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TODAY

NATIONAL

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The Dhankuta district hospital has become a shell of its former self for the lack of an upgrade. The then Tri Chandra Hospital was established in 1913 in Chowk Bazar, Dhankuta, the old regional headquarters. **Pg 2**

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OPINION



India's short-term power trading markets—the day ahead and real time—provide Nepal a good outlet for its surplus power. But these markets cannot induce new capacity to be built. **Pg 4**

— BISHAL THAPA

MONEY

Two years since the government drafted E-Commerce Bill, nobody knows when it will see the light of day. The proposed law has been pushed further into the background as the nation prepares for the elections. **Pg 5**

Elon Musk promised advertisers he would keep Twitter from turning into a "free-for-all hellscape." This week, advertisers are beginning to demand details on how he plans to uphold the commitment. **Pg 5**

WORLD

Former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan is in stable condition after being shot in the foot during a political rally in Lahore. He has repeatedly told supporters he was prepared to die for the country. **Pg 6**

SPORTS

Nepal Police Club advance into the semi-finals of Prime Minister Cup One-Day Cricket following their six-wicket win over Lumbini Province, thanks to an all-round performance by Dipendra Singh Airee. **Pg 7**

Pakistan keep afloat their slim hopes of reaching the last four of the ICC Men's Twenty20 World Cup with a 33-run victory over South Africa in a dramatic rain-affected match at the Sydney Cricket Ground. **Pg 7**



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Kipa Lhamu Sherpa of Panibhitta in Chivabhanjyang, Panchthar arranges chhurpi (hard cheese) at her farm in this recent photo. The resident of the village bordering India sells the product for Rs200 a string.

POST PHOTO: PRAKASH CHANDRA TIMLSENA

Tripartite talks on equal benefits for ex-Gurkhas end inconclusively

While the parties have agreed to sit for talks again, no date has been fixed.

ANIL GIRI
KATHMANDU, NOV 3

The long-awaited tripartite talks for equal pension and benefits for retired Gurkha soldiers ended inconclusively in London on Thursday.

Gyan Chandra Acharya, Nepal's Ambassador to the United Kingdom, was leading the Nepali delegation in the talks on behalf of the government

of Nepal while Andrew Murrison, who was recently appointed as Minister for Defence People by Prime Minister of UK, Rishi Sunak, was leading the UK side in the talks, according to the leaders of the agitating Gurkha veterans.

Ambassador Acharya tabled the agenda for talks, based on recommendations jointly made by the embassy in London, the Gurkha community

and the British government, Krishna Ruchhenbung Rai, who is leading the campaign for justice and equality for Gurkha veterans, told the Post over the phone from London. "But the British side refused to touch the issue saying that the UK government has just been formed and the minister is new and he is learning."

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School transport concern resurfaces after boy's death

Guardians complain schools in the Valley are not enforcing rules to guarantee the safety of students on board.



POST FILE PHOTO

After an earlier accident, traffic police had checked school buses extensively.

ANUP OJHA
KATHMANDU, NOV 3

Safety of schoolchildren has become an everyday concern of parents in Kathmandu these days.

A 13-year-old boy got killed in a school bus-related incident in the Capital. On Wednesday, the boy was travelling to Gongabu on his way back from school when he craned his neck out of the bus and smashed his head against a tree at Lazimpat.

Amid chaotic road traffic and choked walkways, safe commute is of paramount concern. One of the ways the parents try to ensure their children's safety is using buses operated by schools which pick up and drop students at fixed points.

According to Metropolitan Police Circle Lazimpat, the seriously-injured Ayushman Dahal, a fifth grader at Lazimpat based Best's Montessori Chain of School, was rushed to Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital on Wednesday afternoon. He succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment at the hospital on Thursday.

Following the accident, the police took the bus driver, Roshan Adhikari, 30, into custody for investigation.

"Our preliminary investigation showed that both the driver and the school are responsible. We are still in consultation with the parents of the deceased child and the school management. We are struggling to settle the

issue," said an officer from the Lazimpat Police Circle who didn't want his identity disclosed.

Rajendra Prasad Bhatta, spokesperson for the Kathmandu Valley Traffic Police Office, said the incident was "dreadful and unfortunate".

"If only the school had been more concerned about students' safety, such an incident could have been avoided," said Bhatta. He declined to get into the specifics of the negligence in this case as the investigation was ongoing.

Every day, hundreds of school buses run across the Valley, picking up and dropping children door to door, but many bus operators don't follow the rules.

According to the Institutional School Criteria and Operation Directorate Act 2069 BS (2012), buses carrying students should be painted orange and each school should set the criteria to ensure safety and proper management of students while commuting.

"Unfortunately, [in this case] the school management didn't follow the rules," said Suprabhat Bhandari, chairperson of the Guardians' Association Nepal.

"If only that particular school had observed how the bus was being operated, this dreadful accident could have been avoided," said Bhandari. "As school buses carry small kids, the bus operator and assistants should be more careful in ensuring their safety."

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Parties' higher education pledges smack of hypocrisy

While they promise to attract foreigners to local varsities, Nepalis don't seem much interested in studying here and are leaving the country in record numbers.

BINOD GHIMIRE
KATHMANDU, NOV 3

The number of Nepali students opting to study abroad is getting back to pre-Covid levels. Records at the Ministry of Education show 112,528 students headed for 80 various countries acquired No Objection Certificate (NOC) in the fiscal year 2021/22.

The number is close to a fourth of the total university students in the country. Some half a million students are enrolled in 11 different universities in Nepal. Poor quality of education, delayed academic calendar and lack of jobs after studies, according to the education experts, are the reasons for the large-scale brain drain from the country.

As per the ministry's data 66,885 Nepali students acquired the NOC for Australia and 16,820 for Japan. Those getting the government's clearance to study in the United States and Canada stood at 5,883 and 5,522, respectively, while as many as 5,074 got the NOC for the United Kingdom. The numbers of the students acquiring the NOC gives a tentative figure of the numbers of students flying abroad for higher studies.

The country is headed for its second general elections after the promulgation of the 2015 constitution, and the parties are busy unveiling their election

manifestos. Education is one of crucial agenda items in their pledges to voters.

The election manifesto of the ruling Nepali Congress says it will encourage Nepali universities to enrol at least 10 percent international students. It also claims that it will connect Nepal's universities to the international network of educational institutions for collaboration and cooperation.

Binay Kusiyait, a professor at the Tribhuvan University and a researcher on education, says the parties should stop making unbelievable claims like attracting international students when Nepali students themselves do not trust our education system. "Why would international students come to Nepal when our own are unwilling to study here?" he told the Post.

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NATIONAL

■ BRIEFING

Rabi Lamichhane's Rastriya Swatantra Party proposes directly elected prime minister

KATHMANDU: The newly formed Rastriya Swatantra Party on Thursday unveiled its election manifesto for the upcoming federal and provincial polls, proposing a directly elected executive prime ministerial system as a form of governance. Unveiling the manifesto at an event in Kathmandu, the Rabi Lamichhane-led party proposed a broader electoral college for the presidential election incorporating ward chairpersons to federal lawmakers. Currently, an electoral college, including the members of the federal parliament and provincial assemblies, vote to elect a new president as per the constitutional provision. Moreover, the party has proposed electing an 'apolitical' president. Descendants of Nepali citizens who have not joined any political party or received political benefits for the past 10 years are eligible to compete in the presidential election, the party's manifesto states. The party's pledge regarding the head of the executive body is closer to the pro-monarchy Rastriya Prajatantra Party, which has also proposed a directly elected executive prime minister in its poll commitments. The Rastriya Swatantra Party has also proposed a directly-elected Chief Minister in provinces. The party has also floated a proposal in which the vice-president chairs the upper house.

Nepal promises to continue participation in UN peacekeeping operations

KATHMANDU: Nepal has reaffirmed its commitment to contributing to United Nations peacekeeping in all possible manners. Addressing the Special Political and Decolonization committee of the UN on Thursday, Amrit Kumar Rai, Nepal's permanent representative to the UN, noted that many Nepali peacekeepers have been deployed around the world while stressing the need for a holistic and integrated approach to peacekeeping. "United Nations peacekeeping has evolved into multidimensional and multi-faceted operations with complex mandates that include upholding the rule of law, protecting civilians and ensuring human rights. And yet, they are underfunded and under-resourced undertakings," Rai said. "Mandates should be specific, prioritised and achievable, and supported with adequate financial and technological resources adapted to the reality on the ground." Rai added that member states must contribute to the peacekeeping budget in full and promptly to ensure resource predictability. According to the UN, Nepal is the second largest contributor of uniformed officers to UN Peacekeeping. More than 5,700 military and police personnel from Nepal are deployed to the UN operations in Abyei, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, the Middle East, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, and Western Sahara.

Dhankuta District Hospital in a shambles

The hospital, which is one of the oldest in Province 1, has become a shell of its former self for a lack of upgrade.

