

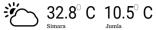
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Children play with a replica of the Rato Machhindranath chariot at Mangalbazar in Lalitpur on Sunday.

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

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 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.

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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 Janamorcha, the fifth party in the coalition, was 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 alliance made no sense for the Janata Samaibadi.

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

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

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

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

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

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 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.

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Students in Rolpa apply theoretical knowledge in farming

Schools in Rolpa run agricultural courses that help students understand agricultural practices and gain technical know-how to generate better yield in fields.

Sugam Roka Magar studies at Rangkot-based Nepal Rastriya Secondary School, Rolpa. Alongside his studies, Sugam also takes out his time to work in his family's vegetable fields.

A student of grade nine, Sugam says working in the fields gives him a deeper insight into what he learns in the classroom.

'I am learning by doing. I apply what I learn at school in the fields and experiment with different techniques to see what works,'

Nepal Rastriya Secondary School runs classes on agriculture as a technical subject from grade nine to twelve. Sugam is one of the students who have enrolled for the course.

Sugam's classmate Pratap Gharti Magar is also happy to be able to apply his theoretical knowledge in the fields and see his hard work come to fruition.

"I put whatever I learn in class to practice. My parents grow vegetables like potatoes, onions and cauliflowers and I help them get a better yield by adopting the lessons I learn in the classroom," he said.

Like Nepal Rastriya Secondary School, Thawang-based Balabhadra Secondary School and Siddhartha Model Secondary School in Jinbang have also been running classes on agriculture as a technical subject for the past six years. Hundreds of students from Thawang, Jinabang and Rangkot have signed up for the lesson at these educational

Both the students and teachers think teaching-learning activities have proven effective as students get the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in real life. Surendra Kumar Chaudhary, a teacher at Nepal Rastriya Secondary, said that the school administration and the teachers have emphasised imparting practical skills along with theoretical knowledge. "The main objective of technical education is to be able to implement theoretical knowledge in practical terms," said

According to Gopal KC, the head-

master at Nepal Rastriya Secondary School, two different programmesstudents and guardians programme at home and teachers and students programme at school-have been launched for practical education.

"Students of the agriculture course have been providing help to their guardians in identifying diseases, controlling insects and diseases as well as spraying insecticides/pesticides in the farms,"

There are altogether 850 students in Nepal Rastriya Secondary School. Among them, 190 have enrolled in agricultural studies as a technical subject this academic year.

The students and teachers of Birbalabhadra Secondary School in Thawang produce lemon, kiwi, mushrooms and other green vegetables. According to Amar Shrestha, coordinator of crop science at the school, the teachers and students have planted crops in around 15 ropanies of land. "We work for two hours in the field twice a week. We practice what we learn in the class,' said Aayush CN, a 10th grader at

In recognition of their exemplary work, the federal government decided to provide assistance to Nepal Rastriya Secondary School in Rangkot; Balabhadra Secondary School in Thawang and Siddhartha Model Secondary School in Jinbang under the President Educational Reform Programme this year. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology will provide Rs 1 million each to the schools annually under the programme. The amount under the programme is to be used to increase students' involvement in agricultural productions and live-

"We are happy to be selected for the President Educational Reform Programme. Our school has become a model school in the district with the support provided by the government at different times," said Ajaya Gharti Magar, the school management committee chairman of Balabhadra Secondary School in Thawang. "The school will fully utilise the amount provided under the programme for the practical education of the students



Ducks are seen on a pond searching for food at Chalnakhel in Dakshinkali on Sunday.

Fuel prices up, again

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

It owes Rs22.40 billion in dues to the Indian Oil Corporation.

Nepal Oil Corporation had declared itself bankrupt in January despite hiking fuel prices to near-record levels.

The high cost of fuel is digging deeper into consumers' pockets, and the monthly consumer price inflation climbed to

its highest level of 7.28 percent in the first nine months of the current fiscal year that ended in mid-April.

The transport and airline industry may increase the ticket rates as per the auto pricing mechanism. Since this month, the government has allowed transport operators to revise fares if the fuel price fluctuates by Rs5 per litre.

What's in store for the five-party alliance after ...

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Coalition didn't help us increase our seats as expected," said Upendra Yadav, chairman of the Janata Samajbadi. "Wherever we contested alone we fared better but lost in most of the places where we had forged

Yadav, however, said the results of a single election may not adversely affect the existing alliance

"But mistakes should be corrected as most of the Congress votes didn't transfer to other parties and it affected our results," he told the Post. "We will analyse the problems while reviewing the local-level polls after all the results are out.'

According to Yadav, though chances of the Maoist Centre joining hands with the UML are slim, nothing is impossible in politics.

'I don't think they will come together immediately," he said.

Four days after the elections, on May 17, CPN (Unified Socialist) Chairman Madhav Nepal had publicly expressed his dissatisfaction over his party's poor show in the elections. Addressing a function, Nepal said his party did not get the support expected of the coalition partners in the elections.

The party's general secretary, Beduram Bhusal, said his party has sought reports from all the local committees of the party within next Sunday to review the election results. "Things didn't turn out as we had expected but we will review the results and then make further strategies for the party," Bhusal told the Post. "That would also include the party's stance about the existing ruling coalition.'

While addressing an election rally in Bharatpur in the lead up to the elections, Maoist Centre chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal had proclaimed to continue the alliance for another 15-20 years.

The Maoist party may not have improved its wins significantly, but its bargaining power has certainly increased. Within Dahal's party also, there is some dissatisfaction that the party members and supporters voted for the Congress but there was no reciprocity from the side of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's party.

"In some places, the alliance seemed to have worked but in a majority of places we did not get votes from the Congress," said Haribol Gajurel, a central member of the party who is close to party chair Dahal. "Since we all are busy with the polls we have not got the time to discuss and evaluate our performance.'

Most of the Maoist leaders have said their party managed to increase only a handful of local units but if the votes had been properly transferred the same way they did to ensure Congress candidates' wins, their party would have won around 200 local units.

As of Sunday, Maoist Centre has won 120 local units and is leading in two units. This is slightly better than the last time when they won 106 units.

"Actually an alliance with the Congress is very difficult as its voters

don't vote on our symbol unlike the UML's voters," said Gajurel. "But the alliance would depend on how other partners work with us."

Dahal, however, has commented that the electoral alliance has by and large been successful and now the coalition would continue until the upcoming federal and provincial polls, and that the coalition was formed with an intention to end political instability and take initiatives for development.

"Basically the electoral alliance has been successful," Dahal said while addressing the leaders of the Congress and Maoist Centre of Madhyapur Thimi Municipality at his Khumaltarbased residence on Saturday morning. "Actually the coalition was formed to ensure political stability and give impetus to development.'

In Madhyapur Thimi Municipality of Bhaktapur, the alliance has won against the UML with Congress winning mayoral candidate and Maoist Centre deputy mayor.

Given the unstable nature of party chair Dahal, it is, however, not easy to predict he will stick to the alliance with the Congress as most of his party leaders feel comfortable with a left alliance, observers say.

"There are rumours that Oli has sent leaders to meet our chairman but that is not true. We are not in touch with anyone from Balkot," said Ramesh Malla, chief personal secretary to Dahal. "It's not necessary for us to talk with the UML.

However, some Maoist Centre leaders have said the party could think of holding discussions with the UML only if Oli admits his past mistakes and promises not to repeat such mistakes in future.

Before the 2017 federal and provincial polls, Dahal had bargained with both the Congress and the UML, but he chose the latter citing a higher pos sibility of vote transfer from the UML to the Maoist party and a better electoral deal. Besides, his intention was also to become the chair of the largest communist force.

Some political analysts have ruled out a breakdown of the existing ruling coalition until the next polls because Dahal seems to have promised Deuba that he would stick to the coalition.

