

THE KATHMANDU POST

Nepal's largest selling English daily

Mohan Joshi

The government has announced national mourning and a public holiday for Tuesday and decided to fly the

national flag at half-mast in govern-

ment offices and Nepali missions

abroad to mourn the demise of histori-

age of 103 while undergoing treatment

at the KIST Medical College and

Monday decided to declare a public

holiday for Tuesday to honour the

Joshi was undergoing treatment for

On Sunday, Joshi's mortal remains

were kept on the premises of the

Lalitpur Metropolitan City where

hundreds of people from diverse back-

grounds including political leaders,

cultural conservationists, literature

lovers, art enthusiasts, teachers and

students paid their tributes to the late

historian. Also, a contingent of Nepal

Police presented a guard of honour to

Last year Joshi pledged to donate

his body to the hospital for medical

prostate and heart-related ailments

The Ministry of Home Affairs on

an and polymath Satya Mohan Joshi. Joshi passed away on Sunday at the

POST REPORT

KATHMANDU, OCT 17

Teaching Hospital.

distinguished historian.

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POST PHOTO: DIPENDRA ROKKA

Public holiday today Kinship to be decisive in to mourn Satya

Political parties have picked candidates who appeal to

TUFAN NEUPANE SUDURPASCHIM, OCT 17

A boy plays on a swing at sunset at Changunarayan in Bhaktapur with a sparkling Manohara River in the background, Monday.

When the entire country was gripped by a heated debate on the delineation of federal provinces during the constitution-making process, a sizable constituency in the then Far Western Development Region demanded that the entire region be made a single federal province. They took to the streets protesting the proposal to include Kailali and Kanchanpur districts in another province that was to be carved out of the region's southern gin claimed that Kanchanpur and Kailali districts should be inseparable parts of an 'undivided far-west'.

On the other hand, people from the Tharu community who are historically dominant in the southern plains of the region launched protests demanding a Tharuhat province composed mainly of Kailali and Kanchanpur districts.

Owing to the influence of powerful leaders of hill districts like Sher Bahadur Deuba of the Nepali Congress, Bhim Rawal of the CPN-

Elections 2022 33

UML, and Lekhraj Bhatta of then UCPN (Maoist), the entire far-western development region was named Province 7, which was later renamed Sudurpaschim Province by the pro-

Though the leaders succeeded in keeping the entire region in a single province while federating the country, local politics continues to be riddled with factional infightings.

>> Continued on page 2

Sudurpaschim elections

voters from their ancestral districts.

vincial assembly.

Fuel still expensive despite fall in international prices

Nepal Oil Corporation says it cannot slash prices because of massive accumulated losses.



Costly fuel has added to the pain of Nepalis struggling under high inflation.

KRISHANA PRASAIN KATHMANDU, OCT 17

Nepal Oil Corporation continues to charge high prices even when the cost of oil on the international market has tumbled, analysts say. Inflation-stricken consumers complain they are hit with a price hike every time rates on the international market go up, but the state-owned oil monopoly does not respond with the same quickness when it is the other

Nepal Oil Corporation says it cannot slash prices because of massive losses, but insiders point out that it is making a profit for the first time in 20

Costly fuel has added to the pain of Nepalis struggling under high inflation. There is growing public furore that even though world prices have been falling for the last two months, this has not been reflected in the domestic market.

The government company has said that prices may not come down because of its negative balance sheet, adding that if there is pressure to cut prices, the supply system may be dis-

Nepal Oil Corporation has revealed it is currently making a monthly profit of Rs790.87 million, thanks to a fall in crude prices in August and

According to international media reports, the average price of Brent crude oil dropped to \$86.27 a barrel in September before climbing to \$91.63 in mid-October.

Birendra Goit, director of Nepal Oil Corporation, said the corporation was back in the black after 20 months. "Prices have been going down for the last two months, but the mid-October period looks uncertain as the price of crude has started increasing.

>> Continued on page 5

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Xi came, Xi saw but Xi couldn't conquer hurdles in bilateral ties

Three years since the Chinese President's historic Nepal visit, there is not much to show for it.

It has been three years since Chinese President Xi Jinping's October 2019 Nepal visit, which was described as a "watershed" in Nepal-China relations.

Xi, who is all set to be elected president for another five-year term at the ongoing 20th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, had vowed to transform 'landlocked' Nepal into a 'landlinked' country and the two sides signed a slew of agreements during his Kathmandu visit in October, 2019.

At the visit's end, a 14-point joint statement was issued and a 20-point list of instruments was signed and exchanged.

Separately, during delegation-level talks with President Bidya Devi Bhandari, Xi had announced an aid worth Rs56 billion to Nepal. Although the money was to be provided over the next two years, negotiations for it still continue between Kathmandu and Beijing. Interestingly, the joint state-

ment did not mention the Rs56 billion promised by Xi.

"We plan to discuss with Chinese authorities matters including the aid promised by Xi as well as the recent Chinese announcement to provide Nepal 800 million RMB [Rs15 billion] for 2022," said Bishnu Pukar Shrestha, Nepali ambassador to China, over the phone from

During a meeting between Foreign Minister Narayan Khadka and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in the Chinese city of Qingdao on August 10, the Chinese government had pledged a new aid worth 800 million RMB.

Shrestha said he is waiting for Kathmandu's nod to start talking with the Chinese authorities.

A Beijing-based Nepali diplomat, meanwhile, said Chinese officials have been saying they have already provided some of the Rs56 billion aid in the form of Covid supplies including vaccines and other assistance. "We will learn the details once we sit for talks

with them," the diplomat said. There has not been a single meeting between Nepali and Chinese officials in the past three years to discuss the agreements signed three years ago during Xi's Nepal visit.

But several other matters agreed back then including the joint announcement of the height of Mt Everest, agreements on setting up the Confucius Centre at the Tribhuvan University, developing protocols for export items to China and Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) on Criminal Matters, high-level exchanges, and holding meetings of bilateral mechanisms have already been implemented, say officials.

"Some projects are making good progress and some are in the initial stages of implementation," a foreign ministry official said. "Despite being priority issues, we failed to implement some agreements, partly because of the parlaysing Covid pandemic."

>> Continued on page 2

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NATIONAL



POST PHOTO: KESHAV

Three years since Xi's visit to Nepal, no progress in BRI projects

A woman holds a ball of wool while others give her company in a Bhaktapur locality on Monday.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Under the agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) on criminal matters, one of the 20 instruments signed and exchanged during Xi's visit, Nepal in January 2020 extradited around 200 Chinese nationals who were illegally staying and working in Kathmandu. Similarly, Nepal set up its Office of the Consul General in Chengdu and some Nepali and Chinese cit-

ies also established sister-city relations.

One important agreement signed during the visit was a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport of

was a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport of Nepal and the Ministry of Transport of China on the Feasibility Study of China-Nepal Cross-Border Railway Project. But Nepali officials are still unsure when the study will start.

As per the joint communique released after Xi's

As per the joint communiqué released after Xi's visit, the two sides had committed to implement several projects under the Belt and Road Initiatives, which Nepal signed up to in 2017.

"The two sides agreed to intensify implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative to enhance connectivity, encompassing such vital components as ports, roads, railways, aviation and communications within the overarching framework of trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network," said the joint statement. The goal being to "significantly contribute to Nepal's development agenda that includes graduating from LDC at an early date, becoming a middle income country by 2030 and realising the SDGs by the same date."

But not a single project that Nepal had selected under the BRI has started in the past five years.

In order to execute the BRI projects, Nepali authorities have communicated to the Chinese side that Nepal prefers grants to loans.

Leelamani Poudyal, former Nepali ambassador to China, said the Covid pandemic, change of government in Kathmandu and passage of the US \$500 million Millennium Challenge Corporation Nepal Compact despite strong Chinese reservations also affected the BRI projects.

"There were some hindrances in executing the projects agreed during Xi's visit, but now the two sides need to speed up negotiations to make good of the agreements," said Poudyal, who was the Nepali ambassador to Beijing during the visit.

One major announcement made by Xi was to transform Nepal from land-locked to land-linked country. But following the pandemic, China has almost shut two key border trading points of Kyrung and Tatopani. China has allowed limited movement of transport and cargoes from Tatopani crossing point, an ancient trading route between Nepal and China, since the 2015 earthquake in Nepal.

irthquake in Nepal. "The Tatopani border point remains shut since the earthquake, and Xi's announcement on Nepal's transformation from land-locked to land-linked country has not materialised," said Mrigendra Bahadur Karki, the executive director of the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS). "As China put in place a series of restrictions on transport and business on the Tatopani border, Nepal has been relying more and more on India for bilateral and third-country trade."

After Xi's historic visit to Nepal, first by a Chinese president in 23 years, there were apprehensions in Kathmandu that Nepal would tilt towards the north. But that did not happen, said Karki. "It is also because there has been no desired progress on several projects."

An official at the Finance Ministry, meanwhile, said Chinese officials have recently discussed implementation of some agreed projects. According to the official, the Chinese side has sought the environment impact assessment report on the Tokha-Chhahare tunnel project, and proposed discussing the Araniko Highway upgrade, Bir Hospital extension, and the second phase of the Ring Road widening project covering the Kalanki-Maharajgunj section.

During Xi's visit, the two sides had agreed to implement the protocol on Nepal's utilisation of the highway in Tibet for cargo transport as well as the protocol to the Agreement on Transit. But not a single cargo has moved through the Tibetan highway since Nepal and China signed the 2016 transit agreement.

They had agreed to carry out the feasibility study for the construction of tunnels along the road from Kerung to Kathmandu, for the Kimathanka-Leguwaghat section of the Koshi Highway and for the development of three North-South corridors, namely Koshi economic corridor, Gandaki economic corridor and Karnali economic corridor. These corridors would help create jobs, improve local livelihoods, and stimulate economic growth and development.

But none of these agreements have made progress, said officials. Likewise, agreements on the boundary management system, setting up the Madan Bhandari University, imparting training to Nepali technical human resources in the field of railway, road and tunnel engineering, cooperation in hydropower, wind power, solar power, biomass energy as well as the Nepal-China Electric Power Cooperation Plan, among others, await implementation.

"Belying Chinese expectations, BRI projects could not have the desired success in Nepal," Karki said. "Their political projects, like keeping the [then] Nepal Communist Party intact, failed. Now they are trying to engage with the Nepali Congress, which is a major policy shift. To sum up, Xi's visit had no substantial impact on Nepal-China ties."

Death of two tigers in quick succession worries conservationists

An adult male tiger was found dead in Parsa on Sunday, 16 days after another in Bara.

SHANKAR ACHARYA

An adult male tiger was found dead at Bagadadob in Paterwa Sugauli Rural Municipality-4, Parsa, on Sunday. Farman Miya, the spokesperson of the Forest Division Office in Parsa, said the big cat might have been dead three or four days ago. "When we discovered it, the carcass had already started decomposing," Miya said. "Paws of both front legs of the nine feet four inch long tiger were severed off and taken away."

The place where the tiger was found dead is around 300 metres south from a national forest that borders Parsa National Park. The dead tiger is kept at the subdivision forest office in Basantpur and a team of expert technicians from Chitwan National Park conducted a post-mortem on Sunday, according to Miya. "Sample has been taken to Chitwan for a viscera test which will confirm the cause of the death," Miya said. "It is suspected that the poachers might have poisoned the tiger."