**DEVENDRA BHATTARAI
& RAMESH CHANDRA ADHIKARI**
DHANKUTA, NOV 3

Tika Prasad Ghimire, a resident of Dhankuta Municipality-7, suffered a heart attack last week and was immediately rushed to the district hospital. But the hospital could not initiate his treatment and referred him to Biratnagar.

Kedar Dahal's mother is an asthma patient. The resident of Dhankuta-7 says his mother needs immediate medical intervention whenever she suffers an asthma attack. Last week he rushed his ailing mother to the district hospital after she started having breathing difficulties.

"She was in pain and said she couldn't breathe. I took her to the district hospital but the doctor on duty couldn't treat her and referred her to Biratnagar," said Dahal. "What is the point of a hospital if it cannot provide necessary services to patients."

The district hospital in Dhankuta has become a shell of its former self for a lack of upgrade. One of the oldest medical institutes in Province 1, the then Tri-chandra Hospital was established in 1913 in Chowk Bazar, Dhankuta, the old regional headquarters of the Eastern Development Region.

This hospital catered to the patients of all 16 districts of the Eastern Development Region. Surya Bahadur Thapa, who was prime minister four times, kept this hospital on priority for the important role it played in providing medical services to a large population of the region. However, today the hospital is in complete disrepair and in need of major upgradation of physical infrastructure and medical facilities.

Last year, then chief minister of Province 1, Bhim Prasad Acharya,



POST PHOTO: PRAKASH CHANDRA TIMLSENA

The Tri-chandra Hospital, which is now the District Hospital, Dhankuta was established in 1913.

announced that the 15-bed district hospital would be upgraded to 100 beds and would further be expanded into a medical college in mid-October, 2021. However, his promises did not come to fruition.

Dr Manish Shah, acting chief of the hospital, says that patients come to the hospital seeking treatment but since the hospital does not have the needed manpower, resources and infrastructure, he refers all the patients to hospitals in Biratnagar.

"It is a shame that we cannot provide the necessary treatment. People come to us hoping to get treated but we sadly have to turn them away," said Shah. "Ghimire, the heart patient who had come to the hospital last week, was in a bad condition. If he wasn't taken to Biratnagar immediately, he would have suffered more."

Dhankuta District Hospital is spread over 16 ropanis. It was estimated that at least 50 ropanis of space is needed to oper-

ate a 100-bed hospital. However, no work has been carried out in this regard.

According to the government standard, the minimum criteria to run a 100-bed hospital is to have eight specialist doctors and the necessary support staff. The hospital currently has only one medical officer employed on a contract basis. Dr Pradeep Khatriwada, the medical officer, works 24 hours a day as there are no other doctors.

"I only conduct routine checkups here. General surgery and maternity facilities have also been stopped for a lack of manpower and other facilities," said Khatriwada.

According to Khatriwada, an average of 1,300 patients visit the hospital annually.

Ventilators and ICU beds were installed in the district hospital two years ago during the Covid-19 pandemic but they were never used for a lack of skilled manpower and specialists such as anesthesiologists.

No takers as parties promise big on education

>> Continued from page 1

"The parties should also explain how they plan to realise their pledges. Sadly, the parties are happy making vague commitments, which are not backed by credible plans."

The CPN-UML is competing with the Congress in making unrealistic promises in the manifesto. The UML says, if elected to power, it will provide world class education and take educational infrastructure to international standards.

Students, however, find such claims hard to buy as the same parties have overseen a steady decline in the quality of the country's academic institutions over the past few decades. For instance, the Tribhuvan University, the country's largest and the oldest university, hasn't been able to publish the results of the examinations conducted a year and a half ago. As many as 125,000 students of the Bachelor's in Business Studies First-Year have been waiting for their results since July last year. Similarly, 64,000 students of Bachelor's in Education, and 35,000 students of Bachelor's in Arts,



who sat their examinations in July last year, are also waiting for their results.

"The parties have been making tall promises about transforming the country's education system before every election, but not much has improved," Ronisha Raut, 20, who is preparing to join a foreign university, told the Post. "I am not convinced that my prospects will improve if I pursue my higher studies here."

The students claim politicisation

has plagued the country's education system. And they are not wrong. The vice-chancellor, rector and registrar in universities are appointed based on power-sharing agreements among the political parties. Even school teachers and university lecturers are appointed based on political affiliations. These appointees are gradually given permanent appointments without having to attend competitive exams.

Education experts, meanwhile point to the absence of a mechanism to hold the parties accountable in the event of their failure to make good on the promises. "This is the reason why they have been making impossible promises all these years," said Kusiyait.

Promulgation of the Federal Education Act was not a priority of any of the parties when they were in power. However, all of them in their manifestos have promised to soon promulgate it. "The public should grill the politicians repeatedly on how they plan to implement their pledges, and what they did all these years when they were in power," said Kusiyait.

Supreme Court suspends extension of GMR deadline

Indian firm has yet to finish financial closure of Upper Karnali.

PRITHVI MAN SHRESTHA
KATHMANDU, NOV 3

The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the government's decision to extend the deadline for GMR Energy to complete the financial closure of the 900MW Upper Karnali Hydropower Project, throwing the future of the project into uncertainty.

On July 15, the Cabinet had decided to extend the deadline by two more years. Citing a number of reasons, a single bench of Justice Ishwar Prasad Khatriwada issued the interim order not to implement the government decision until the final verdict.

On September 19, 2014, the Investment Board Nepal and GMR Energy signed the Project Development Agreement (PDA) giving the Indian company two years to conclude financial closure (generating resources to develop the project). The deadline was extended further on January 8, 2017 by one year. On November 10, 2017, the Investment Board extended the deadline by another year against which a writ petition was under consideration at the Supreme Court.

"After expiry of the deadline, no decision was taken to continue the



POST FILE PHOTO

The Supreme Court.

agreement and maintain the agreement intact," the court observed. "In the context that the last deadline expired three years ago and there had been no extension since then, no logical justification can be found in extending the deadline by two years from July 15 this year."

The court has also questioned why the Cabinet had to extend the deadline for financial closure while the law authorises the Investment Board to do so. "There can be no justification for extending the deadline for financial closure until 2024 as the agreement was signed for two years in 2014," the court said. The court has attached priority to the case. The interim order has made the Upper Karnali Hydropower Project further uncertain as the GMR won't be able to work towards financial closure now.

"As per the PDA, two sides can extend the deadline anytime," said a lawyer familiar with the matter. "Even though the GMR applied for an extension, the IBN didn't take a timely decision on the deadline in the past, contributing to the current situation."

According to the lawyer, the final verdict would be subject to how the government extended the latest deadline.

School transport under scanner after child dies in accident

>> Continued from page 1

The Post's multiple attempts to contact representatives of Best's Montessori chain of schools to get a response over the incident failed.

Bhandari also complained that schools often cram kids into their buses and drivers often indulge in reckless driving while the students are still on board.

"School buses should be the safest mode of transport, but that's not the case here," Bhandari said.


Just two months ago, traffic police, while conducting a surprise check, had caught at least five school bus drivers drink-driving with students on board. Since then, the traffic police have arrested more than three dozen such school bus drivers in the Valley.

After a massive media coverage and complains from parents over the issue, in the first week of September, the traffic police conducted a campaign against drink driving and made the checking of school buses more effective in coordination with the Private and Boarding School Organisation Nepal (PABSON) and the National Private and Boarding School Association Nepal (N-PABSAN), but Wednesday's incident has raised eyebrows.

"This once again is a wake-up call for all of us," said DK Dhungana, chairperson at PABSON. "We had run an awareness programme against drink-driving with the help of traffic police. Now we will immediately hold a meeting and send a circular to all the schools to caution bus drivers and helpers."

Guardians' Association Nepal, however, doesn't believe PABSON's assurances.

"They just make promises when there is an incident. They forget it within days and don't take any action," alleged Chairman Bhandari.



Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanepani Limited (KUKL) Project Implementation Directorate (PID) Kathmandu Valley Wastewater Management Project

Invitation for Bids

Date of Publication : First Date of Publication: **4 November 2022**

Loan No. : 3000-NEP (SF), Kathmandu Valley Wastewater Management Project

Contract No. : KUKL/WW/ SN-04: Sewer Network Development Works in Gokarna

Deadline for submission of Bids: 12:00 Hrs. Nepal Standard Time (NST) of **5 December 2022**

- The Government of Nepal has received financing from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of Kathmandu Valley Wastewater Management Project (KVWMP). Part of this financing will be used for payments under the contract named above. Out of total financing of this Contract, 90% will be borne from KVWMP and 10% will be borne by Gokarneshwor Municipality. Bidding is open to eligible National bidders.
- The Project Implementation Directorate (PID), KUKL ("the Employer") invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for Sewer Network Development Work in Gokarna ("the Works"), which consist of major works as mentioned hereunder:
 - Construction of Sewer System of about 6.2 kilometers length by supplying, laying, fitting and fixing of Double Wall Corrugated Plastic Pipes and Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) Pipes;
 - Construction of RCC Manholes
- National Competitive Bidding (NCB) will be conducted in accordance with ADB's "Single-Stage, Two Envelop" procedure and is open to all bidders as described in the bidding document.
- Only eligible Bidders with the following key qualifications defined in the Bidding Document may participate in this bidding:
 - (i) Minimum average annual construction turnover of **NPR 604 million** calculated as total certified payments received for contracts in progress or completed within the last **5 (five) years**.
 - (ii) Participation as a construction contractor in at least one contract within the last **7 (Seven) years** that has been successfully or substantially completed and that is similar to the proposed works, where the value of the Bidder's participation which exceeds **NPR 295 million**; and
 - (iii) Participation as a contractor, Joint Venture partner, or Subcontractor, in supplying, laying and fixing of RCC Pipe/Double wall Corrugated (DWC) (cumulative of RCC and or DWC) for Sewers of **500 mm diameter or above for minimum 4.95 kilometer length** (cumulative) within the last **7 (Seven) years**;
- To obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents, bidders should contact:

Project Director,
Project Implementation Directorate (PID)
Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanepani Limited (KUKL)
Kathmandu Valley Wastewater Management Project (KVWMP)
Anamnagar, Kathmandu, Nepal
Postal/Zip code: 44600
Tel No: +977-1-5705986; +977-1-5705398
Email: kuklpid.org.np
Fax No: +977-1-5705057
- Bidding Documents can be purchased until before 12:00 Hrs. (NST) on 5 December 2022; From Project Implementation Directorate at the address indicated above with submission of a written application and payment of a non-refundable fee of NPR 20,000.00. The fee may be deposited in the bank Account mentioned below; or can be obtained by courier after submission of written application along with a copy of company/firm registration certificate, PAN/VAT Registration Certificate addressed to The Project Director at the address indicated above. The application must be supported by bank voucher of NPR 20,000.00 (Non-refundable) for delivery within the country deposited in the bank Account mentioned below;

Name of Bank: NIC-Asia New Road, Kathmandu, Nepal
Account Name: Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanepani Limited
Account No.: 3041091950524005
- To purchase the bidding documents, eligible Bidders should
 - a. write to address above requesting the bidding documents for KUKL/WW/ SN-04: Sewer Network Development Work in Gokarna
 - b. pay a nonrefundable fee of NPR 20,000 by depositing the amount in the bank account as stated below:

Name of Bank: NIC-Asia New Road, Kathmandu, Nepal
Account Name: Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanepani Limited
Account No.: 3041091950524005
Swift Code: NICENPKA

The Bid Document is available in the PID website (<http://www.kuklpid.org.np>) for reference.

- A pre-bid meeting shall be held at 14:00 Hrs. NST after site visit which starts at 11:00 Hrs. (NST) on **20 November 2022** at PID Office at Anamnagar, Kathmandu
- Deliver your bid:
 - to the Employer as stated above;
 - on or before 12:00 Hrs. (NST) of **5 December 2022** (Late submission of Bids shall not be accepted)
 - Together with a Bid Security of amount **NPR 8.32 million**.

Bids will be opened promptly after the deadline for bid submission in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

- If the bid submission and bid opening date happens to be a declared public holiday, the bid submission and bid opening date will be the following office opening day.

माइग्रेसन हरायो

मिति २०७८/१/१५ गते सामाजिकवादी जाबलाखेलसम्म जाँदा मेरो निम्न व्यटीरा भएको पोखरा युनिभर्सिटीको स्नातक तहको माइग्रेसन सर्टिफिकेट हराएको हुँदा पाउनु हुने महान्भावले नजिकको प्रहरी कार्यालय वा फोन नं. ९८४९६१२६२७ मा खबर गरिदिनु हुन अनुरोध गर्दछु।

Name: Sanjeev Rawal
PU Regd. No.: 2009-2-03-2122
Symbol No.: 10031073
Year: 2014
Address: Imadol, 04, Lalitpur

■ DISTRICT DIGEST

Lift drinking water scheme stalled for two years

SALYAN: The Lanti-Botechaur Lift Water Supply project, which is run by Chhatreswari Rural Municipality with special federal grant, has been stalled for two years affecting as many as 300 families. According to Oja Bahadur Budathoki, chairman of Chhatreswari, locals have to walk for hours to fetch clean drinking water from rivers and springs. The project's construction was stopped after the contractor missed the deadline. "The previous contractor did 20-25 percent of the work," Budathoki said. "There is a plan to resume construction but the government must send the entire project budget for it."

Postal highway obstructed

SARLAHI: Residents of Kaudena in Sarlahi district on Thursday obstructed transportation along the postal highway throughout the day, demanding the road be upgraded soon. The protesters blocked the road section from early morning by burning tyres. Chanting the slogan 'no road, no vote', the demonstrators warned that they would not cast votes for the candidates who do not take initiative to blacktop the highway section. The 41-km Sarlahi section of the postal highway is in poor condition while the highway has been blacktopped in the neighbouring districts of Mahottari and Rautahat.

Upper house panel suggests fewer ministries to cut costs

Calls for scrapping 10 federal ministries and reducing the number of provincial ministries to 10 percent of assembly's size.

TIKA R PRADHAN
KATHMANDU, NOV 3

A special committee of the National Assembly has directed the government to reduce the number of ministries in both the federal and provincial governments for sustainable federalism. The panel has also suggested slicing off half the existing departments under the federal government.

As per the recommendations of the parliamentary special committee formed to study the implementation and monitoring of federalism, the upper house committee has directed the government to do away with 10 of the 25 ministries in the federal government and limit the number of provincial ministries to 10 percent of the total strength of that particular assembly.

"After a thorough study and consultations with experts, authorities of all three tiers of government and civil servants, we have made 99 recommendations," said Khimlal Devkota, who heads the special parliamentary committee. "The government should implement them to ensure that federalism sustains for a long time."

Devkota, a member of the National Assembly who is also an expert on fiscal federalism, handed over the study report to the chairman of the National Assembly, Ganesh Timilsina, at a function organised in the Capital on Thursday.

The recommendation of the



Lawmaker Khimlal Devkota (R) submits the report to upper house chair Ganesh Timilsina.

National Assembly panel comes at a time when some political parties, including the right-wing Rastrriya Prajatantra Party, several independent candidates and some leaders of major parties like the CPN-UML have been proposing that the provincial level be scrapped. Their major concern was the cost of sustaining federalism.

Based on the study, a meeting of the special committee formed under the Parliamentary Sustainable Development and Good Governance Committee of the upper house has directed the government to take initiatives to cut the ministries of the federal government to 15 by mid-July next year and to halve the departments under the federal government, which are now almost defunct following the

implementation of federalism.

"Administrative costs have risen due to the increase in the number of provincial ministries and ministers," stated the panel in its set of recommendations. "The number of provincial ministries must not exceed 10 percent of the total assembly members, with five provincial ministries as the bare minimum."

There have been many studies on how many federal ministries are needed after the country adopted federalism, which allows transfer of around 60 percent of the workload of the federal government to provincial and local governments.

The Public Expenditure Review Commission led by the economist Dilli Raj Khanal submitted a report to the

government in February, 2019, suggesting that the number of federal ministries be limited to 16.

The commission formed by then KP Sharma Oli government in August, 2018 had given two reasons for slashing the number of ministries—the workload of the federal government had gone down significantly with two other tiers of government at the provincial and local levels taking many of the functions of the earlier unitary state system and, secondly, to reduce the state expenditure.

In 2014, the Administrative Reform Recommendation Committee led by Kashi Raj Dahal, former chairperson of the Administrative Court, had suggested limiting the number of federal ministries to 12 once the country embraced the federal set-up.

In the report submitted to the then Sushil Koirala government in April 2014, the Dahal-led panel had suggested having 18 ministries until the general elections after the promulgation of the new constitution and reducing the number to 12 once the local and provincial governments come into operation.

The Devkota-led parliamentary special committee has also recommended the government to cut 50 percent of the civil servants and stop promoting the civil servants who have not served for at least two years. The committee also recommended keeping the chief administrative officers of the local level to the provincial governments

concerned, besides setting budget ceilings for provincial and local governments. The committee made 99 recommendations to ensure smooth functioning of federalism, along with a time-bound chart including the authorities responsible for implementing the recommendations.

Though the parliamentary committee, after a thorough study, made the recommendations to the government with a time-bound action plan, committee members have doubted its proper implementations.

"It's a matter of trusting our political leadership," Devkota told the Post. Experts on administrative reforms are also apprehensive about implementation. Dahal, who is an expert on administrative reforms, also said his study panel had recommended that the provincial ministries must not exceed seven but none of the recommendations was implemented.

