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WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

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Janakpur Jumla

FESTIVE GREETINGS

The Kathmandu Post wishes all its readers, advertisers and well-wishers a happy Tihar.

The next edition of the Post will be published on Saturday, October 29.



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Sunak looks set to become next UK PM after Johnson quits race

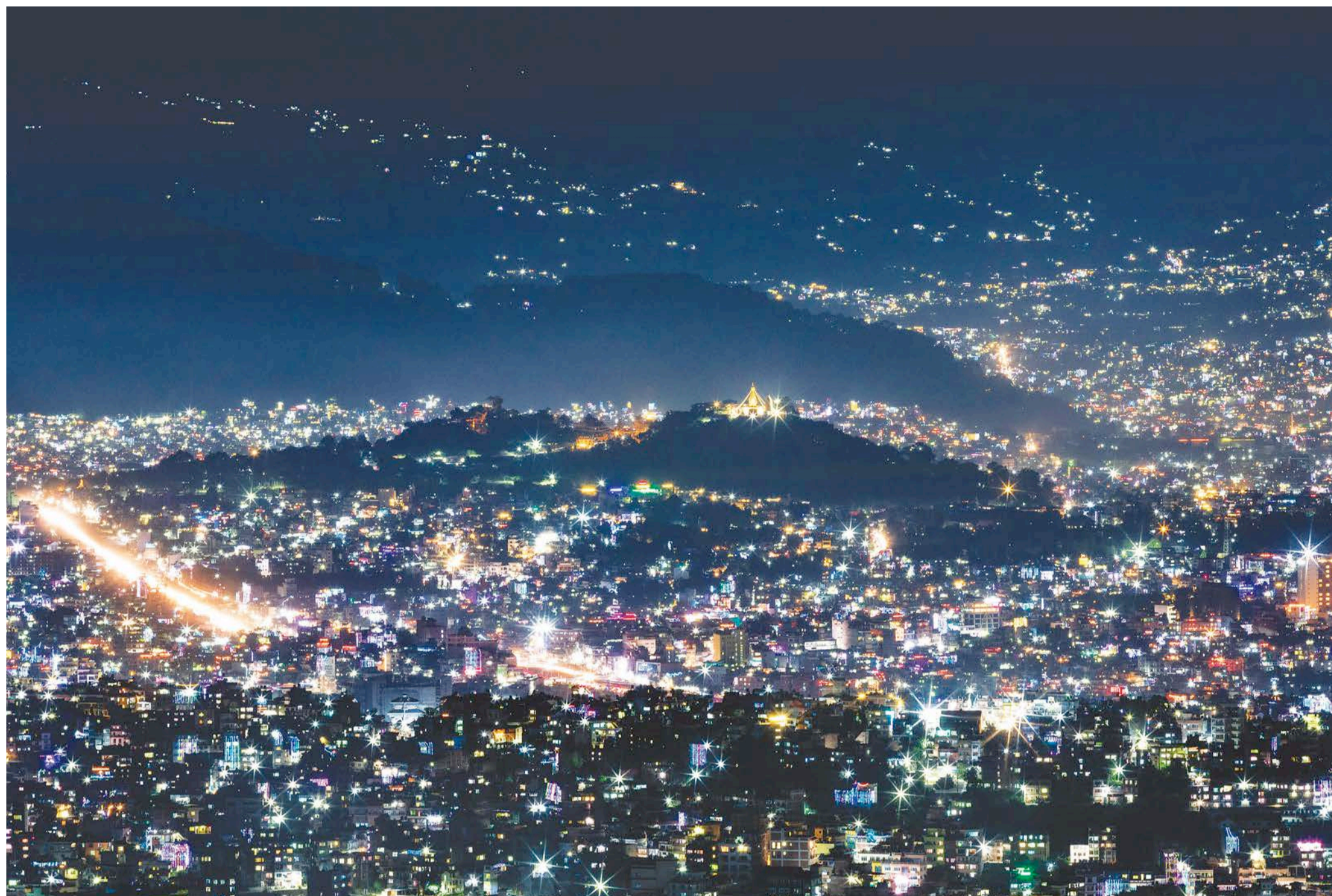
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A view of the northwestern part of Kathmandu Valley awash in colourful lights, pictured from Bosandanda hill near Taudaha at dusk on Sunday, the first day of the five-day Tihar festival.

POST PHOTO: HEMANTA SHRESTHA

Election Commission mum as parties hold 'informal' rallies

Code of conduct says parties and candidates cannot begin electioneering until November 3.

TIKA R PRADHAN
KATHMANDU, OCT 24

With less than a month remaining for the federal and provincial elections, the Election Commission is gradually succumbing to pressure from political parties and has been turning a blind eye to the ongoing blatant violations of the election code of conduct.

Although the commission has been ordering individual candidates to furnish clarifications for violating the

code provisions, it has not been taking any action when such violators are political parties.

Also, the commission has already allowed candidates to conduct door-to-door campaigns, which were restricted by the code until November 3.

Currently, almost all candidates are focusing on such campaigns throughout the nation. The commission, under pressure from parties, has decided to allow such 'low-key' and 'informal' campaigns.

"We have allowed candidates to conduct informal door-to-door campaigns due to repeated requests from political parties," said Surya Prasad Aryal, assistant spokesperson of the Election Commission.

But the parties have gone a step ahead in violating the code and started organising rallies, which are officially not allowed until November 3, even as the commission remains silent.

Clause 13 (1Y) of the election code of conduct clearly states



that candidates can organise marches, rallies and corner meetings, broadcast and publish their campaign advertisements in the media and organise door-to-door campaigns only from 17 days prior to the election day. This means the parties and candidates must wait until November 3 before they hit the campaign trail.

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Soil shortage, poor demand decimating Bhaktapur's pottery-making

ANUP OJHA
BHAKTAPUR, OCT 24

Just half a decade ago, a week before Tihar festival, the Prajapati family would be busy manufacturing palas—traditional earthen lamps—at the Pottery Square in Bhaktapur. But for the last few years, their traditional occupation has been in a crisis, compelling many families like the Prajapatis to quit the generations-old business and seek alternatives.

"The demand for palas has significantly come down and there is no profit in selling them," said Maina Prajapati, 50, taking out a few pala and other mud-made utensils from a kiln.

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What are new parties offering that traditional ones don't?

Many have laid emphasis on effective implementation of constitution and shoring up federalism.

NISHAN KHATIWADA
KATHMANDU, OCT 24

With the emerging political parties hot to trot for the November polls, many are keeping a close eye on the planks they will contest the elections.

In the fray are as many as 2,412 first-past-the-post candidates from 62 political parties and independent aspirants.

As the elections draw closer, the major and emerging parties have begun working out strategies to boost their electoral prospects—agendas and priorities are the crucial parts of the strategies.

Leaders of the emerging parties echo each other saying they have prioritized better and viable agendas

which the traditional parties have repeatedly ignored.

Some emerging parties also have free health care and free education as their common priority, while some have emphasised effective implementation of constitutional provisions.

Ganesh Karki, the press coordinator of the Rastriya Swatantra Party, which was formed by a group of independent candidates, says besides making other usual promises, they have given top priority to proper implementation of the fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution. "Our party is of the view that people should be able to enjoy the rights guaranteed by the constitution without any hindrance," he said.

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Children place their bets as they play langur burja, a traditional board game involving a roll of dice, at Thecho in Lalitpur on Monday. This game is played especially during Tihar.

POST PHOTO: ANISH REGMI

New parties to focus on implementing constitution

>> Continued from page 1

Likewise, amending the constitution with clearly demarcated the rights between the centre and provinces is also their priority, according to him. "We reckon the provincial structure should be active, easy and useful and the governance structure financially sustainable," he said.

Television star Rabi Lamichhane who has a huge fan following across the country, formed the party which has now fielded professionals in many constituencies and is seen as another prospective national party.

The state should control education and health—and make it free eventually, Karki added. "To sum up, our election agendas will discard the big promises the traditional parties failed to live up to and focus on the plans and agendas having a better prospect of practical implementation," he told the Post. "The agendas that make a difference in public lives are our prime concern."

The party, however, has not fielded any candidate for the provincial elections. Sajha Party Nepal has fielded just one FPTP candidate. Under the proportional representation category, it has 27 candidates for the provincial elections. First of all, the federal structure should be allowed to function properly, as federalism is intrinsic to the constitution—if federalism fails then the constitution will also fail, says Milan Pandey, a leader of Sajha Party Nepal, who was formerly coordinator of the Bibeksheel Sajha Party.

"We strongly believe that the provincial structure should be strengthened. If the chief ministers change repeatedly, that's not the fault of the system, but of the political parties," he told the Post.

Chandan Singh, general secretary of CK Raut-led Janamati Party, says they will solicit votes in the major polls with development and prosperity as their major planks.

According to him, the party's priorities include resolving citizenship-related issues and farmers' problems, along with subsidies and compensation for poor farmers and corruption-removal.

"We will vocally advocate for a law giving voters the right to recall [allowing voters to remove elected representatives from office before their term has ended]. It will be our primary concern if we reach Parliament," he said.

"Moreover, we have also prioritised free health and education."

Raut launched the Janamati Party on March 18, 2019 after giving up his extremist and secessionist agenda following an 11-point agreement with KP Sharma Oli-led government.

Singh says people will vote for his party, as it has emerged as a ray of hope in Madhesh, especially for the youths, especially since other Madheshi leaders have abandoned their core agendas and teamed up with traditional parties.

The CPN-UML has already sealed an electoral deal with the Janata Samajbadi Party Nepal—a major Madhesh-based party. Likewise, the pro-monarchy Rastriya Prajatantra Party has formed political alliances with the UML in some constituencies.

Similarly, the Nepali Congress-led alliance has the Maoist Centre, the Unified Socialist, Lotantrik Samajbadi Party, and the Rastriya Janamochra as partners.

Samikchya Baskota, Bibeksheel Sajha Party chair, says ensuring Nepalis abroad have the right to vote will be their major election agenda—they firmly believe a law should be made on the basis of the Supreme Court verdict for the same.

The party has prioritised four 'helping pillars' for a sustainable economy—technology, hydroelectricity, agriculture and tourism, she said. "We will also advocate for jobs for prisoners. The plan is to reopen several state-owned factories that have remained shut for years and employ them under strict supervision."

Nepal will vote on November 20 to elect 165 lawmakers through direct elections and 110 through the proportional representation system.

UML has fielded candidates in 141 constituencies, followed by Rastriya Prajatantra Party with 140 candidates.

Likewise, the Rastriya Swatantra Party stands third in fielding candidates—it is contesting in 131 constituencies. The Nepali Congress has 91 candidates, and the Janata Samajbadi Party has fielded candidates in 79 constituencies.

"Full implementation of the constitutional provisions and delivery of real socialism will be our major election agenda," says Hamro Nepali Party chair Anant Raj Ghimire.

"Our other priority is job-creation to prevent youths from going abroad," he told the Post. According to Ghimire, the party will advocate making the bodies such as the Supreme Court, Commission for the Investigation of the Abuse of Authority, and Election Commission—which are currently headed by people with political leanings—fairer and more independent.

They have fielded 65 candidates in federal constituencies and 101 in provincial ones, Ghimire said.

Manpower shortage affects health services in Lumbini

Hospitals have not been built in 89 local units out of 109 under the 'one municipality, one hospital' programme.

AMRITA ANMOL
BUTWAL, OCT 24

Four years ago, the federal government introduced an ambitious plan to build one 15-bed hospital in every local unit across the country.

Out of the 109 local units in Lumbini Province, 89 have not built hospitals yet. Only Mandabi Rural Municipality in Pyuthan started constructing a hospital building while 88 others have not even started the work.

In some cases, there is a dispute between the people's representatives over where to build the hospital. As a result, the people in rural areas of the hill districts of the province, where hospitals are few and far between, have to go far even for the treatment of minor diseases and injuries.

