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INSIDE



High interests delight depositors, but give businesses a hard time – Page 5

At least six missing as rains wreak havoc in western Nepal - Page 2 Women politicians from Madhesh see bias in candidate selection

- Page 3 Interview: Youth is not just a matter of age



(Clockwise from top left) Upendra Yadav of Janata Samajbadi Party, Madhav Nepal of CPN (Unified Socialist), KP Sharma Oli of CPN-UML, Pushpa Kamal Dahal of CPN (Maoist Centre), Radhika Tamang of the Maoist Centre, Ranju Darshana (independent), and Pradip Paudel and Pushpa Bhusal of Nepali Congress file their candidacies for the November 20 elections from their respective constituencies on Sunday.

Nepal loses Rs200

million in Dashain

power spillage

Parties deny dissidents tickets, many hit back by filing rebel candidacies

- Page 4

Many leaders have even allied with rival forces against the candidates of the mother party or its electoral alliance.

NISHAN KHATIWADA KATHMANDU, OCT 9

The filing of nominations by candidates of various political parties and independent aspirants for the firstpast-the-post (FPTP) seats of the federal parliament and provincial assemblies concluded Sunday.

Candidates filed their nominations for the 165 House of Representatives seats and 330 provincial assemblies seats for the elections scheduled for November 20



Unsold energy is still high. Utility hopes approval from India will facilitate export of more electricity. But the candidates-selection was

PRITHVI MAN SHRESTHA KATHMANDU, OCT 9

Amid reduced domestic demand and India not buying more electricity, the Nepal Electricity Authority saw massive spillage of power during the Dashain festival.

The authority said spillage reached as high as 800MW at times with domestic demand falling as low as 700MW against the peak demand of around 1700MW. The total installed capacity of Nepal's power projects exceeds 2,200MW and all of them were operating in their full capacity, aided

Elections 2022 41 DAYS TO GO

A whiff of change in the air on candidate nomination day

Independents challenge many party heavyweights as Election Commission registers candidacy across country.

BINOD GHIMIRE KATHMANDU, OCT 9

The race for federal parliament and provincial assemblies entered an important stage on Sunday with political parties and individuals filing nominations across the country.

The candidates will vie for 165 seats of federal parliament and 330 seats of provincial assemblies under the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system on November 20.

Another 110 seats of the federal parliament and 220 seats of provincial assemblies will be filled through the proportional representation system of election.

While hundreds of candidates have filed nominations as independent candidates, the real fight will be between the ruling five-party alliance and another coalition led by the CPN-UML. Sunday's nominations suggest the common candidates of the Nepali Congress, the CPN (Maoist Centre), the CPN (Unified Socialist), the Loktantrik Samajbadi Party and the Rastriya Janamorcha will challenge the candidates fielded jointly by the UML, the Janata Samajbadi Party, the Rastriya Prajatantra Party and the Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal. However, unlike the five-party alliance, the UML-led electoral partnership doesn't have common candidates across the country.

"The nomination process for the elections under the FPTP system concluded smoothly across the nation," Shaligram Paudel, spokesperson at the Election Commission, told the Post. As per the commission's report compiled by the time the Post went to the press, 2,494 persons including 233 women have registered their candidacies for the House of Representatives. Similarly, a total of 3,423 persons, of whom 295 are women and one is from the sexual and gender minority community, filed their nominations for provincial assemblies.

The commission had fixed Sunday for filing nominations under the FPTP. Earlier, on September 18 and 19, the parties had submitted their closed lists of candidates under the proportional representation system.

Prime Minister and the Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba has filed his candidacy from Dadeldhura for the seventh time since 1991.

Arzu Rana Deuba, the Congress Central Working Committee member and wife of the prime minister, filed candidacy on her husband's behalf at the district office of the commission. The executive head of the country will go head-to-head against his former comrade Karna Malla, who quit Congress and joined the Nepali Congress (BP), a fringe party.

CPN-UML chair and former prime minister KP Sharma Oli is trying his luck from Jhapa-5 in his home district. The Congress's Khagendra Adhikari, the common candidate of the ruling alliance, and writer Deepak Kumar (Yug) Pathak among others are challenging him. The Rastriya Prajatantra Party is supporting Oli. >> Continued on page 3



e top leadership of the politi cal parties only favour their confidants, and sideline the leaders with new ideas and opposing views. After quitting the CPN-UML, Ghanashyam Bhusal filed his candidacy as an independent from Rupandehi-1, reportedly with the backing of the Nepali Congress-led electoral alliance. >> Continued on page 2

not free of controversy as it kicked up a storm in the major parties-many

leaders quit their parties, resigned

from their posts, or filed rebel candi-

dacies against the official candidates

unhappy with their party brass have

decided not to contest the elections,

One thing common among the dis-

gruntled leaders is that almost all of

them have long been critical of their

party leaderships and speaking

Observers say it is evident that

up against top-level decisions.

ignoring requests to the contrary.

Moreover, several senior politicians

of their parties or alliances

continued raini the festival season.

As Indian authorities have allowed Nepal to sell only up to 364MW in their power trading market, the NEA had no way to sell the surplus energy.

"Around 40 million units of electricity went to waste in a week during Dashain," said Kul Man Ghising, managing director of the NEA.

>> Continued on page 3

In remote west, campaigners tore down chhau sheds. They have sprung up again

Despite costly campaigns, the practice of banishing women to period sheds still prevails in many districts of Sudurpaschim and Karnali provinces.



Authorities and campaigners have been unable to uproot the Chhaupadi practice.

BASANT PRATAP SINGH IN BAJHANG & BIDHYA RAI IN KATHMANDU

On a cold December night in 2018, 35-year-old Amba Bohora of Budhinanda Municipality Ward 9 in Bajura, a remote hill district of

Sudurpaschim Province, and her sons aged seven and nine died in a chhau goth. Police confirmed that the trio had died from suffocation due to the fire they had burned in the shed to keep warm in the winter night.

Nineteen days prior to their deaths, a summit on menstrual health management was held at Hotel Yak and Yeti in Kathmandu on December 11. Representatives of several organisations in the US, the UK, Germany, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh among other countries; campaigners and adolescents attended the summit.

A model chhau goth, a shed built for menstruating women and postpartum mothers, was the major attraction among the attendees.

Pictures and videos of the chhau goths in villages being dismantled were shown to the participants claiming that the Chhaupadi practice was on the wane in Nepal.

Around \$40,000 was spent on the one-day summit jointly organised by the Nepal government and the Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management Partners' Alliance (MHMPA) and funded by GIZ, a German development agency, according to Gunaraj Shrestha, the coordinator of the alliance.

Budhinanda, where the young mother and her children died in a chhau goth, was among the municipalities declared a Chhaupadi-free area.

On December 2, 2019, 21-year-old Parbati Rawat died in a chhau shed in Sanfebagar Municipality Ward 3 of Achham. The incident happened during the 16-day violence against women national campaign.

>> Continued on page 2

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NATIONAL



Locals using basket traps to catch fish in a shallow stream on the outskirts of Tulsipur in Dang district, a few days ago.

Six persons missing as rains wreak havoc in western Nepal

Five of a family have gone missing in Kalikot. Several areas are without transport, communication and electricity.

TULARAM PANDEY

KALIKOT, OCT 9

Five family members have gone missing after a landslide buried a house at Tilagufa Municipality-7 in Kalikot district on Sunday.

Dhruvraj Bista, his 35-year-old wife Mamata, 15-year-old son Bharat, 13-year-old son Kripesh and 11-yearold daughter Gyani went missing after their house was washed away by a landslide at around 10:30am, according to the chief of the District Police Office, Jayashwar Rimal.

According to the police, it was difficult to search for the missing persons due to continuous rains for five days. Even though a police team of 8 went to the spot, they were unable to dig through the landslide debris, which contained rocks in significant amounts and was difficult to remove. According to Rimal, two houses of Dhruvaraj and the neighbour's house were also swept away by the landslide which fell from above the house. Life in Kalikot has been affected by the continuous rain. The Karnali corridor and Karnali Highway are blocked by land-

slides in several places. Roads have collapsed in many places and houses have

vincial office in Surkhet, the repeater tower at Ratamata, Rolpa, which links Jajarkot and Rukum, and the Sallabhir repeater tower that serves West Jajarkot remains shut since last Wednesday after its solar-powered batteries died owing to lack of sun. Also, the generator could not be operated for lack of fuel, according to Telecom officials. The Sallibhir area has been without telephone services for the past two days.

According to Nepal Telecom's pro-

Also, Chaurjahari, Sallus Bazar, Rakam and Jajarkot headquarters of West Rukum have been without power for the past three days after a pylon of the central transmission line near Chhinchu was toppled by heavy rains.

Karnali Highway is blocked in many places by landslides.

Similarly in Salyan, the Srinagar market located in Sharada Municipality-1 in Salyan district has been inundated by rainwaters. More to the flooding in the Sukekhola and Bhagwati rivers. According to Deputy Superintendent of Police Damodar KC of the District Police Office Salyan, landslide debris including rocks have entered the houses. Due to the increase in the flow of water in the river, the transport service has also been disrupted. There are no casualties but locals are living in fear. And in Bajhang, the five days of rains have blocked several roads and disrupted power supply. According to Kamal Raj Chaudhary, information officer at the District Police Office, Bajhang, life in the district has been badly affected due to the continuous rainfall since Wednesday. Due to the landslides that accompanied the rains, the Jaya Prithvi Highway, the only road connecting Bajhang with other districts, has been blocked and the electricity service has been cut off, making life difficult. The district administration office has issued a notice warning locals of more rain-induced disasters if the weather does not improve. It has asked the public to take all possible precautions to remain safe.

Drive against menstruation sheds largely ineffective

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Despite various programmes and campaigns organised by the government and international and local development organisations, Chhaupadi, a deeply rooted practice in which menstruating girls, women and postpartum mothers are deemed impure and banished into seclusion, still prevails in various districts of the Sudurpaschim and Karnali province

The Civil and Criminal Code enforced in 2017 has criminalised Chhaupadi. The practice of Chhaupadi is not only discriminatory against women but is also life-threatening as seen from reports of girls and women dying in chhau sheds due to cold, suffocation, snakebites, and wildlife attacks surfacing frequently.

Clause 168 (3) of the Civil and Criminal Code pro-visions three-month jail and a fine of Rs3,000 against anyone found guilty of forcing a menstruating woman to live in a Chhaupadi shed. The punishment is more severe for those holding public positions.

In Parbati's case, the police arrested Chhatra Rawat, Parbati's brother-in-law, on the charge of forcing her to practise Chhaupadi. The Achham district court sentenced him to 45 days in prison.

On January 8, 2018, 23-year-old Gauri Budha of Turmakhad Rural Municipality in Achham died of suffocation in a Chhaugoth. Turmakhad, 55 km east of the headquarters Mangalsen, was earlier declared Chhaupadi-free.

According to the Human Rights Commission's report on the impact of the Chhaupadi system on women, in 2019, 13 people died in Achham alone in chhau goths between 2007 and 2018.

After Parbati's death, police launched a campaign to declare Achham a Chhaupadi-free district and authorities dismantled Chhaupadi sheds. The elected representatives also were actively involved to make the drive a success.

Then on January 22, 2020, the federal Ministry of Home Affairs directed the administration in 19 districts of Sudurpaschim and Karnali provinces to destroy Chhaupadi sheds. More than 8,000 sheds were torn down and around 100 local units were declared Chhaupadi-free during the drive that lasted

a few months. the formation of local governme

"We demolished the Chhaupadi sheds but could not rid the society of superstitions. The people rebuilt the destroyed sheds after a few days, said Parbati Awasthi, chief at the women and children unit of the District Police Office in Bajhang, who had actively participated in the chhau goth demolition drive in Sudurpaschim districts.

