

159 agencies penalised for routing migrant workers through Indian airports

Department warns 434 recruitment firms for failing to submit mandatory flight records.

HOM KARKI
KATHMANDU, JULY 11

The Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE) has penalised 159 recruitment agencies for sending migrant workers to overseas destinations via Indian airports without prior authorisation.

The department has also issued warnings to 434 other manpower companies that failed to submit mandatory records on workers' departures, giving them a final opportunity to comply.

The action follows a DoFE directive requiring all licensed recruitment agencies to submit details of workers who travelled abroad between March 15 and June 14 after obtaining labour permits.

According to the department, the move was aimed at identifying agencies that routed workers through Indian airports without obtaining prior approval. Officials say the practice increased after the government tightened oversight of service fees charged by recruitment agencies, prompting some firms to use Indian airports to avoid greater scrutiny.

Under the Foreign Employment Act, 2007, recruitment agencies are required to send migrant workers through airports in Nepal. Although the law allows the use of foreign airports under exceptional circumstances, agencies must obtain prior approval from the DoFE and follow the prescribed procedure.

Recruitment agencies, however,

argue that soaring airfares and a shortage of international flights following heightened tensions in West Asia forced them to use Indian airports.

According to the department, 678 of Nepal's 1,117 licensed recruitment agencies submitted the requested flight records. A review of the records found that 159 agencies had routed workers through foreign airports without prior approval.

The department issued formal warnings to the 159 agencies under Section 54 of the Foreign Employment Act, treating the cases as first-time violations.

The department said in a notice on Saturday that eight agencies, including Grand Suite Job, Mass Human Resource, Noon Resources, Apex HR Consultancy, Tesla Overseas, Tsunaguwa International, Allied International Manpower and Anjali Overseas Services, were found to have repeatedly violated the law and ignored departmental directives. They were each fined Rs50,000.

The department also found that 434 recruitment agencies had failed to submit the required records, in violation of Section 37 of the Act. They have been issued formal warnings and directed to submit the documents immediately.

According to DoFE data up to June 14, 722,000 Nepalis, including 636,000 men and 86,000 women, left for foreign employment. Of them, 242,000 were deployed through licensed recruitment agencies.



The department has said eight agencies were found to have repeatedly violated the law.

Nearly 2.6 million smart driving licences printed as backlog cleared

New digital licensing system set to launch this week; over 300,000 licences nearing expiry to be issued only after renewal.

BIMAL KHATIWADA
KATHMANDU, JULY 11

Nearly 2.6 million smart driving licences from a backlog of 2.9 million applications have been printed within eight and a half months of an agreement between the Security Printing Centre and the Department of Transport Management.

The centre has printed 2,592,417 licence cards in two phases. Of the remaining applications, 307,583 licences have less than a year of validity left.

The department said these licences will be printed only after applicants renew them. According to Dev Raj Dhungana, executive director of the Security Printing Centre, all eligible licence cards have been printed based on the data provided by the department.

The first agreement between the centre and the department was signed on October 29, 2025, to print 1.2 million licence cards by April 25. After completing the first batch on schedule, the two sides signed another agreement on April 17 to print an additional 1.7 million backlog licences by July 16.

"We have printed all the cards included in the second batch of data provided by the department," Dhungana said. "The remaining printed licences will be handed over to the department by mid-July, clearing the backlog."

The centre currently receives data for 3,000 to 4,000 applicants each day, including those who have passed driving tests and those renewing their licences.

Dhungana said the transport department will continue to coordinate data management for the time being. In the future, the printing centre will sign printing agreements directly with all seven provincial governments, although the data will continue to be routed through the department until the transition is over.

"A formal agreement will be signed once a decision is made on whether the department or the provincial governments will bear the printing cost," he said. "The department will continue to manage the system until the provinces are fully integrated."

Regular licence printing continued even as the backlog was being cleared. During the first phase, the centre printed 37,698 urgent licences and



An official distributes newly-printed driving licenses at Transport Management Office in Radhe Radhe, Bhaktapur in this recent photo.

31,227 regular applications. In the second phase, it printed another 4,881 urgent licences and 229,918 regular applications submitted after driving tests or renewals.

"With the backlog cleared, applicants completing new driving tests or renewing their licences after mid-July will receive their smart cards without delay," Dhungana said. The printed cards are sent to the department, which distributes them through the postal service to 42 transport management offices across the country.

Keshav Khatiwada, director at the department, said all data except licences with less than a year of validity had been sent for printing.

"Initially, we estimated that between 300,000 and 350,000 licences fell into this category. After verification, the figure came to 307,583," he said.

Khatiwada said printing such licences was considered impractical because many would require renewal shortly after being issued, resulting in additional costs for both the govern-

ment and service seekers. However, he said they could still be printed if required by law.

Under existing provisions, renewed driving licences are valid for 10 years. The extended validity period replaced the previous five-year term on July 30, 2025. Khatiwada said provincial governments will now assume responsibility for licence printing.

New system from July 17

The Department of Transport Management plans to replace its existing licensing platform with the Electronic Driving Licence and Vehicle Registration System (EDL-VRS) from July 17.

"The current system has become outdated, and the new platform represents a major upgrade," Khatiwada said.

