



THE KATHMANDU POST

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

Nepal's largest selling English daily

Printed simultaneously in Kathmandu, Biratnagar, Bharatpur and Nepalgunj

Vol XXXI No. 248 | 8 pages | Rs.5
Monday, October 30, 2023 | 13-07-2080



33.8° C -1.5° C
Janakpur Jomsom

TODAY

NATIONAL

Concluding the peace process was in focus as Nepal's leaders met UN Secretary General Guterres on Sunday. UML's Oli accused Prime Minister Dahal of delaying the task with moves to 'glorify violence'. Pg 3

OPINION

In the year 2003-04, as the Maoist conflict raged, Nepal saw the highest number of disappearance cases in the world, writes Charan Prasad. Pg 4



MONEY

Women entrepreneurs in Tilottama of Lumbini have many success stories to share. Many produce sanitary pads, make stuffed dolls and run a dairy farm. One had to quit her bank job when she was pregnant. Pg 5

WORLD

Beijing Xiangshan Forum, China's biggest annual show of military diplomacy, started on Sunday, although the Asian power is still missing a defence minister, who typically hosts the event. Pg 6

SPORTS

Mohammed Shami led an inspired bowling display as India hammered England by 100 runs on Sunday to stay unbeaten in the World Cup and all but push the defending champions out of the semi-final race. Pg 7

Nepal are set to begin their World Cup Asia Qualifier campaign with a match against Singapore at the TU Ground on Monday, aiming to book a place at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, their first since 2014. Pg 7



Devotees carry palanquins during the Chakte Narayan Jatra, an exclusive of the Handigaun locale, in Kathmandu on Sunday.

POST PHOTO: SANJOG MANANDHAR

Heart disease, respiratory illnesses are main killers

Nearly 86 percent of the total deaths studied were due to non-communicable diseases and accidents.

ARJUN POUDEL
KATHMANDU, OCT 29

Nearly 32 percent of total deaths in Nepal are attributed to ischemic heart disease and chronic respiratory diseases, a new report by Nepal Health Research Council stated. Ischemic heart disease is a condition in which the heart does not get sufficient blood and oxygen because of narrowed or blocked blood vessels.

Although the study was carried out in two local units—Gosainkunda Rural Municipality of Rasuwa and Mithila Municipality of Dhanusha—with a sample size of 364 deaths that occurred in the Nepali year 2079, the report is deemed to capture the country's overall state.

Of the 364 deaths in the two local units where the study was

conducted, 16.4 percent were attributed to ischemic heart disease and 15.3 percent to chronic respiratory diseases.

Likewise, 9.3 percent of deaths were caused by stroke, a serious life-threatening medical condition that happens when the blood supply to a part of the brain is cut off. According to the report, 5.5 percent of deaths were attributed to other non-communicable diseases, 4.7 percent to road accidents, 4.4 percent to diabetes, 4.4 percent to pneumonia, 3.6 percent to other injuries, 3.3 percent to falls and 2.5 percent to cirrhosis.

In total, 85.7 percent of the deaths that occurred in 12 months of the Nepali year 2079 were attributed to non-communicable diseases. This includes 68.6 percent deaths from several non-communicable diseases and 17.1 percent from injuries.

>> Continued on page 2

United Nations chief calls for justice for insurgency victims

Vows support for peace process while stressing adherence to international standards.

ANIL GIRI
KATHMANDU, OCT 29

The visiting United Nations Secretary General António Guterres sent a strong message to Nepali politicians on Sunday, emphasising the need for Nepal's transitional justice system to meet international standards.

Guterres, who landed in Kathmandu on Sunday morning on a four-day visit, held talks with President Ramchandra Paudel, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Purna Bahadur Khadka and Foreign Minister NP Saud in the afternoon and discussed key priorities of Nepal and the United Nations, including the transitional justice process, which has been in limbo since 2006, effects of climate change, Nepal's contribution to UN peacekeeping, and its graduation from a least developed country.

Addressing media persons after meeting Prime Minister Dahal, Guterres said, "The United Nations stands ready to support Nepal to develop a process that meets international standards, the Supreme Court's rulings, and the needs of victims—and to put it into practice."

At the meeting between Dahal and Guterres, the two discussed ways to conclude the protracted peace process, and the status of the transitional justice-related bills currently in Parliament, among other things.

Since the signing of the comprehensive peace accord in 2006, there have been calls from several quarters including the victims of the decade-long insurgency and international community that Nepal's peace process should align with international standards, it should be vic-



Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal and UN Secretary General António Guterres on Sunday.

tim-centric, and there should be no amnesty for those involved in grave rights abuses.

"The next few years will be decisive, as Nepal prepares to graduate from the least developed country status," said Guterres, "and as it embarks on the final stages of the peace process, transitional justice must help bring peace to victims, families and communities."

In his meeting with Speaker Devraj Ghimire, Deuba, Oli and Saud, the completion of the peace process and seeking the UN's role as facilitator dominated the agenda.

"We have requested the United Nations to help take the peace process to its logical end," Dahal said in his joint press briefing.

>> Continued on page 2

Victims appeal to UN secretary general for justice

KATHMANDU: The high-level visit by the UN Secretary General António Guterres has been an opportunity for the victims from the Maoist insurgency to draw his attention to their long struggle for justice.

In the first week of October, the Conflict Victims Common Platform and the Conflict Victims National Network, two different organisations of the insurgency victims, had urged Guterres to press the government to amend the Enforced Disappearances Enquiry, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act to ensure a victim-centric resolution. (Details on Pg 3)

के लामखुट्टेले तपाईंको परिवारलाई सताइरहेको छ?

यस्ता छन् लामखुट्टेलाई भगाउने ७ उपाय

- पानीका भाँडाहरू ढाक्नुहोस् ।
- डोका र भ्याजलमा जाली लगाउनुहोस् ।
- जमेको पानी हटाउनुहोस्: लामखुट्टेले जमेको पानीमा अण्डा पार्छ, त्यसैले पानी जम्ने नदिनुस्, घरवरपर पानी जम्ने डिब्बा र खाल्डाखुल्डी हटाउनुस् ।
- लामखुट्टे भगाउने निमर सिट्रोनेलाजस्ता विरुवा रोप्नुहोस् ।
- बगैचाहरू सफा र कुँडाककटमुक्त राख्नुहोस् । भाडी र अग्ला घाँसमा लामखुट्टे लुक्छन् ।
- नाली सफा गर्नुस्: लामखुट्टेले पातपतंगार र लेदो भरिएको नालीमा अण्डा पार्न सक्छ ।
- लामखुट्टे भगाउने Buzzz Off जस्ता प्राकृतिक स्प्रेको प्रयोग गर्नुहोस् ।



Protect yourself with NATURE'S POWER

१०० प्रतिशत प्राकृतिक स्प्रे 'Buzzz Off' ले लामखुट्टे र किरा भगाउँछ । यसले लामखुट्टेको टोकाइबाट बचाउने मात्र होइन लामखुट्टेको टोकाइबाट लाग्ने रोगहरू रोक्छ। यो पनि सहयोग पुऱ्याउँछ । 'Buzzz Off' ले बालबालिकासहित सबै जनाका लागि लामखुट्टेबाट सुरक्षित, विश्वसनीय र स्थायी सुरक्षा दिन्छ ।

Buzzz Off मा समावेश सामग्री

- सिट्रोनेला तेल
- नीम तेल
- लवाङको तेल
- युकलिप्टस तेल
- दालचिनी तेल
- सुगन्धित तेल

HIMALAYAN ESSENCE

Contact Information:
Address: Thapathali-11, Kathmandu, Nepal
Call: +977 980-3009299
Email: customerservice@himalayanesence.com.np

100% Natural Protection

1.5C temperature rise cap goal on the line as countries gear up for key climate talks

Ministers meet next week to grapple with such flashpoint issues as future of fossil fuels.



Visitors at the Annapurna Base Camp immediately after the Dashain festival. In Nepal, the most visible effects of climate change are on the mountains.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS, OCT 29

Facing record-shattering temperatures and a geopolitical tinderbox, countries are scrambling to lay the groundwork for crucial UN climate

talks next month tasked with salvaging global warming goals laid out in the landmark Paris deal.

Ministers meet next week in the United Arab Emirates to grapple with flashpoint issues, including the future of fossil fuels and financial solidarity

between rich polluters and nations most vulnerable to the devastating impacts of climate change.

World leaders meeting in Dubai for the COP28 summit between November 30 and December 12 will also have to respond to a damning progress report on the world's commitments under the Paris Agreement.

The 2015 deal aims to limit global warming to well below two degrees Celsius since the pre-industrial era and preferably a safer 1.5C. The results are already in on that "global stocktake": the world is far off track.

"The challenge we face is immense," incoming COP28 president Sultan Al Jaber acknowledged in October.

Keeping the Paris goals in reach needs an enormous collective effort to slash greenhouse gas emissions this decade. But that may be even more challenging in a world roiled by geopolitical storms, with conflict between Israel and Hamas adding to tensions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, United States-China rivalry and a mounting debt crisis.

>> Continued on page 2

NATIONAL

DISTRICT DIGEST

Hyena found dead on riverbank

SALYAN: A headless carcass of a hyena was found on the bank of the Sharada River in ward 1 of Sharada Municipality on Sunday. The government and the International Union for Conservation of Nature have listed hyena as an endangered species. According to Jitendra Mahat, head of the Division Forest Office, Salyan, the hyena, aged about eight years, has been sent for a post-mortem. Further investigation is going on to find out whether the animal died of natural causes or was killed, said Mahat.

Inebriated man arrested with firearm



NEPALGUNJ: Police arrested a 25-year-old man in possession of a musket from Duduwa in Banke district on Sunday. Rahul Singh Sardar of ward 6 of Duduwa Rural Municipality was detained with the musket, said police. The security personnel arrested Rahul, who was under the influence of alcohol, as he intimidated his family members and neighbours brandishing the weapon. Detailed investigation is underway into the case, said Deputy Superintendent of Police Narayan Dangi.

Two people held for murder

DHANUSHA: Police in Dhanusha district arrested two people on the charge of murdering their friend. Pawan Sahani of Aurahi Rural Municipality ward 6 and Harichan Mandal of Janakpurdhham Sub-metropolitan City ward 24 were arrested for allegedly murdering Rupesh Mahara Chamar of the same ward of Janakpurdhham. Chamar's body was found in a paddy near the ISKCON temple in the city on Friday. According to a preliminary police investigation, the duo had killed Chamar by beating him with a bamboo stick. Superintendent of Police Bishwaraj Khadka said Mandal hit Chamar on the head with a bamboo stick following a dispute. Further investigation is underway, he added.

Natural disasters prompt mass exodus from villages

Many settlements in Baglung district in western Nepal have been grappling with outmigration after recurring landslides and floods in recent years.

PRAKASH BARAL
BAGLUNG, OCT 29

On September 2, 2020, landslides in wards 7, 8, and 9 of Dhorpatan Municipality displaced 126 families. Twenty-two people were killed while 17 are still missing. In the wake of the disaster, the National Reconstruction Authority decided to provide the victims housing grant for the reconstruction of their homes.

Among the displaced, at least 100 displaced families were provided with the first instalment of Rs50,000 to rebuild their homes. The NRA provides Rs300,000 in total per victim in three instalments. The first instalment includes Rs50,000, second Rs150,000 and the final is Rs100,000. However, to qualify for succeeding tranches after receiving the first instalment, the displaced must lay the foundation and start construction. In Dhorpatan, only 18 families out of the 100 qualified for the second tranche of the reconstruction budget. According to the local unit, most of the displaced families migrated out of the village instead of rebuilding their homes.

The Monsoon-induced Disaster Risk Reduction and Rescue Committee under the District Administration Office of Baglung has requested that the local government help them collect the money. According to the municipality, most of those who took money are still living in small sheds in Dhorpatan and Bobang areas. With several victims moving out of the affected areas, it is difficult to track their whereabouts, according to the committee.

In the monsoon of 2007, a landslide swept away 12 houses and killed 35 people in Gwalichaur in ward 5 of Badigad Rural Municipality. Haridatta Acharya, a local of Gwalichaur, said that after the incident, several people who were at risk left the village, and along with them, 20 families who were not at risk also left the village.

"Even though the NRA started providing money for reconstruction, that could not stop many people from leaving the village. Currently, the village is almost empty. Since there are fewer people in the village, the government also stopped investing in development infrastructure and services in the village," said Acharya.

In August 2021, a landslide in Tunibot settlement in ward 1 of



This picture taken earlier this month shows an empty house and animal shed in Jaimini Municipality, as people have left due to frequent landslides.

Jaimini Municipality destroyed half a dozen houses and killed two people. Following the landslide, the locals of Tunibot started leaving the village gradually.

