

THE RISING NEPAL

ALL BE HAPPY, ALL BE WELL

CABINET APPROVES
COMPENSATION
FOR 153 VICTIMS

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Oct. 7

The government has approved compensation for 153 victims recommended by the National Human Rights Commission and decided to recommend several ordinances to the President for authentication and issuance.

A meeting of the Council of Ministers held at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers in Singha Durbar on Wednesday approved compensation for the 153 victims based on recommendations made by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

The meeting also decided to give consent to the government of Portugal to establish a Consulate-General in Kathmandu.

According to government spokesperson and Minister for Education and Sports Sasmit Pokharel, the Cabinet decided to recommend to the President the issuance of ordinance to amend Some Nepal Acts relating to Land, the ordinance to amend some Nepal Acts relating to Forests, and the Ordinance to amend some Nepal Acts relating to Disasters, among others.

The meeting further decided to promote Joint Secretary Navinraj Singh of the Nepal Engineering Service to the post of Secretary in the gazetted special class. Similarly, Joint Secretary Chakra Bahadur Budha of the Nepal Administration Service was promoted to the post of Secretary in the gazetted special class.

The Cabinet also decided to promote Deputy Auditor General Chandrakanta Bhandari of the Nepal Audit Service to the post of Deputy Auditor General in the gazetted special class.



A breathtaking reflection of the Dharahara tower reflected in rainwater at Tundikhel, Kathmandu following Wednesday's rainfall.

PHOTO: SAGAR BASNET/TRN

Govt steps up shelter plan for Bhotekoshi victims

NDRRMA seeks proposals to build temporary homes in flood-hit areas

BY PURUSHOTTAM P. KHATRI
Kathmandu, Oct. 7

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) has invited proposals from partner organisations willing to construct transitional shelters for families displaced by the Bhotekoshi flood in Rasuwa, Nuwakot and Dhading.

Issuing a public notice on Wednesday, the Authority asked interested organisations to propose the construction of transitional shelters for affected households in the three districts in accordance with standards approved by the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction.

The organisations have been asked to clearly state the number of shelters they intend to build, proposed locations and the names of the concerned local levels. They must also submit a work plan specifying the expected date for starting construction and the deadline for completion, according to NDRRMA Spokesperson and Under Secretary Shanti Mahat.

Organisations that have already entered into agreements to construct transitional shelters in the flood-affected areas must also provide details of such agreements, according to the notice.

The organisations will have to coordinate with the Department of Urban Development and Building Construction

and the concerned local governments while implementing the shelter projects. Proposals must be submitted to the NDRRMA within seven days of the publication of the notice, Mahat said.

The call for proposals comes as the government has begun shifting its focus from emergency response to recovery and rehabilitation following the devastating Bhotekoshi flood. The NDRRMA executive committee recently decided to immediately advance work on temporary housing, reconstruction and rehabilitation for people whose houses were destroyed by the disaster.

At the time, 278 families from seven local government units had expressed their desire to move into temporary shelters. In addition, 400 families from Gosaikunda Rural Municipality and 350 displaced families from Uttargaya and other rural municipalities are staying in Bidur, with their longer-term housing preferences still being assessed.

According to Mahat, the need for transitional accommodation remains significant at this time. As of October 5, 1,065 displaced people were still staying in 17 holding centres, including 843 in Rasuwa, according to the Authority. Similarly, 121 displaced people were staying in holding centres in each of Nuwakot and Dhading. There are nine holding centres in Rasuwa and four each in Nuwakot and Dhading.

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247 individuals at health risk in holding centres

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Oct. 7

At least 247 individuals staying in the holding centres established in the flood-affected areas of Rasuwa and Nuwakot have been identified as being at health risk.

A total of 149 health workers, organized into 34 medical teams, have been deployed to provide healthcare services to the 1,184 flood-affected people residing in 15 holding centres; these health workers have been mobilized from 19 different health institutions.

According to a latest report released by the Health Emergency and Disaster Management Unit under the Ministry of Health and Food Safety, at least four people have died during treatment in the hospitals.

The report indicates that the at-risk group includes nine pregnant women, 25 lactating mothers, three

postpartum women, 99 senior citizens, eight persons with disabilities, 21 children under the age of two, and 82 children under the age of five.

The report states that the total number of patients and injured persons treated following the floods has reached 349. Of these, three remain under treatment, and 345 have been discharged.

The report notes that among those currently receiving treatment, two are at the Sukraraj Tropical and Infectious Disease Hospital in Teku, and one is at the National Trauma Centre.

So far, at least 9,559 people have received health services from the medical teams. Similarly, two teams from the Armed Police Force (APF) have been assigned to health and rescue operations. These medical teams have served a total of 1,559 people.

Mental health counseling

Health teams have also prioritized mental health and psychosocial support in flood-affected areas.

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Thapa declares end of factions in NC

BY PALLAV BHUSAL
Kathmandu, Oct. 7

Nepali Congress President Gagan Kumar Thapa has declared an end to factions and groups within the party, saying the 15th General Convention should mark a new beginning for a united Nepali Congress.

Addressing the closing session of the general convention on Wednesday, Thapa said all factions within the party had come to an end.

“Special or otherwise, all kinds of factions have ended. There is no group. From today, all factions are over,” he said.

Thapa said the Nepali Congress would now move forward as a single party rather than on the basis of internal groups. He said he would focus much of his time on taking the party's policies and ideas to society and engaging in public debate on national issues rather than being confined to internal party management.

He also pledged to work round the clock immediately after the general convention until the local-level elections.

The closed session also endorsed a contemporary issues proposal presented by party Vice-President Bishwa Prakash Sharma. The proposal covered current political issues, including the erosion of democratic culture.

Sharma said Nepali Congress should develop a culture of listening to the people in both victory and defeat and become a party that inspires hope, trust and confidence.

“Do not focus only on who wins which post,” he told the delegates, stressing that the party must address the decline in democratic culture.



Rathore withdraws candidacy for president

Meanwhile, Kishor Singh Rathore withdrew his candidacy for party president and announced his support for Thapa. Rathore said he withdrew his candidacy in the broader interest of party unity at a time when the Nepali Congress was facing a crisis.

Rathore had registered his candidacy at the last moment on Tuesday evening. Following his withdrawal, Thapa will face Shyam Krishna Khadgi in the presidential race.

Nepali Congress spokesperson Devraj Chalise also withdrew his candidacy for the post of vice-president, according to Rajendra Katuwal, member-secretary of the election committee.

The closed session also endorsed the reports presented by Treasurer Umesh Shrestha and General Secretary Gururaj Ghimire. Shrestha presented the party's financial report covering its financial condition, income, expenditure and economic activities, while Ghimire's report focused on strengthening and making the party more popular and organised.

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Public media need structural revamp: Minister Timilsina

RSS
Kathmandu, Oct. 7

Minister for Information and Communications, Dr. Bikram Timilsina, has said public media require structural revamp so that they would be further smooth, prompt, professional, result-oriented and credible.

Minister Dr. Timilsina said it while garnering information on the organisation and management survey of the State-run media such as Public Service Broadcasting, Gorkhaptra Corporation and Rastriya Samachar Samiti (RSS). The workforce would be managed based on burden and performance.

The structures in the public media should not be made unmanageable and complex by creating division, section and administrative layers. However, competent workforces are imperative in the institution and structures prepared accordingly, he reminded.

The Minister further said major responsibility of public media is production and dissemination of quality news, information and programmes, so the employees' quota can be managed accordingly. Best news rooms are need of hour, while resources are of equal attention, according to him.



The organization and management survey should pay heed to the issues such as current structure, performance, workforce and need at office and its sections. However, bulky structures should not be created, Dr Timilsina underscored.

The sections involved in duplication of works in the office should be retrenched, according to him.

The organization and management survey is being conducted in the public media by taking into account the structure, quota, human resources, work division, term of references, rights and accountability, and office needs. The survey report would help make the media services further effective and professional.

Auspicious time to receive Dashain Tika is at 10:26am

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Oct. 7

The Nepal Calendar Determination Development Committee has announced that the most auspicious time for receiving Tika on Bijaya Dashami this year is 10:26 AM on Wednesday, October 21.

The committee said devotees should first perform the immersion of Goddess Durga at 8:49 a.m. and then receive tika and blessings from elders at the designated auspicious time.

According to the committee, people receiving tika at the auspicious time should face west. Although tika can be received throughout Bijaya Dashami, the 10:26 AM has been recommended for those who wish to follow the

traditional auspicious moment.

Dashain is Nepal's biggest national festival and is celebrated with great enthusiasm across the country. Nepalis living away from their hometowns for work and business often return home during the festival to receive blessings from elders. The festival is particularly associated with the worship and devotion of the nine forms of Goddess Durga.

This year, Navaratri will begin on Ashwin 25, with the auspicious time for Ghatasthapana set for 11:47 AM. The committee has advised that necessary rituals be performed before Ghatasthapana because Chitra Nakshatra and Vaidhriti Yoga occur on the same day.

The auspicious time for changing the ceremonial flag on October 12 is 10:07 AM, and the Pachali Bhairav procession will take place on October 15.

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Kathmandu Valley residents rely on senses to assess air pollution

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Oct. 7

Most residents of the Kathmandu Valley consider air pollution a serious health risk, but the vast majority of those who monitor air quality rely on smell, visibility and eye irritation rather than official data, according to a new survey.

A survey of 1,200 Valley residents by Taza Initiative Nepal found that 81.2 per cent rated air pollution as hazardous to extremely hazardous to health. However, 94.1 per cent of those who check air quality said they rely only on their senses to assess pollution levels.

The findings were released by Taza Initiative Nepal, a non-profit organisation



established in 2026 that works on research, air quality monitoring and evidence-based solutions to reduce air pollution in the Kathmandu Valley.

The survey also found that 52.3 per cent of respondents rated the air

quality in their local areas as poor or very poor. Negative perceptions were highest in Lalitpur, where 60.9 per cent of respondents rated local air quality negatively, followed by Kathmandu at 59.2 per cent and Bhaktapur at 56.0 per

cent. The figure was 35.9 per cent in North Kathmandu.

Access to information about air quality varied significantly according to educational attainment. Only 10.8 per cent of respondents with primary education or below said they knew how to check air quality, compared with 63 per cent of those with a master's degree or higher.

The survey also showed that the use of digital tools to monitor air quality is concentrated among younger people. Among respondents aged 18–24 who actively monitor air quality, 60.3 per cent use websites and 42.5 per cent use mobile applications. However, these figures account for only 14.1 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively, of the entire 18 to 24 age group.

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BULLION
(Rs. per tola)

Hallmark Gold

: Rs. 292,300/-

Worked Gold

: NA

Silver

: Rs. 4,425/-



STOCK

NEPSE

: 2,572.34

Total Amount

: | 3,748,080,303.08

No. of Share

: 10,300,688

US FUTURES SLIP AS OIL PRICES AND BOND YIELDS RISE

AP
New York, Oct. 7

U.S. futures are retreating and bond yields are climbing again after a barrel of oil ticked back above \$100 per barrel Wednesday. Much of the focus on Wall Street will be on the release of minutes from the last meeting of the Federal Reserve, where the nation's benchmark interest rate was hiked for the first time in three years.

Futures for the S&P 500 dipped 0.1% a day after reaching a record 7,818.93. Despite worries over the Iran war, high inflation and pressures from the bond market, the index at the heart of many 401(k) accounts has soared 23% since hitting a trough in late March.

Futures for the Dow Jones Industrial Average slipped 0.3%, while Nasdaq futures declined 0.4%.

Crude prices rebounded early Wednesday. The price for a barrel of Brent crude oil, the international standard, rose 1.3% to \$101.88. That's about \$55 more than a barrel cost at this time last year.

U.S. benchmark crude rose 0.6% to \$89.99 per barrel.

Yemen's Houthi rebels used ballistic and cruise missiles, as well as drones, to attack military facilities and airports in Saudi Arabia, the rebels' military spokesman, Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree said on social media Wednesday. He didn't provide evidence for the claim.

Also attacked were Abha airport, military facilities in Khamis Mushait and other "critical sites" in the cities of Najran and Asir, according to Saree.

And after falling back slightly this week, bond yields are on the rise again.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 5.33%, while the 30-year Treasury climbed to 5.71%.

The Fed releases the minutes from its September meeting when U.S. central bank officials raised the key interest rate. The minutes may provide clues about where the Fed, and interest rates, are heading.

