



THE KATHMANDU POST

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

Nepal's largest selling English daily
Printed simultaneously in Kathmandu, Biratnagar, Bharatpur and Nepalgunj

Vol XXX No. 94 | 10 pages | Rs.5
Monday, May 23, 2022 | 09-02-2079

32.8° C 10.5° C
Simara Jumla



Children play with a replica of the Rato Machhindranath chariot in Mangalbazar in Lalitpur on Sunday.

Fuel prices up, again

Petrol costs Rs180 a litre, diesel Rs163, cooking gas Rs1,800 per cylinder now.

POST REPORT

KATHMANDU, MAY 22

The Nepal Oil Corporation on Sunday hiked the prices of all petroleum products, a week after the last increment. The new rates will come into effect on Monday.

With the revised rate, the price of petrol will cost Rs180 per litre, from the earlier Rs170.

Despite the hike, the state-owned fuel monopoly said it still suffers a loss of Rs14.64 per litre in petrol.

Similarly, the price of diesel and kerosene has been hiked by Rs10 to Rs163 per litre each.

The loss in diesel is Rs26.82 per litre, the corporation said in a statement. However, the corporation enjoys a profit of Rs22.11 on a litre of kerosene. The corporation has also hiked the prices of liquefied petroleum gas. A cooking gas cylinder now costs Rs1,800, from the earlier Rs1,600.

Likewise, the corporation has jacked up aviation fuel prices sold to the domestic carriers by Rs10 per litre, which will now cost Rs166 per litre.

The state oil monopoly said its fortnightly losses, after the price revision, would be Rs3.35 billion, indicating another hike soon.

The oil monopoly said in a statement that out of the Rs43 billion amount that it needs to pay its supplier—Indian Oil Corporation, by May, only Rs20.60 billion has been cleared so far due to cash shortage.

>> Continued on page 2

What's in store for the five-party alliance after local vote results?

With increased bargaining power, the Maoists may want to continue partnership, but CPN (Unified Socialist) and Janata Samajbadi Party look unhappy.

TIKA R PRADHAN

KATHMANDU, MAY 22

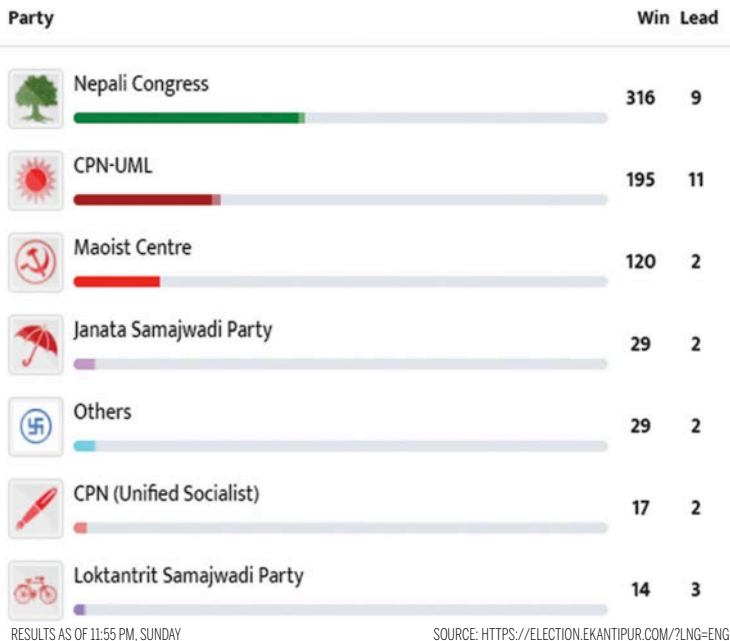
When the five-party ruling coalition was in deep engagements to form an electoral alliance, the goal was not only the May 13 elections. The five forces had their eyes set on general and provincial elections as well, which are due later this year. Rastriya Janamorchha, the fifth party in the coalition, was just tagging along. Anyway it is an anti-federalist force.

The four parties—the Nepali Congress, the CPN (Maoist Centre), the Janata Samajbadi Party and the CPN (Unified Socialist)—however, were guided by their own interests.

Congress wanted to pre-empt the Maoist Centre's possible alliance with the CPN-UML. The Maoist Centre wanted to maintain its political relevance. The CPN (Unified Socialist) lacked a popular base for elections, as it was formed only in August last year after splitting from the UML. The Janata Samajbadi leaders said they did better where they fielded candidates individually but lost most of the places where they forged alliances.

Local election results show the Congress and the Maoist Centre are the biggest gainers. The Maoist

Number of local unit chairs won by parties



Centre even managed to establish itself as a decisive force extricating itself from the risk of being consigned to oblivion.

The Unified Socialist has been by and large decimated, with just 17 wins and two leading. The alli-

ance made no sense for the Janata Samajbadi.

Now these two parties have started complaining against the alliance, while the Maoist Centre is feeling smug.

>> Continued on page 2

Resham Chaudhary won election from hiding. His 5-month-old party claims Tikapur when he is in jail

Tharus who feel they were shortchanged by the state have spoken through the ballot, activists and analysts say.

BINOD GHIMIRE

KATHMANDU, MAY 22

In the run-up to the promulgation of the constitution, Nepal's southern belt was burning—on the eastern part, Madhesis were protesting, and in the far-west region, Tharus were up in arms. And on August 24, 2015, less than a month before major party leaders adopted the constitution in Kathmandu, the Tikapur incident happened. Thousands of Tharus had gathered against politicians' decision to address the demand for an Akhanda Sudurpaschim, which meant keeping the entire "Far-western Development Region" as a single province in the new federal setup. Tharus felt they were short-changed.