The death follows another incident on October 1 when another tiger was found dead at zero mile of Kathmandu-Nijgadh Expressway near Nijgadh, Bara. After conducting a post-mortem, a team of veterinary doctors and technicians ascertained that the 14-year-old tiger had died due to lack of food and water. They surmised that the old tiger did not eat for about 15 to 20 days.

The tiger found dead in Bara sustained injuries in its mouth and other parts of the body. Conservationists suspected that the tiger was quite old and it sustained serious injuries while fighting with other tigers. According to the Parsa National Park, the tiger entered a Nepal Army camp nearby a few hours before its death. The tiger bit and scratched the tyres of vehicles parked in



PHOTO COURTESY: OM PRAKASH CI

The carcass of a tiger at Bagadadob in Parsa on Sunday. Experts suspect poisoning killed the big cat.

the camp, park officials said.

The death of two tigers in quick succession has had conservationists worried.

"Huge efforts are being made to conserve tigers which are endangered in the world [the species is listed as 'Endangered' in the IUCN Red List]," said Ashok Ram, chief conservation officer at the Parsa National Park. "The frequent death of tigers is quite worrisome."

Ram guessed that the tiger which was found dead on Sunday might have emerged from the national park as the incident site is just seven kilometres from the national park forest. "Both the dead tigers went out of the park forests and reached there through the national forest," he added.

According to the latest tiger census held

in 2021, tiger population in Nepal has reached 355, with the country nearly tripling the number in 12 years. In 2010, there were 121 tigers in Nepal. The number had risen to 198 in 2013 and 235 in 2018.

According to the latest census, Parsa National Park is home to 41 adult tigers. According to Ram, there were only four tigers in the park in 2010. The number rose to seven in 2013 and 18 in 2018, with the population doubling in just four years.

"The number of tigers is increasing with the rise of prey species and thanks to effective conservation programmes," Ram said. "We are concerned about the recent death of the tigers. We will study about it and take necessary initiatives for tiger conservation."

Kinship to be key in Sudurpaschim polls

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

As the federal and provincial elections are round the corner, Kailali and Kanchanpur, two Tarai districts of Sudurpaschim, are heating up with 'Tharu versus Pahadi' politics.

The Pahadi or hill community is further divided into those from 'Karnali east' and those from 'Karnali west' as well as those from one district versus another district.

The political parties and the contestants are in the fray hoping to capitalise on the divisions among the electorate. The origin of the candidates will be the decisive factor in winning the upcoming November 20 elections. Let us observe this dynamic in Kanchanpur district.

Besides the indigenous Rana Tharu community, Kanchanpur is now home to the Brahmin and Chhetri people who migrated from seven hill districts, and several Janajati communities resettled by the government decades ago. Mahendranagar Bazaar, the main marketplace in the district, lies in the federal lower house constituency number 3. Majority of the voters here are from the Khas community who migrated from hill Baitadi and Dadeldhura dis-

Lekhak for the lower house seat from Kanchanpur-3 while the UML's candidate for the same seat is Niru Pal. The electoral contest here is being seen not only as a competition between the UML and the Congress but also as one between the people of Dadeldhura and Baitadi origins. Lekhak is of Baitadi origin while the Pal family migrated from Dadeldhura.

The situation is similar in constituency number 1 and 2. The Congress has fielded NP Saud of Dadeldhura origin for the Kanchanpur-2 seat to strike a balance between the communities of Dadeldhura and Baitadi. But the UML has fielded Nara Bahadur Dhami of Baitadi origin to challenge Saud.

The indigenous Tharu community as well as Tamang and Magar communities are the major ethnic groups living in Kanchanpur-1. The UML fielded Tara Lama Tamang while the ruling alliance picked Bina Magar as candidate for the constituency. Both the parties have tried to strike a communal balance by fielding Tharu candidates for the corresponding provincial assembly seats.

The competition in Kanchanpur-2 and 3 is going to be between the people of Baitadi origin and those of Dadeldhura origin. Besides politics, the people of Baitadi and Darchula stand together in trade and business. Likewise, the people of Dadeldhura roots claim themselves as indigenous community after the Tharu claiming that their forefathers migrated to Kanchanpur generations ago. They have for long had a stronghold on politics, education, trade and business in Kanchanpur.

Kanchanpur residents of Bajhang and Achham origins often stand together on major issues. Usually, whoever gets their support gets elected. People of Doti and Bajura origins are in small numbers in Kanchanpur and so not in a position to influence election results.

"The political parties are under tremendous pressure to maintain regional balance during the elections. Otherwise, their electoral campaigns may not yield desired results," said Tekraj Panta, a professor of political science who is also a retired dean of Sudurpaschim University. "Regional politics is strong in Kailali and Kanchanpur districts while the politics of ideology is quite weak."

Panta says Ramesh Lekhak was picked as a Congress candidate in Kanchanpur-3 because of his Baitadi roots.

Social Development Minister of Sudurpaschim Province Gobinda Raj Bohara also admits the people who migrated to Kailali and Kanchanpur from various hill districts have a huge influence in the region's politics. "They vote for candidates of their own community. The political parties are acutely aware of this dynamic and field their candidates accordingly," said Bohara.

Such is also the situation in Kailali dis-

रामेछाप जिल्ला मन्थली नगरपालिका

५ सुनारपानीमा रोकिराखेको प्रदेश

०२-०१५ प ६३५१ नम्बरको रातो

पल्सर एन नस मोटरसाईकल मिति

२०७९ साल आश्विन २९ गते बेलुका

देखि हराएकोले पाउन् हुने

महान्भावले नजिकको पहरी

कार्यालय वा सवारी धनिलाई

रामकमार श्रेष्ठ

लिख तामाकोशी ६ खिम्ती

व्भाइदिन हुन अनुरोध छ।

माटरसाइकल हराया

मिति २०७९/०५/०३ गते टोखा भोरबाट

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trict. Although Tharu people are dominant in four of the total five constituencies in Kailali, there apparently is a trilateral competition in Dhangadhi, the provincial headquarters, among the Tharu, and the people of Doti and Dadeldhura origins.

The Pantas, Panerus, Bhattas, Bhandaris and Joshis, all of Doti origin, have remained quite influential in Dhangadhi for the past three generations, locals say. They are comparatively more dominant in the Congress than in other political parties. An intra-party rift has opened up of late after the people of Dadeldhura origin, who are outnumbered by those of Doti origin, rose to the leadership of the local units of the Congress party.

"People who migrated from Doti were in a majority and more influential for a long time. But the people of Dadeldhura rose through party ranks here after Sher Bahadur Deuba was elected Congress president," said Gambhir Singh Air, a legal practitioner based in Dhangadhi. "But the Doteli people refused to accept the dominance of those of Dadeldhura origin as the former are in a majority in Kailai. Hence the rift and rivalry between them."

Sher Bahadur Deuba was elected to the second Constituent Assembly from both Dadeldhura and Kailali in 2013. Pushkar Nath Ojha of Doti origin won the by-election after Deuba resigned from the Kailali constituency. Ojha wanted to contest for a federal seat from Kailali-5 in 2017, but the party denied him a ticket after Deuba's wife Arzu decided to stand for election from the constituency.

The Doteli community including Ojha did not accept Arzu as their candidate and as a result, she lost the election. The Congress leadership expelled Ojha from the party for five years, accusing him of betraying the party's official candidate.

This time Ojha is contesting as an independent candidate from Kailali-5. Fearing lack of cooperation from disgruntled party members again, Arzu changed her mind at the eleventh hour and opted for a safe path of reaching the parliament through the proportional representation route. Arzu fielded her personal secretary and nephew Prakash Deuba for provincial assembly from Kailali-5 (B). But Kshitiz Bhandari of Doti origin is standing as a rebel candidate against Prakash Deuba of Dadeldhura, once again highlighting the bitter rivalry between politicians from the two districts.

And in Kailali-4 lower house seat, the Congress-led alliance has pitted Bir Bahadur Balayar of Doti against UML's Lekhraj Bhatta, who is of Doti origin. "Kailali-4 is mostly populated by migrants from Doti. Initially, the Congress had planned on fielding Nain Singh Mahar, who is of Dadeldhura-

changed its mind and picked Balayar to go toe-to-toe with Bhatta of the same community," said

Kailali-3 is a Tharu stronghold. Most people of hill origins in this constituency are united as they will be in minority if they are divided along district lines.

(With inputs from Mohan Budhaair in Dhangadhi and Bhawani Bhatta in Mahendranagar)



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(दोस्रो पटक प्रकाशित मिति २०७९/०७/०१)

स्थानीय सरकार संचालन ऐन, २०७४ को दफा ६२ क मा भएको व्यवस्था तथा यस नगरपालिकाको आन्तरिक आय संकलन (ठेक्का बन्दोबस्त) सम्बन्धी कार्यविधि, २०७५ को दफा ३ अनुसार तपशिलमा उल्लेखित नदी तथा खोलाहरुको स्वीकृत घाटहरुबाट निर्धारित मापदण्ड बमोजि नदीजन्य पदार्थ उत्खनन् तथा संकलन गरी तोकेको दरमा बिकी गर्ने गरी ठेक्का बन्दोबस्त गर्न नगर कार्यपालिकाको मितिः २०७९/०५/२५ गतेको बैठकको निर्णयअनुसार ईच्छुक निर्माण सम्बन्धी काम गर्ने फर्म वा कम्पनीहरुले आफ्नो फर्म/कम्पनीको निवकरण भएको प्रमाणपत्र, मुल्य अभिवृद्धी कर दर्ता प्रमाणपत्र, नियम अनुसार करचुक्ता प्रमाणपत्रको प्रमाणित प्रतिलिपिहरु संलग्न राखि https://www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp/ मा यस सम्बन्धी राखिएको सूचनामा उल्लेखित शर्तहरुको अधिनमा रही बोलपत्र प्रिक्रयामा सहभागी हुन सम्बन्धित सबैको जानकारीको लागि यो सूचना प्रकाशन गरिएको छ । बोलपत्र फारम सार्वजिनक खरिद अनुगमन कार्यालय (PPMO) को वेवसाईट https://www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp/ बाट बोलपत्र फारम Download गरि नियम अनुसार बोलपत्र फारम भर्न सिकनेछ ।

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R	२/०७९/८०	मिरण खोला (मिकिनिदमार-१, डाँडी-२, डाँडी-३, धनमाना मिरण दोभान-४, धनमाना मिरण दोभान-४, धनमाना मिरण दोभान-६ IEE ले तोकेको क्षेत्र)	२८५४४	९०,६३,२९१।-	₹000 -	कवोल अंकको ५%	सूचनाको १५ औं दिन मिति २०७९/०७/१५ कार्यालय समय भित्र PPMO को e-Bidding System अनुसार	सूचनाको १६ औ दिन मिति २०७९/०७/१६ दिनको १२ बजे भित्र PPMOको e–Bidding System अनुसार
w	३/०७९/८०	ग्वाड खोला, धिमले खोला, जिर्घा खोला, गडौली खोला र बुका खोला- IEE ले तोकेको क्षेत्र	१९०४४	६०,४६,८५०।-	₹000I-	कवोल अंकको ५%	सूचनाको १४ औं दिन मिति २०७९/०७/१४ कार्यालय समय भित्र PPMO को e-Bidding System अनुसार	सूचनाको १६ औ दिन मिति २०७९/०७/१६ दिनको १२ बजे भित्र PPMO को e—Bidding System अनुसार

The ruling alliance has fielded Rame

NATIONAL

Anthropologist Om Gurung dies of cancer



POST REPORT

Om Gurung, former general secretary of Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities and professor of anthropology at the Tribhuvan University, died of cancer on Monday afternoon.

