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The Himalayan

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Max: 29-31°C Min: 17-19°C
Sunrise 05:08 Sunset 19:02

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SHORT TAKES



Two cars of a freight train lying on a road after falling off a bridge in Munich, on Saturday. One person was killed.

INTERNATIONAL

UK train collision

LONDON: Nine people were in critical condition on Saturday after a collision between two passenger trains in central England the night before killed the driver of one of the locomotives, police said. British Transport Police Chief Constable Lucy D'Orsi said more than 80 people were treated in hospitals after the crash late Friday afternoon, and 28 remained hospitalised a day later. Buckingham Palace said King Charles III 'is greatly saddened' by the crash. It said 'his thoughts and sympathies are with the family of the deceased and with all those injured or affected by such a tragic incident.' Police and accident investigators are working to understand why a commuter train bound for London's St Pancras Station slammed into the back of another train headed for the same destination on Friday afternoon. Photos and videos posted on social media showed dozens of people, some with bandages but also many who appeared uninjured, standing and sitting among emergency vehicles parked on a road parallel to the train tracks. — AP

Japan hikes visa fees

TOKYO: The Japanese government has decided to raise single-entry visa fees for foreigners five-fold to 15,000 yen (about \$90) from 3,000 yen beginning in July. The decision, marking the first increase since 1978 amid inflation and the yen's depreciation, was announced by Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu during a press conference held on Friday. Under the revision, issuance fees for multiple-entry visas will rise from 6,000 yen to 30,000 yen. "We do not expect the move to have an immediate impact on inbound tourism," Motegi said. — Xinhua

Congo Ebola update

BUNIA: Mourners gathered Friday to bury a six-month-old girl who died from Ebola earlier this week, the third child to die at an orphanage in eastern Congo as authorities have struggled to contain the latest outbreak. Ituri, the region at the centre of the current outbreak, has reported more than 90 per cent of the cases. The response has been complicated by residents clashing with healthcare professionals over disrupted burials and the response to the outbreak, which has been militarised at times. The impersonal nature of safe burial practices and the severity of the epidemic were evident on Friday as only healthcare workers in protective gear were allowed to handle the coffin and the burial. Bundibugyo, the type of Ebola in this outbreak, has no approved treatment or vaccine, and even some health workers have said they don't have the masks, gloves and other gear to protect themselves. During a visit to Bunia on Friday, Congolese Health Minister Roger Kamba said that there were now 933 confirmed cases and 245 deaths from the current outbreak. — AP

RSP's national convention begins today

Himalayan News Service
Kathmandu, June 20

The first national convention of the ruling Rastriya Swatantra Party led by Rabi Lamichhane will begin tomorrow in Bharatpur city of Chitwan district.

RSP General Secretary Kabintra Burlakoti told mediapersons that Party Chair Lamichhane and Prime Minister Balendra (Balen) Shah, who is the senior leader of the party, will address the inaugural session of the convention.

Party Chair Lamichhane addressed the last meeting of the outgoing Central Committee in Chitwan today, expressing his desire to continue collaborating with the members of the Central Committee in the same manner in the future.

Lamichhane said he and his party would never deviate from their commitment to democracy. He further said the convention is expected to further reinforce internal democracy within the party. He also pledged to remain steadfast to these values and principles throughout his political career.

He further stated that the RSP stands on the foundation of the achievements gained through the struggles and sacrifices made for the federal democratic republic, the constitution, and social and political change.

Lamichhane said internal party democracy was the most vital cornerstone of their foundation. He said: "To what extent I, as the founding chair fulfilled my role in strengthening internal democracy is for all of you to evaluate. However, for me, integrity and internal democracy are non-negotiable."

He said he remembered the time when they were establishing the party. "We had to struggle to find 21-22 citizenship certificates before submitting the registration documents to the Election Commission," he added. "On top of that, the requirement of inclusiveness added further pressure, and I am remembering that challenge today."

Referring to the party's four-year journey, he noted that it had gone through many ups and downs and that the party remains under public scrutiny and evaluation by citizens. He credited all the party leaders and cadres for bringing the party to current position.

He said that the party convention is an important step towards

E-voting facility

CHITWAN: E-voting facility is to be made available in the general convention of the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP). According to RSP's Election Commission Chief Bhuwan KC, voters can cast their votes by touching names and photos of candidates on an electronic device. It is estimated that the first phase of voting will be completed in about six hours. Voting will take place for one chairperson and 99 members in the first phase. KC informed that elections for vice-chairperson, general secretary and joint general secretary will be held in the second phase from the elected members. KC shared that the nomination process would start at 2:00pm on June 22, and the first phase of elections is planned for the same evening. After the first phase is completed by the night of June 22, the second phase will be held on June 23, according to KC. The second phase of the election will be only for office bearers. For representatives from abroad, RSP has arranged voting through its own app. Among the 170 representatives from abroad, one can vote via the app. — RSS

making the party more organised and scientifically managed.

Describing his office as a place of historical significance, Lamichhane said: "This is the final Central Committee meeting of this term. Yesterday, we also held the final Secretariat meeting from my office. I thanked the Secretariat members from that very room. Important historical documents of the party were signed there. It was also in that same room that police officers entered with handcuffs to arrest me. Therefore, this meeting is also extremely important."

The three-day convention, which will begin tomorrow, is expected to see the participation of more than 3,000 delegates, party leaders, activists and observers from across the country.

RSP General Secretary Burlakoti said that there would be around a dozen speakers and most of the party leaders would speak during the closed session.



A person dancing during the Zürich Pride parade in Zürich, Switzerland, on Saturday.

Trump deepens the dustup with Italy's PM over disputed photo from the G-7 summit

Associated Press
Washington, June 20

President Donald Trump today lashed out at Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, insisting that she asked 'over and over' for a photo with him at the recent Group of Seven summit and criticising what he said was Italy's lack of cooperation during the Iran war.

The remarks deepen the spat that began this week with the Republican president's interview with an Italian broadcaster, during which Trump claimed Meloni 'begged' for the photo during the G-7 meeting in France. Meloni has called that 'completely fabricated.' The dustup led Italy's foreign minister to cancel a planned trip to US as Meloni's government lined up in her defence.

"Italian PM Giorgia Meloni asked, over and over, for a picture with me during the G-7 meeting in France," Trump wrote on his social media platform while spending the weekend at the Camp David presidential retreat. He misspelled her first name in the initial post, which he later corrected.

He continued: "She is doing poorly in Italy with her level of popularity, possibly because she turned down the United States of America, a country that truly loves and protects Italy, when it came to denying Iran

from obtaining or developing a Nuclear Weapon (But so did NATO, for that matter!)"

Trump's comments were aired yesterday on the *La7* network. A correspondent had asked the president about Ukraine, but Trump raised Meloni and made the claim about the photo. Trump said he was not obliged to take the picture with her but that he felt sorry for her and agreed, *La7* said. The broadcaster put a dubbed version of the conversation online, but not the original English audio.

In his post, Trump also complained that Meloni would not allow the US to use Italy's landing strips or runways during the Iran war though the US is a leader in defence spending among NATO allies. That is a long-standing complaint about the military alliance and one that Trump raised before his White House meeting Wednesday with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte and the NATO summit in Turkey next month.

Italy, a key logistics hub for the US, declined in March to allow American bombers headed for the Middle East to use a base in Sicily without parliamentary approval. Trump vented his frustration about Meloni and today claimed that she 'wants to be friends again' in light of the initial deal between the US and Iran to end the war.

SPCC's new Everest rangers help mountain cleanup with record 90,000 kg waste

Sandeep Sen
Kathmandu, June 20

This spring, for the first time, the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC) stationed a team of rangers at Camp II on Mount Everest. Their job was simple but important: Make sure climbers coming down from the high camps were actually carrying waste with them, not just meeting their quota with rubbish picked up lower on the mountain.

By the end of the season, SPCC had removed 90,329 kg of waste from Everest, even as the mountain saw its busiest climbing season ever. Of this, 80,579 kg came from the Everest Base Camp area, including human waste, kitchen waste, mixed waste and recyclables. Another 9,750 kg, along with 1,769 poop bags, was brought down from above Base Camp.

But for SPCC, the headline number was never just the weight of garbage. It was who carried it down, and who made sure it came down at all.

The rangers were introduced after SPCC, with approval from the Department of Tourism, brought in a new rule this season requiring climbers to bring back at least two kilos of waste from above Camp II, in addition to the existing eight-kilo quota collected at Base Camp. Until now, SPCC monitoring only covered Base Camp, meaning climbers could meet their waste quota without clearing higher camps. Posting rangers at Camp II for the entire season closed that gap, ending the pattern of waste accumulating at Camps III and IV season after season.

SPCC CEO Tshering Sherpa said the rangers were deployed in line with the government's Sagarmatha cleanup directives, and that the committee plans to take the system further next season by sending rangers up to Camp IV as well. Sherpa said the South Col has long been known as the most polluted spot on the mountain, which is why SPCC wants rangers stationed there too.

The cleanup came during a record season, with 701 climbers active across Everest, Lhotse and Nuptse this spring, the highest number ever recorded. SPCC said its teams collected 1,226 kg of non-recyclable waste from Camp III and the South Col, along with 210 gas canisters, while another 6,522 kg of waste passed through its checkpoint at the Khumbu Icefall.

Beyond the cleanup, SPCC's staff also played a role in this season's most dramatic rescue story. When guide Hillary Dawa Sherpa went missing in Everest's death zone, several SPCC staff members, including those on ranger duty, paused their waste-monitoring work to join the search. Dawa Sherpa was later found alive.

SPCC was founded in 1991 by local Sherpa communities and has managed waste collection in the Everest region for over three decades. It has also maintained the Khumbu Icefall route since 1997 through its team of Icefall Doctors. With the rangers now tested through one of the busiest seasons on record, SPCC says expanding the system to Camp IV will be its main focus going into next year.

of the equinox is the moment the sun is directly overhead at the equator.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN METEOROLOGICAL AND ASTRONOMICAL SEASONS?

These are just two different ways to carve up the year. While astronomical seasons depend on how Earth moves around the sun, meteorological seasons are defined by the weather. Meteorologists break down the year into three-month seasons based on annual temperature cycles. By that calendar, spring starts on March 1, summer on June 1, fall on September 1 and winter on December 1. — AP

Summer solstice: Today is the longest day of the year for half the planet

This is the sun's time to shine: Sunday is the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere.

Sunday is the solstice, marking the start of astronomical summer north of the equator. It's the opposite in the Southern Hemisphere, where it is the shortest day of the year and winter will start.

The word 'solstice' comes from the Latin words 'sol,' for

sun, and 'stitium,' which can mean 'pause' or 'stop.' The summer solstice is the end of the sun's annual march higher in the sky, when it makes its longest, highest arc. The bad news for sun lovers: It then starts retreating and days will get a little shorter every day until late December.

People have marked solstices for eons with festivals and monuments, including Sweden's midsummer eve celebrations

and Stonehenge, which was designed to align with the sun's paths at the solstices.

Here's what to know about the Earth's orbit.

WHAT IS THE SOLSTICE?

As the Earth travels around the sun, it does so at an angle, making the sun's warmth and light fall unevenly on the northern and southern halves of the planet for most of the year.

The solstices mark the times when the Earth is tipped most extremely either towards or away from the sun. This means the hemispheres are getting very different amounts of sunlight, and days and nights are at their most unequal.

At the Northern Hemisphere's summer solstice, the Earth's upper half is leaning towards the sun, creating the longest day and shortest night of the year. The summer solstice falls between June 20 and 22. This year it's June 21.

The opposite happens at the Northern Hemisphere winter

solstice: The Earth's upper half leans the furthest away from the sun, leading to the shortest day and longest night of the year. The winter solstice falls between December 20 and 23.

WHAT IS THE EQUINOX?

During the equinox, the Earth's tilt is neither towards the sun nor away from the sun, so both the northern and southern hemispheres get an equal amount of sunlight. The sun rises almost exactly due east and it sets almost exactly due west.

The word equinox comes from two Latin words meaning equal and night. That's because on the equinox, day and night last almost the same amount of time — though one may get a few extra minutes, depending on where you are on the planet.

The Northern Hemisphere's fall — or autumnal — equinox can land between September 21 and 24, depending on the year. Its spring — or vernal — equinox can land between March 19 and 21. The exact time



FOREX			
CURRENCY	UNIT	BUYING (in Rs)	SELLING (in Rs)
Indian Rs	100	160.00	160.15
US Dollar	1	150.62	151.22
Euro	1	172.66	173.34
Pound Sterling	1	199.34	200.13
Swiss Franc	1	186.76	187.50
Australian Dollar	1	105.61	106.04
Canadian Dollar	1	106.46	106.89
Japanese Yen	10	9.34	9.38
Chinese Yuan	1	22.25	22.34

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Police fire shots to arrest suspected drug traffickers in capital

Three individuals arrested with 300 grams of heroin

Himalayan News Service
Kathmandu, June 20

Police fired warning shots and opened fire at a suspected drug trafficker during an operation in Kathmandu today, leading to the arrest of three persons allegedly involved in heroin trafficking.

According to the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), a team deployed to monitor drug trafficking networks operating in Kathmandu valley carried out an operation in Balkumari, Kathmandu Metropolitan City-32, after receiving information that a group was selling heroin brought from Basamadi in India to buyers in the valley.

Police said the suspects attempted to flee when officers moved in to apprehend them. The NCB stated that two warning shots were fired, but the suspects alleg-

edly ignored order to stop.

During the operation, one round struck 31-year-old Kishor Prasad Audhya of Patrawa Sugauli Rural Municipality-4, Parsa, in the right leg below the knee.