"I think this alliance will continue until the upcoming federal and provincial polls even if the UML wishes to break the alliance," said Jhalak Subedi, a political analyst. "Given the bitterness in the relations between Dahal and Oli, the Maoists could turn down Oli's proposal to cut the UML to size."

Some UML leaders including Ghanashyam Bhusal said his party has only two options ahead-either go for a left alliance or face a disaster. 'I have been telling the party that

the UML should take initiatives for a left alliance, to no avail," Bhusal told the Post. "It's not to appease Dahal but for the sake of UML's future that our leaders should realise the mistake of dissolving the House.

Resham Chaudhary won election from hiding. His 5-month-old party ...

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Tharus have expressed their voice through the ballot box.'

People who were victimised and tortured at the hands of the police in the aftermath of the Tikarpur incident, openly came in support of Bishram Kushmi from Ward 7 of

Tikapur Municipality is one of them. He was arrested on April 5, 2016, on the charge of his involvement in the Tikapur violence. After staying in jail for three years, he was acquitted by the Kailali District Court on March 6, 2019. The decision has been upheld by the High Court as well. He was tor tured inhumanly in the police custody to extract confession from him. "As other parties

just used us as a vote bank, we voted for the new party with a hope that it

will stand for our cause," he told the Post. He was quick to clarify that he is not a member of the party.

Even though the issue of justice to Resham or others who have been detained does not fall under the jurisdiction of the local government, votes to the NUP at the local level will build a foundation for the party's prospects in the general elections, accord-

ing to Kushmi.

"I believe the party will fare even better in the provincial and federal elections," he said.

Police had filed cases against 58 people from the Tharu community accusing them of their involvement in the Tikapur violence and arrested 27 of them. Those arrested by police say they were tortured indiscriminately and were forced to admit their involvement.

The 2017 general elections installed CPN-UML chair KP Sharma Oli as prime minister. The UML and the CPN (Maoist Centre) merged in May 2018. The Rastriya Janata (later merged to become Janata Samajbadi Party), from which Resham

had won the

elections,

also joined the government in June 2021. It joined the government after Oli agreed to form a taskforce to recommend revisions in the constitution, release party cadres jailed on various charges and revise the Citizenship Act.

However, the Rastriya Janata Party did precious little to ensure justice to Resham. While the party's top leaders became ministers, Resham languished in jail.

Local intellectuals say there always has been a strong feeling among the people in Kailali that Resham and several others were framed by

"Not only Tharus, but even the non-Tharu population also believes the Tikapur incident happened as part of a political movement and that it was not a criminal act," Hari Chandra Kamali, an associate professor at the Kailali Multiple Campus, told the Post. "Through the local elections the people have given their verdict of innocence to Resham. I can confidently say even non-Tharus have voted for the party."

Tharu leaders say that in the last five years neither the state nor the party Resham belonged to, took concrete steps for his release. The Rastriya Janata Party led by Upendra Yadav is still part of the government led by Sher Bahadur Deuba. The then Mahantha Thakur faction of the Janata Samajbadi had also joined the Oli government. Though it raised Resham's issue, it was largely meant

Shravan Tharu, acting coordinator of the Tharuhat Tharuwan Rashtriya Morcha, said Tharus don't have trust in the two parties which didn't even take a single concrete step in making public the report of the Lal Commission.

for political consumption.

On September 18, 2016, the government had formed a commission under Girish Chandra Lal, a former justice at the Supreme Court, to investigate the atrocities committed during the protests in Tarai/Madhes in the runup to and after constitution promulgation. The Lal commission submitted its report in December 2017 to then prime minister Deuba. However, the report hasn't been made public yet despite a ruling from Parliament. Human Rights Watch, an international rights body headquartered in New York, on October 1, 2019 also had called on the Nepal government to

make the report public. "Tharus have understood that they will have to fight injustice on their own. The NUP victory is a beginning,' Sravan told the Post. He says the party will be further strengthened in the upcoming elections as the Morcha too will extend its support to it.

Analysts agree.

Kamali, the associate professor, sees the Tharu votes consolidating in favour of Resham's party if the state continues to ignore the genuine concerns of the indigenous community.

"The result of the local elections is a wake-up call for major parties, at least here in this region," he said.





POST PHOTO: ELITE JOSH

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.

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

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 lead-

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

"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

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



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

lack of an alternative, the bus park operated out of Khula Manch for more than five

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

the contractor has already missed the construction deadline and has secured an extension of the contract, according to City

Since last year, the City has applied a 'pick and drop system' for buses to Banepa, Panuati, and Sundarijal from Bir Hospital; safa 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,

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."

who is a retired teacher. "We don't even

The New Bus Park at Gongabu is only for long route buses except for Sajha Yatayat buses, which short and medium route public buses and other vehicles, there are no designated park-

Not only commuters and Kathmandu locals, but bus drivers also have concerns over the mismanagement of the public transport system in the city.

This whole situation has caused us major inconveniences," said Tashi Lama, 36, a bus driver who has been in the profession for the

'We don't have designated spaces where we can park, or even pick and drop passengers. While on the job, we can't even park our vehicles to relieve ourselves. The traffic police will chase us away if we don't clear out from an area within seven minutes, added Lama, who drives in the Dhulikhel-Kathmandu route.

'Kathmandu's new crop of elected representatives should focus on building bus parks in accessible areas immediately. Former mayor Bidya Sundar Shakya said he would look into these issues but there has been no tangible progress so far," said

Since Mayor Shakya and deputy mayor Hari Prabha Khadgi completed their fiveyear terms on May 19, the new team of elected representatives must look into the issue now, said Ishwar Man Dangol, former spokesperson of the City. "The contractor had informed me that the construction of the multi-storey view tower was almost complete. But now the newly elected representatives should take up the issue," he said.

The absence of designated bus parks and stands has also added to the daily workload of the traffic police, said a traffic constable deployed in the Bir Hospital area requesting

"We have to be extra alert throughout the day because if we do not keep the traffic flowing, then the transportation routes will be caught in a gridlock," he said. "If there were bus parks where public vehicles could park their vehicles between routes then the roads wouldn't be jammed," he said. "They wouldn't be parking by the roadside causing traffic congestion.'

"Kathmandu's traffic in the core area like Sahid Gate, New Road and Ratnapark is chaotic for a lack of bus parks," he added. "A model bus park is the need of the hour in Kathmandu. I request those who will come into office to act on this matter immediately.'

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

ARJUN POUDEL

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,

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 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

'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 adminis-

tered within a certain time frame." The government has over 3 million doses of Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccine doses

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

On Sunday, 17,302 people were vaccinated against

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

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 Sinovacall the vaccine doses in stock are used up. The Sinovac-Corona Vac 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 pae-

diatric 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 "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 recom-

mended 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 pur-

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.





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TODAY



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

Speaker



Opening Remarks Vishnu K Agarwal President of CNI

Panel Speaker

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**



Moderator

Dipendra Chaulagain Director Prosperity Foundation

Second Session

First Session

Legal barriers to enhancing productivity



Kishan Shrestha Minister, Labor and Employmentt



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 Khatiwada 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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OPINION

EDITORIAL

Crime doesn't expire

There is an outright necessity to craft progressive laws to ensure justice for survivors.

The mainstream and social media are currently ablaze concerning the heart-wrenching story of a young beauty pageant aspirant. Unable to bear the ordeal of living with the pain and scars of years of sexual abuse, the survivor finally mustered up the courage to reveal her story to the world, hoping that her abusers would be brought to the dock. Despite an outpouring of support for the survivor, a formidable obstacle lies within our legal system that prevents numerous survivors of sexual abuse from filing a petition against the perpetrators.