Gurung had spearheaded the fight against the social exclusion, cultural discrimination and political domination against indigenous people and other marginalised and disadvantaged groups of Nepal.

According to his family sources, he died at around 1:45 pm at the Harisiddhi-based Nepal Cancer Hospital and Research Centre

"According to the hospital, he breathed his last at 1:45 pm today," said his cousin Krishna Gurung. "He was admitted to the hospital yesterday only after he complained that he

Gurung was being treated for cancer in his right leg through chemotherapy. Around a decade ago Gurung had his kidney transplanted from Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Hospital in New Delhi, according to Krishna

He had completed his PhD in anthropology from Cornell University of New York in 1996 on "Local systems of Natural Resource Management and dissertation research.

Born on February 11, 1953 at Bhuskat Tarakhola of Baglung district, Gurung served as NEFIN general secretary from 2001-2004 and was a chief advisor to NEFIN from 2004-2007. NEFIN is an umbrella organisation of all the indigenous nationalities of the country.

In his 36 years of teaching career at the Tribhuvan University he had led the Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology for 12 years. He was one of the founding members of the

Gurung is survived by his wife, a son and two daughters.

Government mute spectator as extreme weather hits farmers

As climate change-induced disasters increase, thousands of people face the risk of hunger.

On Thursday, Bikram Tiwari, a Narainapur Rural Municipality-6 in Banke district, bought a 50-kg sack of rice with the relief money provided by the Nepal Red Cross Society.

The 54-year-old farmer said it was the first time in his life that he

"All the grains stored in my house have been damaged by floodwaters," Tiwari said over the phone from Narainapur. "Due to a dry spell in the monsoon season, we could not cultivate all the arable land and now floodwaters damaged not only ready-to-harvest crops but also the foodstuffs stored in the house.'

Narainapur, a remote municipality in western Nepal, was declared a drought-hit zone due to a dry spell in mid-monsoon season that either deprived farmers of cultivation or caused saplings to wither in the fields.

The district authorities had declared Narainapur as drought-hit area in August.

Thousands of people from the rural municipality, one of the worst-hit areas when the pandemic gripped the country in the spring of 2020, migrated to India in search of work due to problems with agriculture caused by the climatic condition.

The weather varies greatly in Nepal. Low rainfall is not the only problem. Excessive rainfall causes havoc too. Last year, the freak rain post-monsoon inundated farmlands in 3,966 hectares.

The government has failed to take necessary measures to protect the farmers from erratic weather. Narainapur has no access to irrigation and farmers there depend on rainfall for agriculture. Given the extended dry spell in the areas this year, paddy fields have developed cracks and the crops are drying up.

Officials at Narainapur Rural Municipality said owing to the drought this year, only 15 percent of the total arable land in the area was cultivated. "Almost all places of the municipality have been inundated by floods triggered by persistent rainfall for five days," said Laxmi Kanta Mishra, spokesperson for the munici-



The government has failed to take measures to protect farmers from erratic weather.

pal office. "We have started collecting data on the loss incurred by farmers.

The local unit had collected such data after declaring the area droughthit zone in monsoon, but the affected farmers have received no help so far.

Increasingly, Nepal has found itself at the receiving end of the climate crisis. Drought and dry spells in the cultivation season and floods and inundation in the harvesting season have become a new normal in the country over the past few years.

"Droughts, dry spells, flooding, and inundation not only affect any particular sector like food security," said Raju Pandit Chhetri, director of Prakriti Resources Centre, which advocates environment-friendly policies and development practices. "Implications of climate change will be in multiple sectors—health, food security, education and women empowerment, among others.

At least 119 people have died, 38 are missing, and 107 people were injured in disaster-related incidents during this monsoon. According to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority, 5,465 people have been relocated, 273 houses were destroyed and 78 were partially damaged by floods and landslides

Scores of studies and scientific

analyses over the decade and, more recently, the IPCC report, have warned that Nepal is one of the most vulnerable countries to the climate crisis and business-as-usual approach isn't sufficient to tackle the adverse impacts of the crisis.

As climate disasters fuelled by erratic weather patterns become more pronounced and frequent, experts say several other crises have been in the making over the years including climate displacement, both internal and external.

"First of all, farmers should be provided with scientific information about weather patterns. For that, authorities should strengthen early warning and weather monitoring systems," said Chhetri. "They should be provided drought and flood-resistant crops, or other alternatives of food crops, and insurance.'

Experts warn that the impacts of global warming will be both shortterm and long-term and across multiple sectors.

"I am worried about how to feed my family," said Tiwari, the head of a nine-member family. "We somehow managed to cultivate five kattha (18,225 square feet) of land by using borewell water but the floods have damaged the crops.

Multidimensional poverty slumped in Nepal before Covid-19, global report says

Earlier, a national report had warned that the Covid-19 pandemic could disrupt the past gains.

PRITHVI MAN SHRESTHA

Nepal and India made rapid progress towards reducing multidimensional poverty in the years before the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world, a new global report on multidimensional

In 2011, 39 percent of Nepalis were multidimensionally poor and the percentage dipped to 25.7 in 2016 and 17.5 in 2019, according to the report. "It means 5.13 million Nepalis are multidimensionally poor based on Nepal's total population of 29,192,480 as per the census 2021," said Dharma Swarnakar, policy advisor at the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), Nepal at a press briefing on Monday.

Thereport, Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2022, was prepared by the UNDP in coordination with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and was released on Monday.

The report has lauded the improvement Nepal made in the area of sanitation which led to sharp reduction in multidimensional poverty.

"This progress has been accompanied by notable improvements in sanitation, which saw the largest reduction in the percentage of people deprived in this indicator—from 60.6 percent in 2011 to 35.9 percent in 2016 and 21.4 percent in 2019, among the whole population, according to the report

Multidimensional Poverty Index (PMI) is measured based on deprivation across three sectors and 10 sub-sectors—health (child mortality, nutrition), education (years of schooling, enrollment), and living standards (water, sanitation, electricity, cooking fuel, floor, and assets).

"Improvements in sanitation (in Nepal) are highly correlated with improvements in other health indicators, such as child nutrition, child mortality and access to drinking water," the report, which has assessed Nepal's situation as a case study, states. "A growing body of evidence points to the positive health benefits

of having access to an improved sanitation facility and drinking water on child health and wellbeing through lower diarrhoeal incidence, a leading cause of child mortality in developing countries.

According to the report, Nepal's status is better compared to average multidimensional poverty of 20.5 percent

Along with Nepal, India also made rapid progress with the South Asian giant reducing multidimensional poverty to 16.4 percent in the 2019-2021 period from 55.1 percent in 2005-06. In South Asia, the war-torn

Afghanistan has the worst multidimensional poverty of 55.9 percent followed by Pakistan with 38.3 percent and Bangladesh with 24.6 percent.

Before the Covid and recent economic turmoil, Sri Lanka's only 2.9 percent population was under multidimensional poverty while 0.8 percent of the population of the Maldives was in multidimensional poverty. The new report has not calculated

the impact of Covid-19 on the multidimensional poverty in Nepal and across the world. Nepal's national report on multidimensional poverty released in August, 2021 warned that progress made by Nepal could be in doubt with the pandemic pushing the poor further into poverty.

The global report has also pointed out the pessimistic scenario in global multidimensional poverty reduction due to the pandemic.

"Recent estimates suggest that the most pessimistic scenarios are plausible," the report says. "Updated data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation show that, on average, students across the globe lost half a year in schooling due to the pandemic-broadly consistent with the earlier simulation result that half of children stopped attending school during the first year of the pandemic." The report also pointed out the most

recent data on food insecurity from the World Food Programme, which had suggested that the number of people living in a food crisis or worse increased to 193 million in 2021.



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OPINION

EDITORIAL

Exclusionary inclusion

Marginalisation of the country's small ethnic groups is a tragedy of modern Nepali politics.

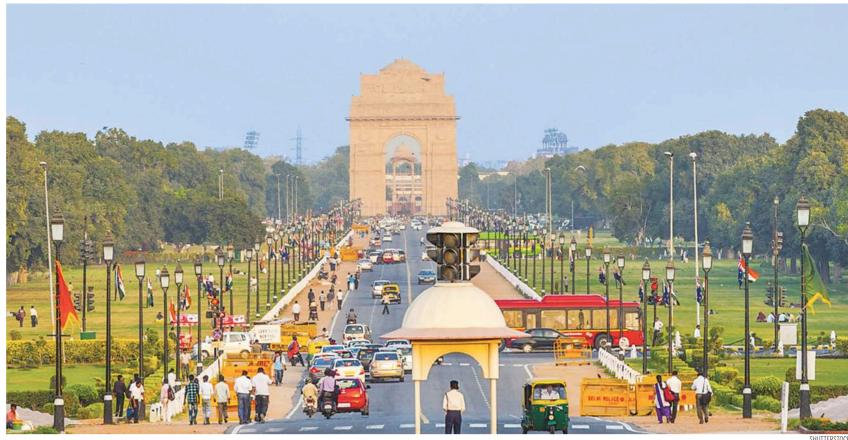
A decade and half is not long enough to pass a final judgement on a new political system. But some inferences about it can certainly be drawn. The country adopted the proportional representation (PR) system in state organs after the 2006 changes to mainstream minority communities and historically marginalised groups. However, in this time, nearly half of the ethnic groups in the country have had no representation in the federal legislature—two Constituent Assemblies and one federal parliament. According to a yet-to-be-published report of the National Inclusion Commission, a constitutional body, as many as 62 of the 126 ethnic groups in the country have never been represented in Parliament. Among these are communities like Kusunda, Nurang, Raute, Kalar, and Lohorung.

The PR system was introduced after rigorous debates. The goal, again, was to reimagine Nepal as home to a highly diverse society and to end age-old discriminations. Yet what we see is that political leaders follow the system not because they believe in it but only because they are legally bound to do so. Even when people from the marginalised communities are represented, most often, they are the near and dear ones of the traditional political elites who have controlled Nepali politics since 1990. This was also amply evident in the May local elections, when political parties circumvented the provision of women's mandatory representation by forming political coalitions: while individual parties must abide by constitutional norms, there are no such restrictions for coalitions.

This time, on the eve of the federal and provincial elections, the political parties have again doled out tickets mostly to the members of traditionally dominant groups. They have continuously ignored the communities that are sparsely populated and scattered across the country; in other words, the groups that are electorally insignificant. Yet in doing so the political parties undermine the very spirit of the new federal setup that above all should prioritise inclusion of the biggest possible swath of the population: Why change the old system if the underrepresented communities will continue to be excluded? The first Constituent Assembly was hailed both at home and abroad as one of the most inclusive in the world but successive legislatures have been less and less reflective of the country's diverse population.