Today almost all households in Sanfebagar have rebuilt period huts

In Bajhang, Majhigaun in Khaptadchanna Rural Municipality was declared a Chaupadi-free area in December 2014. Before the announcement, traditional faith healers were also sensitised in the matters of menstruation and the practice of Chhaupadi following which the chhau goths were demolished. The villagers too actively participated in the demolition drive and took an oath to end the mistreatment of menstruating women.

According to the data of the Women and Children's Office, organisations including the then Women's Development Office, District Development Committee and the erstwhile village development committees spent more than Rs2.05 million on the programme. However, after less than a month of being declared a Chhaupadi-free zone, the villagers went back to repairing the chhau goths.

In June 2018, Saipal Municipality of Bajhang demolished six Chhaupadi sheds at Dhuli, a remote settlement. Local girls and women stayed in caves nearby or pitched tents under the open sky during their periods. Then a few months ago, with the amount collected by a local mothers' group, a community Chhaupadi shed for eight persons was built in the settlement. But the police demolished the newly-constructed shed, forcing girls and women back to the caves and open fields.

The presence of a police post in the village has deterred the locals from reconstructing the shed. But that hasn't stopped them from observing Chhaupadi.

"The police demolished our chhau goth, only adding to our hardships," said 35-year-old Birati Rokaya from Dhuli. "The caves can only accommodate three persons at a time so when a group of women gets their periods, we stay out in the fields. It's difficult

President Bhandari hospitalised with Covid

Was admitted to TU Teaching Hospital Saturday with fever.

POST REPORT KATHMANDU, OCT 9

President Bidya Devi Bhandari, who has been undergoing treatment at the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, has tested positive for Covid-19.

Bhandari was admitted to the hospital on Saturday following high fever. "President Bhandari has tested positive for Covid-19," Dr Dinesh Kafle, director at the hospital, told the Post. "Her condition is better today [Sunday] compared to Saturday."

Doctors attending to the head of state said she was given intravenous fluids on Saturday, and started oral medicines from Sunday.

Doctors and her personal aides say Bhandari will remain in the hospital for a few days. Tika Dhakal, media expert to the President, said she also underwent tests for dengue and seasonal flu but those



President Bidya Devi Bhandari

reports were negative.

The President was taken to the hospital after complaining of high fever and body ache," Dhakal told the Post. "However, her reports for different tests suggest there are no major complications.'

but we have to observe Chhaupadi anyhow. It is our custom.'

The monsoons and the winters are the toughest for the women in Dhuli village which lies at an altitude of around 3,000 metres above sea level. It snows up to five feet during winter. "It is not easy to stay in the cave or the flimsy huts in winter. Nursing mothers and their babies are hit hardest by unfavourable weather," said Ujeli Rokaya, another woman of Dhuli village. "But observing Chhaupadi is important to us.'

The ostracisation of menstruating girls is not limited to their households; the discrimination spills over into all aspects of their lives. For example, girl students and female teachers of Janaprakash Basic School in Badimalika Municipality Ward 8, Bajura, are prevented from attending school during the menstrual cycle.

"There is a temple on the school premises. The villagers do not allow menstruating students and teachers to go to school for five days arguing that gods will be angry," said Nira Bista, a teacher at Janaprakash Basic School. According to her, in observing Chhaupadi many girl students miss classes which reflects poorly on their academics.

Badimalika was also declared a Chhaupadi-free local unit a few years ago.

According to Madan Joshi, a civil society leader, there are around 20 schools in Bajura district where menstruating girls and women are barred from entering the school premises during their period.

Many schools in Bajhang, Achham, Humla, Kalikot and Mugu follow the unspoken rule of barring girl students and female teachers from entering the school premises during menstruation.

Samjhana Karki, a student at the Kanya Secondary School, Bungal in Bajhang, says missing school for five days in a row affects her schoolwork and her overall academic performance at school.

"No matter how dedicated a student you are, if you are a girl you have a slim chance of topping the class," said Karki. "Girls never score higher than boys in my class and that's because girls are forced to miss school even during exams.'

Sannitriveni Rural Municipality and Shubhakali Rural Municipality.

Similarly, an elderly woman went missing as a landslide hit a house belonging to Jora Singh Shahi at Tilagufa-6. Shahi's 80-year-old mother, Lalka Shahi, went missing in the landslide, said police.

according Gorkha, Shankarhari Acharya, chief district officer, Deepak GC, 34-year-old man of Surkhet, who was trapped in a landslide at Lokpavir in Chumanuvri Rural Municipality-6, was rescued after four days on Sunday. GC was badly injured and was sent to the TU Teaching Hospital in Kathmandu for treatment by helicopter.

In Myagdi, a landslide triggered by continuous rains damaged the Lulang Basic School building located at in Lulang Dhaulagiri Rural Municipality-2. The classrooms of grade three and grade eight of the school were destroyed by the landslide that hit on Saturday afternoon.

Due to excessive rain most of the districts of the Karnali province, including rural settlements, have been left without communication links

(With inputs from local correspondents)

federal structure in 2017, the trend of destroying chhau goths gained momentum with sporadic campaigns aimed at ridding the villages of menstrual taboos

According to Bhojraj Shrestha, the then Chief District Officer (currently Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Urban Development), who led the campaign to demolish the Chaugoths in Achham after Parbati's death, the budget poured into the anti-Chhaupadi campaigns does not justify the impact of such campaigns.

Unless those who lead such campaigns, including the government and development agencies, and those who are active in implementing them intrinsically believe in eradicating the Chhaupadi practice, no amount of money and resources will help rid the society of such malpractices," Shrestha said

"I am tired of hearing empty speeches of political leaders and futile activism among the so-called activists and organisations carrying dual agendas. There are very few people who honestly believe that this practice must be abolished. We need more of them to allow our women dignified menstruation.'

Two years after the last chhau goth demolition campaign in Achham, almost all the sheds have been reconstructed. "After the campaign to destroy chhau goths slowed down because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the sheds were built back," said Pashupati Kunwar, a campaigner against Chhaupadi in Achham.



After chhau sheds were torn down by activists, some women spend their periods under overhangs outside their villages in Bajhang district.

alliance with the Madhesh-based

Janata Samajbadi Party, the pro-mon-

archy Rastriya Prajatantra Party, and

Kamal Thapa's Rastriya Prajatantra

Party-Nepal, which advocates a Hindu

state. The party has ceded a few con-

stituencies to the Rastriya Prajatantra

Party and 17 constituencies to the

Janata Samajbadi. Thapa is contest-

ing from Makawanpur-1 on a UML

slipped into a political quagmire and

blame the leaders of the major parties

discipline, said Lok Raj Baral, a politi-

ant, responsible and visionary, but our

leaders lack such qualities. They are

rather practising nepotism and favor-

itism, and bringing their confidants

and relatives to power," Baral told the

for the state of affairs.

Analysts say the country has

Our political parties lack unity and

"The top leadership should be toler-

ticket

cal analyst.

Rebel candidacies galore after parties deny election tickets to dissidents

>> Continued from page 1

On Saturday, upon learning that the ticket from his constituency was given to Dipak Bohora of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, Bhusal announced his resignation from the party.

Similarly, Minendra Rijal of the Nepali Congress who was planning to contest for a lower house seat from Morang-2 was denied a ticket, which was given to another leader Sujata Koirala instead. Rijal had won the 2017 elections from the constituency.

Likewise, the CPN-UML has denied a ticket to its dissident leader Bhim Rawal although the party's lower bodies had unanimously endorsed him as candidate from Achham-1. The party has decided to field Jhapat Bohora-a leader who recently joined the party after quitting the Maoist Centrefrom the constituency.

Nepali Congress leader Amresh Kumar Singh has also been deprived

of a ticket by the party.

Similarly, Congress leader Jagannath Poudel, an influential leader from Chitwan Congress who had in May fought for Bharatpur mayorship against the party's wishes and lost, has filed his candidacy as an independent.

Many other influential local leaders of big political parties have decided to contest the November elections as independents

In Kaski-3, Congress and UML leaders are standing against their parties' official candidates.

As many as 150 district leaders of the CPN (Maoist Centre) in Dhankuta including Hemraj Bhandari, a former lawmaker from the party who is also a Politburo member, announced their collective resignation on September 26 protesting the party's decision to forge alliance with other parties.

They had announced that they

would field Bhandari as an independent in Dhankuta's only lower house seat

In the CPN-UML, the Das Bhai (ten dissidents) were targeted by the party chair Oli's camp. Among the dissidents, those who softened their tones have been rewarded with tickets, but those who refused to compromise have been deprived of their chances to contest the elections.

Observers say the top leaders of the major parties do not want to hear critical voices and have been exercising monopoly in candidate- selection. According to them, to get election tickets and to rise through party ranks, one has to kowtow to the top leadership and turn a blind eye to the party's wrongdoings

Most parties are being led by mediocre leaders who have been running the show in an authoritarian manner and are inordinately averse to dissent.

said Puranjan Acharya, a political analyst. "The top leaders of major political parties don't want to hear critical voices," he said.

According to him, even though the Congress is a little more sensitive to dissident voices, party president Sher Bahadur Deuba is no different to the top leaders of other parties. "Even the Congress has denied tickets to several electable candidates, who have a track record of winning elections. In all parties, those who have failed to gain the trust of top leaders have been denied tickets," Acharya told the Post.

The Nepali Congress-led electoral alliance has sealed an electoral deal by dividing the 165 FPTP seats-90 for Congress, 47 for the CPN(Maoist Centre), 19 for the CPN (Unified Socialist), seven for the Loktantrik Samajbadi Party, and two for the Rastriya Janamorcha.

The CPN-UML has also forged an

Post. "This has cost the political system dearly. Also, the unnatural political alliances that serve vested interests will do no good to the country."

CK Lal, a political commentator and columnist with the Post, said parties have turned Nepal into an oligarchy. "In oligarchy, top leaders make their own political kingdoms, reward their loyalists and punish those who go against them. It has been happening in Nepal's politics after the promulgation of the 2015 constitution," he told the Post.

Lal added that the top leaders are oligarchs who only favor those loyal to them and cannot tolerate dissent.

Acharya, another observer, concurs. "Only those who are blindly loyal to the top leadership are getting a chance," he said. "This will lead to a handful of leaders controlling the system, which is bad for both national politics as well as the country.'

NATIONAL

Women politicians from Madhesh accuse party brass of bias in selecting candidates

Nepotism and monetary influence have held sway in candidate selection in all major parties, they say.

SANTOSH SINGH DHANUSHA. OCT 9

Women politicians from the Madhesh Province have expressed their grievances over the selection of candidates for the upcoming federal and provincial elections scheduled for November 20. Arguing that party leaderships sidelined genuine politicians who are women, a cross-party group of women leaders complained that the leadership offered tickets only to the well-connected and rich individuals.

During an interaction programme organised in Janakpur last week, the women leaders criticised the party leaderships for not fielding women candidates for the election of the House of Representatives and Provincial Assembly under the firstpast-the-post (FPTP) category. The electoral alliance among the major political forces has further reduced the opportunities of women repmembers. "The party leadership is reluctant to listen to us when we raise our voice for the compulsory nomination of the female candidate under the first-past-the-post system," Das said. "The major parties nominate the male candidates by forging the electoral alliance among them." Das cited the example of the local election in which two different parties under the alliance fielded male candidates for both mayor or chairperson and deputy mayor or vice-chairperson posts in the local bodies.

