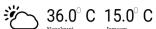
THE KATHMANDU POST

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A participant of a barbers' protest in Kathmandu on Tuesday, demanding relief as their business had been severely affected by the restrictions enforced to contain the spread of Covid-19.

Amid soured Nepal-India ties, Oli is threatening relations between peoples of two countries, leaders and experts say

Foreign Ministry scrambles for damage control after prime minister made unfounded claims about Lord Ram's birthplace and accused India of creating a 'fake' Ayodhya.



PHOTO: PM'S SECRETARIAT

Prime Minister Oli talks at a Bhanu Jayanti ceremony in Kathmandu on Monday.

KATHMANDU, JULY 14

At a time when Nepal-India ties have hit an all time low over boundary issues, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's remarks on Monday regarding the birthplace of Lord Ram have done more harm than good, as he has stoked a controversy that could affect people-to-people ties, leaders and foreign affairs analysts said on Tuesday.

While addressing a function to mark the 207th birth anniversary of poet Bhanubhakta Acharya, Oli accused India of cultural aggression and distorting historical facts. Oli said that Lord Ram was born in Ayodhya, which was near Thori in Nepal's Birgunj—not in India—and

that he was a Nepali. Oli, however, stopped short of providing any concrete evidence to back

"Our historical facts were distorted. We thought Sita got married to Prince Ram of India. But this is not true. Sita was married to Ram of an Ayodhya that is in Nepal, not in India," said Oli. "And that Ayodhya is a village situated west of Birgunj. India created a fake Ayodhya.'

Oli's statement garnered quite a response, with leaders from his own ruling party describing it as "uncalled for" and ludicrous. Some leaders from

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India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, too, were quick to rebut his argu-

On Tuesday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was scrambling for damage

"Attention of the government of Nepal has been drawn to the various interpretations of the remarks made by Prime Minister Oli," said the ministry in a statement. "The remarks made by the prime minister are not linked to any political subject and have no intention at all to hurt the feeling and sentiment of anyone [sic].

Leaders of Oli's Nepal Communist Party (NCP) as well as the opposition, former ministers and diplomats, however, said that the damage had already been done.

According to them, Oli's remarks were insensitive and that they could even lead to the souring of ties between the two countries at the peo-

Raghuji Pant, a Standing Committee member of the ruling party, told the Post that the prime minister should refrain from making statements on issues related to religious sentiments.

According to Pant, by stoking controversy over the birthplace of Ram, Oli has touched a raw nerve, as Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party came to power on the plank of Ram's birthplace and

with the promise to build a tem-

ple in Ayodhya.

Pashupatinath and Lumbini evoke emotions among Nepalis, it's similar with millions of people of India when it comes to Ayodhya," Pant told the Post. "Debate and discussions on such historical facts should be left to intellectuals and researchers. The prime minister should keep out of such issues. After the prime minister's statement, I am afraid our bilateral relations will

take a further dip."

Oli, who came to power on his nationalist plank in the wake of an Indian border blockade in 2015, has upped the ante against India once again of late, accusing it of encroaching upon the Nepali territory and even sending a more lethal coronavirus than China. After his government decided to publish a new political map depicting Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limipiyadhura as parts of Nepal, Oli al emblem.

The decision to publish a new map, and its subsequent adoption from Parliament, has made the Indian media, which itself is accused of toeing Modi's line, hostile to Oli.

Oli, who is facing a tough time in his party for his poor governance, recently received a sudden support from across the spectrum after a section of the Indian media broadcast "news reports" about how he had fallen into Beijing's trap and his relationship with Chinese Ambassador

There was a vocal outcry against the "news report" in the Nepali public sphere, with politicians, civil society and social media condemning the alle-

Some say Oli seems to have misinterpreted the widespread condemnation of the Indian media as a support for him and went a step ahead to talk about Ram's birthplace in a bid to nee-

"At a time when our ties with India have hit an all-time low since 1947, remarks made by the prime minister are very unfortunate," Rameshnath Pandey, a former foreign minister, told the Post. "This is actually a cause for

Pandey said since Nepal and India entered a state of cartographic war, there has been a deadlock with dialogue

not forthcoming in the near future. "We are not talking with each other. This has never happened in the history of Nepal-India relations," said Pandey. "If we fail to bring our ties back on track, or if our relationship further deteriorates, it will seriously impact the geopolitical positioning in South Asia. We have to find a remedy before it's too late.'

Some foreign policy experts suspect that Oli's remarks on Ayodhya could dilute the agenda of boundary dispute with India.

"The timing is very important and a statement coming from the prime minister on such sensitive issues could divert the main agenda of holding talks with India," Durga Prasad Bhattarai, a former foreign secretary and ambassador, told the Post. "Such remarks can become a distraction at a time when the boundary row is an important issue and both the countries need to sit down and talk.'

>> Continued on page 5

Rukum murder of youths was result of caste discrimination, House probe finds

Study finds sheer lapses on the part of local government, local administration and police in handling the incident.

BINOD GHIMIRE

KATHMANDU, JULY 14

The killings of six youths in Soti village of Chaurjahari Municipality in Rukum (West) were a result of castebased discrimination prevalent in the society and a crime against humanity, an investigation by a parliamentary committee has concluded

The report submitted to Speaker Agni Sapkota says the incident was premeditated and conspired by the family of a 17-year-old girl that was not happy about their daughter having an affair with Nabaraj BK, 21, from Bheri Municipality in Jajarkot district because he belonged to a so-called lower caste.

"It was a pre-planned and well-choreographed mass murder," Parbati Bishunkhe, a member of the study team, told the Post.

"The youths were first taken under control and then killed before they were thrown into the river."

The House of Representatives, following pressure from the opposition parties, on June 8 formed the nine-member probe team led by Devendra Poudel, a Nepal Communist Party (NCP) lawmaker.

On May 23, dozens of locals from Soti in Chaurjahari Municipality of Rukum (West) district had chased away Nabaraj and 18 of his friends



Family members and relatives of the victims

who had accompanied the former to the village to help him elope with his girlfriend, who belonged to the so-called upper caste.

at the Jajarkot District Police Office.

After knowing that Nabaraj was coming to take her daughter, the mother of the girl called villagers including Dambar Bahadur Malla, chairperson of the Ward No 8 of Chaurjahari Municipality, who attacked the youths with household tools like sickles and axes in addition to wooden sticks and stones that took six lives, leaving 12 others seriously injured.

Besides Nabaraj, the other deceased are Ganesh Budha Magar, Tikaram Nepali, Lokendra Sunar, Govinda Shahi and Sanju BK whose bodies were recovered from the Bheri River.

>> Continued on page 5

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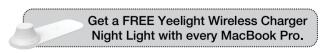
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MEDLEY

Inside the Post

National

The Public Account Committee of the House of Representatives has decided to summon Minister for Health Bhanubhakta Dhakal after recording statements from officials involved in the controversial deal to procure Covid-19related medical goods and equipment through Omni Business Corporate

Opinion

A tripartite ministerial meeting between India, Myanmar and Bangladesh held in Yangon in January 2005 agreed to import natural gas through a pipeline from Myanmar via Bangladesh

Money

World

The federal government incurred the biggest monthly budget deficit in history in June as spending on programmes to combat the coronavirus recession exploded while millions of job losses cut into tax revenues.

Australian states tightened borders and restricted pub visits on Tuesday, while Disney prepared to close its Hong Kong theme park and Japan stepped up tracing as a jump in novel coronavirus cases across Asia fanned fears of a second wave of infections.

Culture & Arts

A self-taught, independent videographer, Nishan Bhujel is changing the game of traditional video making.

News Quiz

- 1. According to the Department of Nepal received investment commitments worth how many billions during the lockdown period?
 - a. Rs 8 billion b. Rs 8.22 billion
- c. Rs 10 billion d. Rs 11 billion
- Kantipur Television completed how many years of operation
- on Monday?

- Which country plans \$3.2 billion of new soft loans to help small and medium-sized enterprises in the tourist and services sector hit by the
- coronavirus pandemic? a. Pakistan
- b. Bhutan
- c. Thailand
- 4. Ten people died and two others went missing in Monday's

landslides in which district?

- a. Baglung b. Parbat
- c. Tanahun d. Kaski
- 5. Investment pledges made by foreign investors during the lockdown period of four months have plunged by what percentage?

 - b. 24 c. 30
 - d. 34
- Who among the following was one of the founders of Microsoft?
- a. Larry Ellison b. Steve Jobs
- c. Larry Page
- d. Bill Gates



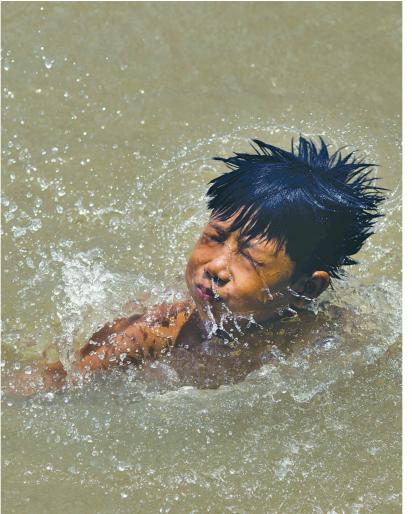


PHOTO POST: HEMANTA SHRESTHA

A boy swims in Nagdaha, Lalitpur.

On this day in history

Inflation continues as Chinese economy cools

BEIJING - China's economy cooled considerably in the first six months of this year, but high inflation, an ailing state sector and natural disasters continued to threaten a soft landing in 1995.

Gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the first six months of the year stood at 10 percent, down 1.8 percentage points on the same period last year, according to State Statistical Bureau (SSB) figures published Thursday.

"GDP growth is approaching the planned eight percent target" for 1995, set earlier in the year by the National People's Congress (NPC), SSB chief economist Qiu Xiaohua was quoted as saying by the China Daily.

China's GDP registered growth of 11.8 percent for the whole of 1994. Qui attributed the slowdown to the government's tight monetary policy, which he said had scaled back fixed-asset investment—a major inflationary factor.

The Kathmandu Post July 15, 1995

Answers to News Quiz: 1(b), 2(b, 3(c), 4(c), 5(b), 6(d)

Quote of the day

Ministry mulls allowing local governments to resume schools in areas with lower risk of Covid, Page 3

"Running classes at the school level is not a well thought out plan. No activities that bring people together should be allowed at this point."

Dr GD Thakur, former director general of the department of health, warning authorities that negligence at this crisis might inflict great harm

Most read online

Nepal Airlines decides to ground Chinese aircraft for good to cut losses

On March 28, a Y12e aircraft of Nepal Airlines landed about 60 metres short of the runway at Nepalgunj airport and skidded before halting on the nearby grassland. The Chinese-made plane bearing registration number 9N-AKU carried five people, three crew members and two medical personnel, all of whom were evacuated safely.

Sending diplomatic note to complain about Indian private media an immature and wrong approach, experts say

In a rare practice, the government of Nepal has lodged a protest with India over "some objectionable content" about Nepal and Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli by the Indian media. The Embassy of Nepal in New Delhi submitted a note verbale to India's Ministry of External Affairs on Friday.