As per the 2011 census, among the 62 unrepresented communities, three have less than 1,000 members each: Kusunda (273 people), Nurai (278) and Raute (618). Yet, in the new federal setup, the members of these groups have as strong a claim for representation in state organs as the demographically dominant groups. Perhaps the biggest tragedy of today's Nepali politics is that its top leaders have failed to internalise the inclusive spirit. Thus, in a way, the same forces that brought about the progressive changes in 2006 are now actively undermining them. Otherwise, if our political class is committed to inclusion, it is not difficult to find a middle-way out. For instance, if it is not possible to ensure the representation of all these numerically small communities in the legislature at once, perhaps they could be represented on a rotational basis. This isn't rocket science.

Delhi musings



Driving through the heart of town, you cannot but admire the trees on both sides of the road.

SUJEEV SHAKYA

THE OTHER VIEW



Thirty years ago, two issues were talked about when I spent a few months in New Delhi to sit for my final Chartered Accountancy exams. First, security, as there were roadblocks and shootings because of the Khalistan separatist movement; and second, pollution. The first issue is gone, but the second one remains as discussions around air pollution, noise pollution and pollution of the River Yamuna keep coming back. There are these topics to talk about, but there are also changes that the city has gone through. Spending the Dashain break here, I could reflect on a few.

The city is greener than it was 30 years ago. Especially driving through the heart of town, you cannot but admire the trees on both sides of the road and on the dividers that separate the lanes. Many of these were planted three decades ago when an aggressive Clean Green Delhi was launched. A sim-

campaign launched in Kathmandu Kathmandu Metropolitan City at the same time, but we can see what these two campaigns have achieved. In Delhi, thousands of trees were felled for building the metro rail and highways, but it seems there has been a reasonable effort to replant trees and plant more than they felled. Any city requires lungs to breathe, and green patches are the only way to keep the expansion of cities sustainable There has to be space for people to walk, children to play, or that small open space to assemble when natural or human-induced disasters strike.

Young women omnipresent Three decades ago, when you saw young

women working at stores as associates or in restaurants, it was a rare sight, and they would have come from the Eastern Himalaya and north-eastern states. Delhi has a notorious reputation and perception regarding women, but things have changed. What has been overwhelming is how young women now are omnipresent in establishments that provide services—restaurants, retail stores of all sizes and fuel stations-working without the fear of being ostracised. We see more single women sipping coffee at cafes or enjoying a meal at a restaurant. Ride-hailing cabs and women-only compartments on the Metro trains have changed how they travel, and a general sense of safety through the perception of requiring extra precaution as a woman remains.

Maybe it was the festive season, but the streets seemed to have an overdose

of posters, flex and banners with pictures of politicians and their sycophants. Perhaps, in Nepal, we tend to see this also after former prime minister Oli and his team emphasised splashing photographs everywhere. In Delhi, a store owner would have a poster of himself with the leaders wishing him happy festivities. It could be the culture association with the privileged that South Asian societies like to see, or it is just pure sycophancy. The print media is splashed with pictures of leaders in advertorials and paid advertisements, so one cannot blame the media for being pro-establishment, whether federal or state, as more than 70 percent of their revenues can be attributed to spending by the establishment. When one talks about pollution, air pollution is a crucial issue that Delhi continues to fight; but visual and noise pollution is an irritant. You need meditative quality to survive the honking despite measures taken to curb the habit in Kathmandu.

Capital of the future

One cannot but keep comparing cities Keeping infrastructure growing and maintaining them is a big challenge. Some cities have done very well, be it Dubai or Singapore. So, keep wondering whether Delhi will have sidewalks for people to walk on and pedestrian crossings so they will not have to wade in the water when it rains. These are fundamental questions that people are asking everywhere in the world as cities are moving from being car-centric to becoming people-centric. The old grandeur of

Connaught Place is returning. It is a great place for shopping and hanging out as the area is well connected by the Metro and public transport. Many activists complain that the city has been built for the rich and privileged. The people who make the buildings, roads and Metro, and those who work as domestic help, drivers and other service providers are seen as outsiders, and the squalor they live in is an eyesore. Perhaps this is the challenge this city, as the capital of the world's second largest economy-to-be in a few decades, will have to manage.

Will this come only from government rules and regulations, or has it got to do with citizen discipline? In a city where many people feel entitled to have chauffeurs open the door for them, and expect someone to carry their small notebook or bag when moving around, or still need that guard to salute and acknowledge their arrival and open the door for them, it is tough. Having a poor sense of accommodating others and a high sense of privilege when one is behind the wheel of expensive cars is a complex human trait to handle. Perhaps, the younger generations may shun this way of equating wealth and social status with privilege, and not feel necessary to get to the optics that have a lot to do with a colonial hangover. Yes, interacting with some young people, they share the change that is taking place and the hopes for the changes they expect to see. Let us live on this hope for this city with history, heritage and opportunities to explore excellent cuisine and conversations.

Expectations from the Election Commission Nepal

It is up to the commission to be the responsive, fair, judicious, responsive, and autonomous body it is.

ILA SHARMA



There has been considerable hue and cry all over mainstream and social media that the Election Commission of Nepal was not being fair in levying hefty fines on those who could not afford them in the recent local elections. On the one hand, the election commission receives a lot of flak for not implementing election expenditure rules on candidates who openly flout the law. There is no doubt that it must regulate and maintain financial discipline. The commission, on the other hand, wants to encourage candidates from excluded clusters to run for office. It fined candidates who failed to submit expenditure reports on time.

Regarding the expectations, as well as the nature and purpose of the commission, there seems to be a lot of confusion in the public mind. To be able to understand the actions or perceived inaction of the commission, we must first understand the nature of this constitutional body-its jurisdiction, duties and functions. What is referred to as the commission's activism or overreach is, in fact, its duty.

The election commission has traditionally been a very quiet/silent institution, conservative and behaving very much like the tight-lipped judiciary, shy to publicise its work. Nor does it defend itself when attacked. It is best not to get distracted when one has to deliver periodic elections on the ground without a glitch. However, the downside of remaining silent in the face of criticism is that most of us do not understand the commission's attempts at electoral and party

reforms, nor do we understand how it

tutional body with a whole gamut of functions, from quasi-judicial to purely administrative and managerial. Its primary responsibility is to deliver periodic elections that are free, fair and credible on the ground. Along with some legislative duties, it also

the regulations, directives, procedures, directions and orders related to the election, drafted and issued by the commission, have the effect of law and are enforced as such during the election.

It is interesting to note that not only does the election commission initiate legal framework that follows an act, but it also initiates every preliminary draft bill of electoral laws. This is a

practice in Nepal as none other than the commission has consolidated lessons learnt from their past work. The commission works on its reform agenda through five-year strategic plans and knows best when it comes to what reforms to take up to deliver increasingly better elections on the ground. Every election is rounded up with review meetings, and annual reviews are a part of the learning process.

The draft bill thus prepared by the election commission is then sent to the Ministry of Law through the Ministry of Home Affairs for vetting to check if anything in the bill is in conflict with the constitution and prevalent laws of the land. However, the substance of the content is not to be tampered with. It is a different matter that the journey of the draft bill is

lengthy, and the substance itself is sometimes mutilated beyond recognition before it reaches the state affairs parliamentary committee for discussion and then tabled in Parliament.

Depending on the situation, as the election commission deems fit, regulations, procedures, and directives are formulated in line with the spirit of the constitution and are based on the relevant acts passed by Parliament. These instruments are essential because they serve as tools for the commission to implement reforms and make quick decisions. In the exercise of powers granted under the relevant acts, the commission is responsible for formulating rules and regulations.

Additionally, the election commission also takes measures to reform the system. One such provision is made in the law, which states that women, Dalits and ultra-poor candidates are to be charged only half of the regular nomination fee. To encourage these groups to run for office, the commission halved the fees in the preliminary draft bill. In the recent past, many candidates who ran for office in the local elections belonged to such groups, but many of them lost. Many were first-timers and independents, which means that they may not have been aware of the requirement to submit election expenditure reports to the commission within the given time frame.

The election commission recently issued directions to the political parties to field one-third of their candidates in the first-past-the-post system. It is a different matter for observers, civil society, and the voters to see and monitor how many parties followed the orders. However, using the same powers, the commission can also waive the fines by setting up criteria for the financial status of the candidates who lost. The commission's message that it can come down heavily on those who violate the law has been well established. It is now up to the commission to be the responsive, fair, judicious, responsive, and autonomous body it is.

Sharma is a lawyer and former election commissioner of Nepal.



An election commission is a constiserves as a quasi-judicial body. That is

MONEY

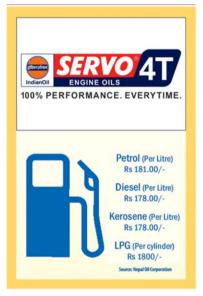
FOREX US Dollar Pound Sterling Japanese Yen (10) Chinese Yuan Qatari Riyal 82 52 Malaysian Ringit Saudi Arab Rival

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Silver	Rs 1 160

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GASOLINE WATCH



BRIEFING

Europe's largest home appliances brand Bosch makes foray into Nepal



KATHMANDU: BSH Home Appliances, the largest manufacturer of home appliances in Europe joins hands with Laxmi Electro Tech P Ltd. an entity of Laxmi Group, Nepal to launch Nepal's first-ever Bosch brand store in Kathmandu. Located at IT Plaza in Kamaladi, this state-of-theart store displays Bosch's high-quality, German engineered home appliances including refrigerators, washing machines, dishwashers, mixer grinders and more. Through this store BSH Home Appliances aims to cater to Nepal's growing base of quality-conscious consumers who are looking for high-performance products that can add comfort and convenience to their everyday life. (PR)

Apple freezes plans to use China's YMTC chips, Nikkei reports

CALIFORNIA: US tech giant Apple Inc has put on hold plans to use memory chips from China's Yangtze Memory Technologies Co (YMTC) in its products, after Washington imposed tighter export controls against Chinese technology companies, the Nikkei reported on Monday. Apple had origi nally planned to start using state-funded YMTC's NAND flash memory chips as early as this year, Nikkei said, citing people familiar with the matter. The chips were initially planned to be used only for iPhones sold in the Chinese market. It was considering eventually purchasing up to 40 percent of the chips needed for all iPhones from YMTC, the newspaper said. The United States last week added China's top memory chipmaker YMTC and 30 other Chinese entities to a list of companies that US officials have been unable to inspect, ratcheting up tensions with Beijing, starting a 60 dayclock that could trigger much tougher penalties. YMTC is also being investi gated by the US Commerce Department over whether it violated Washington's export controls by selling chips to blacklisted Chinese telecommunications company Huawei

Consumers continue to pay through the nose for fuel despite global prices dropping

>> Continued from page 1

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said in its latest report that as the cost of living continues to rise, policymakers around the world will need to protect the most vulnerable members of society from the impact of higher prices.

