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WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

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27.8° C -3.9° C

Janakpur Jumla

TODAY

NATIONAL

Over 150 people in a village have been taken ill after attending a marriage feast at Chirtungdhara in Palpa on Saturday. The attendees got sick a day later, the number of those ailing rising since Tuesday. **Pg 2**

After scuffles between Nepali and Indian citizens in Darchula over India's embankment construction on the Mahakali, Nepal has sent a diplomatic note to Delhi for joint site inspection to settle the dispute. **Pg 5**

OPINION

The impact of climate change has begun to worsen the situation in the plains as heat waves during the summer and foggy haze during the winter negatively affect agro-forestry, animal husbandry and fish farming, writes CK Lal. **Pg 4**



WORLD

When Chinese President Xi Jinping visits Saudi Arabia from Wednesday, the oil-rich kingdom will seek mostly economic gains rather than a meaningful shift away from the United States, analysts say. **Pg 6**

MONEY

PickNDrop has been selected among the top five in the start-up category for this year's ICT Awards which will be held on December 23 in Kathmandu. **Pg 7**

SPORTS

Morocco beat Spain on penalties to reach the World Cup quarter-finals for the first time in their history after the match finished 0-0. The African side won the shoot-out 3-0 after Spain failed to convert all three of their spot kicks. **Pg 9**



POST PHOTO: DEEPAK KC

An artist paints a wall on the theme of social equality under an initiative by Artudio and the US Embassy, at Minbhavan, Kathmandu on Tuesday.

Nepal-Bangladesh joint venture project gets environmental nod

Nepal and Bangladesh have agreed to jointly build the Rs160 billion hydropower project on Sunkoshi River.

PRITHVI MAN SHRESTHA
KATHMANDU, DEC 6

The Ministry of Forest and Environment has cleared the Environment Impact Assessment Report for the proposed 160-billion-rupee, 683-megawatt Sunkoshi 3 hydropower project, paving the way for bilateral negotiations between Nepal and Bangladesh to develop the project.

The two countries have agreed to develop the project through a joint venture investment as per the agreement reached between the two sides during the fourth meeting of the working group and joint steering committee held in late August.

As per the statement issued by the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation on August 25, the two sides agreed that Nepal would send the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) report to Bangladesh, as early as possible, on which the Bangladeshi side would give its opinion at the earliest, while taking ahead the process of establishing a joint venture company.

Officials at the energy ministry confirmed that the EIA report has got approval from the Ministry of Forest and Environment.

"We have received the letter from the environment ministry about the approval given to the EIA report on Sunkoshi 3 project," said Chiranjeev Chataut, director general at the Department of Electricity Development. The EIA was under the environment ministry's consideration since April this year.

Officials said the government would

share the report with Bangladesh as agreed in August.

"Once we share the report with the Bangladeshi side, they will review it, seek needed clarifications and a joint technical team is then expected to visit the project site," said Madhu Bhetuwal, spokesperson at the energy ministry. "After that, the two sides are expected to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on project development, paving the way for joining project development."

It is still unclear which agencies would be involved in the project.

Though the two sides have agreed to develop the project through a joint venture company, it is unclear which agencies would be involved in the project which will be built at the border between Ramechhap and Kavre districts. Officials said Nepal's obvious choice for the joint venture is the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), the state-owned power utility.

The NEA has also been eager to be a partner. "There has been an initial talk about handing out the construction licence to Nepal Electricity Authority, but no official decision has been made," said the NEA Managing Director Kul Man Ghising.

>> Continued on page 2

Ruling alliance two seats shy of majority

At the end of proportional representation vote counting, the five-party alliance has 136 seats against the 138 required to prove a majority in the 275-strong House.

BINOD GHIMIRE
KATHMANDU, DEC 6

The CPN-UML, which trailed the ruling Nepali Congress in the first-past-the-post (FPTP) seats, has won the most (34) seats of the lower house under the proportional representation (PR) system.

In the seat allocation completed on Tuesday night, the ruling Congress has managed to bag 32 PR seats. The party that had won 57 FPTP seats will now have a total strength of 89 seats in the House of Representatives, to become the largest party.

The UML, with 78 seats (including 44 from the FPTP) will have a presence in parliament as the second largest party.

Some 61 percent of the 17.98 million registered voters cast their ballots in the single-phase parliamentary and provincial elections on November 20. As per the commission's report, the number of valid PR votes was 10.05 million.

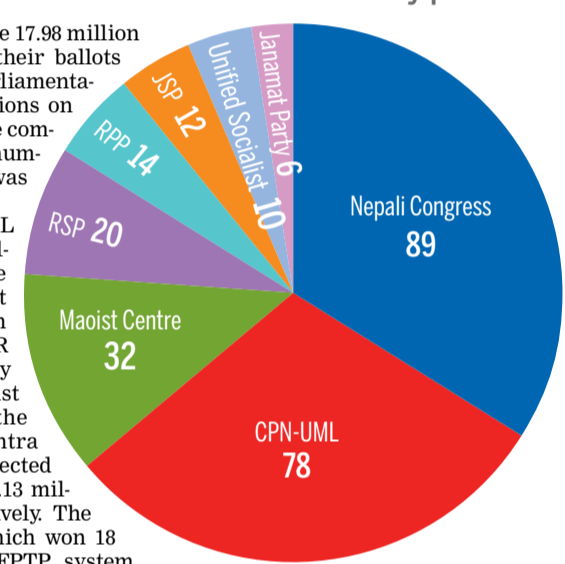
Of this total, the UML collected 2.84 million PR votes. The Congress was hot on its heels with 2.71 million PR votes, followed by the CPN (Maoist Centre) and the Rastriya Swatantra Party, which collected 1.17 million and 1.13 million votes, respectively. The Maoist Centre, which won 18 seats under the FPTP system,

has managed to secure 14 more seats under the PR system, to have a total of 32 representatives in the lower house. With 13 seats under the PR, the Rastriya Swatantra Party takes hold of the fourth position with a total of 20 seats including seven FPTP seats.

Out of the 68 parties registered for the election under the PR system only seven could meet the threshold of three percent votes needed to qualify for parliamentary seats under the PR category. The Rastriya Prajatantra Party, the Janata Samajbadi Party and the Janamat Party are other three parties which have met the threshold.

>> Continued on page 2

Total seats won by parties



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Nepal lifts seven-month-old import ban on luxury goods

The International Monetary Fund had questioned the wisdom of lengthening the ban on certain products as it was hurting trade and the economy.



POST FILE PHOTO

The restrictions have severely impacted a number of businesses dealing in imported goods.

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, DEC 6

The government on Tuesday decided to lift the seven-month-old ban on the import of "luxury goods" to meet a condition of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) ahead of the

formation of a new government.

The Cabinet meeting on Tuesday decided to completely lift the ban from December 16, a minister told the Post. "The cabinet meeting has in principle approved the lifting of the restrictions."

Earlier in April, alarmed by the fast

pace at which Nepal's foreign currency reserve was going down, the government imposed import restrictions besides ordering importers to maintain a 100 percent margin amount to open a letter of credit.

The directive issued on April 26 embargoed 10 types of goods described as luxury items. They included, among other things, mobile sets worth over \$600 and motorcycles of over 250cc capacity. Harsher restrictions followed, and mobile sets costing more than \$300 and motorcycles with a capacity of more than 150cc were banned.

On August 30, the government loosened the restrictions and permitted the import of diamonds, large television sets, toys, cards, snacks and tobacco.

The ban on automobiles, mobile phones, liquor and heavy motorcycles had been extended until December 15.

Finance Ministry officials, however, had told the Post earlier that the ban may be relaxed before the extended mid-December deadline.

>> Continued on page 2

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NATIONAL

Congress-led coalition wins 136 House seats

>> Continued from page 1
Despite winning 10 seats under the FPTP system, the CPN (Unified Socialist) couldn't cross the threshold.

Based on the vote share, the commission had allocated the 110 PR seats of parliament among the eligible parties. "We have apportioned the seats based on the vote share of the seven parties crossing the threshold," Dinesh Thapaliya, the chief election commissioner, told the Post.

As per the seat allocation, the pro-Hindu and pro-monarchy Rastriya Prajatantra Party party won seven seats under the PR category, to equal its seat tally under the FPTP category. The Janata Samajbadi Party that had registered victory in seven seats under the direct elections has got five seats under the PR system.

The CK Raut-led Janamat Party that crossed the threshold to become a national party in its first foray into parliamentary elections also has got five seats, bringing it on level terms with the Janata Samajbadi Party. (Janamat Party had won one FPTP seat.)

In this way, the five-party ruling alliance has secured 136 seats against 138 required to prove a majority in the 275-strong House. The alliance includes the Congress, the CPN (Maoist Centre), the CPN (Unified Socialist), the Loktantrik Samajbadi Party, and the Rastriya Janamorchha, which have won 89, 32, 10, four and one seats, respectively.

"The commission on Wednesday will ask the parties to name lawmakers under the PR category," Surya Aryal, assistant spokesperson at the commission, told the Post. "The parties will have to send the names from the closed lists they had earlier submitted to the commission."

The seven parties will get three days to send the names to the commission. If their list doesn't have proper representation of various clusters of

caste groups and communities, they will get one more day to make corrections. "We will submit the final report to the President when the names under the proportional representation are finalised," said Aryal, adding the report is likely to be presented on December 12 or the next day.

Submission of the final report will clear the way for the parties to form government and commence the new parliament. After receiving election results from the commission, President Bidya Devi Bhandari will invite parties to form a government within two days. As no party commands a majority, she will call for a coalition government as per Article 76 (2) of the Constitution of Nepal.

Similarly, the process to summon the first meeting of the House of Representatives will begin following the submission of the election results to the President. As per Article 93 (1) of the constitution, the President summons a new session of the federal parliament within 30 days of the declaration of final results.

If the final results are submitted on December 12, the first meeting of parliament must start latest by January 11. "Our preparations for the first meeting of the lower house are in full swing. We have already arranged office spaces for the new parties that were not represented in the previous Parliament," Roj Nath Pandey, spokesperson at the parliament secretariat, told the Post.

The selection process for the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives will also start with its first meeting as per Article 91 (1) of the constitution. "The members of the House of Representatives shall, within 15 days of the date of holding of the first meeting of the House of Representatives, elect a Speaker and a Deputy Speaker from amongst themselves," reads the Article.

Lumbini chief minister's office moved to Deukhuri overnight

Chief Minister Kul Prasad KC snubbed calls by parties and civil servants against hastily shifting the seat of the provincial government as Deukhuri lacks the infrastructure.



This undated photo shows a cabinet meeting of the Lumbini province.

GHANASHYAM GAUTAM
RUPANDEHI, DEC 6

On Monday, Lumbini Province's Office of Chief Minister and Council of Ministers was moved to Deukhuri in Dang from Butwal overnight.

Tilakram Sharma, spokesperson for the Lumbini province government, said the office's equipment were transported to the provincial capital on three trucks on Monday night. "Now the chief minister's office will operate from Dang once the office is set up," Sharma told the Post.

Despite a call by political parties and civil servants to postpone the plan until the physical infrastructures are ready, Chief Minister Kul Prasad KC moved ahead with it anyway.

The coalition partner Nepali Congress, main opposition party CPN-UML, government employees and newly elected provincial assembly members had protested against the move.

The provincial assembly on October 6, 2020 decided to shift the provincial capital from Butwal in Rupandehi district to Deukhuri valley in Dang. The then chief minister Shankar Pokharel had announced that the provincial headquarters would be shifted only after construction of necessary infrastructures was complete. But two years after the decision, the construction remains incomplete.

The provincial government plans to house its ministries on the premises of the Rapti Technical School in Deukhuri.