According to Bishnu Acharya, ward chair of Jaimini-1, since the landslide in 2021, altogether 45 families have left Tunibot. Now the village looks almost deserted, says Acharya.

"The NRA also assured the victims to help rebuild their houses, but people still left. Tunibot now looks like an abandoned settlement in the middle of a forest. The municipal authorities also tried to convince the locals to stay back, but not many wanted to," said Acharya.

Three years ago, Kaule settlement

Officials say 28 wards of 10 local units in Baglung are at high risk of different kinds of natural disasters.

in ward 5 of Kathekhola Rural Municipality caved in. Around 14 families were relocated by the NRA into an integrated settlement. Along with the people of Kaule, most of the families in the surrounding settlements began leaving their villages and

migrated to Chitwan.

According to the District Disaster Management Committee in Baglung, 28 wards of 10 local units are at high risk of different kinds of disasters, such as landslides and floods, among other things.

Harihar Sharma, the deputy mayor of Jaimini Municipality, said that due to the risk of disaster, people have started migrating from their native villages and efforts from the local government and other government agencies have fallen short in convincing them to stay back.

"Ten years ago, the population of the municipality was 32,046 and it decreased to 24,628 in 2021. Currently, we have no data on how many people

UN chief in Nepal calls for immediate ceasefire in Gaza

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Nepal's peace process is in its final stage. In order to take it to a logical conclusion, we have emphasised the role of the UN secretary general. To facilitate coordination and cooperation with the international community, we hope that the United Nations will extend further support to Nepal," said Dahal.

Guterres arrived in Kathmandu in the midst of the Israel-Hamas war. He has been calling for a ceasefire between the warring sides to end the suffering in the Gaza Strip.

"As Guterres is familiar with Nepal's political climate, we had cordial and frank exchanges," said Dahal. "And we discussed several issues of mutual interest as well as coordination and facilitation from the international community on several issues, particularly in mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change. We also discussed ways to reduce the impact of climate change in Nepal."

"I am here in Kathmandu to strengthen the deep friendship between Nepal and the United Nations. This country has a long and proud tradition of championing peace and multilateralism. And the United Nations is hugely grateful to Nepal for your support for multilateral solutions backed up by the enormous contribution you make to peacekeeping missions around the world," said Guterres.

"Nepal's progress over the past 20 years has been astonishing," he added. "You have become a republic, established peace, and thrown yourselves behind the Sustainable Development Goals and climate action."

Touching on the issue of climate change, Guterres said, Nepal is also caught in a blizzard of global crises not of its making: the aftermath of the Covid pandemic, inflation, and the enormous threat posed by climate change.

"Much more international action is needed. Developed countries must step up to support sustainable development, and help developing economies including Nepal to tackle the climate crisis. On this trip, I will visit the Himalayas to see for myself the terrible impact of the climate crisis on the glaciers."

He is visiting the Everest region as well as the Annapurna Base Camp in order to see first hand the implications of the climate crisis and will interact with the local communities to get a sense of how livelihoods have been affected.

"The situation is dire and it is accelerating. Nepal has lost close to a third of its ice in just over thirty years," he said.

"And glaciers are melting at record rates. The impact on communities is devastating and I will meet local people in the Himalayas to hear directly from them... I will also travel to Pokhara and to Lumbini, to reflect on Lord Buddha's teachings of peace and non-violence, which are more relevant than ever in our deeply troubled world," said Guterres.

This is his second visit to Nepal after 2007, when came the chief of the United Nations

refugee agency and visited the Bhutanese refugee camp.

"And I want to explore how the United Nations and Nepal can work together even more to solve problems, boost prospects, and improve international support," Guterres said while assuring support to Nepal in the fight against the climate crisis, adding, "though Nepal is a friend to the world, the world must be a better friend to Nepal."

Guterres called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. Thousands of innocent people including children have been killed on both sides since a surprise attack by Hamas on southern Israel on October 7 and retaliatory action by Israel.

Guterres, who arrived in Kathmandu after meeting Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani, reiterated his call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza.

"I reiterate my appeal for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages, and the delivery of sustained humanitarian relief at a scale that meets the needs of the people of Gaza," he said in a statement after meeting Prime Minister Dahal.

"We must join forces to end this nightmare for the people of Gaza, Israel and all those affected around the world, including here in Nepal," he added.

"These are difficult and tense times. I know that even though the conflict in the Middle East is thousands of miles away, it has hit very close to home for the people of Nepal. I extend my deepest condolences to the families of the 10 Nepali students killed in the terror attacks by Hamas in Israel on 7 October, and my best wishes for the safe return of Mr Bipin Joshi, who is missing," said Guterres. "I have just arrived here from Qatar and will continue to insist on the immediate and unconditional release of all the hostages in Gaza," he added.

"The situation in Gaza is growing more desperate by the hour. I regret that instead of a critically needed humanitarian pause, Israel has intensified its military operations. The number of civilians who have been killed and injured is totally unacceptable."

Despite repeated calls from different quarters for a ceasefire, Israel has not stopped its military offensive on Gaza.

"The protection of civilians is paramount. The Laws of War establish clear rules to protect human life and respect humanitarian concerns. Those laws cannot be contorted for the sake of expediency. The world is witnessing a humanitarian catastrophe taking place before our eyes."

More than two million people, with nowhere safe to go, are being denied the essentials for life—food, water, shelter and medical care, while being subjected to relentless bombardment, Guterres added.

"I urge all those with responsibility to step back from the brink."

Ongoing wars may jeopardise 1.5C climate goal

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

This year has seen a catalogue of climate extremes and the highest global temperatures in human history, stoked by the El Nino weather phenomenon that is warming temperatures.

That may serve to focus minds, making clear that the dangerous changes to Earth's fragile life support systems are already in motion.

The question is whether countries perceive climate change as a "collective threat", Alden Meyer of think tank E3G told AFP.

The climate talks, which will kick off with a two-day world leaders summit, are expected to be the biggest ever, with predictions of 80,000 attendees.

Observers have raised concerns that eye-catching initiatives on the sidelines of the meeting could obscure the main negotiations, which this year should reflect the poor performance on the Paris goals.

"The risk is that we will be sold a whole raft of declarations and side coalitions," said Lola Vallejo, of the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations.

The focus should instead be on "an ambitious agreement on the stocktake of the Paris Agreement, including fossil fuels and loss and damage", she said.

The UAE has proposed targets to triple global

renewable energy capacity, double the annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030 and called for massive scaling up of climate finance.

Rich polluters are under pressure to finally meet their promise to provide \$100 billion in funding by 2020 for poorer nations to prepare for climate extremes and fund the energy transition.

An agreement to help vulnerable countries cope with climate "loss and damage" is also a key point of contention.

The flagship achievement of last year's COP27 in Egypt, it was mired in disagreement during recent talks to flesh out the details—like who pays, how much and the fund structure.

But the biggest tussle is likely to be over weaning the world off coal, oil and gas—the main drivers of global warming.

Jaber, who heads the UAE state-owned oil firm ADNOC, has said he believes the phasing down of fossil fuels is "inevitable", without specifying when. ADNOC last year announced plans to invest \$150 billion in oil and gas expansion over five years.

Meyer said technology to capture emissions at source or remove them from the atmosphere touted by the UAE and others are not anywhere near at a scale to make a significant contribu-

tion in the years to 2030.

"You can have a pathway to 1.5C or you can expand oil and gas production. You can't have both," he told AFP.

"The UAE is trying to pretend it doesn't have to choose."

There are some positives. The International Energy Agency has said world fossil fuel demand is forecast to peak this decade due to the "spectacular" growth of cleaner energy technologies and electric cars, helped by ambitious policies in China, the United States and Europe among others.

But that is not enough. On our current trajectory the world will still warm by far more than 2C.

With nearly 1.2C of warming so far, scientists warn some impacts are hitting harder and faster than expected.

Climate change should be viewed as an "existential threat", according to a recent study by prominent researchers.

Co-author Johan Rockstrom, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, said he now expects the world to blow past the 1.5C threshold, before attempting to drag temperatures back down again by 2100.

"That will be a very jumpy ride, a real gauntlet for humanity," he told AFP.

Nepal ignoring non-communicable illnesses: Experts

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Communicable, maternal, neonatal and nutritional diseases were responsible for 14.3 percent of the total deaths.

The report shows that around 88 percent of deaths in Mithila Municipality were attributed to non-communicable diseases. This includes 70 percent from several non-communicable diseases and 17.9 percent from injuries. Communicable diseases were responsible for just 12.1 percent of deaths in the municipality.

Changing lifestyle is responsible for rise in non-communicable diseases, say doctors.

However, in Gosainkunda Rural Municipality, the mortality-related disease burden differs from that in Mithila Municipality, with 62.1 percent attributed to non-communicable diseases, 13.3 percent to injuries and 24.6 percent to communicable diseases.

The proportion of deaths is higher in males at 57.9 percent and in individuals aged over 60 years,



SHUTTERSTOCK

at 64.7 percent.

The study shows only 71.3 percent of deaths were registered and 71.5 percent of deaths occurred at home. The study was carried out using a verbal autopsy.

Non-communicable diseases surpassed both morbidity and mortality-related burdens in Nepal

long ago.

Several studies, including the 'Non-communicable Disease Risk Factors: STEPS Survey Nepal-2019' jointly carried out by the World Health Organization, the Ministry of Health and Population and the Nepal Health Research Council, and others, show that the preva-

lence and risk of non-communicable diseases surpass those of communicable diseases.

The reports show alarming signs on several fronts including alcohol consumption, tobacco use, salt and junk food intake, vegetable and fruit intake, and the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

They attribute the rise in non-communicable diseases to changing age structure and lifestyle, such as increasing sedentary behaviour, tobacco and alcohol use, and unhealthy diets.

However, authorities concerned have been slow to recognise the magnitude of the growing burden of non-communicable diseases, according to public health experts.

"Multiple studies show that the burden of non-communicable diseases and resulting deaths has surpassed that of communicable diseases. So we must increase investment in mitigating non-communicable diseases," said Dr Megnath Dhimal, chief researcher at the Council. "It is high time for aid agencies to invest in reducing the growing burden of non-communicable diseases in Nepal."

Dhimal informed that a study carried out in Makawanpur district in the past showed similar results.

Korean doctors see income surge amid intensifying physician crunch

□ LEE JAEUN
SEOUL, OCT 29

Amid a shortage of physicians and the second-lowest doctor-to-population ratio among the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries, South Korean doctors have seen a substantial increase in their income, making them some of the highest earners in the medical field across surveyed OECD nations.

The Korean government plans to address the country's doctor shortage by increasing medical school enrollment quotas, a move prompted primarily by a market structure that limits the number of physicians through such limits on medical school enrollment.

According to the 2023 OECD Health Statistics report, doctors in Korea out-earn their counterparts in 27 other member countries that submitted relevant data. Following Korea, the top earners are found in the Netherlands, Germany, Ireland and the UK. The US was among the countries that did not provide data.

According to the report, the annual earnings of salaried specialists in Korea averaged \$192,749 in 2020 when adjusted for purchasing power parity, which factors in local living costs. This figure surpassed the OECD average by 60 percent. Meanwhile, salaries for Korean general practitioners ranked sixth.

In 2020, self-employed doctors in Korea earned an annual income of \$298,800, taking PPP into consideration. Of the seven countries that provided data, this figure ranked second behind Belgium, where self-employed doctors earned an average of

\$337,931 in 2021.

Korea is also seeing a steep growth in doctors' income compared to other professional occupations, according to data released by the National Tax Service. The average annual income of self-employed specialists, including physicians, practitioners of traditional medicine and dentists, was 269 million won (\$218,000) as of 2021. The figure stood at 173 million won in 2014, showing a 55.5 percent increase. In contrast, the average annual income of lawyers in Korea showed only a 12.7

4.5 clinicians per 1,000 individuals, respectively.

Korea also reported a low number of medical school graduates, with 7.3 per 100,000 people, ranking third lowest after Israel and Japan. This figure is nearly half of the OECD average of 14 graduates per 100,000 people.

Despite the limited number of medical school graduates, the demand for medical services in Korea remains elevated. In 2021, Korean nationals sought outpatient care consultations at an average of 15.7 times per person the highest frequency among OECD nations and 2.6 times the OECD average of 5.9.

The Korean government seeks to increase the medical school enrollment quota, which has been fixed at 3,058 since 2006 due to fierce opposition from doctors' groups. If approved, the new quota would take effect starting in 2025.

Health Minister Cho Kyoo-hong said Friday that the government would allow some universities to increase the quota in 2025 "if they have room to increase their capacity." "Given the pressing nature of this matter, we will aim to increase the quotas for existing medical schools. We will also continue to review the plan to open new schools in the provinces," Cho added.

The Ministry of Education announced on Sunday that it would send an official letter to 40 medical schools nationwide and conduct a survey related to the expansion of admissions quota over two weeks. At least two-thirds of medical schools nationwide are expected to request an increase in the enrollment quota, according to multiple sources.