According to data provided by the Nepal Police, 15,459 cases of violence against women and children were reported across the country in the eight months to March 2022. That averages to approximately 64 daily. But the restrictive nature of the statute of limitations sets the maximum time to initiate legal proceedings from the date of an alleged offence, whether civil or criminal, and allows numerous cases to be discarded based on this technical oversight. Therefore, as per the current law, a plaintiff, despite fighting fears of public exposure and overcoming mental trauma, must file a complaint about rape within a year of the incident. It constitutes nothing less than a mockery of the entire Nepali justice system.

After numerous revisions over the years, the time has come for lawmakers to carefully study the issue once again to overhaul the existing ill-thought-out provisions within the statute, and bring in meaningful provisions that will guarantee safeguards for survivors of rape and sexual abuse. Perpetrators should have no other recourse than to promptly face the full wrath of the law. Nepal lacks an environment in which issues related to rape and sexual violence is handled. There is a pervading nature of institutional misogynism still actively prevalent in all walks of life, and therefore, the institutions designed to check violence against women need a complete revamp.

Comprehensive training and awareness need to be constantly provided to understand the gravity of the matter. And safeguards need to be carefully designed to prevent survivors from spiralling into depressive bouts. There should be a safe environment to encourage survivors to narrate their ordeal in their own time without fear of being ridiculed or made to feel embarrassed or remorseful. Therefore, there is an outright necessity to craft well-thought-out laws to ensure justice for the survivors.

The simmering rage that has built momentum over the past few days shouldn't be derided as just another passing phase—the police, for the first time, have initiated an investigation without a formal complaint. And with scores of other survivors' stories yet to be revealed, the insurmountable task before us needs careful supervision. If we as a society seek to be seen as one that respects and values people's selfworth, there can be no room for perpetrators of sexual violence to carry on unaccounted for. It is time we put an end to this abomination.

The blooming power

Nepal is today on the brink of having excess energy to sell during the monsoon season.

PRABAL ADHIKARI



Nepal is rapidly transitioning from a nation of chronic energy deficit into a nation of energy surplus. After suffering years of power cuts, Nepal is today on the brink of having excess power to sell—which is estimated to be 364 megawatts during the upcoming monsoon season when the country's hydropower plants generate electricity at full capacity. This passage from deficit to surplus will signal a paradigm shift in the pattern of cross-border power trade between Nepal and India which, over the decades, defined a one-way power flow—from India to Nepal.

On the strength of this good fortune, Nepal's hydropower policy should be managed in such a way that the nation's hydropower megawatts continue to grow year by year so that these ever greater amounts of power and energy can be used, not only to feed Nepal's rapidly increasing domestic demand, but also to increase the nation's export far into the future. Such management will serve in the best interests of the economies of numerous nations in the region while also improving the environment of South Asia as a whole.

IEX and Nepal

Other than India, Nepal became the first country in South Asia to engage in day-ahead transactions on the Indian Energy Exchange (IEX), when on May 1, 2021, the Nepal Electricity Authority began importing up to 350 megawatts through the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur 400 kV transmission line. It is noteworthy that Nepal and India actually began bilateral transactions over that line on February 17, 2016 on the basis of a power purchase agreement between the NEA and NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam (NVVN) when it only supported transmission at 132 kV.

On November 3, 2021, the NEA began selling power generated by two Indian-developed hydropower projects—Trishuli (24 megawatt) and Devighat (15 megawatt)—on the IEX on a day-ahead basis using the same transmission line. On January 15, 2022, the NEA also began to import up to 65 megawatts from the IEX's day-ahead market through the Tanakpur-Mahendranagar 132 kV transmission line.

As surplus power is expected to be available from Nepal's hydropower stations after approximately the second week of June 2022, Nepal's trend of power transactions will be reversed by sending power to India. With this export using the IEX's day-ahead platform—at approximately INR5 per unit

for a period of approximately five months—Nepal's public and private enterprises stand to earn revenues in the amount of approximately INR6,550 million over that period. With the NEA currently planning to sell its surplus power to India using both the IEX and bilateral contracts, Nepal is also making efforts to export power to Bangladesh.

Potential for power trade

The NEA has signed power purchase agreements for 6,354 megawatts to be generated from 356 projects located in various parts of Nepal, some of which are renewables-based-solar and bagasse (sugar factory-based) plants. In addition to these power purchase agreements, the NEA has also processed power purchase agreement applications from generation stations totalling 11,412 megawatts. Given that these under-construction projects will continue to be commissioned periodically, the contribution of power from the power purchase agreement-based projects can be expected to increase

However, the prevalence of run-ofriver generation stations in Nepal will also continue to result in power surpluses during the monsoon and power deficits during the dry season; and this will require the country to rely on cross-border markets during both seasons. According to current projections made by studies conducted at the NEA, and taking into account the commissioning of new generation projects in different timeframes into the future, the installed generation capacity to be added to Nepal's system is estimated to be 851.5 megawatts for the fiscal year 2021-22, 705.4 megawatts for 2022-23, 706.8 megawatts for 2023-24, 551.1 megawatts for 2024-25, 787.2 megawatts for 2025-26, and 976.7 megawatts for 2026-27.

According to forecasts made by the NEA, Nepal's energy requirement for fiscal 2022-23 will reach 11,258 million units with a corresponding peak load of 1,977 megawatts, whereas maximum power and net energy exports for the fiscal year under NEA simulations will be approximately 613 megawatts and 3,036 million units respectively. The simulation further shows that within three years, Nepal will, for the first time, be exclusively an exporter of power without any need to import power during the dry season. By fiscal 2025-26, Nepal will have 2,456 megawatts of maximum surplus power and 14,022 million units of annual surplus energy available for export. However, as things currently stand, the existing cross-border transmission capacity will not be sufficient to carry this pow er-a second quad moose-based 400 kV cross-border transmission line between Nepal and India, Butwal-Gorakhpur,

will need to be constructed.

All the above-cited encouraging statistics, however, come with caveats. The issue of exporting electricity to other countries has raised one of the Nepal's most contentious debates just at the moment when the country is approaching prosperity's crossroads. The issue can be easily grasped. Should

Nepal strive to be energy independent, or should its goal be to achieve energy security by adopting a policy of interdependence with its South Asian neighbours?

Those who dissent from a policy of electricity exports must be persuaded to endorse the following self-evident truths. First, as a qualitative matter, energy security through cross-border trading is a far better outcome than energy independence because it is less expensive to achieve and because it offers opportunities to enrich the entire region while continuing to grow the local economy. Second, Nepal will suffer irreplaceable revenue losses if it fails to access export market opportunities. Third, the choice not to export power only makes sense when the country making that choice is able to increase domestic demand to consume

While it goes without saying that one of Nepal's top priorities should be greatly to increase the domestic consumption of clean energy, including with appropriate policy intervention measures, it is also patently evident that the country will never be able to absorb its bounty of generation potential domestically. Rather than adopting a beggar thy neighbour policy, Nepal should use its excess power to prosper itself as well as the entire region—financially and environmentally.

all the power it can produce.

Adhikari, is former spokesperson and the power trade director of the Nepal Electricity Authority.

Whataboutism in arguments

The rise of social media and political polarisation made whataboutism more visible.

BENJAMIN CURTIS



Whataboutism is an argumentative tactic where a person or group responds to an accusation or difficult question by deflection. Instead of addressing the point made, they counter it with "but what about X?".

As bickering couples and parents of siblings will know, this happens in daily life all too often. "You lied about where you were last night!" a person feeling wronged will say. To which, instead of owning up, the partner replies: "Well, what about you? You lie to me all the time!"

Similarly, in response to being told off for the state of her room, one child's whataboutist reply will be to say: "But what about my brother's room? His is worse."

It happens on social media, in politics and in societal and international conflict too. To wit, UK prime minister Boris Johnson, in February 2022. In response to Keir Starmer's accusation of wrongdoing in relation to the partygate affair, Johnson sought to deflect attention by (falsely) accusing Starmer of failing to prosecute Jimmy Savile during his time as director of public prosecutions.

