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TODAY

■ NATIONAL

Prime Minister Dahal and Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba met on Thursday. Endorsement of the transitional justice bill and making Parliament effective were the major agendas, leaders said. Pg 2

India has renewed the power export permit to Nepal for three months. The Indian side agreed to the renewal three days before its expiry though the Nepal Electricity Authority had been pursuing it for months. Pg 5

OPINION

While most Nepalis today own personal papers in various volumes, our society does not have well-resourced archives in which they can be properly deposited, writes Pratyoush Onta. Pg 4



■ MONEY

tech giant Xiaomi launched its first EV in Beijing on Thursday, injecting itself into a fiercely competitive sector in the world's largest car market. Xiaomi is known for affordable smartphones. Pg 6



SPORTS



The 24-team lineup for the European Championship is complete after Poland, Ukraine and Georgia finally qualify for the tournament in Germany. France will likely go into the tournament as the favourite. Pg 7



Students from various schools sit for the exam at Kanya Mandir Higher Secondary School at Nhyokha in Kathmandu. The nationwide Secondary Education Examinations (SEE) began on Thursday with half a million students being tested for the tenth-grade assessment.

CIAA charges 19 in mobile device management system purchase scam

Case filed against Telecommunications Authority ex-chairs Jha and Khanal, among others.

POST REPORT

KATHMANDU, MARCH 28

The Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) on Thursday filed a corruption case against 19 individuals, including two former chairmen of the Nepal Telecommunication Authority (NTA),

The anti-graft body registered the

case at the Special Court, accusing former chairmen of the authority, Digambar Jha and Purushottam Khanal, along with 17 others, of irregularities in the purchase of the Mobile Device Management System (MDMS) by the NTA.

Former senior director Ananda Raj Khanal of the NTA, incumbent directors Dipesh Acharya and Min Prasad Aryal, and deputy directors Binod

Chandra Shrestha, Surendra Lal Hada and Rewati Ram Pantha have been made defendants in the case, the CIAA said in a statement on Thursday.

Assistant directors Bijay Kumar Rai Yadav, Nirajan Koirala, Sandeep Adhikari and Surya Prasad Lamichhane and Deputy Director Achyutananda Mishra have also been accused of corruption.

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Ministries to be reminded to enforce diplomatic code

The rules specify how to conduct diplomatic meetings and how office bearers should present themselves.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is writing to all line ministries, including the Prime Minister's Office, to strictly adhere to the diplomatic code of conduct in order to streamline meetings with foreign officials, leaders, and diplomats. It will also reiterate that all correspondence to foreign countries should be made through the foreign ministry.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha has made implementing the diplomatic code his top priority and appears determined to enforce it with urgency. Shrestha became the foreign minister for a second time early this month.

'We are writing to all line ministries once again to adhere to and follow the diplomatic code of conduct," Amrit Rai, the foreign ministry spokesperson, told the Post. The protocol division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is issuing a circular to all line ministries on Friday to follow the code.

Shrestha himself first introduced the diplomatic code of conduct in 2011 when he was the foreign minister in the Jhala Nath Khanal Cabinet. Successive governments failed to enforce or follow it despite calls from different sectors for strict adherence to the code for effective communication with foreign nations, agencies and offices.

Article 3 of the code states that the Code of Conduct applies to persons holding public office and officials drawing remunerations and perks from the state treasury. "On the basis of Article 3, we are going to issue the circular again," a senior official at the protocol division told the Post.

Ahead of his China visit, the deputy prime minister instructed us to issue a letter to all line ministers requesting that they follow the code, said Rai. A copy of the code of conduct is publicly available on the foreign ministry's website. The old text which has been amended multiple times will be circulated, said Rai. "If needed, we will adjust and amend the code according to the suggestions and inputs from the

Foreign ministry will send a circular to all ministries to implement code first out in 2011.

Last year too, after Pushpa Kamal Dahal became the prime minister, he had decided to enforce the diplomatic code through a Cabinet decision but that did not happen. Later, when Dahal ditched the political alliance with the CPN-UML, Rastriya Swatantra Party and the Rastriya Prajatantra Party and took the Nepali Congress on board the government, the issue of enforcing the code took a back seat.

United States changes how it categorises people by race and ethnicity

Momentum for changing the race and ethnicity categories grew during the Obama administration in the mid-2010s.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ORLANDO, FLORIDA, MARCH 28

For the first time in 27 years, the US government is changing how it categorises people by race and ethnicity, an effort that federal officials believe will more accurately count residents who North African heritage.

The revisions to the minimum categories on race and ethnicity, announced on Thursday by the Office of Management and Budget, are the latest effort to label and define the people of the United States. This evolving process often reflects changes in social attitudes and immigration, as well as a wish for people in an increasingly diverse society to see themselves in the numbers produced by the federal government.

"You can't underestimate the emotional impact this has on people," said Meeta Anand, senior director for Census & Data Equity at The

Respondents have the option to pick multiple categories at the same time such as 'Black', 'American Indian', 'Hispanic'.

Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. "It's how we conceive ourselves as a society. ... You are seeing a desire for people to want to self-identify and be reflected in data so they can tell their own stories."

Under the revisions, questions about race and ethnicity that previously were asked separately on forms will be combined into a single question. That will give respondents the option to pick multiple categories at the same time, such as "Black," "American Indian" and "Hispanic."

Research has shown that large numbers of Hispanic people aren't sure how to answer the race question when that question is asked separately because they understand race and ethnicity to be similar and they often pick "some other race" or do not answer the question.

A Middle Eastern and North African category about race and ethnicity. People descended from places such as Lebanon, Iran, Egypt and Syria had been encouraged to identify as white, but now will have the option of identifying themselves in the new group. Results from the 2020 census, which asked respondents to elaborate on their backgrounds, suggest that 3.5 million residents identify as Middle Eastern and North African.

"It feels good to be seen," said Anna Eskamani, a Democrat from Orlando whose parents are from Iran. "Growing up, my family would check the 'white' box because we didn't know what other box reflected our family. Having representation like that, it feels meaningful."

The changes also strike from federal forms the words "Negro" and "Far East," now widely regarded as pejorative, as well as the terms "majority" and "minority," because they fail to reflect the complex racial and ethnic diversity.