A week ago, Chief Minister KC, a CPN (Maoist Centre) leader, instructed government employees and other stakeholders to shift his office. His instructions included making necessary arrangements to house the offices in Rapti Technical School within five days.

The provincial government transported the goods with the help of the security personnel and the Maoist activists despite the noncooperation from the employees.

Chief Minister KC has been performing his office work by setting up an office in a room of Rapti Rural Municipality in Dang since December 1. He visited Butwal whenever required. After knowing the possible noncooperation and even the protest of the employees, KC shifted the office goods during the night on his own initiative.

The civil servants and some of the secretariat members came to know about the relocation only on Tuesday morning. According to an official at the chief minister's office who refused to be named, there was no discussion or preparation done at the office to move it to the permanent capital.

KC's move to hastily shift the provincial capital to Deukhuri has drawn mixed reactions.

The people's representatives from Rupandehi and its surrounding districts, business communities, political parties and the locals are against the move while those in Dang and some other districts in the province have welcomed the move.

Bhumishwar Dhakal, the former chief whip of the UML in the Lumbini provincial assembly, said that KC's move was wrong. It could cause confrontation among the political parties and stakeholders, he said. "There are no problems to implement the decision made by the two-thirds majority of the provincial assembly but the capital was shifted without constructing the necessary infrastructures," Dhakal said. "All the ministries cannot be operated from the building which was constructed for a technical school."

Government employees and various organisations they are affiliated to protested against the government's decision, citing a lack of infrastructure to operate government offices there. On Wednesday, they submitted a joint memorandum to Deepak Kafle, the chief secretary of the Lumbini Province, urging the provincial government to postpone its decision until the physical infrastructures are readied in Deukhuri.

A few months after Deukhuri was declared the provincial capital, the provincial government had shifted the Ministry of Tourism, Rural and Urban Development to the town. Minister Dilli Bahadur Chaudhary also moved to Deukhuri, but the minister soon returned to Butwal saying he could not work effectively due to the lack of infrastructure in the new location. The Office of the Chief Minister also set up a liaison office in Deukhuri a year and a half ago, but the office remains unused.

■ DISTRICT DIGEST

Three convicted of caste-based discrimination, sent to prison

POKHARA: The Kaski District Court sentenced three individuals to a one-year prison term and fined Rs50,000 each on charges of caste-based discrimination. A single bench of district judge Abani Mainali Bhattarai on Monday issued the sentence against Dev Bahadur Thapa, Ram Bahadur GC and Janak Thapa, residents of Batulechaur in Pokhara Metropolitan City. They were found guilty of caste-based discrimination against Manoj Sunar of the same area. Upon performing the final rites of his father Sammar Bahadur Sunar, who died in Dubai in 2020, Manoj wanted to observe the post-cremation rituals in a public building meant to be used to perform the 13-day mourning rituals at Gaidako Khor in Batulechaur. Back then, the trio had barred Sunar from entering the public hall stating that a person from a Dalit community cannot enter the building that is being used by people from Brahmin and Chhetri communities. Acting on a complaint filed by Mohan Sunar, the brother of the deceased, the police arrested the accused and kept them under custody for a week in 2020. The accused were later released on bail. The police completed their investigation and the district attorney's office filed the chargesheet at the court. The case that saw multiple hearings finally came to an end on Monday after remaining sub judice for around two-and-a-half years.

Elderly killed in elephant attack

BIRATNAGAR: A 73-year-old resident of Sundarharai Municipality-10 in Morang was killed in an elephant attack on Tuesday. He and his wife had gone to Munal Community Forest to fetch grass for their cattle. As the elephant began to set upon them, the wife was able to flee but the husband couldn't make it, said DSP Deepak Shrestha, spokesperson at the District Police Office, Morang. According to him, the body of the deceased was recovered from the forest.

Five checkpoints set up to control traffic accidents

EAST NAWALPARASI: The District Police Office in East Nawalparasi has decided to set up five additional checkpoints, aiming to control traffic-related incidents in rural roads in the district's hilly areas. According to Superintendent of Police Bhuwaneswar Tiwari, new police check posts were set up in Munde, Kumsot, Bhojhapokhari, Kokhe and Devistang. "Vehicles plying in the rural roads have been found to be carrying passengers far beyond their capacity," Tiwari said. As many as 10 people died in separate road accidents in the hilly areas of the district over the past one month.



Ruling alliance leaders during a meeting at Baluwatar on Monday.

Nepal's ban on luxury imports to go from Dec 16

>> Continued from page 1

While the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had questioned the wisdom behind lengthening the import ban on certain products as it was hurting trade and the economy, economists too have been saying that prolonging trade restrictions goes against the principles of a free market economy.

The Washington-based organisation had delayed the second instalment of a \$400 million loan to Nepal till

February 2023, stating that the country had not fulfilled the conditions. Nepal has already received \$110 million as the first instalment.

Following the Russia-Ukraine war that choked the global supply system causing prices to rise like never before, Nepal too suffered chronic current account deficits and was increasingly vulnerable to external economic shocks with accelerating foreign reserve depletion.

The situation has since improved.

With a mission to promote global economic growth and financial stability and encourage international trade, the IMF had lauded the initiatives taken by the government to address the decreasing foreign exchange reserves, but it had expressed concern over the ban on imports.

An IMF team led by Robert Gregory had visited Kathmandu from April 24 to May 2 to discuss the first review under Nepal's extended credit facility (ECF). The ECF

provides financial assistance to countries with protracted balance of payments problems.

Automobile dealers have been constantly saying that the import ban was choking their business.

"More than 75 car showrooms have shut down. Another 70 are on the verge of closing," Dhruva Thapa, president of the Nepal Automobile Dealers Association, told the Post in a recent interview.

In January, the IMF approved a \$395.9 million extended credit facility for Nepal.

The 38-month financing package was provided to Nepal to mitigate the Covid pandemic's impact on health and economic activity, protect vulnerable groups, preserve macroeconomic and financial stability, and support sustained growth and poverty reduction.

As per the agreement, the IMF will provide around \$55 million in the second disbursement.

The Covid pandemic took a heavy toll on Nepal's economy. From April to July 2021, Nepal

suffered a devastating second wave of Covid, interrupting a gradual recovery in economic activities.

Nepal's economy contracted by 2.1 percent in 2019-20. The IMF estimated a partial recovery of growth at 2.7 percent for 2020-21 and forecast growth of 4.4 percent in 2021-22.

The collapse of tourism and service sectors, which are key drivers for growth, will take time to recover, the IMF said. After a sharp drop in 2020, imports have rapidly grown, fuelling a large current account deficit.

According to the Nepal Rastra Bank, the country's foreign exchange reserves are now sufficient to cover goods imports for 9.6 months, and goods and services imports for 8.3 months.

The balance of payments remained at a surplus of Rs12.43 billion, and gross foreign exchange reserves stood at \$9.48 billion in the first quarter of the fiscal year that ended mid-October, the central bank said.



Kathmandu Metropolitan City staff members removing illegal signboards of businesses in the Maharajgunj area on Tuesday.

Sunkoshi-3 gets environmental nod

>> Continued from page 1

"If we get the licence, we can hand it over to the new joint venture company, provided a joint venture agreement is reached between the NEA and a Bangladeshi entity." Power-hungry Bangladesh has been eager to develop hydropower projects in Nepal and buy electricity from the country.

In the August meeting, Nepal and Bangladesh had decided to request India to provide passage for the export of 40-50 MW of electricity from Nepal to Bangladesh in the initial phase, utilising the high voltage direct current power systems located in Bheramara of Bangladesh.

For this, they agreed to ask for a trilateral energy sales and purchase agreement among the NEA,

Bangladesh Power Development Board, and India's NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam (NVVN) on utilising the Baharampur-Bheramara cross-border power transmission link.

The 683 MW project will be built on the Sunkoshi river in central Nepal.

In 2013, India and Bangladesh inaugurated the Baharampur-Bheramara cross-border power transmission link between the countries that would ini-

tially facilitate the export of 500 MW of electricity. In fact, the NEA said it had sent a request to NVVN in late August as per the agreement reached between Nepal and Bangladesh. "We are yet to get a response from the Indian company," said Ghising.

As per the Joint Vision Statement on Power Sector Cooperation issued in early April during the state visit of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to India, the two countries aim to expand cooperation in the power sector and include partner countries under Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal (BBIN) framework. "India's cooperation will be crucial to realise the dream of power trade between Nepal and Bangladesh," said Bhetuwal.

Government of Nepal
Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
National Information Technology Center
 Singhadurbar, Kathmandu

Notice for Opening of Financial Bid

2079/08/21 (December 07, 2022)

Pursuant to rule no. 31 (nga), sub-rule no. 5 of Public Procurement Regulation 2064, it is notified to all concerned that the financial bid of the below mentioned contract will be opened on 2079/08/28 (December 14, 2022) in National Information Technology Center, Singhadurbar at 13:00 hrs.

| S. N | Name of Contract | Contract No. | Substantially Responsive Bidder in Technical Evaluation |
|------|---|----------------------|---|
| 1 | Supply, Delivery and Installation of Secure Email Gateway | NITC/G/NCB-06/079-80 | Nextgen Solutions Pvt. Ltd, Pulchok, Lalitpur |



INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION DAY

December 7, 2022

Celebrating The International Civil Aviation Day in Collaborative Efforts Under the Aegis of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal and Airline Industries of Nepal For

ADVANCING INNOVATION FOR GLOBAL AVIATION DEVELOPMENT

Government of Nepal
Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal



MESSAGE

It is my immense pleasure to be a part of celebration on the auspicious occasion of International Civil Aviation Day which is being celebrated to mark the signing of Convention on International Civil Aviation on 7 December 1944 in Chicago. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to whole aviation fraternity and particularly; the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). On this special day, I would like to express sincere gratitude to ICAO for providing its continuous co-operation and support in the development of air transportation in Nepal. ICAO's global theme "Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development," is relevant in the contemporary world; especially at a time when the whole world is gearing up for technological advancements and digital business transformation.

For us, connectivity and accessibility are indispensably linked with civil aviation. Air transportation provides vital links to complex geological and inaccessible mountainous terrains which are difficult to navigate by other modes of transportation. In addition, tourism is one of the major forebearers of Nepalese economy and a top government priority. The growth of aviation industry is vital for both Nepalese tourism sector and nation's socio-economic development. The guidance provided by ICAO has been significantly beneficial in improving and standardizing safety, security and other aspects of civil aviation in Nepal. This year, Nepal achieved remarkable ICAO safety audits score which is above the global average. This outcome from the assessment of ICAO shows the progress made by Nepal and it is crucial for further expansion of civil aviation.

We believe that the global challenges faced by aviation sector needs to be resolved with wider collaboration and harmonized effort of all aviation partners and stakeholders involved. The wave of innovations which is ongoing in aviation industry will definitely reinforce the development of air transportation and subsequently; spur the growth of tourism industry. It will be vital in overcoming those challenges and create a significant impact in achieving ICAO's strategic objectives. Our priority today is to ensure sustained growth and progress of civil aviation sector. Once again, I would like to congratulate all aviation stakeholders on this occasion.