Audhya was taken to National Trauma Centre, where he is undergoing treatment. The other two arrested are 25-year-old Ashok Bhul of Tikapur Municipality-5, Kailali and 20-year-old Niraj Kumar Mandal of Rajgadhi Municipality-3, Saptari. Police recovered 300 grams of heroin and four mobile phones from the suspects.

The bureau said preliminary investigation showed that the group had been supplying heroin in Kathmandu valley. It also revealed that Audhya had previously been convicted in a drug-related case and was released from Nakkhu Prison on October 5, 2021 after

serving a three-year jail sentence and paying a fine of Rs 104,000. Further investigation is under way.

Kathmandu valley has witnessed a steady rise in drug-related arrests in recent years, with law enforcement agencies reporting increasing trafficking of heroin, brown sugar, tramadol and other controlled substances through both domestic and cross-border networks.

Police say traffickers often use Kathmandu as a distribution hub, bringing narcotics from border areas and supplying them to urban markets.

Authorities have also expressed concern over the growing involvement of young people in drug abuse and trafficking, prompting intensified surveillance and enforcement operations across the valley.

Public participation vital to curb narcotic drug abuse and crime, says IGP Karki

Rastriya Samachar Samiti
Jhapa, June 20

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dan Bahadur Karki has stressed that active public participation is essential alongside police efforts to control drug abuse and other crimes.

The head of the primary law enforcement agency of the country said so while addressing the inaugural session of the Jhapa Campaign against Narcotic Drugs Abuse' in Birtamod, Jhapa, today. IGP Karki lamented that despite the implementation of more than 15,000 awareness programmes across the country aimed at preventing drug abuse, the expected outcomes were

dismal. Hence, Karki viewed that the campaign should be taken forward intensely, effectively and strictly to improve effectiveness.

During the event, Chief Minister of Koshi Province Hikmat Kumar Karki expressed his concern that Jhapa district remains one of the country's most sensitive districts in terms of drug-related risks. He thus called for close coordination and cooperation among all levels of government and agencies to address the challenge collectively.

Likewise, Deputy Inspector General and Chief of Koshi Province Police Office Binod Ghimire, Chief District Officer of Jhapa Shivaram Gelal, Mayor of Birta-

mod Municipality Pabitra Mahatara Prasai, among others, unequivocally highlighted the need to strengthen community-level awareness to reduce narcotic drug abuse. According to the statistics, the number of people estimated to be abusing drugs in Jhapa currently exceeds 21,000. Currently, the district operates 42 rehabilitation centres, including five dedicated to women.

The campaigners expressed their confidence that the campaign would further strengthen collaboration among government agencies, security bodies, local governments and communities to address rising drug use and its social impacts.

Yoga can support healthy ageing in South-East Asia, says WHO

Himalayan News Service
Kathmandu, June 20

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has highlighted the role of yoga in promoting healthy ageing, saying the ancient practice can help older people maintain physical health, mental well-being and social connectedness throughout their lives.

Marking the International Day of Yoga 2026, WHO South-East Asia Officer-in-Charge Dr Catharina Boehme said this year's theme, 'Yoga for Healthy Ageing,' underscores the importance of yoga as a lifelong practice that can be adapted to changing needs and abilities at every

stage of life.

In a statement issued on the occasion, Dr Boehme described yoga as one of the world's oldest and most enduring practices for health and well-being. She said yoga combines physical activity, breathing techniques, mindfulness and meditation, contributing to improved physical function, emotional health and social engagement.

According to WHO, the theme is particularly relevant for the South-East Asia Region, which is experiencing a rapid demographic shift towards an ageing population. The organisation said there is a growing need for affordable, scalable and culturally appro-

priate interventions that support healthy ageing, and yoga meets those requirements by helping improve mobility, protect cognitive health and reduce social isolation.

WHO noted that yoga can be modified to suit different fitness levels and health conditions, making it accessible to many older adults. Regular practice can support independence, reduce the risk of falls, enhance quality of life and encourage person-centred approaches to health and well-being, the agency said.

The organisation also pointed to international policy frameworks that support the integration of physical activity and traditional health practices into health systems. These include the WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030 and the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025-2034, which promotes the safe and regulated use of evidence-based traditional medicine, including yoga.

Dr Boehme said healthy ageing depends not only on health systems but also on the daily choices people make throughout their lives.

International Day of Yoga is observed annually on June 21. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the day in 2014 following a proposal by India that received support from 175 member states.

The date coincides with the summer solstice, chosen for its symbolic association with balance, light and longevity.



An employee of the Guthi Sansthan displaying *Bhoto* (top) and President Ramchandra Paudel receiving *tika* from the living goddess *Kumari* (bottom) during the *Bhoto Jatra* of *Rato Machhindranath*, considered the god of rain and seasons, in Jawalakhel, Lalitpur, on Saturday.

Over 700,000 visitors discover Mustang's wonders in 11 months

Rastriya Samachar Samiti
Myagdi, June 20

In the current fiscal year 2026/27, Mustang has welcomed over 700,000 tourists, with a total of 705,754 individuals entering the region from July to May.

This figure matches the total number of visitors from the previous fiscal year, indicating a steady interest in the area. The data, collected by the border police station in Mustang, highlights that 460,924 of these tourists were domestic, while 244,830 were international, arriving via 151,160 vehicles along the Beni-Jomsom road. Notably, May saw a significant influx of tourists, with 90,939 foreign and 40,838 local visitors recorded, utilising 27,488 vehicles.

The increase in Indian tourists is attributed to a dollar-saving policy by the Indian government, which has made travel to destinations like Mustang more appealing.

The region has become particularly popular among Nepali tourists during public holidays, leading to full bookings in accommodations along the Beni-Jomsom route. The peak tourist season in Mustang typically occurs in May, coinciding with the start of summer.

Police Inspector Santosh Basyal noted that approximately 80 per cent of foreign visitors are from India, with many drawn to the sacred Mukti Temple, a significant religious site in the area. Tourists also visit Mustang for various other attractions and activities, contributing to its status as a favoured destination.

Rastriya Samachar Samiti
Kathmandu, June 20

The shortage of the past two months of drugs used to treat cancer is to come to an end.

Kiransundar Bajracharya, information officer at the Department of Drug Administration, said that drugs used in chemotherapy treatment will be easily available in a few days. "We will soon facilitate the import of drugs and make them easily available to patients," Bajracharya said.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

UN calls for dignity, respect, protection for refugees

Rastriya Samachar Samiti
Kathmandu, June 20

Today marks the World Refugee Day, which is being organised across the world by organising various programmes.

The day is observed annually on June 20, expressing respects to all those forced to flee their homes due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 117.3 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced by mid-2025 due to human exploitations, conflicts, violence, human rights violations or events disturbing public order. The ongoing conflicts in Sudan, Ukraine, Afghanistan and the Syrian Arab Kingdom have forced millions of people to leave their homes.

The UN has said the protection of refugees is not only a humanitarian concern, but also a foundation for global peace and stability. In the absence of adequate protection, the refugees face the risk of perilous travels, children are deprived of education, and women and girls become more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol are regarded as the principal

international legal instruments for the protection of refugee rights. These instruments guarantee refugees the rights to work, education, shelter, identity, religious freedom and travel documentation. One of the Convention's key principles is 'non refoulement' which prohibits sending refugees to places where their lives or freedom would be under serious threat. According to the UNHCR, World Refugee Day provides an opportunity to recognise courage, resilience and determination of refugees as they rebuild their lives. The UN Refugee Agency has called on governments, donor agencies, local communities and the international community to reaffirm their collective commitment to ensuring refugees' safety, dignity and rights.

The UN has also stressed that preventing the forced return of refugees to unsafe areas and ensuring conditions that allow them to live with dignity, even while displaced, remain significant commitments of the international community.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a message that, as the World observes the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the commitment to safety and protection remains as relevant as ever for the intentional community.

Availability of cancer drugs to ease

There has been a shortage of chemotherapy drugs including Carboplatin and Cisplatin for the past two months.

The department has assigned Janaki Hospital Nepalgunj, Purbanchal Cancer Hospital Birtamod, Birat Medical College Biratnagar, Babina Pharma Pokhara, Poonam Pharmacy Dharan, Ambassador Pvt Ltd Bharatpur, Malla Pharmaceuticals Pokhara, Taj Nepal Pvt Ltd Kathmandu, DKM Pharmaceuticals Pvt Ltd Kathmandu, Sijal Pharma and Anmol

Health Care Kathmandu to get these medicines.

Cancer patients in Nepal require 1,000 vials of Carboplatin and 600 vials of Cisplatin per month.

Meanwhile, President of the Nepal Drug Suppliers Association, Pawan Acharya, said that they are importing the medicine to Nepal even though it is expensive to prevent shortages in the treatment of patients.

He said that there will be no shortage of medicine after the government adjusts the price.

ONCE OVER

School bus accident claims one, injures 30

UDAYAPUR: A school bus met with an accident on Saturday on Madan Bhandari Highway at Jogitole of Udayapuri Rural Municipality-7, resulting in the death of one and injuries to 30 others. The bus bearing number plate *Ba 2 Kha 6438* belonging to Mahottari-based Deep Education English Boarding School was en route to Sunsari from Mahottari, carrying school staff, when it fell around 12 metres off the road, District Police Office, Udayapur said. The deceased has been identified as Bimalesh Dutta, 55. He was declared dead while undergoing treatment. Rasila Kumari Chaudhary, 38, and her son Sandesh Kumar Chaudhary, 12, who sustained serious injuries in the accident, have been referred to Biratnagar-based Neuro Hospital for further treatment. The remaining injured passengers are receiving treatment at Udayapur District Hospital. Driver Jeevan Ale, 28, of Gaushala Municipality-10, Mahottari, who was unhurt in the accident, remains in police custody, according to the police. — rss

Service launched

KATHMANDU: The Ministry of Home Affairs has launched a call centre to receive and address grievances, complaints and suggestions concerning its areas of responsibilities. Named 'Hello Home Call Centre', the facility was launched with the objective to make the Ministry's services more effective, transparent and responsive, Spokesperson at the Ministry Ananda Kafle shared. The facility has been established under the Grievances Management Section within the Ministry. Public can contact the facility through its toll-free number 1112 or its official e-mail gunaso@moha.gov.np or WhatsApp number 9851360603, the ministry said. — rss

GBIA in Bhairahawa will be operational soon: Tourism Minister Paudel

Himalayan News Service
Kathmandu, June 20

Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Khadga Raj Paudel has said that the Gautam Buddha International Airport in Bhairahawa will be brought into regular operation soon, with the government actively working to resolve existing challenges.

Speaking at an event organised by Tranquility Spa in Bhairahawa yesterday, Minister Paudel said necessary groundwork was underway to ensure full operation of the airport. He dismissed claims that the airport remained non-operational due to political or diplomatic reasons, stating instead that certain policy-level shortcomings were the main obstacle, which are now being corrected.

The minister also highlighted reforms in labour migration services, stating that workers can now obtain labour permits from home without travelling to Kathmandu.

He stressed the need for broader promotional efforts to attract tourists rather than focusing only on sending Nepali workers abroad and bringing them back.

Paudel also said that the proposed Nijgadh International Airport should be developed in the future as part of long-term aviation expansion plans.

OFFICE	PHONE NO.
Police Control Room	100
Traffic Police Control Room	103
Fire Fighters	101
Traffic Jam Information (SMS)	JAM 4321
Emergency Police Service	4228435
Crime Information	4412748
Child Missing	104
Nepal Electricity Authority	4153164
Blood Bank, Pradarshani Marg	4225344
Nepal Red Cross Society, Teku	4270650
Bhaktapur Red Cross	6611661
Army Hospital	4271940
Bir Hospital	4221988
Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital	6611532
Chirayu National Hospital	5905888
Kanti Children Hospital	4411550
Norvic Hospital	4258554
Police Hospital	4412430
Patan Hospital	5522295
Om Hospital	4476225
Star Hospital, Sanepa	5550197
Teaching Hospital	4412505
Grande Hospital	5159266
Dr. Iwamura Memorial Hospital	6612695
Ishan Children and Women's Hospital	4959560
Tilganga Hospital	5970048
Hearse (Shav Vahan)	6612266

नेपाल नेत्रज्योति संघ
गौर आँखा अस्पताल
शिलबन्दी दरभाउ पत्र आह्वान सम्बन्धी सूचना
प्रकाशित मिति २०८३।०३।०७

नेपाल नेत्र ज्योति संघ अन्तर्गत सञ्चालित गौर आँखा अस्पतालको निमित्त आर्थिक वर्ष २०८३/०८४ को लागि औषधि, सर्जिकल तथा ल्याबमा प्रयोग हुने सामग्री, लेन्स, चश्मा फ्रेम, शिशा लगायतका सामग्रीहरू वर्ष भरी सप्लाई गर्न पर्ने भएको हुँदा नेपाल सरकारबाट इजाजत प्राप्त इच्छुक रजिष्टर्ड कम्पनी वा सप्लायसंहरूले शिलबन्दी दरभाउपत्र पेश गर्नुहुन यो सूचना प्रकाशन गरी शिलबन्दी दरभाउपत्र आह्वान गरिन्छ।

१. विस्तृत विवरण सहितको दरभाउपत्र फारम दस्तुर बापत रु.२५००।०० अक्षरेपी दुई हजार पाँच सय मात्र (फिर्ता नहुने गरी) गौर आँखा अस्पतालको राष्ट्रिय वाणिज्य बैंक लि. गौर शाखामा रहेको खाला नं १२१०१००००१३४६००१ मा दाखिला गरी दरभाउपत्र फारम २०८३ असार २८ गते दिउँसो ४:०० बजे सम्म खरिद गर्न सकिनेछ। दरभाउ पत्र फारम भरी फारममा उल्लेख भए बमोजिमका फर्म/कम्पनीसँग सम्बन्धित कागजातहरू संलग्न गरी मिति २०८३।०३।२९ गते दिनेको १२:०० बजे सम्म दर्ता गराई सक्नु पर्नेछ। दरभाउपत्र यस अस्पतालको लेखा शाखाबाट उपलब्ध गराइने छ।

२. शिलबन्दी दरभाउपत्र खोल्ने मिति :- २०८३।०३।२९ दिउँसो दिनको ३:०० बजे निवेदक वा निजको प्रतिनिधिहरूको उपस्थितिमा खोल्नेछ वा उपस्थिति नरहेमा पनि खोल्न बाधा पर्ने छैन।

३. दरभाउ पत्र स्वीकृत गर्ने वा नगर्ने अधिकार अस्पतालमा निहित रहनेछ।

थप जानकारीका लागि
नेपाल नेत्रज्योति संघ
गौर आँखा अस्पताल,
गौर - ०८, पुरेनवा, रौतहट, नेपाल।
फोन नं. ०५५-५२०६१९
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NEIGHBOURS

CJP supporters bang plates to call for minister's resignation

The exam paper for a nationwide medical programme was leaked last month through social media app Telegram

Associated Press

New Delhi, June 20

Supporters of India's viral Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) banged steel plates with spoons in a protest today to demand the resignation of the education minister over allegations of examination irregularities and repeated paper leaks.