The major political parties have also decided to contest the federal and provincial elections under alliances. On the one hand is the five-party alliance of Nepali Congress, CPN (Maoist Centre), CPN (Unified Socialist), Rastriya Janamorcha and Loktantrik Samajbadi Party, and the UML has also cobbled up a coalition, joining hands with Janata Samajbadi Party, Rastriya Prajatantra Party and



A wide-angle view of the full moon seen from Tinpiple in Kathmandu on Sunday evening. The Full Hunter's Moon, or Kojagrat Purnima, marks the end of the Dashain festival and onset of winter.



Participants at an interaction that discussed candidate selection in Janakpur last week.

resentation in the legislative bodies, they said.

"The women who have been actively involved in various movements and party activities are denied an opportunity to contest the elections," said Bibha Thakur, the central member of Tarai Madhesh Loktantrik Party. "The women from poor and Dalit communities are deprived to compete at the polls as the parties favoured the rich, well connected and the new entrants for the upcoming elections. Even the women, though very nominal in number, are unable to raise voice for the rights of women because they have to Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal.

The woman leaders representing the Nepali Congress, UML, Maoist Centre and Loktantrik Samajbadi Party also expressed their grievances against the respective party leaderships for underestimating the female party workers.

Maoist leader Dipa Lama, who started her political career as a Maoist combatant during the decade-long insurgency, said that nepotism, favouritism and monetary influence have dominated the party while the party workers who toiled hard for political change for years have been

Number of serious crimes fell this Dashain, police say

Police data show 21 minor incidents of crime were registered in the past two weeks in contrast to 773 in 2019 and 568 in 2018 during the festival.

ANUP OJHA KATHMANDU, OCT 9

As people leave the Kathmandu Valley for their hometowns in droves ahead of Dashain every year, the valley usually witnesses an uptick in the number of crimes, especially burglary and hooliganism. For the burglars, empty homes and apartments provide an opportunity to break into them and walk away with valuable goods. But this year, only a few such incidents were reported in the valley, a sharp decline from the numbers in previous years, police said.

years, police said. Security efforts such as increased surveillance through CCTV cameras (Valley Police estimates over 10,000 CCTV cameras have been installed across the valley's streets and alleys), police patrolling round the clock and awareness programmes are to be credited for the decline in incidents of crime, according to police. Covid among the public.

The rate had seen an uptick in the years before the pandemic, according to police data. Crime rate had increased in Kathmandu by 36 percent during Dashain in 2019, with a total of 773 cases of crimes registered in the period that year. In 2018, police recorded as many as 568 cases during Dashain.

A total of 3,343 security personnel were deployed in the Valley starting from Ghatasthapana. had left the Valley to celebrate Dashain," Mainali said.

The Kathmandu Valley Traffic Police Office estimates that over 2.2 million people had left the Valley to celebrate Dashain this year, a rise from about 600,000 in 2021 and 300,000 in 2020.

A total of 3,343 security personnel were deployed in the Valley starting from Ghatasthapana, which marks the beginning of the 15-day Dashain festival.

Despite police patrolling, however, incidents of noise pollution and quarrel involving drunk revellers continued unabated during this year's Dashain as well, local representatives said.

"As ours is a core area, most of the people were indoors during Dashain, so we didn't record any criminal activities, but police didn't control the local bhattis [pubs] that opened till midnight," said Yogesh Kumar Khadgi, chairperson of Kathmandu Metropolitan City's ward 27, which encompasses areas such as Ason, Bhotahity and Kamalakshi. "This caused a disturbance in our areas. The police should have controlled it."

Independent candidates take aim at party nominees

>> Continued from page 1

Then there is Maoist Centre chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal who likes to constantly switch constituencies. During the first Constituency Assembly (CA) elections in 2008, Dahal won from Rolpa-2 and Kathmandu-10. And in the second CA elections in 2013, he was elected from Siraha-3, but lost in Kathmandu-10. But new electoral rules bar candidates from contesting from more than one constituency.

And in 2017, during the first general elections held after the promulgation of the federal constitution, Dahal moved to Chitwan-3, his home district, and won. But this time, he is trying his luck in Gorkha-2. Dahal's nomination was proposed by Babarum Bhattarai, chairperson of Nepal Samajbadi Party, and seconded by Narayan Kaji Shrestha, senior vice-chair of the Maoist Centre. Both Bhattarai and restna are from Gorkha and in 201 the two had contested against each other from Gorkha-2. The contest was won by Bhattarai, who had the backing of the Nepali Congress The UML has fielded Abdus Miya to challenge Dahal. Likewise, Madhavi Bhatta, a dissident in the Nepali Congress, is also contesting as independent, challenging Dahal. Chairperson of the Unified Socialist, Madhav Kumar Nepal, is a common candidate of the five-party alliance in Rautahat-1. Upendra Yaday chairperson of the Janata Samajbadi Party, is contesting from Saptari-2 with UML's support. Yadav is likely to face a tough challenge from Loktantrik Samajbadi Party's Jaya Prakash Thakur, who is a common candidate of the Congress-led electoral alliance. CK Raut, chairperson of the Janamat Party, is also contesting from the same constituency. Similarly, Lokantrik Samajbadi Party chair Mahantha Thakur is contesting from Mahottari-3 as a common candidate of the ruling alliance. The UML-led alliance has fielded Hari Narayan Yadav of the Janata Samajbadi Party to challenge Thakur. In several constituencies, the battle is going to be between heavyweights. Rajendra Lingden, the chairman of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, is facing Congress senior leader Krishna Sitaula in Jhapa-3. Lingden has the support of the UML while Sitaula is the common candidate of the five-party alliance. Lingden had defeated Sitaula in the 2017 elections. In Sarlahi-2, Loktantrik Samajbadi Party senior leader Rajendra Mahato is contesting against Mahendra Raya Yadav, joint-chairperson of Bhattarai's party. Similarly, Gokarna Bista, the UML secretary, and Ram Kumari Jhakri, secretary of the Unified Socialist and former UML leader, are fighting head-to-head in Gulmi-2. In Syangja-2, Congress vice-chair Dhanraj Gurung will face UML secretary Padma Aryal. Aryal was elected from the constituency in 2017. In the Capital, Kathmandu-5 will see an interesting contest. Ishwar Pokharel, a senior vice-chairperson of the UML is being challenged by Pradip Poudel of the Congress. Former Bibeksheel Sajha Party leader Ranju Darshana too has filed her candidacy as an independent candidate from the constituency.

male leaders."

Thakur further said that the top leaders of all the political parties are reluctant to field women candidates in the elections. "Only a very few female candidates have been chosen and that too based on monetary influence, family relation or their connection with the influential leaders."

Chameli Devi Das, a provincial assembly member of Madhesh Province who was elected from Janata Samajbadi Party, also accused the male-dominated party leadership of being biased against female party Jueimeu.

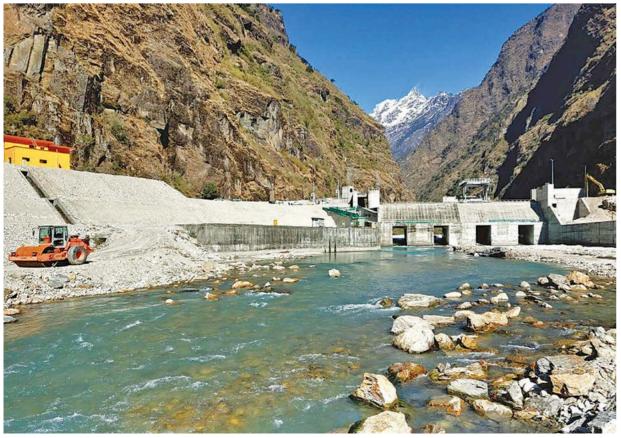
"The constitution ensures 33 percent representation of women in the legislature but only the women from well-off families and relatives of the influential party leaders get an opportunity," Lama said.

Ruka Kumari Mishra, a UML member from Janakpur, echoed Thakur and Lama. "The female party leaders have been evaluated not on the basis of their contribution to the party or their merit," Mishra said, "but on the basis of monetary influence and their connection with influential party leaders." Data from the Kathmandu District Police Range show that only 21 petty offenses were reported in the valley in the past 15 days—starting from Ghatasthapana, on September 26, till Kojagrat Purnima, on Sunday, which marked the end of Dashain this year.

While police said they don't have the data of crimes during Dashain in 2020 and 2021, the rate had been on a downward trend in those years too, thanks in part to the fears of catching "There were not any big crimes that took place during Dashain this year," said Senior Superintendent Dinesh Raj Mainali, who is also the spokesperson of the District Police Range. Installation of CCTV cameras in alleys and most of the households deterred thieves and burglars from committing crimes, Mainali said, adding that police were deployed round the clock and that also helped to keep the burglars at bay.

"Criminal incidents came down significantly this year, despite the increase in the number of people who According to police, security personnel were deployed on foot, on bicycles, motorcycles and vehicles for 'seal and search', 'cordon and search', picketing, ambushing and vigilance drives, and cross-checking operations.

NEA loses millions in power spillage as it awaits India's nod



Even though the country's sole distributor had long been seeking India's approval to sell the power generated by the 456MW Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project, India refused to give its nod citing the involvement of Chinese contractors in the project, which is currently Nepal's largest.

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"If we calculate the cost of spillage based on Rs5 per unit, we lost as much as Rs200 million in potential earnings in a week."

According to the NEA, there has been a reduction in spillage as factories and businesses, major consumers of electricity, have resumed operations after the Dashain festival.

"The spillage still amounts to around 200MW in the day, which goes up to 500MW during the night," Ghising told the Post.

The state-owned power utility had foreseen the potential spillage of energy during the festival time as it struggled to get timely approval from New Delhi for exporting more energy.

With hydropower projects operating in full capacity owing to continued monsoon rains, Nepal is currently producing more electricity than the domestic demand.

The NEA, however, is hopeful that the southern neighbour will soon give it approval to sell an additional 111.8 megawatts. "We are getting information from India that the approval process has reached the final stages," said Ghising. The NEA sought approval from the Indian authorities to export an additional 212.7MW through competitive bidding.

In mid-August, the NEA had requested approval from India to sell 111.8MW generated from Mistrikhola, Likhu Khola-A, Solukhola and Chilime hydropower projects.

The NEA said in late September that it has also sought approval to sell an additional 100.9MW generated from Likhukhola, Kabeli B1, Maikhola, Hewa Khola A and Lower Modi hydropower projects.

The state-owned power utility has been selling 37.7MW from Trishuli and Devighat hydropower projects, 140MW from Kaligandaki, 68MW from Middle Marsyangdi, 67MW from Marsyangdi and 51MW from Likhu-4, which was developed by the private sector, according to the NEA.

The NEA earned as much as Rs7.19 billion by exporting electricity to India in the last four months—between early June and mid-September, according to the power utility.

Even though the country's sole distributor had long been seeking India's approval to sell the power generated by the 456MW Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project, Indian officials refused to give their nod citing the involvement of Chinese contractors in the project, which is currently Nepal's largest.

India instead asked the NEA to propose other projects without Chinese components to sell electricity in the Indian market. So, it had submitted a list of new projects to export power to India.

"We expect to earn as much as Rs16 billion by selling electricity in the next fiscal year," said Ghising.

OPINION

EDITORIAL

Action not words It falls on Nepal to constantly remind the rich world of their climate responsibilities.

Dashain weather is usually associated with crisp mornings, bright days and blue skies, but this year it was anything but cheerful. Rain, unfortunately, played spoilsport by disrupting travel plans for the hundreds of thousands leaving Kathmandu Valley for their hometowns, and landslides triggered by incessant downpours primarily caused this disruption. What is frightening is that we are now witnessing unseasonal weather conditions, which are causing immense hardship for the people due to their unpredictability. The past few years have been a constant battle, from the Covid-19 pandemic to the dengue epidemic, and the devastating effects of climate change on land, vital infrastructure, food security, livelihood and the economy at large.