Jeevan Ram Shrestha
Minister

Government of Nepal
Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal



MESSAGE

The whole aviation community around the globe is celebrating International Civil Aviation Day today by recognizing the contributions of air transportation at the service of all mankind. On this occasion, I would like to congratulate International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for its unique role in helping States to cooperate and realize a truly global rapid transit network. This year, the Government of Nepal, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation is commemorating this day with the theme Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development which was stipulated by ICAO. This special anniversary theme precisely aligned with Agenda 2030 of United Nations as the world embarked on a new era of sustainable development. Innovation is swiftly changing many industries and aviation is no exception. In fact, aviation industry itself is a key innovator and also, an early adopter of the technologies. In this aviation industry, innovation is critical, not only for improving efficiency and operational capabilities but also for creating values through those improvements. The advancements in this sector will transform the mobility and augment the development process through state of the art technology, innovative solutions and emerging transportation modes. Thus, the holistic and integrated approach is required in order to identify the inefficiencies in the contemporary system and enhance the performance of the aviation system with the help of innovations of the future. On behalf of the Government of Nepal, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude to ICAO for its continuous leadership and co-operation in fostering the development of civil aviation. In particular, I would like to acknowledge ICAO's role in promoting technologies and policies that are instrumental for attaining sustainability of aviation and combating climate change. The Government of Nepal is committed to continuously working with the aviation industry and all stakeholders in this sector. We are committed to adhering to the ICAO principles and standards in order to ensure that aviation sector is safe, reliable, efficient and sustainable. I urge all the industry stakeholders to join hands together for the harmonization and embracing the innovations in the air transportation.

Suresh Adhikari
Secretary

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF NEPAL
Head Office, Bhatbhateni, Kathmandu, Nepal



MESSAGE

It is a matter of pleasure to be a part of the celebration on the occasion of the International Civil Aviation Day. The slogan for this day "Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development" truly manifests the efforts of ICAO in its mission of assisting States to adopt technological advancements and innovative methods and thus ensuring global aviation development.

Nepali aviation sector, after being severely affected by the pandemic of COVID-19, has begun to gain momentum. Through these difficult years, aviation probably has proved to have been the most resilient of all sectors and most inevitable during such crisis. In case of Nepal, advancements have been continuous regardless of hurdles. Despite the external adversities, we have been successful in completing two major projects of international airport construction and also bringing those into operation. With three international airports in the country, we are on the verge of galloping towards a new paradigm for the development of aviation sector in Nepal. During all of these activities, safety has been our focus which is also evident from the fact that Nepal has been placed above global and APAC region average with respect to the effective implementation rate in the USOAP audit conducted in 2022.

For all of our endeavors to develop a globally safe and secure aviation sector, collaboration from national and international aviation partners has been crucial. Global safety and efficiency is best achieved through a coordinated approach in partnership with all stakeholders within the civil aviation system as guided by ICAO. The efficient leadership and support of ICAO for the global aviation during all times of difficulty have been driving the global aviation smoothly ahead in its journey of safety, security and efficiency. Our commitment today, on this significant occasion, is that we shall continually keep on striving for better results in the field of aviation safety and security by following the guidelines of ICAO in collaboration with all stakeholders and thus contribute for the progress of global aviation safety as a whole. Lastly, I would like to congratulate ICAO on its 78th anniversary.

Er. Pradeep Adhikari
Director General

International Civil Aviation Organization
Organization of Aviation Safety International
Organization of Aviation Civil International
Международная организация гражданской авиации
شبكة الطيران المدني العالمي
國際民間航空組織



MESSAGE

On the occasion of this year's worldwide celebration of International Civil Aviation Day on 7 December 2022, I am greatly honored to convey on behalf of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Asia and Pacific Regional Office, our sincere wishes to the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation of the Government of Nepal.

International Civil Aviation Day was first celebrated on 7 December 1994 to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, the charter of ICAO. The purpose of International Civil Aviation Day is to help generate and reinforce worldwide awareness of the importance of international civil aviation to the social and economic development of States, and of the unique role of ICAO in helping States to cooperate and realize a truly global rapid transit network at the service of all mankind.

Every five years, coinciding with ICAO anniversaries (2014/2019/2024/2029/etc.), the ICAO Council establishes a special anniversary theme for International Civil Aviation Day. Between these anniversary years, Council representatives select a single theme for the full four-year intervening period. In recognition of ICAO's 75th anniversary, the Council selected the following theme "75 Years of Connecting the World" for the 2019 celebrations until 2023. The Council has decided that the theme will be "Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development".

While the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted the international civil aviation, we must continue our efforts to rebuild the global aviation community given the importance of economic contribution of civil aviation. The Vision of ICAO is to achieve the sustainable growth of the global civil aviation system. At the recent 41st ICAO Assembly, State aviation regulators reached a number of landmark agreements and decisions that will enable them to enhance the safety and efficiency of the international air transport system. In particular, States endorsed the latest editions of ICAO's Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP) and Global Air Navigation Plan (GANP). These important strategic plans guide States cooperation and actions on the basis of global aviation targets and technology roadmaps, enabling aligned worldwide progress on key priorities and challenges.

The ICAO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific considers the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation of the Government of Nepal an important partner of the international civil aviation community and rest assured the Regional Office remains available to support the CAA Nepal in your endeavors to strengthen the safety, security and efficiency of the international air transport system.

Lastly, I convey my gratitude to the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation of the Government of Nepal, and all of the colleagues and partners, for their contribution to make international civil aviation a stimulus for economic and social growth maintaining, at the same time, high standards of safety and security in all critical areas of aviation.

Best wishes,

Tao Ma
ICAO Regional Director
Asia and Pacific Office

Airlines Operators Association of Nepal
वायुसेवा संचालक संघ, नेपाल
"Flight Safety is our Commitment"



MESSAGE

It is indeed a great pleasure and privilege to me to have this opportunity of observing the International Civil Aviation Day which is being celebrated every year on the anniversary of the establishment of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) on 7th December. This year too we are celebrating ICAO day as per the theme given by International Civil Aviation Organization "ADVANCING INNOVATION FOR GLOBAL AVIATION DEVELOPMENT".

Aviation industry was in a critical time as the whole world suffered from unprecedented challenges of COVID-19. Aside from the financial aspect, the Pandemic is likely to have changed consumer behavior and the airline sector. As we look forward to the Post Pandemic world, the socio-economic effect of COVID-19 is likely to continue. There will be a long-term effect on aviation concerning the hygiene and safety standards. They are expected to be more stringent on both the aircraft and airport. As businesses continue to adapt to work from home culture, business travel is also likely to decrease. However, leisure trips will likely increase as a result of remote work. This is bound to affect the pricing strategy of airlines as passengers taking leisure trips are likely to be more price sensitive than those on business trips. Airlines will also constantly seek to become more efficient by experimenting new routes, using more efficient aircrafts or reimagining their business models.

Nepal has always been a country of natural beauty, flora, fauna, mountains, temples, Gods, culture, traditions, costumes and of course has been in the list of one of the most preferred tourism destinations in the world. According to Lonely Planet, a renowned website that publishes and ranks top tourists destinations of the world put Nepal in 8th position. Our safety standards are higher than global benchmarks. So I appeal to the world that our sky is totally safe and sound. Everyone can travel confidently.

On the positive note, many countries have followed through on their plans to return to normality, lifting many health measures, relaxing travel restrictions, and reopening borders. Boeing has also forecasted the need for over 43,000 new aircraft deliveries globally over the next 20 years. We also expect Innovations such as green hydrogen aviation fuels, implementation of blockchain technology, and augmented reality to also keep the industry afloat.

On behalf of the Airlines Operators Association of Nepal (AOAN) and my own, I would like to express my deepest felicitations and warm wishes to the International Civil Aviation Organization and all our partners and request them to come forward to celebrate this joyous occasion of the establishment of 78th ICAO.

Capt. Rameshwar Thapa
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We extend our heartfelt congratulation and warmest felicitations to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) on the occasion of its founding day of December 7, and further wish the worldwide celebration of this day a grand success.

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OPINION



OUR VIEW

Time moves slowly at TU

Nepalis deserve better than a university that cannot publish the results of its annual exams for over a year.

A recent Times Higher Education World University Rankings deemed Tribhuvan University the world's largest, with 460,632 enrolled students. In terms of institutional performance, it ranked 801st out of the 1,600 universities in 99 countries surveyed. But such rankings often hide more than they reveal. TU, for instance, has gained notoriety for inordinate delays with the publication of its examination results. This year, the university broke all records, with students having to wait for up to 16 months to get their mark sheets. This kind of neglect has broken the spirit of hundreds of thousands of students who enter the TU premises and its affiliated colleges with great enthusiasm every year.

But there was a mini miracle in 2017 when TU published the results of nine faculties within three months. This was not because of some divine intervention. That year, the World Bank had given the university Rs50 million as an incentive for timely publication of results in select faculties. Alas, expectations of a turnaround were dashed with the end of the subsidy. Separately, many students have already lost precious years and gone through a lot of mental distress due to the university's incompetence in conducting online classes and exams during the Covid-19 pandemic.

TU officials have tried to evade responsibility by citing lack of modern technology, infrastructure, manpower and the sheer volume of students it admits—over 80 percent of all university-goers in Nepal. Yet, as the experiment with the World Bank bonus suggested, where there is a will, a way can be found. For instance, even today, the answer sheets from examination centres across the country are first brought to the Office of the Controller of Examinations in Kathmandu before being dispatched to the examiners' homes. This is a needlessly lengthy and time-consuming process.

Taking a cue from the country's federal structure, TU can set up seven provincial bodies to locally handle the answer sheets of students from the constituent campuses in the province. Such a decentralised structure would reduce the workload on the central departments and hasten the publication of the results. Even in India, big education establishments like AIIMS and IITs have adopted the same model. This will also be in keeping with federalism's goal of developing regional centres of excellence in diverse fields so that people no longer have to look to Kathmandu for everything.

TU, since its establishment in 1959, played an all-important role in the development of what was a poor and illiterate country. And it will continue to be the desired university for the vast majority of Nepali school graduates, either out of choice or compulsion; for it is—and will remain for the foreseeable future—the heart and soul of the country's higher education system. As such, TU cannot be allowed to wither to an extent that it is not even capable of publishing the results of its periodic exams. With quality health and education established as their constitutional right, Nepalis deserve a more professionally run “national” university.

THEIR VIEW

Jiang Zemin's legacy

Jiang was far-sighted, and could make correct assessments of different situations.

Jiang Zemin passed away in Shanghai on Nov 30 at the age of 96. The profound outpouring of grief by the nation speaks volumes of the late leader's great contribution to the Communist Party of China and the country.

Jiang was an outstanding leader who enjoyed high prestige. He was acknowledged as a great Marxist, a great proletarian revolutionary, statesman, military strategist and diplomat, a long-tested communist fighter and an outstanding leader of the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. He was the principal founder of the Theory of Three Represents and the core of the CPC's third generation of central collective leadership.

That leadership defined building a socialist market economy as an objective of reform, and formulated and implemented a raft of principles, policies and major strategies. Under their leadership, the country dealt calmly with a series of breaking international events that concerned China's sovereignty and security, overcame the difficulties and risks that cropped up in the political and economic spheres and those brought by natural disasters, and kept China's reform, opening-up and socialist development drive moving forward in the right direction.

The great achievements of the Party and the country in the 13 years since the fourth plenary session of the 13th CPC Central Committee in 1989 were inseparable from Jiang's practice of the art of political leadership as a Marxist statesman.

Jiang was far-sighted, and could make correct assessments of different situations. He always observed and reflected on issues taking into consideration the general trends of China and the world, as well as the overall work of the Party and the State, continuously advancing theoretical innovation and innovation in other fields.

Jiang valued practice and kept pace with the times. He always grasped the trends and opportunities of the times, summing up experience and sought new ways based on the vibrant practice of the Party and the people, thus advancing the work of the Party and the State in a down-to-earth yet enterprising manner. Today, his fine character and noble manner are still educational and motivational for the Party and the country on the path to modernisation.

Jiang's death is an inestimable loss to the Party, the military and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups. But grief should be turned into strength, and Jiang's legacy should be carried forward with concrete actions. The nation should rally around the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core with greater resolve and purpose, and adhere to the Party's basic theory, basic line and basic policy to advance the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and strive in unity to realise the second centenary goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects.