—The Korea Herald

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
ANN
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

percent increase over the same period. Lawyers earned an average of 102 million won in 2014, which increased to an average of 115 million won in 2021.

Korean doctors' comparatively higher salaries when compared to other OECD nations and other professions appears to stem from the relative scarcity of medical professionals in the face of significant demand for health care services.

In 2021, Korea had 2.6 active clinicians per 1,000 people, including practitioners of Korean traditional medicine. This figure surpasses only Mexico's 2.5 clinicians among OECD member states, according to the report. When traditional medicine practitioners are excluded, Korea ranks at the bottom among OECD nations. Leading the list were Austria, Norway and Germany with 5.4, 5.2 and



A man makes his way home carrying a load of grass at Lalmatiya, Dang in this recent photo.

RSS

Conflict victims draw UN chief's attention to their plight

Seek to meet visiting secretary general in person. Successive governments have remained reluctant to make good on the promises made in the 2006 peace accord, they say.

□ BINOD GHIMIRE
KATHMANDU, OCT 29

The high-level visit by the UN Secretary General António Guterres has been an opportunity for the victims from the Maoist insurgency to draw his attention to their long struggle for justice.

In the first week of October, the Conflict Victims Common Platform and the Conflict Victims National Network, two different organisations of the victims, had urged Guterres to press the government to amend the Enforced Disappearances Enquiry, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act to ensure a victim-centric resolution. They had written to him through the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Kathmandu a week before his visit, which was slated to begin on October 13. The trip was postponed following the escalation in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

They had jointly urged the UN chief to utilise the powers of his office to reiterate to the government of Nepal the importance of expediting the resolution of Nepal's longstanding transitional justice concerns, amend the Act with the full incorporation of our concerns, ensure victim-centric and credible transitional justice process that thousands of victims finally receive the truth and justice they deserve.

In their letter, the victims recalled how successive governments remained reluctant to implement the promises of the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement to end impunity, uncover the truth, and respect victims' rights to justice.

"As a result of the absence of substantial justice, truth and reparative measures including adequate compensation, individuals affected by the conflict and their families have endured profound challenges in many aspects of their lives. Tragically, some of them have lost their lives while pursuing justice, and their descendants have taken up the cause in their memory while some are tragically living without treatment. Thousands of victims of murder, disappearance, sexual violence, beating and mutilation, torture and abduction, and hostage and displacement, longing for truth, justice, reparation and non-recurrence are tired of the repeated commitments that are yet not duly fulfilled," the victims said.

A week later, another organisation of the victims urged Guterres to use his office to help expedite the long-stalled process. "In the absence of effective measures to address harms we suffered, they are compounded and multiplied as each year passes. So many victims are now living in situations of extreme deprivation, unable to meet their basic needs. In this context, the Kathmandu-based prosecution versus amnesty debate further frustrates the grassroots victims. Any intervention that further delays the process would have an adverse impact on the needs of the victim. We therefore urge the secretary general to use his good office to expedite the process," read one of the points of the memorandum submitted by National Network of Victims and Survivors of Serious Human Rights Abuses (NNVS) through the UN resident coordinator's office on October 12.

The NNVS said while the amendment bill to the Act is progressive, it still has a couple of issues that need to be addressed. "We therefore urge the secretary general to use his good office to encourage all stakeholders of the process to expedite the parliamentary process to pass the bill

without any further delay," it said.

On the eve of Guterres' visit to Kathmandu on Sunday, Discharged People's Liberation Army, an association of former Maoist child combatants, also drew his attention to use his position and influence to exert pressure on the government of Nepal to fulfill its legal and humanitarian obligations and respond to their demands. "The United Nations, having certified our presence through the UNMIN verification exercise, has a duty to ensure that we child soldiers are regarded as true stakeholders in the peace process," reads a point in the statement issued by Lenin Bista, founding chair of the Discharged People's Liberation Army.

It has urged the UN chief to call upon the Nepal government to rectify its position that denies the existence of child combatants during the 1995-2006 conflict, and to provide appropriate support and resources for their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

"Upon your return to New York, secretary general, we ask you to keep engaged with the matter of child soldiers of Nepal, so that the government may fulfil any commitments it does make to you. We ask you to stand in solidarity with us, the former Maoist child soldiers of Nepal, as we struggle to fashion a future for ourselves—international humanitarian law and natural justice demand nothing less," the statement further reads.

The victims said while they believe that the UN secretary general understands their appeal, they were looking forward to meeting him in person to draw his attention to the matter first-hand.

"We welcome his statement that the UN was ready to support Nepal to develop the transitional justice process to the international standards, the Supreme Court's rulings and the needs of victims," Suman Adhikari, founding chair of the Conflict Victims Common Platform, told the Post.

"However, we are disappointed that he is not meeting the victims and civil society, but only the government representatives."

Concluding peace process in focus as leaders meet Guterres

□ POST REPORT
KATHMANDU, OCT 29

Visiting United Nations Secretary General António Guterres on Sunday called on President Ramchandra Paudel, Speaker Devraj Ghimire, Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba, CPN-UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Purna Bahadur Khadka and discussed a wide range of issues including Nepal's protracted peace process, effects of climate change, and Nepal's contribution towards UN peacekeeping operations.

During the meeting with Guterres, President Paudel said that Nepal's role in climate change is negligible and asked the United Nations to be serious about the negative impacts of climate change.

He also urged Guterres to hold responsible the developed nations who are most responsible for the climate crisis. He demanded that the UN should take the lead so that the developed nations would fulfil their duties, according to a statement issued by the president's office.

"We are not the reason behind the climate crisis but due to excessive carbon emissions by other nations, we are mired in the crisis. The United Nations should tell those nations to fulfil their duties," Paudel reportedly told the visiting secretary general. "We are facing it, the whole world is facing it, the entire humanity is facing it. It can only be stopped by our joint efforts and the United Nations should take a lead."

Paudel also touched upon the issue of Nepal's unfinished peace

process and said that as per the spirit of the comprehensive peace accord, the process will be concluded by compensating the victims and addressing the concerns raised by the UN and following the principles of reconciliation.

Guterres said his Nepal visit has three agendas—successful conclusion of the peace process, the climate crisis and discussion on how Nepal is the appropriate place to spread the message for ending the inequality that is the major cause of the instability across the world. That is why I visited Nepal, Guterres told Paudel, according to the statement.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister Dahal fondly recalled his meetings with the secretary general in Rome and New York and thanked him for visiting Nepal.

Dahal also reiterated Nepal's commitment to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter and reaffirmed its faith in multilateralism with the United Nations at the centre, according to the statement.

He highlighted Nepal's inclusive and peaceful transition to a federal democratic republic and UN's support to Nepal's unique and home-grown peace process.

Dahal also thanked the United Nations for its continued support to Nepal's development efforts, including poverty reduction, education, child and maternal health, gender empowerment, disaster resilience, reducing the impact of climate change, and implementation of sustainable development goals.

During the talks, Guterres recalled his earlier visit to Nepal in a different capacity. He also acknowl-

edged Nepal's support to the UN's initiatives and programmes.

"The promulgation of the constitution in 2015 and the successive two cycles of democratic elections at all three tiers of the federal system reaffirm that we are on the right path, a path of peace, stability, democracy, and development," Dahal said at a banquet hosted on Sunday evening. "As we gear up for the concluding phase of the remaining leg of the peace process, I am confident that we will accomplish it in an equally successful way and present a successful example of transition from conflict to peace and democracy."

Dahal also told Guterres that two bills related to transitional justice will pass Parliament soon. The transitional justice process is guided by the peace accord, directives of the Supreme Court, Nepal's international commitments, and concerns raised by the victims and ground realities, Dahal further told Guterres, according to the statement.

In his meeting with House Speaker Devraj Ghimire, Guterres discussed matters related to the Nepal-UN relations. Ghimire praised the role played by the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) to take the peace process forward. "Nepal is committed to bringing the transitional justice process to a logical conclusion through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission of Inquiry into Disappeared Persons," Ghimire said.

Meanwhile, Congress chief Deuba in his meeting with Guterres appreciated the role played by the UN in advancing the peace process.

He said consultations were going on with the stakeholders to conclude it.

But UML chair Oli had a different take on the peace process. He told Guterres that the peace process had been delayed because of Prime Minister Dahal. Oli said the peace process had faced a setback due to the promotion of violent activities, according to UML leader Pradeep Gyawali, who also met with the visiting UN chief.

Dahal's decision to celebrate the launch of the People's War as a national day had made the peace process difficult, Gyawali, a UML deputy general secretary and former foreign minister, said after the meeting.

Oli said that transitional justice should not be "transitional injustice".

"That should be resolved by taking the victims into account," Gyawali said, citing Oli's discussion with Guterres. "We want to finish it as soon as possible. But the prime minister, who used to be the rebel leader, should play a role in ending all these issues. But his activities of promoting and glorifying violence have created friction. The victims are worried."

Oli told the visiting UN chief that there should be no amnesty for serious crimes, Nepal's international commitments should be taken into account, and the verdicts of the Supreme Court be respected.

On Sunday evening, the prime minister hosted a banquet in honour of the UN secretary general and his delegation. Guterres also visited Patan Durbar Square, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is scheduled to travel to the Everest region and Pokhara on Monday.



United Nations Secretary General António Guterres delivers a speech at a banquet hosted by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal at Singha Durbar, Kathmandu on Sunday.


Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC)
Kantipath, Kathmandu, Nepal

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

FOR

**Purchase of Three STOL Aircraft
International Competitive Bidding (ICB)**

Single Stage: Two Envelope Bidding Procedure

Contract Identification No: NAC-PURCHASE/ 01/STOL/23-24

Date of Publication of Notice: 22nd October, 2023
Last date of Submission: 5th December, 2023

Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) invites all interested Aircraft Manufacturers to submit their sealed proposals for the "Purchase of Three STOL Aircraft". The sealed proposals must reach at Corporate Department, Nepal Airlines Corporation, Kantipath, Kathmandu, Nepal within 5th December, 2023 (12:00 hrs Nepalese standard time). The sealed proposals received after last date and time of submission shall not be accepted. For more details, please visit NAC's website: <http://www.nepalairlines.com.np/home/notices>

NAC reserves all rights to accept or reject all or any proposals received without giving any reason whatsoever.

OPINION



OUR VIEW

The vote against Israel

Having faced multiple blockades, Nepal cannot be indifferent to the plight of the people of Gaza.

Following the overthrow of the hidebound Rana regime and establishment of the country's first democratic government in 1959, Nepal was eager to expand its diplomatic wings. In the eyes of the new Prime Minister BP Koirala, if his landlocked country was to overcome its geopolitical constraints, it was vital to reach out to possible friends all around the globe. Meanwhile, Israel, since it formally came into being in 1948, was desperately looking to build support for the Jewish state that had sprouted in the heart of the Muslim world. So Koirala did not hesitate to establish diplomatic ties with Israel in 1960, making Nepal the first country in South Asia to recognise "the right of Israel to exist within secure and internationally recognised boundaries," which, in fact, remains Nepal's official stand to this day. Apparently, Israeli diplomats rather ruefully recounted the same history with their counterparts in Kathmandu after Nepal, on Friday, joined six other South Asian states to vote in favour of a United Nations resolution calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities and unhindered humanitarian access in the Gaza Strip. (India abstained from the vote.)

The UN General Assembly adopted the resolution titled "Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations," with 120 nations voting in its favour, 14 against, and 45 abstaining. Clarifying its reason to abstain, India said the resolution failed to mention the October 7 'terrorist' Hamas attack on Israel, a position other abstainers and nay voters also took. But then Pakistan's ambassador to the UN Munir Akram was bang on that the resolution had made no mention of any of the belligerents in the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict. If Hamas was to be mentioned, so should Israel, he reasoned. Who was or was not mentioned in the motion is a side issue though. What the Hamas terrorists did on October 7, killing up to 1,400 Israelis in cold blood, is inexcusable and those who partook in the crime must be made to pay. Yet the fact remains that over 7,000 Palestinians, many of them women and children, have already been killed in retaliatory Israeli bombardments in the Gaza Strip. The fatalities in Gaza could soon multiply as Israel begins its ground offensive.

Israel has cruelly cut off supplies of vital fuel and food into the area, even as it arbitrarily continues to drop bombs. Nepal, as a nation precariously sandwiched between two big powers, and one that has itself witnessed multiple blockades, cannot remain indifferent to the plight of the 2.3 million 'blockaded' people of Gaza who have absolutely nowhere to go. Israel's disproportionate response to the Hamas atrocities is inhumane and unbecoming of a democratic state. Such brazen and indiscriminate attacks and the retaliation they will invariably entail will make Israel even more unsafe. The West Asian country has been emerging as a lucrative job destination for Nepalis, and Nepal has learned from it, especially in the area of agriculture modernisation. The help extended by the Israeli government in the timely and respectful repatriation of the bodies of the 10 Nepalis killed in the October 7 Hamas attack is also laudable. Moreover, Nepal is and will continue to remain Israel's friend. But Israel will also do well to listen to wise words of counsel of its old friends like Nepal.