Media commentators have rightly pointed out that Johnson was simply adopting what one journalist called Donald Trump's "favourite dodge". When criticised, Trump would routinely deflect attention by claiming

that someone else was worse.

The rise of social media and increasing political polarisation may well have made whataboutism more visible. But it is certainly not a new tactic. It was, in fact, taught by the sophists, a group of lecturers, writers and teachers in Greece, over 2,500 years ago.

In some limited circumstances it may be a legitimate tactic, for example, when it is relevant to highlight that the person making the accusation has a bias. For the most part, however, even if the person making the accusation is a hypocrite or has double standards, this does not mean that their accusation is false.

Origins of whataboutism

The exact term was first used in print by a reader named Lionel Bloch in 1978 in a letter to the Guardian. "Sir," writes Bloch, "your leader [article], East, West and the plight of the warring rest (May 18), is the finest piece of 'whataboutism' I have read in many years." He goes on to decry the use of this tactic as a "Soviet import" used by "progressive minds" to defend communism.

But Bloch's usage derives from earlier uses of similar terms. In a letter to the Irish Times published on January 30, 1974, reader Sean O'Conaill complains about the use of the tactic by IRA defenders, to whom he refers to as "the Whatabouts". Three days later, the Irish journalist John Healy published a column in the same paper, on the same topic, dubbing the tactic "Whataboutery".

Formally speaking, whataboutism is a fallacy most closely related to the ad hominem fallacy, wherein a person responds to an accusation by attacking the person making it.

It is a fallacy because even if the counter-accusation is true, it doesn't defend whoever is being accused (the lying partner, the messy child, Donald Trump) in the first place. At best, it shows that both parties behaved shamefully. And, of course, two wrongs do not make a right.

In philosophy, an argument is a reasoned debate aimed at truth. But in many other contexts, people often do not view arguments in this way. They view them, rather, as battles to be won. Their goal is to get their opponent to concede as much as possible without their conceding anything themselves.

Viewed in this way, whataboutism is an effective strategy. It works on the principle that offence is the best form of defence. By launching a counter-attack, you place your opponent on the back foot.

Why whataboutism is so popular Psychologists suggest that this view of arguments is prevalent in political debate because it is driven by partisan bias. When confronted by an opponent with a different political viewpoint, you are more likely to view what they say as an attack to be countered, rather than a point to be debated.

More pernicious is when whataboutism is put to work as a misinformation tool. Since the Cold War era Russian propagandists have responded to criticism of Russian policies by immediately pointing out that western countries have similar policies.

The same ploy is routinely seen in other conflict situations. Chinese propagandists have used it to deflect criticism of how China's Uyghur population is treated. Junta propagandists in Myanmar have used it similarly when criticised for the regime's treatment of Rohingya muslims. The list goes on.

The sophists were the propagandists of ancient times. They prided themselves on being able to convince an audience—using any means available, including whataboutism—of any conclusion, irrespective of its truth.

Plato was an ardent critic of the sophists. He vehemently made the point that arguments should be aimed at truth. His most famous work in this respect is the Gorgias dialogue, which sees Socrates and Callicles debate the good and evil of man. Fittingly, it contains the earliest example of whataboutism that I have been able to find and the best response to it: Socrates, "You're breaking your original promise, Callicles. If what you say contradicts what you really think, your value as my partner in searching for the truth will be at an end." Callicles, "You don't always say what you think either, Socrates." Socrates, "Well, if that's true, it only makes me just as bad as you ...'

Curtis is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy and Ethics at Nottingham Trent

University.

MONEY

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

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 centres in Singapore and India. According to the Financial Times report, the maritive initiative will enable these countries to monitor illegal fishing even when the boats have

turned off the transponders. (REUTERS)

FOREX

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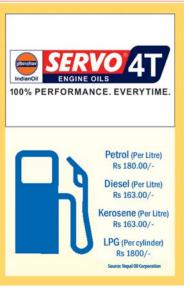
US Dollar	124.38
Euro	131.37
Pound Sterling	155.33
Japanese Yen (10)	9.73
Chinese Yuan	18.58
Qatari Riyal	33.96
Australian Dollar	87.49
Malaysian Ringit	28.34
Saudi Arab Riyal	33.16
	Exchange rates fixed by Nepal Rastra Bank

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Rs 98,000

Rs 1,270 SOURCE: FENEGOSIDA

GASOLINE WATCH



Much talk but little action to tame rising inflation

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,'

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



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

reached a high level before the Russia-Ukraine war began in late February.

"The inflation rate rose because of supply constraints and the prices of coal, natural gas, edible oil and wheat shot through the roof," said Paras Kharel, research director at the South Asia Watch on Trade, Economy and

Trade, an economic think tank operating in five South Asian countries. To cope with the current price shocks, Kharel suggested targeted social protection schemes like cash transfers for the poor, establishment of fair price shops, and reduction of import duties on essential foods

temporarily. Shekhar Golchha, president of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, called on the government to concentrate on taming rising inflation.

"The high taxes on petroleum products need to be revised as fuel is a key component that impacts the overall consumer prices," said Golchha. "As the Nepali rupee is falling against the United States dollar, it is expected to increase the trade deficit in terms

Industry Minister Dilendra Prasad Badu thinks promoting increased use of electricity can bring down oil imports.

"If regular supply of electricity for households is assured, it will lessen the dependency on fossil fuels," he said. "But electricity should be made cheaper to increase consumption."

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.



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 with Russia after its invasion of Ukraine in February The move by the world's biggest oil import-

er 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.

Unipec, 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 vho closely monitor the flo 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

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 Kamar-

Indonesia's resumption of

uddin 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

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

Malaysia second. Prices of

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

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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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.

India trims tax on fuel, essential commodities

NEW DELHI, MAY 22

India on Saturday announced a series of changes to the tax structure levied on crucial commodities in a bid to insulate consumers from rising prices amid high inflation.

Minister Nirmala Finance Sitharaman announced a cut in excise duty on petrol by 8 rupees (\$0.1028) per litre, and 6 rupees per litre on diesel. The new tax regime on petrol

and diesel could result in a loss of about 1 trillion Indian rupees to the government in annual revenue due to the lower collection, she said in a series of tweets The government also removed the

import duty on anthracite, PCI coal

and coking coal in a bid to reduce raw material costs for local market The latest measures will be effective from May 22, the government said in a notification after the announcement by Sitharaman, who also urged state

in line with federal plans. A litre of petrol currently costs 105.41 rupees, while diesel is at 96.67

governments to follow suit with simi-

lar reductions on fuel prices keeping

rupees in New Delhi. The government will also provide a fresh subsidy of 200 rupees per cooking gas cylinder to over 90 million beneficiaries under a welfare scheme introduced for women below the pov-

The subsidy will have an annual revenue implication of nearly 61 billion Indian rupees, Sitharaman said.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has specifically asked all arms of the government to work with sensitivity and give relief to the common man, she said. The government was also working to reduce taxes on raw materials for plastic products to lower down the cost of final products.

Experts said the latest moves will likely increase fiscal concerns and raise doubts about government meeting its deficit target of 6.4 percent of GDP for 2022-23. But inflation has become a major headache for Modi's government ahead of elections to several Indian state assemblies this year. A sharp jump in inflation meant

input costs escalated for businesses. The rise prompted the central bank to hike interest rates at an unscheduled policy meeting this month.

"Today's decisions, especially the one relating to a significant drop in petrol and diesel prices, will positively impact various sectors, provide relief to our citizens," Modi wrote on Twitter. "It is always people



Government of Nepal

Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation

Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC)

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: AEPC/NRREP/CREF/2021/22-02

Date of Notice Publication: 23 May 2022

Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC): 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. AEPC/NRREP/CREF hereby Requests for Proposal (RFP) from eligible Consulting Firms/Institutions for the tasks: "Audit of AEPC/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 AEPC/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 AEPC, 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.