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Gum Problems

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Government reinforcing

diplomatic codes for

NATIONAL

□ DISTRICT DIGEST

Arzu Rana undergoes surgery in India

KATHMANDU: Arzu Rana Deuba, chair of the House of Representatives' Agriculture, Cooperative, and Natural Resource Committee, under went successful surgery in India on Wednesday. The lawmaker, who is also the wife of former prime minister and Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba, had been visiting India for follow-up examinations. Kamal Rawal, her personal secretary stated that she underwent successful surgery for Hyper Parathyroidism at the Max Hospital in New Delhi, India She left for India on March 15 by informing the federal parliament secretariat. "Currently, Dr Arzu Rana Deuba's health is improving. As per the doctors' recommendation, she will have to remain in the hospital for further treatment," the statement said.

Body of man missing in Karnali recovered

DHANGADHI: The body of Lokendra Shahi, who had gone missing after jumping off the Karnali Chisapani bridge on Monday, was recovered from the Karnali river near Tikapur on Thursday, According to Shivaraj Joshi, information officer at the District Administration Office, Shahi's body was recovered from Sanakatti Ghat at ward 2 of Tikapur Municipality. The victim was among 17 Holi revellers who had jumped into the Karnali river on the day of the festival on Monday. They had alleged ly told the security personnel that they would just take photographs on the bridge.

Man murders wife in Rautahat

RAUTAHAT: A 40-year-old man allegedly murdered his wife in Rautahat dis trict on Wednesday. According to Deputy Superintendent of Police Om Khanal, 35-year-old Setimaya Waiba died on the spot after her husband Tirtha Waiba attacked her with a sickle. The couple, who had gone to collect fodder, had got into a heated argument which led to the death. police said. The incident came to light after the accused, in an inebriat ed state, admitted to the locals of committing the crime. Tirtha has sustained serious injury to his neck after he attempted to take his own life by slitting his throat with the sickle, police said. He has been admitted to the Civil Hospital in Chandranigahapur and further investigation into the matter is underway

Dahal and Deuba meet as conflict victims grow weary

The two leaders convened after victims pressed Dahal over stalled transitional justice process.

POST REPORT

When the Nepali Congress was part of the ruling coalition with the CPN (Maoist Centre) until earlier this month, both the parties advocated for a swift endorsement of the amendment bill on the Enforced Disappearances Enquiry, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act should be endorsed without delay. They even suggested that the bill should be endorsed through a vote if the CPN-UML refuses to endorse it by consensus.

However, the Congress's voice regarding the bill has changed after Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, the chief of the Maoist Centre, ousted the largest party from the ruling coalition and formed a new government in partnership with the CPN-UML on March 4 Since then there has been no discussion in the bill.

In recent days, the Congress has been protesting in the House of Representatives to register its opposition to the induction of Rastriya Swatantra Party chief Rabi Lamichhane, who is accused of misusing cooperative funds, as deputy prime minis ter and home minister in Dahal's Cabinet.

Amid the deadlock, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba held a meeting on Thursday. "Endorsement of the transitional justice bill and making Parliament effective were the major issues of discussions between the two leaders," said Govinda Acharya, press advisor to the prime minister.

The amendment bill has been under consideration of the Law, Justice and Human Rights Committee of the House of Representatives for more than a year. It is not sure when the committee will resume discussion on the bill. Dahal has been reiterating that conclusion of the transitional justice process is his top priority.

The 'commitment paper' of the new ruling alliance issued a few weeks ago has listed revision of the bill one of its major priorities. Victims of the insurgency along with human rights defenders have been demanding a revision of the bill without further delay.

A section of the conflict victims on March 22 had asked the government to endorse the bill before taking any decision on transitional justice.

Another section of the victims also has demanded not to delay the amendment under any pretext. Holding a meeting with Dahal on Wednesday, the victims, led by Bhagiram Chaudhary, a former chair of the Conflict Victims Common Platform.



however, demanded that the government start a process to appoint office bearers in the two transitional justice commissions, as per a recent court ruling, while the law amendment process continues

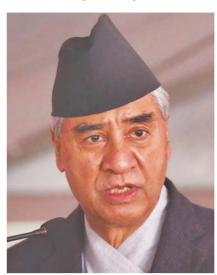
"We urged the prime minister to start the selection process within the court's deadline using the authority to remove difficulties," said Chaudhary. Section 42 of the Act authorises the government to remove difficulties.

However, such a decision (of removing difficulties, which means appointing office bearers) must be presented in Parliament within 30 days of its commencement. Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons have been getting extensions based on the provision.

The Supreme Court on March 12 had given the government a month to start the process to select office bearers for the two commissions.

The two commissions have been inactive since July 2022 after the government decided to extend their terms without retaining their chairmen and members. Against the government's previous claims that the bill to amend the existing transitional justice law would be endorsed by October 2022, which would have also opened the door for recruiting new office bearers, there has been no progress.

Until the office bearers are appointed, the court had asked the government to constitute task forces within the commissions in order to carry out preliminary investigations into the victims' complaints.



Sher Bahadur Deuba

While the truth commission has received 63,718 complaints, the disappearances commission is sitting on around 2,400 cases. The victims group that met Dahal on Wednesday asked him to immediately constitute a recommendation committee to pick office bearers for the commissions ensuring that it adopts a credible selection process.

The victims have also sought time to allow filing of complaints mainly by the victims of rape and sexual violence, transfer of property of the victims of enforced disappearances, and establishing separate units within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Their other demand is to make public the whereabouts of the victims of enforced disappearances

In November 2006, the then government and the Maoist party through the Comprehensive Peace Accord had committed to disclosing the whereabouts of people disappeared or killed during the decade-long insurgency within 60 days of the signing the pact. They have yet to fulfil the commitment.

"We also request the prime minister to prioritise revision of the Act and make sure the bill gets endorsed from the ongoing session of the federal parliament, reads one of the demands of the victims.

The court in its order on March 12 had also reminded the government to immediately amend the law as per its earlier verdict. On February 26, 2015, the Supreme Court had directed the government to amend the Act's around half a dozen provisions that allowed amnesty even in cases of serious human rights violations.

foreign meetings and national consensus," said

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The diplomatic code is mandatory for all ministers. They are required to meet foreign diplomats and representatives of foreign governments in the presence of a foreign ministry official.

The code's introduction in 2011 was widely praised by political, bureaucratic and security apparatuses and even by sections of Kathmandu's diplomatic circle. Initially, only serving politicians and bureaucrats were within the code's ambit.

It was revised in 2012 and a fresh draft was tabled in the Cabinet, which did not go into the implementation but the Dahal government last year had decided to reinforce it.