—The China Daily/ANN

Repercussions of remittance economy

SOUTH SIDE

The advantages of remittance inflow into poor countries such as Nepal are too obvious to miss.

CK LAL

The rainfall during the monsoon this year was 10 percent lower than the annual average. The government routinely fails to procure sufficient chemical fertiliser for farmers in time. Insufficient rain is likely to reduce the rice output and adversely impact the cultivation of pulses, oil seeds and vegetables, as winter rains are often unpredictable.

The cycle of drought and floods in the Madhesh plains—the rice bowl and bread basket of the country—was bad enough. The impact of climate change has begun to worsen the situation as heat waves during the summer and foggy haze during the winter negatively affect agro-forestry, animal husbandry and fish farming.

For small landholders and marginal farmers, they need a lot of grit to maintain the tradition which once proclaimed that farming was the best occupation as it helped feed the world. An old saying in Maithili holds, “*Utam kheti, madhyam baan / Nikristha chakari, bheek nidan*”. The axiom declares agriculture to be the best occupation, commerce the tolerable second, and working for others the worst option as it forbids begging altogether.

The sanctity of tilling the land for salvation has lost its social and religious overtones. When livelihood is at stake, economic considerations triumphs over family traditions. It is much more tempting these days to sell the land, get in touch with a manpower agent and fly away to the cities of the Gulf Cooperation Council such as Dubai, Doha or Dammam. It's the money they send home from their meagre earnings as remittances that has kept the Nepali economy afloat during difficult times.

The rhetoric of creating employment opportunities in Nepal through industrial development is all very well, but it flies in the face of ground realities. The supply of energy has stabilised to a certain extent, but the availability of hydroelectricity is highly vulnerable to natural calamities. The per unit cost of transportation in a landlocked country with largely rugged terrain makes the import of raw materials and the export of finished products highly uncompetitive.

In addition to transportation bottlenecks and unpredictability of energy availability, there are human resource constraints that discourage productive investment in the industrial sector. Managerial talent is in short supply as opportunities in the development agencies and INGOs are more lucrative. Technical personnel prefer to work



SHUTTERSTOCK

abroad due to higher prospects of career advancement in bigger markets. Skilled workers are hard to find and even more difficult to retain.

Perhaps the most frustrating element is the sense of entitlement among government officers, regulatory authorities and even unskilled workers that the jingoistic elites have nurtured over the years. While fly-by-night operators find the commercial environment extremely conducive for making a fast buck in cahoots with manipulative fixers, the condescending attitude of locals makes foreign investors, expatriate technocrats and skilled managers cringe as they feel unwanted and unwelcomed in a high-risk and low-return country.

The glamour of the tourism “industry” notwithstanding, its contribution to the GDP was a paltry 6.7 percent recently, and is unlikely to go above 10 percent in the near future. Remittance has remained one of the largest contributors to the national economy for years, and will probably remain so for quite a while. The World Bank estimates that remittances accounted for 22 percent of the GDP this year. Informal inflows are considered to be at least 50 percent higher than official figures. The economic size of remittances is too high not to have a significant impact on the political economy of the country.

Conspicuous benefits

The advantages of remittance inflow into poor countries such as Nepal are too obvious to miss. In the absence of easily exportable commodities or internationally competitive products, wage repatriation from abroad remains the primary source of earning foreign exchange. It has been asserted that “remittances to developing countries prove larger and more stable than other external financing, including foreign direct investment (FDI), official development aid (ODA), and private debt and portfolio equity”. In fact, the contribution of remittance to the national econ-

omy is sometimes larger than FDI and ODA combined.

In addition to procuring convertible currency for vital imports such as food, medicine and petroleum products, and helping maintain the balance of payments, remittances play a vital role in reducing absolute poverty. When an earning member begins to send some of his savings back home, the family in the source country can afford to eat well, send its children to school, build better shelter, take care of the aged and the ill, and save some money to tide over emergencies.

The discernible change in the villages of Madhesh after the mid-1990s is attributable largely to the remittances from GCC countries. Children are better dressed, enrolment of girls in schools has gone up, and brick houses have begun to replace thatched huts. Soaps, shampoos and detergent powders in tiny sachets can be bought from corner shops.

It is said that plump pigs in narrow streets that feast on waste and stray dogs lazing around the pile of leftovers are the surest signs of new-found prosperity. The whirl of motorcycles, ring-tones of Chinese smart phones, smell of fish being cooked on gas stoves and youngsters making TikTok videos complete the picture of localities that have benefited from remittance inflows. Then there are tipsy adults whiling away their time as they wait for the next tranche from money transfer agencies.

In areas that have been receiving money from abroad for over a decade or so, changes are even more perceptible. Apart from higher consumption, living conditions begin to improve with constant inflow of funds. Water supply and sanitary conditions get better, electric fans and heaters reduce the impact of temperature variation, clothes are cleaned more often, and children learn to do their homework.

The economy of Nepal endured the shocks of the Gorkha earthquakes and survived the long Covid-19 lockdowns

largely on the basis of remittances. External donors, lenders and philanthropists of the Nepali diaspora were generous with words, but not very munificent in deeds.

Invisible costs

While the benefits of remittances mostly go to households, their costs have to be borne by the whole society. Economists have argued that the remittance trap causes conspicuous consumption, fuels price rise, raises the cost of production, reduces competitiveness and inhibits growth. The demographic dividend is lost as the working age population finds it more attractive to migrate abroad. The median age of Nepali-born migrants in Australia is 27.9 years. Perhaps it's much lower for Nepali workers in West Asia and Malaysia.

Governance in the source countries suffer when recipients expect nothing from their government. The pressure to improve public education, health and transport disappears as remittance beneficiaries begin to rely upon private and for-profit providers of all such services. The ones left out of the loop suffer the most. Prof Paul Collier puts it most succinctly, “Migration hurts the homeland.”

The most problematic aspect, however, appears to be the intangible remittance of culture, beliefs and values of the host countries in West Asia and Malaysia that tend to promote intolerance of diversity, acceptance of radical religiosity, a distaste for democracy and a silent rage against the regime at home among workers that toil in slave-like conditions. Remitters yearn for certainty at home, and are willing to back politicians with an authoritarian streak.



Lal is a veteran political commentator.

Ghost airports: Lessons for Nepal

Out of the 55 airports in the country, 19 are out of operation and only a handful are self-sustaining.

MUKESH DANGOL

There are many instances around the world where an airport bites the dust and the big hunks of concrete take a ghostly turn. Airports are strategic infrastructures that are capital-intensive, technology-oriented and often cover a huge land area. They require constant adaptation to provide enough functional, safe and affordable services for airlines and passengers. If not, they would not be able to realise the traffic they hoped for. Subsequently, they can turn into facilities that may be fully operational but devoid of any passengers or traffic. In the worst case scenario they turn into so-called ghost airports.

Airports are intended to boost local and regional economies but fail to attract airlines to operate to/from these airports. Several reasons exist: Conflicts, war, poor planning, environmental issues and/or under-demand destinations. Ciudad Real Airport (CGM) in Spain is one such airport which could not operate successfully as planned. Initially built as an alternative to Madrid Barajas Airport (MAD) with a huge investment of over \$1 billion and a capacity of handling 2.5 million passengers annually, the airport declared bankruptcy in 2010, three years after commencement. Poor planning with overlooking deficiencies, availability of competitive airports nearby and economic factors (co-incident of airport operation and financial crisis in Spain) are said to be reasons behind its unsuccessful operation.

Another classic case is the ambitious plan of Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport (MRIA) in Sri Lanka. Launched in March 2013 with an annual capacity of 1 million passengers, this airport initially witnessed several airline operations, including its national flag carrier—Sri Lankan Airlines. However, owing to low



SHUTTERSTOCK

demand, airlines and airports incurred huge losses. The airport could not attract more airlines for continuous operation; by 2018, almost all airlines had aborted flights. It soon turned into a “white elephant” for the Sri Lankan government as it incurred consistent losses. Moreover, it could not generate enough revenue to pay back the \$190 million loan provided by the Exim Bank of China for its construction. The airport has been dubbed “The World's Emptiest International Airport” by Forbes, thanks to its minimal flight operations despite its size and capability.

There are various arguments and reasons for its failure, including the airport's site in a suburb area, lack of proper local support, unavailability of other infrastructures (public road transport linking to adjacent locations) and environmental issues due to the airport's location at an elephant and migratory bird habitat. It is argued that 2000 acres of forest were destroyed during its construction which led to the displacement of about 200 elephants. The biggest culprit is the government's over ambition without proper planning, specifically, checking the facts and alternative plans and project sites. The moral of the story—low demand led it to be uneconomical.

In India, 33 airports operated by the Airport Authority of India are non-operational. To counter this, the Government of India has come up with several policy reforms and incentives such as reduction in airport fees and fuel taxes, subsidies on landing, parking and other charges. Moreover, via-

bility gap funding (VGF) for three to five years has been adopted to revitalise these airports.

In Nepal, 19 out of 55 airports are not operational. Only a handful of airports are self-sustaining, while most rely on Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) revenues for their management and operation. The much anticipated Gautam Buddha International Airport (GBIA) and Pokhara Regional International Airport (PRIA) were built with huge investments. Their economic sustainability might be an issue in future if not properly managed and marketed. In this context, the experiences from other countries have many lessons that can be meaningful for airport planning in Nepal.

Airport development planning: Demand forecasting is key in airport planning. Various other infrastructure projects need to create adequate demand for each other, viz., land transportation (airport accessibility), tourism products and trade activities, comfort, safety and security issues.

Airport-airline growth nexus: Planning and developing airports in isolation deepen the issues with airport operation. Consultations with airlines and other stakeholders is a must.

Innovative airport business model, airport marketing, and strategies for airport operation: During the commencement of new international airports, reducing airport fees and taxes on fuel are often observed. This is not enough in the competitive landscape today. It is crucial to understand that the economic sustainability of airports depends on customers' demand and

commercial viability. Moreover, a strategic mindset comes into play—airport operation is a business.

Passenger service quality and ground handling: For airport operators, airlines and passengers are ultimate customers. Satisfying the basic needs and serving them in the best way possible is paramount in the airport business today.

Site selection and airspace management: Airport planning and construction is not merely about building runways, taxiways, parking bays and related infrastructure on the ground. For a country like Nepal, air routes must be ensured to make the airport viable operationally. We have already witnessed the issues of air routes for GBIA, and if not solved on time, it will be repeated in the case of PRIA. Airlines will be required to travel extra miles which implies additional operational costs, thus adding to the air ticket price. This makes the airport economics complex, making travel from these airports costlier.

We often focus on analysing international air traffic and passenger growth as indicators in the planning process. But we should not miss out on fostering simultaneous growth and strengthening of our carriers (both Nepal Airlines and private operators) along with these infrastructure developments. If not, our airports merely serve as a marketplace for international air operators destined for Nepal. In this scenario, we would not be able to impact our economy via aviation growth. In a nutshell, we should not consider airport infrastructure planning and development in isolation. When it comes to future airport development, we should ensure the economical viability and technical feasibility of our projects before proceeding with any concrete decisions. As such, an integrated and holistic approach coupled with strategic thinking is critical if we really want to avoid our airports being ghost airports.



Dangol is an officer at the tourism ministry.

Elephantiasis still a concern in Baglung

Irregularity in prescribed drugs intake is main reason it is still prevalent in the district, say health officials.

PRAKASH BARAL
BAGLUNG, DEC 6

The Ministry of Health and Population plans to conduct a mass drug administration campaign against Lymphatic filariasis, commonly known as elephantiasis, in Baglung from mid-January next year. This is the fourteenth campaign launched in the district since 2009-2010 to control the spread of the disease.