Most of us are aware of climate change and its impacts, and yet we seem to think that the associated problems will go away on their own. Numerous conferences are hosted every year to ensure that something is done to save the planet, yet they mostly don't result in tangible outcomes. Moral arguments to tackling the menace of climate change fall flat in the face of economic development and national self-interest. The actions of the developed nations have indeed fallen short of promises for drastic measures to cut their emissions.

Nothing meaningful on climate change will be achieved so long as profit remains the primary focus. The changing weather patterns aren't just about deluges and droughts. They can displace people by ripping up their livelihoods in an instant, leading to mass unemployment and poverty. Over the past few years, the erratic weather has wiped out food sources and is threatening global food security. Last year's October rain which damaged ripened paddy could be a recurring feature.

While development and climate change are closely linked, the onus is on the developed nations to shoulder most of the responsibility for the global warming that is causing drastic changes in the climate. The rich countries failing to live up to the promises they constantly reiterate is nothing but hypocrisy. The demand for funds by the poorer nations isn't a ploy to defraud the wealthier ones. It is a legitimate demand for money to deal with the hazards of climate change chiefly borne of the irresponsible actions of rich nations; after all, rich countries account for just 12 percent of the world population and yet they are responsible for 50 percent of all greenhouse gases.

And it is not just the industrialised West that is to be blamed. Sandwiched in the middle of two economic powerhouses, India and China, Nepal will undoubtedly have to bear the brunt of their unthoughtful actions as they continue to prioritise economy over ecology. Therefore, it falls on our government to constantly remind the world, particularly the rich half, of their responsibility and obligations, while at the same time devising policies and proactively taking steps to deal with the threats posed by climate change. Disrupted Dashain plans of its citizens will be among lesser of the worries for the country if the impacts of climate change continue to worsen.

Scope of digital currency

The general public at large in Nepal has a typical currency-handling culture.

ROSHEE LAMICHHANE



The central bank of Nepal issued a notice about the circulation of new currency notes for Dashain. Thereafter, it also released one more circular that invited consultations from the public to explore the prospects for launching digital currency in an economy that is largely cash-based. Only 67.3 percent of Nepal's population had access to banking services using one unique bank account as of mid-June 2020, as per the financial access report of the central bank. The dream of introducing digital currency in the economy and transitioning towards a cashless society remains utopian as long as a majority portion of the population is not inducted into the banking system.

To convert such a dream into a reality, appropriate enabling infrastructure in the form of suitable connectivity and mobile devices need to be put in place to be able to reach every nook and corner of the nation including farflung places devoid of any kind of banking facilities. Thus, rolling out any kind of innovative digital product is not only fraught with many technical obstacles, but it also involves overcoming several critical challenges relating to digital awareness, digital access, digital availability and digital affordability.

The prospects

There are three kinds of digital currencies, namely, (i) Central bank digital currencies (CBDC), (ii) Crypto currencies, and (iii) Virtual currencies. Investments in crypto currencies and non-fungible tokens are regarded as highly speculative in character as they are susceptible to volatilities involving both plunges and upswings. Countries like India, Bangladesh and Pakistan are coming up with feasibility reports for the introduction of CBDC as a more secure and safer substitute for such investments. On similar lines, the central bank of Nepal has also taken such an initiative, and it can be considered timely and pertinent in the given scenario

There is ample research evidence to support the rationale for launching



CBDC. The immediate motivating factors could be found in the form of a reduction in usage of actual cash, provision of digital means of payment that are almost cash-like, providing a big boost to such digital payment services, injecting and creating a healthy competition among payment service providers, efficiency enhancement, and a perceptible reduction in the cost of providing financial services. An Asian Development Bank report of 2021 stated that the entire Pacific region was plagued by financial inclusion and remittance problems, for which a well-designed and implemented CBDC offered a pragmatic solution. CBDC has to be designed only after giving due emphasis to all the reputational and cyber security risk dimensions as is demonstrated by various research studies.

Going by the global trend of more and more economies going digital, it is only a matter of time before the muchhyped digital currency is put into circulation and gains momentum resulting in financial inclusion and accelerated economic growth aided and assisted by wallet, innovations and digital transformations such as meta-verse. Generally, cash-based systems are vulnerable to rampant corruption, especially in low-income economies. Moreover, the contraction in economic activity led to the hoarding of cash. Digital currency can ensure transparency and offset such undesirable practices by providing security and mechanisms for tracing the money. As our currency is pegged to the Indian rupee, the speed of digitalisation also depends

on that of the Indian currency. It is hoped that transactions involving illegal currency will not happen once Indian currency becomes totally digitised. In addition, any decision to go for digital currency in Nepal would also have an impact on remittances made through informal channels.

The challenges

In a predominantly hard currency economy like Nepal, people handle bank notes not only in normal times but especially during festivals such as Dashain and religious ceremonies. In such a setting, migrating to digital platforms and moving over to digital currency requires a change in attitudes, preferences and mindset. Going by global trends, Nepal is also likely to catch up with universal wallets like Google Wallet and other indigenously developed ones, which work with or without internet connectivity, and are presently in use and gaining acceptance and prominence. We need to keep in place a supportive internet-driven infrastructure and all the required digital devices to be able to keep pace with the digitisation momentum and also the changing behavioural patterns of the common people.

Productive utilisation of the internet is missing, despite large segments of the Nepali population having internet connectivity and using mobile devices. This is mostly due to a lack of digital awareness and skills on the part of the people, which is of paramount importance for any effective implementation of digital innovation. This calls for governmental intervention in association with all private stakeholders. In this context, the importance of sensitising and educating people about data privacy and security need not be overemphasised. Glaring disparities between men and women in terms of owning a personal bank account, independent mobile ownership and access to the internet and other electronic devices are causing the digital gender divide in Nepal. This demands a focused training intervention targeted at womenfolk centring on cyber security and productive use of the internet.

To conclude, the introduction of digital currency in a country like Nepal, which is a hard currency economy, is fraught with cultural challenges. There has always been a sense of exuberance and excitement to hold brand new currency notes during the festival days of Dashain, which continues to remain one of the characteristic hallmarks of the Nepali socio-cultural milieu. The general public at large in Nepal has a typical currency-handling culture that is rooted in the traditional hard currency mindset. In this context, it would be prudent on the part of the central bank to wait for some time before full-scale digital currency adoption and be on the watch for the experiences of neighbouring countries. All decisions that involve the design, adoption and implementation aspects of CBDC or any other type of digital money should not be pivoted on technical criteria alone but also on cultural implications.

Lamichhane is an assistant professor at the Kathmandu University School of Management, Lalitpur.

Youth is not just a matter of age

MONDAY INTERVIEW -

Youth leader Manushi Yami Bhattarai, 36, has filed her nomination from the ruling coalition for Kathmandu-7 for the November 20 federal parliamentary elections. *The Post's* **Tika R Pradhan** spoke with Yami Bhattarai on issues related to her electoral agenda, prospects, and issues of marginalised groups, including others. Excerpts:

You have filed a nomination for a member of the House of Representatives from Kathmandu-7 today. How are you feeling?

I'm happy to get an opportunity to become a common candidate from the coalition. The selection of youth candidates by political parties sends a positive message throughout the nation, not just Kathmandu-7. I am excited to seek votes with positive energy.

What are your major agendas for the upcoming polls?

We are contesting for the legislature. We do not know whether we can reach the executive positions or not. As lawmakers, our primary function will be to draft better policies and laws and discuss bills. So my focus will be on building public institutions, making them efficient and workable, and strengthening them. Moreover, the structures related to health, education and anti-corruption have been dysfunctional. It's not that we don't have such institutions, but we need to strengthen and reform them. I will also push for Jana Lokpal. Since I'm a student of political science and I studied such public institutions, my major concerns will be on those issues. I will also focus on the economy, as the weakened economic base cannot bear the burden of educational and health institutions.

Do you have any specific plan for youth, women and issues related to marginalised communities?

I have been advocating on issues related to Dalits, Janajatis and other marginalised communities. A major problem in our country is developing a situation where youths can live a dignified life with a dignified job. So, my priority will be generating employment in various sectors, including information technology, tourism, cottage industry and agriculture. I will work to make this city a safe place for women. I will also work to strengthen existing laws in favour of women and ensure proper implementation.

How will your term in Kathmandu-7 be different compared to your mother's [Hisila Yami] at a time when people are complaining that contemporary politics is just election-oriented?

An election is a mechanism of democracy, and we must participate in it unless advanced methods are developed. For us, electoral reform is also an important agenda. Without reforms, the elections would only remain a ritual, and people may not see change as they cannot feel the change from any individual candidate. So, electoral reform is also essential to include many Nepalis residing abroad for employment. But elections are not only individual-centric. We need to see the agenda. When my mother became a candidate for the Constituent Assembly, the primary agenda was making the constitution. But our responsibility is to implement the substantial aspects of the constitution speedily and correct the problematic provisions

Since we also have a role to deliver to the people, I know there is a difference between my mother's term and now. So I don't think we can compare these two.

Now, we also need to focus on delivery. Learning from my mother's term and two terms of Rambir Manandhar, I will take the lead by studying the responsibilities of my generation. I don't want to look back much; I want to focus on my future.

You came from the background of the Maoist insurgency, where thousands of people sacrificed their lives. Don't you feel lucky enough to get such an opportunity when many others who have contributed more are not?

Besides our family background, we all have our identities and sacrifices. I



Manushi Yami Bhattarai

have been involved in politics and organisational activities ever since I was 15. I have been involved in student politics; before that, I was with an organisation related to labourers working in India. Many of my seniors may not have the opportunities I have, but it's not only an opportunity issue. We also have to serve the people. I know that our selection process is faulty. Therefore, electoral reforms have been our major agenda. Parties should practise internal democracy while selecting candidates. Besides, we can also develop a system to choose candidates from outside the party including the well-wishers. Every individual has their own emotions on both positive and negative aspects. The main issue is what kind of system we develop. Once the system is developed, all these issues will disappear. In my case, I'm taking the risk to get a mandate from the people. There were also practices in parties of keeping some individuals in a safe zone, but I'm here to get the people's mandate. So, I don't think people will take this negatively.

Would you get this opportunity if you were a daughter of an ordinary person?

I wonder how difficult it might be for ordinary people to get opportunities when it is so difficult for people like me.

How do you see the role of youth, women and marginalised groups in the decision-making of political parties?

Internal democracy within political parties is weak, but due to some legal and constitutional provisions, some representations of women and marginalised communities exist.

We are at a critical juncture to break the existing monopoly. But on the issue of youths, it is complicated as there is no legal provision for them like there is for other communities. But youth is not only a matter of age; there must be the aspect of youthfulness, including progressive agenda and outlook. We must have a critical mind. In general, we youths are somewhat enslaved and are involved in factional politics. There is also a compulsion to do so to get opportunities. So, to break this, we must strengthen the internal mechanisms of the parties just as how we talk about well-managed and robust institutions for a prosperous county. If we can strengthen internal democracy in our parties, we can truly ensure the representation of all the groups in numbers and on issues as well. I don't think parties have been able to give justice to the marginalised groups.

What role should youth leaders like you play in that?

We need to change the existing political culture. Nowadays, our cadres depend on leaders for their living. That's how the factional politics of Nepal works. It's a bitter truth. So, we cannot be self-sustained unless we strengthen the political economy. In my case, I don't need to depend on anyone because I got the opportunity to study, and now I teach to earn a living. But most of our friends in politics are different. So that increases dependency, which we need to break, although it is not so easy. Once you are self-sustained, you will have the courage to speak the truth.

There are comments that Baburam Bhattarai, your party chairman, who had abandoned the Maoist party, happened to rejoin the same party. Has alternative politics failed in Nepal?