Earnings season is also just around the corner and PepsiCo will report its quarterly results Thursday. Delta Air Lines posts earnings Friday and several of the country's biggest banks release quarterly performances next week.



As the Dashain and Tihar festivals draw near, goats and sheep have been brought to the open ground in Sallaghari, Bhaktapur Municipality-1, for sale.

PHOTO: TRN

Humla businesses complain lack of taxpayers' education

BY RAJAN RAWAT
Humla, Oct. 7

Entrepreneurs and businesspersons in the mountainous district of Humla have complained about a lack of taxpayer education.

Speaking at a market-monitoring workshop organised by Simkot Rural Municipality in Simkot on Wednesday, they said they lacked adequate knowledge of taxes and other legal requirements.

Most of the participants complained that they have to pay double taxes when registering their businesses, according to businessman Ramjan Rawat. He urged the rural municipality to clarify the taxes applicable to different businesses. Several entrepreneurs suggested for orientation programmes on taxation.

He said participants also complained that they did not have adequate information about business registration and renewal, Permanent Account Number (PAN) and Value Added Tax (VAT).

Another businessman, Kachho Lama, complained that businesses were required to register both with the rural municipality and the Office of Industry and Consumer Protection, resulting in what they described as double taxation.

He said that, due to a lack of information, people often had to start businesses without completing all the required legal procedures. Businesspersons said new

entrepreneurs should be provided with taxpayer education and existing entrepreneurs should receive refresher training.

Participants also raised concerns about the lack of clarity among businesspersons regarding the process of issuing and receiving bills for goods. They said there was also a need to clarify provisions related to penalties and fines.

Meat traders in Simkot, the district headquarters, also complained that irregular electricity supply was causing problems for their businesses.

Following concerns raised by entrepreneurs and businesspersons about the lack of information, Chief Administrative Officer of Simkot Dambar Bahadur Budha pledged to clarify legal procedures and organise orientation programmes on legal matters in the coming days.

Providing information on problems and challenges seen in the local market, Arjun Joshi, chief of the Office of Industry and Consumer Protection in Humla, said businesses were still being operated without registration, illegal goods were still available in the market, and black marketing had not been completely controlled.

According to him, other problems include unstable prices, artificial shortages, lack of awareness, inadequate knowledge of consumer rights, consumers' failure to develop the habit of obtaining bills, lack of quality checks, inadequate action following market monitoring, insufficient institutional resources and misleading advertisements.

Budget allocated to rebuild Tarigaun Airport in Dang

BY GOKARNA POUDEL
Tulsipur, Oct. 7

Hopes are renewed for resuming operations at Tarigaun Airport in Dang after the government allocated Rs. 250 million for runway expansion in the budget for the fiscal year 2026/27.

A technical team led by Minister for Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation Khadak Raj Paudel conducted an on-site inspection of the airport on Wednesday while the Rastriya Swatantra Party's district committee organised an open discussion on the importance of Tarigaun Airport to the overall development of Dang.

Addressing the programme, Minister Paudel said the runway would be expanded, and the airport brought into regular operation within two years. According to him, the plan is to extend the existing runway to around 1,500 metres.

He said although the allocated budget was not sufficient for the entire runway expansion, it could be used for initial works such as levelling the ground.

"Dang was linked to the foundations of ancient civilisation, the Sanskrit University and the Sarayu civilization. The airport's runway expansion could help promote cultural tourism and attract visitors," said Minister Paudel.

He also said Tarigaun Airport could be used as an alternative airport when weather conditions are unfavourable for 72-seat aircraft to land at Nepalgunj and Bhairahawa airports.

NCNC supports Rs. 11M to Disaster Relief Fund

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Oct. 7

The Nepali Centre of North Carolina (NCNC) has handed over a cheque for US\$72,000 (about Rs. 11.1 million) for deposit into the Prime Minister Disaster Relief Fund (PMDRF) to support families affected by the Bhotekoshi flood that occurred on August 26.

A delegation from NCNC led by its president Dadhin Pandey, including Shyam Aryal, Dr. Pallavi Sharma and other office-bearers, presented the cheque to Finance Minister Dr. Swarnim Wagle at a programme held at the Nepali Embassy in Washington, DC, on Monday.

The NCNC said in a statement that Minister Dr. Wagle said the support extended by Nepali organisations based abroad in response to a natural disaster in Nepal reflected a generous spirit. He said such assistance had provided significant relief to families affected by the disaster.

Likewise, NCNC President Pandey expressed his appreciation to individuals, organisations, families, businesses and community groups that had contributed to the humanitarian campaign according to their capacity.

He said the support demonstrated the unity, love and solidarity of Nepalis

Minister Dr. Wagle said the support extended by Nepali organisations based abroad in response to a natural disaster in Nepal reflected a generous spirit.

with those affected by the disaster. "When Nepal is in distress, our hearts also hurt with Nepal," he said.

Pandey said the fundraising campaign would continue until October 31. He also announced that a five-km run titled 'Walk for Nepal' would be organised the following week, with a target of raising around US\$10,000.

During the campaign, Dedicated to Our Community of North Carolina contributed US\$12,111, Kanu Patel Divo Foundation US\$5,002, Niraj Shantilal Patel US\$5,150, and Ishwar and Kamala Devkota US\$3,001.

Venkateshwara Temple and Shirdi Sai Baba Temple each contributed US\$3,000. The United Bengali Association donated US\$2,115, while the American Association of Bihar Jharkhand Jhansi contributed US\$2,000.

Similarly, Sandesh Joshi donated US\$1,100, Jeevan Neupane and Sarita Kandel US\$1,001, while Ramila and Bikash Sapkota, Rohil Bhattarai, Ashish Patel, Asian Focus Corporation, L Workbiz and Tomita each contributed US\$1,000.



PHOTO: TRN

Minister for Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation Khadak Raj Paudel with the technical team during an inspection of Tarigaun Airport.

General Secretary of RSP and Dang-2 lawmaker Bipin Kumar Acharya said the airport was linked to the mobility and livelihoods of around 1.8 million people in Lumbini and Karnali provinces.

He said attention should also be given to developing road infrastructure connecting Dang with Salyan, Rukum, Rolpa and Surkhet districts along with the operation of the airport.

Dang-3 lawmaker Kamal Subedi said operating Tarigaun Airport was essential as Dang is the provincial capital. He said regular air services were also necessary for the development of health, education and tourism.

Regular flights operated from Tarigaun Airport from 1960 to 1985 while intermittent service continued even after. Although Sita Air resumed services in 2023, it discontinued them within a year. Tulsipur Sub-Metropolitan City Deputy Mayor Syani Chaudhary said a detailed project report (DPR) had already been prepared for upgrading the airport.

The airport currently has 30 bighas of land in its name. According to Chaudhary, a process has been initiated to use around four bighas of land belonging to the Cotton Development Committee adjacent to the airport for runway expansion.

Farmers lack interest in Kaguno cultivation

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Humla, Oct. 7

Despite high demand for foxtail millet, a local traditional crop known for its high nutritional value, its cultivation is gradually disappearing in Humla district. Although there is a strong demand for the crop outside the district, local people have stopped eating dishes made from it, leading to a decline in its cultivation.

Kamal Budha, Chairperson of Simkot Rural Municipality-8, said foxtail millet, which was once grown by almost every farmer as an essential crop, is now at risk of disappearing. He said cultivation had started to decline after local people stopped eating rice and other dishes made from the crop.

Although people in the district have stopped consuming foxtail millet-based dishes, the crop is used to prepare kheer and other dishes outside the district and is sold from large hotels to department stores. Farmers in Humla receive around Rs. 180 per kg for foxtail millet. Farmer Babbar Jung Hamal of Kharpunath Rural Municipality-4 said the crop was gradually disappearing due to a lack of promotion and inadequate awareness of its importance.

He said the crop is now cultivated only sporadically, and stressed the need to conserve and promote its cultivation. Hamal said he used to produce up to two quintals of foxtail millet himself, but it has now become difficult even to find seed for plantation. According to him, the crop was at risk of disappearing



PHOTO: RAJAN RAWAT/ TRN

Foxtail millet cultivated in Simkot this year.

because local people were reluctant to eat rice made from its grain despite its high nutritional value. Hamal called for greater attention to its conservation.

Chudamani Panta, chief of the

Agriculture Development Office, said the office was working to promote traditional crops produced across the district rather than focusing on foxtail millet alone.

He said people from outside the district were also looking for foxtail millet rice, but the demand could not be met because farmers were no longer producing enough of the crop.

IMF urges countries to do more to curb debt

AP
New York, Oct. 7

Countries both rich and poor must take faster action to cut debt and counter growing inequality as their economies weather a triple whammy from the artificial intelligence boom, heavy borrowing and shocks from wars in the Middle East and Ukraine, the head of the IMF said Wednesday.

"Some very tough political choices stare us in the face," IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said in a speech in Singapore ahead of autumn IMF-World Bank meetings to be held in Bangkok next week.

"My message to the world's economic policymakers next week will be this: we cannot keep delaying necessary policy action — you have the tools, now have the wisdom to use them," she said.

At the meetings in Bangkok, finance ministers and central bank governors of 191 IMF-World Bank member countries will assess the state of the world economy and discuss strategies to support financial stability and sustained growth. So far, the hardest recent hits to global well-being have come from conflicts in the Middle East, Ukraine and elsewhere, Georgieva noted.

But excessive debt is a growing burden for wealthy countries such as the U.S., Japan and Germany, as well as low-income countries that must choose between spending on public welfare or repaying onerous loans at a time of high interest rates, she noted.

Georgieva pointed to risks associated with the rapid buildup of data center capacity to deliver artificial intelligence, which has helped push stock prices in many places to record highs, supporting strong economic growth despite high energy costs due to the Iran war. Investments in AI are likely to exceed the relative scale of spending on building railroads, electricity grids and telecommunications networks.

"Love it, hate it or fear it, AI is here, rapidly becoming a key driver of countries' relative fortunes in the world economy," she said.

The AI building boom is underpinning robust corporate earnings as well as higher inflation. But there is a lag between the heavy investments involved and the arrival of AI's benefits, Georgieva said.

"Should earnings fall short," she said, "hyperscaler leverage and large and growing global holdings of U.S. equities could turn a disappointment into a far-reaching shock."

Seven of the top 10 countries for AI-related trade are in the Asia-Pacific region, where the share of global economic activity has risen to 43% from 25% in 1991, the last time the meetings were held in Bangkok.

While China, India, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and other countries with strong tech sectors are benefiting from the AI boom, it is bypassing most others, Georgieva said, adding to economic inequality. AI also is raising energy demand, pushing prices for fuel, fertilizer, food and other key commodities still higher.

Social Ministry, NRCS to provide cash assistance for flood victims



BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Oct. 7

The Ministry of Women, Children, Gender and Sexual Minorities and Social Security and the Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) have signed an agreement to provide cash assistance to families affected by the Bhotekoshi flood under the Samunnati Programme.

The agreement was signed at the ministry in the presence of

Minister Sita Badi on Wednesday. Acting Secretary of the ministry Chakra Bahadur Budha and NRCS Chairman Dr. Bishal Kumar Bhandari signed the agreement.

NRCS General Secretary Rishiram Khanal and head of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Nepal, David Fisher were also present on the occasion.

Under the agreement, the NRCS will provide cash assistance of Rs. 100,000 to each family affected by

Bhotekoshi floods in 63 districts. The assistance is intended to address the immediate and priority needs of flood-affected families, ease their daily lives, and support their recovery and rehabilitation, the NRCS informed in a statement.

Data on affected people will be provided by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA).

An initial estimate puts the number of families affected by Bhotekoshi floods at around 6,000.

"Beneficiaries will be identified based on the data received and necessary verification, and the funds will be deposited directly into the bank accounts of the respective beneficiaries," read the statement. This is intended to make the aid distribution process easier, transparent and effective.

Families can use the funds they receive in managing their priorities, including for food, clothing, health and sanitation, essential household items, transport, communication and livelihood-related needs.

According to the NRCS, priority will be given to flood-affected and particularly vulnerable women-headed households, persons with disabilities, children requiring special care, senior citizens, marginalised communities, gender and sexual minorities, and individuals and families with other special needs.

As per the agreement, the ministry will be responsible for policy guidance, programme monitoring and coordination. Likewise, the concerned local governments will support beneficiary identification and verification as well as local coordination, while the NRCS will assist with the distribution of cash and voucher assistance, community coordination, monitoring and accountability-related activities.