Lymphatic filariasis is a mosquito-borne parasitic disease. The disease caused by filarial worms is transmitted by different species of mosquitoes, including Culex, Anopheles, and Aedes.

To declare the disease eradicated, the infection rate should be less than one percent. The government had committed to eliminating lymphatic filariasis as a public health problem by 2020. But the target could not be achieved due to low coverage of the programme in some districts—Baglung being one of them. The Health Ministry has extended the deadline to 2028 due to its failure to eliminate the disease in some districts.

The government started a mass drug administration programme to eliminate Lymphatic filariasis in 2003. Under the programme, healthy people above five years of age are given diethylcarbamazine and albendazole.

The percentage of elephantiasis patients in Baglung stands at two, Health Office says.

The percentage of people suffering from elephantiasis in Baglung stands at two percent, according to the Health Office in Baglung.

In Narayansthan, Baglung Municipality-14, where the number of infected people was high, a Transmission Assessment Survey (TAS) was conducted in 2020 on every patient to find out what went wrong. "The TAS revealed that most of the infected people did not take the medicines regularly," said Ram Prasad Khanal, head of the Health Unit of Baglung Municipality. "That is why the disease is still not under control in the area."

According to Khanal, a pre-transmission survey was also done in mid-November to identify the number of people suffering from elephantiasis in Baglung Municipality. The pre-transmission survey is a method of detecting the disease by testing the blood samples of every person from every household in a particular location. The survey showed two percent of people in Baglung were infected and more than 20 infected people have been identified in Narayansthan. Medicines for the disease have been distributed in the area regularly since the fiscal year 2009-2010.

Lakshmi Sharma, public health inspector at Health Office Baglung, showed a district-wide survey conducted in the fiscal year 2020-2021

that put the number of elephantiasis patients at 242 across the district. "We expect the number to decrease this year. Hopefully, the 14th drug administration campaign will bear good results," she said.

"The infection which should have been eradicated years ago can still be seen in two percent of the population in the district. The challenges to eradicating the disease are aplenty but the most pressing one is negligence on the patient's part," said Sharma. "Most patients do not take medicines regularly. It is difficult to make people understand the necessity of taking medicines to eradicate the disease. When the health workers ask them, they say they will take medicines regularly but they don't."

Besides Narayansthan, symptomatic patients of elephantiasis have been found in Galkot, Badigad and other local units.

The World Health Organisation has identified the disease as a major public health problem, with an increasing prevalence worldwide. Nepal is one of the 73 countries in the world, where lymphatic filariasis is endemic. According to the UN health body, elephantiasis can be cured after five years of continuous medication but irregular intake of medicines will affect the efficacy of the medicines.

"A person who has taken the medicines regularly does not spread the infection and cannot transmit it to others. But in Baglung, controlling the disease is becoming a major problem because people don't take the prescribed medicines," said Sharma.

According to Chakra Bahadur Khatri, ward chairman of Baglung Municipality-14, the infection rate in the district has gone up in the last four years. "Four years ago, only 1.6 percent of the people were found infected in Baglung. Today two percent of the people are living with the disease. Apart from Narayansthan, a special campaign was conducted in Kushmisera of Jaimini Municipality, Dagatumdada and Gwalichour of Badigad Rural Municipality last year. These two areas are seeing an increase in the number of patients of elephantiasis," said Khatri. "Volunteers, health workers and public representatives have been mobilised to identify the infected people and to provide them with medicines and treatment."

According to Khanal, head of the Health Unit of Baglung Municipality, blood samples from 300 people will be collected and tested every day for elephantiasis and treatment of the infected will start immediately. "Blood test kits have arrived in Baglung. More than 450 health workers, 950 women health volunteers and more than 700 other volunteers will be deployed across the district for the mass drug administration campaign," said Khanal.

Rambalak Yadav, a technician at the Vector Borne Disease Research and Training Centre, Hetauda, stresses the need for regular medication to meet the government's target to eliminate the disease by 2028. "In 2018, the target to eliminate elephantiasis from Baglung was set for 2020, but the goal has not been met. We will now have to ensure every patient takes the medicines," he said.



A woman is pictured in the midst of vegetable patches at Dhunche Pakha in Bhaktapur on Tuesday.

POST PHOTO: DEEPAK KC

More than 150 people taken ill after attending a wedding feast in Palpa village

The attendants have reported symptoms such as fever, diarrhoea, headache, nausea and vomiting.

MADHAB ARYAL
PALPA, DEC 6

Over 150 people in a village have been taken ill after attending a marriage feast at Chirtungdhara in Bagnaskali Rural Municipality, Palpa on Saturday. The attendees started feeling sick a day later and the number of people falling ill has been increasing since Tuesday.

According to health workers deployed in the area, family members of over 100 families from Budhakhande, Bhanjeli, Amreli, Pipartung, Dhatol localities in Chirtungdhara and Ghorbanda villages have complained of illness.

Maniraj Adhikari, chief of the Health Division Office in Bagnaskali, said that the patients have complained of having multiple symptoms including fever, diarrhoea, headache, nausea and vomiting.

Adhikari said they have provided relevant medicines to the patients after administering them with intravenous fluids and oral rehydration

solution. "However, since some of the patients are not responding to the medicines that we have provided," Adhikari said, adding that those patients have been referred to Tansen-based private medicals, Mission Hospital and Lumbini Medical College for further treatment.

The rural municipality has deployed health officials including chiefs of various wards' health divisions and health posts, staff nurses and lab technicians under the supervision of Mission Hospital doctor Sanjiv Rawal and Health Division Office Chief Adhikari.

The health officials including local representatives are taking stock of the situation and are facilitating the treatment of the sick.

A team of technicians from the District Health Office has also visited the area to collect water samples to determine the cause of the illness.

Around 400 people had attended the wedding and the majority of the attendees had been complaining of illness, said Pema Rana, a local.



Health officials attend a patient in Chirtungdhara village in Palpa.

POST PHOTO: DEEPAK KC

Nepal calls for joint inspection of disputed Mahakali site

Government sent a diplomatic note to India after tensions in Darchula over India's unilateral construction of embankment on Mahakali.



The embankment has been permanently changing the Mahakali river's course, say locals.

POST PHOTO: MANOJ BADI

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, DEC 6

Two days after scuffles broke out between Nepali and Indian citizens in Darchula district over India's unilat-

eral construction of an embankment on the Mahakali river, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday sent a diplomatic note to the government of India for joint inspection of the site of dispute.

Sewa Lamsal, spokesperson at the foreign ministry, confirmed to the Post that a diplomatic note had been sent on Wednesday afternoon through the Embassy of India. "The note mentions the report received from the

ground through the Ministry of Home Affairs as well as the details of incidents on the border on Sunday and Monday," said Lamsal, adding, "We have called for a joint inspection of the disputed sites."

Nepal government, in the note, has also asked India to stop embankment-construction in the disputed area and ensure that such constructions are not carried out in the future, officials privy to the matter told the Post.

Tension ran high on Sunday at the Nepal-India border in Khalanga of Darchula after Nepali and Indian citizens chanted slogans and pelted stones at each other over India's embanking of the Mahakali river. At least four Nepali nationals including one minor were injured after being hit by stones hurled from the Indian side across the river. On Sunday, Darchula locals had also staged demonstrations in Khalanga protesting the Indian construction.

"The situation is normal today," chief district officer Dirgharaj Upadhyaya told the Post on Tuesday, adding that the Indian side has stopped construction at the disputed site after talks between Nepali and Indian officials on Sunday and Monday.

Locals say India's embankment-building has been pushing the Mahakali further into Nepal, perma-

nently changing the river's course. They also say the river will further erode the Nepali side of the border, especially during the monsoon.

During Sunday's scuffles, some Indian citizens were also injured, according to Indian media reports.

"We've told the Nepal administration to take action against stone-pelters," Indian news agency, ANI, quoted a junior magistrate of Pithoragarh district as saying.

Locals say Indian construction is pushing the Mahakali further into Nepal.

The new agency also quoted one B Thapa, who was identified as the president of Board of Trade from the Indian side, as saying that they have continued their protest against Nepal demanding action for the injuries received by Indian traders allegedly at the hands of the Nepali police during a baton-charge.

"If action is not taken within three days by the administration, we will start a hunger strike here," Thapa told

the ANI.

But chief district officer Upadhyaya rejected such allegations and said no Indian national was injured on the Nepali side of the border.

Officials said the Indian side has built a gabion wall up to ten meters tall on the Indian side of the river to prevent erosion and flooding. Nepalis are vehemently opposed to the new construction and say the wall will divert the Mahakali towards Nepal and cause further damage.

Meanwhile, leaders from various political parties have called for an early resolution of the dispute.

Speaking at a function in Jhapa on Tuesday, Nepali Congress General Secretary Bishwa Prakash Sharma said the new Indian embankment mocks Nepal's dignity and its people.

"As India has undermined the dignity of Nepal, the government has sent a diplomatic note protesting the unilateral construction," said Sharma.

UML leaders also demanded an immediate halt to construction works. "Mahakali is a border river so no one should build structures that affect the other side of the river," said Rajan Bhattarai, head of CPN-UML international relations department. "Any unilateral construction should be stopped immediately and the two countries should sit for talks to find an amicable and permanent solution," Bhattarai said.

FOREX

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| US Dollar | 132.49 |
| Euro | 139.07 |
| Pound Sterling | 161.35 |
| Japanese Yen (10) | 9.70 |
| Chinese Yuan | 18.95 |
| Qatari Riyal | 36.26 |
| Australian Dollar | 88.99 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 30.14 |
| Saudi Arab Riyal | 35.24 |

Exchange rates fixed by Nepal Rastra Bank

Shares

Nepse 1,933.88 -0.25%

| HIGHEST LOSERS | | | | | |
|------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| NMB | NMBSO | ICFCD3 | NMBFI | NCSF | RFPL |
| -6.07% | -3.89% | -3.32% | -3.28% | -3.25% | -2.8% |
| MODERATE LOSERS | | | | | |
| UMHL | GIBFI | NIJCL | OHL | LBL | GHL |
| -0.13% | -0.12% | -0.1% | -0.06% | -0.05% | -0.05% |
| MODERATE GAINERS | | | | | |
| NTC | ENL | DHPL | PPCL | RIDI | NSLB |
| 0.11% | 0.1% | 0.06% | 0.03% | 0.02% | 0.01% |
| HIGHEST GAINERS | | | | | |
| DLBS | CMFI | SMB | HBL | KLES | SMFS |
| 8.17% | 6.12% | 5.86% | 4.15% | 4.01% | 3.96% |

BULLION PRICE PER TOLA

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| Fine Gold | Rs 99,300 |
| Silver | Rs 1,350 |

SOURCE: FENEGOSIDA

■ BIZLINE

European Union to provide relief to earthquake victims

KATHMANDU: The European Union said on Tuesday that it would provide more than Rs27 million (200,000 euro) in humanitarian funding to assist families affected by the earthquake that struck western Nepal in early November this year. "This funding supports the Nepal Red Cross Society in delivering much needed assistance, including the provision of shelter materials such as tarpaulins, blankets and mattresses, as well as the construction of latrines and water supply facilities," reads the statement issued by the European Union Delegation to Nepal. "Health promotion activities will be organised to ensure access to essential health care services." While the most affected people will be given cash grants to meet their basic needs, the humanitarian aid will directly benefit 11,000 people whose houses have been destroyed or damaged. The funding is part of the EU's overall contribution to the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

Raqoon, Recon to deliver cybersecurity services for SMEs

KATHMANDU: Raqoon Business Design LLC in Switzerland and Recon Cybersecurity Solutions in Nepal announced the formation of a strategic partnership on November 11 to deliver automated vulnerability scanning and penetration testing solutions to small and medium-sized enterprises in Switzerland and the EU. The agreement is believed to help deliver automated cybersecurity tools and services for SMEs to overcome cybersecurity challenges. The partnership is expected to boost Recon Cybersecurity Solutions' growth in Switzerland and Europe and enable SMEs to buy affordable and intuitive cybersecurity prevention. Raqoon, a Swiss innovation studio, has been operational since January 2020 and has created a portfolio of startups and smart solutions. Recon Cybersecurity Solutions has been operational since November 2019 and has created ReconwithMe.com, an automated vulnerability scanning and penetration testing tool, developed by security researchers. "We have scouted globally for a solution provider, which is capable of delivering an affordable and automated solution for our customers in Switzerland and EU," said Bojan Laskovic, managing director of Raqoon. "We want to help SMEs to become more resilient against cyberattacks." Subash Gautam, CEO of Recon said, "We're more than happy to have a strategic partnership with Raqoon and expand our product and services to Switzerland and EU."