It's not that Baburam Bhattarai has rejoined the Maoist Party. He is the chairman of the Nepal Samajbadi Party, and we are a part of it. It's not that alternative politics has failed. There is always an alternative to everything. We went through various ups and downs in the last few years. Pushpa Kamal Dahal did some experiments like forming the Nepal Communist Party and Bhattarai also did some experiments. Now, both leaders are preparing for new alternatives, including different forces taking both positive and negative experiences from their experiments. That's what I understand. Instead of joining each other's parties, they are

trying to develop a new alternative.

What is your vision for politics?

I am confident that I will become a representative of my country to strongly speak and present the national interest on national and international platforms. I don't want to see an inferiority complex among the people based on our national interests and our country. Secondly, when we have a weak economic base, everything will be weakened: Social justice issues, political culture and institutions. We need to focus on strengthening the country's economy for the next decade: Promoting youths in IT, generating employment, and developing an investment-friendly, work-friendly environment. If we cannot increase the income of a typical Nepali, everything we talk about will be gossip. We must be focussed on our target to increase per capita revenue in a specific timeframe. We also need to prioritise economic development after learning from developed countries.

People want proper health and education as basic amenities. Most of my relatives hesitate to return to Nepal from abroad due to the lack of health and education opportunities.

Where do you see yourself in the next ten years?

I don't have any roadmap for myself as an individual, but I want to take this country to the stage where people can pin hope through our team effort. I will develop a mechanism for a better political culture.

I don't believe an individual can change everything with a magic wand. I want to strengthen democracy and prove myself.

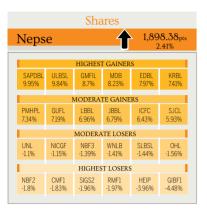
What are your prospects of winning the polls?

We can see positive voices that youths must come to the front. Since I belong to the young generation, I have a high chance of winning. My agenda is also my strength, which I must communicate to the voters properly. And the most decisive factor is the coalition of Congress, Maoist Centre, Rastriya Janamorcha and Nepal Samajbadi Party.

THE KATHMANDU POST

MONEY

FOREX 132.02 US Dollar 128.63 Furo 146.36 Pound Sterling 9.08 Japanese Yen (10) 18.55 Chinese Yuan 36.25 Qatari Riyal 84.08 Australian Dolla 28.39 Malaysian Ringit 35.13 Saudi Arab Rival Exchange rates fixed by Nepal Rastra Bank



GASOLINE WATCH



BRIEFING

Energean begins gas flow testing at Karish field

JERUSALEM: Energean has begun pumping gas to its floating production facility in the offshore Karish gas field as part of reverse flow test ing procedures approved by the Israeli government, the London-listed energy group said on Sunday. It said the testing phase is an important step in the commissioning process of the so-called FPSO Energean Power facil ity. The development of the Karish field, about 80 km west of the Israeli city of Haifa, has raised tensions between Israel and Lebanon in their protracted dispute over maritime boundaries, drawing threats of war from the Iran-backed Hezbollah movement. The US has been mediate ing indirect talks on the issue since 2020. Last week Israel rejected revisions to a draft agreement on demarcation of the two countries' maritime borders at a critical phase of negotiations. Energean has said its floating production storage and offloading vessel is due to start production at Karish in the third quarter. (REUTERS)

High interest rates delight depositors, but give businesses a hard time

The borrowing rate has reached 16 percent, making it difficult for the productive sector to survive, Nepali traders say.

KRISHANA PRASAIN KATHMANDU, OCT 9

The central bank's decision to raise interest rates has hit interest-sensitive businesses as the cost of borrowing has gone up, insiders say.High interest rates encourage saving and attract deposits amid the ongoing liquidity crisis, but many business lines that reprice monthly are having a hard time. The result is higher inflation, according to bankers and businessmen.

Nepali traders say that the borrowing rate has reached 16 percent, making it difficult for the productive sector to survive amid a liquidity crunch in the market.

"High interest rates can impact small businesses' cash flow and their ability to borrow and reinvest," said Dinesh Shrestha, vice-president of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the apex private sector body.

High interest rates even impact employment as hiring slows down.

"It increases the cost of production, reduces the competitive capacity of the production sector, and eventually prompts more imports," said Shrestha "We condemn the way banks and financial institutions have increased the interest rate to 15 percent to lure deposits, and we are worried about it,' Shrestha said.

"Nowhere in the world do banks pay an interest rate higher than the country's rate of inflation," he said. "This needs to be stopped immediately."

According to the National Industrial Survey 2019 of the Central Bureau of Statistics, the number of large manufacturing establishments grew by a meagre 17.46 percent in 27 years due to a high-cost economy, lack of adoption of modern technology and policy that was unfriendly towards investors.

Political instability in the country has crippled the manufacturing and industrial sectors, insiders say.

The employment rate has been stagnant over the years. The survey report shows that the manufacturing sector generated only 64,707 jobs in three decades. The number of persons engaged in large-size manufacturing was 223,463 in 1991-92.

"We are looking for help from the government and Nepal Rastra Bank to provide new loans in a new way and manage the existing loan gradually," Shrestha said. "If increasing the



High interest rates even impact employment as hiring slows down

interest rate does not get addressed on time it will have a negative impact on the overall economy."

The government has said in the budget statement of this year that it prioritises the increment of domestic production, but this does not seem to be true considering actions like this and it is just watching, insiders say.

The private sector has made investments by taking risks, but there is no support from the government on the investment done by the sector, they say.

"The private sector is holding a meeting on Monday to discuss interests rate and request stakeholders to overcome it," Shrestha said.

Domestic producers, mainly exporters, were already facing tough challenges due to high fuel costs, increased raw material prices and hiked shipping charges. The increased interest rate has added to the worries of manufacturers

"In readymade garments, our prices were more than 26 percent higher compared to other countries in the global market. The increase in the interest rate has added another burden that ultimately makes our products less competitive," said Pashupati Dev Pandey, president of

the Garment Association Nepal. "We are not getting loans. We are being provided a 25 percent loan for

running capital which is not sufficient. We need at least a 75 percent loan," said Pandey, owner of Pure Clothing, a readymade garment producing company.

"This trend increases the risk of factories closing down that may cause unemployment," Pandey said. "The production capacity of the readymade garment industry has already declined by 50 percent." The budget of the current fiscal year has prioritised increasing domestic production and consumption amid fast-rising imports, shrinking exports and falling local production.

It has also announced implementing programmes like domestic industry decade to increase the production and consumption of indigenous goods. But it seems like entrepreneurs are going to have another tough time.

"Interest rates have increased due to the global economic situation, inflationary pressure, import-based economy and the strengthening of the greenback," said Anil Kumar Upadhyay, president of the Nepal Bankers' Association.

"If we keep the interest rate lower

than the rate of inflation, there are chances of money going into unofficial lending. People tend to invest in safe havens like housing and land and other unproductive sectors," said Upadhyay, CEO of Agricultural Development Bank.

POST FILE PHOT

"Only around 28 percent of the depositors in the country have normal savings. Other depositors tend to invest in gold, shares and others that have a high return if they do not get timely returns on their savings," he said. "Banks have increased the interest rate on savings three times in one year, and raised the interest rate on loans. So, to balance the market and observe the depositors and increased office expenditure, banks need to prepare a cost mechanism. The interest rate is increasing globally as well."

According to reports, the increase in long-term interest rates has been driven by global economic recovery, which led to an increase in global demand for credit relative to global savings

"The liquidity crisis is also another reason for increasing the system cost of banks that are maintaining it by borrowing from the central bank, and the price needs to be transferred somewhere," Upadhyay said.

Argentina to tighten import controls to preserve dollars, sources say

REUTERS **BUENOS AIRES, OCT 9**

Argentina will regulate import authorisations more closely in an effort to prevent fraud and preserve reserves of US dollars, Economy Ministry sources said on Saturday.

The new system will include verifi cation that the size of an importer's request is consistent with its financial resources; requiring importers to designate only one bank account for foreign trade and more precise timing for importers' purchases of hard currency from the central bank, the sources said.

The government will publish a detailed resolution in the coming days and it will take effect on October 17. This is to bring order to the system

and avoid irregularities," said one of the sources familiar with the plan.

The government wants to make sure that hard currency is used for approved imports.

Given limited central bank reserves of US dollars, the government wants to make sure that hard currency is used for approved imports that increase domestic output.

The reserves stand at \$36.55 billion, the central bank reported Thursday.

In Argentina, the dollar is worth 88 percent more in Argentine pesos in alternative financial markets than under the official rate, which is used to pay for imports.

This entices some importers to overcharge or duplicate authorisation requests, said one of the sources.

'Given the gap, it is very tempting to access the dollar in the official market, which is why there are schemes to accumulate unnecessary inventory," explained the official, who asked not to be identified.

"Some importers improperly try to obtain as many goods as possible using the official dollar."

The new system will also allow small and medium-sized companies to reduce the timeframe for import payments from 180 days to 60 days.

Half marathon to help disadvantaged youths



US tries to hobble China chip industry with new export rules

Biden admin seeks to slow Beijing's technological and military advances.

UK minister Zahawi savs planned power cuts extremely unlikely

LONDON: Senior Cabinet Office minister Nadhim Zahawi on Sunday said it is "extremely unlikely" Britain would have planned power cuts over winter, responding to a National Grid warning that the country could face black outs if it cannot import enough energy. "It is extremely unlikely, but it's only right that we plan for every scenario. But all I would say is we have a buffer," Zahawi told Sky News. "So I'm confident that come Christmas, come the cold weather, we will continue to be in that resilient place." (REUTERS)



POST REPORT KATHMANDU, OCT 9

Intrepid Travel, one of the largest small group adventure travel companies in the world, on Sunday organised a half marathon in Kathmandu, to raise funds to help disadvantaged youth in Vietnam.

The company aimed to raise Rs100,000 by walking 21 km through Kathmandu. In Vietnam, it is estimated that one out of five children live in poverty due to which they are forced HOTO COURTESY: INTREPID TRAVE

to leave school and look for work.

The company said in a press statement that all proceeds will go to Blue Dragon Children's Foundation in Vietnam. Blue Dragon works to provide individualised support to every child rescued and has reunited more than 2,200 children.

The Blue Dragon Marathon started from the Intrepid Nepal office in Lazimpat and marched to Maharajganj, Samakhusi Chowk, Tokha, Budhanilkantha, Hattigauda, Golfutar and returned to Lazimpat.

WASHINGTON, OCT 9

REUTERS

The Biden administration published a sweeping set of export controls on Friday, including a measure to cut China off from certain semiconductor chips made anywhere in the world with US equipment, vastly expanding its reach in its bid to slow Beijing's technological and military advances.

The rules, some of which take immediate effect, build on restrictions sent in letters this year to top toolmakers KLA Corp, Lam Research Corp and Applied Materials Inc, effectively requiring them to halt shipments of equipment to wholly Chineseowned factories producing advanced logic chips.

The raft of measures could amount to the biggest shift in US policy toward shipping technology to China since the 1990s. If effective, they could hobble China's chip manufacturing industry by forcing American and foreign companies that use US technology to cut off support for some of China's leading factories and chip designers.

"This will set the Chinese back years," said Jim Lewis, a technology and cybersecurity expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a Washington DC-based think tank, who said the policies harken back to the tough regulations of the height of the Cold War.

"China isn't going to give up on chipmaking ... but this will really slow them [down].'

In a briefing with reporters on Thursday previewing the rules, senior government officials said many of the measures were aimed at preventing foreign firms from selling advanced chips to China or supplying Chinese firms with tools to make their own advanced chips.

They conceded, however, that they had not secured any promises that allied nations would implement similar measures and that discussions with those nations are ongoing. "We recognise that the unilateral controls

we're putting into place will lose effectiveness over time if other countries don't join us," one official said. "And we risk harming US technology leadership if foreign competitors are not subject to similar controls."