He pointed out three problems in administrative reforms after the country adopted federalism—unstable structural setup, managerial problems such as creating positions catering to individuals instead of need, lack of successor plan and behavioural problems.

"So far, not even 25 percent of the directives issued by parliamentary committees have been implemented," said Dahal. "There is no basis to believe that our politicians have the willpower to implement these directives."

Talks on ex-Gurkha benefits inconclusive

>>> Continued from page 1

So there is no agreement and the talks have ended inconclusively, Rai said, adding that while the three parties have agreed to sit for talks again, no date was fixed.

The British side said since there was a new government in London, it would need some more time to look into the issues raised by ex-Gurkhas.

In 2018, the Nepali Embassy in London, representatives of the Gurkha community and the British government prepared a tripartite report and the outline for talks in order to settle the issue permanently. Thursday's talks marked the first tripartite talks since the joint report was prepared.

Major Juddbahadur Gurung, Dhan Bahadur Gurung and Pushpa Rana Ghale represented the Gurkha veterans in the talks. A large number of ex-Gurkhas, their family members and relatives had gathered in front of the ministry when the talks were underway inside the Defense Ministry.

The Nepali side clearly tabled the agenda during the meeting, held only for one hour on Thursday, said one Gurkha veteran. "We termed it as a positive beginning, but the next talks should not be delayed for a long time."

The British government—which had earlier dismissed ex-Gurkhas' claim seeking equal pension and pay for those who had retired or had been made redundant by the British Army before 2006—has been saying that it will now only reconsider the demands on welfare and medical benefits.

This time again the British side insisted on more welfare schemes for Gurkha veterans, instead of giving increments in pension and perks equal to British nationals, added Rai.

Seeking equal pay, pension and perks as provided to the British nationals, three Gurkha veterans staged a hunger strike in August last year. After the strike, the British side agreed to sit for talks.

But the tripartite talks were delayed due to frequent political changes in the United Kingdom. The 1947 tripartite agreement between Nepal, British and Indian governments had clearly outlined equal pay, pension and perks for Nepali youths in the Indian and British armies.

The agreement had also paved the way for the distribution between India and Britain of existing Gurkha brigades serving in British India. Thus, the 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th units of Gurkha Rifles became part of the British Army, while the remaining brigades were retained by an independent India.

The tripartite pact assures that all perks, remuneration, benefits and pension schemes for Nepalis serving in the British and Indian armies will be equal to those of British and Indian nationals. However, Gurkha veterans have long alleged that Britain has pursued discriminatory policies on remuneration.

On March 20, 2017, the British government had agreed to form a panel to study the demands of retired Gurkha army personnel, including pension. The panel submitted its report to the governments of Nepal and Britain on March 22, 2018. The report suggested that both governments form a committee for dialogue between Nepal and the British governments to address the demands of the British Gurkha veterans for equal pension.

Apart from equal pension rights, the Gurkha veterans have also been demanding equal pay and perks, free healthcare and equal compensations, residency for family members of Gurkha soldiers and equal pension to the widows of Gurkha soldiers who died during service.

Although the Gurkhas who retired after 2007 are getting pension and other perks on par with their British counterparts, the problem is with regard to the more than 8,000 Gurkhas who retired before 2007. The disparity and difference is more than 300 percent, according to Gurkha Satyagraha United Struggle Committee, which is leading the campaign. As things stand, the British side has time and again communicated to the Nepali authorities that giving equal perks and pension to former Gurkha soldiers would bring a huge financial burden on the British government.

According to the Gurkha Satyagraha United Struggle Committee, more than 25,000 pensioners who retired before July 1, 2007 were deprived of equal pension. However, that number has since come down to around 8,000 as the others have died.

In March 2019, the British government had announced an increase in pension by up to 34 percent for the Brigade of Gurkha servicemen who had joined before 2007. But that decision was rejected by the Gurkha veterans, dubbing it a "piecemeal approach" not on par with the British nationals.

On Wednesday, Gurung, who is also a member of the talks team as well as the spokesperson for the Gurkha negotiators, had issued a statement saying the G2G table talks is a historic first where the two governments and Gurkha veterans' representatives will be sitting together at ministerial level to ensure that we finally resolve these genuine grievances of all Gurkhas once and for all.

"On the pension issue, the Gurkhas who had joined the British Army between January 1, 1948 and October 1, 1993 are the ones concerned. Those who joined from 1 October, 1993 are on the same terms and conditions as their counterparts in the British Army," the statement said.



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OPINION



OUR VIEW

A burning issue

The violence on the environment is a transnational problem and we need a collective resolve to tackle it.

In a recent interview with the Post, former Indian foreign secretary Shivshankar Menon assured India's neighbours that it does not export its politics. There is much that can be said either in agreement or disagreement with the veteran diplomat's statement. But there is something more lethal than politics that India is currently exporting to Nepal—the air pollution that is already leaving us with itchy eyes and aching heads. One can easily blame the paddy stubble-burning farmers of Punjab and Haryana, or even the Diwali revelers of Delhi, for the sudden decline in Kathmandu's (or much of Nepal's and north India's) air quality. Yet this is a complicated problem that spans borders, politics, economics and environment, and which as such has no easy solutions—and which is precisely why it calls for a multinational, coordinated approach.

As Dhruv Khullar's recent New Yorker reportage put it, "India has among the world's highest rates of chronic respiratory disease; on the worst days, breathing the Delhi air is equivalent to smoking two packs of cigarettes." Being a close neighbour, Kathmandu cannot but be affected by the worsening air quality in Delhi. On Thursday, Kathmandu reported an Air Quality Index (AQI) score of 137—well above the accepted level of 100—while Tulsipur in Dang recorded 169. As winter deepens, the AQI level is only going to get worse. Again, the violence on the environment is a transnational problem and we need a collective resolve to tackle it. The inability of the government next door to solve the problem on time is causing us health problems today, but what is happening in India is only half the story. There are skeletons in our closets too, for Nepal too has witnessed increased incidents of winter-time forest fires, many of which can be attributed to human negligence. In any case, if the situation persists, we might as well show on our television screens a Nepali version of the Indian anti-smoking advertisement which says, "What has happened to this city? There is ash and smoke everywhere. Why doesn't anyone say anything?"

Our own politicians have for far too long gotten away with lies, even total incognisance, on air pollution. This life-and-death issue is almost non-existent in the manifestos of political parties contesting the upcoming parliamentary polls. The pollution that is an everyday problem for common citizens is, apparently, what Russian journalist Svetlana Alexievich calls, in the context of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear plant disaster, the "missing history...the invisible imprint of our stay on earth and in time". The invisibility, obviously, is a performative act of ignorance, for it is easier to feign ignorance than recognise and act. We have contaminated our arable lands with chemical fertilisers, polluted our waters with plastic, and poisoned our air with carbon monoxide. Every country in the world is complicit in the deprecation of Planet Earth, and we are already paying the price for our actions. But when are we going to start a change for the better? When are we going to realise that individually we all fail but collectively we all triumph in this battle for our very existence?

THEIR VIEW

Choked rivers

The authorities must limit the use of plastic, especially plastic packets and polyethylene.

There is an all-out war going on against our rivers. We know it, we can see it, but we are doing hardly anything to prevent it, even though our lives and livelihoods both depend on this. One of the most persistent elements of this war is plastic pollution. Even though Bangladesh boasts about being the first country to ban the use of plastic, and the High Court granted rivers the legal status of "living entities" in early 2019, little effort has been made to walk the talk. For example, as per a recent analysis by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), 40 percent of Chattogram city's mismanaged plastic is ending up in the Karnaphuli River, while the Rupsha River in the south-west is taking in 31.7 percent of such waste. This is, sadly, pretty much the story of all our rivers connecting cities.

Industrial waste and irresponsible plastic management have turned rivers like the Buriganga, Meghna, Kirtankhola, Galachipa, Payra, and Bishkhal (among many, many others) into veritable dumping grounds. Of the 646 tonnes of plastic waste produced in Dhaka annually, 12 percent ends up in rivers. Worse still, given that Bangladesh has a deltaic landscape, its waters also have to bear the brunt of plastic waste flown in from neighbouring countries.

Besides reducing navigability and making dredging very difficult, plastic pollution of rivers is harming the environment and the lives of humans and animals (aquatic and otherwise). Those traditionally dependent on rivers are also losing their livelihoods. Aquatic creatures that end up consuming plastic waste are often killed by it too. And most concerning, as plastic waste disintegrates into microplastics and is consumed by animals, the toxic substances present in them can eventually become absorbed into animal tissue and contaminate the food chain of humans.

The level of pollution and encroachment has reached a point that many rivers across the country have become extinct or are nearing extinction. There have been worrying reports on three rivers in Rajshahi, the Old Khowai in Sylhet's Habiganj, and several others surrounding Thakurgaon in recent times. How can this be the state of a country that was once known as a Land of Rivers? What good is the status of a "living entity" if we do not stop our rivers from being choked to death?