"I have heard several speeches that a hospital would be built in every local unit, but I don't see anything happening about it," said Sita Sunar of Bagdula in Pyuthan Municipality-9. "There is no hospital nearby, and people are deprived of health facilities in the rural areas. People have to travel 9 km to reach the district hospital in Pyuthan."

Recently, modern techniques of health treatment have been introduced to private health institutions in major towns and cities of the province. But the problem of the rural folks remains the same. They are forced to suffer as the government's



Some hospitals in the province are unable to operate equipment for ICU and HDU services.

POST PHOTO

plan to operate a hospital in each local body is left in limbo.

According to Bhoj Prasad Shrestha, former health minister of the Lumbini Province, the health sector did not grow mainly due to the lack of coordination among the three governments and their reluctance to give continuity to the plans initiated by the previous government.

In Lumbini, there are 13 hospitals and 13 Ayurveda treatment facilities. For them, the provincial government has been allocating about Rs4 billion

every year. Out of the 1,249 posts sanctioned for these health institutions, 676 remain vacant. Given the data, a specialist doctor looks after 104,709 patients, a nurse has 3,539 in her share and there is a medical officer for 54,625 people on average.

Binodraj Giri, chief at the province health directorate, said posts in various public health institutions remained vacant as the provincial public service commission was yet to be established to select personnel.

"The country moved to federalism,

the number of health institutions increased and the doctors were divided between the federal and provincial governments," Giri said. "But despite the rise in the number of health institutions and health services, the number of doctors and health workers remains the same. The shortage of human resources causes problems in delivering quality health services."

According to Giri, there are 1,530 beds in Lumbini including the federal and provincial hospitals. Due to lack of skilled manpower, some hospitals are unable to operate equipment for ICU and HDU services.

Bheri Hospital, Rapti Academy of Health Science and Khajura Cancer Hospital are under the federal government. The federal government allocates around Rs1 billion to them annually. But the people are forced to visit private health institutions as they do not get good services at public hospitals, which reel under shortages of human resources and equipment.

"Due to the lack of manpower, hospitals have to rely on helpers and junior health workers," said Munshi Prasad Majhi, the health unit chief in Sammarimai Rural Municipality, Rupandehi. "Even though the scope of healthcare has widened in the hospital, we have not been able to provide the services due to lack of manpower."

Lately, the problem of non-communicable diseases is increasing in the

province. The Lumbini provincial government has been providing Rs200,000 per person for heart valve replacement, kidney transplant and cancer treatment and Rs50,000 per person per year for asthma and bronchitis patients.

From the financial year 2020-21, hundreds of patients have received financial support from the government, including 1,473 patients with asthma and bronchitis and 278 people with cancer, heart and kidney diseases.

Provincial Health Minister Indrajit Tharu said that the provincial government prioritised improving physical infrastructures and upgrading the hospitals. "But we have not achieved our goal as expected due to the shortage of required human resources," he added.

According to the data of the provincial health directorate, out of the 12 districts of the province, except Rukum (East), 11 districts have operated maternity services with surgery. There are 91 percent of institutional deliveries and 87 percent of deliveries by skilled manpower. However, the infant mortality rate in Lumbini is higher than the number of the whole country.

Neonatal mortality rate is 30 per thousand live births, infant mortality rate is 42 per thousand and 45 people under five years of age die per thousand.

Parties, candidates openly violate election code of conduct

>> Continued from page 1

The code of conduct has been in force since September 28.

When asked about the ongoing disregard for the codes, Election Commission officials said the campaigning period was shortened to 17 days as suggested by political parties, which asked the commission to find ways to reduce election spending.

But observers and several politicians slammed the code as impractical after it turned out that the parties and candidates needed to wait for almost three weeks since their candidacies were confirmed by the commission. The commission had published the final list of first-past-the-post [FPTP] candidates on October 12.

On October 19, the Election Commission issued a seven-point directive for the political parties and candidates contesting the polls to abide by the code of conduct, in vain.

The ruling coalition of Nepali Congress, CPN (Maoist Centre), CPN (Unified Socialist) and Rastriya Janamochra organised their latest election rally in Kathmandu on Monday after concluding similar rallies in Pokhara, Janakpur, Biratnagar, Surkhet, Dhangadhi and Butwal. The ruling coalition started holding rallies on October 21. "The parties had earlier informed us that they would make their rallies as modest as possible, but that has not been happening," said Aryal, assistant spokesperson of the commission, adding, "I don't know how the commission will deal with these violations."

Bhaktapur's pot makers fear for their livelihoods

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"Earlier this kiln used to be filled only with palas, but now, there are very few to be baked. Previously, a large number of people would flock to buy them before Tihar, but not so these days," lamented her husband Ram Prajapati.

The Prajapatis come from a long line of clay artisans who specialise in making earthenware, but many have left the profession due to shortage of clay and a decrease in the demand of palas. At the Pottery Square, there are some 150 Prajapati households, but hardly 40 people are now pursuing their traditional business.

Only a few in the new generation are in the trade. They too mostly cater to foreign tourists, demonstrating the art of making earthen pots on a wheel. They charge Rs150 to teach how to make a cup or any other earthenware.

"We stopped making palas this year, but we are making piggy banks, ceramic cups and other decorative materials from clay," said Sitaram Prajapati, 42, who owns a ceramic shop in Pottery Square.

Old-timers recall how the open space around the Pottery Square would be filled with palas ahead of Tihar festival. But now, the area looks deserted. Close to it, a few Prajapati families are drying paddy in the sun as their ducks roam the open space.

"Usually, people who sell goods on the footpaths would order palas prior to Tihar," Sitaram said. "But no one ordered this time as the Kathmandu Metropolitan City has prohibited them from selling goods on the



The Prajapatis come from a long line of artisans who specialise in making earthenware.

POST PHOTO: BEEJU MAHARJAN

footpaths."

Maina and Sitaram, who have been in this business from their childhood, said their families would sell up to 400,000 pieces of palas during earlier Tihars, but now, it's hard to sell even 20,000 pieces. None of their children are into the business.

"About 25 years ago, we used to sell a dozen palas for Rs15, now it is sold for Rs46 a dozen," Maina said. "There is hardly any profit because the clay is expensive and hard to find." She said the areas where they used to collect clay for making the earthen pots are now covered by houses and

other structures.

Now it costs Rs 7,000 to bring mud in a mini-truck, but there is a shortage of black clay. Places like Harisaddhi in Lalitpur where the soil is found is already gentrified, covered as it is with concrete buildings.

Maina said easy availability of inexpensive Indian and Chinese electric lamps in the market is making people lose interest in buying locally made palas.

"Those who earlier used to order 300 palas now order only around half a dozen. They only take it to perform rituals, and even re-use them," said

Laxmi.

Upendra Suwal, the ward chair of Bhaktapur Municipality-4, said brick kilns inside Kathmandu Valley have made black clay, a key ingredient in clay-pot making, scarce.

"The centuries-old pottery-making tradition of Bhaktapur is under threat," Suwal said.

Although a group of Prajapati families have already submitted a memorandum to the Bhaktapur Municipality to preserve their occupation, they are yet to get a response, according to Krishna Sundar Prajapati, a local who is also an elected representative of ward-4 of the municipality. "The main problem is soil," Krishna said. "Because the lands are being plotted to be sold off, we need to pay extra money to contractors to buy soil. It used to be free just a decade ago."

Krishna further said the Prajapati community in the Pottery Square have asked the Bhaktapur Municipality to give them a place from where they can source soil.

When the Post contacted Krishna Giri, chief administrative officer at Bhaktapur Municipality, to inquire about the declining profession of traditional pot makers, he said they are yet to decide on the issue.

"Our mayor [Sunil Prajapati] is also from the Prajapati community and there have been talks," Giri said.

Giri, however, admitted that it would be tough to address the issue.

"The municipality can't force the landowners to give pot makers soil," he said. "For this, we should first find appropriate land."

Omicron's highly infectious new sub-variant XBB confirmed in Nepal

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, OCT 24

Nepal on Sunday confirmed the infection of Omicron's new sub-variant XBB.

The XBB, a recombinant lineage between two Omicron sublineages BJ.1 and BA.2.75, has been taken as a fast-spreading variant. The subvariant caused a spike in coronavirus cases in Singapore recently and has also been reported in India.

According to the Ministry of Health and Population, whole-genome sequencing carried out on swab samples of coronavirus-infected persons collected between August 6 to September 30 confirmed the infection of the new sub-variant.

The subvariant caused a spike in cases in Singapore recently and is also reported in India.

Whole-genome sequencing is a comprehensive method of analysing the entire DNA sequence of an organism's genes. Researchers say that whole-genome sequencing of coronavirus could be instrumental in tracking the severity and properties of the virus.

Concerns have also grown in Nepal of late, as another new sub-variant of Omicron BF.7, dubbed ultra-infectious, has been detected in India.

Nepal has reported almost all variants and sub-variant of Covid-19 seen across the globe.

So far, 12,018 deaths have been reported from Covid-19 in the country, according to the official count. On Sunday, 41 people tested positive for the virus—39 in 445 polymerase chain reaction tests and two in 805 antigen tests.

The Health Ministry said that 22,324,933 people or 76.5 percent of the total population have been fully vaccinated. The number of people taking booster shots stands at 7,972,791 as of Monday.



People prepare to release paper lanterns from a hilltop in Ichangu, Kathmandu on Sunday. Tihar, also known as Dipawali, is a festival of lights.

POST PHOTO: SANJOG MANANDHAR

Dogs worshipped on second day of Tihar



POST PHOTO: ELITE JOSHI

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, OCT 24

Nepalis on Monday marked Kukur Tihar, the second day of the ongoing Tihar festival, by worshipping dogs, considered faithful companions to humans since ancient times. According to Hindu mythology, dogs are often regarded as the symbol of loyalty and trust. On Kukur Tihar, people worship the canines with vermilion powder, garlands and offer them delicious food.

Laxmi Puja, which usually falls on the third day of Tihar, was also simultaneously observed on Monday this year per the lunar calendar. The five-day Tihar festival concludes with Bhaitika, which falls on Thursday.

Dengue spread to continue for next two weeks

Health Ministry asks local units to continue search-and-destroy drives and the public to keep their houses and surroundings clean during Tihar.

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, OCT 24

Although new cases of dengue infection have gone down following a decline in temperatures of late, the Ministry of Health and Population said that the risk of infection continues to persist and will do so for the next several days.

With the onset of post-monsoon, which is considered a high transmission period for the dengue virus, officials asked all agencies concerned and the general public to follow proper safety measures.

"We think that infection of dengue virus could continue for the next two weeks," said Dr Roshan Pokhrel, secretary at the Ministry of Health and Population. "As preventive measures have not been very effective, people should also try to avoid infection."

Dengue is a mosquito-borne disease transmitted by female *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes. The same vector also transmits chikungunya, yellow fever, and Zika viruses, according to the World Health Organisation.

Post-monsoon is considered a high transmission season for dengue but Nepal has witnessed outbreaks of the deadly disease since the beginning of the year and in the pre-monsoon and monsoon seasons as well.

This year's monsoon ended on October 16.

At least 52 have died and 43,685 people have tested positive for the dengue virus so far this year—a single-year record. Experts say reported cases of dengue could be just the tip of the iceberg, as around 90 percent of the infected people are asymptomatic. Many people infected with dengue

have not been seeking hospital care, which is also the reason for the decline in reported cases, doctors say.

Those closely tracking the cases suspect many more people could have succumbed to the disease as not all deaths are reported. Officials at the Health Ministry concede as much.

Despite the deaths of dozens of people and thousands getting infected, no proper measure has been taken to contain the spread of the virus.

The Epidemiology and Disease Control Division had recommended that the Health Ministry declare a dengue epidemic in the country, but ministry officials refused, arguing infections would naturally decline with a dip in temperatures.