Under the new system, applicants will be able to pay renewal fees online. Medical examinations will also be digitised, with authorised doctors uploading reports directly to the system.

The department also plans to coordinate directly with the Department of Postal Services so that printed licences can be delivered to designated distribution points more efficiently.

Khatiwada said the department's role will gradually shift towards maintaining the central database, while licence data will eventually flow directly from provincial transport offices to the Security Printing Centre for printing.

He said applicants would no longer have to wait in a long printing queue once their fees had been paid.

Since 2022, shortages of smart licence cards forced many motorists to carry revenue receipts instead of physical licences.

Despite progress in printing, applicants continue to face long queues at transport management offices, particularly in the Kathmandu valley to collect their licences. Transport offices have faced criticism for failing to streamline the distribution process.

Floods at Kirtipur holding centre expose flaws in government's squatter relocation plan

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"Within minutes, it rose above our knees. Our immediate priority was to carry the young children out to higher ground. The police only arrived after everything was completely submerged."

For young students, the disaster has disrupted their education. Rijan Lama, a fifth grader, had received new textbooks and uniforms two months ago. "I was fast asleep when the water came and couldn't save anything," he said. "My notebooks with my homework are gone now."

Manoj Mahato, looking over the flooded compound, noted grimly, "The few belongings we saved from the bulldozers are now destroyed by the floods. People usually go searching for water, but water keeps hunting us down."

The conflict surrounding the Thapathali squatter settlements has been a major socio-political flashpoint in the capital city since late 2022. The Kathmandu Metropolitan City repeatedly attempted to clear the banks of the Bagmati river to execute its urban beautification projects and river corridor development plans.

Past eviction attempts led to violent clashes between municipal police and settlement residents, who argued they could not leave without a proper rehabilitation plan. While the federal government previously hesitated to provide security backing for forceful evictions, the government push in April led to the current temporary relocation policy, which has now faced severe operational failures during its very first monsoon test.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority issued a statement on Saturday morning, confirming that 54 out of the 154 individuals sheltered at the Kirtipur holding centre had been successfully rescued and moved to the Smriti Bhawan building at Tribhuvan University. Security forces were mobilised to distribute food, clean water, and emergency relief supplies.

By 3pm when Kantipur's scribe reached the site, the floodwaters had receded, leaving behind thick layers of debris and mud. Girvanika Thapa, holding her ten-month-old son, showed her mud-stained clothes drying in the sun. "The chil-

dren are exhausted and crying constantly," Thapa said. "We were given some beaten rice and curd, but it is difficult to eat in this state of distress."

The government is currently preparing to transfer the remaining displaced families to the Nepal Electricity Authority training centre in Kharipati, Bhaktapur. Ojaswi Thapa, an official from the Prime Minister's Office who has been managing the disaster response on-site since 2:00 am, confirmed the plan. "We are working to coordinate immediate relief and are preparing to transport the families to a much more organised facility in Kharipati," he said.

However, the displaced residents are strongly resisting the move to Bhaktapur. Punam Devi Paswan pointed out that her children are about to begin their school examinations. "If we move to Bhaktapur, their classes will be disrupted

entirely," she said.

Pradip Bista, the lawmaker elected from Kathmandu-10 as Rastriya Swatantra Party candidate, visited the shelter to reassure the families. "The government will take full responsibility for your welfare," Bista told the displaced families. "There are schools available in Bhaktapur as well, and your children's education will not suffer. Please board the vehicles; the arrangements in Kharipati are far better."

Despite assurances from officials, residents remain skeptical. "Our children's education is already ruined," said Anjali Paswan. "The government will simply evict us from Kharipati after a few months anyway."

According to Bibek Bastola, personal secretary of Infrastructure Minister Sunil Lamsal, 154 individuals from 65 families were formally registered at the Kirtipur facility.

Among them, 35 families accepted a cash grant of Rs25,000 provided by the government for voluntary self-management and left. However, 27 families refused to fill out the application forms.

"How can a family of seven or eight members manage to rent a house and survive on just Rs25,000?" said a displaced woman who refused the grant. "So we have not filled the form."

Machakaji Maharjan, project chief of the High Powered Committee for Integrated Development of the Bagmati Civilisation, said that moving the remaining families to Kharipati is the only immediate alternative. "They were initially moved here because the riverbanks were dangerous," Maharjan said. "Now that the monsoon has created problems here, Kharipati offers a secure environment until we find a long-term solution."



Squatters take out their belongings from their shelter at the deluged holding centre in Kirtipur, Kathmandu on Saturday.

Private sector ready to improve social responsibility spending but won't surrender funds

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Notably, the board contains no representatives from the private sector despite the fund being financed entirely by corporate contributions.

The committee would meet at least twice a year, approve annual programmes and budgets, coordinate with implementing agencies, monitor projects, review progress and issue policy directives. It would also prepare separate operational guidelines governing the management of the fund.

According to the draft, the fund could finance a broad range of activities, including education, healthcare, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian assistance, environmental conservation, disability support, income generation for socially marginalised communities, financial literacy, investor education, consumer protection, preservation of cultural heritage, restoration of national heritages and infrastructure development in remote areas.