The government's inaction towards identifying and punishing the polluters and encroachers is shocking indeed. It cannot continue any longer given the huge threat posed by tonnes of plastic waste being dumped into rivers every day. A country so dependent on its rivers, for trade, travel, and livelihoods, cannot afford to lose their functionality. The authorities must limit the use of plastic, especially plastic packets and polyethylene. And they must ensure better management of plastic waste so that it doesn't end up in our rivers.

—The Daily Star/ANN

Gen-next power sector reforms

The private sector and the NEA must team up to develop the sector through trading with India.

BISHAL THAPA

Goddess Lakshmi didn't just smile on Nepal's electricity fortunes this Tihar. The Hindu goddess of wealth rained down blessings like never before. On the day of Lakshmi Puja, October 24, the state-owned utility Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) exported 9,603,000 kilowatt hours of electricity to India, 406,000 kilowatt hours of it during peak hours, earning approximately Rs30 million in the process. The NEA began trading electricity through India's power exchange in June after obtaining approval from the Indian government. During the three-month period from mid-July to mid-October, the NEA earned approximately Rs3.7 billion in net exports. To get a scale of these earnings, picture this: The export revenues are enough to give each of its household customers a gift of Rs1,022.

The NEA's recent earnings from electricity exports have vindicated its strategy to integrate Nepal's power system firmly with India's electricity market. The voices that protested, including me that cautioned against an integrated cross-border electricity structure, have been proven wrong—at least for now. Nepal's long cherished dream of exporting electricity and earning billions is finally being realised. This is clearly a moment for NEA and the government of Nepal to soak in the applause. The debate over pursuing energy trading with India is now closed. But the risks from integrating with India's power markets haven't gone away. There is still much that must be said and much that remains to be heard.

Adjusting to a new era

Nepal is now integrated with India's power market. As the development of additional cross-border transmission lines accelerates, some of it enabled by United States assistance under Millennium Challenge Corporation, there is no doubt that Nepal's power sector is in a new era of cross-border electricity trading. There is no turning back now. Can Nepal reform fast enough to adjust and thrive in this new reality? The NEA's exports this year have come during a period of unusually high prices in India's electricity exchanges. Power prices rose sharply starting October 2021. Between June



SHUTTERSTOCK

and October 2021, for example, the average day ahead market clearing prices on the Indian Electricity Exchange increased approximately 260 percent to 300 percent.

India's power sector regulator, the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC), noted that by March 2022 the day ahead and real time markets (where the NEA trades) had twice as many buyers as sellers. Market clearing prices were repeatedly hitting the exchange's ceiling of INR20 (Rs32) per unit. In April 2022, the CERC capped the power price on the exchange at INR12 per unit and renewed that ceiling in September. That maximum limit will remain in place through the end of the year. The challenge for Nepal will begin when India's power prices return to normal levels. In the past, day ahead prices on the exchanges have ranged between INR3 and 4 per unit. Renewable energy may push these prices lower. Prices may be even lower in

long-term contracts. Will Nepal's new power plants remain competitive against those prices?

India's short-term power trading markets—the day ahead and real time—provide Nepal a good outlet for its surplus power. But these markets cannot induce new capacity to be built. Almost all new power plants in India are built on the back of firm long-term power contracts. In the entire Indian power system, only three plants are operating on a merchant basis without the guarantee of long-term power purchases, my former colleague reminded me. New hydro plants in Nepal will similarly only be built if there is certainty of firm power purchases over the long term. Only the NEA can currently provide that guarantee.

New hydro plants with a combined capacity of approximately 7,000 megawatts are stuck waiting for the NEA to sign power purchase agreements, a leading Nepali power sector profession-

al explained to me. The NEA has suspended signing new power purchase agreements for the last few years, he says. That suspension is, perhaps, for a reason. The NEA estimates that there isn't enough domestic demand to absorb all the projected supply. It doesn't want to be saddled with all that energy with nowhere to sell it. Prices and sales in India's day ahead and real time power trading exchanges are not guaranteed. Committed purchases without committed sales would place the NEA in too much risk.

How can power trading with India induce new capacity to be built in Nepal? Without access to India's long-term power purchase agreements, there is no easy answer, unfortunately. This may be where Nepal must draw from an understanding of how India's power markets evolved. India has undertaken significant power sector reforms over the last two decades. The introduction of real time trading two years ago, for example, was the result of deep structural changes that had been paralysed for a decade in struggles between different agencies and in the courts.

Reforms urgently required

India's electricity market, from which the NEA is expected to harvest Rs4 billion this year, is a product of those reforms. Further reforms are still unfolding. But there is now a base strong enough to support a robust trading platform. Nepal's approach to power trading has lacked any meaningful reforms. It has plunged the NEA into electricity trading with the hope that the necessary reforms will follow. These reforms are now urgently required. Simply put, and as the power sector professional summarised it so aptly for me, "The NEA cannot do it all by itself."

The core to India's power sector reforms was in allowing the private sector to participate. It allowed for risks to be diversified, capacity to be enhanced, and capital to be injected, thus helping the market to mature. Nepal's power sector must rapidly reform to enable the private sector to supplement, collaborate and partner with the NEA in developing its power sector through trading with India. Without reforms, Goddess Lakshmi may find less reason to smile upon us, especially if all that power trading does is to lock us into an era of Indian power imports, while the vast potential of Nepal's hydro simply flows down the rivers.



Thapa is an economist with a long experience in the energy sector.

Rise of post-acute dengue syndrome

The ability of the dengue virus to cause long-term post-acute infection sequelae is alarming.

SHER BAHADUR PUN

Following the massive 2022 dengue outbreak, post-acute dengue syndrome is becoming apparent and drawing more attention in Nepal. A few days ago, a staff member at the Sukraraj Tropical & Infectious Disease Hospital resumed work after recovering from dengue. But he was still complaining of severe fatigue, weakness, and muscle and joint pain. Very recently, a retired hospital staff, who was also infected with dengue with severe symptoms, was continuously experiencing severe

people with post-acute dengue syndrome experienced/are experiencing at least two or more symptoms. Such complaints were not noticed or reported during the first massive dengue outbreak in 2019.

There is, so far, no consensus on the most appropriate name for the post-acute sequelae of dengue fever and its time frame among scientific experts, although several studies on the persistent symptoms after recovering from the acute phase of dengue infection have been published in the past. Initially, there was no clear consensus on defining the post-acute sequelae of Covid-19. It was popularly known as "long Covid", "long-haul Covid", "chronic Covid", and "post-Covid". It was later defined as "an individual with a history of probable or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection, usually three months from the onset of Covid-19, with symptoms that last for at least two

longer follow-up study conducted in Brazil found that half of the dengue patients (54 percent) reported various symptoms that persisted for more than 14 days. In a study done in Cuba, over half (57 percent) of the individuals with a prior diagnosis of dengue fever found persistent clinical symptoms in the two years following infection/after their diagnosis. It shows that post-acute dengue syndrome is not rare and may go unnoticed due to lack of research, study or attention.

Nonetheless, heretofore, post-acute dengue syndrome has not yet been widely recognised in Nepal. In light of the current dengue outbreak in Nepal, the sudden rise in post-acute dengue syndrome can be considered as an unexpected but possibly a new emerging event.

Individuals living with post-acute dengue syndrome frequently asked questions about its duration (possible

the other 44 percent. Nevertheless, it can be as long as two years following the resolution of the acute phase infection, as shown by a Cuban study group. Nepal is witnessing a sudden surge of such syndrome for the first time in an increasing number of patients after recovery. Hence, its outcomes and time duration are yet to be known or studied.

The ability of the dengue virus to cause long-term post-acute infection sequelae is alarming. Despite this, there is still a lack of research studies or interest in understanding the reasons behind this sequelae. Several interesting findings about dengue infection and its post-acute sequelae are emerging. For example, why a significant number of patients are having post-acute dengue syndrome following the current 2022 dengue outbreak, although the virus has been circulating in the population for about 18 years (first reported in 2004) in Nepal?

Some studies found that symptomatic patients, especially those who experienced severe symptoms or went through warning signs of dengue fever, are at greater risk of having post-acute dengue syndrome. This means that hundreds of patients, who recently recovered from the disease, are expected to suffer from post-acute dengue syndrome in the coming days or months, as we observed most of the patients with severe symptoms of dengue virus, including bleeding complaints during the current 2022 dengue outbreak. Studies have found that females with dengue are at higher risk of having a post-acute dengue syndrome than their male counterparts. So far, the majority of the patients who complained of persistent symptoms after recovery from acute dengue infection were female. At present, the reasons behind these findings are not well explained and are yet to be explained.

For the first time, post-acute dengue syndrome is increasingly seen among dengue patients after recovery from the virus in Nepal. Previous studies have observed the overall prevalence rate of the syndrome was about 50-60 percent or nearly half of the dengue patients. It is, thus, reasonable to anticipate a similar prevalence rate of post-acute dengue syndrome in dengue patients in the months or even years to come in Nepal.