The division had also recommended spraying insecticides and carrying out search-and-destroy drives, among

other measures, to contain the contagion. But except for counting the number of deceased and infected people, nothing substantial was done, public health experts said. This led to an unchecked spread of the disease across the country.

Though the federal government asked local units to carry out fogging in their areas, there was no monitoring to check for local units' compliance with the directive. Dengue virus is killed by fogging; the spraying needs to continue until the risk goes away.

But many local units had expressed their inability to carry out mosquito search-and-destroy drives citing a lack of funds for the task.

Meanwhile, the Epidemiology and Disease Control on Sunday met representatives of local units and urged officials to continue the search-and-

destroy drive during Tihar.

"We have also asked local units to prepare a plan to carry out regular search-and-destroy drives," said Dr Chuman Lal Das, director at the division.

The division said that *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes are responsible for the ongoing spread of the dengue virus. Likewise, serotypes 1 and 3 of the dengue virus have been spreading at present.

According to Das, serotyping was done on 12 blood samples of infected people at BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences, and of them, seven samples were found responsible for serotype 1 and five for serotype 3.

Officials ask the public to keep their houses and surroundings clean as *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes live both indoors and outdoors while *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes live outdoors.

काठिपुर

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EDITORIAL

Ditch the hammer, Balen

The goal is to balance the interests of those involved in informal trade with pedestrian comfort.

The Kathmandu Metropolitan City has been aggressively pursuing a drive to remove roadside businesses and street vendors. Managing road traffic and walkways in a city that packs in over a million people is definitely a daunting task, and it is upon the municipality to make the city livable and navigable. This is why the clean-up initiatives of the new mayor of Kathmandu city Balendra Shah were initially applauded. But some of his recent actions have also come under withering criticism. The municipality was widely criticised for the way municipal police terrorised roadside businesses. The goods of many were seized and the sellers chased away. The heart-rending photos and images of a wailing Sharmila Tamang, a roadside vendor whose cart had been seized by the city police, became emblematic of this mayoral drive. Inadvertently, many who had pinned high hopes on Shah to better manage Kathmandu now started doubting his intent. How could he be so cruel, they asked?

As Tihar kicked off, it was the turn of the flower sellers by the roadside to be chased away. Many of these sellers wait for Tihar for the whole year so that they can make enough to tide over the rest of the year. Again, there is no doubt that our walkways and footpaths should be better managed. But this must be done as a part of a well thought-out plan, not on an ad hoc basis. For instance, the municipal authorities could have given the roadside vendors some time to find alternative sites of business; the municipality itself could have arranged for such sites. Even if doing so is not always possible, it is vital that people's chosen representatives follow due process while implementing their vision. If Shah wants to make the walkways in the city more pedestrian-friendly, the first thing to do would be to consult all stakeholders, especially those who will be directly affected. That is how things are done in a democracy. It is unbecoming of democratically elected representatives to act like autocrats who feel they have carte blanche to do pretty much as they please. Yes, that is the kind of perception Shah is slowly building—in under six months into his tenure.

It is also myopic to apply a single lens to the issue of pedestrian comfort. Many people who are looking to celebrate Tihar rely on the roadside businesses to provide them garlands and other puja material at reasonable prices. There is also a kind of vibrancy to the Tihar-time roadside markets. The issue of proper management of roadside vendors is not unique to Nepal. Most sizable urban spaces are facing such problems—and only a few of them have banned roadside businesses outright. The goal is rather to balance the interests of those involved in these informal trade who make sustenance-level income with the comfort of the pedestrians. It's said that if the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail. Someone with Balan Shah's education background and public backing must be more creative than that.

Election campaigns have effectively turned into mudslinging competitions.

ACHYUT WAGLE



The Election Commission asserts that it is all prepared to hold the federal and provincial legislative elections slated for November 20. Logistics and operational strategies are essential to enable the electorate to vote for a party or individual of their choice. Beyond that, the very essence of elections in a multi-party system is the availability of parties from among whom the voters choose based on their ideological merit and future plans. The ideology is generally formed under a political metanarrative, while plans and programmes are outlined by parties to woo the voters.

The competition among the contestants is based on their ideological propositions because they reflect how they perceive the socio-economic problems and their plans to correct them. But ideology has disappeared from Nepal's political discourse, thanks to the rise of "pragmatic" politics of electoral alliances sans principles. The ruling alliance includes the self-styled anti-federalist Samyukta Jana Morcha, pro-federalist Janata Samajwadi Party (Baburam Bhattarai faction), democratic socialist Nepali Congress, ultra-left CPN (Maoist Centre) and moderate left CPN (Unified Socialist).

The opposition alliance led by the CPN-UML is made up of another faction of the Janata Samajwadi Party (headed by Upendra Yadav) and the royalist Rastriya Prajatantra Party that sees republicanism, federalism and secularism as absolutely unnecessary. The single binding element in all these alliances is nothing but a lust for power at the cost of ideals, norms or ethics.

Mockery of manifestos

Periodic elections are also about new plans for the country and promises to the voters. This typically comes in the form of election manifesto published by a political party or candidate which contains their aims, policies and plans of action. But with less than a month remaining for the elections, no major political party has come out with an election manifesto.

This shows that the political parties have taken the voters for granted by failing to inform them about their

Crude politics of elections



POST ILLUSTRATION

intentions and visions. The very concept of manifesto now appears to have become a big political mockery.

Some large parties like the Nepali Congress and the UML, claim to be drafting them. But the manifesto of a party that is fighting the election under an alliance has no or little political rationale. And drafting a common manifesto for the entire alliance is almost an impossible task because the convergence of ideas is a mirage, and there is no political honesty and accountability. Thus, the very term "manifesto" is a joke.

A total of 84 political parties out of the 116 registered with the Election Commission are contesting this parliamentary election. This indeed is an extraordinary scenario in a country with a population of only about 30 million. The mushrooming of political outfits to such an extent was made possible by the rise of "politics without principles". About half of these parties claim to be communists without any ideological basis to distinguish them from one another.

Even the larger outfits like the Maoist Centre and the UML barely

have a distinct ideological identity. Since all political players have accepted multi-party parliamentary democracy, the retention of the word "communist" in their names is a farce.

These aberrations have encouraged people to form a new party without any defined objectives or possibility of electoral success. The presence of such a large number of parties that mostly surface during the elections has added to the political mess. If the public has become increasingly disenchanted with the parties that have traditionally remained at the forefront of national politics, the newer ones have not been able to enthrone the voters either. The large number of parties in the fray seems to indicate that politics has become a profession which anyone can pursue without any qualification.

Serious ramifications

While the absence of ideological differences has enabled often warring parties to form coalitions, maintaining a separate political outfit solely for the purpose of power-bargaining has a number of serious ramifications. This

confusing concoction deprives voters of the opportunity to choose the party that matches their preferences. For example, if one wants to vote for a party that defends federalism, one will not know whom to choose because of the medley of ideologies represented in an alliance.

Such crudity in politics focused only on winning elections does not help to consolidate the political system we have adopted. A republican federal democracy can thrive only if a multitude of political ideas (not the number of parties without ideas) are allowed to come to the forefront of the national political debate. The practice of creating alliances has effectively made that impossible. The temerity of the parties going to the voters without an outline of their plans and programmes shows how little say the common people have over national affairs. There is a dictatorial motive among the parties that expect people to vote for them to let them rule, not for their plans of action. The current election campaign has effectively turned into a mudslinging competition instead of an informed, civilised debate.

State power and multilateralism in development

Newly emerging powers and consultative forums must be recognised more as partners than competitors.

HIRAMANI GHIMIRE



State power, or the capacity of a state to regulate behaviour and enforce order within its territory, is undergoing significant changes. In international relations, we are witnessing a progressive erosion of Westphalian sovereignty. This has implications for the security of a country as well as its development. For example, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) mark an era of development cooperation involving mutual accountability of independent states. Goal 16 of the SDGs is to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels".

For the first time in history, independent states have set out a shared vision of effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions. Traditionally, development cooperation has been about designing and delivering "projects" on infrastructure and other basic services. Governance and institutions were often seen as a no-go area. With their commitment to Goal 16, independent states are bringing governance, and therefore intra-state power relations, under international scrutiny.

Influence of multilateral institutions

For a very long time, the three powerful actors have dominated developed thinking. The United Nations (UN) system, international financial institutions like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and

the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The UN system has taken the lead in achieving international cooperation on development and harmonising global actions towards this. A major part of the UN's strategy was official development assistance (ODA). The 1970 ODA arrangement included a provision that required developed countries to provide at least 0.7 percent of their GDP to developing countries by 1975. Unfortunately, this target has not been met even today. In 2021, the total ODA accounted for 0.33 percent of the GDP of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Apart from finances, the UN has played a key role in broadening our understanding of "development". The UN's work on understanding and assessing human development, primarily within the framework of its flagship publication, the Human Development Report, has established benchmarks in a wide range of areas of progress and development areas.

However, the development performance of the UN system in practice has been rather weak. A number of institutional issues, including political and organisational tensions, have an impact on delivery. Let's consider the case of Nepal. According to the latest Development Cooperation Report published by the Ministry of Finance, the UN's total disbursement in Nepal was \$56 million in FY 2020-21, accounting for only 3 percent of the total aid disbursements.

International Financial Institutions (IFIs) have long been a major source of advice and influence in both development thinking and practice. Their intellectual contributions are also very important, which we saw in what is known as the "Washington Consensus". With the Washington Consensus losing its support base, thought leadership is shifting away from the IFIs. In Nepal, however, they are key actors in terms of policy influencing through financial transfer. The World Bank provided the largest volume of official development assistance (47 percent of all aid) in 2020-21. The ADB was the second largest donor, contributing to 15 percent of all ODA. What is possibly changing is that Nepali authorities are becoming more self-assertive with increas-



SHUTTERSTOCK

ing fiscal space. We see this reflected in the government's Foreign Aid Policy, 2019.

The WTO plays a referee's role when it comes to trade-distorting policies. It has perhaps the strongest mechanism for dispute settlement among all multilateral institutions. However, its influence has declined because of the progressive erosion of the effectiveness of its "court system" (now dysfunctional) and the proliferation of regional trade agreements. No wonder, then, the private sector in Nepal keeps complaining about the lack of benefits from the country's much-celebrated membership of the WTO.

New players

The international aid architecture has changed with power shifts in political and economic terms. The western world no longer has a monopoly on

ideas, strategies, and norms governing development cooperation. The Development Assistance Committee of OECD was the sole agency to develop policies and strategies for development aid. Meanwhile, other competing forums have emerged. Non-OECD donors, including China and India, are exercising their influence over aid policies. A number of BRICS forums are debating development cooperation issues. The emerging agenda of South-South cooperation will also have an impact on how global debates on development are structured and legitimised.

The rise of China as a donor is noteworthy. Actual figures on Chinese aid are not available, but some estimates suggest that Chinese aid is in the range of \$6 billion per year, accounting for a meagre 0.05 percent of Chinese Gross National Income. But China exercises a significant level of

influence among its partner countries, particularly in Africa. Unlike traditional donors of the West, China gives its partners freedom to choose how to use aid money without insisting on policy changes or governance standards. Furthermore, the focus is on infrastructure, compared to western donors' emphasis on institution-building, human development, and participatory approaches. To some observers, the Chinese approach to aid represents a challenge for western donors. The Chinese initiative to establish the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to develop infrastructure and improve connectivity in Asia has attracted wide international attention, as demonstrated by the membership of several European countries in it. As an international institution, the AIIB also focuses on accountability systems, corruption control, and social safeguards. The AIIB is, there-

fore, expected to gain international recognition for China as a "normative power" in international financial systems. The New Development Bank, also known as the "BRICS Bank", is another example of efforts from rising powers to create opportunities for development finance without having to rely on traditional donors. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which aims to emerge as a counterbalance to western powers, too, illustrates the growing dominance of China. These developments are viewed as a "silent revolution" in international debates on development cooperation.