Poorer households often spend relatively more than others on food, heating and fuel; categories that have seen particularly steep price increases. Moreover, households cannot easily adjust consumption to minimise spending on these products; everyone must eat and use heating, and transportation (whose price is often determined largely by fuel costs) is often essential to get to work, the

In countries with well-developed social safety nets, targeted cash transfers to those particularly exposed to higher energy and food prices (such as children and older people) and existing automatic stabilisers (for example, unemployment insurance) are the best ways to limit the impact on those least able to bear it.

However, measures to limit the inflationary impact should offset any increase in new spending. In countries lacking well-developed safety nets, governments should look to extend any already active programmes, according to the IMF report.

While Nepal's caretaker government cannot make crucial decisions ahead of the November 20 elections, Nepal Oil Corporation is adamant about not slashing fuel prices because of its ballooning debt. It says its outstanding dues currently stand at more than Rs43 billion.

The government company owes Rs33.60 billion to its sole supplier Indian Oil Corporation. It has borrowed Rs7 billion from the government and Rs3 billion from Rastriya Banijya Bank against its property as collateral to pay for fuel imports.

"The global oil market is still unpredictable. We cannot immediately cut fuel prices," Goit said.

"We are receiving letters from Indian Oil Corporation to clear our



Nepal imported fuel worth Rs50.88 billion in the first two months of the fiscal year, compared to imports worth Rs37.95 billion in the same period in the last fiscal year

outstanding dues. If we fail to pay them, fuel supply might be halted,' Goit said. "So, we don't have a plan to cut prices.

According to Nepal Oil Corporation, its estimated fortnightly profit on petrol sales stands at Rs360.04 million. The corporation has been making a fortnightly profit of Rs110.15 million and Rs470.70 million on the aviation fuel sold to domestic and international airlines respectively.

The corporation incurs a loss of Rs180.51 on the sale of diesel fortnightly. The fortnightly loss in the LPG business is Rs370.60 million.

Diesel accounts for a large share of its sales. Goit says that diesel makes up 60 percent of the total fuel consumption. "So it does not make much sense to make a profit from petrol and aviation fuel. Even a Rs1 profit on diesel makes a big difference.

With the rise in oil prices as shown in the revised price list sent by Indian Oil Corporation on Sunday, the corporation incurs a loss of Rs6.34 on every litre of diesel sold.

"We are in a difficult situation to manage supply because the price of crude oil has been increasing in the international market again. On top of that, a stronger United States dollar has added to the burden," the corporation said in a press statement issued on Sunday.

"As the diesel price is on the high side, the corporation may go into a loss again," Goit said.

Nepal Oil has been cross-subsidising petroleum products. It makes a big profit from the sale of aviation fuel and uses it to subsidise diesel.

"If the corporation decreases the price of petrol or aviation fuel, it will have to increase the price of diesel and LPG," Goit said. "Increasing the price of diesel obviously will impact everything-from the cost of food to clothes.'

The price of petrol has swelled by 28.17 percent to Rs181 per litre in the past year, while diesel and kerosene prices rose by 36.51 percent to Rs178 per litre. The price of LPG or cooking gas has increased by 19.44 percent to Rs1,800 per cylinder in the same period.

Indian Oil Corporation reviews export prices of petrol, diesel and kerosene every fortnight, and of other products such as aviation fuel and

cooking gas on a monthly basis. The last time Nepal Oil reduced

the prices of petroleum products was on June 25. The price of petrol was cut by Rs20

per litre to Rs179; and the prices of diesel and kerosene were reduced by Rs29 per litre each to Rs163.

Again, on July 4, Nepal Oil increased the price of petrol by Rs2 per litre to Rs181 and diesel and kerosene by Rs9

to Rs172 per litre. Earlier, at least two parliamentary committees had directed the government to slash various taxes imposed on petroleum products, but it is not

clear what taxes were to be reduced. On June 2, Nepal Oil lowered gasoline prices by Rs10 per litre. On both occasions, the government made

Fuel imports soared by 34 percent year-on-year in the first two months of the current fiscal year ended mid-September, according to the Department

Nepal imported fuel worth Rs50.88 billion in the first two months of the fiscal year, compared to imports worth Rs37.95 billion in the same period in the last fiscal year.

UK Treasury chief scraps nearly all government tax cut plans

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The UK's new Treasury chief ripped up the government's economic plan on Monday, dramatically reversing most of the tax cuts and spending plans that Prime Minister Liz Truss announced less than a month ago.

In a televised address, Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt said he was scrapping "almost all" of Truss tax cuts, along with her flagship energy policy and her promise-repeated just last week—that there will be no public spending cuts.

While the reversal of policy calmed financial markets, it further undermined the prime minister's rapidly crumbling authority and fuelled calls for her to step down before her despairing Conservative Party forces

Scrapping Truss' plan to reduce the basic rate of income tax by 1 percentage point, Hunt said "it is a deeply held Conservative value—a value that I share—that people should keep more of the money that they earn.'

"But at a time when markets are rightly demanding commitments to sustainable public finances, it is not right to borrow to fund this tax cut."

Such major policy announcements are normally made first in the House of Commons. However, after an agreement with the speaker of the House, it was left to Hunt-rather than Trussto deliver the calming message to the markets, weeks earlier than he had planned.

Move further undermines the prime minister's rapidly crumbling authority.

Hunt was appointed on Friday after Truss fired his predecessor Kwasi Kwarteng, who spent less than six weeks in the Treasury job.

Truss and Kwarteng jointly came up with a September 23 announcement of 45 billion pounds (\$50 billion) in unfunded tax cuts that spooked financial markets, sent the pound to record lows and forced the Bank of England to take emergency

Over the weekend, Hunt has been dismantling that economic plan. The government had already ditched parts of its tax-cutting plan and announced it would make a medium-term fiscal statement on October 31. On Monday he went further. He

scaled back a cap on energy prices designed to help households pay their bills. It will now be reviewed in April rather than lasting two years—sweep-Hunt's moves are aimed at restoring

the government's credibility for sound fiscal policy after Truss and Kwarteng rushed out a plan for tax cuts without detailing how they would pay for He spent the weekend in crisis talks

with Truss, and also met with Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey and the head of the government's Debt Management Office. The unfunded tax cuts fuelled inves-

tor concerns about unsustainable levels of government borrowing, which pushed up government borrowing costs, raised home mortgage costs and sent the pound plummeting to an alltime low against the dollar. The Bank of England was forced to

intervene to protect pension funds, which were squeezed by volatility in

A coconut vendor waits for customers at Dhulabari Chowk, Jhapa

World Cup boom pushes some Qatar residents out of homes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE DOHA, OCT 17

Qatari landlords eyeing profit from the looming World Cup have been kicking out a growing number of mostly foreign tenants, sometimes with just a few days' notice.

More than one million football fans are expected to descend on the capital Doha during the November-December tournament, putting a strain on the tiny Gulf nation.

Landlords who have spotted an opening to increase rents "show no pity" and the market is dominated by 'greed", said a representative of a real estate company, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Reem, a foreigner working for a major Qatari company, was told she had a week to leave her apartment.

The woman, using a pseudonym to avoid reprisals from her employer, told AFP the owner of the block wanted the dozens of apartments rented to her employers emptied so they could earn more during the World Cup.

"We felt humiliated," Reem said. The company has moved Reem and other employees into a hotel, but they

can only stay there until just before the tournament kicks off. They will then move into "temporary" apartments, she said.

"Leaving home with all our belongings in bags and boxes to go into a hotel room was a disaster.'

Other tenants in Doha told AFP they were similarly forced to choose between paying more on rent or leaving. Properties in the tower where Reem used to live are advertised on booking.com for \$1,700 a night during the World Cup with a minimum stay of 14 nights.

In the two years she had been in the apartment, Reem said rent was \$2,500

Most fans will be staying in hotels, apartments, cruise ships and desert camps booked through the official World Cup portal Organisers have insisted there will

be enough accommodation for all fans in the emirate of just 2.8 million people. The Qatar government acknowledged there was "increased demand" for accommodation during the World Cup but did not comment on individual cases. A government official said any tenant "may file a complaint with

the Rental Disputes Settlements Committee Office"

To ease the crunch, FIFA recently released thousands of hotel rooms it had reserved, which experts have said could push World Cup prices down.

Some fans are turning to the open market for luxury apartments or better locations near stadiums, and the prices advertised for some Doha properties highlight owners' sky-high hopes. On Airbnb, apartments for two people go for \$2,500 a night.

A villa for the full 29 days of the World Cup will cost fans booking through the online platform at least \$13,000—but prices can go into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Some Doha residents are putting their flats up for rent and fleeing Qatar



More than one million football fans are expected to descend on the capital Doha during the November-December tournament, putting a strain on the tiny Gulf nation.

for the month. Adel, who listed his small apartment on Airbnb for \$900 a night, said "demand was very high" when he first advertised it. But he had to cancel the reservations after Airbnb asked him to provide a landlord's statement approving

the sublet. Rents have also risen sharply for tenants coming to the end of their leases in recent months.

While Qatari law allows for an increase of up to 10 percent for a lease renewal, average rents in some Doha districts have risen by 40 percent over the past year, according to Anum Hassan, head of research in Qatar at international consultancy firm

A Western diplomat in Doha said embassy staff have demanded increased salaries to meet their rent

"Rents ... will stay high for a while," said Nabil Ghorra, a 59-year-old Lebanese-American who lives in Doha's upscale Pearl district.

"I feel that there are people taking advantage of the situation, but this happens all over the world when there's an event" like the World Cup.

Technologies Co Ltd. (REUTERS)

WORLD | MEDLEY

BRIEFING

Ex-PM Khan wins big in Pakistan by-election

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan won six of eight national assembly seats he stood for in a weekend by-election unofficial results showed on Monday, a vote he has called a referendum on his popularity. The by-election is the latest twist in months of political wrangling that began before Khan's April ouster via a no-confidence vote, and comes as the nation grapples with the aftermath of devastating monsoon floods that left a third of the country under water. The polls were called "in constituencies where the government thought PTI was weakest". Khan, a former Pakistan cricket captain, said at a press conference at his home on the outskirts of Islamabad, referring to his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, "Despite such attempts, our voters defeated combined candidates of the ruling coalition.'

Lawmakers will try to oust UK PM Truss this week: Daily Mail

LONDON: British lawmakers will try to oust Prime Minister Liz Truss this week despite Downing Street's warning that it could trigger a general election, the Daily Mail reported. More than 100 members of parliament (MPs) belonging to the governing Conservative Party are ready to submit letters of no confidence in Truss to Graham Brady, the head of the Conservative Party's committee which organises the leadership contest, the tabloid reported, quoting unnamed sources. Britain, engulfed in a political crisis, has lost three prime ministers since it voted to leave the European Union in 2016. The MPs will urge Brady to tell Truss that "her time is up" or to change the political party rules to allow an immediate vote of confidence in her leadership, the report said. Brady is said to be resisting the move, arguing that the Truss, along with newly appointed Chancellor Jeremy Hunt, deserve a chance to set out economic strategy in a budget on October 31, the report added.