A joint-secretary at the foreign ministry said that it never went into force as the political leadership did not commit to following it.

According to officials, the original draft of the code was amended several times and broadened in 2013 and 2014. The DCC has been revised to include the prime minister, ministers, top leaders of political parties, office bearers, and incumbent

and former government officials. Speaking at the House of Representatives on March 19, Deputy PM Shrestha vowed to rigorously enforce the code 'very soon'

"We are going to take a bold step in implementing the diplomatic code of conduct," he added. "For a broader consensus on foreign relations and diplomacy, an effective diplomatic code of conduct is a must."

He urged the party leaders, parliamentarians, and elected representatives to keep national interests at the core while engaging in foreign relations and diplomacy. "While keeping national interests at the core, we should be careful of others imposing their own agendas. Our independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity given to us by our ancestors could face serious challenges. So on the issue of foreign relations, its policy, and conducting diplomacy, we should have a common voice

As per the code, the aforementioned officials and leaders must obtain prior approval from the foreign ministry before meeting foreign diplomats and officials and must brief the ministry on the meeting. The code also attempts to regulate political parties and asks them to set up a separate protocol section within the party for recording the contents of meetings as the institutional memory of their organisations.

While meeting foreign dignitaries, parties must also provide the details of their agenda to the concerned government ministries, in case details are sought.

The DCC has also proposed designated venues for party leaders to hold meetings with foreign diplomats and dignitaries. However, this does not apply to courtesy and farewell calls. It also has provisions to curtail the frequent and unnecessary move ments of diplomats.

Some political figures had expressed reservations over the content of the DDC during the premiership of Sushil Koirala "The DDC was again tabled in

the Cabinet when Koirala was the prime minister but due to reservations from various sections, it was put on hold," the joint-secretary "Successive governments tried to enforce the diplomatic code, but in vain."

Besides specifying how to conduct diplomatic meetings, the code also states how office bearers should present themselves at diplomatic meetings and functions.

The code requires even former prime ministers to inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before meeting ambassadors, diplomats, and foreign leaders.

In 2020, when Oli was the prime minister, then-foreign minister Pradeep Gyawali also publicly announced that the government would revise the diplomatic code and make it compatible and friendly. However, the Oli government failed to implement it.

US government redefines how it identifies people by race and ethnicity

Khanal said.

The revisions also encourage the ity data beyond the minimum standards, such as "Haitian" or "Jamaican" for someone who checks "Black."

The changes to the standards were

hammered out over two years by a group of federal statisticians and bureaucrats who prefer to stay above the political fray. But the revisions have long-term implications for legislative redistricting, civil rights laws, health statistics, and possibly even politics as the number of people categorised as white is reduced. Donald Trump, the presumptive

GOP nominee for president, recently alluded to arguments made by people who allege Democrats are promoting illegal immigration to weaken the power of white people. As president, Trump unsuccessfully tried to disqualify people who were in the United States illegally from being included in the 2020 census.

Momentum for changing the race and ethnicity categories grew during the Obama administration in the mid-2010s, but was halted after Trump became president in 2017. It was revived after Democratic President Joe Biden took office in 2021

The changes will be reflected in data collection, forms, surveys and the once-a-decade census questionnaires put out by the federal government, as well as in state governments and the private sector because businesses,

universities and other groups usually follow Washington's lead. Federal plan on how they will put the changes

The first federal standards on race and ethnicity were produced in 1977 to provide consistent data across agencies and come up with figures that could help enforce civil rights laws. They were last updated in 1997 when five minimum race categories were delineated—American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander and white; respondents could pick more than one race. The minimum ethnic categories were grouped separately as not Hispanic or Hispanic or Latino.

The interagency group that worked on the latest revisions noted that categories are sociopolitical constructs, and race and ethnicity are not defined biologically or genetically.

Racial and ethnic categories used by the US government reflect their

In 1820, the category "Free Colored People" was added to the decennial census to reflect the increase in free Black people. In 1850, the term "Mulatto" was added to the census to capture people of mixed heritage. American Indians were not explicitly counted in the census until 1860. Following years of immigration from China, "Chinese" was included in the 1870 census. There was not a formal

question about Hispanic origin until

latest revisions.

Some Afro Latinos feel that combining the race and ethnicity question will reduce their numbers and representation in the data, though previous research by the US Census Bureau did not find significant differences among Afro Latino responses when the questions were asked separately

Mozelle Ortiz, for instance, is of mixed Afro Puerto Rican descent. She feels the changes could eliminate that identity, even though people can choose more than one answer once the race and ethnicity questions are combined.

"My entire lineage, that of my Black Puerto Rican grandmother's and all other non-white Spanish speaking peoples, will be erased,' Ortiz wrote the interagency group.

Others are unhappy about how some groups of people such as Armenians or Arabs from Sudan and Somalia were not included in the examples used to define people of Middle Eastern or North African background.

Maya Berry, executive director of the Arab American Institute, said that while she was "incredibly happy' with the new category, that enthusiasm was tempered by the omissions.

"It is not reflective of the racial diversity of our community," Berry said. "And it's wrong."



A mother carrying her baby navigates a road undergoing sewer maintenance at Ikhalukhu in the old quarter of Patan on Wednesday.

CIAA seeks Rs919.83m recovery, Rs232m penalty from MDMS scam accused

>> Continued from page 1

The CIAA has accused the individuals and consultant Nuemera JV of illicitly profiting from the procurement of the device management system and causing losses to the NTA.

The anti-graft body has filed the case demanding the recovery of Rs919.83 million, which the government allegedly incurred as a loss, from those accused.

It has also demanded that the accused be sent to prison and a penalty of another Rs232.06 million be imposed on the defendants

The CIAA has accused the officials of submitting the bidding document without preparing cost estimation with a breakdown and of presenting baseless and fictitious documents. According to the commission, the officials had submitted the bid documents only manually even as the Public Procurement Act 2007 has made electronic bidding (e-bidding) mandatory.

Likewise, the officials had allegedly stifled competition in the bidding process to favour certain firms by introducing a 'bid security' provision, which is not required by the law, and managed to obtain approval for 'unnaturally high' quotation prices.

The commission has also asserted that their acts of hiding and destroying official documents, preparing forged dossiers and quoting abnormally inflated prices were proven in its investigation.

The commission has accused them of deliberately overlooking various mandatory provisions and a report presented by another consultant TAEC Consult, which had recommended a review of the request for proposal.