THEIR VIEW

Crucial concerns

Students and their parents should be fully aware of how their data will be used and shared.

In a rapidly evolving world, it is essential for nations to modernise their education systems. One such step toward educational transformation is the 'One Nation, One ID' initiative of the centre, which seeks to introduce the Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR). This programme holds the potential to revolutionise the academic journey of students, enhance access to opportunities and streamline administrative processes for educational institutions. However, as with any ground-breaking initiative, there are pertinent questions and concerns that warrant attention. On the surface, the APAAR initiative seems like a significant leap forward. It offers students a centralised platform to access and manage their academic records, from pre-primary to higher education. This is a crucial move towards making education more organised and accessible for millions of students in India. One of the most compelling aspects of APAAR is its potential to simplify administrative processes for educational institutions. Standardised data and a reliable repository can reduce errors in databases and variations in data formats. This can lead to more efficient operations and better management of academic records. For schools and colleges already grappling with a multitude of tasks, this could be a welcome change. Furthermore, the system can improve students' access to a range of opportunities. With their academic data readily available and reliable, students may find it easier to secure scholarships, job placements and enrolment in educational programmes. This has the potential to level the playing field, allowing students from all backgrounds to access opportunities that may have been elusive before.

However, as we delve deeper into the APAAR initiative, some crucial concerns emerge. Privacy and data security are paramount. Its stated objectives allude to the sharing of students' academic data with entities involved in various educational activities. While this might be beneficial in many cases, it opens a Pandora's box of privacy and security concerns. The data could end up in the wrong hands and students' personal information could become vulnerable. Moreover, the consent process needs a closer look. There is evidently a lack of clarity about the implications of consent and an apparent effort to make it mandatory, covertly if not overtly. Informed decision-making is vital. Students and their parents should be fully aware of how their data will be used and shared. They must also have the choice to opt out with their data secure. This lack of transparency could create apprehension among those being asked to sign the consent form because transparency and clarity in the consent process are non-negotiable. Students and their academic records are too precious to be mishandled. Finally, there are implementation challenges to consider. Educational institutions, particularly those with well-established databases, might face difficulties in integrating this new system. Overhauling existing procedures and data management systems is no small feat and this transition must be as smooth as possible to avoid disruptions.

— The Statesman (India)/ANM

The success of the transitional justice process lies in the action of the House committee.

CHARAN PRASAI



Addressing the 78th United Nations General Assembly, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" pledged that there would be no blanket amnesty for serious human rights violations and that the ongoing transitional justice process would be victim-centric. He also appealed to the international community for its goodwill and support for the final phase of the peace process.

However, the ground reality is different. A credible transitional justice (TJ) process is yet to begin. The first item on the agenda, the TRC Amendment Bill which is the foundation for driving the process, is still pending in Parliament and is unlikely to follow the stipulated track. Therefore, it's doubtful the prime minister's promise to the world body to abide by the verdict of the apex court, meet international standards and embrace the feedback from broader consultations with the stakeholders will be fulfilled.

The TJ mechanism, Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappeared Persons that were formed for two consecutive terms failed to address a single case out of the over 60,000 cases registered because of political influence. Due to lack of a credible appointment process, they were unable to obtain support from the conflict victims and human rights community, and the international community, including the UN. Their eight-year terms were wasted yielding no results.

Transitional justice

Among the three pillars of the peace process, two—the integration of Maoist combatants in the Nepal Army and the promulgation of a new constitution—have been completed. But one of the major pillars—transitional justice—has been stalled for the last 17 years since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement on November 21, 2006. The rights of the conflict victims and the principles of transitional justice, namely truth, justice, reparation, and institutional reform ensuring non-occurrence, have been undermined. This process has fallen victim to political consensus. It has been trapped in the making and breaking of governments.

A 'Nepali' peace process



POST FILE PHOTO

Undoubtedly, Nepal's peace process is a home-grown initiative, as stated by Dahal at the UN. With various exercises and initiatives, it has developed a legitimate "Nepali model" track following international standards, with the rulings of the Supreme Court and vigorous engagement of civil society under the leadership of the conflict victims community.

The special contributions of human rights defenders Daman Nath Dhungana and the late Padma Ratna Tuladhar are worth mentioning here. The role of the international community—especially the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, International Committee of the Red Cross and diplomatic missions in Nepal—was also crucial.

During the year 2003-04 as the Maoist conflict raged, Nepal saw the highest number of disappearance cases in the world. Both the government and rebel leaders committed wrongdoings. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the international human rights community, especially Amnesty International, played a supporting role in responding to urgent actions to save their lives. The Red Cross communicated with the families of disappeared people and rescued security personnel and government officials.

During the autocratic rule of King Gyanendra, civil society constituted a Unilateral Ceasefire Civil Society Monitoring Committee headed by Shambhu Thapa, the then president of the Nepal Bar Association, to prevent unilateral attacks from the government. Following the declaration of a

ceasefire, the government constituted a National Monitoring Committee on Code of Conduct for Ceasefire led by Dr Birendra Prasad Mishra. The committee facilitated the creation of an environment for the government and the Maoists to reach an agreement in the presence of the UN representative Ian Martin.

Prime Minister Dahal, in his address at the UN, reiterated that the peace process was nationally owned and that it was on the top of his political agenda. By now, he must also have understood that the precondition for success lies in "earning the trust" of the conflict victims. And the entry point for building trust is having a credible search committee and process for selecting the officials of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappeared Persons, free from politics.

The committee should be an independent body with five members—a former chief justice, chair or representative of the National Human Rights Commission, former judge of the Supreme Court and two civil society members, one of them a woman. This is a key demand from the stakeholders to make changes to the Amendment Bill in Parliament.

Second, this process requires ownership of the stakeholders, especially the victims, with a set standard of national and international legitimacy. The Supreme Court orders, international standards, Comprehensive Peace Agreement and promises made to the victims community must be honoured. An incomplete TRC Amendment Bill

has been forwarded to the parliamentary Law, Justice and Human Rights Committee by its subcommittee. Both houses will eventually pass the bill with a majority vote.

Pending issues

The current official visit to Nepal of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, has been seen to be crucial for moving the TJ process forward in the right direction. It is believed that his good offices will inspire key political players and policy-makers to get the TRC Amendment Bill enacted with the set standards addressing the conflict victims' satisfaction.

The success of the TJ process lies in the action of the House committee. Some of the major pending issues are: Will the amended TRC Act be able to earn the trust of the victims? Can serious crimes like killings, torture, sexual violence, abduction, crimes against humanity and war crimes be categorised as "no amnesty"? Will the selection committee be free from political influence? Will a Special Court be established as a politically free independent entity? Are there sufficient law provisions to prosecute the perpetrators? Will the recommendations of the commissions be mandatory? Are there answers to the issues of child soldiers and the war crimes committed against security personnel and Maoist combatants and their families? Will the statute of limitations for filing cases be removed?

Prasai is a human rights defender and coordinator of the Accountability Watch Committee.

Antibiotic shortages and AMR

Antimicrobial resistance was directly responsible for an estimated 1.27 million deaths in 2019.

MANICA BALASEGARAM



The overuse of antibiotics is now widely recognised as one of the main factors contributing to antimicrobial resistance (AMR)—often called the "silent pandemic." But what is less well known is that shortages of antibiotics also play a role in fueling AMR.

Scarce supplies of pediatric amoxicillin, used to treat Strep A, made headlines in the United Kingdom late last year, as a surge of infections left at least 19 children dead. Far from being an outlier, however, such shortfalls are common and pervasive, affecting countries across the world, and their consequences for both individuals' health and AMR's spread can be dire. That is because shortages of first-line antibiotics often lead to overuse of those that are specialised or kept in reserve for emergencies. Not only may these substitutes be less effective, but reliance on them increases the risk of drug resistance developing and infections becoming more difficult to treat in the long run.

Already one of the world's biggest killers, AMR is on the rise. In 2019, it was directly responsible for an estimated 1.27 million deaths—more than HIV/AIDS and malaria combined—and associated with 4.95 million more. So far, the global response to this growing crisis has focused mainly on trying to outpace drug-resistant bacteria through the development of new antibiotics. But in the short term, there is ample room to reduce the number of AMR deaths, as well as AMR's impact on health more broadly, by addressing some of the causes of shortages and improving access to appropriate treatments.

The same market failures that trig-



SHUTTERSTOCK

gered the global AMR crisis are also largely responsible for antibiotic shortages. Compared to other drugs, antibiotics are often more complex and more costly to manufacture, have stricter regulatory requirements and are less profitable. As a result, many pharmaceutical companies have significantly reduced or stopped antibiotic research and development over the last few decades.

Not only are very few new antibiotics being developed, but it has also become less attractive to produce those already

on the market, partly owing to supply-chain bottlenecks and volatility. All it takes is a disruption in the supply of an ingredient or a quality-control problem, or a supplier increasing prices or halting production entirely, to bring the global supply chain of these medicines to a standstill.

But just as important has been the equally volatile demand for antibiotics caused by sudden outbreaks of bacterial infections and poor management of national supplies, which contributes to stockouts. While shortages are not

uncommon in the pharmaceutical industry, they are 42 percent more likely for antibiotics than they are for other drugs.

Although precise numbers that would reveal the scale of the problem are difficult to obtain, much of this uncertainty could be avoided with better market intelligence. Even though antibiotics are less lucrative than other drugs, pharmaceutical companies can still turn a profit—if they have accurate data. Improved forecasting can thus reduce risks for manufacturers and provide a stronger incentive to scale up production and expand their markets.

There is also plenty of room for improvement in the way that countries—particularly lower-income countries—procure, register and manage these vital drugs. By expanding the capacity of national regulatory authorities, for example, it would be easier to track and coordinate supplies and create stockpiles to build greater resilience. All of this would also help provide more certainty for drug makers.

SECURE, an initiative led by the World Health Organization and the Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership (of which I am executive director), aims to work with countries to improve access to essential antibiotics. That involves exploring how national regulatory authorities could serve as centralised hubs to help monitor, prevent and respond to shortages. Eventually, SECURE intends to create more buoyant and competitive markets by encouraging countries to pool procurement, ensuring a more reliable supply.

Shortages of antibiotics are a serious problem for all countries, but there is plenty that can—and should—be done to prevent them. Given the accelerating spread of AMR and the long lead-in time to develop antibiotics, we can't afford to continue overlooking the problem. Equally important, efforts to address scarce supplies could help ensure that, when new drugs become available, they reach the people who need them.

Balasegaram is the executive director of Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership.

— Project Syndicate

FOREX

US Dollar	133.50
Euro	141.05
Pound Sterling	161.97
Swiss Franc	147.97
Australian Dollar	84.57
Canadian Dollar	96.24
Singapore Dollar	97.41
Japanese Yen	8.92
Chinese Yuan	18.24
Saudi Arab Riyal	35.58
Qatari Riyal	36.67
Thai Bhat	3.70
UAE Dhiram	36.35
Malaysian Ringgit	27.94
Korean Won	9.84

Exchange rates fixed by Nepal Rastra Bank

SHARES

Nepse (in percent) **1,875.65** pts **-1.48%**

HIGHEST LOSERS					
SONA	NHPC	NILPF	NICCF	IHL	CHDC
-10%	-7.92%	-5.7%	-5.33%	-5.33%	-5.25%
MODERATE LOSERS					
HEI	RFPL	MKHC	MHL	GCIL	BGWT
-5.14%	-4.98%	-4.95%	-4.76%	-4.66%	-4.55%
MODERATE GAINERS					
BOKDBI	BHL	SBDS7	RSDC	JSLBB	HHL
1.92%	1.97%	1.99%	2.16%	2.3%	2.78%
HIGHEST GAINERS					
SPC	SPHL	BPW	GHL	CYCL	USHEC
3.03%	3.67%	5.62%	5.71%	6.6%	8.99%

BULLION PRICE PER TOLA

Fine Gold	Rs 117,000
Silver	Rs 1,415

SOURCE: FENEGOSIDA

BRIEFING

India sets \$800 per ton minimum export price on onions till end-December

NEW DELHI: India has set a floor price of \$800 per metric ton minimum export price on onions up to December 31, the government said on Saturday, in a bid to ensure adequate domestic availability and to stabilise prices. "The measure has been taken to maintain sufficient availability of onion to domestic consumers at affordable prices as the quantity of stored rabi 2023 onion is declining," the government said in a statement, referring to crops sown in winter. The government also announced procurement of 200,000 tons of onions for its buffer, over and above the 500,000 tons already procured, it said in the statement. The south Asian nation had in August imposed a 40 percent export duty on onions up to December 31 to improve domestic availability of the vegetable. (REUTERS)