Energy crisis fuels renewables boom, IEA says

PARIS: The energy crisis is fuelling an acceleration of the rollout of renewable power, raising hopes for efforts to meet ambitious targets against global warming, the International Energy Agency said Tuesday. Total renewables capacity growth worldwide is set to almost double in the next five years and overtake coal as the largest source of electricity generation by 2025, the IEA said in a report. The 2,400-gigawatt growth between 2022-2027 is almost a third higher than last year's IEA forecast, according to the Paris-based agency, which advises developed nations. This would help "keep alive the possibility of limiting global warming to 1.5 (degrees Celsius)", the IEA said. (AFP)

Outsourced delivery services take off as e-commerce flourishes in urban areas

PickNDrop has been selected among the top five in the start-up category for this year's ICT Awards.

PAWAN PANDEY
KATHMANDU, DEC 6

When cooking gas deliveries in Kathmandu Valley were disrupted due to the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, a group of young entrepreneurs stepped in to keep the kitchen fires burning. Nepal slapped a nationwide stay-home order in March 2020 in a bid to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, and people were marooned in their houses with no supplies. Entrepreneurs Sishir Khanal, Ghanshyam Khanal and Nabin Parajuli had founded PickNDrop in April 2020 as a delivery service for e-commerce businesses. When the pandemic struck, the firm was kept busy transporting gas cylinders house to house for nearly a year.

Sishir Khanal, who is also the co-founder of Teach for Nepal, a social enterprise that works to improve the quality of public school education, was elected to the House of Representatives on a Rastriya Swatantra Party ticket from Kathmandu-6. Ghanshyam Khanal, a computer science and information technology graduate, and Parajuli, a computer engineer, had worked together for a software development company in 2011. They knew Sishir from their participation in Teach for Nepal events and programmes. The former colleagues were familiar with the need for reliable third-party delivery services from their previous endeavours. Parajuli had started a platform to sell tech-related products in 2014.

"Our discussions with e-commerce entrepreneurs prior to the launch of PickNDrop only confirmed our belief regarding their need for a reliable logistics and delivery service," said Parajuli. With the pandemic at its height, it was challenging for PickNDrop to provide services and find clients, say the co-founders. Business started picking up after a year following the relaxation of Covid restrictions. The firm then reoriented its services to its original objective—a third-party business-to-business delivery service provider.



PickNDrop has 22 delivery associates in the Valley and another 10 in major cities across the country.

According to Parajuli, they have more than 400 clients including Daraz, SastoDeal and Gyapu. "Over 400 clients have registered with us, and we get calls from around 60 clients daily."

PickNDrop has been selected among the top five in the start-up category for this year's ICT Awards which will be held on December 23 in Kathmandu. The company began with an investment of Rs3.5 million which, according to Parajuli, they put together from family and friends. "The investment has now crossed Rs25 million," said Parajuli. "We are still raising capital for the next round of investment."

PickNDrop has 22 delivery associates in the valley and another 10 in major cities across the country. The company outsources deliveries in rural and remote areas to individuals or joins forces with other courier companies.

A delivery associate, or the person who goes out to make deliveries, needs to have their own vehicle and driving licence. The company pays for the gasoline, communication and maintenance, according to Parajuli. "Delivery individuals are also provided with insurance coverage."

The starting salary for a delivery associate is Rs18,000 per month, and

the company provides incentives on the basis of deliveries.

Mandip Nepal, a delivery associate from Jhapa district in the eastern Tarai, says he makes Rs22,000 a month, excluding incentives. Nepal has been with PickNDrop for two years. "A bonus is paid for making more than 15 deliveries in a day," said Parajuli. "A delivery associate can earn between Rs18,000 and Rs30,000 a month."

Besides making deliveries, PickNDrop also collects payments for their clients.

"We launched the 'next day payment settlement' scheme to give suppliers their money on the day following delivery after discovering that delays in payment were a major issue for many e-commerce businesses."

PickNDrop generally charges Rs110 including value added tax for delivering a package weighing up to 1 kg within the valley. The charge increases by Rs20 for each additional kilo.

Elsewhere in the country, the firm charges Rs120 for a 500 gm package, and Rs150 for a package weighing up to 1 kg. For large clients, they have a bulk rate.

The company also provides customised service including packaging ser-

VICES for various clients.

Despite the huge scope of e-commerce, the co-founders feel the government has neglected the sector in its plans and policies.

"Besides the hurdles in registering a company, we lack funding to expand our business," said Parajuli. "The government should not only make plans on paper, it should execute them in reality as well."

Though the government promises to provide seed capital to start-ups to promote youth entrepreneurship and innovation, a work procedure needed to make this happen is yet to see the light of day. "The hesitation of Nepali companies to insure individual packages has made it difficult for long-distance delivery of expensive items," said Parajuli.

Another problem that makes life difficult for PickNDrop is lack of proper addresses. Delivery associates and clients have a hard time finding each other when making a delivery because of the bewildering addressing system.

"There is also a shortage of technical human resources to operate a delivery tracking system, check the delivery status and prepare reports," said Parajuli.

ADB extends \$200 million soft loan to strengthen education system in Nepal



The pro-poor scholarship scheme will be expanded to grades 6-12 to improve retention.

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, DEC 6

The Asian Development Bank on Tuesday approved a \$200 million concessional loan to help Nepal to strengthen the equity, quality, and resilience of its school education.

The programme will assist the implementation of the first 5 years of the government's School Education Sector Plan 2021-2030 in a sector-wide approach supported by eight development partners, including ADB. The program will enhance learning provisions for basic and secondary schools; strengthen teaching and learning in schools; accelerate the recovery from learning losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; and improve the capacity of local governments in education planning, monitoring, and reporting, the ADB said in a statement.

"Nepal has done significantly well in terms of improving access to education, however, there is still a need to address remaining equity issues to access and importantly to take a holistic approach to address the persistent challenges in improving learning outcomes," said ADB Principal Social Sector Specialist for South Asia Rudi Van Dael.

"This program will help accelerate reforms and transform the country's education system to develop human

capital, reduce social inequity, and attain sustainable growth."

Selected secondary schools will be upgraded to increase opportunities to study science education in grades 11-12, especially for girls. The pro-poor scholarship scheme will be expanded from grades 9-12 to grades 6-12 to improve retention.

To mitigate learning loss from the Covid-19 pandemic, a recovery and accelerated learning programme will be jointly implemented with the community and civil society organisations.

"To prepare schools against future learning disruptions, more and better accessible e-resources will be made available through the Sikai Chautari online learning portal. The program will further strengthen the local government's capacity to deliver education in the federal system," said ADB Senior Project Officer (Education) for South Asia Smita Gyawali.

ADB will provide an additional \$1 million technical assistance grant from its technical assistance special fund and administer the equivalent of a \$600,000 grant from the government of Norway to support capacity-building activities, strengthen programme management and coordination, and improve the monitoring and reporting capability of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, the ADB statement reads.

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सामाजीहरुको अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय स्तरको बृहत
प्रदर्शनीमा सहभागी हुनुहोस् ।

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Japan have bright future ahead despite World Cup heartbreak

The four-time Asian champions showed that they can compete with the world's best in Qatar, beating both Germany and Spain to point towards brighter times ahead.



It was the fourth time Japan had exited in the knockout stage in their seventh straight World Cup appearance.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DOHA, DEC 6

Japan failed to reach the World Cup quarter-finals once again but stunning wins over Germany and Spain and more players moving to Europe suggest the Blue Samurai will return stronger.

Japan were eliminated by Croatia in the last 16 on Monday in Qatar, going out on penalties after a nerve-jangling 1-1 draw with the 2018 finalists.

It was the fourth time Japan had exited at the first knock-out stage and denied them a much-coveted quarter-final debut in their seventh straight World Cup appearance.

But the four-time Asian champions showed that they can compete with the world's best in Qatar, beating both Germany and Spain—two former champions—to point towards brighter times ahead.

Coach Hajime Moriyasu said it was not possible to “turn into Superman overnight” but he believes Japan are on the right path.

“We weren’t able to overcome this hurdle of losing in the last 16 and you might say that we didn’t achieve anything new,” he said. “But the players have shown us something that we haven’t seen before by beating former champions like Germany and Spain.”

The number of European-based players in Japan’s World Cup squads has steadily increased since they made their tournament debut in 1998

with an entirely domestic-based selection.

Moriyasu picked 19 European-based players in his 26-man squad for Qatar, including eight who play their trade in Germany’s Bundesliga.

Japan had six players in the group stages of this season’s Champions League and Daichi Kamada won last season’s Europa League with Eintracht Frankfurt.

Midfielder Wataru Endo, who captains Stuttgart in the Bundesliga, said he wants to see Japan have enough European-based players “to fill two teams”.

“The quality of the Japan players is improving—we have more players at European clubs and that is good experience for us,” he said. “We need to have more players playing with European clubs—we need 20 or 30. We are improving but we weren’t good enough to get to the quarter-finals.”

Grass-roots support
Japan’s player exodus to Europe has come at the expense of the domestic J-League.

Only seven home-based players were named in Moriyasu’s squad and fans of local clubs now find opportunities to watch national team stars few and far between.

Japan defender Yuto Nagatomo, who plays for FC Tokyo, urged Japanese fans to support their local J-League club for the benefit of the national team.

“Most of the players in the squad

came up through the J-League and now they play overseas,” said Nagatomo, who returned to FC Tokyo last year after an 11-year stint in Europe.

“There will be a J-League team in most people’s local area. We need to support them. If we get excited about the J-League it will help the players grow and give them motivation, then they’ll go overseas and help the national team.”

Japan’s next immediate challenge is to win the Asian Cup, which will be held in Qatar, likely in early 2024.

It remains to be seen if Moriyasu will still be in charge, with the Japan Football Association set to decide his fate when the team return home.

Veterans like Nagatomo and captain Maya Yoshida are likely to make way for a younger generation, with emerging stars such as Ritsu Doan and Kaoru Mitoma set to take centre stage.

Goalkeeper Eiji Kawashima, who was named in the squad as a back-up after playing at the previous three World Cups, said Japan’s 2022 team was their “best ever” at the tournament.

He backed the young players to take on a leading role and use their heartbreak to make Japan stronger.

“We have a lot of young players and this experience will be massive for the team,” said the 39-year-old. “The game is just finished but I want the players, particularly the young players, to lead us forward.”

Khadka takes one-stroke lead

The former number one pro cards six-under 62 in the first round of the Surya Nepal Kathmandu Open—the season opening event of Surya Nepal Golf Tour 2022-23.