Florida state representative Anna Eskamani poses in front of her office, Wednesday, in Orlando. For the first time in 27 years, the US government is announcing changes to how it categorises people by race and ethnicity. "It feels good to be seen," said Eskamani, whose parents are from Iran.

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"महिलामा लगानी : सभ्य र समुन्नत समाजको थालनी"

नेपालको कुल जनसंख्यामा पुरुषभन्दा महिला करिब सात लाख बढी छन्। एक करोड ४२ लाख ९१ हजार (४८.९६%) पुरुष भएको नेपालमा महिलाको संख्या एक करोड ४९ लाख एक हजार (५१.०४%) छ। जनसंख्यामा महिलाको संख्या बढी भए पनि शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, रोजगारी, उद्यमशीलता तथा आर्थिक, सामाजिक र राजनीतिक पहुँचमा भने महिला निकै पछाडि छन्।

केन्द्रीय तथ्याङ्क विभागको विवरणअनुसार नेपालमा पुरुष साक्षरता दर ८३.६ प्रतिशत पुर्गे पनि महिला साक्षरता दर ६०.४ प्रतिशत मात्रै छ। देशको निजामती क्षेत्रमा ७३ प्रतिशत पुरुष छन् भने २७ प्रतिशत मात्र महिला छन्। अक प्रहरीमा ८.८ प्रतिशत र सेनामा ४.४ प्रतिशत मात्र महिला छन्। सरकारी, सार्वजनिक तथा कर्पोरेट क्षेत्रको रोजगारीमा पछाडि पारिएका महिला अनौपचारिक र असंगिठत व्यवसाय र रोजगारीमा लाउन बाध्य छन।

महिलाको हिस्सेदारी बढाउन राजनीतिक हस्तक्षेप आवश्यक ठानेर नयाँ संविधानले संसद्मा महिलाको उपस्थित ३३ प्रतिशत हुने सुनिश्चित गरेको हो। यस्तै राजनीतिक प्रबन्ध भएकाले स्थानीय तहमा पनि महिला जनप्रतिनिधिको संख्या करिब एक तिहाई पुजेको छ। आर्थिक, सामाजिक र राजनीतिक जाजरणकै कारण हो, यो बीचमा देशले महिला राष्ट्रपति पाएको छ। सभामुख, उपसभामुख, न्यायाधीश, प्रधानन्यायाधीश, नेपाल सरकारका सचिव, सुरक्षा निकायमा उच्च अधिकारी, विभिन्न कर्पोरेट संस्थामा प्रमुख कार्यकारी अधिकृत र औरसरकारी संस्थाको नेतृत्वमा महिलाको उपस्थितिको साक्षी देश बनिसकेको छ। प्रविधि, मनोरञ्जन र खेल क्षेत्रमा पनि महिला नेतृत्वले आफ्नो योज्यता साबित जारिरहेको छ।

कुनै पनि भूमिकामा महिला पुञ्नु आफैंमा सम्पूर्ण उपलिब्ध होइन । नेतृत्वमा महिला पुञेपिष्ठ आर्थिक तथा सामाजिक न्यायका लागि नीति निर्माण र कार्यान्वयनमा के फरक आयो ? मूल प्रश्न यही हो। बहसका लागि कान्तिपुर मिडिया ग्रुप प्रस्तुत गर्दछ, चौथो संस्करणको निर्भीक नारी

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OPINION



Thrill kills

One negative impact of adventurism is that it blurs the line between capability and performativity.

On Monday, as Nepalis sat down to scroll their smartphones after a colourful day of Holi, they were confronted by a bone-chilling video. Seventeen youths jumped, one after another, into the Karnali River from the iconic single-pillared bridge in Chisapani, Western Nepal. As each youth made a splash in the water, the onlookers were either hooting or counting them, eagerly waiting to see each of them emerge from the water and sail to the bank. Their wait turned to worry when 30-year-old Mahendra Shahi, one of the 17 youths, failed to emerge from the water. His dead body was later recovered from Sanakatti Ghat in Tikapur Municipality.

The Karnali swimming misadventure was utterly avoidable. While the actual cause of the youth's death was drowning, the latent cause was a chase for adventurism without a fair self-assessment of his own capability. There seems to have been a lapse in the functioning of the police in the incident, as they should have been better prepared to stop the youths from jumping into the water and rescue them in an emergency. As the days are getting hotter, it is inevitable for youths and children to go swimming. Each year, scores of youths who go out on adventure trips end up killing themselves as they cannot gauge the risks associated with their adventurism

One negative impact of adventurism is that people increasingly find it hard to distinguish between capability and performativity. In the social media age, where almost every aspect of individuals and their social lives can be livestreamed, adventurism has taken on the role of performativity. In a normative sense, any sport, adventurous or otherwise, is a performative act. However, the popularity that comes with the exaggeration of performativity on social media has made people take disproportionate risks. Those who cannot swim are plunging into the water, those who cannot drive properly are doing stunts, and those who cannot climb hills are going for high-altitude treks just because everyone else seems to be doing so. The result: The thrill they chase ends up killing them.

This risk to lives was one of the reasons the government invoked when it banned the popular social media app TikTok. Of course, there were other reasons for the ban, too, as it had become a site of protest and subversion against the government and established social norms. But the possibility of social media sites like TikTok and Facebook heightening risk-taking behaviour among individuals across the country cannot be ruled out. In 2020, a 24-year-old man from Dang district died after falling off a suspension bridge while making a TikTok video. A year later, another 18-yearold man died in Udayapur after falling off a cliff under similar circumstances. Now that TikTok is gone from Nepal, Instagram's Reels has become the new platform to post such

While the state often puts restrictions on taking such risks, such as issuing a circular against swimming in particular lakes or rivers, there is no way it can follow all individuals and prevent all forms of adventurism. It is incumbent on the individuals to take care of their own lives. But, yes, if a nudge from the state can curtail foolish risk-taking, especially among the youth, it is worth investing a little more in awareness, especially on popular online platforms.

THEIR VIEW

Back to villages

Reverse migration isn't a relief as it is being done out of abject desperation caused by poverty.

The harsh reality of the deteriorating living situation in our cities is highlighted once again by data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) which has revealed that the number of people moving back to villages has increased substantially in recent years. This trend, known as reverse migration, is another example of how the persistent cost-of-living crisis, especially in the cities, is forcing people to take drastic decisions.