Nepal often takes an opportunistic position in these forums. It actively participates, for example, in the development discourse dominated by western powers. At the same time, the country is also a dialogue partner in the rather conservative and geopolitically oriented Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

In addition to official development assistance (ODA), which was \$178.9 billion in 2021, global philanthropy has been playing an increasingly important role in advancing the development agenda. For example, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation alone disbursed \$6.7 billion in aid in 2021, surpassing 24 of the 29 OECD donor countries. Understandably, the foundation seeks a corresponding role in policy influencing.

The changing political and economic landscape and the emergence of new private players suggest that development cooperation requires a new delivery model. The public sector is no more the sole channel for financial flows to developing countries. This does not mean that aid flowing from the public sector is losing its relevance. It is still very important, and it can be even more effective if governments could leverage their influence to enable more active participation of other actors, including the private sector. In addition, newly emerging powers and consultative forums must be recognised to be seen more as collaborators than competitors.

Ghimire is a governance specialist and holds a PhD in Public Administration from the German University of Administrative Sciences Speyer.

BULLION	PRICE PER TOLA
 Fine Gold	Rs 94,000
 Silver	Rs 1,215

SOURCE: FENEGOSIDA

GASOLINE WATCH



SERVO 4T
ENGINE OILS
100% PERFORMANCE. EVERYTIME.

Petrol (Per Litre)
Rs 181.00/-

Diesel (Per Litre)
Rs 178.00/-

Kerosene (Per Litre)
Rs 178.00/-

LPG (Per cylinder)
Rs 1800/-

Source: Nepal Oil Corporation

BRIEFING

Philippines 2022 growth target 'very much doable', finance minister says

MANILA: Philippines Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno said on Monday the country's full-year growth target of 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent was "very much doable", and the economy can weather external headwinds. The Southeast Asian country's gross domestic product was 7.4 percent higher in the June quarter than a year earlier. Diokno said the Philippines was in a much better position to deal with external shocks, citing strong foreign exchange inflows from cash remittances of Filipinos overseas plus business process outsourcing revenues - key drivers of the economy. "The Philippines is in much better shape than most other countries... in addressing these external developments," he told a business forum. (REUTERS)

Vietnamese EV maker VinFast receives \$135 million in green funding led by ADB

HANOI: Vietnamese electric vehicle maker VinFast said on Monday it has received a \$135 million financing package led by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), part of a push by the bank to boost climate-friendly investments in the region. VinFast, the auto arm of Vietnam's largest conglomerate Vingroup JSC, said last year it planned to raise at least \$400 million via its first green loan to fund its manufacturing of electric vehicles. "The assistance comprises 7-year tenor financing, including a \$20 million loan funded by ADB, parallel loans of \$87 million facilitated by ADB as mandated lead arranger, and concessional financing of up to \$28 million," a joint statement by the two organisations said. Export Finance Australia, the Finnish Fund for Industrial Cooperation, Oesterreichische Entwicklungsbank AG, and respondents also participated in the parallel loans, the statement added. (REUTERS)

Insect infestation damages paddy crops in Palpa

Plant feeders have infested farms in Madi, Rampur, Argali and Kachal, known as the district's food basket.

MADHAV ARYAL IN PALPA & RAMESH KUMAR PAUDEL IN CHITWAN
OCT 24

Hari Maya Gautam of Rampur Municipality in Palpa is looking at a disastrous paddy harvest this year as around 80 percent of her crop has been diseased.

An insect known as hopper-plant feeders that suck plant sap from grass, shrubs or trees-has infested farms in Madi, Rampur, Argali and Kachal, known as the district's food basket.

The plants became afflicted from the flowering stage. "I asked for help from the concerned authorities but they ignored me," said Gautam.

Last year, Gautam harvested 7.2 tonnes of paddy from her fields. "This year, it looks like 80 percent of the paddy crop has been damaged."

Ambika Dotel of Rampur-5 is suffering from the same problem. Her paddy plants have turned yellow.

"The plants have dried up and turned into hay," said Dotel. "The insects have sucked the sap from the plants. The paddy crop has been a disaster this year."

The farmers obtained their paddy seeds from the municipality which distributed them at a subsidised rate. The seeds which cost Rs78 per kg were sold at a 50 percent discount.

"Cooperatives, farmers groups and individual farmers bought the seeds which were received as grant," said Ram Hari Pandeya, chief of the agriculture section at the municipality.

According to the municipality, it distributed 20 tonnes of Sabitri seeds, 4.5 tonnes of Sama Mansuli and 2 tonnes of Bahu Gudi.

The Sabitri and Sama Mansuli seeds were distributed as per the farmers' demand, but the crops of these varieties failed.

"We don't know what to do," said farmer Jyam Bahadur Rana of



POST PHOTO: MADHAV ARYAL

Hoppers have infested paddy crops on hundreds of hectares in Palpa.

Rampur-5. "I have never seen this problem in the last two decades." Rana claimed the problem occurred due to bad seeds.

Hoppers have infested paddy crops on hundreds of hectares in Palpa. Paddy farmers, who had faced irrigation and fertiliser-related issues during the transplantation, are worried about a further reduction in their harvest.

"Farmers have informed us about the outbreak of the disease," said Milan Gaire, an expert at the Agriculture Knowledge Centre. "We have urged the farmers to be aware of

the issue and use pesticides following instructions given by technicians."

Previously, the disease had hit spring paddy too. Since the hoppers jump and fly, they can infest large paddy fields. Paddy is cultivated on 8,750 hectares in Palpa.

Paddy farmer Surath Bahadur Paudel from Sundar Basti in Bharatpur, Chitwan is worried about another problem. His paddy crop has not produced kernels.

Paudel has been growing Sama Mansuli variety on his 1.15-hectare farm for the past three years, and never had any problem.

Farmers will start harvesting the paddy crop in November. Paudel has lost hope of a good harvest. "I don't think the plants will produce kernels by the time of the harvest," he said.

The grains of Sama Mansuli are slender and consumers like them, according to Paudel. "Good harvests in the past encouraged me to continue planting it."

Paudel is not the only farmer in the area with this problem. The paddy crops on the fields of farmers Chandrakanta Ghimire and Ghannath Sapkota have also failed to produce kernels. "While other varieties of

China economy grows, but Xi's new power spooks investors

Investors fear Xi Jinping will double down on ideology-driven policies at the cost of economic growth.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING, OCT 24

China's economy grew at a faster pace than forecast in the third quarter, official data showed on Monday, but investors reacted with alarm to President Xi Jinping's sweeping new powers over the ruling Communist Party.

Xi as expected secured a third term as leader at a party Congress over the weekend, but surprised observers with his complete stacking of other leadership positions with proteges and allies.

After delaying the release of economic data last week so it would not conflict with the Congress, the government announced on Monday the economy grew 3.9 percent year-on-year in the third quarter.

China had been expected to announce some of its weakest quarterly growth figures since 2020, with the world's second-biggest economy hobbled by Covid restrictions and a real estate crisis. But investors instead focused on the political developments, which raised fears Xi and his allies would continue with gruelling Covid lockdowns and other

policies that have punished the economy.

The currency of the world's second-largest economy slumped and the country's stocks nosedived in Hong Kong to their lowest level since the global financial crisis.

On Monday the onshore yuan dipped as much as 0.4 percent to 7.2552 per dollar—its weakest since January 2008—and the Hang Seng China Enterprises Index, a gauge of Chinese stocks listed in Hong Kong, plunged more than 5 percent.

That put it on track for the worst showing after any Communist Party Congress since the start of the index in 1994.

"The market is concerned that with so many Xi supporters elected, Xi's unfettered ability to enact policies that are not market friendly is now cemented," said Justin Tang, head of Asian research at United First Partners. One of the most pressing concerns is Xi's zero-Covid policy, which continues to see tens of millions of people endure rolling lockdowns that also shutter factories.

China is the last of the world's major economies to continue following the strategy.

"There is no clear sign of a significant easing of the zero-Covid strategy," Nomura's

Ting Lu said, noting that, if anything, the opposite had happened.

In a speech to close the Congress on Saturday, Xi insisted his zero-Covid policy had been a success.

Tech firms were among the worst hit in Monday's sell-off, having been hammered in recent years by Xi's crackdown on the sector that has scythed firms' profits and wiped billions off their valuations.

E-commerce giants Alibaba and JD.com tanked more than 10 percent each, while Tencent lost more than eight percent.

China is also battling an unprecedented crisis in its real estate sector—which makes up more than a quarter of the country's GDP when combined with construction.

Still, the economic data released on Monday gave some cause for optimism.

The third-quarter growth was higher than the 2.5 percent predicted by a panel of experts surveyed by AFP.

"Many economic indicators have actually recovered reasonably well from the mass lockdowns of March and April," according to analyst Thomas Gatley of Gavekal Dragonomics.

Taiwan to boost energy inventories amid China threat

Move is part of President Tsai's push to strengthen the island's 'resilience'.



A file photo shows people paying for their purchases using the light from their phone during a power outage at a shop in Taipei, Taiwan.

REUTERS
TAIPEI, OCT 24

Taiwan is working to increase energy inventories in a move to boost the island's resilience in the event of a crisis, a deputy economy minister said, as China stepped up military pressure to try to force Taiwan to accept Chinese rule. China's blockade drills around Taiwan in August after a visit to Taipei by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi have heightened concerns on the island about the prospect of an attack by its giant neighbour, which has not ruled out using force to bring democratically governed Taiwan under its control.

Tseng Wen-Sheng, one of Taiwan's deputy economy ministers, told Reuters in an interview the government is ramping up its natural gas and coal inventories, part of President Tsai Ing-wen's push to strengthen the island's "resilience" in an emergency amid growing global geopolitical and economic uncertainties.

"When it does happen, we need to be able to undertake pressure to a certain degree," Tseng said, answering questions on the prospect of a Chinese blockade or attack on trade-reliant Taiwan, which imports 98 percent of its energy.

By building new storage facilities across Taiwan, he said the ministry is planning to raise natural gas inventories to more than 20 days by 2030, up from the current level of 11 days. Tseng said coal inventories would be increased in the coming years while those for crude would continue at a level of more than 100 days. He declined to give details as making such information public "does no good to Taiwan."

China claims Taiwan as its own territory and has ramped up military and political pressure against the island over the past two years. Taipei strongly rejects Beijing's sovereignty claims and vows to defend its freedom and democracy. Taiwan authorities have been looking at Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the country's resistance in the event China ever makes good on its threat to attack the island, including studying war tactics and using satellites to communicate with the outside world.

As seas rise, Bangladesh farmers revive floating farms

REUTERS
NAZIRPUR, OCT 24

Mohammad Mostafa, a farmer in the low-lying deltas of southwestern Bangladesh, has revived his forefathers' farming practice of growing crops on floating rafts as rising seas and storm flooding threaten more and more farmland.

With prolonged waterlogging posing an increasing threat to families growing their own food, more have turned to using the rafts as secure platforms to grow vegetables and fruit including cucumbers, radishes, bitter gourds, papayas and tomatoes. Most are sold as saplings.

The rafts, woven from the stems of invasive hyacinths, are providing a lifeline for families during the increasingly extreme monsoon seasons, when dry land can be especially scarce.

The 200-year-old technique was initially adopted by farmers in the region during the flooding season, which used to last about five months each year. But nowadays the area remains underwater for eight to 10 months and more land is being flooded.

"These days, the land is under water for a longer time. This ancient technique has helped us to earn a living," said 42-year-old Mostafa, as he planted balls of seedlings on floating beds.

