

Cheer your team in style

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KATHMANDU, June 13: For Shridhar Pokharel, it wasn't a regular shopping affair at Sundhara; he was on a shopping sail for the FIFA World Cup 2010.

An Argentinean football fan, Pokharel was trying one of the blue-and-white striped jerseys representing the team. "I want to show my support to the team by wearing this jersey," said the 19-year-old who is a fan of the Argentinean player Lionel Andrés Messi.

Shraddha Rana of UNMIN (United Nation Missions in Nepal) concurred.

"Wearing a jersey while watching the games is like being part of the spectators in the stadium," she added. This Germany supporter recently purchased England's jersey. "Though I am supporting Germany for this Cup, I am buying England's jersey because my husband and father-in-law are supporting England for Saturday's game."

Shopping, especially for the World cup, and that too football jerseys, have been on the rise.

In the evening, the Sundhara street market is flooded with people seeking inexpensive goods, mainly clothes. And amid the range of clothing items, the market's freshest lot is the football jerseys representing the teams of the FIFA World Cup 2010.

As the World Cup has begun, football fans have picked their favorite teams. In the spirit of support, they are planning to make their team jersey an integral part of their wardrobe for the coming month. And as fans have descended to the market for stocking up on jerseys, the demand has taken over many of Kathmandu's stores.



And it's not only the street market in Sundhara—that previously sold football clubs' jerseys—that has seen a rise in popularity of the jerseys. Clothing stores around the Valley have started displaying and stocking the newest collection for this football carnival.

Among the teams, the favorites so far seem to be Argentina, Brazil, Italy, England and Spain.

"But we'll know what will sell after the games kick off," said Murali Lal Agrawal of House of Collection at R.B. Complex.

The shop has football jerseys in two different materials: synthetic and what Agrawal said as "jersey material."

The main difference between these two, apart from the price, is the quality. The jersey material is more breathable and absorbs sweat compared to the synthetic, Agrawal said.

At Nepal Sports House in New Road, their stock of the World Cup jerseys comes in dri-fit and polyester material. The dri-fit has the softness and is roomier than its polyester counterpart, said Prakash Shrestha, sales associate at the store.

But it's not only the regular team jerseys that are catching up.

Apart from the regular jerseys, it's also countries' flags printed cotton tees that have been introduced in the market. RJ Sports at China Town, Sundhara is one such stop.

The variety is even more abundant at ATTSH t-shirt House in Jawlakhel and World Trade Center. The company which is celebrating its third World Cup season has prepared jerseys and t-shirts especially for this world cup season. "And for this, the company's team had visited Korea three months back to bring climacool fabric. Korean National Football team's jersey is prepared from this textile," informs Bijay Shahi, the CEO of the t-shirt house.



From L to R: Women Jersey, Rs 495; Cotton tees with Brazil flag, Rs 685; Men's Climacool tees with World Cup 2010 logo and mascot, Rs 895; All of these t-shirts are available at ATTSH t-shirt house stores in World Trade Center, Tripureswor and Jwalakhel.

Highlighting on the fabric's characteristics, Shahi informs, "It drives heat and sweat away from the body through its ventilation channels, so a wearer can sport the jersey for a week without washing," claims the CEO. This light fabric looks like net, though it isn't one.

The house also has tees with this World Cup's mascot (Zakumi) and logo, apart from football towels and other kits especially for the World Cup. ATTSH claims to be the only store selling t-shirts printed with the mascot and logo.

Unlike most of the stores, ATTSH also has t-shirts and jerseys, especially made for women, for the football extravaganza. "It was on Monday that we introduced women items and the store is seeing at least five to seven sales per day," informs Shahi. The store has the tees in various sizes from baby to jumbo (4XL) and in five different colors.

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