The protest near Parliament in New Delhi by hundreds of students and young supporters of the nascent movement added to the pressure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government while also seeking wider support among Indians.

Authorities deployed heavy security and police used cameras and drones to monitor the protest.

Some carried placards and others banged plates, their noise cutting through the crowd protesting and demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

"This is just the beginning. If Dharmendra Pradhan doesn't resign or if no action is taken regarding this issue, this protest will not end here," said a CJP supporter, Deepak Kumar.

The exam paper for a nationwide medical programme was leaked last month through social media



app Telegram. Authorities subsequently postponed the exam and also temporarily banned Telegram in India. The exam is scheduled to be held tomorrow. The government says the leak is under investigation.

"We study in poverty, live in poverty for 24 hours everyday, for years at length, and after that our (exam) pa-

pers get leaked. Will I not get angry at this?" said student Vicky Kumar.

The movement emerged in May, after Supreme Court Judge Surya Kant's remarks comparing some unemployed youth to 'cockroaches' triggered outrage. Supporters embraced the term as a symbol of resilience, helping the group amass

more than 22 million followers on Instagram.

The movement's message has since expanded to include concerns over unemployment, rising living costs and government accountability.

The CJP mixes self-deprecating humour with political criticism. Supporters jokingly call themselves unemployed and chronically online, while videos and memes mocking unemployment, corruption and political dysfunction have attracted millions of views. Many parody CJP accounts have also adopted the cockroach as a satirical political symbol.

Abhijeet Dipke (centre), founder of the Cockroach Janta Party, gesturing as he held the photograph of Mahatma Gandhi and Bhim Rao Ambedkar during a protest demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged examination irregularities and repeated paper leaks in New Delhi, on Saturday.

SNIPPETS

Pakistan violence

PESHAWAR: Twin roadside blasts killed at least seven people in Pakistan's northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said on Saturday. "A private pickup truck carrying passengers was targeted with a remote-controlled IED... the injured were being transported to hospital in a car for emergency treatment when a second IED exploded," said Yasir Afridi, a police officer in Bannu district, adding that three people were wounded. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blasts but the militant group Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan is very active in the region. Pakistan blames neighbouring Afghanistan for the rise in attacks in the country. The Taliban government in Kabul has repeatedly denied Pakistan's accusations that Afghan territory was being used as a safe haven for militants. The frosty relationship between them has spiralled into deadly armed conflict in recent months, including Pakistani airstrikes on cities in Afghanistan. —AFP

Lanka dengue cases

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka is battling the worst outbreak of mosquito-borne dengue fever in years, with more than 44,000 cases and 28 deaths recorded since January, an official said Friday, putting public hospitals under strain. Dengue is common during Sri Lanka's monsoon season, but unplanned urbanisation coupled with damage caused by Cyclone Ditwah, which hit the island nation in late November, has worsened the outbreak this year, authorities said. The number of dengue cases nearly doubled from 5,651 in April to 10,638 in the first two weeks of June, data from the National Dengue Control Unit showed. —Agencies

Bangladesh PM to visit Malaysia, China on first foreign tour

Agence France Presse
Dhaka, June 20

Bangladesh's Prime Minister Tarique Rahman is set to visit Malaysia and China on his first trip abroad since assuming office, the foreign ministry said today, bypassing neighbouring India as his inaugural destination.

Rahman will visit Malaysia tomorrow before travelling to China the following day, Dhaka's state-run BSS news agency reported, citing foreign ministry officials.

In Beijing, trade and infrastructure projects will be on the agenda, according to the officials.

Those could include Chinese support for the long-delayed Teesta project, a plan to restore and manage a key Bangladesh river through dredging, embankment construction and irrigation.

"The visits are being viewed as a major diplomatic initiative aimed at strengthening Bangladesh's economic partnerships," BSS reported, citing the foreign ministry.

Malaysia has an estimated 800,000 Bangladeshi workers, more than a third of its foreign workforce.

Bangladesh is largely encircled by land by India, but relations have been strained since a 2024 uprising toppled the government of then-prime minister Sheikh Hasina, an ally of New Delhi.

Ties improved after Rahman won elections and took over in February from the interim administration that had led the country of 170 million people since Hasina's ouster.

But frictions remain. Hasina has been in hiding in India since fleeing the revolution and Bangladesh has repeatedly sought her extradition.

Relations have also deteriorated along the border, with India sending people it deems illegal migrants across the frontier to Bangladesh.

India has long been wary of neighbouring China's regional clout and the world's two most populous countries compete for influence in South Asia.

Thai man jailed over Facebook comment in monarchy discussion group

Agence France Presse
Bangkok, June 20

A Thai court sentenced a man to 18 months in prison for royal defamation over a comment posted in a Facebook group discussing the monarchy, a rights group said yesterday.

Thailand's strict lese-majeste law shields the royal family from criticism, with penalties of up to 15 years in prison for each offence — punishments critics say are used to stifle dissent. In the latest case, the Criminal Court sentenced a 43-year-old man to 18 months in prison over a comment he posted in the private Facebook group 'Royalist Marketplace,' which has more than 2.2 million members.

The group, founded by exiled royal critic and scholar Pavin Chachavalpongpun, was created as a forum for discussing the monarchy — an unprecedented development in Thai society.

"The court initially sentenced him to three years, but because he confessed, the sentence was reduced by half," Noppol Achamas, information officer at the Thai Lawyers for Human Rights, told AFP.

The man, whose name was withheld to protect his privacy, was granted bail of 100,000 baht (\$3,043) while awaiting an appeal, Noppol said.

The Facebook group became active following the youth-led protest movement of 2020 and 2021, when demonstrators called for reforms to the monarchy and amendments to the royal defamation law. But the movement later lost momentum as many activists faced lese-majeste and other criminal charges.

A total of 291 people have been charged under the royal insult law since 2020, according to TLHR data.

At least 17 have been prosecuted for comments posted in the 'Royalist Marketplace' Facebook group.

Ukrainian drone makers target Asia as tensions spur demand

TAIPEI: The CEO of UFORCE, a Ukrainian producer of attack drones, flew to Tokyo in April with a pitch for Japanese officials and defence contractors: Build thousands of our drones to defend yourself and allies.

Days earlier, US troops had used waterborne UFORCE drones to sink a ship during a secretive exercise held where the South China Sea meets the Pacific. And for years, the firm's Magura surface vessel has helped turn parts of the Black Sea into no-go zones for the Russian navy.

While the maritime geography of East Asia is very different, 'the impact is extremely similar,' UFORCE CEO Oleg Rogynskyy said.

The details of UFORCE's meetings in Japan have not been previously reported. They're part of a larger push by Ukrainian drone makers to tap a military-spending surge in Asia by US allies eager to ward off an increasingly assertive China and deter a conflict over Taiwan, according to interviews with 20 people, including defence contractors and Ukrainian and Japanese government officials.

These defence contractors are seeking to capitalise on Ukraine's reputation as a master of drone warfare, which has helped an otherwise out-gunned Kyiv hold out for more than four years against Russia.

Ukraine has also leveraged its expertise into diplomatic and defence deals in Europe and the Middle East, and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in February that Kyiv was 'ready to open up our technologies' like sea drones to Japan.

Former Japanese defence minister Itsumori Onodera, who remains an influential lawmaker, said he welcomed the Ukrainian efforts to cooperate.

Tokyo needs equipment 'that is actually demonstrating effective power,' he said. Ukrainian defence firms like UFORCE, Skyeton and General Cherry hope to find production partners in Japan, an industrial heavyweight that this year cast off longstanding restrictions on arms exports.

The Japanese military has hosted at least one previously unreported demonstration of Ukrainian drone tech from Swarmer, the firm said. But discussions between other Japanese officials and Ukrainian firms were characterised as exploratory by three people involved in those talks. A spokesperson for Japan's defence ministry declined to comment about its engagement with Ukrainian drone makers but said Tokyo was 'examining all possible options to ensure acquisition of equipment needed for Japan's 'new way of warfare.'

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has warned Tokyo could be dragged into conflict over Taiwan. China has not

ruled out using force to bring Taiwan under its control and regularly holds military drills around the democratically governed island.

'UNMANNED HELLSCAPE' TO FORTIFY TAIWAN

Executives from three Ukrainian firms and a drone association said they were also exploring business with Taiwan, though they were cautious given that Kyiv has no formal diplomatic ties with the island, which China claims as its territory.

Washington is legally required to provide Taiwan with the means to defend itself. Drones would be key to any military response, Admiral Samuel Paparo, the top US commander in the region, said in 2024, adding they could create an 'unmanned hellscape' that buys the US and its allies time to react.

Naval experts like Bryan Clark of the Hudson Institute, a Washington-based think-tank, said that drones will also be needed to plug gaps in the chain of islands hemming in China that runs from Japan through Taiwan and the Philippines. The US drone exercise in April took place off Itbayat, a Philippine island just 100 miles south of Taiwan, according to UFORCE and the US military.

China's foreign ministry and Taiwan's defence and economy ministries declined to comment, as did Ukraine's presidential office.

A spokesperson for the US Pacific Command did not answer questions about Ukraine's efforts to build drone partnerships in Asia but said it had met Ukrainian drone makers 'to discuss how Black Sea operations could apply to Indo-Pacific.'

GATEWAY TO ASIA

Japan in 2022 embarked on a historic defence build-up spurred by concern that the Ukraine war could inspire a similar conflict in East Asia. The rearmament of Japan accelerated when the hawkish Takaichi came to power late last year. She has urged Japanese firms to ramp up weapons production, including unmanned systems.

The country's defence equipment makers — many of whom earn more money selling consumer goods, including in China — have long been wary of the reputational risks that come with dealing arms.

Tokyo has allocated nearly \$2 billion to support drone systems in this year's defence budget. Japan plans to raise annual production of drones to 80,000 by the end of the decade, up from what the Japan UAV Association says were the roughly 1,000 manufactured in 2024. But that is still far fewer than the seven million Ukraine is aiming to build this year. —Agencies

India probes graft charges at temple built on Babri mosque

Agence France Presse
New Delhi, June 20

Indian police are investigating allegations of embezzlement at a temple in the country's north that has been a focal point of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-first politics, a top state official said yesterday.

The Ram Mandir temple in Uttar Pradesh state, built on grounds where a mosque

stood for centuries before being torn down by Hindu zealots, was inaugurated in 2024 with great fanfare by Modi himself.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that a Special Investigations Team (SIT) had been set up to look into alleged siphoning of cash offerings made by devotees.

"We have set up an SIT inquiry on the recommenda-

tion of the trust that administers the temple," said Adityanath, a firebrand Hindu monk, at a public function.

"If anyone has any documentary proof, please provide it to the SIT," he added.

The scale of the alleged embezzlement is unclear but opposition parties and local media reports say it could amount to more than

\$20 million.

The construction of the temple cost an estimated \$240 million, all of which was sourced entirely from public donations, according to the project's backers.

According to *The Indian Express* newspaper, daily offerings from devotees average around \$10,000, going up to \$60,000 on auspicious days.

Devout Hindus claim that

the god Ram was born in the town of Ayodhya — home to the temple — more than 7,000 years ago, but that the Babri mosque was built over his birthplace by Mughal emperor Babar.

India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party — then in the opposition — played an instrumental role in public campaigning that eventually led to the mosque's demolition in 1992.

26
MORE EPISODES
TO GO



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WIN PRIZES DAILY



INTERNATIONAL

Iran announces closure of Strait of Hormuz again

Says its negotiating team with the United States is heading to Switzerland

Associated Press

Dubai, June 20

Iran dealt two quick blows to the interim agreement with the United States today, angered by Israel's continued attacks in Lebanon, saying it had closed the Strait of Hormuz again and announcing that while its negotiators are going to Switzerland for talks, not much is likely to happen there.

First, Iran's joint military command said the strait had been closed, citing Israeli attacks and US 'bad faith' and 'its clear breach of its commitments' by failing to end the war.

The statement on state television warned that 'if the aggression continues, subsequent steps have been planned.'

Minutes later, the state broadcaster said the country's negotiating team was heading to Switzerland, a trip that was originally planned for Friday but was cancelled.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baghaei, Baghaei, however, signalled that little might happen until Iran feels US is living up to the deal.