The ministry is implementing the Samunnati Programme as an inclusive programme aiming to support women, children, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, gender and sexual minorities, marginalised and socially excluded groups, disaster-affected people, and other individuals and families with special needs and vulnerabilities.

Rural roads remain closed before Dashain

BY PREMRAJ SIMKHADA
Kalikat, Oct. 7

Only nine days remain before Dashain, and people are already rushing to return home to celebrate the festival with their families. However, travellers are worried about the condition of the roads and whether they will be able to reach their villages. There are concerns that the Karnali Highway, Karnali Corridor and rural roads in the district could be disrupted during the festival. While the Karnali Highway and Karnali Corridor are still operating with difficulty, most rural roads remain blocked.

Raj Bahadur Bam of Palanta said he was more worried about the roads than anything else as Dashain approached. "The Karnali Highway and corridor are somehow operating for now. But the rural roads are still blocked. We are worried whether they will be reopened by Dashain," he said. He urged local governments to take the concerns of

their residents seriously.

Kiran Adhikari of Shubhakalika-3 shared a similar concern. "People do not get to meet everyone at other times of the year. Dashain is when everyone gathers in their villages. But this year, I am still worried that we may have to walk home," he said. He said children who live in cities are no longer used to walking long distances. "They travel to their villages only once a year. If the roads are not reopened at that time, it will be very difficult for them to walk," Adhikari said.

Travellers are also concerned about landslides at several sections of the Karnali Highway, including Gaganek-hola, S-Mode, Pili, Ratobhira and Tadi. With rainfall also forecast around the Dashain period, fears of further road blockages have increased.

Dharmaraj Shahi of Tilagufa-10 said he was already worried that landslides at different places could make the journey home difficult during Dashain. "If I were travelling alone, I could manage somehow, but there will be children with us," he said.

Passenger help desk set up at Kalipul Bus Park in Beni

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Myagdi (Beni), Oct. 7

A passenger help desk has been set up at Kalipul Bus Park in Beni, Myagdi, to facilitate and ensure the safety of passengers amid the increased travel rush during the festive season.

The District Police Office and District Traffic Police Office, Myagdi, jointly brought the assistance desk into operation on Wednesday to provide support to passengers, address their complaints and help ensure safe and convenient travel.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Rajan Karki said the desk was established as passenger traffic increases

during the festive season and travellers may face various difficulties.

He warned transport operators against carrying passengers beyond vehicle capacity, charging fares higher than the prescribed rates, failing to issue tickets and imposing unnecessary charges on passengers. He also urged transport operators and drivers to comply with traffic rules, saying they have a primary responsibility to ensure that passengers reach their destinations safely and conveniently.

Inaugurating the desk, Acting Coordinator of the District Coordination Committee, Myagdi, Dil Kumari Khatri, urged transport operators and security agencies to make arrangements for safe and convenient travel for the general public during the festive season.

Special security plan in place across Madhes for festive season



BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Mahottari, Saptari, Oct. 7

Security agencies in Madhes Province have intensified preparations for the festive season, with 7,229 police personnel to be mobilised across all eight districts to ensure public safety during Dashain, Tihar and Chhath.

The Madhes Province Police Office has implemented a special security plan from October 15 to November 16, focusing on crowd management, border security, road safety and the prevention of criminal activities.

According to Madhes Province Police Office spokesperson Senior Superintendent of Police Prabhu Prasad Dhakal, the largest deployment will be made in Dhanusha with 1,599 personnel, followed by Bara with 870, Rautahat 863, Saptari 857, Sarlahi 792, Mahottari 747, Parsa 661 and Siraha 651. Another 189 personnel will be stationed at the provincial police office.

The personnel will be mobilised through district reserves, quick response and striking teams, traffic checks, mobile and foot patrols, and security pickets at sensitive locations. Escort services along highways and passenger assistance desks at major transport hubs and border points will also be operated.

Police have identified the open border with India as a major security challenge during the festive period, when cross-border movement increases. Surveillance will be stepped up to control smuggling, illegal movement and the transportation of prohibited goods.

In Mahottari, the District Security Committee has fully implemented an integrated festive security plan, deploying 1,331 security personnel, including 747 from Nepal Police and 584 from the Armed Police Force, Nepal No. 9 Battalion.

Mahottari Chief District Officer Indradev Yadav said the National Investigation Department had been mobilised to collect intelligence in sensitive areas. The Nepali Army will also be mobilised for the security of strategic installations, escort duties and other emergency requirements if necessary.

According to Yadav, 24-hour security pickets, checkpoints and joint patrols have been established along the open border to control illegal movement and the smuggling of firecrackers. Random checks and mobile patrols have been intensified along the East-West Highway and feeder roads, while plain-clothes and foot patrols have been deployed in markets, banks and financial institutions.

Passenger assistance and health desks have been established at major bus parks and border points. Special security arrangements have also been made for Durga Puja, fairs and idol immersion programmes. Such programmes will be allowed only along approved routes and according to designated schedules.

The security plan also covers crowd management at religious and tourist sites, market monitoring, search and cordon operations, and security for rallies and demonstrations. Fire engines, ambulances and disaster rescue teams have been kept on standby for emergencies.

Police will maintain heightened vigilance against road accidents, traffic congestion, theft, robbery, pickpocketing, gambling, illegal betting, alcohol-related disturbances and drug trafficking. Authorities will also monitor black marketing, artificial shortages and unjustified price hikes.

Jewellery shops, banks and other establishments handling large amounts of cash will receive special attention. Security monitoring will also cover Deusi-Bhailo programmes, cultural events and late-night activities to prevent disturbances to public order.

LUMBINI MASTER PLAN REMAINS INCOMPLETE

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Bhairahawa, Oct. 7

Nearly five decades after the Lumbini Master Plan was initiated, the development project remains incomplete, raising questions over delays, inadequate funding and construction work that critics say goes against the original concept of the plan. In general, development projects are expected to be completed within five to 15 years. However, the master plan for Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautam Buddha and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has remained unfinished even 48 years after its implementation began. Delays and the construction of physical structures considered inconsistent with the original concept have also sparked debate over the need to review the plan.

The master plan was prepared by Japanese architect and planner Professor Kenzo Tange in 1978 after six years of study. The then Lumbini Development Committee approved the plan the same year and initially set a target of completing it within 17 years.

According to Lumbini Development Trust Member Secretary Gyanin Rai, the project has not been completed despite the passage of decades. He said several activities carried out during the development process have also deviated from the master plan, making a comprehensive review necessary. Discussions are underway on how to bring the project to a logical conclusion, he said.

Funding shortages have been one of the major obstacles. On April 27, 2021, the Ministry of Finance had assured the project of Rs. 7 billion in funding. Based on that commitment, the trust signed contracts worth around Rs. 3.67 billion for the first phase of construction. However, the required budget has not been released fully.

Trust Accounts Officer Bhim Basnet said around Rs. 4.19 billion had been allocated in the previous fiscal year, but approximately Rs. 600 million remained unpaid to contractors.

He added that the second phase, estimated at around Rs. 2.89 billion, has also faced delays because the Ministry of Finance has not approved the necessary budget release.

Critics have also raised concerns about construction that appears inconsistent with the master plan. Instead of prioritizing environmentally friendly and internationally competitive construction methods, domestic contractors have been involved in projects that have included concrete structures, potentially affecting Lumbini's peaceful and spiritual environment.

An archaeology official said more than two dozen unauthorized structures, including roads and large concrete bridges, have reportedly been constructed in areas not included in the original master plan.

With funding shortages, administrative delays and deviations from the master plan continuing, the goal of completing 100 per cent of the project by 2030 also appears increasingly difficult. Stakeholders have therefore emphasized the need for a comprehensive review of the Lumbini Master Plan and a clear strategy for its completion.



Pokhara Metropolitan City
Office of Municipal Executive
Urban Resilience and Livability Improvement Project
Project Implementation Unit
Simalchaur, Pokhara
Date of Publication: 2083-06-22 (8th Oct 2026)



Pokhara Metropolitan City, Office of the Municipal Executive, Urban Resilience and Livability Improvement Project (URLIP), Project Implementation Unit (PIU), Simalchaur, Pokhara notifies that the following Bidders have been qualified and is hereby intends to accept their Technical Bids in respective contracts in accordance with the Instruction of Bidders for the execution of the following Contracts as specified in the table below. The qualified Bidders are hereby notified and requested for their presence in opening of the Price Bids as per the instructions to Bidders Clause No. 26.7 and 26.8 and PPR Rule 31 (H5).

Date of opening of Price Bid: 2083-06-30 (16th October, 2026) on 13:00 Hours (Local Time) at Pokhara Metropolitan City, Urban Resilience and Livability Improvement Project (URLIP), Project Implementation Unit (PIU), Simalchaur, Pokhara.

S. N.	Name and Contract Identification No. of Project	Name and Address of Qualified Bidders in Technical Bid
1	Name of Contract: Pokhara: Access Road with Cycle Track to Panchase Improvement. Contract ID: URLIP/ PKR/CW/02	i) M/S Sri Ram Enterprises, Bhagalpur, Bihar, India ii) M/S AIPL-NANC JV, Kuleshowar, Kathmandu iii) M/S Kumar Shrestha Nirman Sewa Pvt. Ltd., Mahendranagar iv) M/S Sharma - Surya JV, Mustangchowk, Pokhara v) M/S KOTARKI - A.R.T. - VEDALAYA JV, Balaju, Kathmandu/M/S Lama Construction Company Pvt. Ltd., Kathmandu

Project Manager

NOTICE OF INVITATION FOR SEALED QUOTATION
NEPAL AIRLINES CORPORATION
OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT KANTIPATH, KATHMANDU, NEPAL
First Date of Publication: [27/08/2026]
Second Date of Publication: [08/10/2026]
“Procurement of Aviation Fuel for BLR, BOM, CAN, DEL and DMM Operations” (Ref Nos.: OD/21/ 519/26 to OD/21/ 523 /26)

1. The Operations Department, Nepal Airlines Corporation, Kathmandu, Nepal re-invites Sealed Quotations from eligible bidders for the Procurement of Aviation Fuel for the following operations:

Airport / Operation (IATA / ICAO)	Ref. No.
BLR / VOBL - Kempegowda International Airport	OD/21/520/26
BOM / VABB - Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport	OD/21/521/26
CAN / ZGGG - Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport	OD/21/523/26
DEL / VIDP - Indira Gandhi International Airport	OD/21/519/26
DMM / OEDF - King Fahd International Airport	OD/21/522/26

2. Interested eligible bidders may download the respective Sealed Quotation for Procurement of Aviation (Jet A-1) Fuel documents from the link in our official website as per below.

This notice can be viewed/downloaded on the Corporation’s official website:
http://nepalairlines.com.np/home/notices
Refer to the Sealed Quotation documents for detailed information.
Name: Operations Department, Nepal Airlines Corporation
Location: Kantipath, Kathmandu, Nepal
Attention: Director, Operations Department
Tel: +977-1-571851, **Fax:** +977-1-5718570
Email: bijay.kumar@nac.com.np, dir.od@nac.com.np, prashant.paudel@nac.com.np; incharge.odfinance@nac.com.np



Nepal Airlines Corporation
Operations Department
Kantipath, Kathmandu, Nepal

EDITORIAL

Setback To Growth

Nepal's persistent aspiration to achieve prosperity has often met unintended yet damaging obstacles. In the last decade, natural disasters and the pandemic proved catastrophic. The 2015 earthquake, the COVID-19 pandemic and ruinous floods and landslides, including the recent Bhotekoshi mayhem, have buffeted the nation in succession. They caused huge losses of life and property. The psychological trauma can't be measured in monetary terms, though it also entails unseen economic costs. As the country attempts to pick up the pieces, it faces another tragedy. This cycle of devastations have detrimental impact on recovery, economic growth and job creation. In many cases, reconstruction costs are not borne by the national budget. Seeking foreign aid becomes imperative for speedy recovery and brings the economy back on track. Our fragile ecology, political instability and weak manufacturing and dependent economy have also posed structural barriers to the overall development process.