Pun is Chief of the Clinical Research Unit at Sukraraj Tropical & Infectious Disease Hospital.



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fatigue, asthenia and significant hair loss. In another case, a young woman, who had recovered from dengue fever a month ago, again visited the hospital with complaints of severe fatigue, joint pain (especially in the lower limbs), feeling feverish but without fever, headache, and brain fog (trouble with memory, inability to concentrate etc.).

Other notable health problems reported after recovery from dengue infection include difficulty breathing while talking, dizziness, heavy head, sleep disturbances or sleepiness and heart palpitations. It is observed that

months and cannot be explained by an alternative diagnosis". During the current 2022 dengue outbreak, most of the cases recovered eight to 10 days after symptoms first appeared. Thus, if the patient experiences symptoms (physical and/or mental) at least 10 days after the onset of the illness, the author herein refers to it as post-acute dengue syndrome.

Several countries have previously reported post-acute dengue syndrome. In Sri Lanka, nearly one-third of dengue patients were found to have symptoms of post-dengue fatigue one to two months after infection. A six-month or

end time) and potential drugs for the treatment. There are, thus far, not enough published studies that mention or explain its management and lingering time. However, symptomatic treatment or supportive care from related field specialists could help improve the symptoms. Some studies found that the post-acute sequelae of dengue infection resolved over time without any specific treatment. As to its duration, it is not well known how long it lasts for. A Brazilian study found that symptoms persisted for up to one month in 44 percent of dengue patients, while symptoms remained for up to six months in

FOREX

US Dollar	132.92
Euro	129.57
Pound Sterling	149.47
Japanese Yen (10)	8.96
Chinese Yuan	18.17
Qatari Riyal	36.50
Australian Dollar	83.51
Malaysian Ringgit	28.02
Saudi Arab Riyal	35.37

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Shares

Nepse 1,922.16 -0.53%

HIGHEST LOSERS					
WNLB	MHL	MKIC	GIBF1	RBLPO	BBC
-4.94%	-4.93%	-4.43%	-4.31%	-4.23%	-3.94%
MODERATE LOSERS					
PROFL	SMBFS	LUK	GVL	RLFL	SEF
-3.88%	-3.85%	-3.5%	-3.48%	-3.47%	-3.44%
MODERATE GAINERS					
SBCF	SLBSL	RBL	NMB50	HEIP	SLCF
1.48%	1.5%	1.8%	1.86%	1.9%	1.93%
HIGHEST GAINERS					
MKLB	NILCL	CMF2	OCB088	NBF2	UNL
1.95%	2.29%	2.68%	3.18%	5.92%	6.56%

BULLION PRICE PER TOLA

Fine Gold	Rs 93,200
Silver	Rs 1,215

SOURCE: FENEGOSIDA

GASOLINE WATCH

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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

CGNET launches FTTH, super high speed internet at 'Super Sasto Price'

KATHMANDU: One of the nation's fastest-growing and most admired Internet service providers, CGNET, has launched a new offer—FTTH-Football to the Home where customers can now enjoy higher bandwidth at a very affordable price ahead of the World Cup. Newly released packages consist of Sprinter Plus 130 Mbps at a monthly rate of just Rs799, Popular Pro 250 Mbps at just Rs1099 per month and Rockstar Max 350 Mbps at just Rs1,299 per month, according to the press release issued by the company. Consumers can choose from the 3 packages with a validity period of 1-month, 3-month and 12-month. **(PR)**

Turkey's inflation hits 24-year high of 85.5 percent

ISTANBUL: Turkish annual inflation climbed to a new 24-year high of 85.51 percent in October, official data showed on Thursday, slightly below forecast, after the central bank cut its policy rate despite surging prices. Inflation has surged since last year, when the lira slumped after the central bank began cutting its policy rate in an easing cycle long sought by President Tayyip Erdogan. In the last three months, the central bank slashed its policy rate by a total of 350 basis points to 10.5 percent. It promised another cut this month as the final move in the current easing cycle, running counter to the global monetary policy tightening trend. Month-on-month, consumer prices rose 3.54 percent, the Turkish Statistical Institute said, below 3.60 percent forecast in a Reuters poll. Annually, consumer price inflation was forecast to be 85.60 percent. The annual inflation in October was the highest since June 1998, when Turkey was working to end a decade of high inflation. **(REUTERS)**

China's yuan hovers near 15-year low after Fed decision

SHANGHAI: China's yuan hovered at a near 15-year low on Thursday, tracking broad dollar strength after US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell signalled US rates would likely rise further than expected, dashing market hopes for a change in tone. The Fed raised its benchmark funds rate by 75 basis points as widely expected, but said its battle against inflation will require borrowing costs to rise further. Prior to the market opening, the People's Bank of China set the midpoint rate at 7.2472 per dollar, 275 pips or 0.28 percent weaker than the previous fix 7.2197. **(REUTERS)**

Digital economy overtakes e-commerce legislation

The proliferation of online shopping and e-retailers has made e-commerce laws urgently necessary, insiders say.

KRISHANA PRASAIN
KATHMANDU, NOV 3

It has been nearly two years since the government prepared the draft E-Commerce Bill, but nobody knows when it will see the light of day. Even after a long wait, the proposed law has been pushed further into the background as the nation prepares for the general election and the formation of a new government.

Gobinda Bahadur Karki, joint secretary at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, said they had received the bill from the Law Ministry two months ago, and that they forwarded it to the cabinet at around the same time.

"Right after we sent it to the cabinet, Parliament was dissolved for the election. The bill needs to be passed by Parliament," Karki said. While officials take their time, the online sector has been holding its breath. The proliferation of online shopping and e-retailers in the country has made e-commerce laws urgently necessary, insiders say.

According to online traders, Nepal's internet economy will be worth a billion dollars in the next couple of years, and there is a vital need for a framework. Online orders from outside Kathmandu Valley have swelled too, they say. Buyers and sellers both have been anxiously waiting for the government to pass e-commerce laws to end confusion in the way of doing business.

Consumer rights activists complain that the lack of laws has made customers open to fraud. Buyers have received damaged products or the wrong product. They have also been cheated because of the different prices and the absence of a return and refund policy, the activists say.

E-commerce entrepreneurs, for their part, have been grumbling that



Nepal's internet economy will be worth a billion dollars in the next couple of years, and there is a vital need for a framework, online traders say.

they are facing operational hassles because there are no clear laws.

"The e-commerce market has been thriving in recent years, but it is unfortunate that laws governing it have not been passed. This has resulted in market irregularities in online business," said Bishnu Prasad Timilsina, general secretary of the Forum for Protection of Consumer Rights-Nepal.

"There is no regulation with any provision for punishment, and unscrupulous traders are taking advantage of the lack of governance," Timilsina said.

"It took many years for government officials to get the hang of e-commerce. Now that they have finally done something about it, a new group of people will be coming into government after the election; and there is no guarantee that they will pass the law," Timilsina said.

The e-commerce legislation will regulate and facilitate the trade of goods and services and intellectual property rights using electronic means, supporting the growing digital ecosystem.

Kiran Timsina, co-founder of online cake seller UG Cakes and Urban Girl,

says that without e-commerce laws, entrepreneurs are facing operational hassles and unhealthy market competition.

"For any entrepreneur who wants to step into e-commerce, it is unclear how to register the firm at first despite registering it with Office of the Company Registrar," Timsina said.

"As the number of e-retailers is growing taking undue advantage of the lack of effective governance in the sector; it has created unfair market practices," he said.

Insiders say that the number of online shopping portals is rising

Advertisers grill Elon Musk over Twitter 'free-for-all'

Some clients have already begun to pause ad spending on Twitter this week.



Musk's Twitter account on a phone is seen in front of the Twitter logo in this illustration.

REUTERS
CALIFORNIA, NOV 3

Elon Musk promised advertisers he would keep Twitter from turning into a "free-for-all hellscape." This week, advertisers are beginning to demand details on how he plans to uphold the commitment.

A media buyer at one major ad agency, who declined to be named for fear of reprisal, said the agency would meet with Musk this week to ask how the Tesla chief executive plans to clamp down on misinformation on the social media platform.

The buyer also wanted to know how Musk's pledge squared with his own actions, including one tweet over the weekend that spread a conspiracy theory about the attack against US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's husband Paul.

Other topics include Musk's plan to raise the cost of Twitter's

subscription service and serve "half as many ads," and who will serve as advertisers' point of contact after a procession of senior executives, including Twitter's ad chief, left the company since he took over.

The agency's top clients are expected to join the meeting, the media buyer said.

After tweeting in 2019 about his dislike of advertising, Musk is now under pressure to avoid alienating the advertisers who contribute more than 90 percent of its revenue. He is spending his first week as CEO in New York, with venture capitalist friends joining him in meetings to reassure companies that contribute more than \$5 billion annually to Twitter.

