threaten you and your subjects." The sacred dance of Asta Matrika is believed to protect people from these fears.

The dance includes thirteen deities in total: eight mother goddesses—Brahmani, Mahesvari, Bal Kumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrayani, Mahakali, and Mahalaxmi—along with five Newar patron deities—Bhairav, Simhini, Byangrini, Lord Ganesh, and Lord Kumar. The Shakya and Bajracharya community members from the Newar group actively participated in the performance.

Select individuals who have adhered to sacred rites and maintained purity portray the goddesses. This raises curiosity about why only Shakyas and Bajracharyas are chosen for the Asta Matrika dance, potentially leading to questions about the tradition.

Suprince Shakya, who has been performing as Byangrini (one of the goddesses in the dance) since he was eleven, explained, "The king entrusted the responsibility of performing this dance to the Shakyas and Bajracharyas because they were more advanced in tantric rituals and prayers."

The performers start their ritual by visiting the shrine of Vajrasattva, where they take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Afterwards, they receive blessings from their teacher and make offerings. Once all participants have completed these rituals, the musicians play the opening melody, and the teacher leads them in the dance before the Nriyeshwara temple, the deity of dance. They then observe Upasadha, a day of fasting, and practice meditation.

All dancers must shave their heads and fast for a day to uphold purity and honour the deities. They must follow strict discipline, avoid food and drinks containing intoxicants, and perform various rituals daily throughout the Naach period.

The thirteen deities—eight mother goddesses and five Newar patron deities—must follow the rules preventing them from applying tika or celebrating Dashain. Although missing out on these Dashain traditions might seem disheartening, Shakya notes, "Not being able to put tika during Dashain does not affect me."

Asta Matrika is a tradition handed down through generations, initially learned by observing grandparents and parents. Shakya used to watch his brothers perform as goddesses in this dance and would

assist them. When a position for Byangrini became available, he was selected. His observation paid off, as he felt confident during his first performance.

Performing as Byangrini for the first time made Shakya feel like the deity had entered his body and taken residence. Although he wasn't nervous, this experience left him feeling overwhelmed. He would become semi-conscious, unaware of his surroundings, but completely immersed in his role.

In his journey as Byangrini, Shakya has encountered some individuals who do not fully commit to the tradition and disregard its rules. He emphasizes, "To ensure that Asta Matrika is preserved for future generations, the participants must demonstrate the highest level of devotion, and the selection process must be rigorous. While there is some financial support, it is not enough to sustain the performers. The government should offer financial aid to preserve traditional dances," Shakya adds.

As cities grow and lifestyles change, younger generations may find committing time and effort to traditional dance challenging. Economic pressures might push families to prioritise education and stable careers over cultural practices that may not offer immediate financial rewards. Therefore, the government must provide sufficient support to help sustain these traditions.



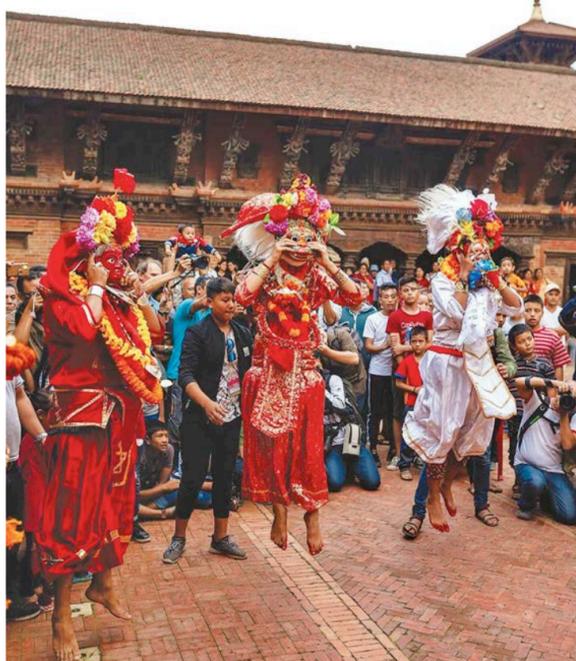
The dance taking place in Mulchok of Patan Durbar Square.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF PRANISH RAJ BHANDARI



The performers gather for a group photo.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF PRANISH RAJ BHANDARI



After the dance completion, the performers take off their masks while jumping thrice.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF PRANISH RAJ BHANDARI



After putting on the *Khwapa* (Mask), the Byangrini performer Shakya sits for a while before the performance.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF PRANISH RAJ BHANDARI



Suprince Shakya first performed as Byangrini in the dance when he was eleven.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THOMAS L KELLY