As per the BBS data, 13.8 out of every 1,000 people in cities returned to villages in 2023, up from 10.9 in 2022. In 2019, only 3.9 people per 1,000 moved back to their villages. On the contrary, the number of people migrating from villages to cities fell to 19.6 per 1,000 people in 2023 from 26.4 in 2022. The reverse migration trend was triggered by the outbreak of the pandemic, which saw the economy shut down in several phases, leading to the loss of income for many. High inflation caused by both external and internal economic shocks exacerbated the situation; the resultant rises in the prices of essentials, coupled with shrinking income opportunities, made living in cities more and more expensive.

According to a recent study by the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling, jointly conducted with the University of Manchester's Global Development Institute, urban poverty in Bangladesh rose to 18.7 percent in 2023 from 16.3 percent in 2018. By contrast, rural poverty dropped to 21.6 percent from 24.5 percent during the same period. Even after cutting corners-reducing food intake, compromising on education and medical treatment, etc-many urban families have been unable to sustain a basic lifestyle.

True, some aspects of rural life have improved, but the fact remains that educational and employment opportunities as well as access to healthcare and public services are still inadequate across rural Bangladesh. While we have always advocated for reducing the mounting pressure on the cities, which led to a rapid but unsustainable growth, reverse migration does not come as a relief as it is being done out of abject desperation caused by poverty. So we urge the authorities to critically examine the BBS findings and take actions accordingly. They must ensure improved livelihood opportunities for those moving back to villages and provide adequate social safety support to those still struggling in cities. Our policymakers must also come up with long-term strategies to ensure equal economic and development opportunities in all districts.

- The Daily Star (Bangladesh)/ANN

On archiving private papers

POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE

We don't have a strong tradition of holding personal papers in public archives or repositories.

PRATYOUSH ONTA



Working on and off for almost a decade, the historical sociologist Lokranjan Parajuli and I were able to put together articles written by the political and literary historian Leelanateshvar Sharma Baral (1923-97) on domestic politics and the foreign policy of Nepal during the Panchayat regime in the form of a 500-page book (Autocratic Monarchy: Politics in Panchayat Nepal, 2012). Baral-who often signed his official name as LS Baral but chose to write literary history and criticism under his pen name Isvar Baral-wrote these 13 articles (one was co-written) between 1960 and 1982. In the book, Parajuli and I wrote a 44-page introduction that sketched Baral's life and work, highlighting "his educational, research and work record on literature, history and politics of Nepal.

Although Baral's family had a collection of his private papers, we did not have the opportunity to read through them when we were writing the introduction in 2012. Hence, we stated that since "we have not had a chance to do research on his personal papers, our narrative is based on published sources and some interviews." Some of these published sources were letters that Baral had written to his contemporaries in Nepal while he was working or studying abroad.

In May 2019, Baral's family gifted his personal papers to the Martin Chautari Library. By early 2023, these papers had been digitised but due to the lack of dedicated staff who can do such work, they have not yet been properly catalogued and indexed. Parajuli and I have looked through the digital files of these papers for two purposes. One, we were looking for unpublished works by Baral that could be published. One such piece written in Nepali, on the mid-19th century politician Mathbarsingh Thapa and his trip to Calcutta, was found. In fact, four different drafts of this text were in the collection. Parajuli was



able to compare the four versions, identify the incomplete most revised draft, and finally put together a version of this text by amalgamating some paragraphs from earlier versions with the most revised draft. The resulting text was published in Samaj Adhyayan

In addition, we have thus far found some correspondence related to the work of the Nepal Sanskritik Parishad (NSP), an organisation founded in Kathmandu in 1951 to promote research in Nepal. Baral was affiliated with NSP as its office secretary and the editor of its journal Nepal Sanskritik Parishad Patrika, whose first issue was published in 1952. Parishad was active from 1951 to 1964 and Baral's active role in it lasted between 1951 and late 1956, when he took up a faculty position at the Indian School of International Studies in New Delhi. Among his personal papers, we have thus far been able to find the appointment letter the Parishad gave to Baral in 1951 and some other mundane correspondence, but not much else related to the organisational dynamics of NSP. Nevertheless, these unpublished texts, in part, have helped

I dwell on the existence of LS Baral's personal papers to highlight the fact that there are many such collections in our midst. Most of them are being held by family members of the departed protagonists or the senior individuals who are still with us. If we as a society are to become more capable of writing

me write a full-length article on the

short life of the NSP.

various types of histories (especially of the post-Rana period since 1951), it will be absolutely essential to figure out ways to make personal papers available in public archives.

But what are personal papers? Most families have various types of financial documents in their collection. These include various deeds, ansabanda (property division) documents, loan and payment receipts, tax-related records, bills and bank statements. These are parts of personal papers, for sure. But a broader definition would suggest that personal papers include correspondence of various types, photographs, identification documents, diaries, personal calendars, travel notes, writings done for schools and

various other records. The personal papers of artists and architects would include drafts and final drawings of their artistic creations, whether they are paintings or buildings. Such papers of writers would include various drafts of their written work. Personal papers of researchers would include their research notes, field notes, drafts of articles they have published (or those that remained unpublished), and even drafts of texts written by others. These items, for the most part, are generated in the course of the concerned person's personal and professional passage through life.

In Nepal, we don't have a strong tradition of holding personal papers in public archives or repositories for various reasons. First, for much of the Rana

era, most of the population remained illiterate and hence, while their families held financial documents, the more expansively understood personal papers were simply not generated by most Nepalis. Second, in the post-1951 decades, this began to change gradually as writing became a part of the lives of more and more Nepalis. But writing was also dangerous during both the Rana and the Panchayat era (1960-90). The personal papers of educated individuals deemed to be opponents of the regimes had to be mostly hidden because they could be used against them by the repressive regimes. Hence, the conditions for the generation and passage of such personal papers to public repositories have not existed for too long in our country.

Third, while most Nepalis today own personal papers in various volumes, our society does not have well-resourced archives in which they can be properly deposited. More and more Nepalis who came of age in the 1950s/1960s have either retired or have already passed away. Even if their families decide to donate their personal papers to existing archives or libraries, such entities are institutionally challenged to properly process those papers and make them available to the public. Many archives and libraries do not have the needed space to hold such materials; others do not have access to the technical know-how to process them.

Fourth, most libraries and archives do not have sufficient financial resources to do such work. In this connection, it is important to note what the chief executive of Patan-based Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya (MPP), Shamik Mishra, told me. He said that MPP can archive personal papers provided that the concerned donors or some third party are willing to secure the financial resources needed to process them for use by members of the public.