Every disaster brings bad economic news. Growth projections are downgraded while the budget is transferred to relief and reconstruction work. This dampens the long-term economic prospects. Following the Bhotekoshi flash flood, the economic sector has been battered again. The flood destroyed private houses, hydropower projects and business establishments worth over Rs. 30 billion in the affected districts. This calamity has a long-term impact on the country's economic activities. The other day, the World Bank said that Nepal's economic growth rate would be shrunk to 3.7 per cent in the fiscal year 2026/27 as a result of the Bhotekoshi flood. According to a news report of this daily, the projected growth rate of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is below the estimated economic expansion in FY 2025/26 when the country achieved 3.9 per cent. In FY 2024/25, it was 4.4 per cent.

In its report 'Nepal Development Update, Building Back Differently for the Future,' published on Tuesday, the WB has predicted that reconstruction and rehabilitation activities would give momentum to the economy, enabling to attain 5.2 per cent growth in FY2027/28. However, challenges lie in pooling the resources to boost recovery. As in the 2015 earthquake, international donors must come up with a generous heart, as the country is not in a position to arrange over Rs. 700 billion, which is required to reconstruct the damaged structures in the flood-hit places. The flood has washed away critical infrastructure such as hydropower and solar plants, transmission lines, roads, bridges and business houses. The production of electricity and delivery of services and goods will be badly constrained. Similarly, trade, tourism, health and education sectors will take a backseat for the time being.

Every crisis comes with opportunity. As extreme climatic events have become regular phenomena in the Himalayas, the country must rethink its development strategy and give greater priority to resilient structures. The reconstruction drive must take the people living below the mountains and glaciers into account. The rebuilding plan needs to be devised by updating the multi-hazard risk assessments that consider floods, debris flow, landslides, glacial hazards and river systems. The location and designs of infrastructure should be determined based on the geological studies. A robust early warning system, disaster preparedness, seamless communication and effective social protection measures are necessary to cope with disasters and post-disaster situations. The WB has pledged to support investment in the systems and implement the right policies so that Nepal moves on a more resilient and sustainable path. Other international financial institutions and developed nations should also back it to swiftly reconstruct the destroyed structures and rehabilitate the affected people.

Prioritise Mental Health

ANGELA GHISING

When one feels compelled to make one's suffering a public appeal for help, the issue at hand cannot remain confined to what has happened to that individual. Recent cases of extreme distress in Nepal cannot be explained in a single sentence, or dismissed after media coverage fades. Rather, it poses an uncomfortable question: What do these incidents tell us about the circumstances in which the country's citizens have to survive?

Recent tragedies, including the deaths of workers in Tripureshwor under severe economic and administrative pressure, underscore how strain on lower and working classes continues to build. Even though each case is unique, collectively, they set off an alarm across the nation, an alarm that concerns the issue of mental health.

It would be misleading to assume that any case of public suffering happens because of pre-existing mental illnesses. As the World Health Organisation (WHO) says, intense distress and harm caused to oneself is a result of a combination of social, cultural, psychological, and environmental factors. Issues such as poverty, unemployment, family conflicts, embarrassment, and administrative pressures might bring about a crisis, either by themselves or in addition to existing psychological disorders. Hence, the question we need to ask first is not whether the person was "mentally ill" but what was happening to the person at the time of the crisis and what means were available to the person.

Nepal has ample reason to address this question urgently. Both the Nepal National Mental Health Survey and other recent surveys suggest that there are major mental health issues in both adults and young people. There is also a huge gap in services in precisely the places where they should take place. Under Nepal's federal structure, mental health care cannot remain an elite provision trapped in tertiary hospitals or confined to Kathmandu.

The crucial point is this: under our federal system, mental health services are meant to be an active, core component of Palika-level local governance, health posts, and primary health centers across all seven provinces. Citizens must have immediate, confidential access to counseling at their local health desks before economic and social strain reaches a breaking point.

Encouragingly, the Ministry of Health and Population, alongside the WHO, initiated consultations for the National Mental Health Strategy 2026-2030, involving delegates from education, labour, home affairs, and local governance. But paper strategies will amount to little unless our local government bodies have adequate resources. The task ahead is one of mobilising our existing primary health facilities, along with referring Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), as well as involving mental well-being concerns in our local administration.

Furthermore, because citizens interact directly with local authorities during moments of vulnerability, frontline municipal and law enforcement officers urgently require training in trauma-informed communication and conflict de-escalation. Investing in local, community-based mental well-being is not a secondary luxury; as WHO economic analyses for Nepal demonstrate, untreated distress inflicts severe economic costs through lost labour productivity and overburdened systems.

The media, too, carries a critical duty to focus on these structural realities rather than sensationalising acts of self-harm. Responsible journalism must demand accountability on local governance and emphasise warning signs and support resources. It is high time that Nepal stopped waiting for public incidents to serve as a reminder of how important mental health is. Each incident demands more than just outrage. Public attempts at desperation serve as a clear warning signal; a warning bell does not indicate that there is just one problem but that our current local structures need our attention.

Civil Society In Search Of Perspective

Tara Dahal



Michael Ignatieff articulates the virtue of civil society: "Without civil society, democracy remains an empty shell; without civil society, the market becomes a jungle." Sensing the vitality of democracy, Nepali civil society groups have performed key roles in democratic education, human rights, health, community building, network expansion, organising discourse, mediation and offering relief to the needy. A peaceful transformation of Nepal's public sphere spurs modernity. The silent social revolution harboured by them in Nepali villages and towns has offered the political parties and citizens critical energy to speak, stir up and claim the rights and reshape power and wealth relationships in society.

They defend popular sovereignty rooted in individual liberty and participatory democracy. It is rooted in human rights and accountability of power to those affected by its exercise. In search of a good life, Nepali civil society since antiquity has tried to enlighten the public about their duties to nature, culture, nation and humanity. Modern rights-based civil society groups face problems in areas of autonomy, membership, charity work, supporting the marginalised, rural orientation, resource utilisation, and self-governance measures within their capacity and competence. Their relationship with other actors is unsettled.

Social contract

Nepali state is very weak in mediating between citizens and democracy. A decade-long insurgency and counter-insurgency

operations have eroded the state's monopoly on power, taxation and loyalty of citizens. Civil society groups complement the development and political functions of the state and provide the resilience to citizens' initiatives to cope with their problems. Their social movements have liberalised the nature of traditional politics from status-bound to social contract, altering the functions of the state and seeking to universalise the dignity of Nepalis.

The vision of civil society groups based on freedom, social justice, solidarity and peace will continue to hold relevance as universal reference points to improve the condition of Nepalis caught in poverty, inequality, hierarchy and patriarchy. The task ahead is how to establish a congruency of interest between the sectoral social action of civil society and national action of the state and make both sets of actors inclusive, visible, representative and accountable to the larger public. Building strong informational networks of association can lead to enhanced faith in the possibilities of modern life.

Democracy requires not just political and economic institutions but also voluntary social and civic ones to mediate power and wealth in society, create checks and balances and hold the state and market institutions accountable. Nepali civil society groups have to play a role in the construction of citizens' civic identity and emancipate them through the project of social reforms. In the field of democratisation, what is challenging for them is how they can overcome their division, partisan character, develop autonomy from the interest groups, build coalitions across the various civic groups, and enable socially legitimate collective action on matters of public good. The information revolution has generated the habits of debate and offered political leadership effective opposition and competition on matters of public and national importance and the questions of common good.

A vibrant democracy requires an all-inclusive perspective of social justice where civil society groups with other stakeholders can enter into cooperative action for institutional and leadership reforms.

The irreducible pluralism in Nepali civil society reflects an essential aspect of a democratic society. They draw sustenance from these diverse social contexts and the historical spirit of citizens' community-mindedness and public-spiritedness entrenched into duty-bound behaviour, dharma and its ideals—emancipation of all and not only the oppressed. They offer people a rich associational life, a culture of mutual trust, cooperation and communication and social capital. The central challenge for Nepali civil society in the realm of "social" now is to expand the domain of particular form of social capital, such as guthi, dhikuti, volunteerism, public-interest federations, associations, CBOs, NGOs, etc. located at certain place into the national scale, beneficial to various communities and transform diverse people into equal citizens. Law, media, NGOs, civil society, and politics advocate rights without promoting duties that bind Nepalis to community, society, and the state.

Globalisation has internationalised the Nepali capital and labour market. It has eased the regional and global participation of Nepali civil society in the emerging social movements and world social forums. They can help the leadership to articulate the policy sovereignty of politics in economic matters and define national priorities for action, seek the support of the global community

and achieve economies of scale through market efficiency and social integration. An imperative exists in building trust and seeking the synergy of civil society-private sector partnership and enabling the weak state to assume basic governance functions and redress the challenges emerging from natural disasters and human follies.

Multi-generational consensus

In a phase of transition to generational politics, the responsibilities of Nepali civil society groups lie in: First, generating multi-generational consensus for democracy building and establishing the legitimacy of state action. Second, supporting the modernisation of the infrastructure of democracy, such as political parties, NGOs, CBOs, public interest groups and the agencies of socialisation; they must build their compliance to the rule of law. Third, to capture the sovereignty of the policy domain and enforce the accountability of governance to the public, they have to socialise people on policy issues.

In a governance regime, however, a sound mechanism of mutual accountability of various institutions, actors and generations and collective welfare must be built so that resources can be synergised into sustainable progress at multi-level government. Fourth, development of the linkages of micro and macro institutions of civil society is vital to enable their efficacy in the realisation of the vision of anti-corruption good governance. A vibrant democracy requires an all-inclusive perspective of social justice where civil society groups with other stakeholders can enter into cooperative action for institutional and leadership reforms that also transcend mini-identity-based politics so essential for strengthening active citizenship and nation-building.

(Tara Dahal holds an MA in Peace and Conflict from Otto-Von Guericke University, Germany)

Landlocked Doesn't Mean Limitlocked

Aditya Tiwari



Yuwaditya N. Tiwari



A country being landlocked does not always mean that it is least developed. Being landlocked may be a gift of nature, but development is a product of collective vision, perseverance, and national resolve, not only materialistic metrics. If natural beauty alone determined prosperity, Nepal would stand alongside the richest and most developed countries in the world. Instead, a European country with striking similarities to Nepal is one of the world's most advanced economies, known as Switzerland.

The Himalayas of Nepal and the Alps both stand as a testament to nature's magnificent grandeur. Snow-covered peaks, pristine lakes, breathtaking valleys, and a landscape that leaves tourists speechless—these two countries share remarkable gifts of nature. Both are landlocked countries; the difference is not geography. It is mindset, governance, and a shared understanding among citizens about what development truly means.

Development

Nepal has spent decades saying that being landlocked hurts its progress. Some people point to the tough terrain and claim it makes development slow. Those points

are not wrong. Still, Switzerland took a different path. It also has no direct access to the sea. But it used that limit to push investment in strong transport systems, major financial work, careful manufacturing, schools, travel, and new ideas. Swiss watches, medicines, banking, and engineering have earned wide respect around the world. Nepal has its own strengths. It has clear natural scenery, big hydropower potential, good farming valleys, and a very rich cultural legacy. Yet Nepal has a hard time building everyday infrastructure.

This contrast raises an uncomfortable but necessary question: What separates these two nations? The fundamental lesson from Switzerland is that development begins not with natural resources but with personal attitudes and strong institutions. They are the result of honest, genuine and sincere citizens in Switzerland who understand that long-term national prosperity requires discipline, cooperation and accountability. It became prosperous because it built a culture where rules matter, institutions outlive politicians and public interest outweighs partisan interest. Development is not just a speech; it is a motive towards responsibility.

Sadly, Nepal has yet to make that transition. Every new government announces, "New priorities," even when those priorities duplicate unfinished projects inherited from previous administrations. Infrastructure turns into a prize for personal gain. Many projects start with big speeches and ribbon cuttings. Then things slow down fast. Weeks and months turn into years. Bureaucracy drags the work out. Corruption stories surface. Contractor fights break out. Rules change when the government is not steady. In the end, the project can end up stalled and forgotten. Development is measured through partisan lenses rather than national interest.

Switzerland demonstrates the opposite culture. Its citizens expect transparency because they pay taxes honestly. They

Nepal can learn from what worked in Switzerland. Clear rules and open government can help; a long plan, not short tricks, can guide growth.

question governments without rejecting the state itself. They protect public infrastructure because they recognise that public property belongs to everyone. Nepal continues to struggle with this cycle of distrust. Citizens often doubt whether taxes will be used properly. Governments frequently fail to deliver projects on schedule. Corruption scandals weaken confidence further. As trust declines, cooperation also weakens, creating a vicious cycle where neither government nor citizens fully believe in one another.