Italy to raise taxes for flat owners doing multiple short-term rentals

ROME: Italy's government plans to hike taxes on short-term rentals by people letting out more than one flat, a draft of the 2024 budget seen by Reuters showed on Saturday. The move comes in the wake of criticism of Airbnb and other short-term rental platforms for contributing to a shortage of affordable housing for residents in the most popular tourist destinations. Italian legislation allows owners to rent out their apartments and pay a tax rate of 21 percent on earnings. Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni intends to raise that band to 26 percent "in the case of the short-term rental of more than one apartment in each tax period," the draft showed. However, the government has scaled back its initial plans as previous drafts reported by Reuters envisaged increased taxation also applying to short-term rentals of single apartments. Meloni said the budget bill for 2024 would be put before parliament on Monday. The approval process is expected to take until December. (REUTERS)

UAW expands GM walkout after deal to end Stellantis strike

MICHIGAN: The United Auto Workers on Saturday expanded its strike against General Motors to include its Spring Hill, Tennessee, engine plant, a move that could stall GM's large pickup production and increase its financial pain. The expansion of the seven-week strike leaves GM the only Detroit automaker without a contract deal. Chrysler-owner Stellantis reached agreement with the UAW on Saturday and Ford on Wednesday. Those deals won workers a record 25 percent jump in wages over the 4-1/2-year contract and allow the companies to restart their profitable truck assembly lines. People familiar with the bargaining said sticking points in the negotiations include retirement benefits and issues related to temporary workers. GM has more retirees than either Ford or Stellantis and increases to pension benefits for workers hired before 2007 cost GM more than its rivals. (REUTERS)

Women entrepreneurs share their success stories

These businesswomen produce sanitary pads, make stuffed dolls and run a dairy farm. One of them had to quit her bank job when she was pregnant.

■ SANJU PAUDEL
LUMBINI, OCT 29

Anju Thapa of Tilottama Municipality-1 in Lumbini province had her first period at the age of 11.

As per local tradition, she had to live separately in a cowshed for nine days, and use old rags to absorb the menstrual flow.

As a result of repeated use of dirty pieces of cloth, she developed an infection.

"The infection at an early age later made me allergic to sanitary pads and reusable napkins," said Thapa, 37.

"I tried all kinds of sanitary pads available in the local market, but they were no good for me."

Thapa shared her problem with her husband Prakash who was then working in Saudi Arabia. He sent her a batch of reusable sanitary pads from there.

"They were better than the ones available in the local market, and caused no allergic reactions. I wondered if a similar product could be made in Nepal," she said.

Thapa had to quit her job in a bank when she became pregnant. She used the time going through tutorials to make such pads. Initially, she made pads with locally available materials.

She spent two years learning through trial and error. She even consulted with foreign manufacturers of reusable pads.

Finally, in 2019, she was able to set up her own factory to manufacture sanitary pads. She spent Rs2.5 million and purchased seven machines. The raw materials she got from China, India and Bangladesh.

Thapa has four women working in her factory. Her husband Prakash returned from Saudi Arabia to help expand her business.

Prakash uses digital marketing and social media to sell the product. "Demand for reusable pads is increasing steadily," he said.

The husband-wife team said increasing awareness about the pollution caused by use-and-throw sanitary pads was also a factor behind the rise in demand for reusable products.



Anju Thapa has four women working in her factory. Her husband, Prakash, returned from Saudi Arabia to help expand her business.

"Most of the diapers and sanitary pads are not biodegradable, and they are simply dumped at the landfill site. This is also one of the reasons why we are producing reusable pads," Prakash said.

Thapa's products are now sold across the country. She also travels to various districts to teach women to make reusable pads at the request of various local bodies, health organisations and women's groups.

Manju Gurung of Tilottama-11 is another successful woman entrepreneur. Her parents, Khadak Bahadur and Moha Lakshmi, made stuffed dolls in Tansen, Palpa which they sold

to tourists.

Gurung followed in her parents' footsteps and began making dolls at an early age.

When she was in the eighth grade, she got a chance to participate in a tailoring training programme. There she also received a hand-operated sewing machine as a gift.

"This was a huge encouragement for me," said Gurung.

"I practised using the sewing machine under the guidance of my parents for five years," she said. By that time, she had finished high school. Now, Gurung runs the Manju Handicraft Training Centre. She

employs five women to produce toys. She also trains other locals.

After getting married, she and her husband Subodh Shrestha moved to Butwal. "My husband worked in a local hardware store during the day time and helped me to make dolls during the night," said Gurung.

"In the last eight years, our business grew significantly."

She receives orders for her dolls from Tilottama, Butwal, Nawalparasi, Bhairahawa and Palpa, among other places. Prices range from Rs125 to Rs3,400.

Besides stuffed dolls, her company makes mirror stands, mobile bags and

fancy key rings.

Gurung looks after the manufacturing side while Shrestha is in charge of shipping.

They also provide training to the inmates at Nawalparasi and Palpa jails as per the request of the Office of Cottage and Small Industries.

Saraswati Banjade of Madhabaliya in Tilottama-13 runs Shiva Shakti Agro Farm.

Banjade taught at a local boarding school for nine years before starting the farm in 2020.

"At first, I started a dairy store to supplement my teacher's salary. Seeing that demand was rising steeply for dairy products, I decided to start my own farm," said Banjade, 40.

With help from her husband and sister-in-law, she bought two buffaloes for Rs500,000.

Banjade ploughed back the earnings from the farm to increase the number of cattle. Her farm now has 51 head of cattle that produce 100 litres of milk daily.

She has some of the high-yielding buffalo breeds such as Murra. Her farm also has bought a feed-making machine to make her buffaloes give more milk.

The farm is spread over two and a half bighas of rented land where they keep the buffaloes and grow their feed.

A non-governmental organisation named Daayitwa provides vocational training to entrepreneurs in Tilottama. Kamal Thapa, programme manager of Daayitwa, said that the NGO is collaborating with Tilottama Municipality to provide such training each year.

"Although we have been conducting such programmes for the last 10 years, their effectiveness has accelerated after the formation of local bodies," said Thapa. Thapa says the NGO selects 20 entrepreneurs for training based on a form they have to fill out. The successful candidates receive training and a seed fund of Rs5,000 to expand their business.

Ten entrepreneurs are selected from among the 20 to receive long-term training. One finalist is awarded a cash prize of Rs100,000.

Fast food slowdown catches up with McDonald's India franchisee

■ REUTERS
CHENNAI, OCT 29

Shares in India's Westlife Foodworld fell as much as 7.7 percent on Friday, a day after the McDonald's operator reported a surprise drop in quarterly profit and indicated high inflation was squeezing consumer spending in the current festive quarter.

Prices of essentials in India have shot up in recent months, prompting companies like Coca-Cola to roll out smaller packs and restaurants to launch cheaper pizzas and burgers.

"All around you are seeing pressure on macro spending," Westlife Executive Director Akshay Jatia said, adding the informal eat out category as well as Western fast food are under pressure in terms of growth. "Eating out frequency remains low," he said.

This slowdown is not restricted to India. Globally, fast-food chains, including McDonald's and KFC-parent Yum Brands, are contending with inflation-stung consumers preferring to dine at home.

To counter this, Westlife in June launched discounted meals at 179 rupees (\$2.15).

However, this only led to a 1 percent growth in same-store sales, slowing from a 7 percent rise in the first quarter

and a 40 percent jump last year.

Westlife's shares are tracking their worst day in two years and seven months, trimming gains to around 5 percent so far this year.

Until the second quarter, the company had shrugged off the fast-food slowdown on higher demand for fried chicken, burgers and coffee, while pizza chains have been under more pronounced pressure for several quarters.

Earlier this week, Domino's Pizza franchisee Jubilant FoodWorks reported a decline in like-for-like sales—a key same-store sales metric—for the third straight quarter.

"Although Westlife has been relatively resilient in the past few quarters, the slowdown has started showing its impact finally," Prabhudas Lilladher analyst Amnish Aggarwal said after the company's second-quarter results.

Consumer spending typically picks up in the October-December quarter, dubbed the festive quarter, as it includes Christmas and the Hindu festival of Deepavali, when people engage in more discretionary spending.

However, another Westlife executive said the factors that pressured the franchisee's sales would not "dramatically" change in the third quarter.



A file photo shows a staff member preparing French fries at a McDonald's restaurant in Mumbai.

G-7 nations back strong supply chains for energy and food despite global tensions

■ ASSOCIATED PRESS
TOKYO, OCT 29

Trade and economy officials from the Group of Seven wealthy democracies strengthened their pledge on Sunday to work together to ensure smooth supply chains for essentials like energy and food despite global uncertainties.

The nations promised to maintain "a free and fair trading system based on the rule of law and enhancing economic resilience and economic security," officials said in a joint statement.

Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa, who co-hosted the two-day event in the western city of Osaka, pointed to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas war as the latest threats to stable energy and food supplies.

"We nations that share important values have a position of responsibility amid growing uncertainties," she said in closing the meeting, stressing democracy, inclusiveness and human rights.

Worries are growing among developed nations about maintaining a stable supply of computer chips as well as essential minerals, like lithium, which are critical these days amid the demand for electric vehicles



Delegates attend a G-7 Trade Ministers' Meeting in Osaka, western Japan on Sunday.

and other green energy.

The G-7 includes the US, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Britain. The European Union, Australia, Chile, India, Indonesia and Kenya were invited to take part in the two-day meeting, as were economic organisations such as the World

Trade Organisation.

The G-7 nations reiterated their criticism of what they called in their joint statement "Russia's brutal, unprovoked, unjustifiable and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine."

The participants discussed how trade policy can contribute to tackling

climate change, strengthening food security, promoting digital trade and working toward sustainable development.

Trade is one sector where growing political tensions with China have been playing out, although China was not directly mentioned in the meetings.

China, while absent at the meetings, loomed as a focal point. China has imposed export curbs on two metals used in computer chips and solar cells—gallium and germanium—that it said were intended to "safeguard national security."

At the G-7 summit in Hiroshima in southwestern Japan earlier this year, participants referred to "economic coercion" in an oblique reference to China's leveraging some nations' dependence for economic items. That phrase was again used at the Osaka G-7.

As the host nation, Japan focused on how China has banned imports of Japanese seafood after the recent massive release of treated wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear plant, which experienced reactor meltdowns in 2011.

Yasutoshi Nishimura, the Japanese minister in charge of trade and the

economy, said G-7 nations expressed support and understanding for Japan's position, stressing the safety of Japanese food based on scientific evidence, including that from Fukushima. Japan will continue to press for the food bans to end, he told reporters.

Nishimura also said the guest nations that took part in the G-7 meeting, including Australia and India, were potentially powerful allies in strengthening the supply chain in valuable materials.

Bilateral agreements on the sidelines included one between Britain and Japan to work together on mineral-supply chains that both sides said were essential to achieve clean energy and effective national defence.

Japan also reached a deal with the EU on digital data exchanges, affirming a commitment to work together on standards to facilitate digital-sector trade, including online exchanges.

Kamikawa also met with US Trade Representative Katherine Tai and reaffirmed bilateral ties in support of "the free and fair economic order," and traded notes about the importance of women playing bigger roles on the G-7 stage.

WORLD

BRIEFING

Moscow will confiscate EU assets if Brussels 'steals' frozen Russian funds, Putin ally says

MOSCOW: Russia will confiscate assets belonging to European Union states it deems unfriendly if the bloc "steals" frozen Russian funds in a drive to fund Ukraine, a top ally of President Vladimir Putin said on Sunday. Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, said on Friday that the EU executive was working on a proposal to pool some of the profits derived from frozen Russian state assets to help Ukraine and its post-war reconstruction. Vyacheslav Volodin, the chairman of the State Duma, the Russian lower house of parliament, said Moscow would retaliate in a way that would be more costly to the bloc if the EU moved against Russian assets, many of which are held in Belgium. "A number of European politicians, led by the president of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, have once again started talking about stealing our country's frozen funds in order to continue the militarisation of Kyiv," Volodin, a close Putin ally, said in a statement on the Telegram messaging app. "Such a decision would require a symmetrical response from the Russian Federation. In that case, far more assets belonging to unfriendly countries will be confiscated than our frozen funds in Europe," he said. Von der Leyen said on Friday that the value of frozen Russian sovereign assets was 211 billion euros (\$223.15 billion) and recalled that the bloc had decided that Russia must pay for Ukraine's reconstruction. Volodin said EU politicians were considering the move "in an effort to hold on to their jobs and because of the poor financial situation to which they had led their countries."