Thousands of Tharus gathered in Tikapur to protest. Security personnel were caught unawares. Nine people—eight police personnel and a toddler—were killed in ensuing clashes.

The local administration pinned down Resham Chaudhary, then a leader of the Rastriya Janata Party, as the mastermind of Tikapur violence. Police launched an indiscriminate crackdown,



Resham Chaudhary took his oath while still in prison.

arresting whoever they wanted to on the charge of their involvement in the violence, from the very next day.

Resham went into hiding. Two years after the constitution's promulgation, Resham ran for a parliamentary seat. He won despite being

in hiding.

In February 2018, he turned himself in. On March 7, 2019 Resham was convicted by Kailali District Court. He is currently in jail.

In the lead up to the local elections this year, Resham formed his own party—Nagarik Unmukti Party (NUP). His wife Ranjita Shrestha on January 3 registered the party.

The five-month-old party has fared exceptionally well, winning four local units out of 13 to become the largest party in Kailali. The ruling Nepali Congress is in second position winning three local units. The party's Ram Lal Dagaura Tharu secured 9,642 votes to defeat Congress' Nawaraj Rawal by a margin of 3,000 votes.

Indu Kumari Chaudhary, an activist advocating the rights of indigenous people, says NUP's victory is a clear indication that people believe injustice has been done to Resham.

"Tharus have always been exploited. Even the regional parties used them as their vote bank. By voting for the NUP, people have expressed their dissatisfaction," she told the Post over the phone.

>> Continued on page 2

Much talk but little action to tame rising inflation which is biting Nepalis hard

There should be social protection schemes, fair price shops and reduction of import duties to offset price rises, experts say.

SANGAM PRASAIN & KRISHANA PRASAIN

KATHMANDU, MAY 22

Economists have been crying hoarse about rising inflation and the risk to the Nepali economy, but policymakers don't seem to be much concerned by their warnings, and have been acting like it's business as usual.

It's apparently not business as usual at Unilever Nepal. The multinational giant says in its latest report that its net profit for the third quarter shrank 32 percent to Rs220 million simply because people are not buying.

Nepali consumers are not buying domestic goods, but they have been splurging on foreign products. The country's import bill has been projected to jump to nearly Rs2 trillion this fiscal year, ending mid-July, which is definitely a bad sign for the economy and portends a full-blown financial crisis, analysts say.

The Central Bureau of Statistics has played down their claims, saying that they expect the import bill to reach the Rs2 trillion mark, equivalent to nearly half of the country's GDP, by the end of the fiscal year; and "that's a good thing as it will boost the growth rate."

But the majority of goods that Nepal is importing are non-essential, and have little to no effect on the growth of the economy. Imports certainly contribute to economic growth, but some of the imports are less important for the economy, insiders say.

"For example, Nepal is spending nearly Rs100 billion to import agricultural goods, mainly cereal crops. Instead of producing cereals in the country, we are importing them, and this signals which way our economy is heading," said an unnamed senior statistician at the Agriculture Ministry.

Nepal's policymakers and planners are finally speaking about inflation.

"As of today, the economy is not in sound health," declared the central bank governor, Maha Prasad Adhikari, addressing an interaction on the impact of inflation on Nepal's economy organised by the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

"It's a serious issue when the country's foreign exchange reserves decline by \$2.3 billion within a year. We cannot face this situation always. It's time to save the economy and everyone should work together," said Adhikari.

Imports have not just increased—they have ballooned. Nepal is now spending on imports in six months what it used to spend in a year before the pandemic. This is not because the quantity of imports has grown, but because their value has swelled three to four times, importers say.

Prices have been driven up by bottlenecked supply chains and robust consumer demand immediately after the Covid cases started to recede.

"In Nepal, consumption increased dramatically," said Adhikari.

This depleted foreign currency reserves as money flowed out to pay for foreign goods. Prices have shot up globally.

According to Adhikari, average inflation in Turkey jumped 70 percent. In the United States, consumer price growth surpassed 8 percent in March, its fastest pace since 1981 following a surge in the cost of energy and food. In Europe, inflation rose to a 25-year high of 5 percent.

Nepal's consumer price inflation rose to 7.28 percent year-on-year in mid-April from 7.14 percent in the previous month and 3.10 percent last year.

"Inflation has been worrying not only poor countries but rich nations too," said Adhikari.

>> Continued on page 7



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A woman jumps over a pool of water while another pedestrian waits to take her turn at a footpath that is undergoing maintenance at New Road, in Kathmandu, on Sunday.

POST PHOTO: ELITE JOSHI

Health Ministry asks local units to start Covid booster jab campaign by May 28

ARJUN POUDEL
KATHMANDU, MAY 22

The Ministry of Health and Population has asked all local units throughout the country to start a booster campaign by May 28.

The request by the ministry comes amid a decline in the uptake of the Covid-19 vaccine.

“All local governments throughout the country will start Covid booster campaign by May 28,” said Sagar Dahal, chief of the National Immunisation Programme. “Local governments can also start the campaign earlier, at their convenience.”

Officials at the Health Ministry said that doses of Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines have been sent to the districts throughout the country on a needs basis.

The ministry had halted the rollout of the vaccine prior to the local elections, which were held on May 13 throughout the country in a single phase, to prevent the vaccine doses from going to waste.

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine doses, which are being stored at minus 80 degrees Celsius in ultra cold freezers, can be kept in normal temperatures (2 to 8 degrees Celsius) for up to 31 days. If not used within 31 days of the rollout, the vaccine doses must be discarded.