Use of Ayurvedic doctors to treat Covid patients by Health Ministry raises concern among public health experts

Public health experts have raised concern after learning that the Ministry of Health and Population was deploying Ayurvedic doctors to the care of Covid-19 patients who are being treated in isolation at the National Ayurveda Research and Training Centre in Kirtipur, Kathmandu.

Second wave of locust invasion imminent; government mulls raising pest bounty to Rs 500 per kg

A second wave of locust invasion is imminent in the country. A few swarms of these ravenous crop-eating insects have already been spotted in some districts. To control the crop damage, the government authorities have been considering raising the bounty sum for every kilogram of locust collected by locals.

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If you believe we have got something wrong and it requires correction, please email us at kpost@kmg.com.np with "correction" in the subject line.

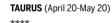
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HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

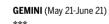


Negative energy has been growing in your circle, and today it will still be unclear as to what you can do to fix it. You need to stop examining the tension and try to put it out of your mind. Let this problem unravel. A solution will reveal itself in time. The issue might even blow over soon



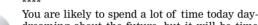


It certainly won't be difficult for you to make new contacts today! Your values are shared by most of the people you'll be dealing with, and there is strong harmonious energy around you. So go out and explore the world around you without hesitation. Let your energy mix with the energy of others. Make some plans.





You can't show that you have any doubt in what you're doing today even if you do! Having conviction in every decision you make is vital right now because too many people are looking to you for the confidence that they themselves lack. To show doubt is to start a domino effect that would only create more issues.





dreaming about the future, but it will be time well spent! It's never too early to make a plan, especially one that you think could help you achieve a major goal. Be open to change, too. What you think you want desperately today might seem silly tomorrow.

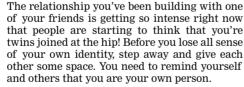
LEO (July 23-August 22)

CANCER (June 22-July 22)



Not everyone is quite as creative as you are, so you should be on the lookout for people who might be trying to poach some of your good ideas. There are some unscrupulous people around who have no problem taking your thoughts and promoting them as their own when important people are in the room.

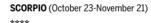
VIRGO (August 23-September 22)



LIBRA (September 23-October 22) Are you getting the distinct impression that



someone at work thinks that you're a pushover? Today, give them a surprise and show them that you know how to stick to your guns and get the ob done! As soon as you flex your muscles, they will probably stop seeing you as a doormat and start seeing you as a force to be reckoned with.





Let your mischievous side come out to play today. It's nice to be good, but it so much more fun to be naughty! You deserve a little silly distraction today, and you've been itching to play some practical jokes and pranks for a while. As long as you're not hurting anyone's feelings, you've got a green light for fun times.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21)



There's no need to worry that you are losing things today. Just let yourself get carried away and do your thing without worrying. You've got bigger fish to fry! For a while now, you've been overthinking things, and this has been keeping you from moving forward. Stop worrying. Just move forward!



You will have a lot of compassionate energy today, and no shortage of places to exercise it! There are plenty of people in your life who could use your help, and you are ready to step up and give them your time and expertise. Keep in mind that they might be too shy to ask. You might have to offer first

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18)

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19)



Today, when you see someone you don't like very much struggling with a task or embarrassed in a public forum, try not to gloat. Instead, decide to be compassionate. Put yourself in their shoes and do for them what you would like done for you. The Golden Rule has never been more applicable than it is today.

PISCES (February 19-March 20)



It's time to lavish yourself with the positive attention you deserve and put some energy into the most important person in your life: you! It's a great day to splurge on a gift you've long wanted. You might even want to celebrate yourself in a dramatic way by scheduling a day off to use however you wish.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Clasp tightly in one's arms 10 Wallet filler
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- damsel 49 Solar plexus 50 Eva or Zsa Zsa
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- 69 Chirped 70 Years on end 71 Organized **DOWN**
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- 8 Öde inspirer 9 Obtains 10 Less expensive 11 Ventricle
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PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

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54 "Balcony scene"

Annabel 65 Put two and two together

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SUDOKU

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YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION





Workers assist a man hurt after the roof of an under-construction Nepal Rastra Bank building collapsed in Kathmandu. Three more workers were injured in the incident.

Ministry mulls allowing local governments to resume schools in areas with lower risk of Covid

Public health experts say any activity that brings people together isn't safe as number of cases are still soaring.

BINOD GHIMIRE KATHMANDU. JULY 14

While health experts have cautioned that the country is still under the threat of Covid-19, the Ministry of Education has prepared a plan to allow local governments and respective schools to resume academic

The provision will come into effect after approval from the federal government, which could possibly take a decision from the next Cabinet meeting. According to the proposal, schools will resume classes at the local level where there is a low threat of the pandemic.

There are 753 local federal units across the country, having 36,000 schools—29,000 of them government-funded. Health Ministry records show that four districts do not have active Covid-19 cases at present.

"Where there is no possibility of running classes at schools, teachers will have to reach out to students,"

according to the ministry's plan.

Teachers from a majority of public schools are staying home, without

Private schools have already notified parents to get their children enrolled.

being currently involved in instruction. According to an official at the ministry, the proposal was introduced to bring the teachers back to their duty. There are over 200,000 teachers serving at public schools.

Starting on Thursday, the day the new fiscal year begins, teachers will have to attend their schools. Even if there is no possibility of running the classes, they will have to run the administration and reach out to students. Private schools have already asked guardians to immediately enrol their children.

The teachers will have to start classes at the community level forming small groups, in case running the school is impossible. Educationists say it would be risky to start schools

in full swing at this point.

"However, engaging students in teaching-learning activities forming small groups could be a better option," Binay Kusiyait, a professor at Tribhuvan University who has researched on school education, told the Post. Mobilising teachers door to door would be even better and less risky.

Some of the local governments have already started engaging students in learning through alternative modes. Tansen Municipality, for instance, has mobilised teachers to visit students at their doorsteps once a week. The teachers support students in learning while also providing tips for the parents to guide their children.

Bhume Rural Municipality in Rukum (East) has started classes in groups starting with grades 9 and 10. Mohan Budha Magar, a teacher from Janajagriti Secondary School, said initiating group instruction was necessary to resume teaching-learning activities. He said group learning is more effective than virtual instruction through online or broadcast media.

"We are focused on ninth and tenth graders at the moment. It will gradually cover the lower grades," he told the Post. The academic year normally begins in mid-April. However, the lockdown imposed to contain the pandemic has made formal resumption of classes uncertain this session. There are more than seven million children going to school.

The ministry's guidelines on virtual classes unveiled last month say instruction through online and broadcast mediums is only for engaging students in learning activities but that does not qualify as formal education.

Countering the ministry's idea, public health experts say it is still not safe to reopen schools. Reports that the coronavirus cases have gone down in the last few days do not necessarily mean the threat has minimised. Dr GD Thakur, former director general of the department of health, said negligence might inflict great harm.

"I would say running classes at the school level is not a well thought out plan," he told the Post. "No activities that bring people together should be allowed at this point."

House panel to seek clarification from health minister over Omni deal

Officials involved in the matter defend it saying fast-track process was adopted to get essential goods at the earliest.

PRITHVI MAN SHRESTHA

The Public Account Co

The Public Account Committee of the House of Representatives has decided to summon Minister for Health Bhanubhakta Dhakal after recording statements from officials involved in the controversial deal to procure Covid-19-related medical goods and equipment through Omni Business Corporate International.

In their statements on Tuesday, all three officials— health minister's advisor Dr Khem Karki, former health secretary Yadav Koirala and former director-general of the Department of Health Service Mahendra Shrestha—involved in the procurement decision, which landed in a controversy over exorbitant pricing of the goods, defended themselves when asked about their questionable roles in the deal.

"We had invited them [the trio] to seek clarification over a committee report about the controversial procurement decision," said Bharat Kumar Shah, chairperson of the committee. "We will soon invite the minister for health to seek clarification from him as well," he added.

The report Shah referred to, confirmed that due process was not followed in awarding the procurement contract to Omni, and Dr Karki acted beyond his jurisdiction to play the lead role in selecting the supplier.

The deal landed in controversy after it was revealed that the government didn't follow the due process while selecting the supplier. Its decision to awarding the contract to a company that quoted higher prices compared to its competitors also prompted the government to terminate the deal on April 1. Authorities even questioned the ability of the company to deliver the goods on time after its first batch of medical goods arrived in Kathmandu.

The medical goods, particularly rapid diagnostic test kits, were found to be substandard, according to the Nepal Health Research Council.

In his statement to the committee, Karki downplayed his role in selecting the supplier saying that he participated in the negotiations for less than 30 minutes. "I had no personal interest in participating in the negotiations with the bidder. I just participated out of compulsion to ensure that the country gets urgently needed medical goods," he said

The ministry had formed a negotiat-

ing team under Karki's leadership to select the supplier for the essential equipment. The parliamentary committee said that Karki, an advisor to the health minister, didn't have the legal authority to make recommendations in procurement deals. But, Karki said he didn't know why he was chosen to lead the negotiating team.

The government on March 26 had assigned Omni Business Corporate International to purchase medical equipment from China after the first cases of coronavirus were reported in the country. Omni brought in its first cache of supplies on March 29, but the Health Service Department cancelled the agreement on April 1 after the deal courted controversy.

According to health ministry officials, Karki not only exercises 'undue influence' over the ministry's decision-making process but is also heavily involved in the transfer of officials from one station to another.

Former secretary Yadav defended the ministry's decision to assign Dr Karki to coordinate the procurement. "As Karki is an expert and also a government official, he was chosen to lead the negotiating team," he said. "A ministry team, which included Dr Roshan Pokharel, chose Karki for the job. They may have made a mistake in the legal point of view."

Former director-general of Department of Health Service Shrestha said Karki was given responsibility legal provisions are silent on who gets to be on the negotiating team. "He had been given the responsibility to just select the supplier," he said.

The trio said that the ministry decided to award the contract to Omni at the earliest as the country was in great need of medical goods after Covid-19 cases started to soar.

They also said that the supplier was chosen through a fast-track procurement process as per instructions from the erstwhile High-Level Committee for Prevention and Control of Covid-19 led by Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Ishwar Pokhrel.

But, lawmakers said they were not satisfied with their response. Minendra Rijal, a member of Nepali Congress lawmaker and member of the committee, said that clarification submitted by the trio wasn't satisfactory. "Nobody wanted to take the responsibility for the decision," he said. "The committee will take the necessary decisions after recording the minister's statement."

Draft public broadcasting bill draws criticism

Journalists, lawmakers say it envisages a broadcaster that remains accountable to the government, and not the legislature.

TIKA R PRADHAN
KATHMANDU, JULY 14

Lawmakers and mediapersons have criticised provisions in a new government-sponsored bill that envisages the merger between the state radio and TV.

The Public Service Broadcasting bill, reg-

istered in Parliament on July 8, doesn't adhere to international principles and will neither lead to the formation of a state-owned media nor a commercial broadcaster, they argue.

"There are some basic concepts of public service broadcasting such as editorial and financial independence, and reflection of the diversity of the audience," said journalist and freedom of information campaigner Taranath Dahal, who was involved in the drafting of the bill earlier. "But the provisions of the new bill does not incorporate any of them," said.