Death toll rises to 42 in ArcelorMittal Kazakh mine fire

ALMATY: The death toll from a fire at a mine owned by ArcelorMittal in Kazakhstan rose to 42 people on Sunday as a search for four miners continued, the Ministry for Emergency Situations said. "The search operation is hampered by the presence of destroyed mining equipment, as well as rubble in some places", the ministry said in a statement. Rescuers are searching for miners in two areas of the mine 4 kilometres apart, it said. On Saturday, operator ArcelorMittal Temirtau, the local unit of Luxembourg-based steelmaker ArcelorMittal, said 206 of 252 people at the Kostenko mine had been evacuated after what appeared to be a methane blast. The Ministry for Emergency Situations said it was still monitoring the gas situation at the mine.

Four blasts kill one, injure three in Western Sahara, Moroccan authorities say

RABAT: Four explosions late on Saturday in the city of Smara in Morocco-controlled Western Sahara killed one man and injured three others, local authorities said. The blasts damaged two houses, authorities said in a statement, without adding further details. Morocco considers Western Sahara its own territory, but the Algerian-backed Polisario Front wants an independent state there. In November 2020, Polisario said it had resumed its armed struggle. Most of the fighting was described by the UN as "low intensity", and occurring mostly in the uninhabited eastern part of the Morocco-built security wall. Morocco has said autonomy is the most it can offer to the territory as a political solution. The Polisario and its ally Algeria demand an independent state. The UN Security Council has urged the parties to the conflict to seek a mutually acceptable solution. Israel was the latest country to recognize Morocco's sovereignty over the territory in July, a move the US took in 2020. Twenty-eight other countries - mostly African and Arab - have opened consulates in Dakhla or the city of Laayoune, in what Morocco sees as tangible support for its Western Saharan rule.

Vatican synod ends without clear stances on women deacons, LGBT

VATICAN CITY: A month-long Vatican meeting on the future of the Roman Catholic Church ended on Saturday without clear stances on hot-button issues such as women deacons and welcoming the LGBT community. The gathering, known as a Synod of Bishops, followed an unprecedented two-year canvassing of rank-and-file Catholics. The 365 synod participants included 300 bishops along with lay men and about 50 women who were mostly lay people. At the synod, the pope gave women and lay people a vote on Church affairs for the first time. The participants meet for a final session in a year, then the pope will write a document on issues facing the Church. The body released a final document with 81 paragraphs that each received at least two-thirds approval. Two referred to the possibility of women being ordained deacons, and those received the most negative votes even though they passed. (AGENCIES)

Thousands loot UN aid warehouses in Gaza Strip as desperation grows

The Israeli military said on Sunday it had struck over 450 militant targets over the past 24 hours.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DEIR AL-BALAH, OCT 29

Thousands of people broke into aid warehouses in Gaza to take flour and basic hygiene products, a UN agency said on Sunday, in a mark of growing desperation and the breakdown of public order three weeks into the war between Israel and Gaza's militant Hamas rulers.

Tanks and infantry pushed into Gaza over the weekend as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced a "second stage" in the war, three weeks after Hamas launched a brutal incursion into Israel. The widening ground offensive came as Israel also pounded the territory from air, land and sea.

The bombardment—described by Gaza residents as the most intense of the war—knocked out most communications in the territory late Friday, largely cutting off the besieged enclave's 2.3 million people from the world. Communications were restored to much of Gaza early Sunday.

The Israeli military said on Sunday it had struck over 450 militant targets over the past 24 hours, including Hamas command centres, observation posts and anti-tank missile launching positions. It said more ground forces were sent into Gaza overnight.

Thomas White, Gaza for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA, said the warehouse break-ins were "a worrying sign that civil order is starting to break down after three weeks of war and a tight siege on Gaza. People are scared, frustrated and desperate," he said.

UNRWA provides basic services to hundreds of thousands of people in Gaza. Its schools across the territory have been transformed into packed shelters housing Palestinians displaced by the conflict. Israel has allowed only a small trickle of aid to enter from Egypt, some of which was stored in one of the warehouses that was broken into, UNRWA said.

Juliette Touma, a spokesperson for the agency, said the crowds broke into four facilities on Saturday. She said the warehouses did not contain any fuel, which has been in critically short supply since Israel cut off all shipments after the start of the war.

Residents living near Shifa Hospital, Gaza's largest, meanwhile said Israeli airstrikes overnight hit near the hospital complex and blocked many roads leading to it.

Israel accuses Hamas of having a secret command post beneath the hospital, without providing much evidence. Tens of thousands of civilians are sheltering in Shifa, which is also packed with patients wounded in the strikes.

"Reaching the hospital has become increasingly difficult," Mahmoud al-Sawah, who is sheltering in the hospital, said over the phone. "It seems they want to cut off the area." Another Gaza City resident, Abdallah Sayed, said the Israeli bombing over the past two days was "the most violent and intense" since the war started.



Palestinians mourn their relatives killed in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip, in a morgue in Khan Younis on Sunday.

The army recently released computer-generated images showing what it said were Hamas installations in and around Shifa Hospital, as well as interrogations of captured Hamas fighters who might have been speaking under duress. Israel has made similar claims before, but has not substantiated them.

Little is known about Hamas' tunnels and other infrastructure, and the claims could not be independently verified. Hamas' government denied the allegations and said they were aimed at justifying future strikes on the facility. The Palestinian Red Crescent rescue service said another Gaza City hospital received two calls from Israeli authorities on Sunday ordering it to evacuate. It said airstrikes have hit as close as 50 metres from the Al-Quds Hospital, where 12,000 people are sheltering.

Israel had ordered the hospital to evacuate more than a week ago, but it and other medical facilities have refused, saying it would mean death for patients on ventilators.

There was no immediate Israeli comment on the latest evacuation order or the strikes near Shifa.

Israel says most residents have heeded its orders to flee to the southern part of the besieged territory, but hundreds of thousands remain in the north, in part because Israel has also bombed targets in so-called safe zones. An Israeli airstrike hit a two-story house in the southern city of Khan Younis on Sunday, killing at least 13 people, including 10 from one family. The bodies were brought to the nearby Nasser Hospital, according to an Associated Press journalist at the scene.

The escalation has meanwhile

ratcheted up domestic pressure on Israel's government to secure the release of some 230 hostages seized in the October 7 rampage, when Hamas fighters from Gaza breached Israel's defences and stormed into nearby towns, gunning down civilians and soldiers in a surprise attack. Desperate family members met with Netanyahu on Saturday and expressed support for an exchange for Palestinian prisoners held in Israel.

Escalation ratchets up domestic pressure on Israel to secure release of some 230 hostages.

Hamas' top leader in Gaza, Yehia Sinwar, said Palestinian militants "are ready immediately" to release all hostages if Israel releases all of the thousands of Palestinians held in its prisons. Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, an Israeli military spokesman, dismissed the offer as "psychological terror."

Netanyahu told the nationally televised news conference that Israel is determined to bring back all the hostages, and maintained that the expanding ground operation "will help us in this mission." He said he couldn't reveal everything that is being done due to the sensitivity and secrecy of the efforts.

"This is the second stage of the war, whose objectives are clear: to destroy the military and governmental capabilities of Hamas and bring the hostages home," he said in his first time

taking questions from journalists since the war began.

Netanyahu also acknowledged that the October 7 "debacle," in which more than 1,400 people were killed, would need a thorough investigation, adding that "everyone will have to answer questions, including me."

The Israeli military said it was gradually expanding its ground operations inside Gaza, while stopping short of calling it an all-out invasion. Casualties on both sides are expected to rise sharply as Israeli forces and Palestinian militants battle in dense residential areas. Despite the Israeli offensive, Palestinian militants have continued firing rockets into Israel, with the constant sirens in southern Israel a reminder of the threat.

The Palestinian death toll in Gaza rose Saturday to just over 7,700 people since the war began, with 377 deaths reported since late Friday, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. Most of those killed have been women and minors, the ministry said.

An estimated 1,700 people remain trapped beneath the rubble, according to the Health Ministry, which has said it bases its estimates on distress calls it received. Israel says its strikes target Hamas fighters and infrastructure and that the militants operate among civilians, putting them in danger.

More than 1.4 million people across Gaza have fled their homes, nearly half crowding into UN schools and shelters, following repeated warnings by the Israeli military that they would be in danger if they remained in northern Gaza. Gaza's sole power plant shut down shortly after the start of the war, and Israel has allowed no fuel to enter, saying Hamas would use it for military purposes.

China's foreign minister says Xi-Biden meeting in San Francisco would not be 'smooth-sailing'

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING, OCT 29

China's foreign minister considers that the road to an expected meeting between President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden would not be "smooth-sailing" and that both sides must work together to achieve results, the foreign ministry said on Sunday.

Wang Yi met with Biden, as well as secretary of state Antony Blinken and national security advisor Jake Sullivan, during a three-day visit to Washington. Both sides agreed to work toward a bilateral meeting at the upcoming Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum summit in San Francisco in November.

In an statement released by China's foreign ministry summarising the discussions with members of the "US strategic community," Wang said that the road to the bilateral meeting would not be "smooth sailing" and that they could not rely on "autopilot" to make it happen.

Wang's three-day visit to Washington came at a time when tensions between the two countries remain high, including over US export controls on advanced technology and China's more assertive actions in the East and South China seas.

The statement said that although there are still many issues to be resolved, both sides believe that it is both beneficial and necessary for the US and China to maintain dialogue.



China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi

The meeting is the latest in a series of high-level contacts between the two countries as they explore the possibility of stabilising an increasingly tense relationship at a time of conflict in Ukraine and Israel.

According to the foreign ministry statement, Wang also said that China and the US needed a "return to Bali," in a reference to Xi and Biden's tenuous meeting at a G20 summit last year, where both officials discussed issues relating to Taiwan, US-China trade tensions as well as cooperation to address issues like climate change, health and food security.

Wang said that the two countries must "eliminate interference, overcome obstacles, enhance consensus and accumulate results."

Bomb kills 1, hurts dozens at Jehovah's Witnesses convention in India's Kerala

REUTERS
KOCHI, OCT 29

One person was killed and dozens injured when at least one homemade bomb exploded at a convention centre in the southern Indian state of Kerala on Sunday where a Christian group was holding a prayer meeting, police said.

Preliminary investigation has shown that an improvised explosive device was used and that 36 people were injured, Kerala Director General of Police Shaik Darvesh Saheb told reporters.

Local newspaper Mathrubhumi, citing witnesses, said at least three explosions occurred inside the convention hall.

When asked whether it was a terror attack, Saheb told reporters, "at this stage I cannot say anything; only after investigating I can confirm the details."

State Transport Minister Antony Raju said more than 10 people have suffered serious burns and were in critical condition.

The incident took place during a Jehovah's Witnesses convention at the centre in Kalamassery, about 10 kilometres northeast of Kochi. The group was holding a three-day zonal convention that had seen more than 2,000 attendees, according to local media.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the incident was very unfortunate and that the police have taken it very seriously.

Police was appointing a special investigation team, Saheb told reporters, adding that strict action would be taken against those involved in the incident.

An eight-member team from the National Security Guard, the Indian government's counterterrorism unit,



People stand outside a convention centre where multiple blasts occurred during a religious gathering in Kochi, India on Sunday.

is on its way to Kerala to investigate as well, media reported.

The health and medical education departments have been instructed to provide high-quality treatment, said Kerala's health minister, Veena George.

"The explosion occurred seconds after the end of a prayer as part of the day's event. The first blast took place in the middle of the hall. Seconds later, two more explosions rocked simultaneously on either sides of the hall," TA Sreekumar, regional spokesperson for the Jehovah's Witnesses told mathrubhumi.com.

China kickstarts Xiangshan Forum in absence of defence minister

REUTERS
BEIJING, OCT 29

Beijing Xiangshan Forum, China's biggest annual show of military diplomacy, started on Sunday although the Asian power is still missing a defence minister, who typically hosts this event.

China hopes to use the forum to promote President Xi Jinping's vision for a safer world and draw developing countries closer, as it faces increased coordination between the United States and its allies to curtail its military ambitions.

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu was initially listed in the forum's agenda as the first guest speaker at Monday's opening ceremony, a sign that suggests China intends to give Russia, which invaded in Ukraine in 2022, centre stage at the forum. But as of Sunday, Shoigu's name was not on the agenda.

The US defence department has sent a delegation led by Xanthi Carras, China country director in the Office of the Undersecretary of Defence.

This year's forum takes place at an awkward time for China, when it is without a defence minister, whose main role is to engage with foreign militaries.

On Tuesday, Beijing sacked defence minister Li Shangfu but did not name a replacement. Reuters reported last month that Li, who has been missing for two months, was being investigated for corruption.

Chinese military leaders more senior than the defence minister have filled in for Li. State media reported that Zhang Youxia and He Weidong, ranked number two and three in the military, separately held bilateral meetings with the defence ministers from Laos, Mongolia and Vietnam on Saturday.