Education reveals another striking contrast. Switzerland's education system is connected to economic needs. Vocational education produces skilled workers. Universities support research with practical skills that strengthen domestic industries. Nepal does have human resources with real skills and training. It often shows that Nepali workers are not feel sure Nepal can offer the kind of jobs and chances they need. Ironically, these same people become highly productive in other countries with efficient systems and better governance. This suggests that Nepal's greatest limitation is not its people but the environment in which they are expected to succeed.

Switzerland offers a clear lesson on maintenance. In that place, people treat upkeep as part of good development.

Growth is not just about starting fresh. It is also about looking after what is already there. Roads, rail lines, schools, and other

public buildings get checked often. If they are left alone, problems grow. Nepal tends to do something different. New projects often get praise when they are opened. After that, maintenance gets much less focus. Over time, buildings wear down. Roads break apart. Public spending loses value as upkeep is weak. Switzerland's success also rests upon institutional stability. Most rules stay about the same even when political context changes. When things feel stable, money is more likely to move into new projects and hence, economic progress.

Strengths

This comparison should not turn into an exercise in pessimism. Switzerland did not get rich in a single day. Nepal has major strengths, but it cannot copy Switzerland as-is. Nepal is placed in a useful spot between two large markets. The country also has strong water resources. That helps power clean energy. Nepal has good land for farming too. It also has tourism appeal that can bring steady visitors. Still, each country follows its own road. History matters. Culture matters. Choices made over time matter.

But Nepal can learn from what worked in Switzerland. Clear rules and open government can help; a long plan, not short tricks, can guide growth. Schools and health care deserve real support. Institutions should be respected, not ignored. Public services need to work well. People also have a role. A shared effort for development should be treated as a real duty, not just words said in public. A point has been proven by the Swiss: being landlocked is not a stamp of stagnation. The real difference between the two nations is not geography; it is the will to have a thought process to think beyond the present, prioritising the common good over the short-term interests.

(Aditya Tiwari is a Kathmandu-based writer and Yuwaditya N. Tiwari is a media professional.)

50 YEARS AGO

THE RISING NEPAL

October 8, 1976

Newari Bhasha Conference Held

Bhaktapur, Oct. 7: Newari language experts Ramapati Raj Sharma yesterday distributed madals, prizes and certificates to the poets, story writers and essayists who took part in the '15th Birat Newari Bhasha conference', reports RSS.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

TRN welcomes articles, letters and comments from our valued readers and contributors.

Please email your contributions to: trnfeatures@gmail.com

trnfeatures@hotmail.com

Or send them to P.O. Box 23, Kathmandu, Nepal

READER'S MAIL

Education Reform In Madhes



This is about the news report headlined "Rajarshi Janak University should lead education reform in Madhes", which appeared in the digital edition of this daily on October 7. According to the report, Minister for Education and Sports and Pro-Chancellor Sasmit Pokharel said this.

Minister Pokharel underlined that the university should focus on research to identify the major problems in the education sector in Madhes and find policy solutions to them. Indeed, the university can be an engine for academic reform in the province. Established with the goal of covering

education, research, technology, and professional fields, its enabling Act envisages expanding quality higher education and research. The university needs to translate this mandate into reality in its letter and spirit.

Only by undertaking drastic educational reform can the province march into the new era marked by social justice and a progressive society, leaving behind many of the ills that continue to plague it. And the university can well be at the heart of this revolution.

Nikeese Neupane Dang

TAILPIECE

A man lay sprawled across three entire seats in a theatre. When the usher came by and noticed this, he whispered to the man, "Sorry, sir, but you're only allowed one seat." The man groaned but didn't budge. The usher became impatient.

"Sir," the usher said, "if you don't get up from there, I'm going to have to call the manager."

Again, the man just groaned, which infuriated the usher who turned and marched briskly back up the aisle in search of his manager. In a few moments, both the usher and the manager returned and stood over the man. Together, the two of them tried repeatedly to move him, but with no success. Finally, they summoned the police.

The cop surveyed the situation briefly, then asked, "All right, buddy, what's your name?" "Sam," the man moaned. "Where ya from, Sam?" the cop asked.

And with pain in his voice, Sam replied, "The balcony."

Russian strikes kill 19 in Ukraine

AP
Kyiv, Oct. 7

Russian missiles and drones pounded Kyiv and a dozen other Ukrainian regions overnight into Wednesday, killing at least 19 civilians, including four children, and wounding around 60 in Moscow's latest devastating barrage, Ukrainian officials said.

Ukraine had anticipated the attack, with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warning the previous day that intelligence services had concluded that Russia was building up for a "massive" strike.

Although Ukraine knew about the looming attack, which coincided with Russian President Vladimir Putin's 74th birthday, it couldn't fend it off completely.

The deaths and damage illustrated the difficulty Ukraine has in countering Russia's ballistic missiles and the new jet-powered drones used in Moscow's escalating bombardments. Without ammunition for its U.S.-made Patriot air defense systems, Ukraine can't stop Russian ballistic weapons.

It is racing to develop a new generation of interceptors fast enough to catch Moscow's high-flying jet-propelled drones.

Russia and Ukraine are engaged in a long-range aerial war as their armies remain largely deadlocked on the battlefield, more than 4 ½ years after Moscow's all-out invasion of its neighbor. The unrelenting aerial attacks are hurting Russia but could be ruinous for smaller Ukraine.

U.S.-led peace efforts appear unlikely to bring any short-term relief, with the possibility of holding low-level technical talks still under discussion. Putin, meanwhile, is pressing ahead with the invasion in the belief that Ukrainians will buckle under the pressure and Kyiv's Western supporters won't stay the course, Western analysts say.

A Russian strike destroyed an apartment block in Pryluky, in Ukraine's northern Chernihiv region, killing 13



PHOTO: AP
Rescuers work on the scene of a building destroyed following recent Russian attacks in Pryluky, Chernihiv region, Ukraine, Wednesday.

people, including four children, and wounding about 50, Interior Minister Ihor Vyhivskiy said.

Deaths were also reported in three other Ukrainian cities, including the capital Kyiv, according to Zelenskyy. "The Russians wanted to strike painfully and demonstratively," the Ukrainian leader said on social media.

Ukraine is looking worldwide for available Patriot missiles, which are in short supply due to the Iran war. "Russian ballistic missiles remain the greatest challenge. And air defense packages for us right now are a vital necessity," Zelenskyy said.

In Kremenchuk, in the Poltava region, two people were killed and seven injured, said Vitalii Diakivnych,

head of the regional military administration, and a rescue operation was continuing. "That is exactly what the enemy is counting on. For us to be afraid to fall asleep. To let our child ren out of our sight. To plan anything. So that everyone thinks: next time it could be my address," he said.

Russia's Defense Ministry said the military carried out a massive strike overnight targeting industrial facilities involved in the production and storage of missiles and drones across Ukraine. The ministry said that port and ship repair facilities in the southern Odesa region and ships carrying cargo for the Ukrainian military were also hit.

Ukraine has hit back at Russia by launching long-range drones and

missiles at oil refineries and storage depots. Zelenskyy said Wednesday that Ukraine targeted two oil facilities and a training ground in the Perm, Samara, and Astrakhan regions of Russia.

Russian officials made no immediate comment. Zelenskyy also indicated that Ukraine had struck in the Black Sea. He posted images of a fire said to show an oil tanker burning in the water near the Russian city of Sochi. It was not possible to independently verify the images.

Some Russian online media late Tuesday also posted the images. Unconfirmed media reports said it was carrying oil from Novorossiysk to India and was attacked by Ukrainian sea drones.

Rubio urges return to democratic values

AP
Athens, Oct. 7

Secretary of State Marco Rubio is set to call for the nations of the West to return to their civilizational roots and restore the values that drove the rise of Europe and North America to global dominance for centuries.

In Athens to discuss deepening economic, energy and security cooperation with Greece, Rubio will deliver a speech later Wednesday overlooking the ruins of the Acropolis, a widely recognisable symbol of the city's ancient civilization associated with the creation of popular participatory government and the social contract.

Rubio intends to remind listeners of qualities he says were born in Greece and later defined the West, such as curiosity, courage, ambition and a restless spirit of exploration and discovery of the unknown.

"It has become fashionable today to believe that enlightened foreign policy means prioritizing the 'global community' over one's own people. Here, too, we have much more to learn from the men of Ancient Greece. They knew that there was nothing selfish or wrong about loyalty to your nation, nor in fighting to defend its interests above all else," Rubio plans to say in the speech, excerpts of which were distributed by the State Department.

"Today, we find ourselves at a crossroads," he will say, according to the excerpts. "The next decade will write the story of the next century. The course we take will determine whether the West maintains its place at the head of the world, or resigns itself to a future of atrophy, servitude, and decline. We will either choose to act now or lose the choice to act at all."

Rubio is seen by many as the gentle face of the Trump administration and has been frequently dispatched to clarify or otherwise address concerns about the president's frequently undiplomatic statements.

In some quarters, however, Rubio's Athens speech may be seen as a follow-on to the blistering address Vice President JD Vance gave at last year's Munich Security Conference, in which he excoriated Europeans for allowing unchecked immigration and accused them of overreliance on America and inattention to their own security.

Vance and Rubio are the leading contenders to assume Trump's mantle at the top of the Republican Party, which faces stiff challenges in next month's congressional midterm elections.

The Trump administration has repeatedly accused countries in Europe of backsliding on their traditional values and democratic principles by stifling the free speech of conservatives and falling short on commitments to international partners like the United States.

Many of those countries have rejected the complaints and accused the U.S. under Trump of being guilty of similar behavior and worse with its staunch anti-immigration stance that some believe is racist. Ahead of his visit to Athens, about 1,500 people gathered to protest Rubio's presence and the war in Iran, chanting "American killers!"

The demonstration was organized by a communist labor union and other left-wing groups and was held ahead of extensive road closures planned in Athens on Wednesday. Organizers said similar protests were held in at least 12 other Greek cities. Public demonstrations were banned by the police in central Athens Wednesday.

Rubio is on the second leg of a three-nation tour of NATO allies that has already taken him to Iceland and will end in Portugal on Thursday.

The trip is aimed at reassuring U.S. partners that the Trump administration is committed to their success and security despite what has been an often brusque and sometimes rude approach to traditional friends that has stirred unease.

Pakistan fuel aid to 9M

AP
Islamabad, Oct. 7

Pakistan's government has provided fuel subsidies to more than 9 million low-income people as the U.S.-Iran war drives up energy prices, officials said Tuesday.

Information Technology Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja said the program was designed to ease the burden on millions of people as regional geopolitical tensions drove up global fuel prices. "We have ensured the process remains seamless and agile for citizens," Khawaja said, describing it as Pakistan's first nationwide use of technology to deliver targeted fuel subsidies.

Rising petrol and diesel prices have added pressure on a cash-strapped nation already grappling with high inflation, pushing up transportation, food and other living costs and raising fears of anti-government protests.

The program, approved by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif last month, offers fuel discounts to eligible motorcycle riders, rickshaw operators and owners of small cars, many of whom depend on their vehicles for work and daily travel.

The subsidies were announced after Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan's major Islamist political party, threatened to march on Islamabad to pressure the government to cut taxes on petrol and diesel.

Fuel prices in Pakistan have risen by more than 50% since the war between the United States and Iran began earlier this year, adding to pressure on households already struggling with the cost of living. Sharif's government says the subsidies are intended to help low-income motorists buy gasoline at prewar prices.

Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik said more than 9 million people are benefiting from the program, in which eligible motorists receive a token by text message and present it at a participating gas station, where staff verify their eligibility before applying the discount.

According to the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, the amount and frequency of assistance vary by vehicle type. Motorcycle and three-wheeler users qualify for a discount of 500 rupees (\$1.79) a week, with a limit of four tokens a month. That brings their maximum monthly assistance to 2,000 rupees (\$7.14).

Owners of cars with engines of up to 800 cubic centimeters are eligible for a discount of 100 rupees (36 cents) per liter on up to 10 liters of gasoline (2.6 gallons) every 10 days. They can receive three tokens a month, saving up to 3,000 rupees (\$10.71). Amir Shahzad, an Islamabad resident, said the subsidy was enough to cover his commute between home and work.

However, he added, "if I need to travel to another city, I will have to purchase petrol at the prevailing market price."