While Nepal Television, established in 1985, is governed by the Communication Corporation Act and Radio Nepal, established in 1951, is run under the Radio Broadcasting Service Development Board (Formation) Order.

Following the success of the second people's movement in 2006, a high-level media commission was formed under the leadership of lawmaker Radheshyam Adhikari to revisit legal provisions related to state-owned media.

The commission had proposed the establishment of a public service broadcasting institution incorporating both Radio Nepal and Nepal Television.

"We had recommended that the government make the public service broadcasting accountable to Parliament," said Adhikari.

Stakeholders and experts have been demanding that the public service broadcasting be made accountable to Parliament and be detached from the government, but the bill gives continuity to the government's control over state broadcasting.

The public broadcasting entity should be given a free hand to ensure editorial independence, but the bill envisions a governing council for the new broadcaster led by the communications minister with secretaries as members.

The Federation of Nepali Journalists has also expressed serious concerns over the provision. "The government has been committed to run Radio Nepal and Nepal Television as public service broadcasting making it accountable to Parliament," said a statement issued by the federation on Tuesday. "But it has shown its undemocratic face by registering a bill which contradicts the National Mass Communication Policy," said the federation.

The federation further said that provisions related to the definition, the procedure of formation, objectives, structures, appointment procedures and representation in the new institution do not match those of the public service broadcasting practised globally

"With the new bill, the government is trying to make the two broadcasting media more loyal to the authorities than they are now," said Ramesh Bista, general secretary of FNJ.

Minister Yubaraj Khatiwada, however, defended the bill saying that it was prepared in accordance with the National Mass Communication Policy, which envisions the transformation of Radio Nepal and Nepal Television into a national public service broadcaster as per the spirit and values of democracy and free press.

Rishiram Tiwari, the spokesperson for the ministry, said the draft bill was prepared as per the recommendations of various committees formed by the ministry, including the high-level committee for the implementation of the National Mass Communication Policy led by Kashiraj Dahal.

"It's now up to the lawmakers to make necessary changes to the draft," Tiwari told the Post.

Federation halts public transport, but some companies resume services in Kathmandu

Private operators accuse the transport federation of trying to restore syndicate in the sector.

ANUP OJHA KATHMANDU, JULY 14

At a time when the Federation of Nepalese National Entrepreneurs has rejected the government's decision last week to resume public transport services, a few private companies have started operating services in Kathmandu following health precautions for their staff and passengers

Sundar Yatayat Private Limited, the first company to roll out electric buses for public transport in Kathmandu last year, has started operating four buses, contrary to the federation's defiance. "Our concern is public [service]. From Tuesday, we have resumed our services applying full safety measures," said Sarita Yogi, who heads the Sundar Yatayat's administration.

The Yatayat provides free masks for elderly passengers, and has managed protective clothing for drivers and their helpers. Passengers' body temperature is taken with a thermal gun and passengers are asked to sanitise their hands before boarding a bus. The Yatayat is ferrying passengers on the Ring Road and to Bhaktapur. According to Yogi, buses are disinfected after every round trip.

The company has decided not to charge passengers extra even as the government mandated up to 50 percent additional fares as it announced its plan last week. "We are going to stick to the earlier bus fare. This is a difficult time, and we don't want to charge the already troubled people more," said Yogi.

Meanwhile, Mayur Yatayat, the company that challenged the public transport cartel by serving on the Kathmandu-Banepa route in 2018, has also rejected the entrepreneurs' decision to keep buses off the road. The Mayur has started operating seven buses on the Ring Road and also to Sanga, Kavre.

"This is no time to do politics; it's a time to serve the people, who are facing hard times in the lack of proper mobility," said Mohan Shrestha, chairperson of Mayur Yatayat. "But the federation is trying to restore their cartel in public transport. We are against such unhealthy competition."



A Sundar Yatayat worker takes the temperature of a passenger to screen him for Covid-19 symptoms on Tuesday.

The government on May, 2018 announced an end to the transport syndicate. The Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport had made the announcement after reaching an agreement with transport entrepreneurs.

The federation has demanded that the government offer a tax waiver, enforce safety measures on board public vehicles and direct banks to restructure the repayment of loans by transport companies.

"Some of their demands are genuine but they are looking for a chance to re-establish their syndicates. We are not going to tolerate it," said Shrestha. "We are here to serve the public, not to bargain in such difficult times."

Shrestha said all the 44 big buses of Mayur Yatayat will be operated by this week, as they are undergoing repairs.

Meanwhile, Sajha Yatayat also plans to operate its 30 buses from Thursday following the government's safety guidelines. "The government should have taken a lead in transforming the public transport system in these four months, but it didn't," said Bhusan Tuladhar, executive director at Sajha Yatayat.

"We want to see the public transportation

executive director at Sajha Yatayat.

"We want to see the public transportation sector prosper and be more people-oriented, and we are working on that," said Tuladhar. Sajha has a total of 67 large buses in its fleet, and it is preparing to operate all of them gradually. However, Tuladhar criticised the government for not preparing comprehensive health guidelines. "The government says vehicles should be disinfected but it does not specify which chemicals should be used. It has failed to play a leadership role," said Tuladhar.

OPINION

EDITORIAL

Crossing Laxman Rekha

We're free to debate about Ram's birthplace. But Oli's rodomontade raises serious questions

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli is known for his tongue-in-cheek remarks and blithe disregard for his critics. He never misses a chance to throw stinging rebukes at his detractors. Lately, faced with criticism for his failure to run the government, especially in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, he has been ratcheting up ultranationalist rhetoric. But on Monday, he took things to yet another level, mixing religion with his nationalist agenda. While addressing a function organised to mark the 207th birth anniversary of poet Bhanubhakta Acharya, the prime minister said Lord Ram was born in Nepal, that he was a Nepali, and that India had made cultural aggression by creating a 'fake' Ayodhya.

This comes on the heels of his earlier remark against India over the country's national emblem from Parliament. In the same breath, he had also remarked that the Indian version of the coronavirus was more lethal than that from China or Italy. Making statements for the consumption of his own constituency is one thing, but using public platforms to touch upon issues that are emotive to people can have serious ramifications. It is quite understandable that Oli made the remarks as diversionary tactics after being cornered in the party in the wake of growing demands for his resignation, both as party chair and prime minister.

As the late Indian scholar AK Ramanujan put it eloquently in his essay 'Three hundred Ramayanas', Valmiki's Ramayana is just one of the over 300 tellings of the epic that enrich the cultural traditions of the Indian subcontinent and South-east Asia. 'No text is original, yet no telling is a mere retelling—and the story has no closure, although it may be enclosed in a text', Ramanujan wrote. In that sense, every new telling of the Ramayana is equally valid as the last one, and Oli is entitled to come up with a new telling. But the way he ratcheted up the issue of Ram's birth just to needle India is problematic. In his attempt to attack the Indian political establishment, he ended up attacking the faith of millions of Indians, and that is not acceptable. If anything, Oli's telling of the Ramayana should be independent of his frustration against his detractors in New Delhi, as Nepal-India relations must outlive the megalomanic politicians

Nepal's transition into a secular country in 2015, shedding the tag of 'the only Hindu kingdom in the world' marked a great leap forward, as its sole aim was to ensure democratic governance in a country with striking ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. The constitution recognising the country as a secular federal democratic republic meant the state ensuring equal rights to the country's different communities. When the constitution was rushed in 2015, it was Oli who played an instrumental role. Since his election to power, though, it has been a slippery slope for the country. Hence, Oli's statement should not be taken in isolation also because of the way the governments at sub-national levels are prioritising religion over development projects. For example, in the far west, a significant chunk of the budget last year was allocated for temple construction. The region is the country's poorest province where 33.9 percent of people are under the poverty line. The local units and elected representatives, who are supposed to prioritise development projects and ensure service delivery to the people, have set their sights on temples. A Centre for Investigative Journalism-Nepal report said last year that impoverished Province 2 and Sudurpaschim spent Rs2 billion on temples and shrines alone.

People gave the electoral mandate to Oli to ensure good governance and strengthen Nepal as a secular federal republic. His constant resorting to nationalism, and now mixing it with religion, does not bode well. Nepal-India ties are already at a low, but people of both countries still enjoy good relations. Oli's statements, however, threaten ties at the people's level. The prime minister has already become a hot topic for the Indian media which has been brazenly broadcasting baseless reports, at times linking him with Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Hou Yangi. The Indian media's reports, however, have come to Oli's advantage on home turf. If it's Oli's calculated move to provide more fodder to the Indian media to shore up

How India lost a gas pipeline to China



The deal to import gas from Myanmar via Bangladesh failed due to political reasons.

MAHENDRA P LAMA



tripartite ministerial meeting between India, Myanmar and Bangladesh held in Yangon in January 2005 agreed to import natural gas through a pipeline from Myanmar via Bangladesh. Gas was to be brought from the newly explored fields in adjoining Rakhine state of Myanmar. It mentioned that the 'government of Myanmar agrees to export natural gas to India by a pipeline through the territory of Bangladesh and India to be operated by an international consortium... The route of the pipeline may be determined by mutual agreement of the three governments with a view to ensure adequate access, maximum security and optimal economic utilisation'.

Bangladesh and India had the 'right to access the pipeline as and when required, including injecting and siphoning off their own natural gas'. The three governments agreed to establish a Techno-Commercial Working Committee which shall identify areas of cooperation, collaboration and investment to develop natural gas resources, infrastructure and marketing in the region; and, deliberate and advise the three governments on policy issues such as pipeline routing, access-related issues as well as techni-

On primarily three grounds, this trilateral project was considered to be a major policy shift particularly in the Indian approach to issues of cooperation in the region. Firstly, it was a clear move away from the traditional bilateral approach to a new tripartite approach in a project located in a contiguous sub-region. Secondly, this was a deal which was negotiated and managed by the concerned line ministries and ministers-in-charge. And thirdly, this brought together three countries on a specific project from two cross-regional groupings of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) thereby making it an inter-(sub)regional initiative.

The deal, however, could not be implemented purportedly because India actually did not immediately agree to Bangladesh's three demands-transmission of hydro-electricity from Nepal and Bhutan to Bangladesh through Indian territory; corridor for the supply of commodities between Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh through Indian territory; and adoption of necessary measures to reduce the trade imbalance between the two countries. This was discussed on the sidelines of the tripartite deal, and a formal joint bilateral press statement was even issued.

However, there were serious political reasons why the entire deal collapsed. The then Bangladesh Nationalist Party-led Khaleda Zia government (2001-06) had mostly been against any meaningful cooperation with India as she apprehended that the latter was deeply and historically disposed to the opposition party Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina. Zia had also provided shelter to Indian militants from the north-eastern region and had consistently called them 'freedom fighters'. She protractedly denied any access to

through Bangladesh despite India asking for the same several times

Leader-centric foreign policy

However, Bangladesh's three demands related apprehensions were substantially addressed within the next six years when the India-Bangladesh Framework Agreement of 2011 was signed after Sheikh Hasina again became the prime minister of Bangladesh (2006 onwards). The effective implementations of some of the projects related to electricity, unilateral free trade access and land deals did prove that Begum Zia's regime was actually a critical block in India's disinterest in this trilateral pipeline project.