The expansion of US powers to control exports to China of chips made with US tools is based on a broadening of the so-called foreign direct product rule. It was previously expanded to give the US government authority to control exports of chips made overseas to Chinese telecoms giant Huawei and later to stop the flow of semiconductors to Russia after its invasion of Ukraine.

The rules published on Friday also block shipments of a broad array of chips for use in Chinese supercomputing systems. The rules define a supercomputer as any system with more than 100 petaflops of computing power within a floor space of 6,400 square feet, a definition that two industry sources said could also hit some commercial data centres at Chinese tech giants.

Musk's Twitter bid heads for business school case study immortalisation

REUTERS

LONDON/NEW YORK, OCT 9

Elon Musk's \$44 billion Twitter takeover saga comes with all the drama necessary to be immortalised in case studies for future captains of industry, as the tycoon's on-off pursuit of the social media platform and unique management style make for a union like no other.

The chief executive of electric car maker Tesla Inc performed a U-turn by proposing to buy Twitter at the agreed price having spent months trying to get out of the deal, just as a Delaware Court was getting ready to rule on the standoff.

"This is unique in many cases," said Arturo Bris, Professor of Finance Director of IMD World and Competitiveness Centre. "It is definitely a business school case study. Because it's about poison pills, breakup fees, lawsuits, hostility.

While there are examples of acrimonious or hostile takeovers such as AOL-Time Warner and Sanofi-Aventis-Genzyme, here the world's richest man-who has long used his own Twitter account to press for more freedom of speech-is working to impose his will on another corporation.

Musk's attempt to take over Twitter is "a gift to professors and students", said Joshua White, a professor at Vanderbilt University, calling the situation "unprecedented"

"Frankly I hate doing mgmt stuff," Musk wrote in a text message to Twitter Chief Executive Parag Agrawal in the run up to making an offer for the company, according to legal documents related to the battle.

"I kinda don't think anyone should be the boss of anyone," he wrote, while another message noted he could "interface way better with engineers who are able to do hardcore programming than with program manager/MBA types".

While the messages reflect his unusual approach to running a business, taking control of Twitter will mean managing it, at least initially. Musk has said he would take the reins as CEO but only until he finds a new executive with expertise in the media industry.

"What is to come is unclear," said Donna Hitscherich, a Columbia Business School professor.

Academics and analysts say Musk should focus on restructuring the social media company's business model after second-quarter revenue dropped amid the court battle and a weakening digital advertising market.

Musk has hinted at wanting to turn Twitter into what he called an "everything app" like the wildly popular WeChat in China which offers everything from banking to chatting. That will be difficult, analysts said,

especially in the United States where consumers are already well served by multiple services.

Whether or how Musk pulls it off remains to be seen. What analysts and academics can agree on is that considerable energy and momentum could be sapped by what they forecast will be heavy turnover among Twitter's staff and senior management.

Musk spent months criticising the company's management and complaining about salaries, what he perceived as political bias and automated 'bot accounts'---of which he thinks there are many more than Twitter estimates

Addressing employees directly in June, he said there needed to be "rationalisation of headcount and expenses" while stressing that staff, who currently have relatively free rein to choose where they work, should lean towards working in an office.



Elon Musk photo, Twitter logos and US dollar banknotes are seen in this illustration.

WORLD

BRIEFING

North Korea launches 2 missiles toward sea after US-South Korea drills

SEOUL: North Korea fired two shortrange ballistic missiles toward its eastern waters on Sunday, the latest of a recent barrage of weapons tests a day after it warned the redeploy ment of a US aircraft carrier near the Korean Peninsula was inflaming regional tensions. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a state ment that it detected two missile launches Sunday between 1:48 am and 1:58 am from the North's eastern coastal city of Munchon. It added that South Korea's military has boost ed its surveillance posture and maintains a readiness in close coordination with the United States. Japanese Vice Defence Minister Toshiro Ino also confirmed the launches, saying Pyongyang's testing activities are "absolutely unacceptable" as they threaten regional and international peace and security. Ino said the weap ons could be submarine-launched ballistic missiles. "We are continuing to analyze details of the missiles, including a possibility that they might have been launched from the sea," Ino said.

Roof collapse kills 9 members of family in northern Pakistan

PESHAWAR: The roof of a home made of mud and wood in northern Pakistan caved in early Sunday killing nine family members, including eight siblings, police said. Police officer Imtiaz Khan said the incident in the town of Chilas in the Gilgit Baltistan region claimed the lives of four daughters and four sons of a res taurant waiter and his wife. Khan said the father was at work when it happened. Neighbours who heard the crashing sound of the house coming down rushed to the home but efforts to rescue the family were unsuccessful. Police said the siblings killed were ages 2 to 12. Such incidents are not uncommon in Pakistan, where implementation of safety standards is lacking and many people live in poor ly constructed structures for lack of financial resources.

Magnitude 5.0 tremor strikes Greece; no damage reported

ATHENS: A magnitude 5.0 earthquake hit central Greece early Sunday, but there were no early reports of damage or casualties. The tremor struck at 1:02 am and had an epicentre 12.7 kilometres below sea level in the Gulf of Corinth, about 100 kilometres west-northwest of the capital, the Athens Institute of Geodynamics reported. The tremor lasted at least 15 seconds and was felt over a large area. Near the sparsely populated epi centre, residents reported hearing a buzzing sound, according to local media. Tremors of this magnitude are common in Greece, which lies in a highly earthquake-prone area, north of where the African plate is pushing underneath the Eurasian plate.

Women students tell Iran's president to 'get lost' as unrest rages

The government has described the protests as a plot by Iran's enemies including the United States.

REUTERS

Female students in Tehran chanted "get lost" as Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi visited their university campus on Saturday and condemned protesters enraged by the death of a young woman in custody, videos on social media showed.

Raisi addressed professors and students at Alzahra University in Tehran, reciting a poem that equated "rioters" with flies, as nationwide demonstrations entered a fourth week.

"They imagine they can achieve their evil goals in universities," Raisi said on state TV. "Unbeknownst to them, our students and professors are alert and will not allow the enemy to realise their evil goals."

A video posted on Twitter by the activist 1500tasvir website showed what it said were women students chanting "Raisi get lost" and "Mullahs get lost" as the president visited their campus. Another social media video showed students chanting: "We don't want a corrupt guest", in reference to Raisi.

Reuters could not immediately verify the videos.

A state coroner's report denied that 22-year-old Mahsa Amini had died due to blows to the head and limbs while in custody of the morality police and linked her death to pre-existing medical conditions, state media said on Friday Amini, an Iranian Kurd, was arrested in Tehran on September 13 for wearing "inappropriate attire" and died three days later.

Her death has ignited nationwide demonstrations, marking the biggest challenge to Iran's clerical leaders in years. Women have removed their veils in defiance of the clerical establishment while furious crowds called for the downfall of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The government has described the protests as a plot by Iran's enemies including the United States, accusing armed dissidents—among others—of violence in which at least 20 members of the security forces have been reported killed.

Rights groups say more than 185 people have been killed, hundreds



tions on Saturday, security forces shot at protesters and used tear gas in the Kurdish cities of Sanandaj and Saqez, according to the Iranian human rights group Hengaw.

In Sanandaj, capital of the northwestern Kurdistan province, one man lay dead in his car while a woman screamed "shameless", according to Hengaw, which said the man had been shot by security forces after he honked his horn as a sign of protest.

A senior police official repeated the claim by security forces that they did not use live bullets and told state State media played down the protests across Tehran, the capital, reporting "limited" demonstrations in dozens of areas. It said many bazaar traders had shut their shops for fear of damage in the unrest, denying there was a strike.

But videos on social media showed what appeared to be the largest protests in the past three weeks in many Tehran neighbourhoods, including a crowd packing streets in the lower-income southern neighbourhood of Nazi Abad. Videos shared on social media showed protests in several major cities. One video showed a young woman lying unconscious on the ground after she was apparently shot in the northeastern city of Mashhad, Iran's second most populous city. The Norway-based Iran Human Rights said at least 185 people had been killed in the protests, with the highest number of killings in the restive Sistan-Baluchistan province in the southeast.

As state TV showed footage of Ayatollah Khamenei on its main evening news, the broadcast was briefly interrupted in an apparent hack with his image, surrounded by flames, next to pictures of Amini and three other women allegedly killed during the protests.

'Man-eater' tiger that killed nine shot dead in India

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE New Delhi. Oct 9

Indian police have shot dead a tiger dubbed the "Man-eater of Champaran" that killed at least nine people, in a major operation involving 200 people including trackers on elephants, officials said on Sunday.

The big cat had terrorised locals on the fringes of the Valmiki Tiger Reserve in Champaran in eastern India, killing at least six people in the past month including a woman and her eight-year-old son on Saturday.

Even before the two latest kills, authorities had designated the tiger, reportedly a male three or four years old, as a "man-eater", meaning that it could be shot.

Earlier attempts to tranquillise the animal had failed.

"Two teams went into the forest on two elephants on Saturday afternoon and the third one waited where we thought the tiger would exit—and we fired five rounds to kill it there," local police chief Kiran Kumar told AFP.

With local villagers beating tin containers, it took about six hours for the team—with eight shooters and about 200 forest department officials—to complete the operation, Kumar said.

Officials said that large sugarcane fields made it easier for the tiger to stay hidden and attack local villagers and their livestock.

The victims included a 12-year-old girl dragged from her bed on Wednesday night, reports said.

Locals in the impoverished villages around the reserve in Bihar state stopped going out in the evening after the tiger's first attack maimed a teenager in May.

But "despite the lurking fear of tiger, it was not possible for us to confine ourselves in our homes as we needed to feed our cattle," Ram Kisun Yadav, a local villager told the Hindustan Times newspaper.

Locals celebrated after the animal was finally shot.

"It was a sleepless night for the whole village. We kept beating tin containers to shoo away the tiger if at all it was hiding near our village," villager Paltu Mahato told the Hindustan Times.

Nearly 225 people were killed in tiger attacks between 2014 and 2019 in India, according to government figures.

Philippine ex-senator briefly held hostage

ASSOCIATED PRESS MANILA, OCT 9

Philippine police killed three detai ned militants linked to the Islamic State group after they staged a jail rampage on Sunday that saw a police mer opposi tion senator briefly held hostage in a failed escape attempt from the maximum-security facility in the police headquarters in the capital, police said. National police chief Gen. Rodolfo Azurin Jr said former Senator Leila de Lima was unhurt and taken to a hospital for a checkup following the escape attempt and brazen hostage-taking at the detention centre for high-profile inmates at the main police camp in Metropolitan Manila One of the three inmates stabbed a police officer who was delivering breakfast after dawn in an open area, where inmates can exercise outdoors. A police officer in a sentry tower fired warning shots, and then shot and killed two of the prisoners, including Abu Sayyaf commander Idang Susukan, when they refused to yield, police said.

he was also gunned down by police commandos, Azurin said.

"She's safe. We were able to quickly resolve the incident inside the custodial centre," Azurin told reporters and justified police action to shoot the inmates. "Senator De Lima was already being held hostage so should we let that very critical situation drag on?"

Russian divers to check damage to blast-hit Crimea bridge

Imposing structure is a symbol of Russia's annexation of Crimea.