It would also support schools and health institutions serving extremely poor communities, pandemic response, orphanages, elderly care homes, shelters for homeless people, organisations assisting survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence, animal rescue organisations, institutions carrying out nationally significant non-commercial innovations and other sectors designated by the government through the Nepal Gazette.

Organisations implementing CSR programmes would also be required to submit annual reports to the Office of the Company Registrar within three months of the end of each fiscal year detailing their activities, expenditure and measurable social impact.

Santosh Koirala, president of Nepal Bankers' Association, questioned why the government wanted to assume direct control over money that companies were already spending after paying taxes.

"We contribute one percent of our post-tax profits to social causes," said Koirala. "If the government believes there are weaknesses or misuse in CSR spending, the answer is stronger regulation through the appropriate regulatory agencies. We support making the system more organised and transparent, but we do not agree with the government collecting and spending the money itself."

Nepal's CSR framework has evolved over the past decade. Section 54 of the Industrial Enterprises Act 2020 requires medium and large industries, as well as cottage and small industries with annual turnover exceeding Rs150 million, to allocate at least one percent of their annual net profit to CSR activities. The money must be spent

under approved annual plans, while expenditure reports must be submitted to the relevant authority within six months after the end of each fiscal year. CSR expenditure is also recognised as a deductible business expense for income tax purposes.

The Industrial Enterprises Regulations further require CSR investments to prioritise low-income groups, rural women, persons with disabilities, minorities and marginalised communities through income generation and skills development programmes.

On May 5 last year, the ministry introduced the CSR Implementation Procedure-2025 to improve transparency, predictability and accountability. The procedure requires industries to spend at least half of their CSR budget in areas directly affected by their operations after consultation with local governments. Companies must prepare implementation plans detailing budgets, activities, timelines and expected outcomes and disclose CSR expenditure in their annual audit reports.

Nepal Rastra Bank has also tightened CSR governance for banks and financial institutions through revised guidelines requiring CSR spending to be transparent, effective and targeted. The central bank directs financial institutions to prioritise communities living in extreme poverty and requires at least 60 percent of annual CSR allocations to be spent within the same fiscal year.

Commercial banks alone reported combined profits of Rs71.51 billion last fiscal year, meaning they are expected to spend at least Rs715.1 million on CSR under the central bank's one-percent requirement. The figure would increase substantially after including development banks, finance companies and microfinance institutions. Comprehensive data on CSR spending by the industrial sector, however, are unavailable.

Internationally, CSR gained momentum after growing concerns in the 1990s about the social impacts of multinational corporations in developing countries. The endorsement of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2011 further established global standards encouraging businesses to respect human rights while providing remedies for affected communities.

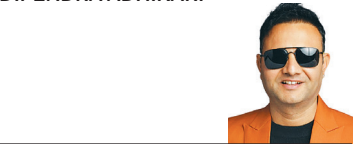
The government's proposal is expected to face intense scrutiny during consultations on the draft bill, with business groups likely to push for retaining companies' authority to implement CSR programmes while strengthening oversight rather than centralising control of corporate contributions.

OPINION

The caveats of amending a constitution

If an amendment can fail even when it is procedurally flawless, who decides when that line has been crossed?

DIPENDRA ADHIKARI



At this transitional juncture, a constitution cannot be labelled merely as a legal document. It is, above all, a record of struggle, drafted to stabilise hard-won principles being undone by the arrogance of a passing majority's vote. Nepal is no exception. This idea is being tested, quietly but persistently, wherever nations

all, for its long journey where the general public can walk together. But failure of the constitution in almost each decade raises questions from all sides. However, a technically able amendment does not necessarily go far enough. Where a change infringes upon the fundamental principles of a Constitution, it is no longer an amendment but the enacting of a new Constitution; and this can be done only by the original Constitutional Power, not by the delegate. But the Supreme Court of India had no hesitation saying that Parliament could not, using its amending powers, abate or set aside



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weigh how far they may go in altering their own founding charters/constitution. It may sound technical, but it addresses the most profound paradox in constitutional law: A constitution confers the authority to alter it. To what extent, then, can that power go before it subverts the authority that gave it? Unfettered discretion of amendment allows those whose power is supposed to be limited to set the limits themselves.

To the profound paradox raised, constitutional theory draws a sharp line between two forms of authority. One is constituent power—the original power of a sovereign people to found a constitution. The other is constituted power—the ordinary powers the constitution itself creates, including the one to amend it. They are not identical. A power to amend is always a delegated one, subordinate to the delegating power. A delegate can amend, elaborate and refine, but they cannot do so to change the founding settlement.

In 1803, John Marshall, one of the most influential Chief Justices in American legal history, expressed that the people's right to establish their own government is a right more fundamental than any ordinary legal right, and one not to be lightly or often interfered with. A constitution, on this understanding, is not a document meant to be revised at will; it is a settlement meant to endure the very majorities that might wish to unmake it.