Houthis claim fresh Saudi attacks

AP
Cairo, Oct. 7

Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen claimed new attacks on airports and military facilities in neighboring Saudi Arabia on Wednesday as the kingdom is pulled deeper into the latest front in the Iran war, which also threatens a crucial shipping alternative to the Strait of Hormuz. As the Saudi capital is targeted again, new cage-like fences have been erected this week around fuel tanks and other equipment of the Saudi state-run Aramco oil company near the Riyadh airport.

The Houthis' military spokesperson, Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree, said on social media that the rebels launched ballistic missiles and drones against King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh. The spokesperson for the Saudi-led coalition fighting the Houthis, Maj. Gen. Turki al-Malki, said they intercepted a ballistic missile north of Riyadh. Flights were briefly disrupted, according to FlightRadar24.

The kingdom, the world's top oil exporter, has faced a string of attacks on oil and military targets in recent days. Now Saudi Arabia and allied Yemeni forces have launched a major ground and air offensive against the Houthis aiming to retake territory that the rebels seized a month ago along Yemen's western Red Sea coast and on the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.



PHOTO: AP
The ministry said the missile hit as other passengers were waiting to board their flight to the Saudi coastal city of Jeddah.

Those positions gave the Houthis better surveillance as they pursue a blockade of Saudi-linked shipping. On Monday, officials said forces of the Saudi-led coalition recaptured several key areas around the strait, through which about 12% of global trade transits.

"The Houthis believe that they can maximize Saudi economic costs and compel Saudi Arabia to surrender to Houthi demands by striking civilian infrastructure, such as oil facilities and airports," the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, wrote in an analysis.

The Houthi spokesperson said they also targeted Abha airport in Saudi Arabia, a frequent target of rebel

drones and missiles. The rebels also claimed to hit an air base in the city of Khamis Mushait and two military bases in Najran and Asir. All are in the southwest, near the Yemeni border.

Inside Yemen, fighting has centered in and around the crucial town of Dhuhab, some 54 kilometers (33.5 miles) south of the port city of Mokha that the rebels seized last month, according to both the Houthis and Yemen's internationally recognized government.

Clashes were also reported in Waziayah district in southwestern Taiz province, which links Yemen's highlands to the Red Sea and overlooks roads to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

STORM ISAIAS THREATENS US GULF COAST

AP
Miami, Oct. 7

Tropical Storm Isaias formed early Wednesday in the warm waters off eastern Mexico and forecasters said it was expected to strengthen into the first hurricane of the Atlantic season before hitting the U.S. Gulf Coast later in the week.

Isaias was located about 285 miles (460 kilometers) west of Progreso, Mexico, and about 580 miles (935 kilometers) southwest of the Mississippi River's mouth, according to the Miami-based National Hurricane Center. It had maximum sustained winds of 40 mph (65 kph) and was moving east-northeast at 8 mph (13 kph).

It was not immediately known where the storm may make landfall on the Gulf Coast. The hurricane center's initial projections said the center of Isaias could come onshore somewhere between eastern Louisiana and the western Florida Panhandle. People in those areas were urged to prepare for the storm.

Bangladesh nuclear plant sparks hope, concern

AFP
Dhaka, Oct. 7

Bangladesh is preparing to switch on its first nuclear power plant, a long-delayed project promising relief from chronic electricity shortages – even as some fear living beside it.

The 2.4-gigawatt Rooppur nuclear plant, a \$13-billion project more than a decade in the making, has transformed the once sleepy nearby village of the same name, bringing Russian workers, new businesses and jobs.

Once fully operational, its two reactors are expected to supply more than 10 per cent of electricity demand in the South Asian nation of 170 million people, which has been hit hard by the fuel crisis sparked by the conflict in the Middle East.

For Md Zahedul Hasan, managing director of state-owned Nuclear Power Plant Company Bangladesh, the giant complex represents the culmination of a decades-old ambition to bring nuclear power to the country. The plant's first reactor is scheduled to be turned on



PHOTO: AFP
Once fully operational, Bangladesh's two nuclear reactors are expected to supply more than 10 per cent of its electricity demand.

by the end of this year, and the second unit "will be operational within a year", Hasan said at the site on the banks of the Padma River, 150 kilometres (93 miles) west of Dhaka.

Bangladesh's power sector is dominated by fossil fuels, particularly natural gas, with coal, oil and renewables making up the rest. The project, built with Russian state nuclear corporation

Rosatom, has also brought an unlikely Russian enclave to rural Bangladesh.

Thousands of Russian workers have spent years building and installing equipment, with a residential complex, shops and restaurants springing up around them. Shop signs appear in Bangla, English and Russian, while some restaurants serve borscht soup alongside local dishes.

PRISM

Canadian buoy drifts 3,000 miles to Ireland

Ottawa: Officials in an Irish county are working to recover an "unusual visitor" to the coastline -- a large Canadian buoy that apparently floated across the Atlantic Ocean.

Mayo County Council said in a news release that the approximately 3.8-ton Canadian Coast Guard buoy was recently found washed ashore on Achill Island in County Mayo. "Following contact with the Canadian Coast Guard, Mayo County Council was informed that their buoys are known to be 'very friendly' and occasionally develop a habit of traveling far from home," officials wrote.

Forgotten lottery ticket wins big

Ohio: An Ohio man's Pick 5 lottery ticket spent nearly four months forgotten in a bag before he discovered it was a \$50,000 winner. Cleveland resident Wayne Hilliard told Ohio Lottery officials he bought his ticket for the June 16 Pick 5 drawing from the Exxon Mobil on Euclid Avenue in East Cleveland and placed it into a bag for safekeeping.

Hilliard said the ticket spent nearly four months forgotten in the bag until he rediscovered it and checked the results of the drawing. The ticket bore the digits 1-7-9-2-9, which matched the drawn numbers in the exact order. Hilliard visited Ohio Lottery headquarters on Monday to collect his \$50,000 prize. He took home \$36,625 after required tax withholdings.

Agencies

TODAY IN HISTORY

- 451 – The first session of the Council of Chalcedon begins.
- 1645 – Jeanne Mance opens the first lay hospital of North America in Montreal.
- 1813 – The Treaty of Ried is signed between Bavaria and Austria.
- 1821 – The Peruvian Navy is established during the War of Independence.
- 1829 – Stephenson's Rocket wins the Rainhill Trials.
- 1150 – Narapatisithu, king of Burma (died 1211).
- 1515 – Margaret Douglas, daughter of Archibald Douglas (died 1578).
- 1551 – Giulio Caccini, Italian composer (died 1618).
- 1901 – Eivind Groven, Norwegian composer and theorist (died 1977).
- 1917 – Walter Lord, American historian and author (died 2002).
- 1950 – Blake Morrison, English poet, author, and academic.
- 1951 – Jack O'Connell, American educator and politician.
- 1951 – Timo Salonen, Finnish race car driver.



An enchanting view of a tranquil village with rich greenery in Uttargaya Rural Municipality-4, Rasuwa, captured from the Laharepauwa village.

Incorporate private schools' concerns in School Education Bill: N-PABSON

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Oct. 7

The National Private and Residential Schools' Association Nepal (National PABSON) has suggested that the government ensure the concerns of private schools and improve the education sector within the framework of the proposed School Education Bill.

Submitting an 11-point proposal, N-PABSON stated that the registration status of private schools currently operating under the Office of the Company Registrar should be maintained as it is.

It also demanded that provisions

remain open for newly established schools to register with the Office of the Company Registrar to ensure the security of their investments.

National PABSON suggests that while the education provided by private schools must be based on the national curriculum, fee structures should be determined according to national standards.

These standards should incorporate aspects such as technology-friendly and scientific education, extracurricular activities, and physical infrastructure development, in alignment with Part 4 and Article 51 (j) of the constitution.

Furthermore, the association stated that mandatory participation in the Social Security Fund should not be

imposed on all schools without considering factors such as student enrollment, fee structures, geographical remoteness, and school classification. Citing the lack of uniformity in student numbers and fees, it demanded that salary standards for teachers and staff be determined based on a 60:40 ratio.

Mentioning the difficulty in completing the current curriculum within the stipulated timeframe due to Saturdays, Sundays, and festival holidays, National PABSON proposed either reducing casual and sick leave allowances or decreasing the curriculum's workload.

It also demanded that new fee structures and salary scales be implemented only from the beginning of the academic session.

Stating that a radical transformation in teaching methodology is essential, National PABSON has proposed arranging training for teachers, conducted in person on Saturdays and Sundays, and online during other holidays.

National PABSON suggests making moral education a compulsory subject at the school level to instill moral values in students and establishing clear rules that schools, staff, and students must strictly observe.

Furthermore, PABSON also stated that scholarships for higher education, specifically for grades 11 and 12 and the university level, should be both need-based and merit-based to help prevent the exodus of students abroad.

247 individuals at health risk in...

Ministry data show that as of now 15,984 people have received specific mental health and psychological counseling from 70 health personnel.

So far, 320 individuals have received on-site psychosocial counseling. Likewise, three mental health helplines are also currently in operation.

Four health institutions have suffered total damage due to the disaster.

In addition, the report notes that access to three health facilities has been obstructed, and three others have sustained partial damage.

The Ministry stated that in the last 24 hours, there have been zero new cases of Influenza-Like Illness (ILI), Acute Gastroenteritis (AGE), fever with rash, or other fevers. Furthermore, health monitoring, treatment, and management

activities are ongoing in the affected areas.

According to the report, a total of 1,184 people displaced by the floods and disaster are currently staying in 15 holding centres. Among them, 566 are men and 618 are women. There are three holding centres in Nuwakot, three in Kathmandu, three in Dhading, and six in Rasuwa district.

Auspicious time to receive ...

Phulpati will be observed on October 17, with the Tulja Bhawani procession scheduled for 7:37 a.m. and the deity's installation at 10:39 AM.

Maha Ashtami will be observed on October 18, followed by Mahanavami on October 20. On October 21, Bijaya Dashami, the main day of Bada Dashain, will be observed. In addition to the main tika ceremony, the day will feature the

Tulja Bhawani procession, the installation of the deity, and Khadga Yatra.

The Dashain celebrations will continue through Kojagrat Purnima. On October 25, families will observe Kojagrat fasting and Purnima fasting and worship Goddess Mahalakshmi in the evening.

Dashain is also a time for family gatherings, festive food, new clothes, swings and

kite flying. Children especially enjoy playing on traditional swings and flying kites, while adults focus on religious worship and visiting Shakti Peethas. Markets across the country also become crowded as people shop for food, clothing and other essentials. The government traditionally operates subsidised-price outlets during Dashain to make essential food items more affordable for consumers.

Thapa declares end of...

Nepali Congress leader Bishmaraj Angdembe described the 15th General Convention as historic, saying discussions on the party's policies, principles and future course had made it different from previous conventions.

He said the Nepali Congress had

attracted people from all age groups, including young people, and expressed hope that the convention would bring changes to the party's policies and thinking.

Meanwhile, voting to elect the new Central Working Committee is scheduled to

begin at 10 am on Thursday. A total of 7,255 delegates are eligible to vote.

Election Committee Coordinator Prem Bahadur Khadka said voting will take place at seven polling centres including at the City Hall, Khula Manch and Nepal Academy.

Kathmandu Valley residents rely...

Motor vehicles and traffic emissions were identified as major sources of air pollution by 98.6 per cent of respondents, while 94.8 per cent identified dust from road construction as a significant source.

There was strong public support for measures to address air pollution. Some 79.9 per cent of respondents supported expanding public transport and electric mobility, while 71.5 per cent supported stronger dust-control measures and urban greening. However, 70.4 per cent expressed dissatisfaction

with government efforts to tackle air pollution.

The survey also found that 82 per cent of respondents use surgical masks or scarves to protect themselves from air pollution. At the same time, 43.4 per cent said they take no personal measures to protect themselves from pollution.

Air pollution may also be influencing people's decisions to leave the Valley. Among the 7.2 per cent of respondents considering leaving the Kathmandu Valley, 39.1 per cent identified poor air

quality as one of the contributing factors. Economic pressures and inflation were the leading factors, cited by 47.8 per cent.

"The survey data reveals a critical disconnect. Four in five residents say the air is hazardous to their health, yet most are forced to rely on their senses rather than science to understand the air they breathe. Six in ten do not know how to check pollution levels," said Roshani Giri, executive director of Taza Initiative Nepal.