"This trip is therefore about demanding that the other side fulfil its obligations," he said, adding that negotiations toward a final agreement will begin only once key commitments, including an end to fighting in Lebanon, are upheld.

"If any part of these understandings, any part of these commitments, is not implemented, then the memorandum of understanding as a whole will be jeopardised," Baghaei said.

Ships had begun transiting the strait after the interim US-Iran agreement was signed

earlier in the week.

ISRAELI ATTACKS IN LEBANON KILL AT LEAST 16

Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon today killed at least 16 people, including two children, hours after reports emerged of a ceasefire agreement. The persistent fighting threatened an interim agreement between the United States and Iran to end the war in the Middle East.

Seven people remained trapped under the rubble after the strikes hit the southern town of Nabatiyeh and nearby villages, Lebanon's *National* news agency said.

Mediators were scrambling to halt the fighting between Israel and the militant Lebanese Hezbollah group, after a heavy exchange yesterday killed at least 47 people in Lebanon and four Israeli soldiers.

An Israeli military official said Hezbollah had fired more than 50 projectiles at Israeli forces in southern Lebanon overnight, prompting the military to start targeting the militant group there. The official spoke anonymously in line with regulations. The army said it struck dozens of Hezbollah targets and militants in southern Lebanon, including rocket-launching positions and Hezbollah command centres.

Yesterday, Israeli Ambassador to Washington, Yechiel Leiter, said on X that Israel "remains firmly committed to an immediate ceasefire" if Hezbollah honours the agreement and ceases hostilities.

Today, Hezbollah said it had committed to the ceasefire but blamed Israel for violating it several times on Friday night. A statement issued by the group's military wing said it



Destroyed buildings in a village in southern Lebanon as seen from northern Israel, on Saturday.

would abide by the ceasefire but would also repel attacks by Israeli troops.

A CONFLICT THAT COULD SINK THE US-IRAN DEAL

Hezbollah and Israel went to war just days after the US and Israel launched strikes on Iran on February 28, with Hezbollah firing rockets and drones at northern Israel and Israel seizing large swaths of southern Lebanon.

The interim US-Iran agreement signed this week has already reopened the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran had closed as the war unfolded — cutting off the global economy from significant supplies of oil and natural gas. The deal also envisages the relaunch of talks on Iran's nuclear programme, a core issue in the war.

Neither Israel nor Hezbollah are signatories to the deal, which calls for a halt to military operations in Lebanon and for the country's sovereignty to be respected. With the fighting continuing, the accord is under threat and US-Iran talks in Switzerland, planned to start yesterday, have been delayed, with no new date announced.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to keep Israeli forces in southern Lebanon until any threat to Israel is eliminated. Hezbollah has refused to halt its attacks unless Israel commits to withdrawing from Lebanon, which Iran says is also a condition of the deal.

A new round of US-backed talks between the Lebanese government and Israel is expected to take place in Washington next week.

pected to take place in Washington next week.

THE FIGHTING IN THE SOUTH, NEAR THE ISRAEL-LEBANON BORDER

A strike on a village of Barish killed four members of a family, parents and two children. In Arab Salim village, a body was pulled from a destroyed house, and in villages of Doueir and Kfar Rumman, drone strikes killed a person on a bike and a Lebanese soldier. Nine people were killed in strikes in villages of Qannarit, Sohmor and Shehour.

Plumes of smoke rose into the sky over southern Lebanon and Israeli jets flew low over the coastal city of Tyre today. Residents there told *Associated Press* they were relieved that Tyre had been spared in

recent days but the sounds of Israeli planes reminded them the war is not over.

Many doubted a ceasefire would hold. "Our entire lives would change if there's a ceasefire," said Hussein Khoshman, a Tyre resident.

Netanyahu's office did not immediately comment on the ceasefire efforts. Yesterday, Netanyahu posted on X that, on his orders, the Israeli army had 'struck powerfully' 150 Hezbollah targets, killing dozens of militants.

Military Spokesman Brigadier General Effie Defrin said the Israeli forces were operating in a 'forward defence zone' and would continue doing so.

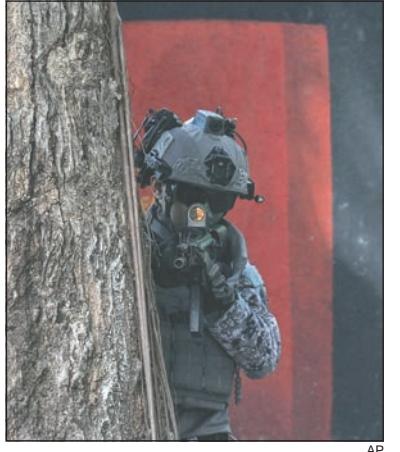
IRANIAN AND US OFFICIALS TRAVEL TO SWITZERLAND

After Iran said its officials did not travel as planned to Switzerland, insisting that the fighting in Lebanon must stop before the talks can take place, US Vice-President JD Vance also postponed his trip.

Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baghaei told the semi-official *ISNA* news agency today that Pakistani interior minister will arrive in Iran as part of continued negotiation efforts. Baghaei had said earlier that consultations through mediators were ongoing regarding next phase of negotiations to draft a final US-Iran pact. As the initial deal was signed digitally earlier this week, the talks in Switzerland were not urgent, and plans were underway to hold a meeting in the coming days, he said.

The Swiss foreign ministry said diplomats were in talks today in the town of Bürgenstock on how to implement the US-Iran deal, without offering details.

THE WORLD OVER



A member of the Philippine troops participating in an amphibious raid military exercise at the marines training base as part of the annual Philippines-US joint marines exercise dubbed Kamandag (Venom), in Ternate, west of Manila, on Saturday.

2 bodies unearthed

MEXICO CITY: Mexican authorities are investigating whether two bodies unearthed near Mexico City belong to two US citizens who disappeared last month, a judicial source told *AFP* on Friday. The remains were found in a clandestine grave in a forested area outside Mexico City, and are believed to be Zafar Padamsee Mawani and Guillermo Jafett Hidalgo, who were last seen on May 20 after they moved to Mexico from Chicago. Family members told US media the couple has been found dead. Mawani and Hidalgo were dual US-Mexican citizens, according to local media. "It pains my heart to know they took their lives away in such a cruel way," the niece of Hidalgo wrote on Facebook, after several days of sharing photos of them. Local media reported that families detected irregular bank movements in the days following their disappearance. — *AFP*

Bolivia emergency

LA PAZ: Bolivian President Rodrigo Paz declared a state of emergency across the Latin American country on Saturday after more than six weeks of protests and road blockades. "After exhausting all avenues of dialogue, reaching agreements with those whose demands were legitimate, and identifying those who used violence in an attempt to destabilise Bolivia, we made the decision to declare a state of emergency across the entire national territory," Paz said in a televised speech. — *AFP*

NZealand on alert

WELLINGTON: New Zealand is well prepared for a potential incursion of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) after the virus was detected in a wild seabird in Western Australia, a senior official said on Saturday. Several government departments have stepped up monitoring and preparedness efforts, Minister for Biosecurity and Food Safety Andrew Hoggard said in a statement. "Since the H5N1 strain of bird flu started spreading around the world, New Zealand's geographical isolation has protected us and given us time to prepare," Hoggard said. Australia has confirmed the H5N1 2.3.4.4b bird flu strain in a migratory seabird in Western Australia, with a nearby giant petrel also suspected. No poultry cases or mass deaths have been reported. — *Xinhua*

Ghana conference

ACCRA: African and Caribbean leaders in Ghana on Friday urged former slave-trading nations to issue apologies and reparations over the trafficking of enslaved Africans after a landmark UN resolution in March declaring it 'the gravest crime against humanity.' The 'Next Steps' conference in the Ghanaian capital of Accra issued a declaration calling on countries involved in the Atlantic slave trade to 'offer full, formal and unconditional apologies as a foundational step towards reconciliation, trust-building and reparatory justice.' The UN resolution is non-binding but carries moral authority. Organisers said the Ghana conference was aimed at moving the reparations debate from recognition to concrete measures. — *AP*

US measles outbreak

SALT LAKE CITY: Utah has spent the past year fighting measles outbreaks — a grim milestone that could affect whether the United States can keep its measles-free designation. More than 680 people have gotten sick since the state's first outbreak began on June 20, 2025. Unlike measles outbreaks in Texas, South Carolina and Arizona, the spread in Utah has been tough to contain to one region — infecting undervaccinated communities in nearly every county. Measles popped up in healthcare settings, big-box stores and restaurants, and youth sporting events. — *AP*

UN rights chief troubled by new European Union migrant return rules

Agence France Presse

Geneva, June 20

The UN rights chief said today he deeply regretted the European Union's new migration rules, which allow much broader detention powers and the creation of deportation centres outside the bloc.

The rules, approved on Wednesday, enable the 27 EU nations to open 'return hubs' outside the bloc's borders, where they can send asylum seekers and migrants to whom they do not grant the right to remain.

Volker Turk, the United Nations' High Commissioner for Human Rights, said the EU and its member states must ensure the rules fully comply with international human rights and refugee law.

"EU states cannot simply outsource their human rights obligations to third states in this context," he said in a statement.

"Detention and return of vulnerable people, including children, to other countries is a particularly sensitive exercise of the state's power and carries a high risk of human rights violations.

"There must be front-and-centre emphasis on human rights protection and dignity throughout — in fact and in law," Turk insisted.

European governments have sought a tougher stance on immigration, which has become a hot political topic used by far-right parties to make electoral gains across the continent.

With asylum seeker arrivals down in 2025, the focus in Brussels has turned to tightening up the repatriation system.

ation system.

Currently, fewer than 30 per cent of people who are ordered to leave are returned to their country of origin.

"International human rights law and refugee law are very clear — no one should be returned to a place where they would be at risk of serious human rights violations or other irreparable harm," said Turk.

"This is the fundamental principle of non-refoulement. It must be fully respected by all countries and all territories under all circumstances."

He also called for robust monitoring and accountability to ensure full respect for human rights in return procedures, including people's right to private and family life, to family unity, as well as to protect the best interests of children.

"Deportation decisions must always be based on individualised assessments and should not be carried out prior to conclusion of appeal processes," Turk insisted.

Besides return hubs, the new measures establish a strict obligation for migrants subject to expulsion to leave and cooperate with authorities to that end.

They say that those who do not, who pose a security risk or are thought to be at risk of absconding, can be detained for up to two years.

Turk urged countries to ensure that public discourse on migration 'remains grounded in fact' and 'avoids conflating migration with security concerns.'

Turk called for a balanced approach to migration anchored in human rights.

A top banker Ilan Goldfajn tried to sway Pope Leo XIV on rare earth mining

Associated Press

Rome, June 20

The head of Latin America's top development bank made a pitch to Pope Leo XIV this week in the face of the Vatican's call to divest from the mining industry: that the mistakes of the past can be avoided in extracting rare earth minerals to supply a global tech boom.

Ilan Goldfajn, head of the Inter-American Development Bank, met privately with the pope yesterday and asserted the potential of rare earth mining, saying it could be a boon to Latin America provided there are safeguards and value is added locally.

It's probably not an easy sell. The Vatican for years has taken a firm stand against multinational mining corporations, especially in Latin America and in favour of the Indigenous peoples, whose lands and livelihoods are often ravaged when mining projects come to town.

Goldfajn's visit, which followed one earlier this year by mining executives, suggests that he recognises the weight of the pope's words in the majority-Catholic region, and a desire to sensitise him to the possibility of a better way of doing business.

Whether Leo can be swayed is another matter, given his own experience in the region and criticism of the often corrupt deals

mining companies ink with governments in the developing world.

Countries have identified dozens of minerals, including copper, cobalt, lithium and nickel, as critical because they are essential for new technologies. The 17 rare earth elements are a subset of them. They're used in a wide range of products, including smartphones, semiconductors, electric vehicles and jet engines.

"It's a unique opportunity for the region, but you need to do it in the right way with the standards, the labour conditions, with the environmental conditions, the governance," Goldfajn said in an interview in Rome on June 18, one day before his meeting.

"We have exactly the tools to do that," he added, noting the IADB has a roughly \$4 billion pipeline of critical mineral projects in the region, mostly in Chile, Argentina and Brazil, and three-quarters of that amount with private companies. He had just delivered a presentation on rare earth minerals at a finance conference, with an eye on potential European investors.

Mining has a chequered, centuries-long history in Latin America, from forced labour and displacement of Indigenous peoples to deforestation, poisoning of waterways and deadly dam collapses. Foreign companies withdrew much of the

wealth from the earth without enriching local populations. In colonial times, silver and gold made its way across the ocean to adorn Catholic churches.

Leo, who spent two decades working as a missionary in Peru, would be intimately familiar with the plight of Indigenous peoples in mining areas and the environmental impact of extraction industries on the land. He ministered in Chulucanas, in the archdiocese of Piura, which has huge copper mining projects, and in Trujillo, known for its gold deposits. His final Peruvian posting, Chiclayo, is a big logistical hub for northern Peru's extraction industries.

"He must have seen both sides: The promise, the future, but also the challenges," Goldfajn said of Leo's time in Peru. He noted that Leo held a private audience with a group of top mining executives in January, which he heard from them had been 'very constructive.'

But two months later, the Vatican launched a campaign to encourage divestment from mining companies. At a Vatican news conference, top officials held up an ecumenical Christian network, known as the Church and Mining Network, that is active in particular in Latin America. The campaign seeks to encourage local churches to review their investment strategies and divest where

needed, and to share information especially with Indigenous groups about the types of extraction occurring on their lands.