"My father and forefathers all used to do this. But the work is not that easy. So, at first I tried to earn as a fruit vendor but ended up in debt," said Mostafa, the sole breadwinner in his six-member family. "I tried my luck at floating farming five years ago and that made a great difference to my life."

The approach, now practised by some 6,000 subsistence farmers across the swampy southwest, may prove crucial as climate change sends sea levels higher and makes the monsoons more erratic.



Mohammad Ibrahim, 48, irrigates his floating bed, at his farm in Pirojpur district, Bangladesh.

Digbijoy Hazra, an agriculture official in the Nazirpur sub-district of Pirojpur, said that the number had risen from around 4,500 five years ago.

Floating farms now cover a total 157 hectares in Pirojpur district, with 120 hectares in Nazirpur that expanded from 80 hectares five years ago.

"It requires less space than conventional farming and does not need pesticides," Hazra told Reuters. "When we're fighting ... the impact of global warming, floating farming could be the future."

Low-lying Bangladesh is considered among the most climate-vulnerable countries, with the impact of rising waters compounded by storms, floods and erosion.

The climate impact is being compounded by natural factors, such as tectonic shifts that are causing the land beneath to sink, and upstream dams holding back silt that would replenish the eroding delta.

Between 2000 and 2019, Bangladesh was ranked seventh in a list of countries hit hardest by climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index 2021 produced by non-profit Germanwatch.

"Because it is the largest delta in the world ... a huge portion of Bangladesh's land area experiences frequent flooding, especially flash floods along with river erosion," the Asian Development Bank said in a 2021 report. Bangladesh is also frequently hit by cyclones that barrel up the Bay of

Bengal, while global warming makes rainfall patterns increasingly erratic. More than a quarter of Bangladesh's population of 165 million live in the coastal zone.

Rising sea levels and coastal erosion could cause Bangladesh to lose 17 percent of its land surface and 30 percent of its food production by 2050, according to a 2019 International Monetary Fund report.

Navigating a boat along one of the country's countless waterways, Mostafa said he is now able to feed his family "without asking for help."

The profit margins, however, have been shrinking as costs rise, he added. This year, he spent about 4,500 taka (\$43) for a boat-load of water hyacinths weighing about 1.2 tonnes to weave into new rafts for the year. Last year, the cost was just 1,000 taka.

The rafts, which take two months to make, are typically around 6 metres long and 1 metre wide, but can be several times that length, farmers said. They need to be replaced with new ones after three to four months.

Mohammad Ibrahim, another farmer in the area, said the floating beds allow him to grow more crops reliably.

"Water levels are rising. I still can remember I used to play football in the land that now goes underwater during the normal tide," the 48-year-old said as he sold gourd saplings that he grew on the floating beds on a boat.

The effort is not without cost. His wife Murshida Begum, 35, said she works more than eight hours a day making balls of seedlings that are planted on the rafts, but the hyacinths often cause itching and sores across her palms and fingers.

Kajol Begum, a 30-year-old mother of two daughters, said: "The work is so hard and painful. I can't sleep at night due to waist pain. But what else will I do when water is everywhere most of the time?"

Auction Notice

SN	Reg No	Model & Make	Year	Colour
1	7CD2	Land Rover- Jeep	2012	Black
2	7CD1	Mercedes- Benz	2012	Black

Engine Type	Condition	Reference Price
Diesel, 2179 CC	Running	NPR 39,50,000.00
Petrol, 3498 CC	Running	35,00,000.00

Sealed bids should be delivered to

The Embassy of Brazil, Kathmandu
Chundeji Marg, H-155,
Maharajjung, Kathmandu, Nepal
Phone No: 4721462/63/64
Email:- brasemb.katmandu@itamaraty.gov.br

Note:- Interested candidates can submit their bids till 4th November 2022.

WORLD

BRIEFING

Russia continues to use Iran's UAVs against Ukraine: UK
LONDON: Russia continues to use Iranian unscrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs) against targets throughout the Ukrainian territory, the British Ministry of Defence said on Monday. Russia is likely using the Iranian Shahed-136 UAVs to infiltrate Ukrainian air defences and as a substitute for Russian-manufactured long-range precision weapons that are becoming increasingly scarce, the ministry said in its update on Twitter. Ukrainian efforts to contain the UAVs have been successful, the ministry said.

Japan temporarily closes Haiti embassy as security worsens
TOKYO: Japan has temporarily closed its embassy in Haiti due to the worsening security and humanitarian situation, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said on Monday. Haiti is facing acute fuel shortages due to a blockade by a coalition of gangs that are demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, with economic activity coming to a halt and many hospitals forced to close or curtail their operations. It is unclear how soon the embassy will reopen, a ministry official said. Japan has been urging its citizens not to travel to Haiti for any reason and for nationals who already there to leave the country immediately.

US and UK warn of possible attack in Nigeria's capital
LAGOS: The United States and Britain on Sunday warned of a possible terrorist attack in Nigeria's federal capital Abuja, especially aimed at government buildings, places of worship and schools, among other targets. Nigeria is fighting an Islamist insurgency mainly in the northeast, but in July the Islamic State claimed responsibility for a raid on a prison in Abuja, which freed around 440 inmates, raising fears that insurgents were venturing from their enclaves. The US Embassy in Nigeria said "there is an elevated risk of terror attacks in Nigeria, specifically Abuja" and added that shopping malls, law enforcement facilities and international organisations were among places at risk.

8 killed in Somalia as militants attack port city hotel
MOGADISHU: Eight people were killed after militants stormed a hotel in Somalia's port city of Kismayo, an attack that started with a suicide bombing on Sunday before gunmen forcibly entered and exchanged fire with security forces. The Islamic extremist group al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the attack, saying its fighters had penetrated the Tawakal Hotel. Security forces from the southern Somali state of Jubaland later ended the siege, killing the gunmen and rescuing scores of people, state media reported. There was no official word on casualties, but a doctor at Kismayo Hospital told The Associated Press of eight dead people, four of whom were security personnel.

Thousands in new Moldova anti-government protest
CHISINAU: Several thousand protesters denouncing Moldova's pro-Western leaders marched through ex-Soviet state's capital for the sixth consecutive on Sunday and set up a new tent camp days after police cleared a similar encampment. About 7,000 demonstrators decried steep price increases, particularly for gas bought from Russia. They called for the resignation of President Maia Sandu and her government. Demonstrators converged on Chisinau's central square in four columns but police kept them well away from the parliament and the president's residence. (AGENCIES)

Sunak looks set to become next British prime minister after Johnson quits race

The multi-millionaire former hedge fund boss will be tasked with rebuilding Britain's fiscal reputation.



Britain's Conservative MP Rishi Sunak leaves his home in London, Britain on Monday.

REUTERS
 LONDON, OCT 24

Rishi Sunak looked set to become Britain's next prime minister after his rival Boris Johnson quit the race, admitting that he could no longer unite their party following one of the most turbulent periods in British political history. Sunak, the 42-year-old former finance minister, could be named leader as soon as Monday to replace Liz Truss, becoming Britain's third prime minister in less than two months. The multi-millionaire former hedge fund boss will face one of the most

daunting set of challenges, tasked with rebuilding Britain's fiscal reputation through deep spending cuts as it slides into a recession, dragged down by surging energy, food and mortgage rates. He will also preside over a party that has bounced from one crisis to the next in recent months, badly split along ideological lines, and a country that is growing increasingly angry at the conduct of its politicians. "The United Kingdom is a great country but we face a profound economic crisis," Sunak said in a statement declaring his candidacy on Sunday. First he must defeat the last candi-

date in the contest, Penny Mordaunt, who is fighting to secure the support of 100 lawmakers to get on to Monday's ballot. Mordaunt, who is leader of parliament's House of Commons, has so far received the backing of around 25 politicians. More than 150 have backed Sunak. Should she fail to hit the threshold, Sunak would become prime minister. If she makes it on to the ballot, the party's members will select the winner on Friday. "He's not taking anything for granted at all," interior minister Grant Shapps, a supporter of Sunak, told BBC television. "He's speaking to colleagues throughout this morning. And of course, we'll be hoping to attract sufficient numbers to ensure that this can be put to bed." Citi economist Benjamin Nabarro said he was sceptical that the government had the legitimacy to manage the current economic challenges. Its first task will be to present a budget, expected on October 31, to plug a black hole in the public finances. "Political machinations over the weekend point to a party beset with divisions. With party unity and legitimacy conspicuously threadbare, we expect a structural credibility gap to remain," Nabarro said. Investors have at least been given some reassurance that Johnson will not be fighting for the leadership again. The former prime minister—forced out of office by a ministerial rebellion earlier this year following a series of scandals—had raced home from a holiday in the Caribbean to see if he could enter the ballot. He said on Sunday night that while he had secured sufficient support, he

realised that he could not govern effectively "unless you have a united party in parliament". Johnson has loomed large over British politics for years. He led his party to a landslide election victory in 2019 but was forced out of Downing Street less than three years later following a string of scandals. "Boris has bottled it," the Metro newspaper said on its front page as many lawmakers questioned whether he had actually secured the backing of the necessary 100 lawmakers. By Sunday just more than 50 said publicly they would vote for Johnson. Many of Johnson's supporters had previously accused Sunak of betrayal after he quit as finance minister in the summer, triggering the rebellion that forced Johnson out. Sunak first came to national attention when, aged 39, he became finance minister under Johnson just as the Covid-19 pandemic arrived in Britain, developing a furlough scheme to support millions of people through multiple lockdowns. If chosen, the former Goldman Sachs analyst would be the United Kingdom's first prime minister of Indian origin. His family migrated to Britain in the 1960s, a period when many people from Britain's former colonies arrived to help rebuild the country after the Second World War. After graduating from Oxford University, he later went to Stanford University where he met his wife Akshata Murthy, whose father is Indian billionaire N R Narayana Murthy, founder of outsourcing giant Infosys Ltd. He also worked at Goldman Sachs as an analyst.

North and South Korea exchange warning shots near sea border

REUTERS
 SEOUL, OCT 24

North and South Korea exchanged warning shots off the west coast on Monday, accusing each other of breaching their maritime borders amid heightened military tension. The South's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said it broadcast warnings and fired warning shots to see off a North Korean merchant vessel that crossed the Northern Limit Line (NLL), the de facto sea boundary, at around 3:40 am (1840 GMT Sunday). The North's military said it fired 10 rocket artillery rounds after a South Korean navy ship violated the NLL and fired warning shots "on the pretext of tracking down an unidentified ship," according to state media. "We ordered initial countermeasures to strongly expel the enemy warship," a spokesperson for the General Staff of the North's Korean People's Army said, according to the official KCNA news agency. The JCS said it had conducted a "normal operation" over the border intrusion, and called the North's move a violation of a 2018 bilateral military pact banning "hostile acts" in the border areas. "We once again urge North Korea to immediately cease consistent provocations and accusations which harm the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula as well as the international community," the JCS said in a statement. In recent weeks, North Korea launched short-range ballistic missiles and hundreds of artillery rounds off its east and west coasts on several occasions in protest over the South's military activities.

Korean Air says jet overran runway in Philippines, no injuries reported

REUTERS
 MANILA, OCT 24

A Korean Air Lines Co Ltd jet with 173 people on board overshot the runway at Cebu International Airport in the Philippines late on Sunday, the airline said, adding that there were no injuries and all passengers had evacuated safely. The Airbus SE A330 widebody flying from Seoul to Cebu had tried twice to land in poor weather before it overran the runway on the third attempt at 23:07 (1507 GMT), Korean Air said in a statement on Monday. "Passengers have been escorted to three local hotels and an alternative flight is being arranged," the airline said of flight KE361. "We are currently identifying the cause of the incident." Video from the scene verified by Reuters showed widespread damage to the plane. The nose landing gear appeared to have collapsed. Korean Air President Keehong Woo issued an apology on the airline's website, saying a thorough investigation would be carried out by Philippine and South Korean authorities to determine the cause. "We remain committed to standing behind our promise of safe operations and will do our very best to institute measures to prevent its recurrence," Woo said. The A330-300 jet involved in the accident was delivered new to Korean Air in 1998, according to flight tracking website FlightRadar24, which said that other flights to Cebu had diverted to other airports or returned to their origin.