BRIEFING

President Biden says monkeypox cases something to 'be concerned about'

THE KATHMANDU POST

PYEONGTAEK: President Joe Biden said on Sunday that recent cases of monkeypox that have been identified in Europe and the United States were something "to be concerned about. In his first public comments on the disease, Biden added: "It is a concern in that if it were to spread it would be consequential." The president was asked about the disease as he spoke to reporters at Osan Air Base in South Korea, where he visited troops before taking off for Japan to continue his first trip to Asia as president.

North Korea reports 'positive trend' in Covid-19 fight as fever cases dip

SEOUL: For the first time in nearly 10 days North Korea's daily "fever' cases dropped below 200,000, state media said on Sunday, reporting "a positive trend" after measures were taken to control the country's first acknowledged Covid-19 outbreak. It has refused most outside help, kept its borders shut and allows no independent confirmation of official data

Powerful storm rips through Ontario, killing at least two

TORONTO: A thunderstorm that nearly packed the power of a tornado rolled through Ontario on Saturday killing at least two people and left parts of Canada's most populous province without power, authorities said. Emergency crews were inundated with calls after the storm uprooted many trees, disrupting traffic and damaging homes

Thousands protest Turkish politician's conviction

ISTANBUL: Thousands gathered for a rally in Istanbul on Saturday to protest the conviction of leading Turkish opposition politician Canan Kaftancioglu for insulting the president and the state. Demonstrators in the central district of Maltepe chant ed songs and waved the opposition and national flags. Kaftancioglu, who was sentenced to just under five years in jail, heads Republican People's Party's Istanbul branch and is one of the strongest voices in it.

Pummelled by Russian offensive in the east, Ukraine rules out ceasefire

The British Defence Ministry says Russia is deploying its BMP-T 'Terminator' tank-support vehicles in the offensive.

REUTERS

Ukraine ruled out a ceasefire or any territorial concessions to Moscow while Russia intensified its attack in the eastern Donbas region and stopped sending gas to Finland in its latest response to Western sanctions and its deepening international isolation.

Polish President Andrzej Duda told Ukraine's parliament that ceding even "one inch" of the country's territory would be a blow to the whole West and reassured Kyiv of Warsaw's strong backing for its European Union membership bid.

"Worrying voices have appeared, saying that Ukraine should give in to Vladimir] demands," Duda said, the first foreign leader to address Ukrainian lawmakers in person since Russia's February 24 invasion

"Only Ukraine has the right to decide about its future.'

After ending weeks of resistance by the last Ukrainian fighters in the strategic southeastern port of Mariupol, Russia is waging a major offensive in Luhansk, one of two provinces in Donbas. Russian-backed separatists already controlled parts of Luhansk and the neighbouring Donetsk province before the invasion, but Moscow wants to seize the remaining Ukrainian-held territory

On the Donetsk frontline, Russian forces were trying to break through Ukrainian defences to reach the administrative borders of the Luhansk region, while further north they continued heavy shelling of Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk, Ukraine's general staff said in its daily update on Sunday.

Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk across the Siverskiy Donets River form the eastern part of a Ukrainian-held pocket that Russia has been trying to overrun since mid-April after failing to capture Kyiv and shifting its focus to the east and south of the country.

The British Defence Ministry said on Sunday that Russia was deploying its BMP-T "Terminator" tank-support vehicles in that offensive. With only 10 available for a unit that already



A view of the destroyed village of Moshchun, amid Russia's invasion, Kyiv region, Ukraine

suffered heavy losses in the failed attempt on Kyiv, however, the ministry said they were "unlikely to have a significant impact"

Ukraine's lead negotiator, speaking to Reuters on Saturday, ruled out a ceasefire or any deal with Moscow that involved ceding territory. Making concessions would backfire because Russia would hit back harder after any break in fighting, Zelenskiy's adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said.

"The war will not stop. It will just be put on pause for some time," Podolyak said in an interview in the heavily guarded presidential office. "They'll start a new offensive, even more bloody and large-scale.'

Recent calls for an immediate ceasefire have come from US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi

The end of fighting in Mariupol, the

biggest city Russia has captured, gives Russian President Vladimir Putin a rare victory after a series of setbacks in nearly three months of combat.

The last Ukrainian forces holed up Mariupol's vast Azovstal steelworks have surrendered, the Russian defence ministry said on Friday.

While Ukraine has not confirmed all its forces have left, the commander of the Azov regiment, one of the units in the factory, said in a video that Ukraine's military command had ordered the forces in Mariupol to stand down in order to preserve

Full control of Mariupol gives Russia command of a land route linking the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow seized in 2014, with mainland Russia and parts of eastern Ukraine held by pro-Russia separatists.

Russian state gas company Gazprom

said on Saturday it had halted gas exports to Finland, which has refused Moscow's demands to pay in roubles for Russian gas after Western countries imposed sanctions over the invasion. Finland said it was prepared for the cutoff of Russian flows. It applied together with its Nordic neighbour Sweden on Wednesday to join the NATO military alliance, although that is facing resistance

from NATO member Turkey. Most European supply contracts are denominated in euros or dollars. Last month, Moscow cut off gas to Bulgaria and Poland after they rejected the new terms. Western nations have also stepped up weapons supplies to Ukraine. On Saturday, Kyiv got another huge boost when US President Joe Biden signed a bill to provide nearly \$40 billion in military, economic and humanitarian aid.

Shanghai reopens some public transport, still on high Covid-19 alert

Shanghai reopened a small part of the world's longest subway system on Sunday after some lines had been closed for almost two months, as the city paves the way for a more complete lifting of its painful Covid-19 lock down next week.

With most residents not allowed to leave their homes and restrictions tightening in parts of China's most populous city, commuters early on Sunday needed strong reasons Shanghai's lockdown and curbs in

other cities have battered consumption, industrial output and other sectors of the Chinese economy in recent months, prompting pledges of support from policymakers. Many who ventured out in the

commercial hub wore blue protective gowns and face shields. Inside the carriages, passengers were seen keeping some empty seats between themselves. Crowds were small.

Xu Jihua, a migrant construction worker, arrived at a subway stop before it opened at 7 am, hoping to get to a rail station, then home to the eastern province of Anhui

"Work stopped on March 16," said Xu, adding he had not been able to earn his monthly 7,000-8,000 yuan (\$1,000-\$1,100) salary since then and would only return to Shanghai once he was sure he could find work

"Is the lockdown really lifting or not? It's not very clear.' A woman who asked only to be

identified by her surname Li said she needed to visit her father in a hospital 8 km from her final stop. "I'm going to the heart hospital, but

I don't know whether there will be any cars or transport once I get to the railway station," Li said. "I might have to walk there. Four of the 20 lines reopened, and

273 bus routes. Some had closed in late March, others later, although sporadic service continued with a limited number of stops. The city of 25 million expects to lift

its city-wide lockdown and return to more normal life from June 1. Most restrictions on movement will remain in place this month.

WHO expects more cases of monkeypox to emerge globally

Many of the current cases have been identified at sexual health clinics.

The World Health Organisation said monkeypox as it expands surveillance in countries where the disease is not typically found. As of Saturday, 92 confirmed cases

and 28 suspected cases of monkeypox have been reported from 12 member states that are not endemic for the virus, the UN agency said, adding it will provide further guidance and recommendations in coming days for countries on how to mitigate the spread of monkeypox. "Available information suggests

that human-to-human transmission is occurring among people in close physical contact with cases who are symptomatic", the agency added.

Monkeypox is an infectious disease that is usually mild, and is endemic in parts of west and central Africa. It is spread by close contact, so it can be relatively easily contained through such measures as self-isolation and hygiene.