The Moderna vaccine also needs to be stored at minus 20 degrees Celsius and can be stored in normal temperatures (2 to 8 degrees Celsius) for up to 31 days. If not used within 31 days of the rollout, Moderna doses too must be discarded.

“We have supplied the vaccine doses in sufficient numbers to the districts and the provinces,” said Dr Surendra Chaurasia, chief of the Logistics Management Section of the Department of Health Services. “We hope that the local governments will start the immunisation campaign at the earliest, as the vaccine doses need to be administered within a certain time frame.”

The government has over 3 million doses of Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccine doses in stock.

Officials hope that administration of the booster shots will help to lessen the risk of Covid-19 outbreaks, and seriousness and deaths from possible infection.

“Everyone above 18 years old who was administered the second doses will be given booster shots, and those above 12 who are not yet vaccinated will be given primary doses, during the campaign,” said Dahal, chief of the National Immunisation Programme.

Earlier in March, the government requested the COVAX facility to halt shipment of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine due to storage problems. The facility, the United Nations-backed international vaccine-sharing scheme, had committed to supply 9.2 million doses of the said vaccine, supplied 1.5 million doses in March. The supply of the rest of the doses has been put on hold at the request of the Nepal government.

With a decline in coronavirus cases in the country very few people are seeking Covid jabs. The Health Ministry had decided to administer booster shots to all who were administered their second doses three months ago, but there has been no significant increase in the uptake.

On Sunday, 17,302 people were vaccinated against Covid.

So far, 19,750,586 people or 67.7 percent of the total population have been immunised against Covid. The Health Ministry said that 5,773,437 people have taken Covid booster shots as of Sunday.

Currently, there are 141 active cases of the coronavirus in Nepal.

The Health Ministry said that there are over 10 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines in stock. Of them, four million doses are the Sinovac-CoronaVac vaccine provided by China in grant assistance. The vaccine doses were supplied in March.

Officials at the Health Ministry said that the Sinovac-CoronaVac Covid-19 vaccine will be rolled out only after all the vaccine doses in stock are used up. The Sinovac-CoronaVac Covid-19 vaccine has a shelf life of two years.

So far the country has received 53,381,570 doses of various vaccines—AstraZeneca, Vero Cell, Moderna, Janssen, Sinovac-CoronaVac and Pfizer-BioNTech.

The Health Ministry said that 8.4 million doses of paediatric Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine have been secured for children between five and 11 years old. According to officials, the Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunisation has agreed to supply the vaccine doses for free.

“The date for the supply of the vaccine doses has not been confirmed yet, but GAVI will provide us the jabs,” said Dahal, chief of the national immunisation programme. “We hope that the supply will start from June.”

Pfizer-BioNTech’s is the only jab recommended by the World Health Organisation for use in 5-11-year-olds.

The American Association of Pediatrics has recommended administering 10 microgram doses in a gap of 21 days to children aged five to 11. The dose, 0.2ml, is a third of what is administered to adolescents and adults.

The vaccine vial for children in the said age bracket comes with an orange cap while the other vial is purple-capped.

Each vial with 10 doses needs 1.3 millilitres (ml) of diluent under Pfizer’s preliminary plan. The vaccines can be stored for six months in an ultra-cold freezer or 10 weeks in a normal refrigerator, under Pfizer’s proposal.

The US Food and Drug Administration in October authorised emergency use of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine for children between five and 11 years.

Capital’s commuters, drivers demand bus parks for short-route transport

Lack of a bus park for short- and medium-route vehicles has inconvenienced thousands of commuters who rely on public vehicles.

ANUP OJHA
KATHMANDU, MAY 22

On Friday evening, Kumar Basnet was among many people who had reached the City Hall at the Exhibition Road to get updates of the vote count of the Kathmandu Metropolitan City.

It was the sixth day of vote counting.

Basnet, 27, of Naya Bazar-7, Banepa Municipality in Kavrepalanchok, had come to Kathmandu on Thursday to make arrangements for his travel abroad. On Friday, he got caught up in the crowd of cheering supporters of Balen Shah, an independent mayoral candidate of the Kathmandu Metropolitan City who is leading the race.

At around 6pm, the weather changed. A strong storm was brewing overhead and soon the city was drenched in heavy rainfall. Basnet looked around for shelter. He would have preferred to get on a bus and make his way home but there were no bus stands around where he could wait out the storm.

“It’s really hard to get buses to Banepa from the Bir Hospital area,” said Basnet, who had by then moved to a nearby shade offered by a tree where dozens more were sheltering from the rain.

“It’s so shameful that the Kathmandu Metropolitan City, the country’s largest capital city, does not have a bus park for short- and medium-route buses,” said Basnet.

The country’s Capital city has not had a bus park for short and medium route buses for over a year and hundreds of commuters who depend on public transport find it a challenge to move around the city.

Until last year, the Kathmandu Metropolitan City used the Khula Manch, the open air theatre, as a bus park. On April 28 last year, the city padlocked Khula Manch following numerous protests by heritage activists, locals and citizen-led groups, who had been calling for vacating Khula Manch since 2019. Buses and other public vehicles had to be cleared out from Khula Manch.

The initial plan was to use Khula



POST PHOTO : ANUP OJHA

Khula Manch served as a bus park for more than five years.

Manch as a bus stand for six months but for lack of an alternative, the bus park operated out of Khula Manch for more than five years.

In 2016, the City decided to use half of the Khula Manch as a bus park to facilitate the construction of the View Tower at the Old Bus Park. The City had planned to use the tower’s basement as a bus park.