Response crews gather around a crashed Korean Air Airbus A330 widebody in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu, Philippines on Monday.

Ukraine urges global ban of Russia's RT over presenter's call to drown children

Russian state television, heavily controlled by the Kremlin, has been a vocal cheerleader of Russia's invasion.

REUTERS
 KYIV, OCT 24

Ukraine branded the Russian state-controlled broadcaster RT as an inciter of genocide on Sunday after a presenter said Ukrainian children who saw Russians as occupiers under the Soviet Union should have been drowned. Within hours, Margarita Simonyan, the channel's editor-in-chief, said she had suspended the presenter, Anton Krasovsky, because of his "disgusting" comments, adding that no one at RT shared his views. In his show broadcast last week, Krasovsky said children who criticised Russia should have been "thrown straight into a river with a strong current". Krasovsky is a pro-war commentator on Russian television who has been sanctioned by the European Union. He was responding to an account by Russian science fiction author Sergei Lukyanenko about how, when he first visited Ukraine in the 1980s, children told him they would live better lives were it not for Moscow occupying their country. "They should have been drowned in the Tysyna [river]," Krasovsky said in reply. "Just drown those children, drown them." Alternatively, he said, they could be shoved into huts and burned.

In a short segment of the interview on social media, Krasovsky also laughed at reports that Russian soldiers had raped elderly Ukrainian women during the invasion. "Governments which have still not banned RT must watch this excerpt," Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said on Twitter, linking to a clip of the interview.

The Kremlin denies its forces have committed war crimes in Ukraine.

"Aggressive genocide incitement [we will put this person on trial for it], which has nothing to do with freedom of speech. Ban RT worldwide," Kuleba added. Russian state television, heavily controlled by the Kremlin, has been a vocal cheerleader of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Presenters have routinely dismissed reports of Russian war crimes and many have used airtime to call on President Vladimir Putin to take an even more aggressive approach to the invasion. The Kremlin denies its forces have committed war crimes in Ukraine.

One hug and one selfie at a time, Biden's mission to connect

ASSOCIATED PRESS
 WASHINGTON, OCT 24

One handshake, one hug and one selfie at a time. If President Joe Biden could greet every American this way, longtime allies say, his approval ratings would soar. Biden has never been at his best in big speeches, where his delivery can be stilted, his stories sometimes meandering. It's the end of his speech that often marks the beginning of Biden's favorite part of an event—the rope line, in the parlance of political operatives. He whirls around, scans the crowd and zeroes in on his first target for a one-on-one connection. It might be with someone like Tim Eichinger, a Milwaukee brewery owner who asked Biden a question during a TV town hall 20 months ago, and has since had a one-on-one video-conference with the president and seen Biden send a couple of letters to his grandson. It might be a small child—Biden likes to carry some cash so he can discretely slip kids a few dollars and encourage them to buy ice cream. It



A file photo shows President Joe Biden posing for photos on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington.

might be someone who stutters—they come in for special attention from the president. After Biden gave a speech on stu-

dent loans on Friday at Delaware State University, there were plentiful handshakes and photos with the students on stage. Last Tuesday, at a Democratic

National Committee event in Washington, Biden invited one audience member backstage for a private photo, autographed some of the abortion rights signs that participants had been waving and mugged in a handful of selfies. Aides say the 79-year-old has perfected his selfie arm, the products of

which are widely shared on social media. At an August event for Maryland Democratic gubernatorial candidate Wes Moore, Biden spent more than 75 minutes across three different rooms greeting people after the speechmaking had ended. He drew cheers when he grabbed hold of a high school drum

major's baton and then posed with it for a photo before the marching band. It's all part of an approach Biden has largely perfected through decades of glad-handing in his home state of Delaware, whose population is just over 1 million and was about half that when Biden was first elected to the Senate in 1972.

Biden to get updated Covid-19 vaccine, urge Americans to follow suit

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden will get his updated Covid-19 vaccine on Tuesday and urge more Americans to get the latest shot, White House spokesman Kevin Munoz said on Sunday. Only 20 million people in the United States have received an updated Covid vaccine through last week. White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said on Thursday it was not enough. "We need everyone to step up and get their updated vaccine as soon as

possible," she said. The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said last week 4.5 million Americans had received the updated vaccine over the past week, the largest weekly increase since the fall vaccination program launched and up about 40 percent from the prior week. The United States started rolling out the updated Covid shots in September, designed to take on the circulating BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron subvariants and the original version of the virus. (REUTERS)

Scaling that kind of personal politicking to the presidential level has been a challenge, first as Biden campaigned for the Oval Office in the Covid-19 pandemic that curtailed his public engagements and now that he's in the White House, where the demands on his time—and the security—are greater. The hard fact, politically, is that one-on-one warmth and empathy only go so far. They helped him forge bipartisan bonds in the Senate but from the White House, most voters, most of the time, only see the president in scripted or staged moments. Biden aides have sought out ways to show voters the president's private interactions, with behind-the-scenes videos of some of the encounters, even if they are unlikely to ever have a chance at one themselves.

Ahmed's four-wicket haul propels Bangladesh to first-ever Super 12 victory

The bowler takes two wickets with the first two balls to set the Tigers on course for a nine-run win over the Netherlands.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HOBART, OCT 24

Bangladesh won their first-ever game in a Twenty20 World Cup Super 12 Monday, with Taskin Ahmed taking 4-25 as the Netherlands imploded early and never recovered, losing by nine runs.

The Dutch, who battled through the preliminary round to reach the Super 12, held the Asian nation to 144-8 with Paul van Meekeren becoming his country's joint all-time T20 wicket-taker along the way.

But they got off to a horror start in the run chase, losing two wickets in the opening two balls to Ahmed, then slumped to 15-4 in cold conditions at Hobart to put them on the back foot.

Colin Ackermann with 62 off 48 balls played a lone hand, making his maiden T20 half-century as partners fell around him and the Netherlands were all out for 135 on the final ball.

Defeat was a heavy blow with two points desperately needed in a group that features heavyweight opponents India, Pakistan and South Africa.

But it was a relief for Bangladesh, who qualified directly for the Super 12 but have suffered from poor form since the 2021 World Cup, playing 19 T20 internationals, losing 14, before meeting the Dutch.

After being sent into bat, Bangladesh plundered 12 off Fred Klaassen's opening over and kept the pressure on as the bowlers struggled to maintain their line.

With temperatures hovering around 12 Celsius (54 Fahrenheit), the Dutch took time to warm up but when Van Meekeren switched ends he found extra pace and Soumya Sarkar (14) mistimed a pull shot to Bas De Leede.

Spinner Tim Pringle was brought on and ended fellow opener Najmul Shanto's innings on 25 in the next over as Bangladesh faltered.

The momentum swung towards the Dutch with danger man Litton Das out for nine, slapping a Van Beek ball to Tim Cooper at mid-off, before the experienced Shakib Al Hasan fell four balls later, caught in the deep off Shariz Ahmad to leave Bangladesh at 70-4 before a brief rain interruption.

They returned and van Meekeren struck again, bowling Yasir Ali with a yorker to draw level on 58 wickets with Pieter Seelaar as the Netherlands' top T20 wicket-taker, needing 22 fewer games to get there.

Afif Hossain (38) and Nurul Hasan (13) put on 44 before De Leede removed them both in the same over as their innings drew to a close.

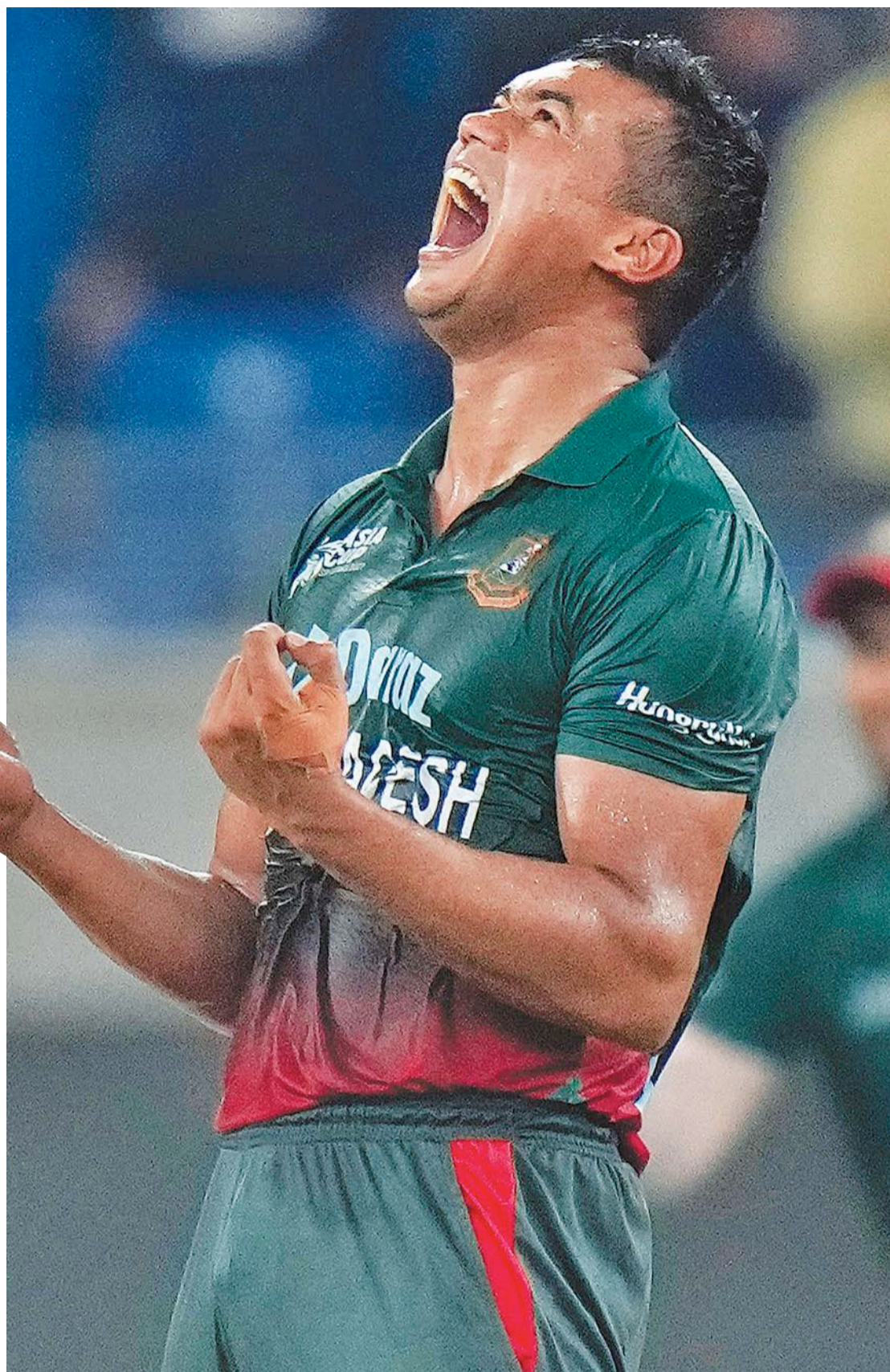
The Netherlands had the worst possible start, with Ahmed bagging two wickets in his first two balls.

Vikramjit Singh edged to Yasir Ali at slip then De Leede got a nick to wicketkeeper Hasan before Ackermann successfully fended off the hat-trick ball.

Two needless run outs within three balls followed with Max O'Dowd (8) and Tom Cooper (0) the men left stranded.