Serum Institute to produce Ebola vaccine for use in Uganda

PUNE: The Serum Institute of India plans to manufacture 20,000 to 30,000 doses of an experimental Ebola vaccine by the end of November for use in trials against an outbreak in Uganda, its developers and a company source said. The response to Uganda's outbreak has been blunted by the absence of a proven vaccine against the Sudan strain of the virus. There have been 54 confirmed cases and 19 deaths since last month and the first case in the capital, Kampala, was recorded last week. But health authorities believe the actual numbers could be higher. (AGENCIES)

Waves of suicide drones strike Ukraine's capital, 3 killed

Drones used in the attack appear to include Iranian-made Shaheds.



A drone is seen in the sky seconds before it fired on buildings in Kyiv, Ukraine on Monday.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Waves of explosive-laden suicide drones struck Ukraine's capital on Monday, setting buildings ablaze and sending people scurrying for shelter or attempting to shoot down the kamikazes-a week after Russia unleashed its most widespread strikes against the country in months.

Air attacks in central Kyiv had become a rarity in recent months, and the concentrated use of drones, their blasts echoing across the city, sowed terror and frayed nerves.

One of the drones slammed into a residential building, killing three people, said the deputy head of the president's office, Kyrylo Tymoshenko. Energy facilities were also among

Drones used in the attack appeared to include Iranian-made Shaheds. Previous Russian airstrikes on Kyiv were mostly with missiles.

Intense, sustained bursts of gunfire rang out on Monday as the drones hummed overhead, apparently soldiers trying to shoot them down. Others headed for shelter-though city life quickly resumed in a country that has become grimly accustomed to attacks.

In what many fear could become more common occurrences in urban centres nearly eight months in to the war, the barrage came in successive waves of 28 drones, Kyiv's mayor, Vitali Klitschko, said. Five of them plunged into Kyiv itself, said Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys

In the Kyiv region, 13 or more were

shot down, all of them as they flew in from the south, said a spokesman for the Ukrainian Air Force, Yurii Ihnat.

One strike appeared to target the city's heating network, hitting an operations centre. Another slammed into a four-story residential building, ripping a large hole in it and collaps ing at least three apartments on top of each other. In addition to the three people killed there, Tymoshenko said 19 were rescued from the rubble, four of them wounded. Rescue workers searching for victims scrambled over the debris from which gray smoke billowed.

An Associated Press photographer who was out shooting morning scenes of Kyiv caught one of the drones on camera, its triangle-shaped wing and pointed warhead clearly visible against the blue sky.

The whole night, and the whole morning, the enemy terrorises the civilian population," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a social media post. "Kamikaze drones and missiles are attacking all of Ukraine."

"The enemy can attack our cities, but it won't be able to break us,'

The Iranian-made Shaheds, which Russia has rebranded as Geran-2 drones, pack an explosive charge and can linger over targets before nosediving into them. They can be fired one after the other.

Andrii Yermak, the head of the Ukrainian president's office, confirmed in a social media post that Shahed drones were among those used

Iran has previously denied provid-

ing Russia with weapons, although its Revolutionary Guard chief has boasted about providing arms to the world's top powers, without elaborating.

The drones have also been repeatedly used by Russia elsewhere in Ukraine in recent weeks to target urban centres and infrastructure, including power stations. They are comparatively cheap, costing in the region of US\$20,000.

Their use in swarms presents a challenge to Ukrainian air defences, said Ihnat, the Air Force spokesman. Western nations have promised to bolster Ukrainian air defences with systems that can shoot down drones but much of that weaponry has yet to arrive and, in some cases, may be months away.

"The challenges are serious because the air defence forces and means are the same as they were at the beginning of the war," Ihnat said. Some air defence weaponry supplied by Western nations can only be used during daylight hours when targets are visible, he added.

After months during which strikes in central Kyiv were rare, early morning strikes last week put Kyiv as well as the rest of the country back

Russian President Vladimir Putin said those strikes were in retaliation for the bombing of a bridge connecting the Crimean peninsula with the Russian mainland

Putin blames Ukraine for masterminding the blast, which suspended traffic over the bridge and curtailed Moscow's ability to supply Russian troops in the occupied regions of southern Ukraine.

India's Congress votes to elect new party president

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW DELHI, OCT 17

India's main opposition Congress party voted to elect a new president on Monday, with members of its dominant Nehru-Gandhi dynasty staying out of the race

Sonia Gandhi, the interim party president, was among the nearly 9,000 party delegates who were entitled to vote on the matter.

"I have been waiting for this for a long time," she said after voting in the party's New Delhi office.

Although the party has historically been led by the family, Sonia Gandhi and her son, Rahul Gandhi, decided to bring in a new face after suffering crushing defeats in national and state elections since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist party came to power in 2014.

Eighty-year-old Mallikarjun Kharge from southern Karnataka state appears to be the frontrunner with the party's top leaders backing him during campaigning ahead of the vote. He has been described by Indian media as the "official candidate." His main challenger is Shashi Tharoor, 66, who spent nearly 30 years at the United Nations before joining the Congress party in 2009.

"I believe the revival of the Congress has begun," Tharoor said after casting his vote.

Tharoor, however, complained to

the party's election authority that he has been denied a level playing field as some senior party leaders, including Ashok Gehlot and Siddaramaiah, issued appeals to party delegates urging them vote for Kharge.

Madhusudan Mistry, who heads the party's election board, is yet to announce his decision on Tharoor's complaint.

The election to the top party post is a major step toward ending the party's struggle to find a new leader after dismal results in the 2019 national elections and Rahul Gandhi's subsequent resignation as party president.

Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi said last month that no one from the Gandhi family will be in the race this time. Vote-counting and results are scheduled for Wednesday.

Modi has denounced Congress' dynastic politics.

The party has been led by non-family members in the past, but Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi have been at the helm of party affairs since 1998.

The family has produced three of India's 15 prime ministers since independence, starting with great-grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru, who was the country's first. Two of them—his grandmother, Indira Gandhi, and father, Rajiv Gandhiwere assassinated. The party governed India for more than 60 years after India gained independence from British colonialists in 1947

British police probe beating of protester on China consulate grounds

MANCHESTER, OCT 17

British police are investigating the apparent assault on a protester who was videoed being beaten by several men after being dragged inside the grounds of the Chinese consulate in Manchester during a demonstration against President Xi Jinping. In video footage posted by the BBC,

a man in a black cap and ponytail was hauled through a gate into the consular grounds, where he was kicked and punched by five men as he lay on the ground.

One silver-haired man in a blue beret, glasses and scarf could also be seen grabbing the man's hair.

Police at the scene eventually stepped through the gate and pulled the man out. Sunday's protest took place on the first day of the twice-adecade congress of China's ruling

Communist Party in Beijing, during which Xi is widely expected to win a third leadership term. Several protest banners had earlier been placed outside the consulate, one with the words, "Heaven will destroy the Chinese Communist Party", and a caricature of Xi wearing a crown, according to pictures provided to Reuters by a freelance journalist on the scene.

The BBC video showed several men from the consulate, some wearing helmets and protective vests, take down several banners, and during a heated confrontation with the protesters, they grabbed one man and dragged him into the consulate grounds.

"Officers were present and responded immediately to diffuse the situation. Enquiries are ongoing at this time to understand the full circumstances," a spokesperson for the Greater Manchester police told Reuters in a statement.

your to-do list and headed toward

HOROSCOPE





our heart and mind will work together today, help ing you acknowledge what you desire. Don't be afraid to make a forward move in your love life. Your ego and creative mind will be amplified as you make time

Working on yourself will be the key to achieving

success in your romantic life today. This cosmic cli-

mate can help you act responsibly and build founda-

tions for the future. Try not to get involved in any



ake some time to acknowledge and appreciate your inner strength today. You may want to seek validation from within than from your peers. Luckily, opportunities to soothe your soul will also come into







CANCER (June 22-July 22) ***



Step into your power by rubbing elbows and shaking hands today. This cosmic climate will help you close deals, pitch ideas, and ask for what you want. Make sure you grow friendships and have a bit of fun as



SCORPIO (October 23-November 21) ***

yourself and others.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22) ***



You'll move towards transformation and feel compassion for yourself. Taking small yet bold steps toward a better future can help you make the most of this planetary exchange. Try to set boundaries with

Don't feel guilty about prioritizing your own agenda

right now. Your social presence will be elevated,

making it a perfect time for building up your net-



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

success today. Use this energy to get caught up on any chores or responsibilities that need attention. Working on a team and as a leader will make your professional headway.



AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18) ***

The universe will ask you to move with passion and purpose, helping you take action toward your goals. Don't feel shy if you need to call on a higher power for some guidance. A flirtatious vibe will follow later

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

unnecessary battles

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) ***



Don't be afraid to lead with your heart today. This cosmic climate will sharpen your wit and sense of confidence, making you feel fulfilled. You may find yourself socializing. Creative inspiration will mani-





SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21) ***

your support network. Take a moment to connect with your spirituality.

The natural healer that lives within will begin to stir

CROSSWORD

ACROSS Serious theater

6 Canine comment

9 Seaweed derivative

13 Win back 15 Hawaii's Mauna -

16 Hay storage unit 17 Runs up bills 18 Pathetic 20 Ceremony

23 Prior's superior 26 Dell or Compaq wares 27 Cavalry

22 Deluge

28 Stiff wind Swimsuit piece 30 Extended family 31 "Pulp Fiction"

outposts

name 32 Corp. biggie 33 Gasp 36 Subside

37 Philosopher -tzu 38 Owns

39 Bullring yell 41 State confidently 43 Adam — of rock 44 Turn down

47 Boundary

45 Water lily leaf 46 Hirt and Pacino

brand 52 Plays in the

54 Smooched 56 Short-lived Brazilian buck 58 Type of tire

63 Computer term 64 Get even for 65 Grills, maybe 66 USN rank

DOWN

Rx givers Salesperson

for one 4 Legendary Marilyn

5 Books inspection

Muddies the waters

Mother-of-pearl source 10 Eva or Zsa Zsa

12 Bulrushes 14 West Coast hrs.

48 Dead language 51 Body-spray

kiddie pool 53 Mongol tents

62 Compete at Indy

67 Ceased

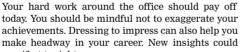
The Red Baron.

Llama cousin 8 Blubbery

11 Parcel out

19 Most doubtful

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





You'll feel the love from your peers today. This celestial exchange will bring good vibes to your social and romantic life, making it a good time to reach out to



PISCES (February 19-March 20) ***

today. Helping those around will bring you a sense of pride, but make sure you don't run away from your own responsibilities. Try to not short-change your

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

RENE CHILD CANE HANKIEKKENTUCKY STARES TOOLS BEEFS LOP AWRY BURLY MOST PAMECREED URALS E L N I NO R E B NAMES ABLID NINE I B E

SENSE 10-7-22 © 2022 UFS, Dist, by Andrews McMeel for UFS

21 Remove weeds 23 Chills

(Valens tune) Spills the beans 29 Male adornment 30 Kublai and Genghis

32 Treat a wound 33 Largest mammals 34 Like city real

estate

35 Aristocracy

40 Former spouses

42 Curly-tailed pooches 46 Principles 47 Drive crazy 48 Spandex fiber

49 Halos 50 18-wheeler 51 Rubber city Drive recklessly Mexican Mrs. 57 Rage 59 Midwest st.

61 Pioneered

60 Fra

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62					63				64					
65					66					67				

SUDOKU

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Budha and Tharu set new national records in athletics

Indian Army Budha from Karnali sets record in the men's 3,000m steeplechase. Army's Tharu achieves her second milestone at the Games with a new best in the women's 100m hurdles.