The View Tower is being built under a build-own-operate-transfer basis by Jaleshwar Swachhanda Bkoi Builders Pvt Ltd. According to the original contract, the company was to complete the construction in five years, operate the property for 30 years and then hand it over to

the Kathmandu Metropolitan City. But the contractor has already missed the construction deadline and has secured an extension of the contract, according to City officials.

Since last year, the City has applied a ‘pick and drop system’ for buses to Banepa, Panuati, and Sundarjal from Bir Hospital; safe tempos [electric three-wheelers] and micro buses within the Kathmandu Valley can pick and drop passengers from the New Road Gate and Bhrikutimandap area. This has resulted in limited destination options for tens of thousands of people who travel from the outskirts of the Valley to Kathmandu and back every day.

Prakash Lama, 62, from Swayambhu, who was also at the Exhibition Road on Friday, said the management, or lack thereof, of public transportation for short- and medium-routes is frustrating. “There are no bus parks in a city full of vehicles,” said Lama, who is a retired teacher. “We don’t even have proper bus stands where commuters can wait for buses and take shelter from the elements. The first job of the upcoming mayor should be eliminating these problems.”

The New Bus Park at Gongabu is only for long route buses except for Sajha Yatayat buses, which ply within the Valley. For other



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TODAY



Keynote Speaker

Dilendra Prasad Badu
Minister, Ministry of Industry,
Commerce and Supply



Opening Remarks

Vishnu K Agarwal
President of CNI

Panel Speaker

Speaker

Moderator

First Session

**Attracting FDI to
increase production**



Dr. Biswonath Poudel
Vice-Chairman,
National Planning Commission



Maha Prasad Adhikari
Governor, Nepal Rastra Bank



Barsha Shrestha
Business Head,
ICRA Nepal Limited



Hemraj Dhakal
Vice President, Confederation
of Nepalese Industries



Dr. Achyut Wagle
Economist



Dipendra Chaulagain
Director Prosperity Foundation

Second Session

**Legal barriers to
enhancing productivity**



Kishan Shrestha
Minister, Labor and Employment



Barsaman Pun
Former Finance Minister



Uday Raj Sapkota
Secretary, Ministry of Law,
Justice and Parliamentary Affairs



Chhaya Sharma
Founding Member, Federation of
Women Entrepreneurs



Birendra Raj Pandey
Vice President, Confederation
of Nepalese Industries



Sabin Mishra
Director, Confederation
of Nepalese Industries

Third Session

**Where is the land
for industrial use?**



Umesh Shrestha
Office of the Minister of State, Prime Minister
and Council of Ministers



Surendra Pandey
Former Finance Minister



Ram Prasad Thapaliya
Secretary, Ministry of
Land Management,
Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation



Haribhakta Sharma
Former President,
Confederation
of Nepalese Industries



Ram Krishna Khatriwada
CEO, Infrastructure Bank



Nitu Pandit
Journalist

Fourth Session

**Boosting domestic output
and promoting export**



Pampha Bhusal
Minister, Energy, Water
Resources and Irrigation



Dr. Swarnim Wagle
Former Vice-Chairman,
National Planning Commission



Arjun Pokharel
Secretary, Ministry of Industry,
Commerce and Supply



Vidushi Rana
Executive Director,
Universal Group



Krishna Prasad Adhikari
Vice President, Confederation
of Nepalese Industries



Suresh Raj Neupane
Journalist

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BRIEFING

MS Group/Millenia Global ties up with Orion to boost market share

KATHMANDU: MS Group/Millenia Global, has tied up with Orion India as its national distributor in Nepal. Orion's state-of-the-art facility in Bhiwadi, Rajasthan will be producing 'Original Choco-Pie' and other food products for the Nepal market at reasonable costs. Owing to the rising popularity and demand for K-Foods in Nepal amidst the K-wave that is sweeping the entire world, Orion is optimistic about its tie-up with MS Group/Millenia Global, reads the press release issued by the company. MS Group/Millenia Global plans to expand its operations to over 35,000 stores across Nepal for Orion in the next year. **(PR)**

NICCI president honoured by Draupadi Dream Trust in India

KATHMANDU: President of Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce & Industry (NICCI) Shreejana Rana has been honoured by Draupadi Samman Patra-2022 in New Delhi for her contribution to Nepal-India bilateral relations through development and promotion of religious/spiritual tourism in both countries. "NICCI feels proud at this moment and encouraged to work sincerely in the area of Nepal-India Economic and bilateral relations in the coming days," according to a statement issued by the group. Nepali Ambassador to India Shankar Sharma and Minister (Economic) at the Nepalese Embassy, New Delhi Nita Pokhrel Aryal were also present on the occasion. **(PR)**

China makes 10 billion yuan available to subsidise growers

BEIJING: China's central government has made available 10 billion yuan (\$1.49 billion) for "one-off" subsidies to support individuals and companies involved in grain cultivation and production, according to a statement published on Sunday by the country's Ministry of Finance. The subsidies aim to support grain growers during the summer and autumn harvest and sowing period, to alleviate any impact of rising costs and to "further mobilise farmers' enthusiasm" for cultivating grain, the statement said. The announcement comes at a time when China's farmers are grappling with high fertiliser prices, which have soared globally since last year. **(REUTERS)**

US, Japan, Australia and India to launch tracking system to monitor illegal fishing by China