In a graphic narration, the then Indian minister for petroleum and natural gas Mani Shankar Aiyar, who was negotiating this deal, recounted, 'We had done it in one meeting, just one meeting! But back in India there was a problem. I couldn't go to Dhaka because I was told we had to support Begum Sheikh Hasina and the credit mustn't go to Begum Khaleda Zia. So please wait, don't rush into these things. So I sat and waited till September to go. In September, I was received royally by Khaleda Zia, and the entire cabinet came to the dinner given in my honour. However, I found my officers had not worked out a proper agreement. So sitting at that dinner I wrote out the agreement of what were actually the minutes of the previous meeting. After I read the agreement, they said they would study it; but I told them, no, we are going to sign it now because it's the minutes of something we had agreed upon. Then these are the minutes which would be translated into an agreement. So they all agreed. And I said right there, "Let's get it typed". When I reached Delhi, I became furious because the ambassador of India had typed "DRAFT" on the agreement because she was anti-Khaleda Zia and the Ministry of External destroyed our hopes. The Ministry of External Affairs was adamant that we won't allow gas to pass through Burma, Bangladesh and then into India'.

China owns the pipeline

This trilateral gas pipeline deal could never be retrieved. China National Petroleum Corporation signed a 30-year hydrocarbons purchase and sale agreement with Daewoo International in December 2008 to draw gas extracted from the Shwe gas project located offshore in the Bay of Bengal. The Shwe gas project off Rakhine (Arakan) state is owned by a joint venture between Daewoo International, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Videsh of India and Gas Authority of India, Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise and Korea Gas Corporation. The 793-km gas pipeline starts at Myanmar's Ramree Island and ends at Ruili in China's Yunnan Province. In China, this \$1.04 billion gas pipeline runs 1,727 km through Guizhou, Chongqing and Guangxi provinces.

Running parallel with the Myanmar-China Crude Oil Pipeline, this gas pipeline became operational in July 2013, and started delivering natural gas also to the Myanmar market through its offtake stations at Kyaukphyu, Yenangyaung, Taungtha and Mandalay By 2019, China had imported 3.4 million tonnes of gas from Myanmar valued at \$1.76 billion. Ironically, both the natural gas and the oil fields that provided pipeline flows to China had distinct imprints of part ownership of Indian giants like Oil and Natural Gas Corporation and GAIL. China and India were then negotiating to cooperate in securing crude oil resources overseas mainly in Africa. Like other failed projects, the trilateral gas project indeed was another major opportunity lost at the sub-regional level

Lama is a former member of the National Security Advisory Board of

No recovery without debt relief

It would save countries from this bleak scenario, freeing up the capital needed to fight the pandemic.

MO IBRAHIM



Last month, the African Union launched the Africa Medical Supplies Platform to facilitate the production and provision of vital medical equipment-the latest achievement in an already impressive response to the Covid-19 crisis. Yet, in the same week, it was revealed that most of Nigeria's federal government revenue was going to debt-service payments, and the country would be cutting public health spending by 40 percent—even as Covid-19 infections continue to

The contrast is as tragic as it is stark. The world's youngest continent is itching not only to stand on its own two feet, but also to provide global leadership. And it remains hamstrung by an old foe: debt. If Africa is to achieve its potential, its creditors must set it free.

Debt relief works. Fifteen years ago this week, the G8 issued the Gleneagles declaration, relieving 18 'highly indebted poor countries'-Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guyana, Honduras, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia-of debt totalling more than \$40 billion.

No longer saddled with massive

debt-service costs, countries were able to invest more in their own economies and people. Many of the countries that had received debt relief, such as Ethiopia and Rwanda, subsequently experienced significant upticks in economic growth. Standards of health care, access to education, and employment opportunities improved markedly. And countries improved their governance and benefitted from greater stability-crucial to sustaining long-

This progress is now at risk of

unravelling. Though Africa has so far recorded a relatively low number of Covid-19 infections, it faces a severe economic crisis, with potentially far-reaching social and political implications. External demand, oil prices, tourism and travel revenues, and remittances have all collapsed. Investors have pulled \$100 billion from emerging markets since the beginning of the pandemic—the largest-ever capital outflow in such a short period. This is contributing to a deepening—and highly dangerous—liquidity crisis.

African governments urgently need capital to stabilise economies hit by cumulative external shocks and to finance an adequate public health response. Yet, unlike the eurozone or the United States, most African countries cannot print money to get them through the crisis. Moreover, their fiscal space remains limited, not least because they must continue to make large debt payments. This leaves their leaders with an impossible choice: cut spending on crucial services, as Nigeria has done, or default.

Debt relief would save countries from this bleak scenario, freeing up the capital needed to fight the pandemic and stabilise the economy. World leaders already recognise this. In April, G20 leaders agreed to suspend some debt repayments for the world's poorest countries for the rest of 2020. But it is nowhere near enough. Pledges must now be swiftly implemented and significantly expanded. Specifically, all creditors—bilateral, multilateral, and private-must implement an immediate debt-service standstill for all African countries until the end

As Vera Songwe, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, has proposed, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) could also be created, modelled on the repurchase ('repo') facilities that American and European central banks often use to support the smooth functioning of markets. This new lending vehicle, backed by the G20 central banks, would not only expand access to cheap liquidity; if designed well, it could also support the shift toward a

more sustainable growth model. The International Monetary Fund also has an important role to play. The creative use of its reserve asset, Special Drawing Rights, could go a long way toward supporting fragile economies.

The world's wealthiest economies have responded to the Covid-19 crisis with unprecedented fiscal measures. African countries must do the same. Ensuring that they can is not charity; it is a matter of shared interest.

If African governments lack the resources to respond effectively to the crisis, the hard-won gains of recent decades will be wiped out; poverty will skyrocket; the virus will become increasingly difficult to contain; and social unrest will grow, particularly in countries like Sudan that are already struggling to end decades-long conflicts. This would exact a massive human and economic toll, and leave all of us living in an increasingly inse-

The Covid-19 pandemic is a shared global challenge, and it demands a shared global response that addresses both the health and economic dimensions of the crisis. Debt relief for Africa is an essential feature of any such response.

Ibrahim is Chair and Founder of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

NATIONAL

Multiple landslides in Syangja displace people, disrupt highways

Three persons were buried and one went missing in a landslide at Kaligandaki on Tuesday.

PRATIKSHA KAFLE

Three persons were buried to death and one went missing in a landslide occurred at Khahare in Kaligandaki Rural Municipality Ward 4, Syangja, on Tuesday morning.

According to the District Police Office in Syangja, six people got buried in landslide debris while on their way to repair a drinking water pipe near a water spring in Khahare.

"Among them, three were rescued from the incident site. But one among the three rescued died while undergoing treatment at Birgha Health Post, said Rajendra Adhikari, deputy super intendent of police in Syangja. "Two bodies were found buried in the landslide debris while one person is still missing in the incident site.'

The two persons rescued from the site are receiving treatment at Palpa Mission Hospital, said police. According to Adhikari, security personnel have been deployed to the incident site for rescue operation.

Twenty seven individuals from Ward 4 have been displaced by the landslide that was triggered by incessant rainfall.

"For the time being, the displaced families are taking shelter at their relatives' houses. We will move them to a safer location soon," said Khim Bahadur Thapa, chairman at the rural

In Morang, a 58-year-old woman



Vehicular movement along the East-West Highway remained closed for 10 hours on Tuesday.

died when her house collapsed in a landslide at Singhadevi Chisangkhola of Kerabari Rural Municipality Ward 2 on Saturday night.

Man Bahadur Rai, deputy superintendent of police in Morang, said the difficult terrains of the incident site made it difficult to retrieve the victim's body and hand it over to her

Likewise, a 23-year-old man from Rautwamai Municipality Ward No. 7 was swept away by the rain-swollen Ratuwa stream on Sunday.

"It has been learnt that the man was on the way to Jhapa from Ratuwamai.

We have mobilised a police team to search for the missing person," said DSP Rai.

Meanwhile, vehicular movement along the Nawalparasi (East)-Daunne road section of the East-West highway, which had remained closed for almost 10 hours since Tuesday morning due to a landslide, resumed from Tuesday noon. Two vehicles were trapped in landslide debris and felled trees along the road section.

Narayan Sah in Morang and Nabin Paudel in Nawalpur con-

Rukum murder of youths was result of caste discrimination, House probe finds...

The incident had drawn international attention, with the United Nations, the Human Rights Watch and the European Union Delegation to Nepal condemning the Dalit killings, saying that caste-based discriminations and crimes were still rife in Nepal and calling for a fair probe into

The parliamentary study has said it found sheer lapses on the part of the local administration and the local government in the investigation into the

The local police, according to the report, took the injured into control, instead of the attackers, suggesting that the entire investigation process was flawed. Those accused of the murder were arrested only the next day after widespread criticism.

Though the 12 injured reported that their six friends, who were found dead later, were missing, the police showed no promptness in searching for them, the probe has found.

The report prepared after a month of study says the police failed to accurately report the crime scene and the places where the victims' bodies were

The lawmakers found that the police hadn't taken statements from those who recovered bodies from the

The report says Sub-inspector Santosh Lamichhane and senior constable Ramesh Basnet, from the Chaurjahari area police post, did not

Loan No. and Title

Contract No. and Title

Deadline for Submission of Bids

criminal investigation process adopted by the local administration, the team noted, calling for further study. The panel has suggested that the government form a special team to look into the incident.

Report says there were lapses in investigation by the local administration.

The parliamentary committee has viewed with suspicion the autopsy report that mentions drowning as the cause of the deaths.

"The fact that the autopsy was carried out by Dr Bhupendra Malla, son of Bhakta Bahadur, the lawyer of the accused, also gives ample room to doubt the authenticity of the autopsy report," says the report

Maheshwor Raj Gahatraj, another member of the probe committee, expressed surprise that the investigation process didn't accord the attention that the incident deserved.

'The incident is a blot on human civilisation and challenges our existing legal and constitutional provisions," Gahatraj told the Post. As the case is sub-judice in the district court,

aspects during their investigation.

The police had filed a charge sheet against 34 people in connection with the case and had arrested 29 of them. The district court has released five after recording their statements while two, including Nabaraj's girlfriend, have been sent to juvenile correction

The lawmakers involved in the investigation say the girl was drawn towards Nabaraj after she saw him perform during an inter-school sports competition and in due course they got closer and started to have an affair

But when it came to a situation that the boy wanted to marry the girl, it

the government's attention to the need to give full shape to the Dalit Commission. Nearly five years since the promul-

commissions, does not even have a proper office.

that the traditional criminal investigation process, which is still in practice, needs improvement.

While receiving the report, Sapkota

Two employees of Melamchi water supply project go missing in tunnel accident

Workers were swept away by high-velocity water released in one of the tunnels.

ANISH TIWARI SINDHUPALCHOK, JULY 14

Γwo workers at a construction site of Melamchi Water Supply Project in Sindhupalchok went missing when they were swept away by a high-velocity water released through one of the tunnels as part of a routine test on Tuesday.

Police said search was underway for Satish Goit, one of the project engineers, and Pemba Lama, a driver, who went missing in the accident.