This idea is clearly reiterated in Nepal's Constitution. The provision of Article 274 bars any modification which may prejudice the popular sovereignty or territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Nepal. There will never be a majority in the Parliament to take down the shield and get to what is behind the shield. The remaining matters are subject to amendment upon the occurrence of the procedural conditions. The substance is the line not to be encroached. However, before the amendment is sought, the legislative intent is subjected to rigorous testing by procedure. Emphatically arguing, legislative intent cannot subvert constitutional sanctity. The prime validity in any course of constitution, either to its adaptability or amendment, is national consensus and public acceptance. Ownership of the public is, above

given those elements of the constitution, such as democracy, the rule of law and independence of the judiciary, even though they were not explicitly stated any where in the text of the constitution. The Supreme Court of Nepal found the same reasoning that the basic structures of the constitutional order imposed actual restrictions on the scope of an amendment.

The most contested question, then, is this: If an amendment can fail even when it is procedurally flawless, who decides when that line has been crossed? In most constitutional democracies, the courts provide the answer. This is not judicial supremacy over the people; it is closer to the opposite. The judiciary is most able to do so. The court will not create the limit. It imposes on itself a prerequisite that is inherent in delegation. However, judicial review is not sufficient as the solution. Finally, the authority for determining what can be amended rests with the sovereign citizen who exercises it by having a meaningful voice in the decision, and by consulting others in the decision-making process. It is up to the government to decide how that participation will happen, but the question of the legitimacy of any amendment is not one of parliamentary majorities, but of the citizen in whose name the constitution was created.

Article 274 protects sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and popular sovereignty by name. It does not name federalism or inclusiveness—both hard-won achievements of Nepal's post-2006 settlement. That unwritten boundaries that fall within constitutional silence were recognised by Nepali courts previously makes the matter more than just academic. Would federalism, inclusiveness or other fundamental elements of the Constitution enjoy the same protection if they were not specifically textually protected? To leave this unanswered is not so much a problem as an invitation; it is a reminder that amending the Constitution is not just a legal issue, it's a matter of ethical perseverance.

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— Editors

BIKEN DAWADI



On Thursday afternoon at around 1:45 pm, 25-year-old ride-sharing driver Ganesh Nepali set himself ablaze outside the Department of Passports in Tripureshwar following a distressing altercation with a Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) police personnel. Already struggling to repay a Rs300,000 motorcycle loan, Nepali succumbed to his injuries the following day. While a fresh parking violation and wheel lock triggered the act, his family alleges that repeated fines from city authorities ultimately drove him to his breaking point. His final words to his brother remain a haunting indictment: "This is all because of the metropolis."

Following his death, police have questioned three city police officers, elevating this tragedy from a localised enforcement issue to a severe trial of systemic urban governance. However, this tragedy is not merely a localised incident of a fine gone wrong. It is a symptom of a deeper, more systemic rot in our urban governance. It is a trial of the Nepali state and its burgeoning municipal police forces, which appear to have traded the duty of service for a mandate of bulldozer and boot.

What is perhaps as staggering as the tragedy itself is the profound silence emanating from the offices of those who once championed the cause of the common man against systemic institutional failure. In January 2023, when entrepreneur Prem Prasad Acharya set himself on fire outside the Parliament building, the reaction from our current leaders was swift and emotive. Then Mayor, now Prime Minister, Balendra Shah wrote then that "each and every unit, department and organ of the state have failed in this case." Rabi Lamichhane, then Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, was even more contrite, stating, "In this case we are guilty. I am guilty."

Today, Shah and Lamichhane occupy the very seats of power they once critiqued, yet their silence regarding Ganesh Nepali is deafening. When they were outsiders, every tragedy was an indictment of the old guard. Now that the machinery of the state is under their command—specifically a municipal police force, set by Shah when he was mayor of Kathmandu metropolis, that answers to the Mayor—the rhetoric of systemic failure has been replaced by administra-

NAYA SHARMA PAUDEL



On July 5, an elephant smashed a house, killing a mother and her four-year-old son in Chitwan. Separately, in Mustang, a snow leopard killed 28 sheep and yaks. In Palpa, when a woman went to inspect her farm in the afternoon, she found that a troop of monkeys had stripped the cobs in her entire field.

Across Nepal, people are talking about these incidents. Almost every day, stories about dangerous animals appear in newspapers, in parliament and on social media. We routinely describe them as 'human-wildlife' conflicts. But are they really conflicts between humans and wildlife?

When we say human-wildlife conflict, the phrase portrays wildlife as an active, intentional opponent as if monkeys deliberately raid crops to impoverish farmers, tigers intentionally kill livestock to punish herders, or elephants consciously destroy homes to create human misery. But that is not how wildlife behaves. Animals do not act out of hostility, revenge or political intent. A monkey steals maize because it is an accessible food source. A tiger takes a goat for the same reason it hunts a deer.

When we blame animals, the institutions and decisions that shape these encounters disappear from view. Conflict is portrayed as a clash between people and nature, not between people and people. Natural problems invite technical fixes. Political problems demand political debate. In fact, the government, conservation agencies and international donors shape relationships between people and wildlife through policies, laws, patrols, fines and restrictions on people's ability to defend their lives and property.

Yet, those who design these policies or dictate practices often live far from the communities that bear their consequences.

The affected communities live

Flames at the gate

Ganesh Nepali's tragedy is not merely a localised incident of a fine gone wrong. It is a symptom of a deeper, more systemic rot in our urban governance.