Zhang is due to make a speech at a dinner reception on Sunday and also give the keynote address on Monday, a task performed by the defence minister in previous years.

State news agency Xinhua reported that the number and level of foreign participants, including 22 defence ministers and 14 military chiefs, are the highest this year since the forum was first held in 2006.

In particular, China is focusing its outreach to the Global South.

Zhao Yufei, an official with the event organiser, said the forum will call on developing countries to oppose bloc confrontation and a "Cold War mentality", which are two frequent criticisms Beijing have of the West.

Two defence diplomats whose countries have sent ministers told Reuters the forum offers a rare opportunity to engage with senior Chinese defence officials and military leaders to build trust, which would be key in times of crisis.

Concerned about how open the forum can be, many in the West have either shunned it or are only sending small and low-level delegations, preferring instead to discuss international security issues at the Shangri-La Dialogue held annually in Singapore.



India hammer woeful England

Jos Buttler's side lose by 100 runs to suffer their fifth defeat in six matches at World Cup, leaving their title defence at the mercy of a mathematical miracle.



India's Mohammed Shami (right) celebrates the wicket of England's Jonny Bairstow during the Cricket World Cup 2023 in Lucknow on Sunday.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LUCKNOW, OCT 29

Mohammed Shami led an inspired bowling display as India hammered England by 100 runs on Sunday to stay unbeaten in the World Cup and all but push the defending champions out of the semi-final race.

Chasing a tricky 230 for victory in Lucknow, England collapsed to 129 all out in 34.5 overs to suffer their fifth defeat in six matches and leave their title defence at the mercy of a mathematical miracle.

The hosts have six wins in as many games and are virtually assured of a semi-final place.

Skipper Rohit Sharma led the charge with 87 as India hammered England by 100 runs on Sunday, a total that looked below par but proved enough for a struggling England side on a sluggish pitch.

"It was a great performance and we would take that win any day," said man-of-the-match Rohit.

Shami returned figures of 4-22 while fellow quick Jasprit Bumrah took three wickets to wrap up the match as fireworks lit up the sky.

England had a disastrous start and fell to 52-5 after Bumrah took wickets on successive ball to be on a hat-trick and Shami joined forces to grab two more.

Bumrah sent back Dawid Malan, for 16, and Joe Root, for nought, but Jonny Bairstow played out the hat-trick ball.

England soon lost Ben Stokes, bowled by Shami, to raise India's hopes of defending the total he then brought the house down when he bowled Bairstow for 14 as 46,000 fans, largely all Indian in blue jerseys, roared.

SCOREBOARD

LUCKNOW/TOSS: ENGLAND, FIELD FIRST.

India 229-9 (50/50 overs)

Rohit Sharma 87 (101), Suryakumar Yadav 49 (47); David Willey 10-2-45-3

England 129 (34.5/50 overs)

Liam Livingstone 27 (46); Mohammed Shami 7-2-22-4, Jasprit Bumrah 6.5-1-32-3

India win by 100 runs.

Player of the match: Rohit Sharma

Wickets kept tumbling and skipper Jos Buttler was bowled by Kuldeep for 10, and Shami sent Moeen Ali packing for 15 and the end was near.

Earlier England left-arm quick David Willey returned figures of 3-45, including the prized wicket of Virat Kohli for a nine-ball duck, after they elected to bowl.

The unbeaten hosts lost three early

wickets, including two to Chris Woakes, to slip to 40-3 before Rohit steadied the innings and built a 91-run stand with KL Rahul, who made 39.

Rohit survived a reprieve on 33 when he was given out lbw but the opener reviewed the decision in his favour with tracking showing the ball would have missed the leg stump.

Rohit reached his second fifty of the tournament to the noisy delight of the nearly-packed 50,000-seater stadium.

The captain and Rahul, who was returning to his IPL home ground where he suffered a serious injury earlier this year, kept the score ticking before Willey broke the stand with Rahul's wicket.

"I know I have got the experience to bat situations, not just going out there and playing my shots all the time," added Rohit.

Rohit kept up the fight but fell to leg-spinner Adil Rashid after he holed out to deep mid-wicket where Liam Livingstone took a low catch.

Kohli, who endured his 16th duck in ODIs, remains one century away from equalling all-time great Sachin Tendulkar's record of 49 hundreds in the 50-over format.

Suryakumar Yadav made a fighting 49 before becoming Willey's third wicket but the tail played out the full 50 overs.

Nepal eye T20 World Cup spot

The Rhinos begin their T20 World Cup Asia Qualifier against Singapore at Kirtipur today.

SPORTS BUREAU KATHMANDU, OCT 29

Nepal are set to begin their ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 Asia Qualifier campaign with a match against Singapore at the TU Cricket Ground in Kathmandu on Monday, aiming to secure their ticket to the ICC Men's T20 World Cup for the first time since 2014.

Eight teams are competing in the Asia regional final, with two spots up for grabs at the next year's global showpiece in the United States and West Indies. Nepal are drawn alongside Singapore, Oman and Malaysia in Group A, while Group B consists of the UAE, Hong Kong, Bahrain and Kuwait. The top two teams in each group will progress into the high-stakes semi-finals where the two finalists will book their place in the 2024 T20 World Cup.

Nepal's only appearance at a cricket World Cup came at the 2014 World T20 in Bangladesh.

The Rhinos will be the favourites to claim one of the two spots at the World Cup. A passionate home crowd will provide an extra boost to a young team that is brimming with confidence following an impressive run that started in February this year.

Coach Monty Desai came at the helm in early February when Nepal were picking up pieces at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup League 2.

But Desai transformed Nepal into a formidable outfit, guiding them from second-last place in the League 2 to an automatic spot in the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier in just 40 days—winning 11 of their 12 one-day international matches.

Desai then guided Nepal to their only second Asia Cup 2023 in May.

Although Nepal fell short against cricket giants like Zimbabwe, India and Pakistan in both tournaments, their spirited performance has attracted attention from around the globe.

The Rhinos fine-tuned their preparation for the Asia regional final with a near-perfect warm-up T20I Tri-Nation Series at home defeating the UAE and Hong Kong twice in the double-legged group phase but lost to the UAE in the final—their only defeat out of 17 matches at home under Desai.

"That defeat was tough to swallow... but we will be working on deep diving into our plans and see if there are any weaknesses," Desai has said.

T20 WORLD CUP ASIA QUALIFIER

PLAYING MONDAY		
Nepal vs Singapore	09:00	Kirtipur
UAE vs Bahrain	09:00	Mulpani
Oman vs Malaysia	13:15	Kirtipur
Hong Kong vs Kuwait	13:15	Mulpani

"We will look into the areas where we feel that we might have missed out in our preparations."

Desai is also hopeful Nepal will qualify for the World Cup.

"We believe our team will deliver for us," he added.

"The Tri-Nation Series was a great platform for us to prepare well for this most important week. My urge to our players will be to remain persistent with their approach with the bat, ball and on the field. We know that big moments are important moments in the game and we want to capitalise on that."

Desai has urged Nepal supporters to show up in large numbers. "Our young team has been working very hard and sweating very hard," he went on.



Nepal captain Rohit Paudel (left) and coach Monty Desai interact during a training session in Kathmandu on Sunday.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CAN

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

You will be in the mood for good conversation and intellectual stimulation. Meanwhile, you will also find yourself blessed when you work hard for your goals. Offer favours if friends or colleagues are in need and find satisfaction in servitude.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

You should wake up feeling refreshed and supported. However, you'll feel like flying under the radar to sort through any emotions you've been avoiding. Consider socialising with gentle souls who lift you up. These vibes also pair well with group activities.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22)

You should feel refreshed today as you will find yourself in touch with the magical forces within and around you. Just be mindful to stay grounded and organised, feeling optimistic about the present rather than floating away on daydreams.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19)

You'll feel motivated to complete tasks today, though you should be mindful of supporting your physical self as you work. Your problem-solving skills may be put to the test, but keeping a cool head can help you navigate any issues.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Touch base with your intuition before starting the day, taking care to ground in the present. You may need to set restrictions with your electronic devices, especially if you have a mounting to-do list that needs tackling.

LEO (July 23-August 22)

Try to get an early start on your workweek agenda. You'll need plenty of time to socialise as you will be in the mood for conversations. You will find small moments of beauty if you open your eyes to the present.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21)

A clarifying, and empowering energy infuses your aura in the early hours. Trust your instincts as you will feel urged to access your strength while taking decisive action. Jury not to let concerns about how you'll be perceived hold you back.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18)

You'll feel refreshed and outgoing, adding some extra pep to your step as the work week begins. Just try not to get caught up in minor details or social interactions that could cause you to disconnect from your duties.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

You should wake up refreshed and with a sense of peace. There may be obstacles to tackle, but try not to get frustrated if issues emerge. Luckily, you will find the breakthrough needed to solve the problem.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22)

Allow your psychic senses to guide you, especially regarding creative projects and building confidence. Your focus will shift, putting you in a practical headspace perfect for tackling responsibilities. Just remember that taking care of yourself must also be a priority.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21)

Focus on your body first, taking time to fully wake up mentally, emotionally, and physically before starting the work week. You'll breeze through tasks today, although temperamental encounters could spoil your flow, making it important that you shrug off moody moods.

PISCES (February 19-March 20)

You may be called to offer advice or support a member of your community early this morning. However, you'll need to shift gears and focus on your private affairs, putting you in touch with the needs of your family or household.

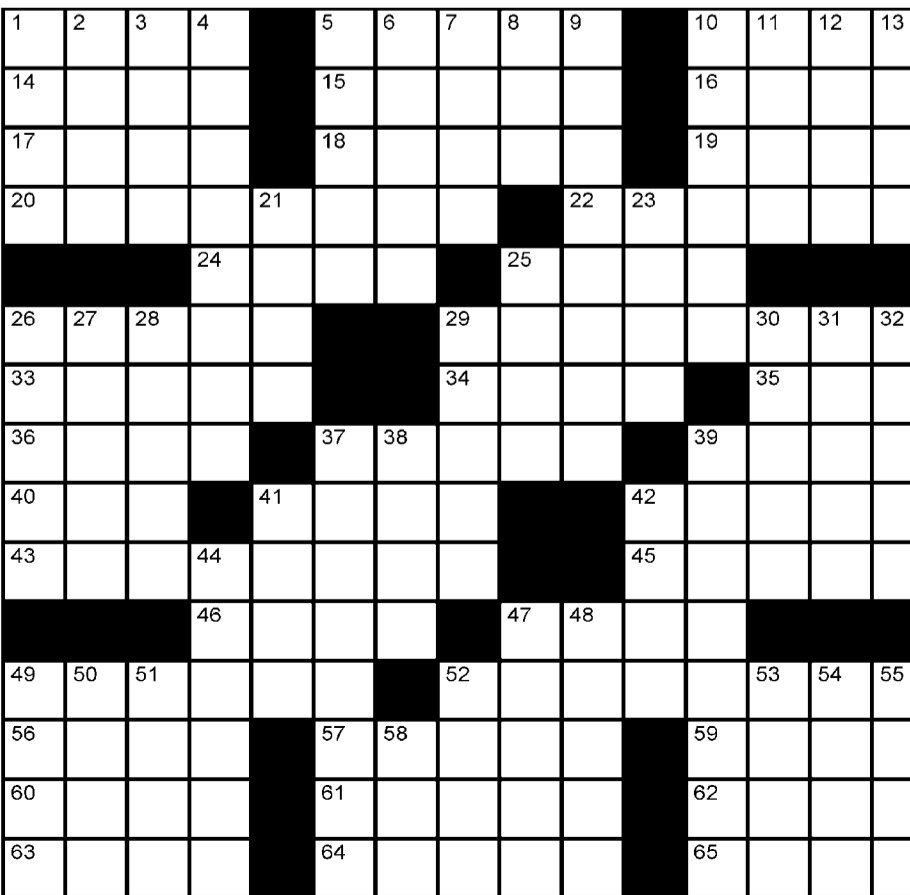
CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- Stair
 - Jewel surface
 - "Simon — ..."
 - Stringed instrument
 - Town in Maine
 - Eye part
 - Before very long
 - Garment part
 - Cheat
 - Breakfast fare
 - Brainteaser
 - Sibilant sound
 - What's cooking
 - Grinding tooth
 - Covers
 - "The — and the Ecstasy"
 - Witness's promise
 - Actor — Ferrigno
 - By — of (because)
 - Low shoes
 - Pace
 - Maria
 - Bodies of saltwater
 - Ship-to — radio
 - Vendor
 - Bring down
 - Medieval landowner
 - Do a farm job
 - Messy writing
 - Chunk
- DOWN**
- Noisy blow
 - Fish in cans
 - England's — College
 - Liking
 - One's mother and father
 - Ram constellation
 - Pros and —
 - Opp. of WSW
 - Heavy rains
 - Bring under control
 - Eager
 - Chant from the bleachers
 - Benefit
 - Ethereal
 - Go very slowly
 - Castle's defense
 - "Dear Sir or —"
 - Gothic arch
 - Standoffish one
 - Move while in neutral
 - Let
 - River in France
 - "That's — dupe!"
 - Brave
 - Settle after flight
 - Chinese takeout order (2 wds.)
 - Spectacle
 - Take heavy steps
 - Stylish
 - Number on a tag
 - Printer type
 - Skidded
 - Upkeep
 - Horse with dark-and-white coat
 - Smoke conduit
 - Gaelic
 - The Big Easy
 - Old Russian ruler
 - Dead lang.