Finally, it would be important to recognise that just enabling some archival entities in the Kathmandu Valley so that they can hold personal papers is simply not enough. As has been persuasively argued by historian Yogesh Raj and MPP archivists Deepak Aryal and Rajeev Singh in the booklet Sthaniya Abhilekhalayako Bato (2079 BS), what we need is a national network of local archives, each of which capable of holding personal papers and many other archival records. Needless to say, local archives should be supported both by public and private resources so that they become functionally useful to researchers and members of the public. There are many examples of such support in other countries. We could learn

Tapping into foreign debt markets

Nepal is unlikely to domestically secure huge investments to fulfil its ambitions.

SHABDA GYAWALI & PRAGRES ACHARYA





The global bond market dwarfs the equity market by at least three times, with an estimated worth of \$126.9 trillion. As Nepal will be spotlighted during the upcoming Investment Summit on April 23-24, we need to seize the opportunity and not limit ourselves to funding only via equity instruments. The alternative is debt instruments. Equity instruments, such as 'ordinary shares', are used to own a company, whereas debt instruments, such as bonds, debentures and loans, are used by the company to borrow.

Nepal is projected to require a minimum of \$40 billion over the coming decade to fulfil ambitions in the energy sector, including infrastructure investments. At least \$20 billion is needed to invest in energy projects to meet exports and rising domestic demand. It is unlikely that investments of such magnitude can be secured domestically. The total lending capacity of the local banks is around \$46 billion, which is growing, on average, by 12 to 15 percent annually. However, investment demand is more than double the growth rate. Their ability to fund larger projects is also limited due to their internal concentration risks. Further, there are demands from other competing sectors. Consequently, renewable energy projects must actively seek external funding, recognising that reliance solely on equity investments is impractical, given that debt constitutes 70 to 75 percent of renewable energy projects'

This sets the stage for targeting the huge international bond market. With the current momentum in the global green bond market, coupled with Nepal's prowess in hydroelectric and solar power and vulnerability to climate change, Nepal finds itself with a significant tailwind. The choice lies with Nepal: Resist the wind or embrace it. Ironically, it seems more difficult to resist.

The global GSS+ (social, sustainability, sustainability-linked, and transition-labelled) bond market boasts a staggering value of over \$3.5 trillion. ently outstrips the available supply, and the market share has surged from a mere 0.3 percent in 2012 to a substantial 3 percent in 2022. This growth is remarkable, considering the rapid expansion of the overall bond market. Nepal can tap into this burgeoning climate finance pool by leveraging international bond markets. This can help Nepal address energy funding shortfalls. This read focuses on corporate or non-government issues of bonds to address the gap. However, this strategy has its challenges, and it'll take some elbow grease to make it happen.

Nepal's guardians harbour more anxiety about the skill of the sword master-the handler of borrowed funds—than they do about the blade debt-to-GDP ratio stood at 43 percent, with external debt comprising 22 percent of GDP, indicating a healthy status compared to the cautionary threshold of 50 percent. Furthermore, this figure is effectively lower, given that all debt thus far has been concessional, with an average interest rate on foreign loans of less than 1 percent and a total outflow of less than 4.5 percent of outstanding debt, including the principal. Additionally, current account receipts outweigh external debt outflows by a factor of 35, demonstrating about the reliability of bond offerings coming out of the country. They also grapple with the daunting task of pricing various risks while struggling This could result in absurdly high-risk premiums higher than what the Nepali market would be or 'should be' willing to pay. All these conundrums can be tossed into the broad basket of the missing country-specific yield curve. But remember, broad strokes sometimes miss the quirks that complete $\bar{\mbox{The}}$ international bond investors are also unaware of the track record of the sole off-taker of energy in Nepal, the

NEA. While the NEA has yet to default, its reliability has yet to be convincingly demonstrated to international bond investors. Even if investors harbour confidence in the NEA's track record, the unpredictability of government policies in developing countries, the dearth of effective governance structures and the absence of contract adherence could prompt investors to search for an umbrella even on a sunny day. While the sun may be shining now, you never know when a sudden downpour might catch you off guard.

It's not the intention to state that these problems plague Nepal. Yet, as a developing nation, Nepal bears the weight of generalised labels and conceptions. The burden of proof to shake off these labels falls squarely on Nepal's shoulders. The effective way to shake off these labels is to have a history of successful bond issuances. However, this means that the inflated risk premiums in issuances before having a 'history' burden the bonds with a weightier price tag.

Now that it appears having a history of bond issuances will kickstart a chain reaction, fuelling further bond issues and setting in motion a positive feedback loop, a question persists: How to start? For every 'history', there must have been a first move. Common sense dictates that these initial steps be deliberate, cautious, and accompanied by ample support. Could the rise in commercial foreign public debt and private sector bond borrowing, influenced by the country's credit rating, exhaust foreign currency reserves or plunge the nation into a debt trap? The second (final) part of the article to be published next week will discuss this.

Gyawali is the head of investment at Dolma Foundation, and Acharya is a finance professional at Dolma



Nepal doesn't have a credit rating, the well-wishers perceive Nepal's cauwhich is an anchor for international tious borrowing practices as an outbond investors to assess country risk come of necessity rather than a and decide whether they want to take choice, expressing scepticism about the the risk of lending to Nepali projects. ability to exercise prudence when If they do, it determines the price granted greater discretion. They fear they'd be willing to pay. The absence of that obtaining a credit rating could such a rating could make investors not open the door to higher-cost commerbother due to uncertainty. While efforts cial market debt that exceeds the curare underway to secure that, there's rent low rates. concern about the potential consequences. Some fear that obtaining a rating might open the floodgates to

excessive government borrowing,

potentially leading Nepal into a cycle

of unsustainable debt.

The absence of a robust history of bond issuance by both Nepal and its corporate entities is another problem, resulting in a perceived lack of credibility. Bond investors/lenders find themselves in a fog of uncertainty

Foundation.

NATIONAL

National Assembly vice-chair Aryal resigns

She was elected to the post in February last year.



Urmila Aryal submits her resignation to National Assembly chair Narayan Dahal.

POST REPORT

National Assembly vice-chair Urmila Aryal resigned on Thursday, following a power realignment at Singha Durbar

She is believed to have stepped down from the position to allow the election of a lawmaker from one of the other ruling coalition partners.