WASHINGTON: US, Japan, Australia, and India will unveil a maritime initiative at the Quad summit in Tokyo to curb illegal fishing in the Indo-Pacific, the Financial Times reported on Saturday, citing a US official. The said that the maritime initiative will use satellite technology to create a tracking system for illegal fishing from the Indian Ocean to the South Pacific by connecting surveillance centres in Singapore and India. According to the Financial Times report, the maritime initiative will enable these countries to monitor illegal fishing even when the boats have turned off the transponders. **(REUTERS)**

FOREX

US Dollar	124.38
Euro	131.37
Pound Sterling	155.33
Japanese Yen (10)	9.73
Chinese Yuan	18.58
Qatari Riyal	33.96
Australian Dollar	87.49
Malaysian Ringgit	28.34
Saudi Arab Riyal	33.16

Exchange rates fixed by Nepal Rastra Bank

BULLION

	PRICE PER TOLA
 Fine Gold	Rs 98,000
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SOURCE: FENEGOSIDA

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Rs 1800/-

Source: Nepal Oil Corporation

Much talk but little action to tame rising inflation

>> Continued from page 1

But economists have not been able to reach a consensus on just how concerned people should be about inflation, and how likely it is to show up on a sustained basis.

"The economy has started to revive a little, but inflation is spiralling out of control," economist Dadhi Adhikari told the Post in a recent interview. "That's worrying. Policymakers are not worried because inflation does not touch the lives of the people who frame the policy. It's only the poor people who suffer."

Economists have warned that a combination of government stimulus and sudden rebound in the economy will cause prices to overheat.

The central bank has already mobilised Rs700 billion in the market.

Rabin Puri, president of the Nepal Feed Industries Association, says prices of raw materials needed to make livestock feed have risen by more than 20 percent. "That obviously will push up the price of chicken in the coming weeks and months," he said.

As Nepal is an import-dependent country, inflation is likely to rise. Commodity prices are expected to remain well above the most recent five-year average.

In the event of a prolonged war or additional sanctions on Russia, prices could be even higher and more volatile than currently projected, according to the Commodity Market Outlook



SHUTTERSTOCK

Economists have warned that a combination of government stimulus and sudden rebound in the economy will cause prices to overheat.

report of the World Bank Group published in April.

The most significant risk is for people who are scarred by a long period of unemployment. People being out of

work, and not able to find jobs, can have a permanent effect on their lives, say economists.

Governor Adhikari said that the liquidity crisis the banks are facing

may continue in the long run by analysing indicators like balance of payments and trade deficit.

Inflation, to which policymakers paid little attention, had already

China quietly increases purchases of low-priced Russian oil

Many European refiners have already stopped buying from Russia for fear of running afoul of sanctions.



REUTERS

A file photo shows oil tankers at a terminal of Sinopec Yaogang oil depot in Nantong, Jiangsu province, China.

REUTERS

SINGAPORE, MAY 22

China is quietly ramping up purchases of oil from Russia at bargain prices, according to shipping data and oil traders who spoke to Reuters, filling the vacuum left by Western buyers backing away from business with Russia after its invasion of Ukraine in February.

The move by the world's biggest oil importer comes a month after it initially cut back on Russian supplies, for fear of appearing to openly support Moscow and potentially expose its state oil giants to sanctions.

China's seaborne Russian oil imports will jump to a near-record 1.1 million barrels per day (bpd) in May, up from 750,000 bpd in the first quarter and 800,000 bpd in 2021, according to an estimate by Vortexa Analytics.

Unipex, the trading arm of Asia's top refiner Sinopec Corp, is leading the purchases, along with Zhenhua Oil, a unit of China's defense conglomerate Norinco, according to

shipping data, a shipbroker report seen by Reuters and five traders. Livna Shipping Ltd, a Hong Kong-registered firm, has also recently emerged as a major shipper of Russian oil into China, the traders said.

Sinopec declined comment. Zhenhua and Livna did not respond to requests for comment. The firms are filling the hole left by western buyers after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which Russia calls a "special military operation."

The United States, Britain and some other key oil buyers banned imports of Russian oil shortly after the invasion. The European Union is finalising a further round of sanctions, including a ban on Russian oil purchases. Many European refiners have already stopped buying from Russia for fear of running afoul of sanctions or drawing negative publicity.

Vitol and Trafigura, two of the world's biggest commodity traders, phased out purchases from Rosneft, Russia's biggest oil producer, ahead of an EU rule that came into

effect on May 15 barring purchases unless "strictly necessary" to secure the EU's energy needs.

"The situation began taking a drastic turn after the exit of Vitol and Trafigura that created a vacuum, which could only be filled by companies that can provide value and are trusted by their Russian counterparts," one Chinese trader, who asked not to be named, told Reuters.

The low price of Russia's oil—spot differentials are about \$29 less per barrel compared with before the invasion, according to traders—is a boon for China's refiners as they face shrinking margins in a slowing economy. The price is well below competing barrels from the Middle East, Africa, Europe and the United States.

China separately receives some 800,000 bpd of Russian oil via pipelines under government deals. That would bring May imports to nearly 2 million bpd, 15 percent of China's overall demand.

For Russia, oil sales are helping to cushion the blow to its economy from sanctions.

State-owned Chinese companies, led by Sinopec and Zhenhua, are set to buy two thirds of Russia's flagship Far Eastern export grade ESPO (Eastern Siberia-Pacific Ocean oil pipeline) blend in May, up from a third before the invasion of Ukraine, traders who closely monitor the flows told Reuters. Russia exported about 24 million barrels in May, 6 percent higher than April.