In each of the three sub-Saharan countries he visited during his April trip to Africa — Cameroon, Angola and Equatorial Guinea — he blasted the 'colonisation' of Africa's minerals by mining companies.

It makes sense for people like Goldfajn to try to engage Leo, even if the pope alone won't move investment decisions, Bryan Harris, managing partner at Sabio, a Latin America-focused strategic advisory firm, wrote in an email.

"The decades he spent in Peru give him personal credibility and his messaging on mining sets the tone for how dioceses and parishes across the continent will engage with mining companies and projects," said Harris, who consults for international mining companies in the region. "These groups are often the basis of local opposition movements to mining, so the Pope has considerable sway on whether relations are confrontational or conciliatory."

Harris noted that processing of rare earths can be extremely dirty, involving heavy chemical use that can contaminate water resources without close monitoring of companies' sustainability commitments and enforcement by federal regulators.

Ukrainian officials criticise Polish president's decision to strip Zelensky of honour

Associated Press

Warsaw, June 20

A decision by the Polish president to strip Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky of Poland's highest state honour was beneficial to Moscow, which has an interest in seeing Kyiv in conflict with its allies, Ukrainian officials said.

President Karol Nawrocki announced yesterday he will strip Zelensky of the Order of the White Eagle over the Ukrainian leader's decision to name a military unit after a Ukrainian paramilitary organ-

isation accused of massacring Poles during World War II.

Former Polish President Andrzej Duda bestowed the award on Zelensky in 2023 for services to security, resilience and the defence of human rights.

Zelensky issued a decree on May 26 naming a military unit of Ukraine's Special Operations Forces after Ukrainian Insurgent Army, or UPA, which operated during the 1940s and 1950s and has been accused in Poland of mass killings.

"For the majority of Polish society, the Ukrainian Insur-

gent Army remains above all a formation responsible for cruel crimes against the citizens of the Polish Republic during World War II," Nawrocki said in a 13-minute address on social media.

The decision to revoke the honour did not mean Poland's support for Ukraine in its defence against Russia would decrease, Nawrocki said.

The Ukrainian decision was met with widespread criticism in Poland. However, Nawrocki is a nationalist politician who has exploited anti-Ukrainian sentiment for electoral gain.

Ukrainians in Poland have been facing increasing prejudice despite their contribution to the economy.

Ukrainian Presidential Office Chief Kyrylo Budanov wrote on Telegram that Nawrocki's decision was 'an unfriendly act towards our people and a gift to the Moscow aggressor, which will certainly use it against both of our countries.'

Ukraine Foreign Minister Andrii Sybaha called the step 'a strategic mistake by the president of Poland, one that benefits only Moscow.'

Ukraine's Ambassador to Poland Vasyl Bodnar said the decision was 'especially painful' as Ukrainians battle missile and drone attacks.

The three Ukrainian officials, as well as Budanov's deputy, Ihor Zhovkva, said they would return state honours that Poland had issued them. Some have criticised Ukraine's response.

Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Ukraine's former prime minister, wrote on X today that one 'harmful and incorrect decision by the current president of Poland cannot be cor-

rected by other incorrect decisions of ours.'

Poland is scheduled to host a major event on Ukraine's postwar reconstruction next week, which Zelensky is expected to attend.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, a political rival of Nawrocki, urged the two leaders to 'tone down emotions, not stoke tensions.'

"The front line runs elsewhere," Tusk wrote on social media yesterday night, adding that the conflict between Poland and Ukraine 'delights Putin and shocks our allies.'

The Himalayan

ON S U N D A Y

Donning exclusive stories

Inside the colourful, compelling and controversial jersey designs at the World Cup



Argentina's Lionel Messi celebrates after scoring the opening goal during the World Cup Group J soccer match between Argentina and Algeria in Kansas City on June 16.



Photos: AP

Mexico's Julian Quinones celebrates after scoring the opening goal during the World Cup Group A soccer match between Mexico and South Africa in Mexico City on June 11.

There will be blood, sweat and tears on players' soccer jerseys at the World Cup — and plenty of deeper cultural and historical meaning, too.

Here, *The Associated Press* runs you through some of the more compelling — and controversial — backstories from the kit designs on show in soccer's biggest event, currently taking place in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

CAPE VERDE'S FLIGHT PATHS

For its World Cup debut, the smallest nation by population at the tournament is paying homage to the roughly 525,000 inhabitants who live on 10 volcanic islands off the coast of Africa. A geometric, triangular print across its blue (home) and white (away) jerseys represents the network of flight paths that connect the islands. The idea is that the people of Cape Verde are united behind the players at the World Cup — and that togetherness showed as the team held firm to seal an unlikely 0-0 draw with heavily favoured Spain in their first match.

BELGIUM'S SURREALISM

"This is not a jersey," reads a message on the collar of Belgium's multicolour away shirt. No, the Belgians aren't losing their minds. It's just a nod to the European nation's surrealist heritage — and notably the work of its master in this artistic movement from the early 20th century. Throughout his career, Belgian artist René Magritte questioned the enigmatic relationship of mind and eye, reality and language, writing under 'The Treachery of Images' — his iconic painting

Norway's Erling Haaland (9) celebrates with teammates after scoring his side's second goal during the World Cup Group I soccer match between Iraq and Norway on June 16.



Haiti supporters react ahead of the World Cup Group C soccer match between Haiti and Scotland in Foxborough on June 13.

of a pipe — the words: "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" (This is not a pipe)." The light-blue jersey features pink patterns and black detailing, incorporating soccer-inspired motifs such as pitch lines and a ball. "True to the surrealism theme, the kit sparks the imagination and invites conversation," the Belgian federation says.

HAITI'S BATTLE SCENE

The original jersey submitted by this Caribbean nation included a depiction of the final battle of the Haitian War of Independence in 1803 on its front. In the words of Colombian sportswear manufacturer Saeta, it was a "tribute to the men and women who contribute every day to Haiti's future". It didn't go down too well with FIFA, which rejected the image during its approval process, deeming it too political. So an updated blue soccer kit was needed, one that no longer includes the battle artwork.

ARGENTINA'S SWIRLING PAINT TECHNIQUE

The defending World Cup

champion is mixing sporting heritage with artistic expression in its jerseys. The home kit — worn by Lionel Messi for his hat trick against Algeria on June 16 — features three shades of blue on its stripes, a homage to the South American nation's World Cup-winning uniforms

from 1978, 1986 and 2022. As for its dark blue away jersey, that's inspired by a traditional painting technique from capital city Buenos Aires — *filete porteño* — that's used for ornamental design, combining brilliant, swirling colours with specific lettering styles.

FRANCE'S AMERICAN CONNECTION

France arrived for the World Cup with an away kit that honours a gift the nation famously gave to the United States: the Statue of Liberty. The jersey has a green hue that resembles the oxidised colour of the iconic sculpture designed by a Frenchman — Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi — and given to the United States in 1886 as a symbol of French-American friendship. On the jersey is a logo in copper — the original colour of the statue — with the words 'Nos diffé-

Iran's Mehdi Ghayedi battles for the ball with New Zealand's Callan Elliot during the World Cup Group G soccer match between Iran and New Zealand in Inglewood on June 15.



rences nous unissent' (Our differences unite us).

IRAN'S ENDANGERED ASIATIC CHEETAH

The most striking imagery on Iran's home (white) and away (red) kits is an Asiatic cheetah low across the front. There also are cheetah spots on the sleeves up to the shoulder. The Asiatic cheetah, an equally fast cousin of the African cat, is one of the world's critically endangered species — one that Iran has long tried to save. There were as many as 400 in the 1990s but the numbers have dwindled to less than an estimated 70 remaining in Iran.

NORWAY'S RUNIC FONT

Norway's kit might be the sharpest at the World Cup — literally. The font used for the names and numbers of players is inspired by runic writing — characters in several Germanic alphabets used in northern Europe from ancient times until the adoption of the Latin alphabet. The writing is pointy, geometric and easily visible, representing the Norwegian team's desire to embrace its centuries-old history. Flanking the large blue cross across the chest are Viking art patterns in an Urnes style.

COLOMBIA'S YELLOW BUTTERFLIES

Look closely at Colombia's typically vibrant yellow jersey and you'll notice a burst of butterfly patterns. That's an homage to the classic novel by the nation's Nobel Prize-winning author, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, and the stories that made him literature's best-known practitioner of magical realism — the blending of the everyday with fantastical ele-

ments such as a man trailed by a cloud of yellow butterflies.

MEXICO'S AZTEC CALENDAR

Mexico's home jersey brings back the Aztec calendar design that was popular in the 1990s. In the run-up to the World Cup, the team visited the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City and posed for a photo with the uniforms in front of the Aztec 'Piedra de Sol' or Stone of the Sun, best known as the Aztec calendar.

SAUDI ARABIA'S ARCHITECTURE

Dotted across Saudi Arabia's dark green home jersey are symmetrical lavender squares or diamond shapes, a tribute to doorway decoration — namely geometric, triangular architecture — commonly seen in homes in the kingdom. Wild lavender flowers fill Saudi's desert landscapes in springtime, so purple is a celebrated colour in the nation and regarded as a symbol of generosity.

BRAZIL'S AMAZONIAN FROGS

What might immediately jump out when looking at Brazil's navy blue-and-black away jersey made by Nike is a yellow 'Jumpman' logo synonymous with Michael Jordan-promoted sportswear. However, more closely linked to Brazilian culture is the colour of the kit, inspired by the skin of the poison dart frog found in the Amazon. It's a nod to the danger posed by Brazil, the record five-time world champion. — Steve Douglas/AP



Dream meals chef dads want for Father's Day

dream Father's Day meal? Three of them answer here. All agree that being together is more important than the food.

BARBECUE CROSSES GENERATIONS

Tom Colicchio, chef and owner of the New York-based Crafted Hospitality, has three kids, ages 14, 15 and 33.

"The teenagers? They're not cooking anything," he says. "But my oldest might — he dabbles in barbecue, so I'd put him to work on smoked short ribs, bone-in, low and slow. I'd be nearby to step in if things went sideways."

Colicchio, a longtime head judge on *Top Chef*, envisions the Father's Day meal enjoyed outside at his place on the North Fork of Long Island, New York, surrounded by family.

GO FISHING FOR FRESH FATHER'S DAY CATCH

Cesar Zapata, chef and owner of the Vietnamese-Colombian fusion restaurant Phuc Yea in Miami, also has his sights on the outdoors.

"Since (my stepson) Eli loves to fish, we'll probably spend the day out on the water trying to



Photos: AP

A June 22, 2023 file photo of Roy Yamaguchi, founder of Roy's Restaurants, with his son Roy Jr and Denise Yamaguchi at a restaurant in Venice.

catch our own meal," he says. "Being in Florida, hopefully we'll catch some snapper or grouper, bring it home, clean it together, and roast the whole fish over the grill."

And nobody should worry about impressing the chef.

"We spend so much of our lives cooking for others that the meals that mean the most are usually the ones that feel effortless and shared," Zapata

says. "I love keeping really fresh fish simple, especially when it's something you caught that same day."

He pictures serving it with a Vietnamese-style salsa verde, grilled asparagus and mushrooms, accompanied by good music and cold drinks.

"For me, Father's Day is less about the 'perfect' meal and more about slowing down, being present, and creating mem-

ories together around food and conversation," he says.

CELEBRATE AROUND THE TABLE WITH A FAMILY-STYLE MEAL

Roy Yamaguchi is on the same page. He's the founder of Roy's Restaurants, a Hawaii fusion restaurant with locations in various cities, and is one of the pioneers of the cooking style Hawaii Regional Cuisine.



Tom Colicchio

he says. "The meal simply gives us a reason to gather."

EVERYONE PITCHES IN

At his ideal meal, Yamaguchi says, nobody just sits and waits to be served — everyone cooks, shares, laughs and contributes.

And he does have one request: For someone else to do all the prep work.

"Anyone who has made shabu shabu knows that slicing the vegetables, preparing the sauces, and arranging everything takes time. Having the family take care of that would be the greatest gift," he says.

Then he would sit back, enjoy a simple glass of Japanese shochu over ice, enjoy the conversation and watch everyone have fun around the table. — Katie Workman/AP

"For Father's Day, I don't need a fancy restaurant or an elaborate dinner," he says. "What I really want is to have all of my kids home. My ideal meal would be shabu shabu or chankonabe because they're the kinds of dishes that bring everyone together."

Both shabu shabu and chankonabe are Japanese hot-pot-style meals, where everybody eats from a common pot on the table.

"At the end of the day, Father's Day isn't really about the food,"

MIXED FARE

Sharon misses Ozzy statue unveiling in France over health scare



Facebook

LOS ANGELES: Sharon Osbourne found herself unable to attend one of the year's most significant rock and roll moments when a sudden health scare forced her to skip the unveiling of her legendary husband Ozzy Osbourne's statue at France's prestigious Hellfest festival.

The television personality and wife of the Black Sabbath icon took to social media to explain her absence from the momentous occasion, revealing she had been dealing with an unexpected hospital visit just days before the event. While she expressed her disappointment at missing the celebration, Sharon made sure to acknowledge the organisers and artistes involved in bringing the tribute to life.

"I'm sorry I couldn't be at Hellfest for the unveiling of Ozzy's statue. Unfortunately I had an unexpected trip to the hospital earlier in the week," Sharon shared with her followers online.

She extended her gratitude to the festival's leadership and particularly praised the artist behind the sculpture. "A big thank you Olivier Garnier, Ben Barbaud and everyone at Hellfest. Special thank you to philippe_pasqua_officiel for the absolutely stunning statue!" she added.