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED



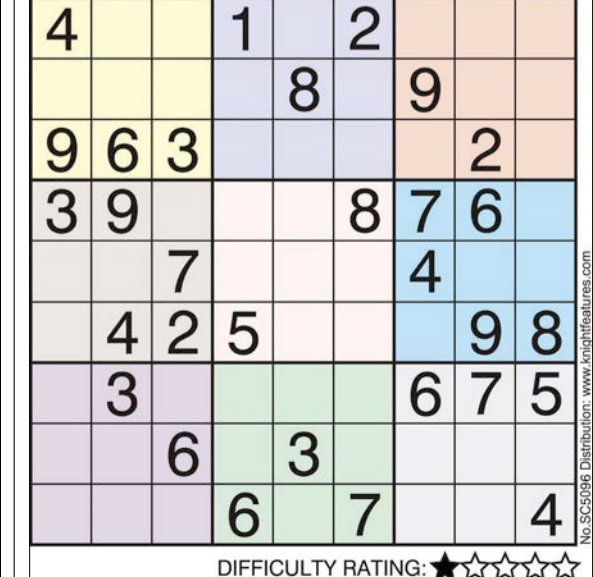
11-7-23 © 2023 UFS, Dist. by Andrews McMeel for UFS



SUDOKU



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Lessons in chemistry

Biochemist Sushila Maharjan talks about her research in genetic engineering, antibiotics and regenerative medicine.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF SUSHILA MAHARJAN

□ MANUSHREE MAHAT
KATHMANDU

Sushila Maharjan was naturally drawn to chemistry among all the sciences. Her enthusiasm for the subject shines through as she expresses her belief that chemistry is the core of all life. There's a melodious lilt to her voice as she begins telling me about her research, jokingly asking, "How much time do we have? I can talk about chemistry endlessly."

Maharjan's fondness for chemistry was evident from her middle school years. She distinctly recalls enjoying learning about atomic particles more than anything else. This curiosity of hers developed a life of its own, leading her to pursue a bachelor's in organic chemistry and a master's in chemistry at Tribhuvan University's Central Department of Chemistry.

Science and engineering have long been considered reputable fields, offering societal respect and stability. Maharjan's father, quite in lieu with his daughter's passions, envisioned her future as a doctor. "My family has been a constant support for me throughout the years," she says.

As Maharjan immersed herself in the theoretical aspects of chemistry, she noticed a glaring gap in her education—the absence of practical experiences. She craved interactive lab work, believing that the intricate nuances of chemistry could only be truly grasped through hands-on exploration, an aspect she wished her education prioritised.

When the opportunity to present her thesis arose (back then, only 50 students could apply for thesis writing), she began her research, completed her thesis and applied for PhD in Biochemistry at Sun Moon University in South Korea.

Maharjan's interest in natural products played a big role in her genetic engineering-based research in South Korea. Her research centred around antibiotics—specifically in isolating antibiotics from streptomyces for their usage in drugs—and she was actively involved in it for several years. For her contribution to biotechnology, she was awarded the Elsevier Foundation Award by the Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD) in 2016.

"Acknowledgements like these can go a long way in motivating researchers. However, it is funding and grants that truly impact research in Nepal," shares Maharjan.

Right now, her primary goal is to tailor research according to Nepal's sociobiological and demographic needs. She co-founded the Nepal Research Institute for Bioscience and Biotechnology in 2011, applying her expertise from her work in South Korea. Her research in Nepal focuses on studying streptomyces, a type of bacteria, at varying altitudes. "Despite efforts, conclusive results have been elusive due to the lack of funding," she says, adding, the government's insufficient support has posed challenges for researchers in Nepal.



WHY DO IT

Returning to South Korea, Maharjan applied for a fellowship with the American Fund for Alternatives to Animal Research (AFAAR). For the past six years, she has dedicated 12-16 hours daily to her work. Currently, she is an instructor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, where she investigates biomaterial and tissue engineering for regenerative medicine. Although she finds the biological aspect of her work most enjoyable, Maharjan emphasises the significance of networking in this multidisciplinary field of bioscience and the importance of collaboration in research, involving technicians, engineers, scientists, and specialists. Despite her work taking years to complete in the US, she says she still maintains contact with medical doctors in Nepal for future research endeavours.

Although Maharjan has dedicated her whole life to chemistry and research, she believes her true success lies in conducting comprehensive research in Nepal. Her goal is to make a significant impact in Nepal's Bioscience field, a dream she has yet to fully achieve.

Despite geographical challenges, Maharjan actively participates in Nepal's scientific community. She contributes to initiatives like Engage Nepal with Science, which focuses on strengthening the country's scientific base through community workshops and school programmes. Additionally, she serves as the Global Biotechnology Commercial Opportunities Chair, preparing to host an online seminar on biotechnology in the near future.

She admits that research can be stressful, impacting the balance between work and personal life. However, she acknowledges that every job has its challenges and stressors. For her, research is driven by passion.

"I won't claim that research is always enjoyable. It's demanding and time-consuming, but it's also incredibly fulfilling. My enthusiasm for future projects in Nepal drives me towards my long-term goals," Maharjan explains.

Trick or treat

Here are two Halloween events you can attend this week.

□ POST REPORT
KATHMANDU

Manigram Bishram Batika is organising a Halloween Party on Tuesday. The resort promises a 'spooktacular' night of fright and fun for all its attendees. Visitors can enjoy special thematic drinks, live music and a shot at winning the 'Best Costume Award' at the event.

Attendees can enter the event free of charge. The party starts at 6:30 pm and guests are requested to don their best costumes.

What: Halloween Party
Where: Manigram Bishram Batika, Butwal
When: October 31
Time: 6:30 pm onwards
Entry: Free



PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE SHOT STATION/FACEBOOK

The Shot Station is hosting the second edition of its 'Carnival of Souls' on Tuesday. The lounge will go all out with Halloween-themed decorations for the occasion. Attendees can enjoy open mic sessions, exclusive drinks prepared for the event and photo shoot sessions. An after-party will take place at the end of the event, and guests can request their favourite songs to dance and jam along to.

What: Carnival of Souls
Where: The Shot Station, Thamel, Kathmandu
When: October 31
Time: 6:00 pm to 2:00 am
Entry: Free

Nepalinked Tattoo Festival next week

The event aims to unite and showcase tattoo culture and diverse art forms.

□ POST REPORT
KATHMANDU

The 8th International Nepalinked Tattoo Festival is taking place early next month. The event is happening at Dhulikhel Mountain Resort in Kavre from November 3 to 5.

Organised by Nepalinked, the event aims to unite and showcase tattoo culture and diverse art forms. Unlike conventional indoor conventions, this festival uniquely appreciates nature by being outdoors, offering a refreshing perspective on this vibrant art scene. Artist Raj Prakash Man Tuladhar has created the official design for the event.

What: International Nepalinked Tattoo Festival
Where: Dhulikhel Mountain Resort, Dhulikhel, Kavre
When: November 3 to 5
Time: 10:00 am to 11:45 pm



PHOTO: COURTESY OF NEPALINKED/FACEBOOK

Matthew Perry, Emmy-nominated 'Friends' star, dead at 54

The actor was found dead of an apparent drowning at his Los Angeles home on Saturday.

□ ASSOCIATED PRESS
LOS ANGELES

Friends' star Matthew Perry, the Emmy-nominated actor whose sarcastic but lovable Chandler Bing was among television's most famous and most quotable characters, has died at 54.

The actor was found dead of an apparent drowning at his Los Angeles home Saturday, according to the Los Angeles Times and celebrity website TMZ, which was the first to report the news. Both outlets cited unnamed sources confirming Perry's death.

"Matthew was an incredibly gifted actor and an indelible part of the Warner Bros. Television Group family," the company said in a statement. "The impact of his comedic genius was felt around the world, and his legacy will live on in the hearts of so many. This is a heartbreaking day, and we send our love to his family, his loved ones, and all of his devoted fans."

Perry's publicists and other representatives did not immediately respond to messages from The Associated Press seeking comment.

Asked to confirm police response to what was listed as Perry's home address, LAPD Officer Drake Madison told the AP that officers had gone to that block "for a death investigation of a male in his 50s."

Perry's 10 seasons on 'Friends' made him one of Hollywood's most recognisable actors, starring opposite Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, Matt LeBlanc, Lisa Kudrow and David Schwimmer as a friend group in New York.

As Chandler, he played the quick-witted, insecure and neurotic roommate of LeBlanc's Joey and a close friend of Schwimmer's Ross. During the show's hijinks, he could be counted on to chime in with a line like "Could this BE any more awkward?" or another well-timed quip.

Perry was open about his long and public struggle with addiction, writing at the beginning of his 2022 million-selling memoir: "Hi, my name is Matthew, although you may know me by another name. My friends call me Matty. And I should be dead."

'Friends' ran from 1994 until 2004, winning one best comedy series Emmy Award in 2002. The cast notably banded together for later seasons to obtain a salary of \$1 million per episode for each.

By the 'Friends' finale, Chandler is married to Cox's Monica, and they have a family, reflecting the journey of the core cast from single New Yorkers trying to figure their lives out to several of them married and starting families.

Perry's 10 seasons on 'Friends' made him one of Hollywood's most recognisable actors.

The series was one of television's biggest hits and has taken on a new life—and found surprising popularity with younger fans—in recent years on streaming services.

Perry described reading the 'Friends' script for the first time in his memoir, 'Friends, Lovers and the Big Terrible Thing'.

"It was as if someone had followed me around for a year, stealing my jokes, copying my mannerisms, photocopying my world-weary yet witty view of life. One character in particular stood out to me: it wasn't that I thought I could 'play' Chandler: I 'was' Chandler."

Unknown at the time was the struggle Perry had with addiction and an intense desire to please audiences.

"'Friends' was huge. I couldn't jeopardise that. I loved the script. I loved my co-actors. I loved the scripts. I loved everything about the show but I was struggling with my addictions, which only added to my sense of shame," he wrote in his memoir. "I had a secret, and no one could know."

"I felt like I was gonna die if the live audience didn't laugh, and that's not healthy for sure. But I could sometimes say a line, and the audience wouldn't laugh, and I would sweat and sometimes go into convulsions," Perry wrote. "If I didn't get the laugh I was supposed to get, I would freak out. I felt that every single night. This pressure left me in a bad place. I also knew of the six people making that show, only one of them was sick."

He recalled in his memoir that Aniston confronted him about being inebriated while filming.

"I know you're drinking," he remembered her telling him once. "We can smell it," she said, in what Perry called a "kind of weird but loving way, and the plural 'we' hit me like a sledgehammer."

In the foreword to Perry's memoir, Lisa Kudrow described him as "whip-smart, charming, sweet, sensitive, very reasonable, and rational." She added, "That guy, with everything he was battling, was still there."

An HBO Max reunion special in 2021 was hosted by James Corden and fed into huge interest in seeing the cast together again, although the program consisted of the actors discussing the show and was not a continuation of their characters' storylines.

Perry received one Emmy nomination for his 'Friends' role and two more for appearances as an associate White House counsel on 'The West Wing'.

Perry also had several notable film roles, starring opposite Salma Hayek in the rom-com 'Fools Rush In' and Bruce Willis in the crime comedy 'The Whole Nine Yards'.

He worked consistently after 'Friends', though never in a role that brought him as much attention or acclaim.

In 2015, he played Oscar for a CBS reboot of 'The Odd Couple' that aired for two seasons. He told the AP that playing Oscar Madison, the character originally made famous in the 1960s series by Walter Matthau, was a "dream role." He also said he was surprised at how much he enjoyed being filmed again in front of a live audience.

"I didn't realise I missed it really until it actually happened, til we actually shot the pilot and there was a studio audience there and I realised, 'Wow, I really like this. This is nice,'" he said. "You kind of ham up for the people in the audience. My performance never got better than when there was an audience there."

Perry was born August 19, 1969, in Williamstown, Massachusetts. His father is actor John Bennett Perry, and his mother, Suzanne, served as press secretary of Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and is married to 'Dateline' correspondent Keith Morrison.



AP/RSS