AI GENERATED

tive silence. This shift from vocal empathy to bureaucratic distance is a betrayal of the populist wave that carried them to office.

The death of Ganesh Nepali is the most extreme point on a timeline of escalating municipal aggression. For years, the city police have been accused of undermining the very private property rights that Article 25 of the Constitution of Nepal seeks to protect. We have seen this 'dozer vision' in the Tukucha River excavation, where municipal authorities deployed heavy machinery to dig up residential backyards in Hattisar. These citizens held official land ownership certificates (*Lalpurga*), yet the city attempted demolition without a formal legal process or compensation, effectively acting as investigator, judge and executioner.

The patterns of misconduct extend beyond land to the movable property of the most vulnerable. From the violent crackdowns on street vendors and waste collectors to the forceful seizure of bicycles and carts without providing official receipts, the city police have routinely crossed the threshold of private property and personal livelihood. Mind you, these are not federal police executing court-issued warrants. They are officers whose actions often amount to civil trespass under the Muluki Civil Code.

How did we arrive at a point where a municipal force can act with such impunity? The formation of these units is enabled by the Local Government Operation Act, 2017, and Schedule 8 of the Constitution, which grants local levels the power to manage '*Nagar Prahari*' (City Police) for enforcing bylaws and protecting public property. While the federal frame-

work exists, it requires individual cities to pass their own legislation—like the Kathmandu Metropolitan City Police Act—to define duties and ranks.

The crisis, however, is not one of authority, but of accountability. Unlike the Nepal Police, who are trained and legally bound by criminal procedure codes, municipal police are often deployed as raw enforcement units using tactics like baton charges and aggressive physical containment, which they are not legally mandated to perform. There is a glaring lack of independent oversight. When a boundary dispute or a parking disagreement arises, the city should file a civil dispute or issue formal notices under the Land Acquisition Act. Instead, they bypass the judicial system entirely, using municipal forces to enforce executive whims overnight.

To understand why this is a moral failure, we might look to the philosopher Robert Nozick. In his Entitlement Theory of Justice, outlined in his seminal work, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Nozick argued that a person is justly entitled to property if it was acquired through legitimate transfer—such as buying a motorcycle or inheriting a shop. Under this view, when a citizen holds a *Lalpurga* or a legal title to a vehicle, the state has no moral right to seize or damage that property unilaterally.

Nozick's philosophy fiercely rejects utilitarian overrule—the idea that individual rights can be sacrificed for social utility. A cleaner city or a less congested pavement is a noble goal, but it does not override an individual's right to their own possessions and livelihood. When the city police seize a vendor's cart or clamp a driv-

er's bike without due process, they are committing an act of state aggression. A city cannot destroy the rule of law to enforce a local bylaw.

As expected, opposition parties like the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have been quick to seize upon this tragedy in Parliament, framing the city police's actions as 'structural violence against the working class'. While their criticisms are factually grounded, we must view their outrage through a cynical lens. These same parties have a long history of apathy towards the urban poor when they held the reins of power. Their current fervour is less about the dignity of Ganesh Nepali and more about weaponising a tragedy to erode the popularity of figures in power. We must be careful not to let the genuine plight of the worker become mere ammunition for a political war.

The state must honour private property rights not just in word, but in administrative practice. We need a transition from punitive, reactionary policing to structural, policy-driven urban governance. First, we must demilitarise municipal police training. These officers should be trained in conflict de-escalation and administrative mediation rather than physical containment. If a situation carries a risk of violence, the law dictates that they must defer to the federal police. Second, the government should implement spatial zoning and time-sharing. Instead of absolute bans on informal workers, we should demarcate specific zones and times where vendors and gig workers can operate without the fear of a 'cat-and-mouse' game with the city police. Third, we must reform the punitive fine system. Rather than physically clamping vehicles and inviting high-stress confrontations, the city should utilise digital cameras and *E-challans* tied to licenses. This removes the flashpoint of immediate confrontation that led to the tragedy at Tripureshwar. Finally, the federal parliament must enact an act to protect the street vendors, to give informal workers legal standing and prevent arbitrary confiscations.

The death of Ganesh Nepali was not an accident. It was a consequence—the result of a system that values the aesthetic of the city over the dignity of its citizens. True urban governance recognises that informal labour and gig economies are not crimes to be eradicated, but the very lifeblood of our city. If Kathmandu is to be a city for all, it must first stop being a city that drives its most vulnerable to the flames.

Dawadi is an Op-Ed Editor at the Post.

Human-wildlife conflict or human-human conflict?

The framing of 'human-wildlife conflict' naturalises the problem, obscures the political choices that produce it and shields powerful conservation actors from scrutiny.

beside forests, depend heavily on farming, and bear the daily risks of crop loss, killed livestock and threats to their children and themselves. They often have the least political influence over conservation decisions, despite carrying many of the costs.

Once we recognise that the government's priorities and policies are behind these apparently natural human-wildlife conflicts, we will seek fundamentally different solutions to address them.

Growing up in rural Nepal, I saw several neighbours lose goats to leopards. They were upset, but never blamed the animals. Such losses were accepted as part of living alongside wildlife. Similar attitudes existed in many forest-dependent communities,

tionship between the people and the rhinos.