REUTERS KYIV. OCT 9

Russian divers were to examine on indav the damage from blast on a road-and-rail bridge to Crimea that is an imposing symbol of Moscow's annexation of the peninsula and a key supply route to its forces battling in southern Ukraine. Saturday's explosion on the bridge over the Kerch Strait prompted gleeful messages from Ukrainian officials but no claim of responsibility. Russia did not immediately assign blame for the blast, which images showed blew away half of a section of the bridge's roadway, with the other half still attached. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin said the divers would start work in the morning, with a more detailed survey above the waterline expected to be complete by day's end, domestic news agencies reported. "The situation is manageable—it's unpleasant, but not fatal," Crimea's Russian governor, Sergei Aksyonov, told reporters. "Of course, emotions have been triggered and there is a healthy desire to seek revenge.'

Israeli troops hunt for shooter in deadly Jerusalem attack

JERUSALEM: Israeli police arrested at least three Palestinian suspects Sunday in connection with a deadly shooting at a Jerusalem checkpoint, as security forces searched for the suspected gunman. The shooter opened fire on a military checkpoint in east Jerusalem late Saturday, killing a female Israeli soldier and wounding three other soldiers, one of them seriously. The Israeli military identified the soldier as 18-year-old Noa Lazar. It was the latest bloodshed in the deadliest violence in the region in seven years. It also came less than a day before Israel was to begin celebrating the weeklong Sukkot holiday, a time when tens of thousands of Jews visit the city. Police said a large force of officers, soldiers and Shin Bet security agency operatives were involved in the search to apprehend the Palestinian attacker. (AGENCIES)

The third inmate ran to de Lima's cell and briefly held her hostage, but

Susukan, who had been blamed for dozens of killings and beheadings of hostages, including foreign tourists, and other terrorist attacks was arrested two years ago in southern Davao city.

The other two inmates, Arnel Cabintoy and Feliciano Sulayao Jr, were suspected members of the Dawlah Islamiyah, a Muslim militant group that has been linked to bombings and other deadly attacks in the country's south.

They were arrested in 2019 in suburban Quezon city in the capital region, and were facing non-bailable charges like Susukan, police officials said.

Many militants belonging to Abu Sayyaf, which the United States and the Philippines have blacklisted as a terrorist organization, and the Dawlah Islamiyah have aligned themselves with the Islamic State group.

tying dozens of white, yellow and red

"soul strings" to her wrists in the

hope it will help her also spiritually

survive the horror, in the belief that



A cargo ship sails next to the Kerch bridge, after an explosion destroyed part of it, in the Kerch Strait, Crimea on Sunday.

Russia's transport ministry said freight trains and long-distance passenger trains across the Crimea Bridge were running according to schedule on Sunday. Limited road traffic resumed on Saturday around 10 hours after the blast. Aksyonov said the peninsula had a month's worth of fuel and more than two months' worth of food, he said. Russia's defence ministry said on Saturday its forces in southern Ukraine could be "fully supplied" through existing land and sea routes.

Thai town struggles with sudden loss of so many of its young

ASSOCIATED PRESS

UTHAI SAWAN, OCT 9

Paweenuch Supholwong sits on her mother's lap and fidgets with her pigtails as her mother tells the remarkable story of how the 3-year-old wisp of a girl survived Thailand's worst mass killing—the only child to emerge unscathed from a day care after a former police officer massacred preschoolers while they napped.

Two dozen children were among the 36 people shot and slashed to death in an attack that shattered the serenity of the rural township of Uthai Sawan, robbing the small farming community of much of its youngest generation in the blink of an eye.

Paweenuch was deeply asleep and covered by a blanket on the floor when the attacker burst through the front door and killed 22 of her classmates who lay around her—apparently missing her because he thought she was already dead, her mother Panomplai Srithong said. Another child survived with serious injuries and remains hospitalized.



Paweenuch Supolwong, 3, the only child to emerge unscathed from the mass killing at the day care centre, is held by her mother Anonpai Srithong in Uthai Sawan, Thailand on Saturday.

As the community has come together to share its grief at the scene of the attack and its Buddhist temples, people have also flocked to Paweenuch, when someone suffers such a tragedy, they lose part of their soul.

"It is to bring the spirit back into her body," Panomplai explained, holding her daughter warmly. "It's like the spirit had left the body and it is being called back."

Uthai Sawan's 6,500 people are spread across a dozen villages, living in homes scattered among the sugar cane fields and rice paddies that many of them farm. The township in northeastern Thailand was named for two smaller communities merged together administratively, with Uthai meaning "rising sun" and Sawan meaning "heaven" or "happiness" in Sanskrit.

Ninety-two of the township's preschool-aged children attended the public day care centre, which is next to the government's administrative offices and across from a sugar cane field. But flooding from seasonal monsoon rains, a mechanical failure that kept the centre's school bus from working and other factors kept many away on Thursday when the gunman attacked.

The township has about 100 more preschool-aged children who either go

to private care centres or stay at home, said Nanticha Panchom, the teacher who runs the day care.

Nanticha, 43, was in the centre's kitchen cooking the children lunch when she heard the first shot from outside—police say it was the attacker shooting a man and a child in front of the building. She heard someone else yell to lock the front door and she ran out to get help.

"I never thought he would go inside," she said as she looked across the driveway to the single-story building now adorned with flowers and other tributes to those killed.

She bleakly wondered whether any children would ever return to the day care, and what the killing of the others will mean for the township of about 1,900 households.

"I can't even imagine what this lost generation will mean to this community," Nanticha said.

Police identified the shooter as Panya Kamrap, 34, a former police sergeant fired earlier this year because of a drug charge involving methamphetamine.

Thai police investigating CNN crew's coverage

UTHAI SAWAN: Thai police are investigating a report that a CNN crew inappropriately entered the day care centre while reporting on the aftermath of the massacre in the building that left more than 20 preschoolers dead, authorities said on Sunday.

Danaichok Boonsom, head of the local township administration, told reporters that he had submitted his report alleging unauthorised entry onto the government property and that police were investigating.

Authorities began looking into the incident after a Thai reporter posted an image on social media of two members of the crew leaving the scene, with one climbing over the low wall and fence around the compound, over police tape, and the other already outside. The Thai Journalists' Association criticised CNN's actions as "unethical" and "insensitive". (AP)

SPORTS | MEDLEY

BRIEFING

England see off Australia

PERTH: England beat Australia by eight runs Sunday in the first of the teams' three warm-up matches ahead of this month's T20 World Cup. Put into bat, England made 208-6-after an opening partnership of 132 between Alex Hales (84) and Jos Buttler (68). Australia were on course to achieve the target, getting to 158-3 midway through the 15th over when Marcus Stoinis (35) and Tim David (0) fell in the space of four balls from Mark Wood. Wood then snagged David Warner (73) as the opener holed out to Hales in the deep. The match was in the balance but England took three wickets in the last eight balls to restrict Australia at 200-9. Wood had 3-34 and Sam Curran 2-35. The teams will play again in Canberra on Wednesday and Friday

Conway guides New Zealand to first T20 Tri-Series victory

CHRISTCHURCH: Devon Conway scored an unbeaten 70 off 51 balls as New Zealand beat Bangladesh by eight wickets at the New Zealand T20 Tri-Series on Sunday. Conway put on 85 with captain Kane Williamson (30) for the second wicket as the Black Caps chase down 137-8 at Hagley Oval with 13 balls to spare. Glenn Phillips' quickfire 23 not out off nine balls rounded out New Zealand's first win of the tri-series. Pakistan lead after the first round of matches, having beaten New Zealand by six wickets and Bangladesh by 21 runs. Earlier, Black Caps leg spinner Ish Sodhi removed top-scorer Najmul Hossain Shanto (33) in his first over before dismissing Mosaddek Hossain soon afterwards to halt the Bangladesh mid-innings momentum, aided by Michael Bracewell (2-14). Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan scored 16 off 16 balls but failed to make an impact. New Zealand face Pakistan in the next game on Tuesday. (AGENCIES)

Madhesh edge hosts Gandaki by 40 runs. Bagmati pull off an eight-wicket win over Sudurpaschim.

SPORTS BUREAU KATHMANDU, OCT 9

Women's teams of the Madhesh and Bagmati provinces made winning starts to their Twenty20 matches under the Ninth National Games in Pokhara on Sunday.

The low-scoring match saw Madhesh edge hosts Gandaki by 40 runs in the opener before Bagmati pulled off an eight-wicket win over the Sudurpaschim Province.

Put into bat first, Madhesh posted 77-8 before they bowled out Gandaki for 37 runs in 19 overs. Sana Praveen and Alisha Yadav contributed 14 runs each for Madhesh after they lost openers Anuradha Chaudhary and Sabnam Khatun for a duck each.

Praveen hit ball-a-run 14 while Yadav faced 22 deliveries. Apart from the duo Shanti Chaudhary was other Madhesh batter to contribute in double-digit figures scoring unbeaten 15 off 27. Roji Kadari (not out 9) Saraswati Kumari (8) and Santoshi Chaudhary (8) contributed for Madhesh

Gandaki bowler Aakriti Tiwari grabbed three wickets while Kusum Godar picked two wickets.

In the run chase, Gandaki batters fell out cheaply at regular intervals. Shila Chaudhary, who contributed 10 runs, was the only player to touch double-digit figures for the home team.

Madhesh's Anuradha Chaudhary was the pick of the bowling claiming four wickets. The player-of-the-match gave away eight runs in her four-over



Madhesh, Bagmati off to winning starts

Action from the women's T20 cricket match between Madhesh and Gandaki (yellow) during the Ninth National Games in Pokhara on Sunday.

spell with a maiden.

In another fixture, Bagmati invited Sudurpaschim to bat first and bowled them out for 71 runs in 18.2 overs. In the run chase, Bagmati made 72-2 in 13.1 overs

Sudurpaschim opener Rudi Poddar and lower middle order batter Anu Kadayat were the only players to score double-digit figures. Wicketkeeper batter Poddar scored 12 off 21 before she was bowled by Krishma Gurung.

Kadayat, the highest scorer for the team, contributed 22 off 23. She hit two fences before being bowled by Khusi Dangol.

Sony Pakhrin was the most success ful bowler for Bagmati claiming five wickets in her four-over spell. The player-of-the-match conceded 13 runs.

GROUP A													
Teams	P	W	N/R	Pts									
Madhesh	1	1	0	0	0	2							
Bagmati	1	1	0	0	0	2							
Gandaki	1	0	1	0	0	0							
Sudurpaschim	1	0	1	0	0	0							

In the run chase, Bagmati openers Ashmita Kharel and Kanchan Shrestha put up a 47-run stand for the first wicket creating base for an easy win. Shrestha contributed 25 runs, the highest of the innings for Bagmati, before she ran out facing 44 deliveries.

Kharel was the first wicket to fall scoring nine runs in her 26 ball knock. Suman Khatiwada remained not out on 11 runs while Aarati Bidari was unbeaten on three runs. Bagmati also got extra 24 runs.

bowler Yashu Sudurpaschim Pandey claimed one wicket.

The women's cricket began five days before the National Games will officially kick off on October 14. The men's cricket already concluded with the Nepal Police Club clinching gold defeating the Tribhuvan Army Club in the final on September 16.

The Nepal Police Club will vie against Karnali Province and Province 1 will lock horns with the Lumbini Province in Group B on Monday.

Italy to face England in Euro 2024 qualifying AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE FRANKFURT, OCT 9

Reigning champions Italy were drawn on Sunday to face England, the team they beat in the final last year, and Ukraine in qualifying for the 2024 European Championship.

Euro 2024, hosted by Germany, will be Italy's chance to regain some pride after they failed to qualify for the World Cup finals which kick off in Qatar in six weeks' time.

Italy beat hosts England in a penalty shootout at Wembley last year after the match ended 1-1 following extra time.

THINGS TO NOTE

- Italy beat England on penalties in the Euro 2020 final last summer.
- Russia is excluded from the competition because of its invasion of Ukraine.
- Three-time Euro champions Germany qualify automatically as hosts.