Sinopec alone is likely to buy at least 10 ESPO shipments in May, doubling its volume before the invasion, with some of the trades hitting a record discount of \$20 a barrel below benchmark Dubai crude on FOB Kozmino basis, three of the traders said.

Sinopec, Zhenhua and Livna are moving more oil from both Russia's Baltic Sea ports in northwestern Europe and its Far East export hub Kozmino.

Zhenhua, the smallest state-owned Chinese oil trader, has chartered ships to move Russian oil, according to shipping data and traders with knowledge of the matter.

Malaysia sees competitiveness as Indonesia resumes exports

REUTERS

KUALA LUMPUR, MAY 22

Indonesia's resumption of palm oil exports will not blunt Malaysia's competitiveness in exporting the edible oil, the Malaysian commodities minister said on Sunday, pointing to the rival's loss of sales in India.

Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin urged "all Malaysian oil palm growers—both plantation firms and smallholders alike—not to be unduly concerned with the recent development."

Indonesia is the largest producer of palm oil, with

Malaysia second. Prices of all kinds of edible oils have hit record highs this year because the war in Ukraine has disrupted supply of one of them, sunflower oil.

"Indonesia's policies could well work to Malaysia's advantage ...," said Zuraida, the minister for plantation industries and commodities. Indonesia's export control policies "would enable [Malaysia] to emerge a dominant supplier to India," she said. Her statement was headed: "Malaysia will not lose competitive edge as Indonesia resumes palm oil export."

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

A well reputed progressive school in Lalitpur, invites applications from qualified and highly motivated candidates for the following posts:

1. Position:	Coordinator (Pre-primary Level)
Requirement:	Bachelor's degree or above.
Experience:	More than 2 years
Salary:	Above 35K
2. Position:	English Teacher (Secondary Level)
Requirement:	Master's degree or above.
Experience:	More than 2 years
Salary:	Above 50K

Candidate with relevant work experience and training will be given priority. Interested candidate who meet the above criteria may send their application with detailed CV to the following email by May 31, 2022.

E-mail : school.vacancy321@gmail.com

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for further recruitment process.



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation
Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPIC)

Central Renewable Energy Fund (CREF)

Mid Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal

Phone: +9771-4498013, 4498014 Fax: 01-5542397

Website: www.aepc.gov.np, Email: info@aepc.gov.np

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Contract Identification Number: AEPIC/NRREP/CREF/2021/22-02

Date of Notice Publication: 23 May 2022

Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPIC): National focal agency promoting renewable energy technologies in Nepal, is currently executing National Rural and Renewable Energy Program (NRREP) with the support from Government of Nepal and various international development partners. AEPIC/NRREP/CREF hereby Requests for Proposal (RFP) from eligible Consulting Firms/Institutions for the tasks: "Audit of AEPIC/NRREP/CREF" For the period from 16/07/2020 to 15/07/2021 and from 16/07/2021 to 16/07/2022 (Nepali Fiscal Year-from 01/04/2077 to 31/03/2078 and from 01/04/2078 to 32/03/2079)

- The proposal must contain **Technical** and **Financial** proposals sealed in **Separate Envelopes**. Both the sealed proposals must be sealed in another single envelop mentioning **Title** of the task and **RFP Number**.
- Detailed RFP (with ToR) for the above task can be downloaded from www.aepc.gov.np or can be obtained from AEPIC/CREF.
- Proposal (in Hard Copy) must be delivered manually to the address above by **12:00 hour's local time** on or before **7 June 2022**.
- Received Proposal (**Technical**) shall be opened in the presence of Proponents' representatives who choose to attend at **12:30 P.M. on 7 June 2022** at the office of AEPIC, Mid Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- The method of selection will be Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS), **80:20** weightage for Technical and Financial proposals respectively.
- Other details are available in the RFP document.

Manchester City retain Premier League trophy

Guardiola's men fight back from two goals down to overcome Aston Villa 3-2 to pip Liverpool, who beat Wolves 3-1, to title by a point on the final day.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON, MAY 22

Manchester City won the Premier League for the fourth time in five seasons after a pulsating title race reached a dramatic conclusion as the champions staged an incredible comeback from two goals down to beat Aston Villa 3-2 on Sunday.

Pep Guardiola's side were teetering on the brink of blowing the title after falling 2-0 behind midway through the second half at the Etihad Stadium. But Ilkay Gundogan sparked an astonishing City revival as the German midfielder reduced the deficit before Rodri grabbed the equaliser. Gundogan turned in City's third goal in the space of five minutes in the 81st minute, rendering second placed Liverpool's 3-1 victory against Wolves irrelevant.

City finished with 93 points, one ahead of Liverpool as they ended their rivals hopes of winning an unprecedented quadruple.

On a breathtaking final day, Burnley were relegated as Leeds beat the drop, while Tottenham qualified for the Champions League at the expense of their north London rivals Arsenal.

Guardiola's men can rightly be called a dynasty after joining Manchester United as the only clubs in the Premier League era to have won four titles in five seasons, with Alex Ferguson's teams doing it on three separate occasions. The eighth league title in City's history is Guardiola's ninth major trophy since arriving at the club in 2016.

Once again, City saved the best until last as they edged Liverpool out on the final day of the season for the second time after beating them to the finish line in 2019.

It was 10 years since Sergio Aguero's



AP/RSS

Manchester City has joined Manchester United as the only clubs in the Premier League era to have won four titles in five seasons.

famous last-second goal against QPR sealed City's first title since 1968 and this jaw-dropping success was almost as unlikely.

Man City were stunned into silence in the 37th minute.