They reached 59-4 before captain Shaun Edwards was undone by the spin of Al Hasan then Pringle (1) departed to Hasan Mahmud.

The covers came on as the rain returned, but it was again a brief delay with Ackermann resuming the chase before he was out going for a boundary to be the ninth wicket to fall.



Fast bowler Taskin Ahmed took 4-25 as the Netherlands, chasing 145, were all out for 135 on the final ball in Hobart on Monday.

Newcastle are taking a beating under Howe

A 2-1 win over Tottenham has sent the Magpies into fourth.

REUTERS
LONDON, OCT 24

As transformations unfold, Newcastle United are taking a beating under Eddie Howe.

After 12 games last season, just after Howe replaced Steve Bruce, Newcastle were bottom of the table on six points with their only aim being survival in the Premier League.

Fast forward to Sunday and a deserved 2-1 win at Tottenham Hotspur, where they lost 5-1 last season, sent Newcastle into fourth place with 21 points from 12 games in which they have lost just once.

While the financial clout of a Saudi-backed takeover has helped bring quality to the squad with the likes of Keiran Trippier, Nick Pope, Sven Botman and Bruno Guimaraes coming to Tyneside, Howe's methodology cannot be underestimated.

He has made Newcastle one of the hardest nuts to crack in the Premier League with just 10 goals in their first 12 games—the best record in the division. That's not just because of better defenders, but also because of a work ethic that runs through the entire team.

Howe's biggest problem now could be managing expectations as Newcastle are inside the top four for the first time in a decade at this stage of a season.

The former Bournemouth manager remains firmly on the ground but Sunday's win at third-placed Tottenham was a big statement that Newcastle can be in contention for a top-six finish and even a Champions League spot.

Newcastle also dominated the game perfectly and comfortably maintained their lead when Harry Kane closed the gap early in the second half on Sunday after goals from Callum Wilson and Miguel Almiron before half-time.

"That was the pivotal moment in the game for me," Howe said. "The atmosphere changed and Tottenham's tail was up but I loved the team's reaction. We didn't just fall deep and go into defensive mode, we stayed in the game as an offensive threat."

With Newcastle's next two games against Aston Villa and Southampton, Howe's side have a chance to cement their place in the top four ahead of a clash with Chelsea.

Newcastle also have striker Alexander Isak and winger Allan Saint-Maximin returning from injury but Howe refuses to make big claims.

When asked if they can stay in the top four, he said: "I don't know. We can only give everything for success, we will give everything in every game."

"Everyone in the group wants the team to succeed before anyone else. The players emptied the tanks for us today."



With Newcastle's next two games against Aston Villa and Southampton, Eddie Howe's side have a chance to cement their place in the top four ahead of a clash with Chelsea.

RESULTS

Tottenham Kane 54'	1-2	Newcastle Wilson 31' Almiron 40'
Leeds Moreno 20' Summerville 90+1'	2-3	Fulham Mitrovic 26' Reid 74' William 84'

PREMIER LEAGUE TOP FOUR

Team	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
Arsenal	11	9	1	1	14	28
Man City	11	8	2	1	25	26
Tottenham	12	7	2	3	9	23
Newcastle	12	5	6	1	20	21

HOROSCOPE

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

This intense luminary event could push certain people or situations out of your life without much notice. New commitments will manifest, though you should think through decisions carefully before entering into them.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) ***

This luminary event will bring an intense rush of energy which could be exhausting. Major shifts within your love life will also be triggered. Try not to rush into any commitments and avoid being carried away by your latest crush.

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

You may feel restless or have difficulty sleeping in the early hours this morning. Pay close attention to what or who brings the most upheaval to your life, looking for solutions to them. Take a moment to examine your health.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) ***

You may feel as though you're at the centre of it all today as your pride and self-expression will be activated. Observing the people around you will give you clues on how they view you, allowing you to improve yourself.

LEO (July 23-August 22) ***

High domestic energy will fly around your space, fluctuating amongst your housemates. Try to lay low if any of your roomies seem more temperamental than usual. Take special care to nurture your own heart and soul.

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

Your words will come through more intensely than you might imagine today, making it important that you are mindful of how powerful words can be. However, this cosmic climate will motivate you to express your true feelings.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22) ***

Grounding will be the key to surviving today's uncontrollable cosmic climate. Avoid investing in large purchases right now, and try not to be reckless with your spending. Connecting with nature will make you feel more present.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21) ***

This cosmic climate will empower you, though issues may arise if you misuse your position. Avoid pandering to malicious thought patterns, especially if they involve other people. Also, remember to nurture your relationships.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21) ***

Emotions you've been shoving below the surface could boil over today, making you feel moody and exhausted. Take a break from the bustle of your normal life and try to process whatever feelings come up right now.

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

Look for ways to evolve your image and public presence today, though you'll need to be strategic in any moves you make. Avoid impulse decisions. The universe may ask you to act on your romantic entanglements.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18) ***

Don't make any impulsive moves when it comes to your professional life. Try to put your focus on where the next opportunities may arise. You may also set boundaries with yourself or others, but don't abandon your diplomacy.

PISCES (February 19-March 20) ****

Get ready for intense moments of enlightenment, elevated psychic abilities, and signs from the universe. Setting intentions around your spirituality will bring quick results, though you should remember to use discernment.

Astrology.com

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Pseudonym of H. H. Munro
- 5 Softly lit
- 10 Silly
- 14 Songbird
- 15 Cowboy's rope
- 16 Curved molding
- 17 Mellowed, as whiskey
- 18 Small pies
- 19 Sunrise
- 20 Walking the beat
- 22 Flannel items
- 24 Social stratum
- 25 Battery size
- 26 Maps for navigators
- 28 Prime-time series
- 32 Waterslides
- 33 Actor — Linden
- 34 Region of India
- 35 Green fruits
- 36 Charge it
- 37 Eiffel Tower site
- 39 Yale alumnus
- 40 Clean a fish
- 41 Pub brews
- 42 Hoedown need
- 45 Oust from power
- 46 Harvest moon
- 47 Khartoum's land

DOWN

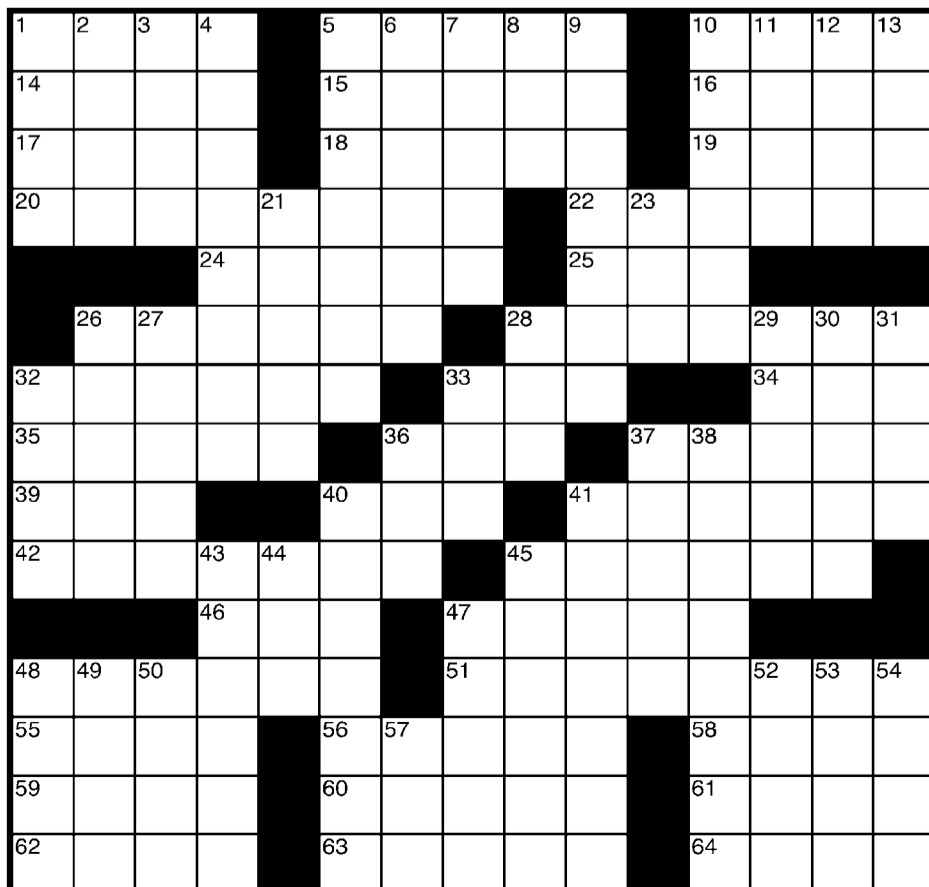
- 1 Trade
- 2 Jason's vessel
- 3 Boat's bottom
- 4 Show
- 5 Canvas users
- 6 Huge beings
- 7 Hulking
- 8 Old-time slugger Mel —
- 9 Holiday quaff
- 10 Astrologer's map
- 11 Culture dish goo
- 12 Kid in "Aliens"
- 13 Desires
- 21 Feels concern
- 23 Pillbox or bowler
- 26 Dish with beans

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED



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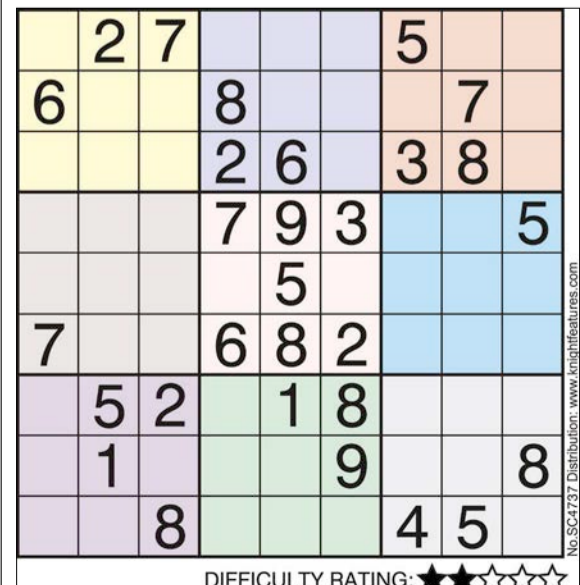
- 27 Dank
- 28 Remark
- 29 Fairy-tale creatures
- 30 Ripple pattern
- 31 Lip, slangily
- 32 Musical symbol
- 33 Cabin
- 36 Prickle (var.)
- 37 Of the Vatican
- 38 Worried, plus
- 40 Disembarks
- 41 Account books
- 43 Glazed food items (var.)
- 44 Digital watch readout
- 45 Fools, perhaps
- 47 Panasonic rival
- 48 Order around
- 49 Spice stand
- 50 Popeye's hi
- 52 Reper to
- 53 Lepton locale
- 54 Spanish for "lad" (2 wds.)
- 57 Web address



SUDOKU



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Dealing with anxiety and fear over dengue

Concerns over getting infected by dengue negatively impact our mental health.



SHUTTERSTOCK

DRISTY MOKTAN

Because of the ongoing dengue outbreak, the infection has become the hottest topic of conversation among those living in Kathmandu Valley. Thousands of people in the valley and beyond have been infected by dengue. And at this stage of the outbreak, we all know someone who got infected by dengue. The swiftness with which the outbreak has spread has already (knowingly and unknowingly) caused a lot of mental distress among people.

If you think that dengue is all about drastic weight loss, fever, headache, and reduction in platelet count, you probably have not considered the emotional and mental toll the fear of getting infected by dengue has taken on us.

As human beings, we tend to place more emphasis on maintaining our physical well-being, but we do not put the same importance on our mental health.