Farmers often lose far more crops to drought, floods, pests and diseases than to wildlife. Yet, they rarely expect compensation for those losses because no one deliberately created those other risks. But they see wildlife damage as a consequence of policies and actions by the government and other conservation agencies. When the state protects wildlife and restricts people's ability to defend their crops, many feel the state owns them.

Thus, we should not speak of 'human-wildlife' conflict but of 'human-human conflict,' or 'local people-conservation authority' conflict.

Conserving wildlife is a perfectly legitimate public goal, no less important than conserving other compo-

encounters with people inevitably increased.

Describing these situations merely as 'human-wildlife conflict' hides this reality. Aided by international donors and conservation NGOs, the government designed policies and programmes that increased the number of tigers, putting locals at risk. This is global conservation at the cost of local lives. 'Human-wildlife conflict' obscures these relationships. It blames wildlife while leaving the underlying social and political questions largely unexamined.

Chitwan's tragedy was not natural. It was the consequence of government policy. This elephant has killed around 25 people over the past 16 years. After every death, local people protested; the authorities promised to improve safety; officials monitored the elephant's movements, but then another life was lost. People cannot remove, relocate, or otherwise act against wildlife because the government owns and protects it. The same principle applies to snow leopards, monkeys and other protected wildlife. The government defines and structures human-elephant relations.

The way we describe a problem shapes the solutions we pursue. If we define these encounters as conflicts between people and wildlife, we search for ecological fixes—compensation, fencing or translocation. Redefining human-wildlife conflicts as human-human conflict, as a kind of political conflict, leads us to different questions. If we recognise them as conflicts among different groups of people over conservation, we begin discussing governance, accountability and justice.

Until we recognise that these are conflicts over conservation policy rather than conflicts with wildlife itself, we will continue prescribing ecological remedies for what are fundamentally political disputes. Therefore, the question is no longer whether people and wildlife can coexist. It is whether people with different values, interests and power can agree on what coexistence should look like.

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POST FILE PHOTO

where encounters with wild animals were seen as an unavoidable aspect of nature. Today, that perception has changed.

A conversation I had in Chitwan National Park illustrates why. A farmer had come to file a compensation claim after a rhinoceros damaged her crops. I asked whether her parents used to complain when wildlife destroyed their fields. She smiled and replied, "No." "So why are you claiming compensation now?" I asked.

"Because the government pays. Those are the government's rhinos." Her response revealed that the conflict was never really with the rhinoceros. It was with the institutions that protect rhinos and determine the rela-

nents of nature. But if protecting tigers, rhinos or monkeys is a societal choice—and I believe it should be—then those who advocate for conservation should openly defend it. However, respecting and protecting people's livelihoods is equally legitimate. The problem arises when one group's priorities dominate and undermine another group's basic human rights. Nepal's world-famous tiger recovery illustrates this dynamic.

Since 2010, the country's tiger population has almost tripled. Tigers did not decide to recover. Governments decided to increase tiger populations. International organisations funded it. Conservation agencies implemented it. As tiger populations recovered,

Nepal begin ACC Women’s U19 Premier Cup with a 105-run victory over Qatar

Sabitri Dhami’s batting heroics help Nepal post a 131-run target. In turn, Nepali bowlers bundle out Qatar for 25 runs.



Nepali players celebrate after defeating Qatar by 105 runs in their first fixture of the ACC Women's U19 Premier Cup in Malaysia on Saturday.

NAYAK PAUDEL
KATHMANDU, JULY 11

Nepal registered a dominating victory over Qatar to begin their ACC Women's U19 Premier Cup campaign on a high note. Nepal defeated Qatar by 105 runs at Bayuemas Cricket Oval in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Saturday.

The tournament features 13 teams, divided into four groups—three of three teams each and one of four teams. Nepal are in Group D with three opponents—Qatar, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Japan, Myanmar and Thailand are in

Group A, while the UAE, Oman and Bhutan make up Group B. Hosts Malaysia are in Group C with Kuwait and Indonesia.

Nepal vs Qatar was one of the five matches that took place on the opening day on Saturday. The other winners also registered a dominating victory over their opponents, except for the Hong Kong vs Singapore fixture.

The UAE defeated Oman by 44 runs, and Indonesia won by 29 runs against Kuwait. Both the UAE and Indonesia won by the DLS method.

Similarly, Thailand defeated Myanmar

by 121 runs as the latter were bundled out for 24 runs in 18.4 overs.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong registered the victory over Singapore by three wickets as they chased 117 runs in 17.4 overs, with three wickets in hand.

There were four half-centuries on the first day of the tournament. Lavanya Keny, UAE's opener, stayed not out at 74 off 54 (10 fours and a six) against Oman, and Anushka Tomar, Singapore's opener, scored 59 off 55 (7 fours).

Thailand's Aphisara Suwanchonrathi also scored a half-century. She got out after smashing 57 runs off 49 deliveries, which consisted of five fours, against Myanmar.

The other half-century of the day came off the bat of Nepal's opener Sabitri Dhami.