Shekhar Khanal, site engineer, and Pemba Lama, a project helper, were rescued and taken to Kathmandu for "The two men have sustained deep injuries in their

heads and legs," said Superintendent of Police Prajjwal The water released to the main tunnel in the intake area

at Helambu Rural Municipality-1 had swept away the four

The incident occurred at around noon at Gate No 17, some 800 metres inside the tunnel, a project employee said

on condition of anonymity since he was not authorised to speak to the media. working on the site, a high pressure water was released,

which led to excessive water flow through the gate pushing the water back to the mouth of the tunnel. "We used to measure the water pressure every hour. There was no reason for this to happen but we don't know the technical aspect," said Krishna Tamang, a project

The Post tried to contact Triresh Prasad Khatri, the project chief, for a comment, but his mobile phone was switched off throughout the day.

The high-velocity water also destroyed the majority of infrastructure, including the main audit and head

"The infrastructure inside the tunnel has been damaged. We haven't been able to reach the incident site to determine the cause of the incident," said Shiva Kumar Sharma, an engineer at the project. He said a technical team had been formed at the minis-

terial level to probe the incident. Another project official said it would take around three

weeks to repair the damaged tunnel gate. Works were underway at the main tunnel and Gate No

17 to channelise water to Sundarijal of Kathmandu from Melamchi River in Helambu. Some witnesses reported a torrent of water gushing out

from the tunnel and sweeping away a project vehicle. The incident has raised concern among the locals. They questioned the quality of the much-awaited national pride

"Our settlement can be swept away at any time due to the poorly-built infrastructure of the project. We don't know how technically sound the infrastructure is," said Mingmar Hyalmo of Helambu. "The government should inspect the incident site immediately and find out where the problem lies.'

Amid soured Nepal-India ...

>> Continued from page 1

According to Bhattarai, such uncalled for remarks can also weaken Nepal's position during talks.

"I wonder if our prime minister deliberately wants that,"

Bhattarai's suspicions emanate from the fact that Oli has tried to use a bad press he has got in India to his advantage at

Meanwhile, a scrambling Foreign Ministry, which is headed by Pradeep Gyawali, who is Oli's trusted lieutenant, however, has made an all-out effort to avoid any further damage.

"As there have been several myths and references about Shri Ram and the places associated with him, the prime minister was simply highlighting the importance of further studies and research of the vast cultural geography the Ramayana represents to obtain facts about Shri Ram, Ramayana and the various places linked to this rich civilization, the statement added after huge uproar from various quarters," said the ministry.

"The remarks were not meant to debase the significance of Ayodhya and the cultural value it bears. It may be underlined that the tradition of celebrating Bibaha Panchami where a marriage procession coming from Ayodhya, India to Janakpur, Nepal takes place every year.'

Oli, who is facing a crisis in his own party, is currently also in a diplomatic quagmire given his government's relationships with India, China and the United States, say foreign affairs analysts. And it would have been prudent on his part if he thought before he spoke, according to them.

"Oli himself has served as a foreign minister in the past so he should know how timing is of paramount importance in diplomacy," said Bhattarai, the former diplomat.

"If there are issues, there are diplomatic channels at his on all issues of international relations. Such actions can damage our ties with our friendly nations.'



भारतीय राजदूतावास, काठमाडौं

सार्वजनिक सूचना

अतिरिक्त सामाग्री सहितका चार पराना डिजी (डिजेल जेनेरेटर) सेटको सार्वजनिक लिलामी यही साउन २ गते (17th July, 2020) दिउसो १२ बजेदेखि १ बजे सम्म काठमाडौं स्थित भारतीय राजदुतावास परिसरमा हुनेछ । यी सामानहरुको निरीक्षण बिहान १० बजेदेखि १२ बजेसम्म सोही दिन गर्न सिकनेछ।

२. यी सामानहरु जस्तो छ त्यस्तै बिक्री गरिनेछ ।

- ३. लिलामी सम्बन्धी सम्पर्ण जानकारी Tender Notice Section अन्तर्गत द्तावासको वेबसाइट www.indembkathmandu.gov.in मा उपलब्ध छ। यसको अलावा लिलामीबारे विवरणहरु टेलिफोन नम्बर ०१-४४११८५१ (द्वितीय सचिव) मा सम्पर्क गरी वा ईमेल estt.kathmandu@mea.gov.in मार्फत प्राप्त
- ४. मालसामान बिक्री गर्ने अधिकार दूतावासमा निहित रहनेछ।



Government of Nepal

Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport

Department of Roads

Development Cooperation Implementation Division Strategic Road Connectivity & Trade Improvement Project (SRCTIP)

Notice No. SRCTIP/02/076-77

Amendment on REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI) (2)

Date of first publication: 11 June, 2020

In reference to REOI Notice published for Consultancy Service of Environment and Social Impact Assessment Study (ESIA) of the Kamala-Dhalkebar-Pathlaiya Section with associated Bridges of the Mahendra Highway, following Amendment has been made;

Notice No	Contract Identification Number	Amendment on	
SRCTIP/02/076-77	SRCTIP-DoR- KDP-CS-QCBS- 03	The Expression of Interest submission deadline is extended up to 10 th August 2020.	

The other terms and condition remain the same.

Deputy Director General

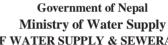
effort to prevent the situation. There were several lapses in the

became an issue of social pride for the family, which resulted in the heinous crime, said Bishunkhe. The Poudel-led team has also drawn

gation of the constitution, the commission, along with other inclusion

The Poudel-led team has also said

said he will take initiatives for an immediate implementation of the report. As Parliament has been prorogued, the report will be sent to the government for implementation.



DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE MANAGEMENT **Urban Water Supply and Sanitation (Sector) Project** PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Panipokhari, Kathmandu

Invitation for Bids

: 15 July 2020 (First date of Publication)

: 3711- NEP, Urban Water Supply and Sanitation (Sector) Project

: UWSSP/OCB/18/Tikapur_Kailali, Tikapur Storm Drainage and FSM

Project, Kailali

: 30 August 2020, 12:00 Noon, Nepal Standard Time (NST)

Nepal has applied for financing from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) toward the cost of Urban Water Supply and Sanitation (Sector) Project (UWSSP). Part of this financing will be used payments under the contracts named above. Bidding is open to Bidders from eligible source countries of ADB. The Project Management Office, Urban Water Supply and Sanitation (Sector) Project (UWSSP), Department

of Water Supply and Sewerage management, Ministry of Water Supply ("the Employer") invites sealed bids

from eligible bidders, based on post-qualification criteria, for the scope of works described hereunder: a.) Storm Drainage Component: Construction of Works consisting of construction of storm water drain about 29 Km length and outfall and Dismantling and reinstatement of existing municipal road. The construction period is two years from the date of issuing of the work order.

b.) FSM Component:

Stage- 1: Construction of Works consisting of Construction of Fecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP) comprising of screen chamber, anaerobic digester, sludge drying beds, anaerobic baffle reactor & anaerobic filter, horizontal flow constructed wet land, polishing pond, composting yards, valve chamber, boundary wall & fencing and Supply and laying of necessary valves, pipes & fittings etc. The construction period is one year from the date of issuing of the work order

Stage- 2: Operations and Maintenance of the FSTP for two years.

Open Competitive Bidding (OCB) will be conducted in accordance with ADB's Single-Stage: Two-Envelope bidding procedure and is open to all Bidders as described in the bidding document

Only experienced and eligible bidders with the following key qualifications should participate in this bidding: • Minimum average annual construction turnover of NRs. 840.00 million or equivalent calculated as total certified

payments received for contracts in progress or completed within the last five (5) years. • Participation in at least one contract that has been successfully or substantially completed within the last 7 (seven) years that is similar to the proposed works, where the value of the Bidder's participation exceeds NRs. 672.0 million or equivalent. The similarity of the Bidder's participation shall be based on the physical size, nature of works, complexity, methods, technology or other characteristics as described in Section 6, Employer's

Requirements of the bidding document. To obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents, Bidders should contact:

The Project Director

Urban Water Supply and Sanitation (Sector) Project

Project Management Office DWSS Building, Top floor

Panipokhari, Kathmandu.

Ph: 0977-1-4006647, 0977-1-4423186

Fax: 0977-1-4413280 Website: www.uwssp.gov.np; Email: info@uwssp.gov.np

To purchase the Bidding Documents in English, eligible bidders should on or before 28 August 2020:

• Write to above address requesting the bidding documents for UWSSP/OCB/18/ Tikapur_Kailali.

pay a non-refundable fee of NRs. 20,000 (in words Nepali Rupees twenty thousand only) (or USD 190.00 equivalent) deposited in Government of Nepal's revenue account as follows:

Name of Bank: Rastriya Banijya Bank, Kathmandu Bank Account No: 1000200010000

Office Code: 3-1-3-0-1-3-5-0-5

Name of Office: Project Management Office

Revenue Account No: 1-4-2-2-9

• The document may be collected in person or may be sent by express airmail for an additional fee of NRs. 2,000 (or USD 20) for domestic delivery or USD 100.00 for overseas delivery. No liability will be accepted for loss in transit or late delivery.

7. A pre-bid meeting shall be held at 13:00 Hrs. (NST) on 17 August 2020 at PMO Office at Panipokhari.

• Deliver your bid to the address below

The Project Director

Urban Water Supply and Sanitation (Sector) Project Project Management Office

DWSS Building, Top floor Panipokhari, Kathmandu. On or before 30 August 2020; 12:00 Hrs. (NST). Late Bids will not be accepted.

Together with a Bid Security in the amount as specified in the Bidding Document (Section 2: Bid Data Sheet

Technical bids will be opened immediately after bid submission deadline in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend, whereas the Financial Bids shall remain sealed and unopened and shall be placed locked. The Financial Bids of only Technically Responsive and Qualified Bidders shall be opened after Technical Bid Evaluation, whereas, the Financial Bids of those Bidders whose Technical Bids are not responsive and qualified shall be returned unopened after the contract is awarded.

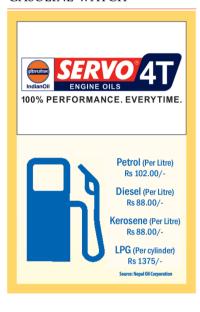
When comparing Bids, ADB's Domestic Preference Scheme will be applied in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the Bidding Document.