Despite her public statement, Sharon chose not to disclose specific details about what prompted her hospitalisation, leaving fans and media outlets speculating about the nature of her health concern.

Sharon's latest health scare adds to a growing list of medical challenges she has faced over the years. The reality television star has been notably candid about her health battles, making her journey a matter of public record. Just last year, she opened up about a particularly frightening incident that occurred

while she was filming. During an appearance on the UK version of *The Talk* in January 2023, Sharon described a harrowing experience where she lost consciousness for an extended period.

Sharon has also navigated a serious cancer diagnosis in her past. She was previously diagnosed with colon cancer, though she has since achieved remission. The television personality opened up about her cancer journey during an episode of the family's reality show *The Osbournes*, providing insight into her experience battling the disease.

Despite these health challenges, Sharon has remained active and engaged in various projects. Earlier this month, she and her son Jack Osbourne made headlines by discussing an innovative plan to preserve Ozzy's legacy through artificial intelligence technology. The pair announced their intention to create a digital version of the rock legend using cutting-edge AI technology, a move that sparked considerable discussion among fans and critics alike.

When addressing the project, Sharon defended the decision against accusations of opportunism.

"Technology moves on," she explained, pushing back against those who suggested the initiative was merely a financial venture. "For somebody to turn around to me and say I'm doing a cash grab, no. You don't know my husband. I know my husband. And my husband would say to me over and over 'How long do you think I'll be remembered?' It's something that will pass on through our family, and it's for our grandkids," she concluded, emphasising that the project was about preserving Ozzy's memory for future generations rather than capitalising on his name. — IANS

Lilo actress Daveigh Chase dies aged 35

LOS ANGELES: Former child actor Daveigh Chase, known for her youthful voice in Disney's *Lilo & Stitch* and her villainous performance in the thriller *The Ring*, has died. She was 35.

Chase's father, John David Schwallier, confirmed to *The New York Times* she died from complications of bacterial meningitis and a blood infection.

She had been homeless in Los Angeles with her boyfriend near the hospital where she died, he told the newspaper.

TMZ first reported on June 17 that Chase died on June 16.

She voiced the lead role of Lilo in the 2002 animated film, a role she auditioned for at age eight. Years later, a Hawaiian actress was cast as Lilo for the live-action remake.

For her role as long-haired Samara in the 2002 horror film, Chase won an MTV movie award for best villain.

Chase also voiced another lead in the 2001 animated film *Spirited Away*. She had roles in the 2001 movie *Donnie Darko* and the 2003 show *Oliver Beene*, according to internet movie database IMDb.com.

She was born in Las Vegas and raised in

Albany, Oregon. In her small hometown, she began singing and dancing at age three, according to IMDb.

Chase struggled with drugs since she was 13 years old, Schwallier said in an interview with the *Times*. He said his daughter was estranged from her parents, who are divorced.

Schwallier said he was in touch with Chase's boyfriend, and just before she died, arrived at the Los Angeles hospital where she was being treated. — AP



POTPOURRI

GARFIELD Jim Davis

Garfield comic strip panels. Panel 1: Title 'Garfield'. Panel 2: Garfield says 'I'M GOING TO START SETTING A BETTER EXAMPLE FOR CATS!'. Panel 3: A responsible cat would not eat that plate of donuts. Panel 4: A considerate cat would not break that vase or shred those curtains. Panel 5: And a loving cat would not kick Odie off the table. Panel 6: 'KICK! RIIIIIP! CRASH! GULP!'. Panel 7: 'BUT, HEY, I'M ONLY HUMAN'.

CALVIN AND HOBBS Waterson

Calvin and Hobbes comic strip panels. Panel 1: Calvin says 'NOW, HONEY, YOU'RE MISSING A BEAUTIFUL SUNSET OUT HERE!'. Panel 2: Hobbes says 'I'LL COUNT TO 10, AND THEN... POW!'. Panel 3: Calvin asks 'DAD, HOW COME OLD PHOTOGRAPHS ARE ALWAYS BLACK AND WHITE? DIDN'T THEY HAVE COLOR FILM BACK THEN?'. Panel 4: Hobbes replies 'SURE THEY DID. IN FACT, THOSE OLD PHOTOGRAPHS ARE IN COLOR. IT'S JUST THE WORLD WAS BLACK AND WHITE THEN.'. Panel 5: Calvin asks 'DAD, HOW COME OLD PHOTOGRAPHS ARE ALWAYS BLACK AND WHITE? DIDN'T THEY HAVE COLOR FILM BACK THEN?'. Panel 6: Hobbes replies 'WELL, TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION.'. Panel 7: Calvin asks 'BUT THEN WHY ARE OLD PHOTOGRAPHS ALWAYS BLACK AND WHITE? DIDN'T THEY HAVE COLOR FILM BACK THEN?'. Panel 8: Hobbes replies 'NOT NECESSARILY. A LOT OF GREAT ARTISTS WERE INSANE.'. Panel 9: Calvin asks 'BUT... BUT HOW COULD THEY HAVE PAINTED IN COLOR ANYWAY? WOULDN'T THEIR PAINTS HAVE BEEN SHADES OF GRAY BACK THEN?'. Panel 10: Hobbes replies 'OF COURSE, BUT THEY TURNED COLORS LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE DID IN THE '30s.'. Panel 11: Calvin asks 'SO WHY DIDN'T OLD BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOS TURN COLOR TOO?'. Panel 12: Hobbes replies 'BECAUSE THEY WERE COLOR PICTURES OF BLACK AND WHITE, REMEMBER?'. Panel 13: Calvin asks 'THE WORLD IS A COMPLICATED PLACE, HOBBS.'. Panel 14: Hobbes replies 'WHENEVER IT SEEMS THAT WAY, I TAKE A NAP IN A TREE AND WAIT FOR DINNER.'.

THE LOCKHORNS Bunny Hoest & John Reiner

The Lockhorns comic strip panels. Panel 1: 'HELLO LORETTA? ... I HAVE A LAUNDRY QUESTION...'. Panel 2: 'THE BOSS USES TRICKLE-DOWN THEORY WHEN IT COMES TO BLAME.'. Panel 3: 'REGGAE IS NOT WHAT I MEANT WHEN I SAID YOU NEED TO GET MORE INTO THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT!'.

THE BETTER HALF Glasbergen

The Better Half comic strip panels. Panel 1: 'I'm looking for a brain surgeon. I want to find out how much it would cost to change your opinions.'. Panel 2: 'Stanley has been unfaithful. I caught him signing another woman.'. Panel 3: 'I go to the gym for stress management, but driving home gets me all stressed out again!'. Panel 4: 'Tell me all about your day, but leave out the boring parts that aren't about me.'.

Sudoku puzzle with grid and clues. Clues: 25 Capital of Ukraine (4) - 27 Slang for gangster (4). Cryptic Clues: Across: 1 How one got carried away? (6) - 4 Maliciously thwarts one who snoops about a letter! (6) - 8 Ms Hurlley takes a thoroughfare leading to this Cornish peninsula (6) - 10 According to my horoscope his life is in the balance (6) - 11 Consequently taken back to Aegean island (5) - 12 Not quite wonderful North European (4) - 14 British money invested in some dilapidated Aegean island (5) - 15 Shiny up and start to cut branch (5) - 17 Like to start a party where people are in the swim (4) - 19 Unidentified flying objects responsible for this exploding of us (4) - 20 Right through one's land (5) - 21 French Revolutionary parent to switch allegiance (5) - 23 It's a girl with a boy's name, mum (4) - 26 Cloth dog dug back (5) - 28 A little pale at first - indication something's needed (4,2) - 29 Went round the bend? (6) - 30 So far, why men ask for girls' phone numbers (2,4) - 31 Look into great bridge bid for weaving course (6). Down: 1 William, it's said, had a Colt in notecase (8) - 2 Number of apostles act over Buddhist sect (5) - 3 Fat in the French way (4) - 5 Steadiness of the post office is established initially (5) - 6 Leave the road and stop (4,3) - 7 Not much to pay for entertainment (4) - 9 Committed and old-fashioned about playing dice (9) - 10 See large number of poets from Northern Italy (9) - 13 There's no holding a key man given some authority (3) - 16 Cygnet's parent in Egyptian reservoir? (5,3) - 18 Ran off in the dream, maybe (7) - 19 Home of the brave even earlier? (3) - 22 Fit girl given body-building exercises (5) - 24 Either way, it's flat (5) - 25 He learns the hard way and pulls back (4) - 27 Think how to make a hot drink (4).

Himalayan Double Crossword — 8875

Double crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-31.

Quick Clues

Across: 1 Make beloved (6) - 4 Ranges or extents (6) - 8 Writing desk (6) - 10 A short nap (6) - 11 Concluded (5) - 12 Endure (4) - 14 Mike ___: ear-biting boxer? (5) - 15 Unfolds (5) - 17 Stitched joint (4) - 19 The Hindu god of fire (4) - 20 Sheen or satiny shine (5) - 21 Wire-less set (5) - 23 Strike with the foot (4) - 26 One ___: that's ten percent? (5) - 28 West ___: the cricket team from the New World? (6) - 29 A stinging insect? (6) - 30 Disappear, evaporate or fade? (6) - 31 Worshipped, loved (6). Down: 1 Blood clot (8) - 2 Risks or braves (5) - 3 Wings or winglike parts (4) - 5 Something sweet to eat? (5) - 6 Lengthen or protract? (7) - 7 Appear to be? (4) - 9 Endures, suffers or experiences (9) - 10 Begins or starts a journey? (4,5) - 13 Boy's name (3) - 16 Surrounded to express public grievances (8) - 18 Famed lamp man? (7) - 19 Inquire of (3) - 22 Objects or articles (5) - 24 To the interior (5) -

Cryptic Clues

Across: 1 How one got carried away? (6) - 4 Maliciously thwarts one who snoops about a letter! (6) - 8 Ms Hurlley takes a thoroughfare leading to this Cornish peninsula (6) - 10 According to my horoscope his life is in the balance (6) - 11 Consequently taken back to Aegean island (5) - 12 Not quite wonderful North European (4) - 14 British money invested in some dilapidated Aegean island (5) - 15 Shiny up and start to cut branch (5) - 17 Like to start a party where people are in the swim (4) - 19 Unidentified flying objects responsible for this exploding of us (4) - 20 Right through one's land (5) - 21 French Revolutionary parent to switch allegiance (5) - 23 It's a girl with a boy's name, mum (4) - 26 Cloth dog dug back (5) - 28 A little pale at first - indication something's needed (4,2) - 29 Went round the bend? (6) - 30 So far, why men ask

Solution for crossword 8874. Grid with words: CABER, PICCOLO, RANGE, GAUCHOS, ARRA, AONU, E A R A S A A, THICKLY, ABETS, HAVENOT, SOCKS, E E S O X T T, E E S E E R K S, RUFF, M N P I P S, A I L S H N N I S A Y, E A V I D I L Y M, R O N E I L L A, R U I N L A S E E D, S O B S R A A O W N S, M L L I O N E L R, R M O B C A P T, C U B S E D Y A M A, F L A W E E S I N K, O I S U N G L U, A K U S A P N I, C U B I T E A R N I N G, C L I F F R E A L L O T, O E A E T E H, E N O K C A O T, ASSURED, TENEIT, D I G E S T S Y O Y O S.

YOUR LUCK section. Includes: HAPPY BIRTHDAY: You're adventurous and enjoy the company of others. You're friendly, empathetic and you love the arts. This is a year of fresh beginnings and major changes in your life. MOON ALERT: Avoid shopping (except for food and gas) and important decisions from 1:00 pm to 5:30 pm EDT today (10:00 am to 2:30 pm PDT). ARIES (March 21-April 19): For the next four weeks, your focus will be on home, family and your private life. TAURUS (April 20-May 20): The pace of your days will accelerate in the next four weeks. GEMINI (May 21-June 20): With fiery Mars in your sign, you have energy to burn! CANCER (June 21-July 22): Today the Sun moves into your sign to stay for the next four weeks. LEO (July 23-Aug 22): Your personal year is ending, which is why the next four weeks (before your birthday) will be a more private time for you. VIRGO (Aug 23-Sept 22): Your popularity will increase in the next four weeks! LIBRA (Sept 23-Oct 22): Once a year, for four weeks, the Sun casts you in a spotlight. SCORPIO (Oct 23-Nov 21): Grab every opportunity to travel or do something to expand your world in the next four weeks. SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22-Dec 21): You'll find that in the next four weeks, your focus on shared property, taxes, debt, insurance issues, inheritances and the wealth of partners will be stronger. CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 19): You will need more sleep in the next four weeks because the Sun is now opposing your sign. AQUARIUS (Jan 20-Feb 18): Roll up your sleeves, because you'll be busy and productive in the next four weeks. PISCES (Feb 19-March 20): Lucky you! The next four weeks promise fun and games!

Business

BIZ BRIEFS

Ncell partnership

KATHMANDU: Ncell has partnered with Trip Turbo, one of Nepal's leading travel and experiences platforms, to offer exclusive discounts and deals on travel bookings and adventure activities to its customers through the Ncell App. Under this offer, customers who purchase any Ncell pack worth Rs 99 or above will be eligible to receive discounts of up to Rs 8,000 on selected travel activities. They can avail a discount of Rs 200 on their first domestic flight booking, Rs 140 on every subsequent domestic flight booking, and Rs 111 on bus ticket bookings through Trip Turbo. The exclusive offers are available through the Partnered Services section of the Ncell App, allowing eligible customers to seamlessly explore and redeem discounts while planning their travel and leisure activities. —HNS

TVS NTORQ 125

KATHMANDU: Jagdamba Motors, the authorised distributor of TVS in Nepal, announced the launch of the TVS NTORQ 125 Race XP Blaze Blue, adding a bold and exciting new colour variant to the popular TVS NTORQ scooter line-up. The new TVS NTORQ 125 Race XP Blaze Blue was inaugurated by Deepak Rauniyar, vice-president of Jagdamba Motors, in the presence of customers, media representatives, content creators and moto vloggers. The event witnessed the participation of over 80 media representatives, more than 50 content creators and moto vloggers, along with customers and TVS enthusiasts. —HNS

'Government working to improve agri sector'

Rastriya Samachar Samiti
Chitwan, June 20

The fifth convocation ceremony of the Agriculture and Forest University was held here today. A total of 2,193 students have graduated from the university with a variety of degrees.