Jason Calacanis, an angel investor and podcast host who is assisting Musk in his first week of ownership, tweeted on Monday that Twitter had a "very productive day" of meetings with

Musk plans to cut half of Twitter jobs: Bloomberg

NEW YORK: Elon Musk plans to cut about 3,700 jobs at Twitter Inc or half of the company's workforce in a bid to cut costs, Bloomberg News reported on Wednesday, citing people familiar with the matter. Twitter's new owner will inform the staff affected on Friday, according to the report.

Bloomberg also reported that Musk intends to reverse the social media company's existing work from anywhere policy and will require employees to work from office though some exceptions could be made.

Musk, in a tweet, had denied a New York Times report that said he was planning to lay off Twitter employees before November 1 to avoid stock grants due on the day. Twitter did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment. **(REUTERS)**

advertisers and marketers.

Another media buyer who spoke with Reuters said their agency will not meet with Musk until he articulates a direction for Twitter or provides a substantive update on how the platform will serve advertisers.

Some clients have already begun to pause ad spending on Twitter this week, said the second media buyer, who declined to name the advertisers as the source was not authorised to do so.

The buyer said some clients had already pulled out of Twitter due to the months-long chaos around the deal, and some in response to concerns about child sexual abuse material on Twitter.

Hundreds protest tax hikes, crackdowns in Sri Lanka

REUTERS
COLOMBO, NOV 3

Hundreds of people marched in Sri Lanka's largest city Colombo on Wednesday protesting against higher taxes, inflation and alleged state-led repression as the country struggles to emerge from its worst financial crisis in seven decades.

The anti-government protest, jointly organised by opposition political parties, trade unions and civil society groups, was blocked by police as marchers attempted to reach a central part of the city where the president's house and other ministries are located. "People can barely eat three

meals a day and this government has done nothing to support people other than impose more and more taxes. We need solutions and we will keep fighting for them," Ceylon Teacher's Union Secretary Joseph Stalin said.

Sri Lanka has been gripped by a deep financial crisis this year caused by record-low foreign exchange reserves that has left the island of 22 million people struggling to pay for essential imports including fuel, food, cooking gas and medicine.

Widespread protests in July resulted in former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa fleeing the country and resigning after protesters stormed his office and residence.

Invitation for Bids No: SGPA(N)/BLDG/01/2022

1. Singapore Gurkha Pensioners' Association (SGPA) is a non-profit social organization registered with KTM district administration office (registration no. 325 dtd 25 Apr 92), affiliated to Social Welfare Council and is tax exempted.
2. SGPA(N) has bought a land, plot no. 327, area: 2-3-3-1 (1,138.69 sq m) at Nakhipot - 14, Lalitpur, and is constructing a building to enhance the welfare and social wellbeing of its members.
3. It invites sealed bids from eligible Nepalese bidders for the building construction.

Some key qualifications and requirements to participate in the bidding are as below:

- Minimum five years of relevant experience.
- Minimum average annual construction turnover of NPR50,000,000/- (Rupees Fifty Million only) in the last three years.
- Have constructed a concrete building of similar size and nature valued at least NPR30,000,000/- (Rupees Thirty Million Only) over the last five years.
- Eligible bidders may obtain Bidding Documents at a nominal cost at below address.
- Pre-bid meeting shall be held at the construction site on 10/11/2022 at 1400 hrs.
- Sealed bids must be submitted at below address on or before 12:00 noon, on 17/11/22.
- Bids must be valid for a period of 90 days after the bid opening date and must be accompanied by a bid security amounting to a minimum of NPR2,000,000/- (Rupees Two million only) that must be valid for 30 days beyond the bid validity period.
- The bids will be opened on 18/11/2022.
- Building construction mgmt. committee reserves the right to revise and review the tender without giving any reasons and shall contact the successful bidder only.

**Building Construction Management Committee Rep,
British Camp, Manbhawan, Lalitpur**

Emails: Devendra_Rana@spf.gov.sg, Tekbahadur_Thebe@spf.gov.sg, Tel: 01-4235262

South China at risk of winter drought, drop in hydropower

REUTERS
SINGAPORE, NOV 3

Southern China is expected to face a drought, which will reduce hydropower generation and mean more power output is needed from other sources to meet peak winter demand, a weather scientist said on Thursday.

"Most parts of China are forecast to have near- or less rainfall this winter than a normal year. But southern China could see drought or even severe drought," Shen Yanbo, chief scientist at public service centre of China Meteorological Administration, told a seminar hosted by state-backed Chongqing Gas Exchange.

China's Ministry of Emergency Management also on Tuesday said it expected a drought along the Yangtze basin in November, while central and southern China is at "extremely high risk" of bush fires.

Shen identified other regions that might experience an "extreme severe drought," including Chongqing and Guangxi, where hydropower is the most significant source of power supply.

Chongqing and neighbouring Sichuan suffered a drought and power shortage in July and August, forcing companies including Taiwan's Foxconn and battery giant CATL—to shut down or curb output.

Government of Nepal
Ministry of Water Supply
Department of Water Supply and Sewerage Management
Federal Water Supply and Sewerage Management Project
Bhaktapur

Notice for the letter of Intent

Date of Publication: November 04, 2022 (2079/07/18)

This is to notify all the bidders who submitted their bid for the contract Identification no. mentioned below that the following listed lowest evaluated substantially responsive bidder has been selected to award the contract Pursuant to Clause 27 of Public Procurement Act 2063.

S. N.	Notice Publication Detail	Contract ID	Name of Work	Lowest Evaluated Substantially Responsive Bidder	Bid Price NRs. (Including VAT and PS)
1	2079-01-28 (PPMO's e-portal and Himalyan Times Daily)	11/078-79/Works/FWSSMP-Bhaktapur	Construction of Kashikhanda Brihat Water Supply Project, Kavre	M/S Uchhakoti/Amar/Nawa Adarsha J/V, Kathmandu, Nepal	184069279.35

Project Chief

WORLD

BRIEFING

Putin calls for modernisation of Russian military weapons
MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday that the weapons used by Russia's military should be modernised.

China says US has 'no right' to interfere in Hamburg port deal
BEIJING: The U.S has "no right" to interfere in Chinese cooperation with Germany, China's foreign ministry said Thursday.

G20 host Indonesia waiting to see if Putin will attend summit
JAKARTA: G20 summit host Indonesia is waiting to see if Russian President Vladimir Putin will attend, Indonesia's foreign minister said on Thursday.

North Korea ICBM may have failed in flight, South officials say as allies extend drills

North Korea has had several failed ICBM tests this year, according to South Korean and US officials.



People watch a TV broadcasting a news report on North Korea firing a ballistic missile off its east coast, in Seoul, South Korea on Thursday.

North Korea fired multiple ballistic missiles on Thursday, including a possible failed intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) that triggered an alert for residents in parts of central and northern Japan to seek shelter.

Japanese Defence Minister Yasukazu Hamada said the government lost track of the missile over the Sea of Japan, prompting it to correct its announcement that it had flown over Japan.

North Korea has had several failed ICBM tests this year, according to South Korean and US officials. The United States condemned North Korea's ICBM launch.

Delhi's air a 'crime against humanity', spurs calls to close schools

REUTERS NEW DELHI, NOV 3

Delhi's 20 million residents were effectively breathing smoke on Thursday as the air quality index (AQI) breached the "severe" and "hazardous" categories in nearly all monitoring stations of the Indian capital.

Former Pakistan PM Imran Khan stable after 'assassination attempt'

He was campaigning for fresh elections during a political rally when he was shot.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE ISLAMABAD, NOV 3

Former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan was in stable condition after being shot in the foot Thursday at a political rally in what the country's president deemed "a heinous assassination attempt".



A file photo of Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan.

Each day during his so-called "long march" 70 year-old Khan has mounted a shipping container towed by a lorry, making speeches from the open top to crowds of thousands in cities and towns along the way.

Russian shelling damaged nuclear plant power lines, Ukraine says

Generators have enough fuel to maintain the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Plant for just 15 days.

ASSOCIATED PRESS KIV, NOV 3

Ukraine's nuclear state operator said on Thursday that Russia has shelled and damaged power lines connecting Europe's largest nuclear power plant to the Ukrainian grid.



A file photo of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in the Zaporizhzhia region, Ukraine.

Ukraine's nuclear state operator said on Thursday that Russia has shelled and damaged power lines connecting Europe's largest nuclear power plant to the Ukrainian grid.

Grief-stricken and angry parents bid goodbyes to Halloween disaster victims

REUTERS SEOUL, NOV 3

"Dad, I'm going out" were the last words Jung Hae-moon heard his daughter utter, at the end of a chat they had on the telephone on Saturday as she turned down an invitation to dinner.