"What seems to be happening now is that it has got into the population as a sexual form, as a genital form, and is being spread as are sexually transmitted infections, which has amplified its transmission around the world," WHO official David Heymann, an infectious disease specialist, told Reuters.

Heymann said an international committee of experts met via video conference to look at what needed to be studied about the outbreak and communicated to the public,



CDC VIA REUTERS

A file photo shows the palms of a monkeypox case patient.

including whether there is any asymptomatic spread, who are at most risk, and the various routes of transmission.

He said the meeting was convened "because of the urgency of the situation". The committee is not the group that would suggest declaring a public health emergency of international concern, WHO's highest form of alert, which applies to the Covid-19 pandemic.

He said close contact was the key transmission route, as lesions typical of the disease are very infectious. For example, parents caring for sick children are at risk, as are health workers, which is why some countries have started inoculating teams treating monkeypox patients using vaccines for smallpox, a related virus. Many of the current cases have been identified at sexual health clinics.

Early genomic sequencing of a handful of the cases in Europe has suggested a similarity with that spread in a limited fashion in Britain, Israel and Singapore in 2018.

Heymann said it was "biologically plausible" the virus had been circulating outside of the countries where it is endemic, but had not led to major outbreaks as a result of Covid-19 lockdowns, social distancing and travel restrictions.



भौतिक पूर्वाधार तथा यातायात मन्त्रालय सडक विभाग

संघीय सडक सुपरिवेक्षण तथा अनुगमन कार्यालय सुर्खेत

धनगढी-खुटिया-दिपायल-चैनपुर-उरैभन्ज्याङ्ग सडक योजना बि.पि.नगर, डोटी

आर्थिक प्रस्ताव खोल्ने मिति संशोधन सम्बन्धी सूचना

(प्रकाशित मिति : २०७९/०२/०९)

यस कार्यालयको मिति २०७९/०१/०६ गते 'The Kathmandu Post' राष्ट्रिय दैनिक पत्रिकामा प्रकाशित ठेकका नं. DKDRP/337011694/078/79-09 को आर्थिक प्रस्ताव मिति २०७९/०२/०५ गते दिनको १२:०० बजे खोल्ने भनी संशोधन गरिएकोमा विशेष कारणवश पुनः संशोधन गरी उक्त प्रस्ताव मिति २०७९/०२/२३ गते दिनको १२:०० बजे खोलिने व्यहोरा सम्बन्धित सबैका लागि यो सूचना प्रकाशित गरिएको छ ।

योजना प्रमुख

Spain swelters as temperatures soar above May average

People waved fans, glugged water and splashed themselves at fountains in Spain on Saturday as the bly high temperatures pushing close to 40 Celsius in some places.

"The early morning of May 21 was extraordinarily warm for the time of year in much of the centre and south of the peninsula," national weather agency AEMET wrote on Twitter.

It issued warnings of high temperatures in 10 Spanish regions for Saturday, where temperatures were forecast to reach the high 30s.

On Friday, May temperature records were broken in the city of Jaen, Andalusia, which logged 40C. AEMET said average tempera-

tures in Jaen were 16C higher than normal for this time of year. Elsewhere in Spain, temperatures were at least 7C higher than usual. In Madrid, street sweeper Rocio

Vazquez, 58, was out working in the direct sun, wearing a face mask. "This year it seems to have gone directly to summer, but we

have to keep going," she said. "It's scorching but it's our job and has to be done. AEMET spokesperson, Ruben del Campo, said earlier this week that, if officially confirmed, it could

be the first ever heatwave recorded "This episode is very unusual for mid-May and could be one of the most intense episodes in the last 20

years," he said. In Cordoba, Andalusia, a group of women who had come from Madrid for a hen party were feeling the heat, one dressed as a pink flamingo.

"It is really hot, we're [battling it] with a lot of water," said bride-to-be was Bea Ovejero, 31.

माटरसाइकल हराया

का.जि.न.पा. वडा नं. ६ नयाँबस्ती गोकर्णेश्वरबाट हुलास फिन सरभर लि

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इन्जिन नं.: DKXCMB00483

अनुरोध गर्दछु ।

In sharp switch, Australia votes for climate action



Anthony Albanese, leader of the Labour Party, shows a thumbs up sign in Sydney on Saturday.

REUTERS

MELBOURNE, MAY 22

Australia's election has brought in a wave of Greens and independents pushing for aggressive targets to cut carbon emissions, who will pressure the incoming Labour government to step up its climate plans if it wants to pass any legislation.

The country's biggest polluters in mining, oil and gas and building materials face a gradual tightening of allowed carbon emissions, while Labour aims to boost demand for electric vehicles and speed up renewable energy developments.

The election result, with the pivotal role climate change played, represents a remarkable shift for Australia, one of the world's biggest per capita carbon emitters and top coal and gas exporters. It was shunned at last year's Glasgow climate summit for failing to match other rich nations' ambitious targets.

"Together we can end the climate wars," incoming Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said in his victory speech. "Together we can take advantage of the opportunity for Australia to be a renewable energy superpower."

Flat on Rent

2. Two bedroom (attached

3. One kitchen dining

4. 24 hour hot and cold

Contact No.

bathroom)

common

water

5. Free WiFi

Full furnished 2nd floor

Albanese has said Labour would

and energy head at the Australia Institute think tank. The Greens want to achieve net zero by 2035 rather than 2050, stop new coal and gas infrastructure being built, and

maintain its target of cutting carbon

emissions 43 percent from 2005 levels by

2030, already much tougher than the

outgoing conservative government's

Paris target of a cut of up to 28 percent.

is short of a majority in the lower house

of parliament, so may need the support

it could face a fight in the Senate, where

it will likely to need to work with the

Greens to pass legislation, including

the 2030 emissions target. "Now the bat-

tle will be over ambition in short-term

targets, legislating a plan so it's out of

the hands of any one government,

and hitting pause on new fossil fuel

mines," said Richie Merzian, climate

of an expanded cross-bench.

With votes still being counted, Labour

Even with an outright majority,

Labour will also face pressure from a handful of climate-focussed independents pushing for emissions reductions of at least 50 percent by 2030.

end coal-fired generation by 2030.

Defeated Prime Minister Scott Morrison once mocked Labour, brandishing a lump of coal in parliament saying, "Don't be afraid."

Since then, Labour-conscious of its defeat in 2019 when it lost seats in regions reliant on coal and gas jobshas dropped or diluted policies that could hurt them.

Two days ahead of the election, a senior Labour politician heaped praise on the gas industry for building mega-projects that generate massive exports, forecast to reap A\$70 billion (\$50 billion)

"I want to be clear how enthusiastic I am, but also how enthusiastic Labour is for this industry, because we know that it creates jobs and creates livelihoods,' Labour's shadow minister for resources, Madeleine King, told a petroleum

9818334363

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

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

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



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

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

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

Dejan Kulusevski's 16th minute tapin from Rodrigo Bentancur's pass put Tottenham ahead before Harry Kane struck with a diving header in the Sharma and team clinch Pro-Am title

SPORTS BUREAU KATHMANDU, MAY 22

EPL STANDINGS

P W D L GF GA PTS

29 6 3 99

38 21 11 6 76 33

38 16 10 12 57

38 12 15 11 42 44

38 15 6 17 38 43

38 | 11 | 15 | 12 | 50 | 46

9 13 16 43

38 11 6 21 43 66

38 9 11 18 42 79

38 6 5 27 34 77

Notes: Top four qualify for Champions League Fifth and sixth qualify for Europa League eventh qualifies for Europa Conference League

32nd minute. Kulusevski curled a sub-

lime shot into the far corner in the

64th minute and Golden Boot winner

Son Heung-min scored in the 70th and

London rivals Arsenal in fifth

place despite their 5-1 win against

Tottenham's victory left north

Burnley's six-season stay in the top

Manchester United lost 1-0 at

tier ended with a 2-1 home defeat

against Newcastle, with Leeds staying

Crystal Palace, but qualified for the

Europa League thanks to West Ham's

up after a 2-1 win at Brentford.