Durga Bahadur Budha (left picture) competes in the men's 3,000 metres steeplechase at the Ninth National Games in Pokhara on Monday, Jayarani Tharu races in the women's 100m hurdles

SPORTS BUREAU

Durga Bahadur Budha of Karnali Province and Jayarani Tharu of Tribhuvan Army Club set new national records in athletics during the Ninth National Games in Pokhara on

Budha secured 3000 metres steeplechase gold with a record time of 8 minute 55.19 second to secure first gold for Karnali. He broke Rajendra Bhandari's 18-year-old record of 8:57.30 set at Islamabad South Asian Games (SAG) in 2004.

Ajit Kumar Yadav of Nepal Armed Police Force (APF) Club finished with silver clocking 9:21.10 and Subash Karki of Army walked away with bronze at 9:22.14.

Budha, who is enrolled at Indian Army, however, drew controversy as four teams, including departmental sides—Army, APF and Nepal Police Club-and Gandaki Province, registered their protest before the kickoff on Monday claiming his participation as illegitimate. The protest by four teams also delayed the kickoff.

In the protest letter they have claimed that he has represented India at international sports meet and he was ineligible to participate in the

"Budha has been registered as an

international player at the database of International Athletics Federation and the proof is attached as well," reads the protest letter.

Despite complaints against Budha, the technical sub-committee of the Games concluded that the Karnali athlete should not be denied participation in the Games. "Budha has been registered as Karnali player and the Games regulation does not mention if a Nepali player who has represented other countries will be eligible to participate or not. Thus his participation should not be barred," wrote the technical sub-committee to the athletics organising sub-committee.

Tharu of Army set her second national record at the Games in women's 100m hurdles heat. She clocked 15.16 seconds to better her own previous record of 15.20. She, however, failed to meet her own heats' timing in the final but her timing of 15.19 seconds was enough to win gold. Tharu on Sunday had earned 400m hurdles gold with record timing.

Nirmala Thapa of Army took gold clocking 16.25 and Bhagirathi Kumari Tharu of APF walked away with bronze at 19.13.

Army athletes also secured men's 110m hurdles and men's discus throw. Jeevan Chaudhary took hurdles gold, clocking 15.03 seconds and finishing ahead of Chandra Dev Joshi (15.81) of Nepal Police Club. Ram Prasad Tharu took home bronze clocking 16.00. Chitra Bahadur Woli secured discus

throw gold with a haul of 38.48 metres,

Puskal Khadka of Police finished runner up with a throw of 32.75m and Hemanta Pal of Sudurpaschim took bronze at 31.10m. The women's discus throw gold went to Sangita Adhikari of Lumbini

who hurled 35.10m. Jeet Kumari Mahato of APF (33.60m) and Milan Budha Magar of Army (32.35m) clinched silver and bronze medals.

Police dominate table tennis

Nepal Police Club has dominated the table tennis gold claiming four among five gold medals on offer by Monday at Rambazar in Pokhara. Table tennis offers a total of seven gold.

Police—who claimed men's and women's team event gold on Saturday, the opening day-secured men's doubles and mixed doubles gold on Monday. The men's double saw Police pair of Santoo Shrestha and Binesh Khaniya edge Nepal APF Club's Shiva Sundar Gothe and Amarlal Malla's pair in straight sets. Province 1 and Tribhuvan Army Club walked away with bronze medals.

The mixed doubles event saw Police pair of Khaniya and Elina Maharjan beat Army's duo of Narayan Ghimire and Swechha Nembang in 3-2 sets. Non Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) and Gandaki Province were joint bronze medallists in the event.

APF's pair of Sikka Suwal Shrestha and Biyanka Rai were the winners of the women's doubles event. The duo saw off Police's team of Nabita Shrestha and Elina Maharjan in 3-2 sets. Bagmati Province and Police's other team composed of Manju Suwal and Yasaswi Awal were joint bronze medallists.

The men's and women's singles event kicked off on Monday.

Thapa Magar wins squash gold for third time

Amrit Thapa Magar of host Gandaki claimed men's individual squash gold for the third time in a row at the National Games.

Thapa Magar edged Aarhant Keshar Singh of Bagmati 3-2 set in the men's open individual final to secure top honours from Seventh to Ninth edition of the Games. The competitive match saw Thapa Magar secure 12-10, 8-11, 12-10, 9-11 and 11-8 win.

Deepak Thapa of Gandaki and Amir Blon of Bagmati walked away with bronze medals. Three events including men's and women's singles open and team events are included in

MONDAY'S NATIONAL RECORDS

SWIMMING

Nasir Yaha Hussain (men's 400m freestyle) 4: 08.64 seconds New record: 4:33.05 seconds Previous record: (Own, 13th SAG)

Nasir Yaha Hussain (men's 100m butterfly) 57.86 seconds New record: 59.77 Previous record: (Anubhav Subba, National Championships 2022)

Nasir Yaha Hussain and Army team (men's 4X100m relay) 3:45.51 seconds New record:

New previous record: 3:46.83 (Heats. Police team. Ninth National Games) 3:46.97 Old record: (Team Nepal, 13th SAG)

Duana Lama (women's 200m breaststroke) New record: 2:43.23 seconds New previous record: 2:44.28 seconds

(Heats, own, Ninth National Games) 2:44.68 Previous record: (Own, 13th SAG) Alexander Shah (men's 50m backstroke)

27.47 seconds New record: Previous new record: 27.54 seconds (Heats, own, Ninth National Games) 28.03 seconds Old record:

(Own, 13th SAG)

Ashley Sapkota (women's 100m butterfly) New record: 1:07.74 seconds 1:09.97 seconds Previous record:

(Gaurika Singh, Eighth National Games)

Ashish Sapkota (men's 200m breaststroke) New record: 2:26.60 Previous record: 2:31.15 (Subham Shrestha, Eighth National Games)

ATHLETICS

Durga Bahadur Budha (men's 3000 metres steeplechase)

8:55.19 seconds New record: Previous record: 8:57.30 seconds (Rajendra Bhandari, 9th SAG)

Jayarani Tharu (women's 100m hurdles) New record:

15.16 seconds 15.20 seconds Previous record: (Own, National Athletics Championship 2022)

APF and Police to battle for women's T20 gold

The departmental sides defeat Lumbini and Bagmati respectively in the semi-final matches.

SPORTS BUREAU

Nepal Armed Police Force (APF) Club and Nepal Police Club will lock horns in the summit clash of the women's T20 cricket of the Ninth National Games after both the departmental teams advanced following their semi-finals victories in Pokhara on

APF Club defeated Lumbini Province by 67 runs in the first semi-final match.

Jyoti Pandey scored an unbeaten half-century to guide APF to 129-3 before Nary Thapa's 4 for 7 helped Sita Rana Magar's side restrict their opponents to just 62 runs.

Lumbini were patient in the start but APF bowler Thapa showed no mercy as she rattled the Lumbini batting order with her ruthless pace soon after taking charge of the bowling in the seventh over.

The former national team captain quickly got to work, removing opener Laxmi Chaudhary for just 5 runs in the fifth ball of her first over.

Indu Barma clean bowled Chaudhary's opening partner Ashma Pulami Magar (6) in the next over to cause more damage to Lumbini. But there was no stopping Thapa on

the field. Thapa next sent Madhu DC (5), captain Saraswati Ganga Magar (2) and Jigyasha Thapa (0) as Lumbini were reeling at 5-36 after the 11th over.

Sushmita Bajgain top scored for Lumbini with 12 off 23 balls that also included a boundary but she too fell flat when Rekha Rawal had her caught by Roma Thapa in the 14.4 overs.

Lumbini never recovered and surrendered the game after Sushma Shrestha and Suman Bist polished off

Earlier, sent to bat first after losing the toss, opener Pandey scored 69 runs facing 61 deliveries to lay the foundation for victory.

Rana Magar contributed 11 before Maneesha Rana had her caught by Laxmi in the first delivery of the

Indu Barma (6) was caught behind

off Kritika Marasaini. Mamta Chaudhary (16) also fell victim to Marasaini's spin. Roma Thapa was

not out for 12. The win also extended APF's winning streak to five matches in as many games in the tournament.

In the second semi-final, Kajal Shrestha shone with the bat as Police saw off Bagmati Province by 36 runs.

Sent to bat first after losing the toss, opener Shrestha cracked 46 runs off 51 balls that featured five fours as Police posted 123-4 in the stipulated

Shrestha also put on a 70-run stand with her opening partner Kabita Kunwar, who made 26.

But Bagmati's Khusi Dongol broke the partnership removing Kunwar in the 12.4 overs.

Samjhana Khadka followed for a duck in the next ball before Shrestha too departed, caught behind off Suman Khatiwada in the 16th over. But the opener had already done

Captain Rubina Chhetry (not out 17) and Kabita Joshi (not out 15) led the Police batting late in the innings.

In reply, Kunwar returned the match figures of 3-6 as Bagmati were restricted to 87-8. The medium pacer trapped opener Kanchan Shrestha for a duck and bowled out captain Karmacharya (18) and Bipisha Shahi (4). Ishori Bist took 2-20, that included the scalps of opener Ashmita Kharel (3) and Anisha Majhakoti (4).

When Binda Kandel departed for 5, Bagmati were already in trouble

Number five batter Khatiwada fought back with 23-ball 23 that included three fences but could not deal with the Police bowling attack for long as she was bowled by Chhetry in the last ball of the 12th over.

Sony Pakhrin was the next casualty, trapped leg in front by Sangita Rai.

Captain Karmacharya and Shahi also departed as Police made it to the last four in their first appearance at the National Games.

The third-place playoff and the final will take place on Tuesday.

Records galore in swimming as Hussain sets three new timings

Seven previous records fall in swimming events at the Games on Tuesday.



Nasir Yaha Hussain (inset) competes at Fistail Academy's swimming pool during the Ninth National Games in Pokhara on Sunday.

SPORTS BUREAU KATHMANDU, OCT 17

Tribhuvan Army Club swimmer Nasir Yaha Hussain created three new national records on Monday adding to his tally of previous three at the Ninth National Games while a total of seven swimming records were shattered in Pokhara on Monday.

The 16-year-old Hussain—who also finished men's 200m freestyle, 200m individual medley and 1500m freestyle with a record time during the Games-bettered his own previous record in the 400m freestyle, and set new timing in the 100m butterfly and the 4X100m team relay events.

Duana Lama, Alexander Shah, Ashley Sapkota and Ashish Sapkota also created new national records.

Hussain clocked 4 minute 08.64 seconds to better his own previous record of 4:33.05 to secure gold in men's 400m freestyle. Ashish (4:22.45) of Non Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) and Irvin Shrestha (4:25.74) of Bagmati earned silver and bronze. Hussain finished 100m butterfly in

57.86 seconds to break Anubhav Subba's record of 59.77 seconds for gold. Ashish (59.68) was behind him followed by Anubhav Subba (59.73) of Army as they secured silver and bronze medals.