Dhmi's wagon wheel

Dhmi entered the crease with her opening partner Sana Praveen, as Nepal's skipper Sony Pakhrin decided to bat first after winning the toss.

In turn, Dhmi and Praveen built an 80-run partnership for the first wicket, the highest of the day, before Praveen (27 off 32) departed in 10.2 overs.

Dhmi sought to build another good partnership with captain Pakhrin. However, the skipper departed for a duck facing three balls.

Dhmi, meanwhile, continued scoring. She completed her half-century in 45 deliveries with the help of five boundaries. She tried changing the gear after the half-cen-

ture, but got bowled by Fatima Mukadam and departed at 52 off 47.

Dhmi's innings was built more on placement than brute force.

Her wagon wheel, as per the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), showed that 35 of her 52 runs came on the leg side, while 17 were scored on the off side.

She accumulated her runs with 20 singles and six doubles, adding five boundaries without clearing the ropes.

Although she found runs through cover, third man and long off on the off side, she was particularly effective working the ball through the midwicket and long-on regions, keeping the scoreboard ticking throughout her 47-ball stay.

Anjila Pathak (23 off 32) also contributed well with the bat for Nepal, as the team also got 23 runs from extras.

However, despite Dhmi's heroics with the bat, it was bowler Rachana Kumari Chaudhary who was adjudged the player of the match.

Rachana's 3-2-2-3

Chaudhary is a right-handed batter, but is left-handed with the ball. She did not get to bat, but was extremely effective with the ball.

She was unused by Pakhrin in the powerplay. Her first over came in the eighth.

Chaudhary bowled a dot ball in 7.1 and sent Pavithra Thamarai Selvam back to the dugout with a caught and bowled in 7.2 overs. Mehza Mehwish and Jaza Mariyam managed a single each in the remaining deliveries of the eighth over by Chaudhary.

When Chaudhary returned in the 10th

and 12th overs, none of the Qatari batters could manage a single against her, let alone a boundary. She took the wickets of Maria Jacob in 9.5 overs and of Fathima Rana in 11.6 overs to bundle out Qatar for 25 runs.

Overall, Chaudhary bowled three overs, where she gave only two runs, picked three wickets and bowled two maidens.

Riya Sharma also picked three wickets for Nepal while Manisha Upadhayay bagged two and Anu Kadayat took one. The trio was also economical as Sharma gave away only six runs, and Upadhyay and Kadayat gave away seven runs each. The four Nepali bowlers bowled three overs each and gave away 12 runs in extras. Nepal will play Singapore at YSD UKM Oval in Bangi, Malaysia, in their second group-stage fixture on Sunday morning.

Lamine Yamal says France should fear Spain in their much-anticipated World Cup semifinal

GREG BEACHAM/AP

INGLEWOOD, JULY 11

Lamine Yamal thinks France should be afraid of Spain with the European giants headed to a World Cup semifinal showdown at 12:45am on Wednesday (Nepali time).

"I believe if France has to fear anyone, it should be us, in my opinion," the teenage sensation told broadcast reporters after Spain beat Belgium 2-1 on Friday to secure their first semifinal berth since 2010. "We were the ones who knocked them out before."

Spain beat France in the 2024 European Championship semifinals and again in Nations League play last year. Yamal became the youngest player to score in the continental competition.

The powerhouses meet again at the home stadium of the Dallas Cowboys next week for a spot in the final.

"We don't fear anyone," said Yamal, who was named the man of the match against Belgium. "It's clear that we are two great teams, world-class national teams, and for me, they are one of the best. We'll see what happens."

Spain advanced on a winning goal by substitute Mikel Merino in the 88th minute of the quarterfinals at SoFi Stadium. La Roja conceded its only goal of the entire World Cup late in the first half against Belgium, while France have piled up 16 goals in their six World Cup matches.

France have made the past two World Cup finals, winning it all in 2018. Spain have made only one World Cup final in its history, but the current team is unbeaten in 37 consecutive competitive matches since March 2023—a stretch that also includes a loss on penalties to Portugal in the Nations League final last year.

Spain coach Luis de la Fuente has been asked by the international media about this potential showdown with France throughout the tournament, but particularly since the start of the knock-out rounds two weeks ago. He has been uniformly complimentary of Les Bleus while echoing his own players' confidence.

"Let me be clear: We are not finished," de la Fuente said. "We are pleased to be in the semifinals, but we want more. We are capable of winning this game, and not just now, but I would have said this a few weeks ago as well."

Yamal, who turns 19 on Monday, has only one goal and no assists while putting 10 shots on target in his first World Cup, but his playmaking and activity down the right side of Spain's attack have been noticeable in almost every match. He started the sequence that led to Spain's first goal against Belgium in a two-man game with Pedro Porro, eventually leading to Fabián Ruiz's rebound goal off Dani Olmo's shot.