3-1 defeat at Brighton.

75th minutes.

38 13 6 19 52

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

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

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,

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 tour naments in the US," said Dassanayake who was appointed the coach of US cricket from 2016-2019. "I travelled almost the whole coun-

try 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,"

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

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

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.

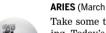
The League 2 featuring seven teams is the gateway for the 2023 World Cup. Each team will play 36 games at the end of the league cycle. The teams that finish in the top three will secure berths for the World Cup Qualifiers in Zimbabwe while the bottom four will compete in the World Cup Qualifiers

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



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) ****

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) ***

ing. 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.

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 move-

ment, and bonding will also happen organically.



CANCER (June 22-July 22) *** enment 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



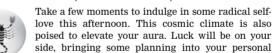


Emotional release will find you today. Give yourself permission to tap into your feelings, allowing them to flow through you without restriction. These vibes will also bring through a strong sense of gratitude



SCORPIO (October 23-November 21) ***

LIBRA (September 23-October 22) ***





cosmic vibes will ma 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

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19) ****

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.



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-



PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

POOR SUET ESTER

HEAVED GLITTER

OUST

SNUBS

ARLABRADE

IRON

IGNITESITKA

VIRGO (August 23-September 22) **** Pleasant surprises will manifest within your love

INANE

| I | B | I | S

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



SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21) *** The more you love yourself, the more others will do

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



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.



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

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 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

version 58 Powerful ruler 62 Desktop picture 63 Use a pen

55 Software

65 Belly-flop 66 Now, to Caesar 67 Ear bone 68 All-purpose

69 Zane or Lady Jane 70 Down and out

trucks

71 Sassy DOWN

 Hornet kin 2 Not in harbor

3 Fibber 4 Bar singalong

Reverberated

6 Obscures

8 Musical sign

9 Commotion (hyph.)

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

29 Kid's game 30 Bullfight bravos 31 Urchin

33 Senor's coin 35 Under the covers

CROON

COUNT

S|W|I|S|H

36 Spot's pal 37 Tops and trains 40 Team cheer 41 Boy Scout unit

47 Resulted

(2 wds.) 49 Reception

44 Ethical behavior

50 Attractive 51 Carry along

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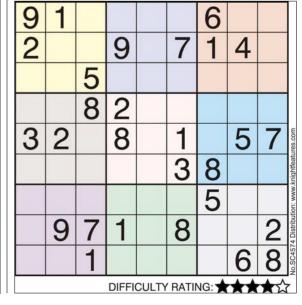
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YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

'Armageddon Time,' a portrait of white privilege

The film, which stars Anthony Hopkins, Anne Hathaway, and Jeremy Strong, has stirred Cannes like no other American film at the festival this year.

JAKE COYLE

hen the Cannes Film
Festival audience
stood to applaud
James Gray's richly
observed autobiographical drama "Armageddon Time,"
about the director's own 1980s childhood in Queens, Gray's voice quivered
as he addressed the crowd.
"It's my story in a way" said Gray

"It's my story, in a way," said Gray. "And you guys shared it with me."

"It took every last bit of control not to burst out into tears," Gray said, still recovering the next day in Cannes. "It's been a really strange journey making the film and my father died two months ago of Covid. The whole process has been fraught and filled with emotion."

"Armageddon Time," starring Anthony Hopkins, Anne Hathaway and Jeremy Strong, has stirred Cannes like no other American film at the festival this year. Gray's movie, which Focus Features will distribute in the US later this year, has been received as a tender triumph for the New York filmmaker of "The Immigrant" and "Ad Astra" not just for the detailed excavation of his childhood but for how the film reexamines his own white privilege growing up—how race and money can tip the scales in the formative years of young people.

Paul Graff (Banks Repeta) is a sixth-grader modelled after the 53-year-old Gray in a middle-class Jewish family. At school, Paul's friend Johnny (Jaylin Webb) is a Black kid with fewer advantages, who's treated differently than Paul. When Paul's family elects to send him to a private school, the gap only grows. Connections to today's inequities aren't hard to decipher. At the private school, Jessica Chastain makes a cameo as Maryanne Trump, sister to Donald and an assistant US attorney.

For Gray, "Armageddon Time" is a period film about now, and a coming home after two far-flung films in the Amazon-set "The Lost City of Z" and the space adventure "Ad Astra."

AP: When did "Armageddon Time" start formulating in your head?

GRAY: I was at an art exhibit in Los Angeles five years ago. Painted on the wall it said: "History and myth begin in the microcosm of the personal." I



(From left) Anne Hathaway, director James Gray, and Jeremy Strong pose for photographers at the photocall for the film 'Armageddon Time' at the 75th international film festival, Cannes, southern France.

had made this film before this where I went into space. It was a very difficult movie to make and a very difficult movie to complete. The end result was not fully mine. That was a very sad experience for me. I wanted to try to rediscover my love for the medium and why I wanted to do it in the first place. I said, "Screw it, I'll make the most personal film I can."

AP: You've called 1980 one of the most pivotal years in American history. Is that because of the election of Reagan?

GRAY: People don't remember that he campaigned in Philadelphia, Mississippi, which is where Goodman, Schwerner and Cheney were killed by the Klan. And he started talking about states' rights. He knew exactly what he was doing. I understand he didn't come out and say the N-word. He didn't come out and be Trump completely. But that was his purpose. I feel like that was planting the seeds for a kind of corpo-

'I feel a particular sense of loss that filmmakers aren't as willing to confront the ideas of class.'

ratist, me-first, top-down, frankly rooted in racism idea of American capitalism that hasn't left us fully since. When you propose a system which is all about money, it has the basis of oppression built into it. It didn't start with slavery. It started with the indigenous people who were basically vaporised. We're very good at genocide.

AP: These aren't the normal inward-looking themes of memoir films.

GRAY: All of this is about what the

actual economic structure of the country is. I felt that that would have power in a context that's very small, which is a kid's transfer from a public school to a private school and how we all do our part to (expletive) things up. In other words, "I'm going to make this ethical compromise now. I'm going to contribute to ethical compromise just a little bit."

AP: Were you thinking any of this when you were living through it as a kid?

GRAY: When I was a kid I never thought about the levels of capitalism, how if someone is up there, that means somebody's gotta be down there. I knew 48 kids in a class, something was wrong. But here's the thing: Why is it not a source of utter rage in our country that public education in our country is financed by local property taxes? They should be burning down state legislatures because of that. The system makes itself very

happy by basically saying: Let's make a superhero movie but put a trans person in it. That's fine. That's excellent, whatever. But that doesn't solve the problem. You have to look at the system itself and understand that it is based on the brutal oppression of one group to survive.

AP: Your film received an enthusiastic reception here in Cannes. Have you thought about how it will be received stateside?

GRAY: I'm sure there will be people who hate the movie. But as an American, I feel a particular sense of loss that we as filmmakers are not as willing to confront the ideas of class. One of the most amazing things about what Francis Ford Coppola did in that movie is how it presents such a vivid picture of the rot of capitalism. Look at "Jaws." That mayor will keep the beaches open no matter what.

AP: Were the Trumps actually involved in your private school experience?

GRAY: They sure were. If I had my high school yearbook, I would show you the board of trustees which had Frederick Christ Trump in the picture. He would walk the halls of the school. His daughter (Maryanne) gave a speech to the school which I had my brother recount the best he could and then I recalled the best I could and we compared notes. They were very similar.

AP: You're a filmmaker considered a classicist devoted to a personal kind of filmmaking for the big screen. Do you ever feel like one of a dwindling breed?