Nepal, Russia discuss Nepalis in Russian Army

BY A STAFF REPORTER
Kathmandu, Oct. 7

Nepal and Russia have discussed the issues of Nepali nationals in the Russian Army, including the missing Nepali nationals, and Nepali nationals detained in Ukraine as Prisoners of War and compensation.

At the meeting of bilateral consultation that concluded in Kathmandu on Wednesday, they also exchanged views on various regional and multilateral matters of mutual interest, including climate change and cooperation in multilateral systems, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) informed in a statement.

The meeting, which also coincided

with the celebration of 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Russia, reviewed overall aspects of Nepal-Russia relations.

"The two sides appreciated the long-standing friendship and close partnership between the two countries. While briefing each other about the political and economic developments in each other's countries, they reaffirmed their commitment to further promoting cooperation and collaboration in various areas including education, human resource development, culture, tourism, climate change, and trade and investment, among others," read the statement.

Foreign Secretary Amrit Bahadur Rai and Deputy-Minister of

Foreign Affairs of Russia Andrey Rudenko co-chaired their respective delegations.

The Russian delegation comprised of the Ambassador of Russia to Nepal Aleksei Surovtsev, officials from the MoFA of Russia as well as diplomats from the Embassy. Likewise, the Nepali delegation included Head of Europe Division Ganesh Prasad Dhakal, officials from the MoFA and the sectoral ministries.

Following the meeting, Foreign Secretary Rai hosted a luncheon in honour of the Deputy Minister Rudenko, and accompanying delegates.

The Protocol on Consultations between the foreign ministries of Nepal and the Russian Federation was signed on 5 September 1995.

Rajarshi Janak University urged to lead education reform in Madhes



BY LAXMI CHAUDHARY
Janakpurdhham, Oct. 7

Minister for Education and Sports and Pro-Chancellor Sasmit Pokharel has said that Rajarshi Janak University should play a leading role in improving education in Madhes Province.

Addressing the 11th Senate meeting of Rajarshi Janak University held in Janakpurdhham on Wednesday, Minister Pokharel said the university should be developed as a centre of academic development in Madhes.

He stressed that the university should undertake distinctive and exemplary work beyond what schools do.

Minister Pokharel said the university should focus on research to identify the major problems in the education sector in Madhes and find policy solutions to them.

He said the university should take the lead in formulating education-related policies and laws based on research.

"There should be a difference between the roles of schools and universities. Universities should rise above narrow horizons and focus on research, knowledge creation and policy reform," he said.

As the university is linked to Mithila civilisation, Minister Pokharel said it should prioritise the study and research of Mithila art, culture, philosophy and civilisation.

He also suggested that the university should develop its own

distinct identity rather than simply following the subjects offered by other universities.

"Rajarshi Janak University should do something new and demonstrate it. It should create an environment capable of attracting students from India and other countries through studies and research focused on Mithila civilisation," he added.

Minister Pokharel, who is also the university's Pro-Chancellor, said priority should be given to expanding access to higher education in Madhes as well as to technical, vocational and employment-oriented education.

He said the university should develop curricula and academic programmes based on local needs and potential and focus on producing human resources capable of addressing the province's requirements.

The Minister said the academic development of the province would be possible only through effective cooperation among universities, local governments and other stakeholders, adding that overall development of the province was not possible without reforming the education sector.

The government was committed to providing necessary support and cooperation for the development of quality education, he added.

Meanwhile, the university's budget of Rs. 511.702 million for the fiscal year 2026/27 was approved by the Senate.

Of the total allocation, Rs. 210.895 million has been allocated for capital expenditure and Rs. 300.807 million for recurrent expenditure.



Gajuri Rural Municipality

Office of Rural Municipal Executive
Gajuri, Dhading

Invitation for Bids (Hardcopy)

Second Date of Publication: October 8, 2026, 9:00 am

The Office of the Rural Municipal Executive, Gajuri Rural Municipality, Gajuri, Dhading, has budgeted a portion of its funds for the implementation of activities tied to the contract mentioned here.

Contract ID	Name of Project	Estimated amount (including VAT)	Bid Security (NRs)	Fee for Bid Documents (NRs)	Deadline
GRM/W/NCB/05/2083/084	Upgrading of Chaukibhanjyang-Gairigaun-Imrang Road in Gajuri 4	1,94,87,556.35	5,00,000/-	3,000/-	October 29, 2026, 12:00pm
GRM/W/NCB/06/2083/084	Construction Of Indryani Temple Pedestrian Bridge Across Belkhu River in Gajuri 6	36,66,056.54	95,000/-	3,000/-	October 29, 2026, 12:00pm
GRM/G/SQ/07/2083/084	Procurement and Installation of Networking, CCTV and Telephone in Office Building of Gajuri Rural Municipality	NA	50,000/-	1,000/-	October 15, 2026, 12:00 pm

Account Details: Rastriya Banijya Bank, Gajuri Branch

Type	Account Name	Account Number	Office Code	Rajaswa (revenue) Shirshak no.
For Bid document	GA-1-1 AANTARIK RAJS	1050100301010002	80330503300	14219
For Bid Security	GA-3 DHARAUTI ACCOUN	1050100303000002	80330503300	NA

Eligible Bidders may obtain further information at the office of Gajuri Rural Municipality, Dhading, email: ito.gajurimun@gmail.com, and contact no. 9851338362. The bid document can be downloaded and printed from website: <https://gajurimun.gov.np/public-procurement-tender-notices> and can be submitted to the office of Rural Municipal Executive, Gajuri, Dhading. Also, visit our Facebook: www.facebook.com/gajuriruralmunicipality

Chief Administrative Officer



Artists couple busy making idols for Dashain



BY SANTOSH DAHIT
Dang, Oct. 7

With the festival of Dashain approaching, JP Magar and his wife Janaki Magar of Ghorahi Sub-Metropolitan City-17, Gairagaun, are busy making idols of Goddess Durga. As orders for idols have started coming from different places, the couple remain busy

making them from morning to evening. Idols of Goddess Durga are currently being made at ‘Swargadwari Handicraft Cottage Industry’, operated along the Dharapani road. JP Magar said the demand for idols increases every year during Dashain as there is a tradition of installing idols of Goddess Durga and worshipping them at various places during the festival. “I have been making idols continuously for the past 13 years. The

workload increases significantly as Dashain approaches,” he said. “At present, neither of us has even a moment to spare.” Magar, who is from Banganga Municipality-11 of Kapilvastu, has been living in Ghorahi and making idols since 2013. Although he has not received any formal training, he learnt the skill by watching other artisans at work. He initially worked alone but later taught the skill to his wife.

Lumbini int’l film festival to be held



BY OUR CORRESPONDENT
Tansen, Oct. 7

Preparations for the Lumbini International Film Festival have been completed. The festival will be held in Tansen, Palpa, on October 8, 9 and 10. During the festival, 26 documentaries from Nepal and around the world, along with international feature and short films, will be screened, said Pandav KC, executive director of Katha Mandala. He said the festival will help promote the language, art, culture, and natural and cultural heritage of Lumbini Province at the national and international levels through cinema. The event will be held at Santosh Cinema Hall in Tansen with the promotion of Tansen Municipality and the

Nepal Tourism Board. The festival is expected to create an environment for filmmaking in the province by promoting its indigenous culture, historical heritage, local food, traditional dress and tourist attractions. After the film screenings, direct interactions with the directors, producers and actors of the respective films will be organised, said KC. The festival will help audiences understand the filmmaking process, themes and creative aspects of cinema and establish direct connections with filmmakers, said Sagar Man Maharjan, ward chairperson of Tansen-6. The festival is being organised in cooperation with the provincial government, local governments, the private sector, tourism entrepreneurs and various organisations to make it a shared cultural festival of Lumbini Province.

Michelle Yeoh rules out directing

AGENCIES
Los Angeles, Oct. 7

Hollywood actress Michelle Yeoh has ruled out becoming a director, saying she prefers acting and producing. Speaking at a press conference at the Busan International Film Festival, Yeoh discussed her upcoming miniseries Blade Runner 2099. She said working on the series and with actress Hunter Schafer had been a great experience. Asked whether she might direct in the future, Yeoh said directing requires a strong vision and leaves little time for anything else. She added that she would rather support directors who have their own vision. Yeoh also received the festival's Asian Filmmaker of the Year award at the opening ceremony. She said she was looking forward to Lee Chang-dong's Possible Love and expressed her interest in working with directors Park Chan-wook and Bong Joon Ho. Yeoh will next travel to New York Comic Con to promote Blade Runner 2099. The eight-episode series will be released on Prime Video on



November 25. Yeoh plays Olwen, a replicant Blade Runner nearing the end of her life, who teams up with Schafer's character, Cora.

Folk Duet Academy to hold 9th national convention in Madhes

BY RABINDRA UPRETI
Bardibas, Oct. 7

The National Folk and Duet Song Academy Nepal is organising its 9th National General Convention and Silver Jubilee celebration in Madhes Province for the first time to mark its 25th anniversary. As the convention approaches, Bardibas in Mahottari has become a gathering place for popular folk and duet singers, musicians and art lovers. The convention is being seen as a special and historic chapter in the academy's 25-year journey as it will bring together the distinct culture of the Madhes region, the uniqueness of Maithili and Bhojpuri traditions, and the popularity of Nepali folk and duet music on one platform. According to the organisers, the three-day convention will be held at the open stage in Gauridanda, Bardibas-3, on October 8, 9 preparations are afoot to make the event grand, dignified and memorable. The convention will be held under the theme ‘Protect democracy, respect creators and encourage new talent’. Madhes Province Chief Minister Krishna Yadav is scheduled to inaugurate the event. The convention will review the academy's 25-year institutional journey and



hold discussions on its current situation, the problems faced by artistes and the prospects of the folk music sector. It will also set the academy's future direction and elect a new leadership team, said academy central member Krishna Gautam. The academy has around 50,000 general members, while more than 1,500 representatives are expected to attend the convention. More than 5,000 people, including observers, well-wishers, artistes and audience, will also participate in the national jamboree. Gautam said the number could increase further as participants are expected from more than a dozen countries, including India, the United States and South Korea.

With the convention approaching, the presence of popular folk and duet artistes has increased in Bardibas. The participation of popular artists including Shantishree Pariyar, Prakash Saput, Preeti Ale and Pashupati Sharma has added to the excitement. Academy deputy general secretary Shirish Devkota and other well-known artists have also arrived in Bardibas. Bardibas has already started taking on a festive atmosphere with extensive publicity, attractive posters and pamphlets, stage decoration and preparations for the opening ceremony. Rudrasen Bishwakarma, president of the Madhes Province chapter of the National Folk and Duet Song Academy

Nepal and co-organiser of the event, said preparations were being carried out on a war footing to make the convention historic, lively, memorable and meaningful. “This national convention being held in Madhes Province on the occasion of the 25th Silver Jubilee is not limited to an institutional programme. It is also an opportunity to promote the art, culture and tourism of Madhes,” said Bishwakarma. According to Ramesh Khatri, secretary of the Mahottari chapter of the academy and local coordinator, 20 sub-committees have been formed to manage everything from the operation of the convention to hospitality. Responsibilities have been divided to provide a comfortable environment for representatives, artists, guests and audiences. The convention is also expected to have a positive impact on hotels, tourism and businesses in Bardibas, said Hira Gautam, president of the Hotel and Tourism Entrepreneurs Federation, Madhes Province. He said the strong influence of popular artistes on social media and digital platforms would help take the convention's activities to audiences across Nepal and abroad. This would also help promote the identity, tourism and cultural potential of Bardibas and the wider Madhes region internationally, he added.

HOROSCOPE

tarot.com

- ARIES:** Small improvements can make a surprising difference today. The Virgo Moon moves through your 6th House, drawing attention to routines, errands, wellness, and the little systems that keep your life moving.
- TAURUS:** Pleasure does not have to be extravagant to feel worthwhile today. The Virgo Moon moves through your 5th House of Creativity and Enjoyment, making you more selective about what actually sounds fun.
- CANCER:** Your mind is sharp today, especially for details other people miss. The Virgo Moon moves through your 3rd House, helping you sort information, ask useful questions, and make sense of something that has felt scattered.
- LEO:** You may be thinking more carefully about what is worth your money, time, or attention. The Virgo Moon moves through your 2nd House, helping you notice where a small practical change could improve security or reduce waste.
- LIBRA:** You may benefit from a little more quiet than usual today. The Virgo Moon moves through your private 12th House, encouraging rest, reflection, and time away from unnecessary noise.
- SCORPIO:** Your social world may feel more selective today. The Virgo Moon moves through your 11th House, helping you notice which friendships, groups, and future plans genuinely fit your life.
- CAPRICORN:** Your perspective could use some fresh input today. The Virgo Moon moves through your 9th House, making it satisfying to research, learn, plan, or dig into a subject that gives your mind something substantial to work with.
- AQUARIUS:** You may feel more attentive to what is shared, owed, or emotionally complicated today. The Virgo Moon moves through your 8th House, encouraging you to look at details around trust, money, or commitments without dramatizing them.