Lucas Digne whipped in a cross from the left and Matty Cash got in front of Joao Cancelo to score with a bullet header. Former Liverpool star Philippe Coutinho doubled Villa's lead with a cool finish in the 69th minute.

But City would not surrender and Ilkay Gundogan headed them back into contention in the 76th minute. Rodri's low strike from the edge of the area two minutes later set up a

nerve-jangling finale. And in the 81st minute, Kevin de Bruyne's low cross reached Gundogan at the far post and the substitute tapped home to send City into ecstasy.

Having already won the FA Cup and League Cup, Liverpool can still enjoy a memorable season of their own if they beat Real Madrid in the Champions League final in Paris on Saturday.

Liverpool were rocked after just three minutes when Pedro Neto produced a close-range finish from Raul Jimenez's cross. Sadio Mane equalised with a clinical strike from just inside the area after sprinting onto

Thiago Alcantara's pass in the 24th minute. Mohamed Salah poked Liverpool ahead with six minutes left but by then news of City's extraordinary recovery had reached Anfield, which was in subdued mood by the time Andrew Robertson scored in stoppage-time.

Tottenham secure top four spot
Tottenham's 5-0 rout of relegated Norwich secured fourth place at Carrow Road.

Dejan Kulusevski's 16th minute tap-in from Rodrigo Bentancur's pass put Tottenham ahead before Harry Kane struck with a diving header in the

EPL STANDINGS							
Teams	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Man City	38	29	6	3	99	26	93
Liverpool	38	28	8	2	94	26	92
Chelsea	38	21	11	6	76	33	74
Tottenham	38	22	5	11	69	40	71
Arsenal	38	22	3	13	61	48	69
Man United	38	16	10	12	57	57	58
West Ham	38	16	8	14	60	51	56
Leicester	38	14	10	14	62	59	52
Brighton	38	12	15	11	42	44	51
Wolves	38	15	6	17	38	43	51
Newcastle	38	13	10	15	44	62	49
Crystal Palace	38	11	15	12	50	46	48
Brentford	38	13	7	18	48	56	46
Aston Villa	38	13	6	19	52	54	45
Southampton	38	9	13	16	43	67	40
Everton	38	11	6	21	43	66	39
Leeds	38	9	11	18	42	79	38
Burnley	38	7	14	17	34	53	35
Watford	38	6	5	27	34	77	23
Norwich	38	5	7	26	23	84	22
Notes: Top four qualify for Champions League							
Fifth and sixth qualify for Europa League							
Seventh qualifies for Europa Conference League							
Bottom three relegated							

Sharma and team clinch Pro-Am title

SPORTS BUREAU
KATHMANDU, MAY 22

The team of pro Purna Sharma clinched the Surya Nepal Premier Golf Championship Pro-Am at the par-72 Gokarna Golf Club on Sunday.

Pro Sharma teamed up with amateurs Mahendra Phagami, Samir Acharya and Kashmira Shah scored 153 points. Sharma earned 44 points, Phagami 38 points, Acharya 36 and Shah 35 points.

The team comprising pro Sanjay Lama (38) and amateurs Bikash Shah (35), Babu Sherpa (35), and Pratap Bohara (34) collected 142 points to finish runners up. The team of pro Rabi Khadka (38) and amateurs Ang Dendi Sherpa (34), Chandra Limbu (34) and Kishor Basnet (34) stood third with 140 points.

Shah of the winning team also claimed the best scorer trophy among women golfers for her 35 points. Dawa J Sherpa bagged the longest drive and Aarti Rajya Laxmi Rana got the closest to the pin.

Altogether 113 players including 24 pros took part in the Pro-Am event played under stableford 3/4 handicap format. Top pro scorer was automatically teamed with the top three amateurs for the winning team. Similarly, fourth, fifth and sixth amateur scorers were teamed with the second best professional for the runner-up team and those amateurs finishing seventh, eighth and ninth were teamed up with the third best professional for the second runner-up team.

Surya Nepal Pvt Ltd managing director Ravi Kumar Rayavaram, and former managing director Abhimanyu Poddar, among others, gave away the prizes to the winners.

The season-ending event of Surya Nepal Golf Tour 2021-22, the Surya Nepal Premier Golf Championship, is scheduled to tee off Monday.

Nepali community excited about cricket team's visit to US, Dassanayake says

SPORTS BUREAU
KATHMANDU, MAY 22

National cricket team coach Pubudu Dassanayake on Sunday said that Nepali community living in the United States (US) is excited about the national cricket team's visit for the ICC World Cup League 2 match scheduled from June 6 to 19 in Huston, Texas.

Nepal are set to vie in the triangular series of the League 2 that involves the hosts US, Oman and Nepal. "Many Nepali origin people play cricket tournaments in the US," said Dassanayake who was appointed the coach of US cricket from 2016-2019.

"I travelled almost the whole country in my tenure as US coach to find the best talents," said Dassanayake at

a programme organised by Cricket Association of Nepal on the occasion of 75 years of diplomatic relations between Nepal and the US.

Nepal are also scheduled to play a couple of warm up matches against local teams as well as an All Star Team comprising of former Nepali national players Prithu Baskota, Basanta Regmi, former New Zealand all-rounder Corey Anderson and former U-19 World Cup winning India captain Unmukta Chand, among others, all of whom are currently living in the US. "Cricket is also a growing sport in the US and it is a great opportunity for Nepal to play against them," he said.

Garrett E Wilkerson, public affair chief at the US Embassy in Nepal, meanwhile gave away a cricket bat to

captain Sandeep Lamichhane. The bat will be signed by Nepal captain Lamichhane and US captain Saurabh Netravalkar.