We have all seen or heard of the physical toll and suffering dengue patients go through, and this has made us worried about getting infected. By now, many of us have also read and heard medical experts say that symptoms worsen for those who get reinfected with dengue. All of these factors surrounding dengue have us

constantly worrying for ourselves and for our loved ones. We are more anxious than ever, and we find ourselves constantly asking questions like, "Have I carried my mosquito repellent cream?" "It is hot but should I still wear full sleeves?" "What if I get reinfected with dengue?" These unsettling questions keep playing and replaying in our minds, keeping us locked in a vicious cycle of anxiety and stress.



— MENTAL HEALTH —

Just because we are physically strong and healthy does not mean that we can handle a high level of constant stress. To be able to deal with mental anguish, we must be mentally and emotionally guarded. I hear many of my clients say how anxiety leads them to think about the worst-case scenarios, which in turn affects them so much mentally that their daily routine gets impacted. And, if not attended to, anxiety can worsen significantly.

The last few years have been particularly stressful for us Nepalis. The 2015 earthquakes devastated many parts of the country, and this was followed by a border blockade that lasted

for months and severely disrupted our normal lives. The stress and anguish we experienced in 2015 were still fresh in our minds when the Covid-19 pandemic gripped us in 2020.

Now in 2022, the dengue outbreak has many of us worried. Many have even stopped stepping outside their homes over fear of contracting dengue. While staying indoors might keep us safe from dengue to a certain extent, being anxious and remaining indoors can be detrimental to our mental health. In these stressful times, socialising with friends and families serves as a coping mechanism.

We must adopt all necessary precautions, like applying mosquito repellent creams and liquids, but continue our social life. Staying locked indoors is not the solution.

Apart from socialising, make sure you take the time to meditate and exercise. Doing so is good for both your mind and body and will aid you in staying optimistic and positive. No matter how trying these times are, try to stay positive and calm.

Last but not least, strictly follow health and safety protocols to stay safe from dengue and keep your mental well-being in mind.

Moktan is a psychosocial counsellor who specialises in psychosocial counselling. She works at Happy Minds, a mental health and well-being platform.

Posting photos of children online. What parents need to know about sharenting?

New parents considering posting about their child should keep in mind that sharing any information may expose their child to the risk of identity fraud.

CLAIRE BESSANT
NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY

Over 40 percent of UK parents put photos or videos of their children online. Showing just how prevalent online sharing now is, in June 2022 the word "sharenting" entered the Oxford English Dictionary, meaning when a parent shares news, images and videos of their children on social media.

Parents engage in sharenting for many reasons: because they're proud of their children and want to tell family and friends about their children's milestones and daily lives; to seek support from and offer advice to other parents; and to store memories. It can also be a source of income. Influencers may earn substantial amounts from brand partnerships when sharing their family lives online.

Sharenting is the habitual use of social media to share news, images, and videos of one's children.

Decisions about whether, where, and how much to share pose a dilemma for many parents. New parents may find themselves confronted by an uncomfortable paradox: they know sharenting may have implications for their children's privacy, but find social media to be an important source of support and connection to other first-time parents.

Some parents may feel they have no real choice. Increasingly parents are encouraged into sharenting by third parties. This includes family, friends, schools, community, the media, and big brands.

More research is still needed to confirm exactly how sharenting impacts upon children and their privacy. However, sharenting does appear to pose some risks. Some parents have stopped sharenting after discovering their children's photos have become the target of predators.

Researchers have also discovered that it is relatively easy for third parties to obtain photographs, names and birth dates of children through parents' Facebook and Instagram posts and to link this information with other online and offline sources to create detailed profiles. New parents considering posting a birth announcement on social media should keep in mind that sharing this information may expose their child to the risk of identity fraud. Many popular social media providers collect and share information with each other. Shared information can be collected by other companies, who monetise this information, profiling children and their families, using their interests and likes to target marketing.



SHUTTERSTOCK

Increasingly parents are encouraged into sharenting by third parties.

What to bear in mind

There are ways to make sharing on social media more secure. You can turn off geotagging on your smartphone's camera app so location data does not attach to photos. Another option is to review privacy settings and limit who can see your posts. On Instagram, for example, by default, adult accounts are set to public. Set your account to private if you want your information to be available only to your followers.

Alternatively, consider using one of the many private social networks, designed for families who don't want to share information beyond a select group of people.

Children's images and information are increasingly shared not just by parents, but also by family members, friends and schools. New parents may find it helpful to think about how they want their children to be portrayed on social media and to have conversations with friends and family about how their children's information will be shared online before their child's birth. This may avoid conflict at a later stage.

It's also worth thinking about the impact your posts might have in the future. Babies and toddlers can't tell you what they think about your posts – so as their privacy steward you need to consider how your posts might affect them.

When you share your children's information online you are creating your child's digital identity, a digital footprint which will follow your child their entire lives.

Consider whether your child will want friends or future employers to see the information you shared of them as a baby. When teenagers start to develop their own identity they may become particularly concerned about their privacy, and about how the way

they are portrayed online may affect their friendships and relationships.

Avoid information that is over-revealing or private, or that might upset or embarrass your child in the future, such as potty training, tantrums, nude or semi-clothed images, and images that children might consider make them look unattractive.

The children in the pictures

Some research has been carried out to investigate what young people think of sharenting. Some say it can be positive, if they're portrayed well and the content supports a positive online image or identity. Some children say their parents' posts make them feel happy and proud, while others like that it can help them connect with extended family. One child of a parent who blogged online about her family said it can be "pretty cool... like having a big family of people who've been watching me grow up."

Some children, however, suggest sharenting may cause embarrassment and anxiety. Many want their parents to ask for their permission before posting. Even one who did not think that sharenting had a negative impact on them said that it can mean "a different type of growing up" and is not something they would do as parents.

Once you feel your child is old enough to express a view, speak to them. Finding out what your child does and doesn't want you to post can avoid irritation, frustration, misunderstandings and conflict.

Explain who you want to share information with and why. The NSPCC's family online agreement, which prompts parents and children to agree on a strategy before posting information online, could be used to start conversations about sharenting from an early age.

— The Conversation

Salman Rushdie lives, but loses use of eye and hand

Rushdie was attacked at an August literary event in western New York.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK

Salman Rushdie's agent says the author has lost sight in one eye and the use of a hand as he recovers from an attack from a man who rushed the stage at an August literary event in western New York, according to a published report.

Literary agent Andrew Wylie told the Spanish language newspaper El Pais in an article published on Saturday that Rushdie suffered three serious wounds to his neck and 15 more wounds to his chest and torso in the attack that took away sight in an eye and left a hand incapacitated.

Hadi Matar, 24, of New Jersey, has been incarcerated after pleading not guilty to attempted murder.

Rushdie, 75, spent in hiding after Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a 1989 edict, a fatwa, calling for his death after the publication of his novel "The Satanic Verses," which some Muslims consider blasphemous. Over the past two decades, Rushdie has travelled freely. Hadi Matar, 24, of Fairview,

New Jersey, has been incarcerated after pleading not guilty to attempted murder and assault in the August 12 attack on Rushdie as he was being introduced at the Chautauqua Institution, a rurally located centre 55 miles (89 kilometres) southwest of Buffalo that is known for its summertime lecture series.

After the attack, Rushdie was treated at a Pennsylvania hospital, where he was briefly put on a ventilator to recover from what Wylie told El Pais was a "brutal attack" that cut nerves to one arm.

Wylie told the newspaper he could not say whether Rushdie remained in a hospital or discuss his whereabouts.

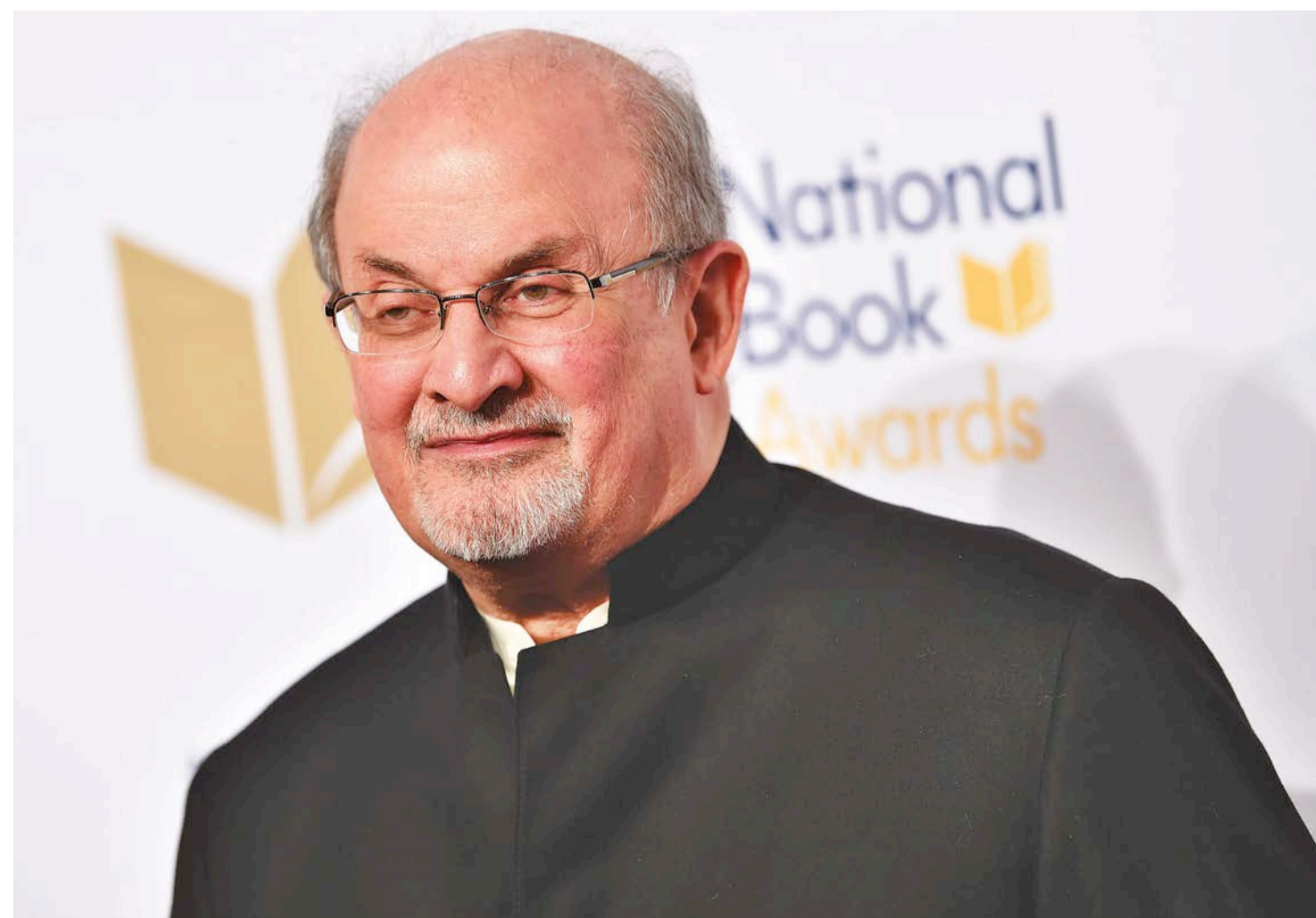
"He's going to live ... That's the important thing," Wylie said.

The attack was along the lines of what Rushdie and his agent have thought was the "principal danger ... a random person coming out of nowhere and attacking," Wylie told El Pais.

"So you can't protect against it because it's totally unexpected and illogical," he said.

Wylie told the newspaper it was like Beatles member John Lennon's murder. Lennon was shot to death by Mark David Chapman outside his Manhattan apartment building December 8, 1980, hours after the singer had signed an autograph for Chapman.

In a jailhouse interview with The New York Post, Matar said he disliked Rushdie and praised Khomeini. Iran has denied involvement in the attack.



AP/RS

Salman Rushdie at the 68th National Book Awards Ceremony and Benefit Dinner on November 15, 2017, in New York.