On the occasion, university's Pro-Chancellor and Minister for Education and Sports, Sasmit Pokharel, said that the government is making every effort to improve this sector as the country's future relies on the development of agriculture.

The education minister also urged the graduating students to consider the academic degree they have received not just as a certificate but as a symbol of responsibility towards the nation, responsibility towards society and commitment towards the future generation and to work accordingly. He expressed confidence

that the knowledge, skills, research capacity and professional competence acquired from the university would help in starting a new era in the country's agriculture, animal husbandry and natural resource management.

Chief guest Professor Saket Kushwaha, vice chancellor of Ladakh University, India, spoke about the common cultural, philosophical and knowledge traditions between Nepal and India and said that education is the guiding light of human life.

Vice chancellor of the university, Prof Hom Bahadur Basnet, urged the graduating students to become entrepreneurs who create jobs and not just job seekers.

According to the university's registrar Prof Subir Singh, of those graduating today 1,836 graduates have obtained bachelor's degrees, 327 postgraduate degrees and 30 doctoral degrees.

US President Donald Trump unveils the new Air Force One, a converted Qatari jet

Associated Press

Joint Base Andrews, June 20

President Donald Trump yesterday showed off the new Air Force One, a formerly Qatari-owned jumbo jet that has been converted into the official US presidential aircraft.

The new aircraft eschews the Kennedy-era robin's egg blue exterior of the old plane for a bolder look, with the underbelly of the plane painted navy blue with a red stripe above it. The plane's left side, where the presidential seal, while the tail of the aircraft has a massive American flag on it.

"This plane was transformed into a flying White House at a level of luxury that nobody has ever seen before," Trump said from inside the massive Joint Base Andrews hangar, as a couple hundred assembled Air Force personnel looked on. He spoke after stepping off the new plane in a dramatic flourish, as his signature tune 'God Bless the USA' played.

He confirmed that he would be taking the new jet to the NATO summit in Ankara, Turkey, next month and indicated he would be returning to China 'at some point,' presumably a reference to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit that China is hosting in November. His return from the Group of 7 summit in France this week was the last planned trip aboard the old Air Force One, he said.

"Now, when we land at airports in London and in Germany and different places, nobody tops this one, and that's the way we have to have it for our country," Trump said, noting that the colours



President Donald Trump speaking after touring the newly designated Air Force One presidential aircraft at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, on Friday.

and the design were to 'my taste, I will say.'

He added that the new Air Force One will do a flyover during the July 4 celebrations next month.

The gift from Qatar is serving as a 'bridge' aircraft to carry the president until the new planes ordered directly from Boeing arrive. That is currently slated for 2028.

The administration formally accepted a luxury Boeing 747 jet from Qatar last year to be used as the presidential airplane, despite questions about the ethics and legality of accepting such an expensive gift from a foreign government.

Trump has insisted in the past that he would not fly around in the Qatari jet once he leaves office and said it would instead be donated to a

future presidential library.

Trump yesterday said the US was in a 'little bit of a logjam' as they awaited the delivery of the new jets directly from Boeing, which had originally been scheduled for 2024 but have been delayed. He recalled asking the emir of Qatar for use of one of their planes.

"See, a normal president wouldn't do this. A normal president wants to stay away from aircraft," Trump said yesterday. "But our country has to be represented properly."

The Air Force said in a news release yesterday that any plane deemed Air Force One 'must meet rigorous security requirements' and that the Qatari plane 'was modified under a disciplined engineering approach that prioritised these exact core capabilities above

all else.' The Air Force also said 'much of the previous head of state interior layout' of the plane was kept intact.

The Air Force has said in the past that security modifications to the jet would cost less than \$400 million.

Trump's efforts to reimagine the presidential airplane date back to his first administration, when he directed that an incoming fleet of new jets would adopt a colour scheme that was nearly identical to that of his personal airplane. Then-President Joe Biden reversed the decision in March 2023 as an Air Force review suggested that the darker colours could increase costs and delay delivery of the new jets, but once Trump returned to office, he returned to his desired colours for the plane.

Other government jets that carry other top administration officials will also use the similar red, white and navy colour scheme, the Air Force said earlier this year.

An Air Force spokesperson, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive plans, told the Associated Press that the two current planes, known as VC-25As, will not be retiring. Instead, they will remain in the fleet until the new Boeing planes, referred to as VC-25Bs, come into service, the spokesperson said.

It is unclear how the older jets will be used but the spokesperson said that both the Qatari jet as well as the VC-25As will be available for use and 'the Presidential Airlift Group will select the appropriate aircraft for each mission based on operational requirements.'

A quieter Federal Reserve could mean volatile markets, higher rates

Associated Press

Washington, June 20

The Federal Reserve has for decades moved steadily from a remote, opaque government agency that shared little about what it did or why to a more transparent institution willing to explain how it makes decisions and what it thinks about the economy. But in his first press conference on Wednesday, new chair Kevin Warsh began to reverse some of those steps. Warsh, like many economists, thinks the financial markets have become too dependent on Fed guidance, and that such direction is more effective in financial crises or economic downturns.

Warsh quickly made changes: The Fed's statement on its interest-rate decision was slashed to 132 words, from 341 in April. And Warsh pointedly noted that the statement excluded any hints, or 'forward guidance,' about what the Fed's next moves might be.

In short, Warsh rapidly delivered on a promise to slash the Fed's communications, particularly the guidance it gives to financial markets about its next interest-rate moves. Yet such an approach carries the risk of more violent swings in stock and bond prices, analysts say, and ultimately could lead to higher interest rates for consumers and businesses.

"Forward guidance in general has served to suppress volatility and anchor market expectations," said George Peakes, global macro strategist at Bespoke Investment Group. "And that has led to lower borrowing rates, relative to alternatives."

Still, the impact on consumers is likely to be modest, Peakes added, with mortgage rates perhaps a quarter-point higher than they would be otherwise.

Financial markets sawed, then fell on Wednesday after the statement and news conference. The yield on the 10-year Treasury, which strongly influences mortgage rates, jumped on Wednesday to 4.49 per cent from 4.43 per cent, though it fell back in Thursday trading. The yield on the two-year Treasury, which closely tracks expectations for Fed action, was 4.16 per cent on Thursday, up sharply from 4.05 per cent before the Fed's meeting. The broad S&P 500 stock index dropped 1.2 per cent Wednesday.

Warsh said the communications task force would consider changes to the quarterly economic projections the Fed issues as well as look at other recent innovations, including press conferences. Former chair Ben Bernanke was the first to hold them, though he did so only after every other Fed meeting. Warsh's predecessor, Jerome Powell, shifted to holding them after every meeting.

Such steps are a sharp contrast with the 1990s, when Greenspan never explained a Fed decision, on the record, to reporters. Warsh could ultimately dial back some of the Fed's increased transparency.

"This is a big change in how the Fed has conducted itself since the (2008-2009) global financial crisis," Matthew Luzzetti, chief US economist at Deutsche Bank, said. "Since then there has been a one-way train to greater communication, more transparency, and more forward guidance. Warsh has now put that train in reverse."

Warsh's view is that financial markets have become too dependent on Fed guidance. Instead, he wants investors to gauge where the Fed may

move next by examining economic data and making their own judgments, which the Fed can then consider as part of their assessments of where the economy is headed.

"Financial market prices are probably the most important source of information to guide central bankers," Warsh said at Wednesday's news conference.

David Andolfatto, an economics professor at the University of Miami and former economist at the St Louis Fed, said he agreed with Warsh that forward guidance has flaws. It can be easily upended by unexpected events, he said, such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine or the Iran war.

But the chair should set out guidelines for how the Fed will react to unexpected events, Andolfatto said, or to challenges such as the persistent inflation it is grappling with now, yet Warsh so far hasn't done so.

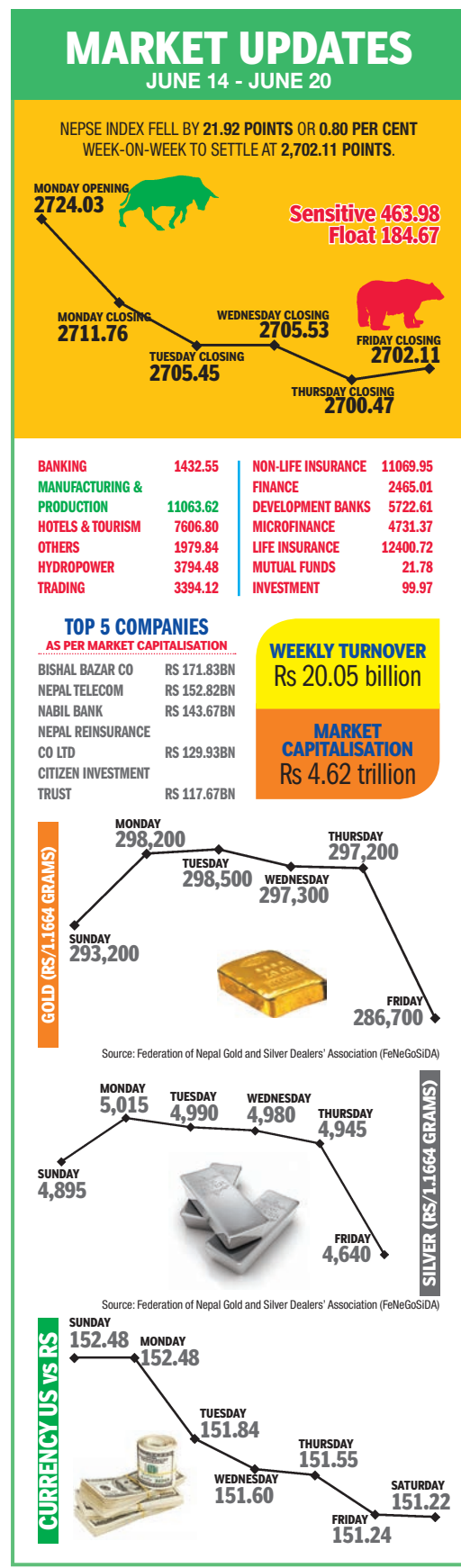
"I'm with him on dispensing with forward guidance, but you have to replace it with a contingency plan," Andolfatto said. "It's not enough to say, trust me, we'll keep inflation at target." Ironically, Warsh's decision to drop forward guidance may empower the other 18 members of the Fed's rate-setting committee, Peakes said. Those officials — six members of the Fed's governing board, plus the presidents of the 12 regional Fed banks — frequently give public speeches, and their remarks will get even more attention as financial markets seek clues about what the Fed may do next.

A big challenge to Warsh's approach will come if there is a sharp financial downturn or economic crisis, as occurred during the COVID pandemic.

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China to impose 55pc levy on Australian beef after quota hit

Agence France Presse

Beijing, June 20

China said yesterday it will impose a tariff of 55 per cent on beef imports from Australia after shipments from the country hit Beijing's annual limit.

The price of beef in China has trended downwards in recent years, with analysts blaming oversupply and a lack of demand as the world's second-largest economy has slowed.

At the same time imports have surged, with China representing a hugely important market for countries such as Australia.

Beijing's Commerce Ministry assigned annual quotas on beef from countries including Australia in late

December after investigators found that imports had damaged China's domestic industry.

Beef sent to China would be subject to the extra 55 per cent levy if imports went beyond those quotas, the ministry warned, with Australia facing a quota of 205,000 tonnes in 2026. The Commerce Ministry said yesterday that 'imports of beef from Australia under the beef safeguard measure reached 100 per cent of the prescribed volume for that country' a day earlier.

The additional 55 per cent tariff would be levied on Australian beef imports from today, it said.

The ministry described the levies in December as 'safeguards' and said they would be gradually relaxed.

Washington slams Cuba reforms as 'superficial'

Agence France Presse

Washington, June 20

The US State Department yesterday slammed Cuban economic reforms announced the previous day as 'superficial smoke signals.'

"These gradual 'economic reforms' are modest, long overdue and ultimately superficial smoke signals from the Cuban regime," a State Department spokesperson told AFP.

Cuban lawmakers on Thursday adopted nearly 200 free-market reforms aimed at rescuing the communist island from a severe crisis aggravated by a US oil blockade. It represented the biggest shake-up of the island's economic model since it began embracing communism six decades ago.

But for Washington, the spokesperson described the reforms as 'part of the dictatorship's handbook.'

"Announce a cycle of supposed reforms to insinuate a desire for change, then quickly roll back any changes the moment the regime's total control is at all threatened," the spokesperson said.

"President Trump continues to apply pressure to drive much more substantial economic and political reforms that

would make Cuba investable ... and give the Cuban people the freedom, dignity and opportunity they deserve."

US President Donald Trump in January cut off oil supplies to Cuba from its main supplier Venezuela after Washington deposed Venezuela's then-president Nicolas Maduro in a military operation.

In addition to growing economic pressure, Washington also indicted former president Raul Castro, the brother of historic leader Fidel Castro, in a case dating back to 1996.