SPORTS BUREAU
KATHMANDU, DEC 6

Rabi Khadka took a one-stroke lead after the first round of the Surya Nepal Kathmandu Open at the par-68 Royal Nepal Golf Club, on Tuesday.

Khadka carded six-under 62 in the opening round of the season opening event at the Surya Nepal Golf Tour 2022-23 at his home course. Khadka is one shot ahead of Bhuvan Nagarkoti, who carded five-under 63.

The Nepal number one pro, Sukra Bahadur Rai, carded three-under 65 to remain three strokes behind the leader, while Niraj Tamang is placed fourth at two-over 66.

Ramesh Adhikari is in fifth position at one-under 67. Dhana Bahaur Thapa and Jayaram Shrestha are joint sixth after carding even-par 68. Three pros, Surya Prasad Sharma, Dal Bahadur Lama and Krishna Man Rajbahak are tied in the eighth position at one-over 69.

Former number one pro Khadka carded four-under 30 on the front nine and played two-under 32 on the back nine. He began the day with an eagle on the first hole and carded birdies on the fourth, fifth and eighth holes. Rabi faced a bogey on the sixth hole. After taking the turn, Rabi dropped a shot on the 15th hole against three birdies on the 10th, 12th and 13th holes.

Nagarkoti took the turn at two-under 32 and carded three-under 31 on the back nine. Bhuvan carded two consecutive birdies on the first and second holes and added another on the fourth hole before facing a bogey on the ninth hole. On the back nine, Bhuvan carded birdies on the 10th, 13th and 14th holes.

Number one pro Rai, who is also participating in the Indian Tour—carded two-under 32 on the front nine and added one-under 33 on the back nine. On the front nine, Rai carded three birdies on the first, second and fourth holes before dropping a shot in the eighth hole. After taking the turn, Rai carded a birdie on the 13th hole and succeeded in saving pars on eight others.

In the amateur section, Ajit BK carded two-over 70 to take an eight-stroke lead over Prajwal Gurung, who played 10-over 78. BK—who is tied in the 11th place with pros Rajendra Shrestha Pradhan and Pradeep Kumar Lama—played one-over 35 on both halves, while Gurung took the turn at three-over 37 and played seven-over 41 on the back nine.

A total of 31 pros and five amateurs are taking part in the first event under the Surya Nepal Golf Tour 2022-23 organised by the Nepal PGA under the sponsorship of Surya Nepal Private Limited.

Cut will be applied after 36 holes with top 21 pros and five amateurs making it to the final two rounds.

The event carries a cash purse of Rs670,000. Top three pros after 72 holes will earn Rs116,000, Rs74,000 and Rs63,000 respectively, while others in top 21 will earn their share of cash prizes.



Rabi Khadka hits a shot at the par-68 Royal Nepal Golf Club in Kathmandu on Tuesday.

HOROSCOPE

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

Verbalizing your emotions will bring forth great healing today. New ideas and curiosities will come to surface tonight. Unfortunately, tension may brew within your social sphere. Tread lightly right now.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) ***

Connecting with the earth will heal you. Your senses and connection with the material realms will be elevated tonight. Use this energy to examine your relationship with the world around you and your actions.

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

People will seek your profound wisdom today. Make sure you don’t allow others to take advantage of your kindness. A passionate charge to your aura will heat things up within your love life so watch out for the imbalance.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) ***

You’ll have a chance to resolve internal conflicts or insecurities pertinent to your idea of success today. Your temperamental side may show up later tonight. Be mindful that you’re not acting unjustly to the people around you.

LEO (July 23-August 22) ***

Look for opportunities to connect with those who truly see you today. This celestial exchange will bring healing through friendship, so don’t be afraid to lean on the ones you love. Tempers will trigger easily right now.

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

You’ll have a chance to establish trust within your business relationships today. Unfortunately, the atmosphere will be emotionally charged, which could cause you to feel anxious about how quickly you’ll meet your goals.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22) ***

Embracing your spiritual side can help you reclaim a sense of balance today. Use this lunar event to reconnect with your sense of passion. Optimism will play a huge role in your ability to reach goals in long run.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21) ***

The universe will ask you to cut ties with bad habits today. This cosmic climate will bring empowerment through change, especially when you prioritize health and wellness. Cleansing your aura or space will go well today.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21) ***

Love will lift you up today, leaving no space for negativity and murky energy. Be sure to plan something special with your sweetie. Use this energy as an excuse to nurture, pamper, and romance yourself rather than another.

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

Tending to your household responsibilities will feel strangely therapeutic today. You may also want to keep tabs on your stress levels. Watch your words, and try not to criticize your loved ones or offer unsolicited advice.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18) ***

Being true to who you are and expressing yourself accordingly will bring a great sense of healing and empowerment. Consider taking a break from your social media if they’ve become too distracting recently.

PISCES (February 19-March 20) ***

The stars will give you permission to invest in yourself today. These vibes will make you particularly sensitive during social interactions. Your instinct to nurture will also come into play, but try not to overstep any boundaries.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Hideout
- 5 In vogue
- 8 Wineglass
- 14 TV’s Hawkeye
- 15 Paris season
- 16 Show up
- 17 Beowulf’s drink
- 18 Motorist no.
- 19 Felt dizzy
- 20 Brought about
- 22 Region of India
- 23 “Cheers!”
- 24 “Fancy” singer
- 26 Teases good-naturedly
- 30 Youth
- 32 Spanish title
- 33 Grime
- 34 Highland girls
- 38 Plains tribe
- 40 Beverage
- 41 Bewildered response
- 42 QB org.
- 43 Six-shooter
- 44 Garnet or ruby
- 45 Span in years
- 46 Want-ad abbr.
- 47 Bareheaded
- 49 Be pouty
- 51 Engine stat
- 53 Maiden name indicator
- 54 Alice’s chronicler

DOWN

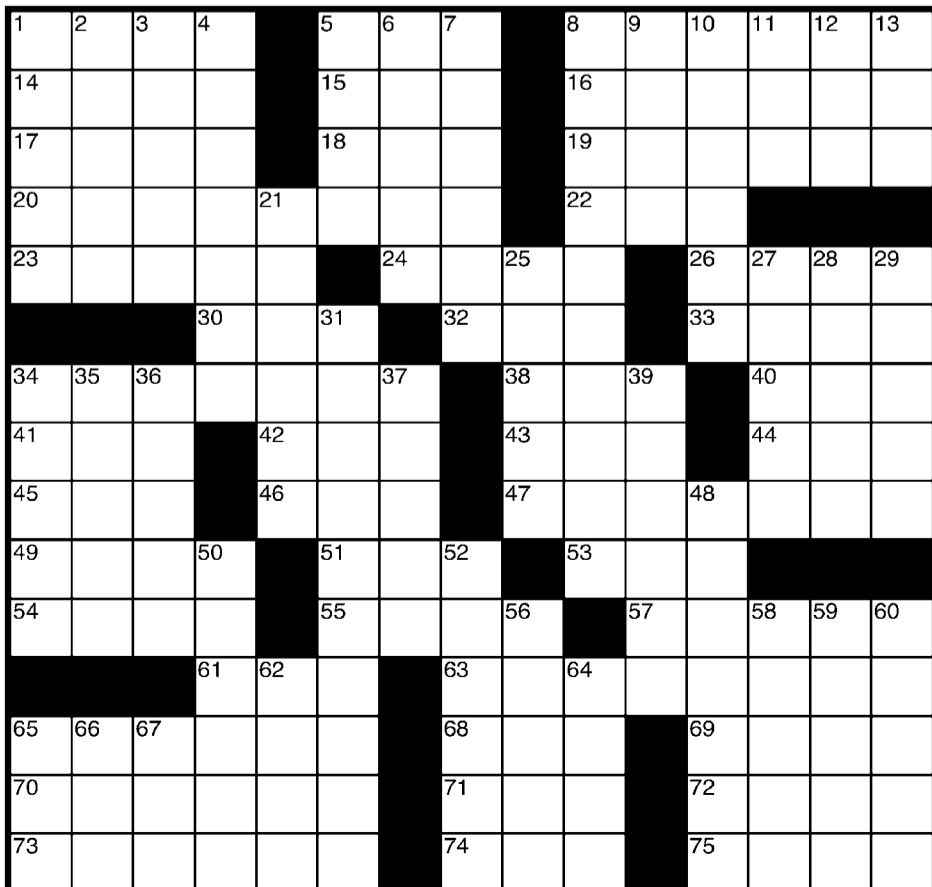
- 1 Mantra chanters
- 2 Noted wise guy
- 3 Sun Valley site
- 4 Some tires
- 5 Griffin of TV
- 6 Aquatic mammal
- 7 Signed over
- 8 Huge
- 9 Two-piece cookie
- 10 Tames a horse
- 11 Like Dogpatch’s Abner
- 12 Morn’s counterpart
- 13 — Danson
- 21 Actress — May
- 25 Limb

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

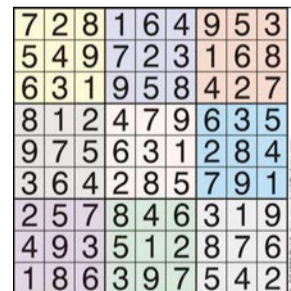


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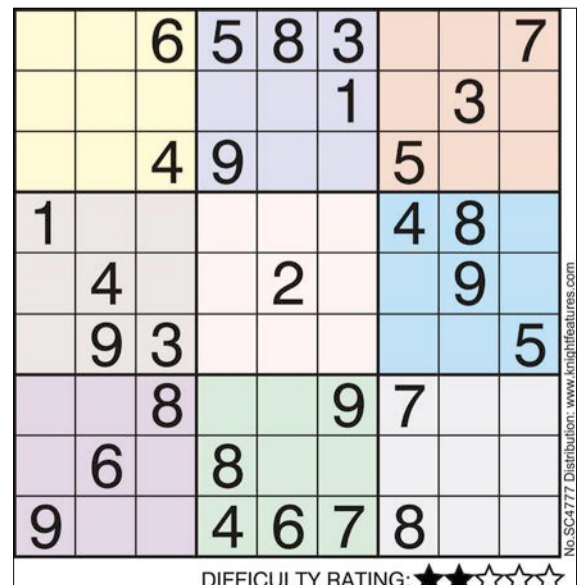
- 27 Campaign issue
- 28 Ranch visitors
- 29 Arises from
- 31 Postponements
- 34 Himalayan city
- 35 Soothsayer
- 36 Carapace
- 37 Upgrade
- 39 Goes inside
- 48 Paying rent
- 50 Eucalyptus diners
- 52 Swabs (2 wds.)
- 56 Court orders
- 58 Painting on a wall
- 59 Scrutinize
- 60 Hear or smell
- 62 Movie
- 64 Iowa, to Jacques
- 65 Calendar abbr.
- 66 Search engine find
- 67 Bart, to Lisa



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Morocco reach historic World Cup quarters

The Atlas Lions beat Spain 3-0 on penalties after Pablo Sarabia, Carlos Soler and Sergio Busquets all miss from the spot.



Morocco's goalkeeper Yassine Bounou stops a penalty shot by Spain's Sergio Busquets during the penalty shootout in Al Rayyan on Tuesday. AP/RSS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DOHA, DEC 6

Achraf Hakimi struck the decisive penalty to send Spain crashing out and Morocco into the World Cup quarter-finals for the first time, winning 3-0 in a shoot-out on Tuesday after a 0-0 draw.

Spain coach Luis Enrique had claimed his players prepared by taking 1,000 penalties as homework but Pablo Sarabia, Carlos Soler and Sergio Busquets all missed from the spot and Madrid-born Hakimi dinked his home to the delight of Morocco's raucous support.

Spain had been hoping they could repeat their 2010 World Cup triumph after reaching the semi-finals of Euro 2020, where they were also beaten on

penalties by Italy.