MONEY

FOREX US Dollar Furo Pound Sterling Japanese Yen Chinese Yuan 33.22 Qatari Riyal 84.10 Malaysian Ringit Saudi Arab Rival

BULLION PRICE PER TOLA Rs 92,200 Rs 995 SOURCE: FENEGOSID

GASOLINE WATCH



BIZLINE

Standard Chartered contributes Rs 35.3 million for Covid 19 relief and recovery KATHMANDU: In a humanitarian

response against Covid-19 pandemic, Standard Chartered has donated Rs 1.75 crore to Action Aid International-Nepal for the project "Enhanced access to prevention measures through basic livelihood and hygiene product support to vul nerable households of Nepal" With this, the total contribution by the Bank has reached Rs 3.53 Crore for dealing with Covid-19 crisis in Nepal, states the press release issued by the bank. It had earlier contributed Rs 1.16 crore to Nepal Government and Rs 58 lakhs to NGO Pasang Lhamu Mountaineering Foundation for relief activities. The latest project aims to deliver a holistic response programme for the marginalised, and vulnerable people in communities most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic including prevention practices to combat the health issues, facilitating access to household Covid-19 prevention kits, PPE distribution and

related activities

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, JULY 14

The federal government incurred the

biggest monthly budget deficit in his-

tory in June as spending on pro-

grammes to combat the coronavirus

recession exploded while millions of

The Treasury Department reported

Monday that the deficit hit \$864 billion

last month, an amount of red ink that

surpasses most annual deficits in the

nation's history and is above the pre-

vious monthly deficit record of \$738

billion in April. That amount was also

tied to the trillions of dollars Congress

has provided to cushion the impact of

the widespread shutdowns that

occurred in an effort to limit the

budget year, which began October 1,

the deficit totals \$2.74 trillion, also a

record for that period. That puts the

country well on the way to hitting the

\$3.7 trillion deficit for the whole year

that has been forecast by the

That total would surpass the previ-

ous annual record of \$1.4 trillion set

in 2009 when the government was

spending heavily to lift the country

out of the recession caused by the 2008

For the first nine months of this

spread of the viral pandemic.

Congressional Budget Office.

financial crisis.

job losses cut into tax revenues.

Hotels in Pokhara close down as virus wipes out tourism

According to the Western Region Hotel Association, 70 tourist-standard hotels have shut down completely.

DEEPAK PARIYAR POKHARA, JULY 14

Ram Prasad Bhattarai, operator of Pacific Guest House at Gaurighat, Lakeside, recently handed over the keys to the property to his landlord as

after the pandemic brought tourism to Bhattarai had leased the property for five years, but only one year after signing the rental contract, he had to

he couldn't pay the rent anymore

pull down the shutters on June 10 "As business came to a complete standstill, I had a hard time paying the rent and bank instalments," said Bhattarai. The house owner returned the advance payment Bhattarai had

"I don't know how long this situation will last. I cannot operate the hotel by paying a monthly rent of Rs150,000," said Bhattarai. He had returned to Nepal after working in India for 15 years, and ran a restaurant in Kathmandu for two years.

"I was making a good income from the guest house. But the Covid-19 pandemic dashed all hopes," he said.

The lake city, which normally receives more than 400,000 tourists annually, had seen arrivals start declining from mid-February.

Bhattarai said his landlord had offered him a 50 percent discount on the rent for two months from March to April. But he demanded full payment after two months, so it was better to

Bhattarai plans to restart his hotel business in Pokhara once the situation returns to normal.

The hotels on Lakeside have begun to shut down due to the rent and interest burden. Hotel Galaxy, Hotel Paramount and Hotel Travel Inn are all shuttered.

According to the Western Region Hotel Association, 70 tourist-standard hotels have shut down completely. Most of the hotels in Pokhara are in rented buildings. Tourism entrepreneurs are having a hard time after their banks started calling them to pay the monthly instalments.

Bikal Tulachan, president of the association, said that hotels in Pokhara were incurring monthly loss-



Tourism entrepreneurs are having a hard time after their banks started calling them to pay the monthly instalments.

es of Rs200-250 million after business evaporated due to the pandemic. "If the situation continues, a number of people will definitely switch to other professions," he said.

Even now, some entrepreneurs are in a wait and watch condition. Not only hotels, other businesses related to tourism too are in the process of closing down

Tikaram Sapkota, a former member of the Nepal Tourism Board, said more and more businesses were closing down despite the lockdown being eased. There are no customers, particularly tourists on whom the city

It is harder for business owners who operate out of rented spaces, he said.

"Covid-19 has hit the tourism sector the hardest, and the impact will be felt for a long time."

Many investors are under financial and mental stress, he said. "Entrepreneurs are ready to resume operations if the instalment payment deadline is extended, rent is waived and they are exempted from paying direct and indirect taxes," he said.

On Monday, a chef who had lost his job jumped into the Seti River in a bid to commit suicide, exemplifying the level of stress caused by the economic slowdown in Pokhara.

The youth was rescued by locals. "I lost my job in the lockdown, and my family also started putting pressure

Tara Budamagar of Baglung, who lost her hotel job, has started selling snacks and street food.

There are 75,000 workers in the tourism sector in Gandaki province. When the tourism business comes to a standstill, there are high chances of losing jobs. Some workers have started doing other work like Tara.

Sapkota said that the tourism industry normally provides jobs to roughly 75,000 people.

As it will take two years to revive the tourism sector, it is estimated that half of the workers will lose their jobs, he said.

Even if tourist arrivals reach 500,000-600,000 in 2021, only half of the current workers will get employment,

he said. It is important to think about managing the rest, he said.

According to Hotel Association Nepal, the tourism industry provides 15,000 direct and 20,000 indirect jobs in hotels in Pokhara.

The association is preparing health safety guidelines and operation protocols to reopen the hotel industry once the situation returns to near normal.

Even though the lockdown restrictions have been relaxed, nothing is happening in the tourism sector. Entrepreneurs said they had not been able to pay regular instalments and interest to their banks with no business activity.

The Pokhara Tourism Council, an umbrella organisation of tourism entrepreneurs in Pokhara, has been saying that the interest rate should be reduced through rescheduling and capitalisation of loans and refinancing facilities until the situation returns to normal.

Even before the lockdown, the council had met with Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, the finance and foreign ministers, the central bank governor and other officials in Kathmandu and submitted a memorandum to bail out the hotel industry amid this crisis.

The federal government has announced a Rs100 billion refinancing fund and a Rs50 billion operation fund to operate businesses affected by Covid-19 in the budget statement for the coming fiscal year.

The council has demanded that the use of these funds be fully proportional and simplified.

Chiranjeebi Pokharel, president of the council, said that the money should be distributed in an equitable manner as there is maximum investment in tourism in Gandaki

"Small and medium-sized entrepreneurs should be given priority to make good use of the refinancing fund," he said.

The council has demanded that arrangements be made to provide easy access to trekking, adventure activities, tourist vehicles and other businesses. He said that banks and financial institutions had been badgering borrowers to pay interest punctually.

Thailand gears up for motor show as pandemic restrictions ease



Customers are seen during the media day of the 41st Bangkok International Motor Show in Bangkok, Thailand on Tuesday.

US budget deficit hits all-time high of \$864 billion

REUTERS

Thailand's capital on Tuesday prepared to host its twice-postponed annual auto show, with organisers saying it would showcase the country's success in containing the

The June deficit was driven higher

by spending on various government

relief programmes such as an extra

\$600 per week in expanded unemploy-

ment benefits and a Paycheck

Protection Programme that provided

support to businesses to keep workers

The report showed that the cost of

the Paycheck Protection Programme

in June was \$511 billion. That reflect-

ed a charge to the government for all

the bank loans made under the pro-

gramme even though the government

will not actually have to pay out funds

until the banks determine whether

the businesses met the criteria for

having the loans forgiven. Those

requirements include spending at

on their payrolls.

From Detroit to Geneva, motor shows have been forced to cancel due to the Covid-19 pandemic, throwing the future of the industry's traditional way of marketing new models into doubt. The 41st Bangkok International Motor Show opens to the public on Wednesday after being pushed back twice since March.

least 60 percent of the loan amount on

worker pay with the other 40 percent

going to overhead costs such as rent

and utilities. Another reason for the

surge in the June deficit was the gov-

ernment's decision to delay tax pay-

ments this year until July 15. That

decision mean that quarterly pay-

ments made by individual taxpayers

and corporations will not be due until

total \$2.26 trillion, down 13.4 percent

from the same period last year, while

spending totals \$5 trillion, up 49.1 per-

cent from a year ago. The CBO esti-

mate of a \$3.7 trillion deficit for this

year could go higher depending on the

course of the economy. The country

So far this budget year, revenues

July 15 this year rather than June.

"This is more than the motor show, but also Thailand's reputation because the other event organizers will be watching," said Prachin Eamlumnow, chief executive of head organizer of the event, Grand Prix International.

Thailand will be the first to host a motor show on this scale since the pandemic, he told reporters.

Thailand has had no locally transmitted cases of Covid-19 for about restrictions imposed to tackle the outbreak, seeking to get its economy mov-

Organisers have pledged to limit crowds this year and control entry at the show, where 25 car brandsincluding Ford and Subaru—and 22 motorcycle manufacturers will display their products.

Each brand's booth has entry and exit points and guests are required to scan a QR code, a type of barcode, with their mobile phones when entering and leaving, unlike at previous shows when people could roam freely. Staff at the booths will also be wearing masks or face shields during the show, which runs from July 15 to July 26.

fell into a deep recession in February,

ending a record long expansion of

nearly 11 years. The Trump adminis-

tration is predicting that the economy

will come roaring back in second half

of this year but many private forecast-

ers are concerned that a resurgence of

virus cases could make consumers too

fearful to resume spending, which

approved more than \$3 trillion in a

series of rescue packages, is sched-

uled to debate another support effort

when it returns from recess on June

20. Democrats are pushing for an

extension of the expanded unemploy-

ment benefits which will soon run out.

omist at Oxford Economics, said she

was expecting that lawmakers would

end up compromising on a new eco-

nomic support package that would fall

somewhere between a \$3.5 trillion

measure passed by the House but not

taken up by the Senate and what is

shaping up to be an opening offer by

Senate Republicans for a package of

larger due to additional stimulus but,

given the congressional timetable, the

impact of the next package will likely

be skewed to fiscal 2021, which starts

"The risk is that the deficit will be

about \$1.5 trillion.

October 1," she said.

Nancy Vanden Houten, senior econ-

Congress which has already

drives 70 percent of the economy.

economy recovers from



A worker wearing a face mask to protect against the new coronavirus guides the loading of a shipping container at a container port in Qingdao in eastern China's Shandong Province.

China's trade improved in June in a fresh sign the world's second-largest economy is recovering from the coronavirus pandemic. But its exporters

rebounding from May's 3.3 percent decline, customs data showed on Tuesday.

\$213.6 billion, an improvement over the previous month's 16.7 percent con-

percent to \$10.4 billion despite tariff hikes in a fight with Washington over trade and technology. Exports to the United States gained 1 percent to \$39.8 billion.

China, where the pandemic began in December, was the first economy to start the struggle to revive normal business activity in March after declaring the virus under control. Manufacturing is recovering, but consumer spending is weak.

slump as demand for masks and other medical supplies recedes and US and European retailers cancel orders.

Leading indicators "suggest that exports will start to contract again

Relations with the United States, China's biggest national export market, have deteriorated to their lowest level in decades.

Disputes over Hong Kong, human rights and the South China Sea added to strains that began with a tariff war launched by the Trump administration in 2018 over Beijing's technology ambitions and trade surplus.

The two sides have announced sanctions on some prominent Chinese and US political figures in a dispute over abuses in the northwestern region of Xinjiang, though it is unclear whether those officials will be affected. President Donald Trump said

Friday that work on the second stage of a deal aimed at ending the tariff war is a low priority because relations were "severely damaged" by Beijing's handling of the pandemic.