After the draw in Frankfurt, Italy coach Roberto Mancini said: "I knew that we'd get either England or France, but that's OK. It's a decent five-team group, no easy matches, all ones we can have a go at.'

Italy will also play North Macedonia, who knocked them out of the World Cup in the playoffs in Palermo in March.

France, who will defend their world title in Qatar, were drawn to face the Netherlands and the Republic of Ireland in Group B while Spain's opponents in Group A will include Scotland and Erling Haaland's Norway. France have bad memories of playing the Irish, who they only beat to reach the 2010 World Cup finals.

Portugal and Cristiano Ronaldo, who will be 39 by the time the finals kick off, go into a Group J including Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iceland.

Croatia, the losing World Cup finalists in 2018, are in Group D with World Cup qualifiers Wales as well as Turkey

Denmark, another team going to Qatar, have Finland, Slovenia and Northern Ireland among the teams in their Group H.

Russia is excluded from the competition because of its invasion of Ukraine.

As hosts, three-time European champions Germany qualify automatically.

The Euro 2024 finals will be played in 10 German cities from June 14 to July 14 as the tournament returns to being hosted by a single country following the multi-country format used for Euro 2020.

Los Blancos long to move in front without him. Eder Militao headed home from Luka Modric's perfect cor-

ner in the fourth minute. Borja Mayoral should have levelled against his former side but was unable to turn home Fabrizio Angileri's cross-shot as Getafe bit back after Madrid's intense start.

Madrid were foiled before the hour mark when Rodrygo dinked the ball over Soria following a ricochet into his path, but the goal was disallowed for offside.

Getafe did their best to keep Madrid at arm's length, with Vincius at his silky best on the ball, albeit too far from goal to do more damage.

With Rodrygo showing his talent too, it will be hard for Ancelotti to

Almeria Robertone 8' Babic 17' Toure 39'	3-1	Rayo Vallecano Catena 81'
Atletico Madrid Correa 5', 48'	2-1	Girona Riquelme 66'
Sevilla Torres 4'	1-1	Athletic Bilbao Vesga 73'
Getafe	0-1	Real Madrid Militao 4'

work out whom he might drop to fit Benzema back into the side.

"The Clasico is still far away, we have another game (against Shakhtar

HOROSCOPE

53

in the Champions League), so I was able to rest players who were tired, Karim, (Ferland) Mendy, maybe others in Warsaw on Tuesday," said Ancelotti.

Correa double

Argentine forward Correa was at his explosive best to help Atletico recover from a chastening defeat by Club Brugge in the Champions League in midweek

Antoine Griezmann started the game at the Metropolitano, amid reports in Spain that Atletico and Barcelona have settled on a transfer fee to make his loan move permanent.

He played a pivotal role in Atletico's opener, with his clipped cross finished by Correa at the back post. Then the Argentine striker intercepted Girona goalkeeper Juan Carlos's pass early in the second half and stroked home his

Rodrigo Riquelme, on loan from Atletico, pulled Girona back into the game with a deflected drive from distance against his parent club, but they could not find the leveller.

At the Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan, Sampaoli started his second stint at the helm of Sevilla with an exciting battle against Ernesto Valverde's third-place Athletic Bilbao.

Sevilla came flying out of the blocks and Oliver Torres slid home after little more than three minutes. Mikel Vesga levelled the scores with a long-range drive in the second half.

Almeria beat Rayo Vallecano 3-1 earlier on

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

ARIES (March 21-April 19) ****

CANCER (June 22-July 22) ***

LIBRA (September 23-October 22) ***

Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid win, Sevilla held by Athletic Bilbao second.



next weekend.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Eder Militao's early goal earned Real

Madrid a comfortable 1-0 win over

Elsewhere Angel Correa's brace

gave Atletico Madrid a 2-1 win over

Girona, while Sevilla coach Jorge

Sampaoli earned a creditable 1-1 draw

Benzema did not train on Friday

and was not included in Real Madrid's

match-day squad, with the club

hoping the French forward will be

at full strength for the Clasico

The striker failed to score in the two

matches he has played since his return

from a thigh injury and it didn't take

against third-place Athletic Bilbao.

Getafe in La Liga on Saturday.

MADRID OCT

ou may feel burnt out within your career this morn ing. Though your impatience will likely hit a peak, try not to do anything hasty that could leave you drifting between jobs. Luckily, the vibe help you find your center and gratitude.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) ***



itation session in before starting the day, taking care to connect with your goals. You'll notice a shift later, inspiring you to step into the limelight after laying low over the weekend.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21) ****



Your success could provoke jealousy within others. Though you'll sense when someone is talking behind your back, try not to validate these haters with your attention. The day will put you in a more stable yet introspective headspace

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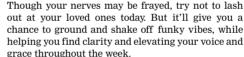
start this Your workweek could get off to a rocky morning. This cosmic climate threatens to leave you feeling unmotivated and in need of rest. Luckily, the vibe will be more forgiving, putting you in a grounded yet social mood.

LEO (July 23-August 22) ***

You may feel bogged down by your to-do list. This cosmic climate will pull you in multiple directions, triggering your imagination while reminding you of your existing responsibilities. It will also elevate your charisma and charm.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22) ****

You won't be in the mood to dial down your thoughts or feelings today. Though this celestial exchange could bring out your playful side, there's also a risk that being overly extroverted could cause you to butt heads with others.



SCORPIO (October 23-November 21) ***

Your words could cut deep this morning if you're not careful. You should also avoid dishing out unsolicited advice or criticisms. Luckily, harmony will be restored, bringing a grounded, romantic, and sensual vibe to the table.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21) ***



Try not to measure others against yourself this morning. You may find yourself in a more judgmental headspace than usual. The vibe will shift, helping you tap into your personal power while moving past the funky vibes



You may have trouble maintaining you composure today. It could result in a short fuse. Luckily, the energy will feel more playful and relaxed this afternoon, elevating your confidence while inspiring you to have a bit of fun.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18) ***



It'll be important that you cut off negative thought patterns as quickly as they manifest. Today's skies could cause you to head down a dark road unless you strive to maintain optimism. You'll feel more stable later in the afternoon

PISCES (February 19-March 20) ***



SUDOKU

Try not to let your social media following affect your sense of self-worth. This cosmic climate could also generate anxiety if you post something hastily. Luckily, your mind will feel more grounded as after noon rolls around.

ASTROLOGY.COM

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Handwriting ability on the wane in Japan

Among other factors, respondents expressed concern over 'decreased opportunities to write by hand'.

THE YOMIURI SHIMBUN

he writing may be on the wall for handwritten Japanese.

In a recent Cultural Affairs Agency survey, 90% of respondents said the proliferation of digital devices, such as personal computers and smartphones, had impacted the Japanese language and the way it was used, while nearly 90% of these respondents said their ability to accurately render kanji characters by hand had declined.

The results of the fiscal 2021 opinion survey — released Friday — shed light on growing concerns over the trend away from handwriting.

The poll was conducted from January to February, targeted 6,000 people age 16 or older and addressed issues related to language usage, the use of new words and the meaning of idioms, among other topics. About 3,600 people responded.

Some 90.6% of respondents thought the spread of digital devices had impacted the Japanese language and

the way they personally used it in social settings. Of these, 89% cited a reduced ability to accurately write kanji

Among other factors impacting the language, 89.4% of respondents expressed concern over "decreased opportunities to write by hand," while 32.3% pointed to "fewer opportunities to read long sentences.

The ability to accurately render kanji characters by hand have declined.

The agency said handwriting is an effective way to learn kanji and an important factor in properly converting characters on digital devices.

"We found that many people have concerns," an agency official said. 'We want to communicate to the public the importance of learning through handwriting.

an News/Asia News Netv

Why so many medieval manuscripts feature doodles—and what they reveal

Doodles can give insights into how people in earlier centuries understood and reacted to the narrative on the page.

MADELEINE S. KILLACKY BANGOR UNIVERSIT

o "doodle" means to draw or scrawl aimless ly, and the history of the word goes back to the early 20th centu-Scribbling haphazard words, squiggly lines and mini-drawings, however, is a much older practice and its presence in books tells us a lot about how people engaged with literature in the past.

Although you wouldn't dare doodle on a medieval manuscript today, squiggly lines (sometimes resembling fish or even elongated people), mini-drawings (a knight fighting a snail, for instance), and random objects appear quite often in medieval books. Usually found in the flyleaves or margins, doodles can often give medievalists (specialists in medieval history and culture) important insights into how people in earlier centuries understood and reacted to the narrative on the page.

It was commonplace to write in margins, underline and annotate, use blank spaces for recipes and handwriting practice, and even colour in images. Given the skills and specialisation required for writing in the Middle Ages-the training, level of literacy, access to materials, for example-doodles in manuscripts were rarely thoughtless or accidental.

Ages are hard to pinpoint, but they probably started with pen trials. When we see images of scribes (people who made written copies of documents) writing, they are often depicted with a pen and knife in hand.

on the surface of the page

adjust the nib of the writing instrument when it became dull after much use. After trimming the nib, the scribe would usually test the pen on a blank SHUTTERSTOCK piece of parchment or flyleaf to make sure that his letters were legible. Doodles from pen trials were never meant to be seen by the future reader as the flyleaf would later be glued to wooden covers

Now, though, with modern technology, medievalists can uncover all sorts of messages that lie behind the pages of these ancient books. These types of doodles-an odd name here and there, modest works of art or even a line of music-are important because they give us a rare glimpse into the real day-to-day life of these medieval scribes and what they really thought about the books they were scribing.

We see this in a manuscript catalogued as Cotton Vespasian D. vi, which is currently held in the British Library in London. The scribe has written the Latin words "Probatio

Doodles in the margins—properly known as marginalia-offer the reader some respite from the labours associated with concentrated reading, but also tell us something about how readers reacted to and engaged with the literary world on the page.

For example, although Sir Thomas Malory's Le Morte Darthur contains relatively few marginalia compared with other medieval manuscripts (80 throughout the 473 surviving folios, by my count), they often mirror the action happening in the narrative in unique ways and demonstrate that the scribes weren't merely mechanical copiers. Rather, their copying habits are highly sophisticated and provide an example of how, in this case, 15th-century scribes played a role in shaping the reception of literary texts

by their contemporary audiences. Books in the Middle Ages were much more valuable than they are today because of the time, skill and

Doodles in manuscripts are rarely thoughtless or accidental.

expense it took to make them. Besides being regarded as an object of permanence, to be retained, saved and used as a repository for eternity, medieval books were also public spaces owned by groups of people, institutions or generations of owners (up to today).

Doodles, annotations, marks, com mentaries and additions become public declarations. Coupled with the book's status as an enduring object, it makes sense that readers felt drawn to write their names or doodle in the margins and flyleaves of these books. Through making their mark, they-as ephemeral beings-were inscribing themselves into the book's eternal living history.

– The Conversatio



The history of doodling The origins of doodling in the Middle

The knife was used for a variety of purposes, such as pricking and correcting errors by scraping the parchment. It was also used for gently holding the parchment in place so that the scribe could avoid resting their hand on it, which would risk leaving fingerprints or natural oil from their skin

Importantly, the knife was used to

Penn[a] e", which means "pen e s t Sometimes, though, the scribes were a little bit bolder and wrote more

emotively about their work. In Aelfric's 11th-century Old English De termporibus anni, a concise handbook of natural science, the scribe finishes with:

"Sy beos gesetnys bus her geendod. God helpe minum handum.

"Thus, let this composition be ended here. God help my hands."

ing their work.

pants in making the text.

Doodling in medieval books also brings us into the world of play as readers and scribes then, as now, surrendered themselves to the urge to interrupt empty spaces on the page.

This scribe was obviously not enjoy-

Pen trials such as these show that scribes were not just passive processors of the text, but active partici-

Marginalia

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