Army's relay team comprising Hussain, Subba, Dilip Thapa Magar and Alexander Shah also clinched 4X100m freestyle relay in record time of 3:45.51. Earlier, Nepal Police Club team held the record in the

Army swimmer Duana Lama set a new record in women's 200m breaststroke to create her fourth national record in the Games. She clocked 2:43.23 to claim gold finishing ahead of Upasti Maharjan (2:56.97) of the same team and Adipsa Baidhya (3:00.03) of Police.

Army's Alexander Shah bettered his own 50m backstroke record of 27.54 second clocking 27.47. Earlier, he had bettered his own record of 28.03 set at 13th South Asian Games during heats in morning. Tenzing Namdo Rayan Gurung of Nepal APF Club and Subba of Army bagged silver and bronze.

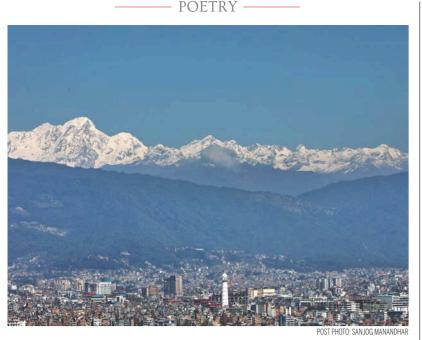
Ashley Sapkota of NRNA clinched the women's 100m butterfly with a record time of 1:07.74 to shatter Gaurika Singh's mark of 1:09.97. Megan Gurung of Police and Rosha Neupane of Bagmati walked away with silver and bronze.

NRNA's Ashish clinched men's 200m breaststroke gold with a record time of 2:26.60 to shatter Subham Shrestha's record of 2:31.15. Bikash Kumal of Province 1 and Seren Singh of Bagmati won silver and

The women's 800m freestyle relay saw the Army team of Anusiva Tandukar, Upasti Maharjan, Duana Lama and Gaurika Singh bag gold clocking 9:27.73. Police team came second at 10:01.30 and Bagmati third at 10:09.57.

After the completion of the third day of the swimming event, Army topped the standings, winning 16 gold among contests for 27 held so far. They also earned five silver and six bronze medals. NRNA are behind them with five gold and six silver medals. APF have three gold, four silver and three bronze medals.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE



The concrete valley

LISA CHOEGYAL

Valiantly the birds keep singing

But any ancient avatar taking a turn above the Kathmandu Valley Skimming the clouds, cruising the thermals with kites and crows Would be startled to see the changes wrought by prevailing 'civilisation' Gods, still lovingly smeared with red, adorned with gold, yoked with marigold Survey the wreckage from behind bars and bricks in their holy precincts

The purity of a single temple bell fades into the growl of bulldozers As roaring engines attack the curve of terraced fields to rearrange the dark rich

Into deep trenches and harsh straight lines coated with concrete. Not long ago, tender shoots pierced this fertile black soil

Residue of a primordial lake, drained by deities A Licchavi stone carving, worn with weather, stood hidden in the fronds of

Sacred snakes safeguarded the hallowed springs and secluded ponds Now dry and desolate.

In my garden fireflies dance in the darkening day

The evening serenade of frogs and crickets competes with pumps and drills Condemned soon to be a distant memory engulfed by the march of man Brittle glittering lights wrap the party palace trees, a multi-coloured assault on

Jagged lightning divides the navy sky, thunder rumbles around the Valley rim Now cluttered with broken roads, naked building sites invade ever higher into

The river that ran free through alder roots and bamboo thickets Now retained by unforgiving walls, choked with plastic and careless greed. Nature and gods are drowning in this once-emerald Valley Struggling with obliteration in a great grey ocean of creeping concrete

Relieved by precious few islands of green respite. No space left amidst the debris of mud and dust that span the seasons

For goats to graze, cattle to wander,

For monkeys to forage, leopards to lurk, bats to dangle,

For rice to grow, vegetables to thrive

For birds to sing

Or even for beings like us to breathe and flourish.

Choegyal is a writer, traveller and sustainable tourism specialist based in Nepal.

Dealing with unnecessary remarks from family members

As families gather for Tihar, many of us are likely to have to listen to elders making hurtful remarks that can trigger us.

ihar is just around the corner, and in a few days, most of us will be spending time with our families and trying to keep an open mind.

While the festive period allows us to spend time with family members and relatives, it is also during this period that we get a lot of remarks like 'Oho, kasto mottako' (You have gained weight); 'Kina noboleko?' (Why are you so quiet?); 'Chhya, kasto luga lagako?" (What kind of clothes are you wearing?) from our close ones. No matter how often we have heard those comments, they hit us like bricks every time and leave us thinking--am I not really good enough? Am I not like the others? Am I unusual?



Such comments can trigger us and force us to deal with deep-laden insecurities and complexes all over again.

As a working mental health professional, this constant judgment and questions are one of the more common issues clients, especially adolescents, have brought into my counselling sessions. My clients often say that the elders in their lives, including parents, compare how so and so's child has accomplished this or done that before coming to the inevitable question--what are you doing with

Such comparisons really hurt the individual's self-esteem. I remember one of my clients saying, "I feel that I am just missing something that I would never be able to fill.'

No matter how empathetic we try to be towards the elders in our lives whenever they make such remarks, we find ourselves being that teenager or, moreover, the child version of ourselves. I have also been at the receiving end of such comments myself, particularly during my college days. Whenever I came home from abroad, I

would get comments from family members and relatives about my weight and appearance. Such comments instantly brought back memories of how I hated my physical appearance as a child. Even though I was a college-going student, I reacted to such comments about my appearance by lashing out at family members and refusing to talk to them for the rest of the day.

I have realised that my reactions are not unnatural. In fact, it's a defence mechanism--regression. Regression means reverting to a less developed stage, which was exactly what happened. I was that child again: helpless and insecure.

It turns out that this defence mechanism is actually there to protect me. I felt hurt by the comments from family members that this defence mechanism allowed me to rely on the less intense, perhaps immature, feelings of aggression and irritability.

Many of my peers and clients in their thirties also say, "No matter how independent and high functioning I am, the elders in my life just do not see me as an adult."

When dealing with such situations, the regressive state of the child gets triggered, and we start to want to please these adults. And as we know, we are not always able to do so, and a

Confronting our emotions and building a healthy perspective can bring closure.

very common feeling of guilt resurfaces. This hampers our mental state.

Thus, being aware of regression can make dealing with our family members much easier. The foremost thing we can do, especially if the family member is receptive and listens, is to let them know how we feel. Seeking help is very beneficial.

Counselling and therapy are also two other useful tools. They allow us to look into these deep-rooted feelings we have built up over the years. We learn to identify and label these feelings. We acknowledge them first ourselves. When we do that, we are able to express it to others.

Many-a-times, we might find ourselves dealing with a rigid wall: the family member is just not willing to listen. Talking with a counsellor will help to build on an adaptive perspective and make us realise that what

matters the most are the improvements we have made over the years. No two individuals ever have the same pathway in life; everyone is on their own. We NEED to acknowledge our progress, no matter how small we or others might consider them.

It is also important to note that confronting our emotions and building a healthy perspective can bring closure, though we might not always be ready for that step. There's nothing wrong with avoiding situations and scenarios where we will likely get unneces sary criticisms.

We can also learn the art of letting go. It's a feat that is very hard to master. When we accept family members for who they are, it can be very liberating. So, the next time another snarky comment comes, we can give a smile, knowing that what is happening is natural and remind ourselves that it is

Obviously, deep-rooted conflicts cannot be ignored, but we can always do our part in helping ourselves deal with them better. Any small step in that direction can make a huge difference in nurturing that child in us and healing our adult selves.

Gurung is a Counseling Psychologist. He is currently working in HappyMinds, a mental health and well-being platform.

Do we have free will—and do we want it? A kid's cartoon may offer clues

A children's TV series, Thomas the Tank Engine, despite being a locomotive, behaves like a human who is morally responsible.



MATYÁŠ MORAVEC UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

re we free or are our actions determined by the laws of physics? And how much free will do we actually want? These questions have troubled philosophers for millennia - and there are still no perfect answers. But it turns out that a character

from a children's TV series can provide a clue. Thomas the Tank Engine, despite being a locomotive, behaves like a human. He makes decisions and choices. And he is morally responsible: when he does something wrong, he gets punished.

But look deeper and things become complicated. He is an engine. His movements are determined by the shape of the tracks, the workings of his engine and the employees of the railway. So is his free will just an illu-

Laws of physics explain how a past event results in a future one. For example, if I put a kettle on the hob, the laws of thermodynamics determine that it will boil at a nearby point in the future. If I don't interfere with the kettle or the hob, there is only one outcome possible: the water will start boiling.

A powerful philosophical argument against free will states that since we cannot change the past and since we cannot change the laws of physics, we cannot change the future either. This is because the future is just a consequence of the past, and the laws of physics dictate that the past will result in the future. The future is not open to alternatives.

This also applies to us: our bodies are physical objects made of atoms and molecules governed by laws of physics. But every decision and action we take can ultimately be traced back to some initial conditions at the beginning of the universe.

We might feel like we have free will, but that is just an illusion. And the same is the case for Thomas: it might seem to him like he is free, but his actions are decided by the layout of the tracks and the timetable of the railway. What he does is not open to alternatives. He is, after all, a steam engine governed by the laws of thermodynamics.

Moral responsibility

But if Thomas' actions are not open to alternatives, why is he told off when he gets things wrong? If he were no more than a machine, would it make much sense to think he is morally responsible? After all, it would be odd to say that my kettle deserves praise for boiling the water, if it really could not have done otherwise.

The US philosopher Harry Frankfurt has developed an ingenious thought experiment to show that the future does not have to be open to alternatives for us to be morally responsible. Imagine two agents, let's call them Killer and Controller. The controller has electrodes connected to the brain of Killer. If Killer doesn't do as Controller wants, he switches on the electrodes – forcing Killer to obey.

Now, Controller really wants someone, let's call them Victim, to die. So he thinks of directing Killer to kill Victim. But it turns out that Killer

actually wants Victim to die as well, so she kills Victim without Controller trodes remain switched off. What's the moral of the story?

Although Killer's actions were not open to alternatives (if she decided not to kill, Controller would have forced her to do so anyway), she is still responsible and punished as a mur-

It looks like Thomas is in the same situation: when he does things within the rules of the railway, he is left to do them of his own volition. When he does not, someone intervenes: the driver, the conductor or the ominous Fat Controller. But he is still reprimanded when things go wrong. The fact that his actions are not open to alternatives does not change anything about that.

How much free will is desirable? So how about a universe where Thomas' future is not determined? Would he be free there?

We might feel like we have free will, but that is just an illusion.

Although we are uncomfortable about the fact that our actions might be determined, the alternative isn't much better. A universe where the future is completely undetermined, where it is too open to alternatives, is just too chaotic. I need to know that when I put the kettle on the hob, it will boil. A universe where the water spontaneously turns into frozen orange juice isn't one where most of us would want to live.

And the same is true of Thomas. If Thomas was allowed to leave the tracks, fly off into the air, or if his steam engine did not follow the laws of thermodynamics, his universe would not function.

His character captures our intuitions about free will. We need choice and moral responsibility, but we do not want our actions to be completely undetermined. We want our free will to be somewhere between full determinism and complete randomness.



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