Trump claims that Cuba, which lies 150 kilometres (90 miles) off Florida's coast, poses a major threat to US national security and has suggested Washington could launch a 'takeover' of the island of 9.6 million people.

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Sports

Shrestha secures knockout win in India Fight League

Himalayan News Service
Kathmandu, June 20

Nepali mixed martial arts fighter Koshish Shrestha produced a sensational performance at the India Fight League (IFL), knocking out his opponent in just 19 seconds.

Representing Delhi in India's premier franchise-based MMA competition, Shrestha lived up to his nickname "The Unstoppable" as he overwhelmed Mumbai's Prachand Jamilya with a devastating first-round knockout. The Nepali fighter wasted no time in asserting his dominance, securing one of the fastest finishes of the event and earning widespread praise for his explosive display of skill and power.

The victory marked another significant milestone in Shrestha's budding professional MMA career. Entering the contest with a 1-0 professional record, the Rage Fight Team athlete showcased the talent and determination that have made him one of Nepal's most promising combat sports stars.



Shrestha had been named in the Delhi franchise squad for the International Fight League, a groundbreaking city-based MMA competition in India modelled on successful franchise leagues such as the IPL, Pro Kabaddi League and Indian Super League. The league has attracted top fighters from across the region and has gained international recognition through global streaming on UFC Fight Pass.

Shrestha's emphatic victory not only strengthened Delhi's campaign in the competition but also highlighted the growing presence of Nepali fighters on the international MMA stage. His performance brought pride to Nepal and further demonstrated the country's potential to produce athletes capable of competing and succeeding at elite levels of mixed martial arts.

With a stunning 19-second knockout now added to his resume, Shrestha has announced himself as a fighter to watch in South Asian MMA and a rising force in the region's rapidly growing combat sports scene.

Top amateur Acharya & Co win Pro-Am title



Winners of the Surya Nepal Premier Golf Championship Pro-Am pose for a group photo with officials at the Gokarna Golf Club in Kathmandu on Saturday.

Himalayan News Service
Kathmandu, June 20

Nepal No 1 amateur golfer Sadbhav Acharya and his team of Shayan Basnyat, Satyajyot Rana, Kiran Poudel claimed the Pro-Am title of the Surya Nepal Premier Golf Championship here at the Gokarna Golf Club today.

Acharya produced the best card, firing a nine-under 63 on his way to earning a whooping 45 points, while Basnyat was the best among amateurs scoring 42 points. Rana and Poudel accumulated 40 and 39 points respectively as the team finished first with 166 points. The four players in the winning team received Odyssey AI Dual Putter each along with trophies.

The team of pro Sukra Bahadur Rai and amateurs Jigme Dongstetsang, Pradip KC and Ujjwal Pradhananga was runner-up with a total score of 155 points. Pro Rai scored 41 points after carding a five-under 67, while Dongstetsang scored 39 points. KC and Pradhananga accumulated 38 and 37 points respectively. They received Callaway Opus SP Wedge each.

Pro Jayram Shrestha and amateurs Phursang Lama, Tenzing Lama and Tendri Sherpa came third with 150 points. Pro Shrestha scored 40 points, while Lama duo added 37 each and Sherpa earned 36 points.

Bipana Shrestha was the best individual among women golfers. She finished first on count back after being tied on 35 points with Anjila Yonjon. Tenzing Tsering won the longest drive award, while Babu Sherpa

claimed the closest-to-the-pin trophy.

In all, 150 golfers – 125 amateurs and 25 pros – took part in the event played under stableford ¾ handicap format. Managing Director of Surya Nepal Pvt Ltd Gaurav Tayal and Vice-president (Corporate) Ravi KC, along with PGA Nepal President Rabin Man Shrestha and Gokarna Golf Club Captain Joseph Nathan handed over the prizes to the winners.

On Friday, Subash Tamang, playing the first tournament of the Surya Nepal Golf Tour 2025-26 season, won the Surya Nepal Premier Golf Championship title. The winner was decided in playoff after Tamang, Bhuvan Nagarkoti and amateur golfer Sadbhav Acharya remained tied at 18-under 270.

The DP World PGTI regular, Tamang won the title with a par on the first hole after both Nagarkoti and Acharya failed to make a par putt. Along with the third Surya Nepal Premier title, Tamang received Rs 320,000. Nagarkoti, who won four titles in the season, received Rs 206,000 and finished as top pro in the Order of Merit with a total earning of Rs 1.03 million.

Acharya won the amateur section title, beating fellow national team member Rahul Bishwakarma by eight strokes. Sukra Bahadur Rai was third among pros with a total score of 15-under 273 and he earned Rs 162,000.

Dinesh Prajapati was fourth at three-under 285 and earned Rs 145,000. Dharan pro Niraj Tamang finished fifth at even-par 288 and got Rs 128,000.

Surya Nepal supports amateur golfer Bishwakarma



KATHMANDU: Surya Nepal Pvt Ltd has supported national team amateur golfer Rahul Bishwakarma here at the Gokarna Golf Club on Saturday. The sponsor of the Surya Nepal Golf Tour since 2008, Surya Nepal provided golf equipment to Bishwakarma, who won the season-opening Surya Nepal Central Open. He has already claimed three titles in the Tour along with numerous amateur section trophies.

Managing Director of Surya Nepal Pvt Ltd Gaurav Tayal and Vice-president (Corporate) Ravi KC handed over the cheque to Bishwakarma during the presentation ceremony of the Surya Nepal Premier Golf Championship. A successful amateur with national and international titles, Bishwakarma is currently preparing for the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games and he is planning to go to DP World PGTI Q-School next year. -HNS

Brazil eliminate Haiti from World Cup

Associated Press
Philadelphia, June 20

Matheus Cunha struck the back of the net and struck a pose, bringing scoring — and a dash of surfing — to the World Cup stage for Brazil.

Vinicius Junior scored and assisted on one of Cunha's two goals as five-time champion Brazil eliminated Haiti from the World Cup with a 3-0 victory on Friday night. "To be at a World Cup, to imagine that, it can be so wonderful," Cunha said.

Haiti, the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation that qualified for the World Cup for the first time since 1974, became the first team guaranteed not to reach the knockout round of the expanded 48-team tournament. Meanwhile, the Selecao got the decisive performance they needed. "It was what I expected from this match," coach Carlo Ancelotti said.

Ancelotti also said Neymar is expected to return from a right calf injury and play for Brazil next week against Scotland in its final group match. Neymar, Brazil's career scoring leader

with 79 goals, missed the first two games. Brazil got plenty of scoring punch from Cunha on Friday.

The Manchester United standout got the start and showed with every surf-and-slide goal celebration why he should have been in the starting lineup in Brazil's listless 1-1 draw against Morocco. Ancelotti made the surprising decision in the opener to instead insert Cunha as a late substitute.

Cunha thrilled the Brazilian fans who made up the bulk of the 68,324 spectators at Lincoln Financial Field when he tapped in a rebound for his first career goal. He then sent a left-footed strike into the upper left corner for a 2-0 lead in the first half against the over-matched Haitians.

Brazil forward Raphinha, who was subbed out with an injury in the first half, had an early goal disallowed on an offside call that only temporarily muted the yellow-clad Selecao fans in an otherwise festive atmosphere at the home of the two-time Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles — whose cheerleaders did their part to rally the crowd.



Brazil's Matheus Cunha (right) shoots the ball to score their second goal against Haiti during their World Cup Group C match in Philadelphia on Friday.

TFTC joins hands with Neo Child Care

Himalayan News Service
Kathmandu, June 20

Twelve Football Training Centre (TFTC) has joined hands with Neo Child Care Centre to launch a special football training programme for neurodiverse children, including those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Down Syndrome.

TFTC, founded and operated by former Nepal national football team captain Biraj Maharjan and national team goalkeeper Bikesh Kuthu, signed the memorandum of understanding amidst a programme on Saturday, with the aim of creating an inclusive sporting environment where children with special needs can develop social, physical and life skills through football.

The initiative, titled "Let's Play Together," is among the first football programmes in Nepal specifically designed for neurodiverse children. TFTC has been running grassroots football training programmes for young players, while Neo Child Care Centre, led by former national football team physiotherapist Shamed Katila Shrestha and Suraj Bhusal, has long been providing educational and specialised services for children with ASD, Down Syndrome and other neurodevelopmental conditions.

Under the agreement, Neo Child Care Centre will assess interested children and recommend participants for the training programme, while TFTC will conduct football coaching sessions tailored to their needs. The first phase of the project will include 20 children and will run every Saturday for three months.

According to TFTC, the programme is open to children aged six years and above who are physically capable of participating in football activities. Training sessions for neurodiverse children will be conducted separately from TFTC's regular grassroots programmes to ensure a supportive and comfortable learning environment.

TFTC said the initiative aims to address the limited access to sports opportunities for children who often face challenges in social interaction and group activities due to autism, ADHD, intellectual disabilities and other neurodevelopmental conditions.

Through football, the programme seeks to improve communication skills, confidence, teamwork and physical fitness.

The partnership has been established as a social responsibility initiative, with at least 10 per cent of participants receiving free training.

US enter World Cup knockout round

Associated Press
Seattle, June 20

Christian Pulisic's injury absence didn't hurt the United States one bit.

The Americans advanced to the knockout round of the World Cup without their injured star forward, beating Australia 2-0 on Friday for

their second straight victory in the expanded 48-team tournament.

The US then won Group D when Paraguay beat Turkey 1-0 early on Saturday morning.

"CP is a fantastic player — the quality and the leadership that he gives us," said Folarin Balogun, who scored

two goals in the 4-1 victory over Paraguay on June 12. "We didn't have him today, but I think you saw we're still capable to go out there and get a result and put up a performance."

As the Group D winner, the US will play a round-of-32 match on July 1 in Santa Clara, California, against a

third-place group finisher. Pulisic, who plays for AC Milan and has 33 goals in 87 international appearances, missed Friday's match because of a calf injury.

Playing without a talent like Pulisic could have derailed previous American World Cup teams. But much has changed

since the last time the US hosted the World Cup in 1994, when they advanced by being one of the best third-place teams. The Americans lost to eventual champion Brazil in the round of 16.

The US have won consecutive games at a World Cup for the first time since 1930. The Americans have scored six goals, one off their record for a World Cup, and received contributions

throughout their roster.

Alex Freeman, the youngest player on the team at 21 and the son of former NFL wide receiver and Super Bowl champion Antonio Freeman, made it 2-0 in the 43rd minute off a set piece. Freeman headed in a deflected shot by Sergino Dest for his first career World Cup goal.

The goal was confirmed after a video review. "(He) is doing a fantastic job," coach

Mauricio Pochettino said of Freeman. "The evolution is massive. He's so humble. He wants to learn. He always listens. He's a player that you really enjoy being with him. Not only coaching, but being with him."

The US took a 1-0 lead in the 11th minute after a run down the left sideline by Balogun. He directed a centering pass toward striker Ricardo Pepi, who started in place of Pulisic. The ball

never reached Pepi, deflecting off Australia defender Cameron Burgess and into the Socceros' net for an own-goal.

The Americans did not score after halftime, but the way they so thoroughly dominated Australia in the opening 45 minutes left an impression on Socceros coach Tony Popovic. "It did not surprise us because their quality is clear," Popovic said.

TIME OUT

Nepalgunj Marathon receives AIMS award



Kathmandu: Nepal's Dhara Nepalgunj Marathon has been honoured with the prestigious AIMS Social Award 2026 by the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races, the global umbrella organisation for road running events. AIMS President Paco Borao handed over the award to Nepalgunj Marathon Founder TS Thakuri during the 25th AIMS World Congress in Tromsø, Norway, on Friday. The AIMS Social Award is one of the organisation's most distinguished recognitions, presented annually to a race organiser that has made an outstanding social impact through running. AIMS has nearly 500 member race organisers worldwide. Expressing his delight after receiving the honour, Thakuri described it as an unexpected achievement and a proud moment not only for Nepalgunj Marathon but for the entire nation. "This is not just an award for Nepalgunj Marathon; it is recognition for Nepal as a whole," he said. According to Thakuri, the marathon was selected for its uninterrupted continuity since 2015, innovative running initiatives, climate change awareness campaigns, and its contribution to sports during the COVID-19 pandemic by organising Tokyo Olympic qualification events while adhering to health protocols. -HNS

India complete ODI series sweep

CHENNAI: Prasidh Krishna picked his maiden five-wicket haul and Yashasvi Jaiswal scored 110 not out as India beat Afghanistan by nine wickets to complete a three-game ODI series sweep on Saturday. Krishna picked 5-23 in 8.2 overs as Afghanistan were bowled out for 218 (44.2 overs) after they won the toss and opted to bat. Skipper Hashmatullah Shahid scored 102 off 131 balls. In reply, India were never in any trouble as Jaiswal struck his second ODI hundred, while also putting up 170 runs for the opening wicket with Rohit Sharma. Sharma scored 79 off 69 balls. Jaiswal was unbeaten in the end as India wrapped up the game with 224-1 in 28.4 overs — leaving 21.2 overs to spare. India had already clinched the series with a 170-run win in the second match at Lucknow and a seven-wicket victory in the rain-shortened first match at Dharamshala. —AP

Almiron red-carded for covering mouth

SANTA CLARA: Paraguay midfielder Miguel Almiron became the first player issued with a red card at the World Cup for covering his mouth, getting sent off during a confrontation late in the first half against Turkey on Friday night. The infraction came during first-half stoppage time in the Group D match when Almiron and Mert Mulder exchanged words following a foul near midfield. Almiron covered his mouth while saying something to Mulder, who immediately appealed to referee Ivan Barton for punishment. —AP