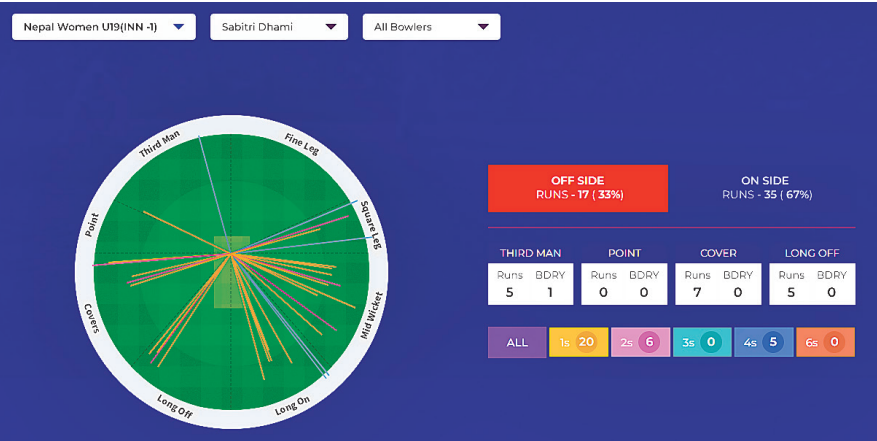
Yamal said his modest statistics don't bother him, noting that he also scored only one goal (with four assists) while Spain won the European Championship two years ago.

Although Spain needed a late goal from Merino to win for the second straight match, Yamal believes his team is ready for the challenge of the World Cup's dominant team so far. Yamal cited Spain's acumen in ball possession—a stat they've repeatedly dominated during this World Cup—as a way to take France out of their preferred style of play.

"I think we were much better, (than Belgium)," Yamal said. "It seems like we're playing very beautiful football, but in reality, there isn't a team that plays against us on equal footing. Everyone drops back, and that makes it more difficult. Nobody has gone toe-to-toe with us. But in the end, we secured the win."

Photo: AP/RSS

Spain's Lamine Yamal, wearing a headband that says 'Ego Yamal', comes out for warm-up ahead of the World Cup quarterfinal match against Belgium in Inglewood, California, on July 10 local time.



Sabitri Dhmi's wagon wheel against Qatar.

PHOTO: ACC

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Ideas that pop into your head today might not be worth following through on, dearest Aries. Appreciate your blessings and use what you already have to further your dreams.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Though you'll crave a bit of luxury, the purchases you make won't live up to the hype. Don't be surprised if a-ha moments change your perspective on the past.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

Getting your point across could be a struggle today, dearest Gemini. Seek meaningful experiences with family around the dinner table, appreciate your foundations, and allow yourself to be loved.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Instead of muscling through social engagements or challenging tasks, give yourself permission to zone out and rest. Revisit the past for a dose of nostalgic comfort.

LEO (July 23-August 22)

Don't be surprised if plans fall through or friends flake out, dearest Leo. Use this time to reflect on your situation, edit projects, or zone out with relaxing activities.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22)

Try not to worry yourself with tomorrow's problems, dearest Virgo. Enjoy catching up with old friends or digging through ancient social media posts.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22)

Focus on dreams you've already taken initiative on, dear Libra, and avoid the temptation to kick off fresh endeavors. Refine and perfect existing goals to strengthen your work.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21)

Save important decisions or conversations for another day, darling Scorpio. Follow signs as they emerge, and they could lead you to creative breakthroughs, love connections, or a warming sense of peace.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21)

Halt searches for romance, opting instead to slow down with self-care practices. Rediscover interests that help you feel empowered or mysterious.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19)

Instead of tackling major feats, focus on your health. You'll have a chance to rekindle past romances, but you should tread carefully to avoid repeating mistakes.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18)

Enjoy creative play, but don't stress over finished results. Physical activity can help you process confusing dilemmas. Embrace gentle movement to release tension and find clarity.

PISCES (February 19-March 20)

You won't have much luck rallying help around the house, dearest Pisces. If you need a project to keep you busy, consider sorting old photos or home videos.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Intensity (with "up")

4 Brute

9 Injury result

13 Ice at sea

14 Theater employee

15 — Canaveral

16 "Believe — — not!"

17 Seedlike body

18 Altar's place

19 Usual

21 Schooldays souvenir

23 Form of "John"

25 Male swan

26 "— on the Bounty"

28 Conductor

32 "— Your Eyes Only"

33 Remove

36 Anger

37 Carries with effort

39 Dollar bill

40 Noblewoman

41 On the Atlantic

42 Composer —

43 Lloyd Webber

45 Flanders of "The Simpsons"

46 Vend

48 Tarantula

50 SSW, e.g.

DOWN

1 High voice

2 Anchor

3 License

4 Road division for HOVs (2 wds.)

5 Clairvoyance

6 Cry heard at sea

7 Withered

8 Molasses

9 Sheath for a sword

10 Mob VIP

11 Lhasa —

12 Smell

13 Fish paddle

20 Enthusiastic

22 Caviar

24 Synthetic fiber

26 Pointing device

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

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

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27 Pressed

29 Actress — Keaton

30 "— Gantry"

31 Walter — medical center

32 Uproar

34 Tip

35 Not wordy

38 Depressed

42 Supplies with oxygen

43 Greek letter

44 Plane part

47 Cup's edge

49 Make bare

52 Gets some shuteye

53 Ellipse

54 Big bag

55 "— the Explorer"

56 "Right away!"

58 Metallic element

59 Chinese dynasty

60 Annexes

63 — — minimum

SUDOKU

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