The two sides signed a "phase one" agreement in January to postpone further penalties but tariff increases

already imposed stayed in place. China's June imports were boosted by a 74 percent increase in purchases of US soybeans under a pledge by Beijing in that January agreement to

narrow its trade surplus with the United States by importing more food and other goods. "China's imports from the US will likely remain elevated in the second half of this year," said Nomura econo-

mists in a report. Imports "should continue to rampup" as the government spends more to support economic recovery and con-

sumer demand, Rasmussen said. China's global trade surplus narrowed to \$46.4 billion from May's \$62.9

The Chinese economy shrank by 6.8 percent in the first quarter, its

A general view of the US Capitol building from the Washington Monument in Washington.

China's trade rises as coronavirus slump

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING, JULY 14

face threats including tension with Washington and a possible downturn in US and European demand. Chinese imports rose 3 percent over a year earlier to \$167.2 billion,

Exports edged up 0.4 percent to

Imports of US goods surged 10.6

Forecasters say exports are likely to

before long," Martin Rasmussen of Capital Economics said in a report.

worst performance since at least the mid-1960s.

WORLD

BRIEFING

Japan: US military coronavirus policy has multiple problems TOKYO: Japan's defence minister said

Tuesday that officials have discovered "a number of problems" with US military measures to guard against the coronavirus among service members stationed in Japan after 95 Marines tested positive at several bases on the southern island of Okinawa. Okinawan officials on Sunday said most of the cases since early July were at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, which is at the center of a relocation dispute. Others were at Camp Hansen, Camp Kinser and Camp McTureous. On Tuesday, Kadena Air Base reported two positive cases. Combined with three cases at Kadena in March the total among the US service members on Okinawa is 100, officials said. "We have discovered a number of problems," Defence Minister Taro Kono said.

Catalan separatist leader says was target of political spying

BARCELONA: The pro-independence speaker of Catalonia's regional parliament Roger Torrent said on Tuesday that he had been the target of political espionage via phone tapping, accusing the Spanish government of being either complicit or negligent. Tensions between Catalonia's separatist regional leaders and the Madrid government have been high for years, and a report in the Guardian and El Pais newspapers that Torrent's phone was tapped is unlikely to help. "In Spain, political espionage is being carried out against political adversaries," Torrent said. "If the Spanish government had knowledge of this, it would have been complicit in a crime. If it had no knowledge of it, it would be a very worrisome symptom of political negligence and lack of awareness of alleged ille-(AGENCIES) gal practices."

Asia ramps up coronavirus curbs as new clusters erupt

The pandemic has now killed more than half a million people in six-and-a-half months.



Municipal health workers are disinfected after a swab sample collecting session to test for Covid-19 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on Tuesday.

REUTERS

Australian states tightened borders and restricted pub visits on Tuesday, while Disney prepared to close its Hong Kong theme park and Japan stepped up tracing as a jump in novel coronavirus cases across Asia fanned fears of a second wave of infections.

Many parts of Asia, the region first hit by the coronavirus that emerged in central China late last year, are finding cause to pause the reopening of their economies, some after winning praise for their initial responses to the

Australia largely avoided the high numbers of cases and casualties seen in other countries with swift and strict measures, but a spike in community-transmitted cases in Victoria state and a rise in new cases in New

South Wales has worried authorities. South Australia cancelled plans to reopen its border to New South Wales on July 20, while Queensland introduced a mandatory two-week quarantine for people who have visited two areas in Sydney's western suburbs.

New South Wales, which has seen several dozen cases linked to the outbreak in Victoria, said pubs will be limited to 300 people, responding to an outbreak centred at a large hotel in southwestern Sydney.

"Indoor activity, where people aren't seated is a huge health risk. It increases the chance of transmisstate Premier Berejiklian told reporters

Australia's second largest city, Melbourne, is in the second week of a six-week lockdown

The number of coronavirus infections around the world hit 13 million on Monday, according to a Reuters tally, climbing by a million in just five days. The pandemic has now killed more than half a million people in sixand-a-half months.

The World Health Organization

(WHO) warned that the pandemic

would worsen if countries failed to

"Let me be blunt, too many countries are headed in the wrong direction, the virus remains public enemy number one," WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual briefing on Monday.

In the Northern Hemisphere, countries are racing to get a handle on outbreaks before winter, which could bring a renewed surge. A second wave of infections in Britain this winter could kill up to 120,000 people over nine months in a worst-case scenario, according to health experts.

adhere to strict precautions.

Hong Kong, which suffered remarkably few cases in the first wave of the pandemic, will impose strict social distancing measures from midnight on Tuesday, the most stringent yet in the Asian financial hub.

Hong Kong recorded 52 new cases on Monday, including 41 that were locally transmitted, health authorities said. Since late January, Hong Kong has reported 1,522 cases and media reported an eighth death on Monday.

"The recent emergence of local cases of unknown infection source indicates the existence of sustained silent transmission in the community," the Hong Kong government said.

China, which has contained a cluster in Beijing in recent weeks, loosened border restrictions between Macau and the neighbouring province of Guangdong, sending shares of Macau casino operators surging.

In Tokyo, health officials were trying to locate more than 800 members of an theatre audience after 20 people including cast members of a recent performance tested positive for the

US rejects China's claims in South China Sea, adding to tensions

REUTERS

WASHINGTON/BEIJING, JULY 14

The United States has rejected China's claims to offshore resources in most of the South China Sea, drawing criticism from China which said the US position raised tension in the region, highlighting an increasingly testy relationship.

China has offered no coherent legal basis for its ambitions in the South China Sea and for years has been using intimidation against other Southeast Asian coastal states, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement.

'We are making clear: Beijing's claims to offshore resources across most of the South China Sea are completely unlawful, as is its campaign of bullying to control them," Pompeo, a prominent China hawk within the Trump administration.

The United States has long opposed China's expansive territorial claims on the South China Sea, sending warships regularly through the strategic waterway to demonstrate freedom of navigation there. Monday's comments reflect a harsher tone.

"The world will not allow Beijing to treat the South China Sea as its maritime empire," Pompeo said. The US statement supports a ruling four years ago under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) that invalidated most of China's claims for maritime rights in the South China Sea.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian condemned the US rejection of China's claim.

"It intentionally stirs up controversy over maritime sovereignty claims, destroys regional peace and stability and is an irresponsible act," he said at

China has built bases atop atolls in the region but says its intentions are peaceful.

a regular briefing. "The US has repeatedly sent large fleets of sophisticated military planes and ships to the South China Sea ... The US is the troublemaker and destroyer of regional peace and stability." China claims 90 percent of the potentially energy-rich South China Sea, but Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also lay claim to parts of it.

About \$3 trillion (2.40 trillion pounds) worth of trade passes through the waterway each year. China has built bases atop atolls in the region but says its intentions are peaceful.

Analysts said it would be important to see if other countries adopted the US stance and what, if anything, Washington might do to reinforce its position and prevent Beijing from creating "facts on the water" to buttress its claims.

"The Southeast Asian claimants, especially Vietnam, will feel more confident in asserting their jurisdictional rights under UNCLOS," said Ian Storey, senior fellow at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore.

The Philippines strongly supported rules-based order in the South China Sea and urged China to comply with the four-year-old arbitration ruling, its defense minister, Delfin

Modi's virus fund won't disclose donors

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW DELHI, JULY 14

Bejon Misra responded quickly to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal in March for donations to a new fund to strengthen the country's fight against the coronavirus.

The next day, the 69-year-old retired management professor made a

"It was a generous contribution because Modi is the face of it," Misra said. Such trust in Modi is common in India, with the prime minister enjoying an 82 percent public approval rating, according to US-based pollster Morning Consult.

So when the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund, or PM CARES, was launched days after India started a countrywide virus lockhaven't stopped.

Retirees like Misra, industrialists, Bollywood stars and foreign companies have all pitched in. But the fund, now valued at more than



Narendra Mod

\$1 billion, has run into controversy over issues of transparency and accountability. The Associated Press requested a list of donors and payments from Modi's office under the Right to Information Law, which gives citizens access to information from India's often opaque bureaucracy. The

Modi's office, which manages PM CARES, has refused to disclose the information, arguing that even though it is administered by the Indian government, it is not a public authority, and therefore not subject to right-to-in-

As a result, there is little transparency about the money the fund is receiving and spending in the middle of India's still-raging virus outbreak.

"It's not a state secret and the government must answer the questions that are being raised," said Saket Gokhale, an independent activist who was one of the first to question the fund. "They are stonewalling."

Legal experts are challenging the response of Modi's office.

Surender Singh Hooda, a lawyer at India's top court, filed a petition on June 5 arguing that the fund's website must display details of the money received and the way it is used. The Delhi high court told Hooda to withdraw his petition and contact Modi's office first, as is required by law.

Modi's office denied Hooda's

"The money has been collected under the name of the prime minister and millions of ordinary citizens have donated to it. The least we expect is some transparency," Hooda said.



KAGESHWORI MANOHARA MUNICIPALITY



DANCHHI, KATHMANDU

Re-invitation for Bid

First date of publication: 31st Ashad, 2077 (15 July, 2020)

- 1. The Kageshwori Manohara Municipality, Office of the Municipal Executive had invited tender for the following construction works in 4th Jestha, 2077. No bid or proposal was found to be substantially responsive eligible. As per PPA-2063 section 10 and sub-section 4(a), it is to notify for the re-invitaion of the following bids.
- The Kageshwori Manohara Municipality, Office of the Municipal Executive invites Electronic bids for S. N. 1 and 2 as indicated in details of work below under Single Stage single Envelope procedures from eligible bidders for the construction as indicated in details of work below under procedures as in accordance with e-GP Procurement Directive 2074. Eligible bidders with the following key qualifications for S. N. 1 and 2 should participate in this bidding and may obtain further information and inspect the Bidding Documents through PPMO website www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp or inspect the Bidding Documents at the Kageshwori Manohara Municipality, Office of the Municipal Executive during office hours.

Key qualifications for S. N. 1 and 2 works:

- a) Minimum Work experience for truss bridge having span greater than 40mbe attested with bid
- A complete set of Bidding Documents for S. N. 1 and 2 may download from PPMO's Web Site www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp by eligible Bidders and submit their bids only electronically through www.bolpatra.gov.np/eqp and upon payment of a non-refundable fee as shown in table below 14th Shrawan 2077, (29 July, 2020).

Information to deposit the cost of bidding document in Bank

Name of the Bank: NIC ASIA Bank Limited, Thali branch, Kathmandu

Name of Office: Kageshwori Manohara Municipality, Kathmandu STHANIYA TAHAKO MUL SANCHIT KOSH **Account Name:**

Account No.: 18CA051127352406

- Bidder who wishes to submit the Bid Security in the form of Cash, the cash should be deposited in Account Name: STHANIYA TAHA DHARAUTI, Account No.: 18CA051127352401of NIC ASIA Bank Limited, Thali Branch, Kathmandu
- Bids must be valid for a period of 90 days after bid opening and must be accompanied by a scanned copy of the Bid security in pdf format amounting as specified in the details of works, which shall be valid up to 30 days beyond the validity period of Bid.
- Electronic Bids must be submitted through PPMO website www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp on or before 12:00 hrs of 14th Shrawan, 2077. The price bid of S. N. 1 and 2 or electronic bids will be opened in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 13.00 hrs. on14th Shrawan, 2077 (29 July, 2020) at Kageshwori Manohara Municipality, Office of the Municipal Executive, Danchhi, Kathmandu.
- Matters not covered in this notice shall be treated in accordance with PPA-2063 and PPR-2064.