Maoist leader Narayan Dahal was elected to chair the upper house earlier this month. A common candidate of the five-party ruling coalition, Dahal defeated Yuvaraj Sharma of the main opposition Nepali Congress

The four-party ruling coalition on March 4 had agreed to elect a Maoist candidate to the chair of the upper house that was vacant after Ganesh Timilsena completed his six-year tenure on March 3. In an eight-point agreement, the four parties stated that they would elect a CPN-UML lawmak-

er the Assembly vice-chair. The agreement was signed by Maoist Centre chair and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, UML chair KP Sharma Oli, Rastriya Swatantra Party chair Rabi Lamichhane and Janata Samajwadi Party chief Upendra Yadav.

Aryal got elected to the post in February last year. A long-time UML leader, Aryal quit the party and joined the CPN (Maoist Centre) over a

India renews electricity export permission for three months

The southern neighbour agrees to provide 554MW whereas Nepal wants 650MW.

■ SEEMA TAMANG

India has renewed the electricity export permission to Nepal only for

The existing agreement, which was renewed a year ago, expires on March 31

The Indian side agreed to the renewal three days before the expiry date even though the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) had been following up on the matter regularly for the last three months.

According to NEA spokesman Chandan Kumar Ghosh, the authority has been informed about the threemonth extension from the Indian side.

"The agreement has been renewed until June 30," he said. It has been agreed to import 500 megawatts of electricity through the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur cross-border transmission line and 54 megawatts via Tanakpur."

The NEA however had sought permission to import 650MW through the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur transmission line and 54MW via Tanakpur.

Officials at the energy ministry said that Nepal may face 10-hour-long load-shedding if it can't import around 600MW of electricity from India during the dry season. Nabinraj Singh, spokesperson for the energy ministry, said that the import permission would be in effect till June-end. "After June 15, we will start exporting energy," he said.

Earlier, Nepal was allowed to import energy at any time as needed. But this time around, Nepal will be allowed to import 554MW of electricity only during 6am to 6pm. "With this arrangement, we will have an electricity shortage and the industrial estates may face shortage mainly



India will supply 500MW of electricity through the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur transmission line.

during the peak hours," the ministry

official said. According to the official, Nepal is

still lobbying with India for supply during additional hours.

production will be only around 1,400MW as the water levels in the rivers recedes significantly during the According to NEA officials, Nepal

Former minister Rayamajhi admitted to hospital

□ POST REPORT

Former minister Top Bahadur Rayamajhi, who is currently in detention for suspected involvement in a fake Bhutanese refugee scam, has been admitted to the Maharajgunjbased Manmohan Cardiothoracic Vascular and Transplant Centre.

He was taken to the hospital on Wednesday night after experiencing dizziness and low blood pressure.



Top Bahadur Rayamajhi

Hospital chief Dr Ratnamani Gajurel said Rayamajhi is experiencing issues with his heart's rhythm. Dr Gajurel said his health condition is stable and will be at the hospital for a 24-hour observation.

On June 16, the Kathmandu District Court sent 16 people, including former minister Rayamajhi, to jail after a hearing in the scam. They have been charged with four types of crimes treason, organised crime, fraud and forgery. The accused have been charge-sheeted for collecting Rs288.17 million from 115 victims-ranging from Rs150,000 to Rs4.8 million eachby promising to send them to the US as Bhutanese refugees.

Nepal joins the Global Platform for Access to Childhood Cancer Medicines

As a member of the platform, the country will receive 35 types of childhood cancer medicines free of cost for four years.

POST REPORT

The Ministry of Health and Population on Thursday signed an agreement with the World Health Organization (WHO) to join the Global Platform for Access to Childhood Cancer Medicines

The platform is an initiative by St Jude Global and WHO to increase access to lifesaving childhood cancer medicines in low- and middle-income "As a member of the platform,

Nepal will receive 35 types of child-The UN health body will provide

technical support to strengthen the supply chain system and health care facilities to ensure the effective distribution of medicines

UNICEF is the platform's procurement partner and will be involved in purchasing medicines and delivering

The first batch of medicines is expected to arrive in the country by the third quarter of 2024 [starting from July] and will be used for the treatment of childhood cancer in the four participating health institutions: Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital, BP Koirala Cancer Hospital, Kanti Children's Hospital, Patan Hospital. There are plans to expand it to other hospitals in the future as needed.

"Each year, an estimated 900 children are diagnosed with cancer in Nepal. However, only about a third of scarcity, resulting in increased deaths," said Dr Rajesh Sambhajirao Pandav, WHO representative to Nepal

"This innovative platform will help enhance access to cancer care by addressing medicine availability issues and ensure that children who need essential cancer medications can access them, while also helping reduce the financial

burden placed upon parents and families of children with cancer."

Nepal is one of the six countries worldwide and the only one in the WHO South-East Asia Region selected by the GPACCM platform to participate in this novel initiative. "Today is an important day for

Nepal. With the signing of this agreement, we have formally joined the GPACCM platform, which will make a great difference in improving the treatment of children suffering from

Initially, the medicines received through the platform will be provided to four government hospitals, we will see how we can expand provision to other hospitals on a need basis, "said Dr Roshan Pokhrel, secretary at the Ministry of Health and Population.

Nepal stepped into the global spotlight in 2020 as a focus country for the

Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer (GICC) which aims to improve outcomes for children with cancer around the world and reach at least 60 percent survival rate for children with cancer by 2030. At present, the survival rate of children with cancer is only 20-30 percent in low and middle-income countries compared to over 80 percent in high-income

The Global Platform for Access to Childhood Cancer Medicines, the first of its kind, was launched in 2021 as part of the Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer. Developed

WHO, the platform aims to provide an uninterrupted supply of quality-assured cancer medicines to approximately 120,000 children in low- and middle-income countries between 2022 and 2024, with the expectation to scale up in future years.

Bagmati Chief Minister Shalikram Jammakattel expands Cabinet

□ POST REPORT KATHMANDU, MARCH 28

Bagmati Chief Minister Shalikram Jammakattel inducted a new minister to his Cabinet on Thursday.

will need around 2,000MW in next two

months whereas the total domestic

Shailendraman Bajracharya, member of the Hamro Nepali Party, took charge as the provincial minister for culture, tourism and co-operatives. He was administered the oath of office by Province Head Yadav Sharma.

After the changes in the ruling coalition at the centre in the first week of this month, the Nepali Congress recalled its ministers and decided to withdraw support to the Bagmati

On Tuesday, the Hamro Nepali Party with two members in the pro-

its support, pushing the Jammakattelled government into a minority. Jammakattel, in a bid to regain majority, appointed Bajracharya to the post on Thursday.