The teams were closely matched through a nail-biting clash, with Spain having more of the ball but Morocco creating the better openings, few though they were.

Luis Enrique trialed his third right-back of the tournament in Marcos Llorente, and benched the team's top scorer Alvaro Morata for Marco Asensio, after the shock defeat by Japan.

Spain monopolised the ball, with Morocco's fans furiously whistling with their side out of possession.

Morocco, who are the last African and Arab side left standing at the first World Cup held in an Arab country, were intensely backed and their fans greatly outnumbered Spain's.

With La Roja playing in a pale blue

second strip, they resembled the away team on hostile territory.

Gavi, who at 18 years and 123 days old became the youngest player to start a World Cup knockout game since Brazil great Pele in 1958, rose to the occasion.

The Barcelona midfield terrier was at his most intense, smashing into challenges left, right and centre, even diving to make one with his head.

Morocco goalkeeper Yassine Bounou tipped a Gavi strike on to the crossbar, though it would have been ruled offside, while Asensio drilled into the side-netting, although Spain created little.

Regragui's side sat deep defensively and threatened on the counter, with Unai Simon beating away a long range effort from Noussair Mazraoui.

Toothless Spain

Sofiane Boufal, who bypassed Llorente like sand slipping through the Spaniard's fingers early on, carved the best chance of the half for Nayef Aguerd, who headed inches over.

Bounou pummelled away a Dani Olmo strike from an angle as the tension cranked up after the break.

Luis Enrique raged at Rodri for choosing the wrong option on the ball, and withdrew the dogged and muddled Gavi for Carlos Soler.

He threw Morata on too, giving Spain a focal point up top, but they struggled to supply him as Morocco sat deeper and deeper.

Another substitute, Nico Williams did find the Atletico Madrid striker on one occasion but the angle was too tight and he scraped a shot across the face of goal.

Bounou made a fine save from Olmo's free-kick as it almost snuck all the way through, with Spain finally creating stronger chances as the game frayed in the moments before extra-time.

Morocco responded in the additional period by finding stability and testing Simon, who made a fine save with his legs to deny Walid Cheddira after he broke in down Spain's left flank.

Despite heavy pressure by Spain in the final moments before penalties, they could not trouble the Sevilla goalkeeper again, with Pablo Sarabia clipping the outside of the post, although he might have been offside.

Having been sent on apparently for the shoot-out, Sarabia struck the post again from Spain's first penalty, after Abdelhamid Sabiri had sent Morocco ahead. Soler and Busquets missed, while Hakim Ziyech scored, before Hakimi netted against his birth country to ignite wild celebrations.

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PLAYERS TO WATCH

Kylian Mbappe (France)

Mbappe is the leading scorer at World Cup with five goals and his lethal form has convinced many pundits to make France the favourites in the last-eight showdown against England.



ATTO 3




A Morocco supporter looks on ahead of the World Cup round of 16 football match between Morocco and Spain at the Education City Stadium in Al-Rayyan on Tuesday. AP/RSS



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It's just like watching Brazil again

Against South Korea, the Selecao played in a way reminiscent of the 1970 and 1982 Brazil teams that captured the hearts of football fans.

REUTERS
DOHA, DEC 6

Brazil produced a footballing masterclass as they hammered South Korea 4-1 in their World Cup last-16 match that brought back sweet memories for fans around the world who have been waiting for the return of Brazilian swagger on the pitch.

Animated by a soundtrack of samba drums and rhythmic dancing cascading down from the stands of the 974 Stadium, Brazil enjoyed themselves while toying with a team that had progressed at the expense of Ghana and Uruguay and had beaten Portugal.

In fact, the Koreans have goalkeeper Kim Seung-gyu to thank that Brazil did not rack up a double-digit scoreline.

Back from an ankle injury, Neymar was the leader of team formed by coach Tite, a manager who made his career playing conservative football but left behind his defensive background to allow a new generation of talent to flourish.

He was questioned for bringing nine forwards to Qatar and raised eyebrows when selecting a quintet of players committed to



Brazilian players hold a banner in honour of the Brazilian football legend Pele at the end of the World Cup last 16 match against South Korea in Doha on Monday. Pele was admitted to the hospital last Tuesday amid ongoing treatment for colon cancer but is under no imminent risk of death, according to several family members. Pele said he watches World Cup games on television. AP/RSS

attacking football in Lucas Paqueta, Neymar, Vinicius Jr, Raphinha and Richarlison.

His courage paid off, with his side playing in a way reminiscent of the 1970 and 1982 Brazil teams that captured the hearts of football fans all across the world.

Brazil spread the ball beautifully with a plethora of one-touch

passing combinations that cornered the South Koreans who had no plan to defend against so much talent.

Vinicius continues to evolve as Brazil's new superstar in the making, maturing and growing in confidence with every game and helping Neymar carry the hopes of a nation.

The 22-year-old jet-heeled winger, who was already a nightmare for any defence with his sprints and dribbling skills, is starting to develop an eye for goal.

He put Brazil in the lead with a magnificent curled strike into the upper left corner, taking his time to aim his shot over the goalkeeper and four defenders who were

crowding the area in front of him. He later dinked a beautiful cross for Paqueta to score Brazil's fourth, showing a control and vision that only special players possess.

It was a needed win for Brazil after arriving in Qatar with the pressure of being the tournament favourites and were drawn in a tough Group G that included Switzerland and Serbia, defensive teams that play a style that always challenges Tite.









Brazil played well in hard-fought wins against the Serbians and the Swiss, results that gave them the privilege of playing their fringe players in the last group stage match against Cameroon, with their ticket already booked to the knockouts.

Losing 1-0 to Cameroon sparked some criticism, but once again Tite was proven right, with his starters fresh and hungry to show the world what they are capable of when the stakes are raised.





Playing attacking football like South Korea tried against this brilliant Brazilian team looks like sporting suicide. Croatia will have to make a tough choice as they prepare to face Brazil in Friday's quarter-final.

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| | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
|  | 20:45 Friday, Dec 9 |  |
| Croatia | | Brazil |
|  | 00:45 Saturday, Dec 10 |  |
| Netherlands | | Argentina |
|  | 20:45 Saturday, Dec 10 |  |
| Morocco | | Portugal/Switzerland |
|  | 00:45 Sunday, Dec 11 |  |
| England | | France |

RESULTS

| | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
|  | 4-1 |  |
| Brazil | | South Korea |
|  | 0-0 |  |
| Morocco | Morocco win 3-0 on penalties. | Spain |



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20th Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival
SUSTAINABLE SUMMITS
kiMff



PHOTO COURTESY: KIMFF

KIMFF 2022 starts tomorrow

This edition of the film fest will screen more than 60 films from 30 countries over five days.

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU

The 20th edition of Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival is scheduled to start on Thursday. Themed 'Sustainable Summits', the festival aims to raise awareness on climate change and its disproportionate impact on countries like Nepal, according to organisers. This year's festival will screen more than 60 films from 30 countries over five days.

The upcoming edition also marks the festival's return to physical screening after a two-year Covid-induced hiatus when the fest went online.

The festival will kick off with a keynote address by the Indian filmmaker, actor and producer Prakash Jha. 'Matto ki Saikil' (or Matto's bicycle), a 95-minute long drama which Jha produced and also features in, will have a special screening on the opening day.

Even though the festival puts the spotlight on the scourge of climate change, it features films portraying a wide range of issues, according to

Nishita Thapa Magar, festival coordinator. "The films explore livelihoods across different societies," she said.

Of the 60 films, 18 will be competing in the International competition and 19 for the best documentary film and fiction film in the Nepal Panorama category.

The festival will take place simultaneously at two venues—Rashtriya Sabha Griha (Hall A) and Nepal Tourism Board (Hall B). The ticket for the whole five-day event is priced at Rs1500, while individual shows will cost Rs100 each. Students with their ID cards can watch each show for half the price.

One can get the ticket at either the festival venue or the physical stores of Vajra Books, Mandala Book Point, Educational Book House, Patan Book Store, Dhokaima Café, and The Yard.

What: KIMFF
Where: Rashtriya Sabha Griha, Hall A (starts 11.30 am)
Nepal Tourism Board, Hall B (starts 11 am)
When: December 8-12
Contact: 01-4440635

Married mothers do more housework when they earn more than their husbands

Woman taking on more of the housework happens not when wives out-earn husbands, but when mothers out-earn fathers.

JOANNA SYRDA
UNIVERSITY OF BATH

The idea of a male "breadwinner" in married heterosexual couples might seem old-fashioned. But as a social construct, the view that a husband's primary role is to earn money has proved to be exceptionally durable.

Research shows that in many countries there is still a strong expectation that men will be the main income provider in the family—and that perceptions of masculinity are linked to this being the case.

So what happens when a woman earns more money than her husband? Studies indicate that couples which move away from the traditional role of a male breadwinner may be seen (by themselves and others) as deviating from the norm. And as this has become more common over recent decades, a theory has emerged that these couples seek to adjust their domestic roles to compensate.

Known as "gender deviance neutralisation", it suggests that when the man earns less than the woman, couples respond to their "non-traditional" income arrangement by becoming decidedly more traditional about who does what in terms of housework. Put simply, higher earning wives end up doing more of the chores.

This is the opposite of what rational economic theories predict, that the partner with lower earning potential will focus more on domestic chores to maximise the overall household standard of living.

So we have two established—and competing—ideas about what happens when wives earn more than their husbands. This is further complicated by a lack of empirical consensus when these theories have been tested using household data on income and time use.

But my research now reveals a key factor when it comes to which theory better applies to housework division and the effect of different earning levels within a couple. And that factor is parenthood.

As most parents will recognise, the birth of a child increases both the domestic workload and the pressure on household income. Babies bring



SHUTTERSTOCK

joy, but also a considerable amount of work and expense.

And surprisingly, it is the first of the theories (as wives earn more they also start doing more of the housework) which better describes the time spent on housework—excluding childcare—when a couple become parents.

Domestic bliss

Children have a significant impact on how their parents deal with time, money and chores. According to one study, the most common area of contention among couples with children is precisely the division of domestic duties and responsibilities. It goes on to suggest that this is primarily due to the clash between the traditional division of labour along gender lines and the modern reality of working mothers often earning more than their male partners do.

But while parenthood could theoretically lead to a more efficient division of labour, in my research I found it crystallised that traditional gendered separation.

Using data gathered over 18 years from over 6,000 dual-income heterosexual couples in the US by the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, I examined the impact of having children on the relationship between how much time both partners spent on housework, and the difference in income between them.

When it came to domestic arrangements, parents showed a marked tendency towards gender deviance neutralisation. For childless couples, the division of housework wasn't related to how much each partner earned.

In fact, these effects are so sizeable that as a mother's relative income increases, so too does her share of the housework.

The striking result of this study was that the woman taking on more of the housework happens not when wives out-earn husbands, but when mothers out-earn fathers. This is not necessarily an intuitive result, as you might expect that the increased financial and domestic demands that come with having children would lead to an efficient,

and not necessarily gendered, division. Specifically, for a wife who earns more than her husband, taking on more domestic duties as well after becoming a mother may not maximise the household's quality of life.

How couples divide the increased domestic workload after becoming parents is an important factor in the earning inequality between women and men over their lifetimes. A pattern once settled upon is often difficult to renegotiate, and even wives who initially earn more than their husbands could see a long-term reduction in their future earnings potential.

And through passing on norms and beliefs to the next generation, these couples' children may well repeat them as adults. One expectation of the "gender revolution" of the 1960s and 70s was that women's increased presence in the workplace and earning potential would be accompanied by men's greater participation in domestic activities. But my research suggests that many parents still have a long way to go.

— The Conversation




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