Details of Works

S.No.	Contract Identification No.	Name of Project	Name of Project Estimate amount (excluding VAT and contingencies) NRs.	Bid security amount NRs.	Bid document fee (Non – refundable) NRs.
1.	Pedestrian bridge/W/ NCB/104RE/2076- 077	Construction of 42m Pedestrian Bridge in Kageshwori Manohara-8	5,240,724.94	175,000.00	3000
2.	Pedestrian bridge/W/ NCB/105RE/2076- 077	Construction of 52m Pedestrian Bridge in Kageshwori Manohara-8	5,483,309.94	175,000.00	3000

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

(Re-advertised for the previously published vacancy for Advocacy and Communications Expert on 17th June 2020)



Children-Women in Social Service and Human Rights (CWISH), a non-profit organization, established in 1993 with an aim to ensure social justice, protection and promotion of human rights especially the rights of children, invites applications for the post of Advocacy Expert from interested eligible candidates (Nepali citizens only) who are reliable, accountable, and have ability to deliver results with highest level of integrity.

Position: Advocacy Expert for Child Labour: Action-Research-Innovation in South and South-Eastern Asia (CLARISSA) Project

Post Type: Full time (40 hours per week)

Work Station: Kathmandu Contract Type: Two and a half years with 3 months probationary period

Required Education and Training:

• Master's degree in law, human rights, social studies, child rights/protection or similar qualification. Master's degree in human rights law and training in rights-based advocacy desirable

Experience and Skills:

- · At least five years of dedicated work experience in the field of evidence based advocacy and multi-stakeholder communication.
- Experience of advocacy/policy advocacy to multiple stakeholders at local and national level.
- Experience of working directly with highly vulnerable and marginalised children, adults and communities in particular child labourers.

Please follow the link below to see or download the details for the Job Descriptions and Job Profile for the

Advocacy Expert position: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Pgs010YPsxLZxfBtk-viccc9JASv57l /view?usp=sharing

Applications and Deadlines:

Applicants who had applied for previous vacancy announcement need not apply again.

- Qualified candidates are requested to email the following documents to CWISH at vacancy@cwish.org.np A cover letter
- o A motivation letter mentioning why you think yourself as a potential candidate for the Advocacy Expert

o An updated CV with recent passport size photo

The application deadline for this position is 18:00 hrs, Tuesday, 21st July 2020 **Interview and Presentations:**

• Only shortlisted candidates will be invited for the further selection process including written examination, presentation and interview.

CWISH reserves all rights to qualify/disqualify applications in any case; all applications will be treated with the highest confidentiality.

CULTURE & ARTS

In an age of exciting musical visuals, 17-year-old Nishan Bhujel is doing all the right things

Bhujel is a self-taught, independent videographer, who is changing the game of traditional video making.

SHASHWAT PANT

he past year has been quite surreal for Nishan Bhujel. Only 17, Bhujel, who picked up a camera only two years ago, has shot music videos for popular Nepali artists like Manas Ghaley and 5:55. He has also worked with popular Indian rapper Emiway Bantai, making seven videos for the artist in just one year. One such video, for the song Firse Machayenge, released in February, has amassed over 200 million views.

"The video got 100 million views in 50 days. When I saw that, I couldn't process it for a while. I started to get a lot of messages from people here and in India congratulating me for my work," says Bhujel. "Sometimes I still can't believe it. But I've always believed in my ability and I still have a long way to go," says Bhujel, who is still in high school.

Bhujel's love for shooting and filmmaking started from a young age, he says. By the time he turned 14, he had spent much of his free time watching a lot of movies, especially works of Bong Joon Ho, who he says is his inspiration.

"His work is perfect. Everything that is on the frame is there for a reason. His use of visual metaphors and symbolism is something I like the most about him. He's a true genius," says Bhujel.

He'd also spend hours on YouTube watching travel videos created by Sam Kolder and music videos shot by Cole Benett learning how to visualise and write scripts. Through YouTube, he also learnt how to edit. "The internet has been my teacher. I had a general idea of a lot of things before I got my first camera," he says.

Soon after Bhujel completed his SEE, his father bought him his first camera, a Canon 80D. With the things he had learned on the internet, which he calls his "film school", Bhujel started to explore and create. He started to make more travel videos, this time with the camera travelling whenever he got the chance. But in his heart, he always wanted to make films like his idol Bong Joon Ho.

"That is still what I want to do. Make features and short films in the long run. But I realised that I still had to learn a lot which is why I worked on a few projects alongside Jholey (Prajwal Thapa Magar)," he says.

That opened up new avenues for Bhujel. First he got a chance to assist James Lama for Manas Ghaley's song Keraisiti. After doing well there, he got a chance to shoot and edit



PHOTO COURTESY: NISHAN BHUJEL

Bhujel (right) with Indian rapper Emiway Bantai during the shooting of the song Firse Machayenge. The song has amassed over 200 million views

another Ghaley song called Drop That Verse.

"After doing a few projects, I started to approach other Nepali artists asking them if they'd give me a chance to shoot their videos," he says. "Luckily, I got good responses."

One guy who was highly impressed with Bhujel's work was Chirag Singh Khadka, better known by his rapper alias 5:55. He approached Bhujel and asked him to shoot a video for his single Life Jacket.

Working with Nepali artists like 5:55 paved the way for the teenager for greater things. Always proactive, Bhujel, when he heard that Indian rapper Emiway Bantai was coming to Nepal, sent an email to Bantai's team sending them his work and seeking permission to shoot a behind the scene video of his show. But Bantai had different plans.

"Emiway replied himself asking if I would be interested in making a music video for him in Nepal. That was quite unreal," he says. "I just wanted to do a behind the scene video of a gig, and he was a famous rapper asking me if I'd be interested to make a video. That is still a special moment."

A great music video isn't just a collection of

great visuals—it gives life to a song. And Bhujel knows that too well. Bhujel wrote a script and shot Bantai's Checkmate in a day. After a few days, he sent the final edit to Bantai. Impressed by the teenager, Bantai sent him a plane ticket asking him to come to Mumbai to work on other projects.

With Bantai, Bhujel travelled across India.

He went to Mumbai initially then to Kerala, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Lakshadeep and Mumbai for nearly two months. "It was quite an experience for a young boy like me to travel with a superstar like him. It was overwhelming in the beginning, but it was a lot of fun. It didn't even feel like work," he says.

But Bhujel wants to do more than shoot

music videos. He wants to make both feature and short films and says he's currently learning how to write better scripts. "I've been writing scripts since I was in hostel. And currently I'm taking this lockdown to explore my writing." He says he's been watching a lot of movies

lysing them. He's also been taking classes through the internet trying to learn something new every day.

Using the things he learnt, he's recently released a short film called Starving. In the short film, he has made the use of evocative visuals, aided with sound that makes the narrative immersive. His experiment with transitions is something that stands out. That is something that is also evident in the other videos available on his YouTube channel.

"It was a fun project me and my friends made in just three days. I feel it's my best work so far. One that I'm very proud of. I'm glad that it's been getting some decent responses so far," he says.

Even though he wants to keep doing what he is doing in the future, he says he still isn't sure if he does want to get into film school. "I think I still want to work a bit more. Learn a bit more before I decide if I want to get into film school. That way I'll not be wasting time there, and I'll keep learning."

EXO members prove worth with solo, subunit gigs amid group hiatus

Amid the break of group activities, with three members of the group serving their mandatory two-year military duties, members of the K-pop band are exploring their solo ventures.



YONHAP

espite nearly half of its

full lineup currently

absent, the presence of

K-pop boy band EXO, a

third-generation K-pop

stalwart, still resonates

loud and deep, as remaining members

pursue solo and subunit projects

during the group's hiatus due to the

military duty requirements of its

Currently, three members—Suho,

Xiumin and D.O.—of the highly popu-

lar nine-piece act are serving out their

two-year military duties. Chinese

member Lay has also been absent

from the group's latest activities and

promotions, focusing on his solo

career in China and the United States.

men must carry out military service

By law, all able-bodied South Korean

PHOTO: THE KOREA HERALD

for about two years in a country that faces North Korea across one of the world's most heavily fortified borders. Violators are punished with prison terms.

Amid the hiatus of group activities, Baekhyun recently made headlines after releasing his second solo EP album Delight to huge commercial success.

The seven-track EP sold over 1 million copies since its late May release to become the third-biggest selling record after BTS' fourth studio album Map of the Soul: 7 and Seventeen's seventh EP record Heng:garae.

With Delight, Baekhyun became the first solo artist to sell over 1 million copies of an album after Kim Gun-mo, who set the record with his seventh studio album in 2001.

Baekhyun also became the first singer to earn the "million seller" title

through both group and solo projects in 20 years after K-pop icon Seo Taeji from back in 2000.

Upon release, Delight also climbed to No. 1 on the Top Album charts run by Apple in 68 countries and regions

Baekhyun made his solo debut in July of 2019 with the debut EP City Lights, which moved over 500,000 copies in its first week. "I want to leave a lasting impact

through this album and further harden my position as a solo singer," Baekhyun said prior to releasing his second solo album. He is largely expected to enlist in the military sometime later this year.

EXO-SC, a subunit of EXO formed of rappers Sehun and Chanyeol, also came out with its first studio album 1 Billion Views on Monday.

The nine-track hip-hop oriented album, a follow-up to the duo's debut EP "What a Life," soared to No. 1 on the Top Album charts run by Apple in 50 countries and regions.

Signs of domestic physical albums sales also hint at commercial success, with the album taking the lead in the major music retail sales charts of Hanteo Chart, Synnara Record and Hot Tracks.

1 Billion Views also was certified "platinum" by the Chinese music streaming service QQ Music, a title given to albums that record sales of over 1 million yuan (\$142,942). The new album hit the milestone just one hour and 25 minutes after it was uploaded on the streaming service.

Sehun said he contemplated a lot of his time as a child to his current life as a K-pop artist while coming up with the words of the album.

"I thought about the hard and good times, reflecting on the busy career that I've lived through. It was a good opportunity to look back at the path I've taken," Sehun was quoted as saying in a press release from SM Entertainment.

EXO member Kai is also reportedly preparing to make his first solo outing in the second half of the year.

Kai, the main dancer of EXO, has recently been active in SM Entertainment's super band SuperM, formed of members for the companies major groups of EXO, SHINee, NCT 127 and Way V.

—The Korea Herald

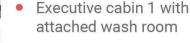
OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE FOR RENT

at Central Business Park, Thapathali, Kathmandu





 Total core area 4039 sqft without veranda (varanda area approx 475 sqft)



Normal cabin 2

Recording studio 1

Meeting room 1

Recreation i land 1

Waiting lounge 1

Reception desk 1

For more information \$\&\ 9851102584