Wilkerson said that people to people ties was a good example of vibrant relations between Nepal and the US. The match against Nepal would be a good experience for the US as well, he added.

CAN president Chatur Bahadur Chand that it was the first official visit of any Nepali sports team in the US. "I hope the cricket team can take Nepal-US relations to greater heights," he said. Captain Lamichhane said that the players have put in great efforts to uplift Nepali cricket.

Nepal are scheduled to play four matches in the US. They will take on Oman in their opening match on June

9 and the US on June 11. They will vie against Oman again on June 14 and the US on June 15.

The League 2 featuring seven teams is the gateway for the 2023 World Cup. Each team will play 36 games at the end of the league cycle. The teams that finish in the top three will secure berths for the World Cup Qualifiers in Zimbabwe while the bottom four will compete in the World Cup Qualifiers playoff.

Nepal currently sit sixth in the event that comprises Oman, Scotland, United Arab Emirates, Namibia, USA and Papua New Guinea. Oman lead the standing with 40 points from 32 matches while Nepal are sixth with 12 points from as many matches. The US are fifth with 14 points from 16 matches.



POST PHOTO: KESHAV THAPA

Garrett E Wilkerson (left), the public affair chief at the US Embassy in Nepal, hands over a cricket bat to captain Sandeep Lamichhane (centre) as coach Pubudu Dassanayake looks on.

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21-April 19) ****
Take some time to honor your emotions this morning. Today's cosmic vibe will ask you to put actions behind your words, though you should avoid moving impulsively. Small blessings could find you today.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) ***
A friend may call on you for emotional support today. Now may be a good time to invite them out for dinner or drinks. This cosmic climate appreciates movement, and bonding will also happen organically.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) ****
Bonding with your coworkers will come easily today. But you might be more absorbent to the energy and emotions of those around you, making it important that you look for ways to protect your aura.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) ***
Emotional breakthroughs and moments of enlightenment are likely to find you today. Take a few chances, especially if you feel as though you're being guided by the universe. Just try not to make major decisions.

LEO (July 23-August 22) ***
Emotional release will find you today. Give yourself permission to tap into your feelings, allowing them to flow through you without restriction. These vibes will also bring through a strong sense of gratitude today.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22) ****
Pleasant surprises will manifest within your love life. The day will encourage you to love yourself first, making it a great time for having fun and working with a creative outlet. It will also help you get ahead in business.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22) ***
Open your heart to the beauty that surrounds you today. This cosmic climate are also supportive of the law of attraction, making it a good time to recite a few positive mantras. The day also heats up your love life.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21) ***
Take a few moments to indulge in some radical self-love this afternoon. This cosmic climate is also poised to elevate your aura. Luck will be on your side, bringing some planning into your personal goals.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21) ***
The more you love yourself, the more others will do the same today. These vibes can also bring a little bit of fun and spice into your love life, so be sure to plan an adventurous date night with someone special.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19) ****
Today's cosmic vibes will make it easy for you to execute these ideas, especially if they're of the artistic variety. Nurture the people around you. Stimulate your mind, as your mind will be thirsty for new information.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18) ***
The universe will ask you to go big or go home. These vibes will elevate your words significantly. The good vibes will continue to flow, making it an ideal time to invest in your home and for having conversations.

PISCES (February 19-March 20) ***
Unexpected news or conversations could find you. These vibes will also bless you with the gift of quick wit and a sharpened mind, making it a great time to work on any creative projects. It will bring luck to your finances and home life, so be sure to invest.

CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- 1 Beat the rap
 - 5 Force out
 - 10 Brewer's grain
 - 14 Where Cambodia is
 - 15 Orchestra member
 - 16 Distant
 - 17 Scorch or burn
 - 18 Went backpacking
 - 19 Pie a la —
 - 20 Type of umbrella
 - 22 Math equation
 - 24 Is in debt
 - 25 Gave out sparingly
 - 26 Concealed
 - 29 Rafter
 - 32 Show host
 - 33 It may be read
 - 34 Hatchet handle
 - 38 Estuary
 - 39 Maxim
 - 42 Life story
 - 43 Hawk
 - 45 Gets nosy
 - 46 Thick with cattails
 - 48 Social mores
 - 50 High-rise units
 - 51 Reinforce
 - 54 Meat and veggies
- DOWN**
- 1 Hornet kin
 - 2 Not in harbor
 - 3 Fibber
 - 4 Bar singalong
 - 5 Reverberated
 - 6 Obscures
 - 7 Type
 - 8 Musical sign
 - 9 Commotion
 - 10 Enormous
 - 11 Run — of
 - 12 Kitchen utensil
 - 13 Tire feature
 - 21 Tidy up
 - 23 Hwys.
 - 26 Game show name
 - 27 Yves' girlfriend
 - 28 Digitize

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

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

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29 Kid's game	50 Attractive
30 Bullfight bravos	51 Carry along
31 Urchin	52 Happen again
32 Senor's coin	53 On one's own
35 Under the covers	54 Malodorous
36 Spot's pal	56 Long-necked bird
37 Tops and trains	57 Ocean bird
40 Team cheer	59 Formality
41 Boy Scout unit	60 Done with
44 Ethical behavior	61 Siesta
47 Resulted (2 wds.)	64 "— been had!"
49 Reception	

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
20					21				22		23			
26	27	28						29	30	31				
32							33				34	35	36	37
38														
43					44		45				46	47		
51	52	53							54					
55							56	57		58			59	60
62							63		64				65	
66							67						68	
69							70						71	

SUDOKU

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

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