GRAY: It's my obligation to continue trying to do the work that I'm doing. Not out of ego or any feeling of "I'm the best" or anything but because of the type of cinema that I like, I'd like to think there's at least somebody out there that likes it, too. And who is speaking for them? The question is: Are you going to pursue with passion what it is you dream about, what you hope for? Or are you going to give in? I'd love to be richer or more powerful or whatever. But if it's not to be, I'm OK with that. I'd rather just pursue my dreams.

— Associated Pre

Kate McKinnon, Pete Davidson departing from 'SNL'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ate McKinnon and Pete Davidson are among those departing from "Saturday Night Live," leaving the sketch institution without arguably its two most famous names after Saturday's 47th season finale.

Aidy Bryant and Kyle Mooney will also leave the cast after the episode hosted by Natasha Lyonne.

The departures represent one of the biggest cast shake-ups in years on a show that has seen unusual steadiness in recent seasons.

McKinnon, 38, won two Emmys and was nominated for nine in her 10 seasons on the show, during which her impressions included Hillary Clinton, and former Attorney General Jeff Sessions. Her comic chops with characters like alien abductee Miss Rafferty frequently drove castmates and guest hosts to lose it live on air.

McKinnon opened the show with an out-of-this-world skit, and said her final goodbyes on "Earth." "I love ya, thanks for letting me stay awhile. Live from New York, it's Saturday night," she said to open the show.

The 28-year-old Davidson joined the cast in 2014 and has appeared in eight seasons. His own outsize personality often outshone the characters he played. His comic commentaries as himself on "Weekend Update" were often his most viral bits. And he was as well-known for his life offscreen—dating Ariana Grande and current girlfriend Kim Kardashian—as on.

"I never imagined this would be my

life," Davidson said during the show. "I appreciate SNL for always having my back, for allowing me to work on myself and grow. Thank you to Lorne for never giving up on me or judging me even when everyone else was, for believing in me and allowing me to have a place I could call home with the memories that will last a lifetime. Thank you."

Bryant, 35, joined the cast at the same time as McKinnon and has been a constant in sketches ever since, getting four Emmy nominations of her own. Mooney, 37, appeared in nine seasons starting in 2013.

George Miller debuts 'Three Thousand Years of Longing'

The movie is Miller's long-awaited follow-up to 'Mad Max: Fury Road'.



Director George Miller poses for photographers upon arrival at the premier of the film 'Three Thousand Years of Longing'.

replaced mythology.

AP/RSS

JAKE COYLE

t's taken a lot of time and a good deal of yearning for Australian director George Miller to make "Three Thousand Years of Longing" his long-awaited follow-up to "Mad Max: Fury Road."

Miller premiered 'Three Thousand Years of Longing' over the weekend at the Cannes Film Festival, the culmination of a journey that began 20 years ago when Miller first read the AS Byatt story upon which the film is based, 'The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye.'

But it was only when frictions over the profits from "Fury Road"— Miller's operatic action opus — opened a window that the time came for "Three Thousand Years of Longing."

"After we wrote it, it was really a question of when to do it," Miller said alongside his stars, Idris Elba and Tilda Swinton, shortly before the film's premiere in Cannes. "It was lucky, actually. We got into litigation with Warner Bros. on 'Fury Road' and it meant that, hey, we can bring this to the fore"

The unveiling of 'Three Thousand Years of Longing' had most Cannes festival goers on the edge of their seats. What would Miller conjure up this time? Could the 77-year-old filmmaker match the propulsive thrill of 'Mad Max: Fury Road'?

That film, which Miller is preparing to revisit with the prequel 'Furiosa,' made its blistering premiere in Cannes seven years ago on its way to an armful of Oscars, \$374 million in box office receipts and a place on plenty of best-century lists.

The answer, it turns out, is a singular blend of fantasy epic and chamber-piece drama that goes to the heart of Miller's own feelings about story-telling. The film, which MGM will release on Aug. 31, was scripted by Miller and his daughter, first-time screenwriter Augusta Gore. In it, Swinton plays a narratologist named

Alithea Binnie who is visiting Turkey

for a conference on how science has

The unveiling of the movie had most Cannes festival goers on the edge of their seats.

After Alithea buys an old bottle at the Grand Bazaar and scrubs it in her hotel sink, a wish-granting djinn (Elba) appears, filling up the room. A lengthy and intimate conversation ensues, in which he tells her about his previous masters throughout the last 3,000 years. Using computer-generated imagery, Miller blends mythology and modern world in a contemplative, history-spanning fairy tale.

"There are some people who are great storytellers, who can do it as a performance," Miller says. "I know that I struggle with that. I can't get up and tell a spontaneous story well. But I can do it in the ultra-slow motion of telling a movie, where I think about every nuance, every rhythm of it."

Miller teamed up again with many of his 'Fury Road' collaborators. But the director sensed that in some ways 'Three Thousand Years of Longing' was the 'anti-Mad Max' — talkative where 'Fury Road' was wordless, spread across aeons rather than in real time.

And for all the eras it spans, the

movie reaches right up to today. The pandemic is seen late in the film in scenes where background actors are wearing masks. The film's production was also dramatically shaped by the pandemic. Miller shifted from shooting in a series of international locations to relying on CGI and his native Australia for the bulk of the film.

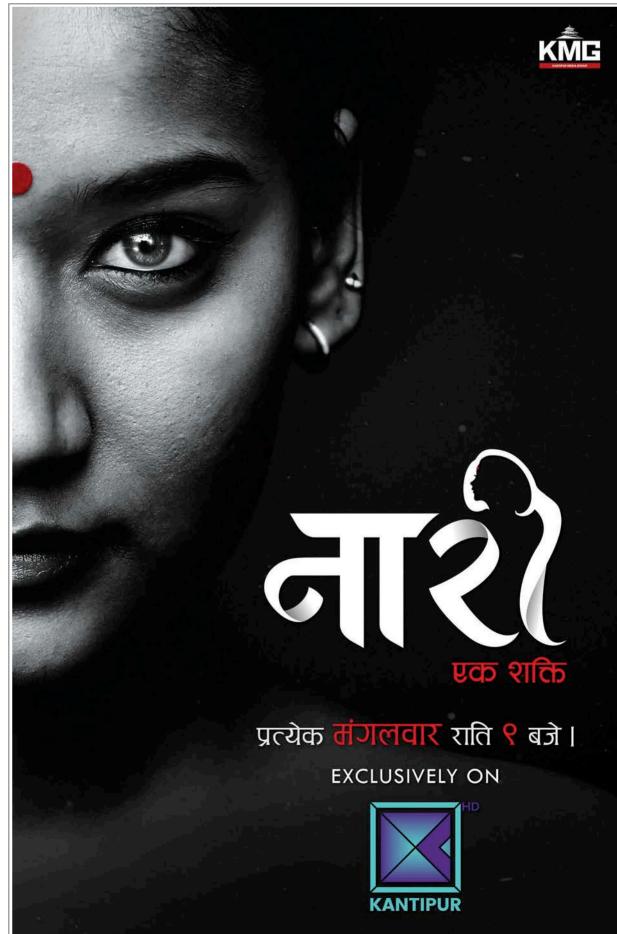
"When we started talking about this film, it felt very right," Swinton says. "But now, this year, it's even more. And I imagine it will be even more the next. That instinct of yours for the wind, that's going to run and run. That's like a seed that one plants."

To Miller, 'Three Thousand Years of Longing' doesn't just lead up to now — it goes beyond.

"It's a very pertinent story," says Miller. "It's like a metal detector or a Geiger counter, when something really activates it." "Time will tell if it has enough stuff

going in it that other people respond to it. You hope that the story becomes someone else's and belongs to everyone," he said.

— Associated Press



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