Itaewon, a district of narrow streets full of bars and boutiques, to be met with chaos as distraught youngsters milled about in their Halloween costumes and rows of ambulances collected victims.



Lee Hyo-sook, 61, mother of Jung Joo-hee, 30, who was one of the victims of a crowd crush that happened during Halloween festivities, grieves next to her daughter's grave in Namyangju, South Korea on Thursday.

to terms with the disaster that ended so many young lives on what should have been an evening of fun. Of the 156 dead, 101 were female, the government said.

daughter be identified by just their family name, Lim. The man usually lives abroad and had not seen their only child for three years as Covid disrupted travel.

Celebrating veganism at The Soaltee Kathmandu

The hotel's ongoing Vegan Food Festival is its attempt to promote veganism and encourage restaurants and hotels to expand their vegan offerings.



POST PHOTOS: KESHAV THAPA

Chef de cuisine Vinay Singh (right) and chef de partie Rajaram Bidari of The Soaltee Kathmandu are the brains behind the hotel's Vegan Food Festival.

ISHA DAS
KATHMANDU

On World Vegan Day on November 1, The Soaltee Kathmandu kicked off its ten-day-long Vegan Food Festival, which the hotel hopes will help spread knowledge and awareness about veganism. The hotel is also using the festival to promote the possibilities of plant-based dishes that replicate the texture and taste of meat.

"A month ago, our hotel served as a venue partner for the Himalayan Vegan Festival. Many who took part in the festival suggested that we incorporate more vegan dishes into our menus," says Agnimitra Sharma, executive assistant manager of F&B at The Soaltee Kathmandu. "This made sense because veganism is more popular than ever. We felt the need to cater to that demographic and work towards making The Soaltee Kathmandu a go-to place for vegans for quality food. So we decided to organise our very own vegan food fes-

tival and further spread awareness on veganism."

The food menu is at the heart of any food festival, and The Soaltee Kathmandu says its team spent considerable time and resources designing the menu. Rajaram Bidari, chef de partie at The Soaltee Kathmandu, designed the festival's menu. Bidari has spent the entire-

ty of his culinary career of 15 years with the hotel.

"One of the areas we focused a lot on while designing the menu was creating vegan dishes that replicate the taste and texture of meat dishes," says Bidari. "From the types of dishes, ingredients, and preparation time to types of utensils to serve the dishes, we went through each and every detail.

We also conducted multiple tasting sessions before finalising the dishes."

The result of all that is a menu that features dishes like soya keema curry, vegan mutton curry, vegan chicken curry, eggless bhurji, and subz jalfrezi, among others.

An ingredient that repeatedly features in the festival's menu is soya.

seasoning and the precise size of chopped soya, the eggless bhurji will most likely have you not miss eggs at all.

The one ingredient that repeatedly features in the festival's dishes is soya. Bidari says that the team decided to use soya not just because of how its texture could be cooked to closely represent different types of meat but also because of its inherent protein content.

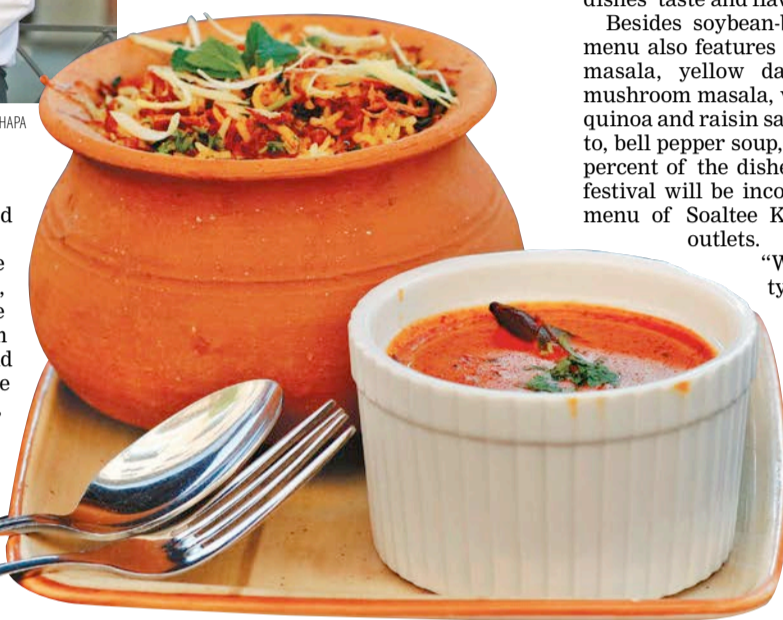
"The trick to making soya taste like meat or egg is preparing it by using the right amount of spices. Apart from natural spices, we have not used any artificial flavour to enhance the dishes' taste and flavour," says Bidari.

Besides soybean-based dishes, the menu also features dishes like rajma masala, yellow dal tadka, mutter mushroom masala, vegetable biryani, quinoa and raisin salad, roasted tomato, bell pepper soup, etc. More than 90 percent of the dishes featured in the festival will be incorporated into the menu of Soaltee Kathmandu's F&B outlets.

"We hope the variety of vegan dishes we have featured in the festival will encourage other restaurants and food-serving venues to expand their vegan options in their respective menus," says Sharma, a vegan. "This way, vegans like me do not have to

always settle for a handful of dishes to choose from every time we go out to eat."

What: Vegan Food Festival
Where: Garden Terrace, The Soaltee Kathmandu
When: November 1 to November 10, 12 pm to 10 pm
Contact: 9801067222



"The secret to making vegan dishes that taste like non-veg counterparts is by using the precise amount of plant protein and choosing the right spices and using them in the right quantity," says Bidari.

In terms of taste and texture, the dish featured in the festival that comes closest to its non-vegetarian counterpart is the eggless bhurji. Bidari and his team have used soya instead of eggs. Courtesy of the right amount of

Climate activists get a month in prison for Vermeer protest

Johannes Vermeer's iconic 'Girl with a Pearl Earring' painting was not damaged in the protest.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS

Two Belgian activists who targeted Johannes Vermeer's iconic "Girl with a Pearl Earring" painting in a climate protest last week were sentenced Wednesday to two months in prison, with prosecutors saying their action "crossed a line" of acceptable protest.

Half of the sentence was suspended by a judge in The Hague, meaning the men will serve one month. A third suspect is due in court on Friday.

One man glued his head to glass protecting the 17th-century masterpiece at the Mauritshuis museum in The Hague while another poured a can of thickened tomato soup over his head. The second man, wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the words "Just Stop Oil," then glued his hand to the wall next to the painting. A third man filmed the protest.

The painting was not damaged, but the glass covering it had to be replaced, and the protest caused other minor damage, prosecutors said. The painting was returned to its wall a day later. Vermeer was not a prolific artist and just about three dozen of his paintings have survived, displayed in

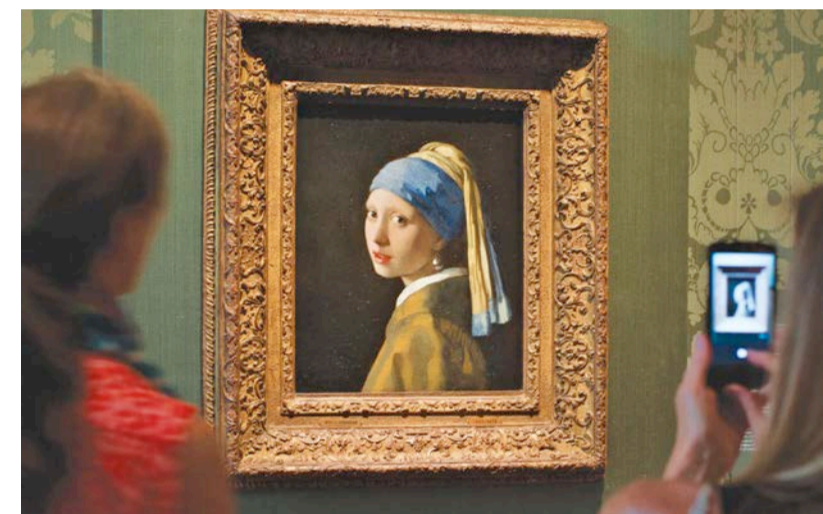
museums and galleries in various countries.

In a statement, prosecutors in The Hague said that the activists' "goal, however important you consider it, does not justify the means."

The prosecutors had demanded four-month sentences, saying they wanted to send a message that "paintings hang in museums to be enjoyed not exploited for activist ends. You keep your hands off them."

Just about three dozen of Vermeer's paintings have survived in various countries.

Earlier this month, climate protesters threw mashed potatoes at a Claude Monet painting in a German museum and a similar protest happened in London, where protesters threw soup over Vincent van Gogh's "Sunflowers" in the National Gallery. In both those cases, the paintings were not damaged.



The Vermeer masterpiece 'Girl with a Pearl Earring' has become the latest artwork targeted by climate activists in a protest at the Mauritshuis museum in The Hague on October 27.




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