CARTOON

gocomics.com



POLICE
ADVANCE TO
SEMIFINALS

BY HARI PRASAD KOIRALA
Urlabari, Oct. 7

Departmental team Nepal Police Club advanced to the semifinals of the ongoing 3rd International Invitational Pathari-Shanish-chare Gold Cup in Pathari-Shanishchare, Morang, by defeating Redhorse Ilam in a sudden-death shootout.

The match went to a tie-breaker after ending in a goalless draw within the regulation 90 minutes.

With both teams scoring four goals each during the initial tie-breaker round, the winner was ultimately decided via sudden death.

In the tie-breaker, Ram Baji. Sujan Magar, Dasharath Giri and Amit Tamata scored for Police, while Redhorse goalkeeper Bibek Magar saved a shot from Krishna Gurung.

Meanwhile, Shyam Murmu, Sujan BK, Pujan Thapa and Bibek Sunam scored for Redhorse; however, Police goalkeeper Amit Tamata saved a shot from Bibek Magar, resulting in a 4-4 draw in the tie-breaker.

In the sudden-death round, Shishir Chaudhary, Subas Tharu, John Bista and Bikash BK scored for Police. Although Heman Limbu, Jamin Laksam, and Binod Dhamala scored for Redhorse, Police emerged victorious after goalkeeper Amit Tamata parried away a shot from Bishal Darji.

Police goalkeeper Amit Tamata, who delivered a decisive performance, was named 'Man of the Match' and received a trophy along with a cash prize of Rs. 7,000.

End of an era: Argentina bids Messi
farewell in the final nt'l team match

AP
Buenos Aires, Oct. 7

Argentina is confronting a once-unimaginable reality: a national team without soccer great Lionel Messi.

On Wednesday, 39-year-old Messi bid farewell to international soccer after 21 years, 126 goals, two Copa América titles and a World Cup championship, scoring a penalty and setting up Argentina's other two goals for a 3-0 victory over Benin. What was otherwise an unremarkable friendly against the West African nation became a moment that this soccer-crazed country had long dreamed.

"It feels like an era is ending, knowing he won't play for the national team anymore," said Valentino Ruso, 17, who was heading to a friend's house in Buenos Aires to watch the game. "I'm sad. I think everyone is upset today. He will be missed."

Argentines had an intense, often unforgiving relationship with the shy boy who left his hometown of Rosario at 13 for the youth academy of Spanish club Barcelona. As he grew into a global icon of near-mythical stature, his compatriots adored and abused him, sometimes questioning his commitment to his home country and accusing him of indifference to it.

But by the time he ended his dazzling international career, his devotion to Argentina was no longer in question. Nor was Argentina's devotion to its most famous export, whose triumphs reminded the country of its capacity for greatness through years of political and economic instability.

"Argentines often say, 'Thank God I was born at a time when I could experience the miracle of watching Messi play,'" said Andrés Rabinovich, a



Glimpses of Argentina's farewell gala of Lionel Messi during his final match for the national team against Benin.

University of Chicago scholar who has researched soccer's role in Argentine culture. "It's hard living in Argentina. Soccer is often one of the few things that offers you some respite, some joy."

For years, Argentines had debated when and how Messi should leave the world stage. His Aug. 31 announcement that he'd be retiring from the national team, weeks after Argentina's loss to Spain in the World Cup final, prompted

an outpouring of gratitude and grief — even as Messi will continue to light up Major League Soccer with Inter Miami. "I don't know if there has ever been a love story between a player and a nation as great as the one you built," his teammate Rodrigo De Paul wrote on Instagram.

The Argentine soccer federation turned Tuesday's game — Messi's 208th — into a national farewell billed as "the

last tango." More than 85,000 tickets to Buenos Aires' largest stadium sold out in 90 minutes, seats that were originally priced around \$60-\$300 later fetching over \$2,500 on resale sites. Players from Argentina's 1978, 1986 and 2022 World Cup-winning squads returned to see him off.

After the final whistle, Messi's eyes glistened as his teammates gathered around him, applauding. A rumbling

PHOTO: AP

Preparations intensify for Nepalgunj
Swimming Championship

BY SIRAJ KHAN
Nepalgunj, Oct. 7

The third edition of the Nepalgunj National Swimming Championship 2083 is set to be held in Nepalgunj. The Nepalgunj Swimming Club is organising this event, scheduled for the upcoming 31st October and 1st November, 2026.

Keshav Neupane, President of the Nepalgunj Swimming Club, stated that preparations are underway for the competition, and are being accelerated through the formation of various sub-committees., which will feature over 200 athletes from across the country and comprise approximately 60 events.

President Neupane also informed that the Minister for Education and Sports, Sasmit Pokhrel, has been invited to inaugurate the championship.

According to the club, the event is organised with the aim of developing and expanding the sport of swimming in Nepalgunj. Club General Secretary Krishna Adhikari informed that preparations for the third edition have been intensified following the successful hosting of the first and second editions.

The club mentioned that national-level swimming competitions are held here annually due to the immense potential for the sport in Nepalgunj, a city known for its extreme heat.

Alongside the development and expansion of swimming, the club has made the search for new and talented athletes a crucial part of its mission.

The first national school-level swimming competition was held in Nepalgunj with the aim of further motivating athletes, coaches and sports enthusiasts. Subsequently, the second national swimming competition has already concluded in Kohalpur, Banke.

NPL preparations in final stages

RSS
Kathmandu, Oct. 7

As the third edition of the Nepal Premier League (NPL) approaches, the work of upgrading and managing the Tribhuvan University International Cricket Ground in Kirtipur has reached its final stages. According to Paras Khadka, Secretary of the Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN), efforts to construct necessary infrastructure and manage the venue have been intensified with only about three weeks remaining until the tournament begins.

He noted that since each edition of the tournament is growing in scale, preparations are being made to provide a superior experience compared to the past for spectators, players, media personnel and distinguished guests.

"We are in the final phase of preparations. There are high expectations



Photo: CAN Facebook

for the successful conduct of the tournament. As the event grows in magnitude, our responsibilities increase as well," Secretary Khadka told RSS. "We plan to complete all work by Dashain and be fully prepared for the third edition."

Addressing management issues observed in the previous edition, new structures are being added to the

ground this time. Secretary Khadka informed that, given the anticipated high turnout of spectators for NPL matches, efforts are underway to increase spectator capacity by making optimal use of the available space.

He noted that necessary structural changes are being implemented after identifying areas within the ground complex that can accommodate more spectators.

Furthermore, Secretary Khadka mentioned that initiatives to improve access roads and gate management are being pursued in coordination with the relevant ministries. CAN has informed that special attention has been paid to management to ensure a comfortable experience for ticket-holding spectators—from the moment they enter the venue until they leave after the match.

In the previous edition, spectators faced issues such as inadequate restroom facilities and dust during movement. Secretary Khadka noted that CAN has taken steps to prevent such problems from recurring this time.

ARTETA SIGNS
NEW CONTRACT

AP
London, Oct. 7

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta has signed a new contract that is set to extend his stay at the English champions beyond a decade.

Arteta penned a deal that keeps him at Arsenal until 2030, the club said Wednesday.

The 44-year-old Spanish coach took charge in December 2019 and is now comfortably the longest-serving coach in the Premier League.

He led Arsenal to the league title last season to end the club's 22-year wait to be the champions of England again.

"We have already built a special bond and created memories that will last a lifetime," Arteta said in a club statement, "and what is so exciting is that this is only the beginning of what we can achieve together."

Cristiano Ronaldo says available for
Portugal; fitness concerns for stars

AP
Lisbon, Oct. 7

Cristiano Ronaldo is not following Lionel Messi into international retirement just yet.

The Portugal superstar said he will remain available to play for his national team, despite having walked out on the squad during the current international window.

In a long statement posted Tuesday, just hours before Messi's much-anticipated farewell game with Argentina, Ronaldo said recently hired coach Jorge Jesus hadn't been true to his word about when he would play the striker in the latest round of Nations League matches.

Still, the 41-year-old Ronaldo said he owed fans and his teammates an apology and expects to receive a punishment.

"I can promise all my fans, and naturally especially all Portuguese people, that we will have one or more farewell matches. There will be time for that," Ronaldo said.

He added: "Therefore, if I am physically fit, playing for my club, hopefully scoring goals, then after serving whatever suspension is imposed on me, I will be available, as I have always been until today, to compete and win for our national team."



wasn't clear whether the decision would be considered justified in accordance with the regulations.

Jesus and federation president Pedro Proença recently downplayed the "misunderstanding" that led to Ronaldo's decision to leave the training camp, saying after a 2-1 win over Norway in the Nations League on Sunday that the veteran star could return whenever he wants.

Fitness concerns for Mbappé, Haaland

It started on the very first night of matches, when Netherlands striker Brian Brobbey and Germany forward Kai Havertz both went off injured in the first half.

Then the problems just kept on coming.

France star Kylian Mbappé limped off with a hyperextended left knee and returned to Real Madrid. Alexander Isak and Cody Gakpo went back to Liverpool on the same day with injuries sustained playing for Sweden and the Netherlands, respectively. Ferran Torres left the Spain squad with ankle pain. England's new midfielder prospect, Alex Scott, was ruled out for up to two months with a thigh issue.

Djokovic seals 7th China Open
title after Minaur injury

AP
Beijing, Oct. 7

Novak Djokovic was handed the China Open trophy after Alex de Minaur retired injured in the final.

Both players asked for medical timeouts after the opening set. De Minaur had a groin issue and quit after winning the opening game of the second set.

The 39-year-old Djokovic won 7-6 (3), 0-1 and extended his perfect record at the China Open to 34-0.

"I always have high expectations of myself and always want to visualise myself with the trophy, particularly here in Beijing, a place where I have never lost," Djokovic said. "But I was also aware that reality is a little bit different these days."

He returned to Beijing for the first time since his previous title in 2015.

His seventh China Open title was also his 102nd on the ATP tour. He's one behind Roger Federer. Jimmy Connors leads with 109 in the Open era.

Djokovic lost his only other final this year to Carlos Alcaraz at the Australian Open.

"This year has been quite challenging for me: Lots of physical and health issues," he said. "I was just trying to find a good feeling on the court. I know that



PHOTO: AP

Novak Djokovic, of Serbia, celebrates winning a point against Alex De Minaur, of Australia, during the men's singles final match at the China Open tennis tournament in Beijing,

I'm feeling well and striking the ball well, I can compete at the highest level. This week has been evidence of that."

Djokovic beat three top-10 players

in an event for the first time in three years. He passed U.S. Open champion Alexander Zverev in the quarterfinals and Daniil Medvedev in the semifinals after the Russian struck a spectator with the ball and was disqualified.

No. 9-ranked De Minaur kept No. 11 Djokovic at bay with aggressive groundstrokes in the first set and saved two break points before unforced errors cost him the tiebreak. He hit 11 winners compared to three by Djokovic.

"I want to say sorry to all the amazing fans who came to watch this match. I didn't want to finish like this, so I'm really sorry," De Minaur said.

He advanced to the final when Hubert Hurkacz retired injured in their second set. De Minaur was seeking his first Beijing trophy and a second title of the year following Rotterdam in February.

After stunning second-ranked Aryna Sabalenka in straight sets in the third round, 34th-ranked Nikola Bartunkova defeated Sinja Kraus 6-0, 4-6, 6-3 in the round of 16 of the women's tournament. Also, fifth-seeded Wimbledon champion Linda Noskova was upset by 19th-seeded Ekaterina Alexandrova 6-2, 6-2.

Seventh-seeded Karolina Muchova overcame a second set scare to knock out 12th-seeded Naomi Osaka 7-5, 1-6, 7-6 (7).