Personal assistant

wanted, who's fluent in English to manage professional and personal life more smoothly. Contact: 9813012320



Government of Nepal

Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development

Rural Enterprise and Economic Development Project Office of the Project Director

Hariharbhawan, Lalitpur

Email: ind.projectreed@gmail.com Tel: +977 1 -5900352, 5900356

Request for Expression of Interest (REoI) for the position of Environment Risk Management Specialist (National Individual Consultants)

Date of Notice Publication: 29 March 2024

Country: Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal Contract ID: NP-MOALD-418571-CS-INDV

Credit No.: 6787-NP

- 1. The Government of Nepal has received financing from the World Bank towards the cost of the Rural Enterprise and Economic Development (REED) Project, under the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.
- 2. The consulting services ("the Services") includes support to the Office of the Project Director (OPD) and Economic Corridor Offices (ECOs) in carrying out the activities for the implementation of the Project.
- 3. The REED Project now invites EoI Applications from eligible, qualified and experienced individual consultants to express their interests for the positions of Environment Risk Management Specialist (NP-MOALD-418571-CS-INDV) to assist the OPD and ECOs on the project related activities for the project period

4. Detailed terms & conditions and the scope of services for specific consulting service are mentioned in the the Terms of Reference

- (ToR) which can be downloaded from the website: reed.moald.gov.np. The selection will be carried out based on the qualification and experience criteria mentioned in the ToR. 5. Interested individual applicants should provide the information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and
- relevant experiences to perform the services as per the ToR. 6. The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank's Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, 5th edition September 2023 ("Procurement Regulations"), setting forth the World Bank's policy
- on conflict of interest. 7. A Consultant will be selected in accordance with Individual Consultant selection method set out in the Procurement Regulations.
- 8. Interested individual consultants are requested to submit their updated Curriculum Vitae (CV) along with a Cover Letter to the REED Project, OPD office at the contact address given above or by mail or by email to ind.projectreed@gmail.com no later than April 15, 2024. Late application will not be accepted and any canvassing shall lead to automatic disqualification.

National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC)

Request for the Expression of Interest (EOI)

Date of Publication: 2080/12/16

- 1. NTNC invites Expression of Interest (EOI) for the purpose of short listings of the eligible, qualified and experienced firm/company/Organization to submit proposals for providing consulting service on Reconciliation/Development of Water Model for the Entire Gandaki River Basin under Gandaki Basin Climate Resilient Project (GBCRP).
- A complete set of EOI documents in English may be collected from the office of National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC) within office hoursfrom 9:00 to 17:00 hrs. Monday to Friday. The EOI Documents shall be submitted and must reach at the address below not
- later than the 12:00 hours on 2081/01/03 and opened at 14:00 hours on 2081/01/03. If last date of submission and opening falls on a government holiday then the next working day shall be considered the last day.
- Short listing will be conducted following the criteria contained in EOI documents and shall be informed to all applicants through email provided on EOI proposal and website of NTNC www.ntnc.org.np. Only the short listed Firm(s) shall be invited to submit the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the mentioned job at a later stage. One Firm is permitted to submit only one EOI either single or in a joint venture. If two or more firms/companies are to be provided services as a group, organizations or a joint venture, the name, address, profile of such firms or company and the name of lead firm or company should be provided.
- The firm(s)/company shall include in their EOI Documents following information in measurable terms and any other information that they may feel will support their application.
 - a) Organization track record (profile); b) Manpower Resources of the firm; c) Work experience of similar work d) Bio-data of key human resources to be
 - involved in the proposed assignment. e) other related documents as mentioned in EOI Document.
- NTNC Reserves the right to shortlist or not to shortlist any or all of the Firm(s) without assigning any reasons whatsoever. Further information of clarification on the EOI can be obtained from the address below during office hours.

Attention: Sr. Administrative Officer, Procurement **National Trust for Nature Conservation** Khumaltar, Lalitpur, P. O. Box: 3712 Tel. No.: 5526571, 5526573 Email: info@ntnc.org.np

			Exchange rates fixed by Nepal Rastra Ban		
SHARES					
Nepse (in percent)			1	2,035.64 _{pts} 0.23%	
HIGHEST GAINERS					
HURJA 10	SARBTM 9.96	HHL 8.73	SPC 8.07	PPL 7.44	RFPL 7.06
MODERATE GAINERS					
MDB 0.07	NABBC 0.05	SWBBL 0.05	PPCL 0.04	MHCL 0.02	NIBD84 0.01
MODERATE LOSERS					
GBILD8 -0.1	6/87 SJC -0.0				AHL -0.02
HIGHEST LOSERS					
USLB -10	DLBS -10	H8020 -6.8	JOSHI -3.34	MKJC -3.28	DORDI -3.19
BULLION PRICE PER TOL					

Rs 127,900

Rs 1,510

□ BIZLINE

Dollar gains as inflation data looms

TOKYO/LONDON: The dollar gained on the euro and pound on Thursday after a US Federal Reserve policy maker said he wasn't in a hurry to cut rates, while traders braced for key economic data and hesitated to move on the yen on fears of Japanese intervention. The Japanese currency was steady at 151.42 per dollar having traded just shy of the 152 mark at its lowest since 1990 on Wednesday before Japan's top monetary officials suggested they were ready to intervene to prevent further declines. The euro was last down 0.33 percent at \$1.0792 its lowest in five weeks, and the pound was down 0.25 percent at \$1.2609. (REUTERS)

India sizzles in global equity capital markets amid deals drought in Asia

SYDNEY: India's bulging pipeline of as the \$3 billion IPO of Hyundai Motor's unit will draw more funds to a market whose share of global equity capital market deals hit a quarterly record this year, bankers said. A paucity of deals elsewhere in Asia will add to the impetus for capital flows into India, they added. Higher global interest rates, geopolitical tensions, as well as China's economic slowdown and its move to restrict initial public offerings (IPOs) to support its secondary markets have led to a slump in equity dealmaking across Asia. (REUTERS)

China will be a driving force for the world economic recovery

BOAO: China aims to be strong driving force for the world economic recovery this year, opening its markets wider to foreign investors and promoting high quality growth, the country's top legislator Zhao Leji said on Thursday. China will make tech innovation a new point of economic growth and is willing to collaborate with other countries on it, Zhao, the chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, said at the opening plenary of the annual gathering of the Boao Forum for Asia. China's import and export of goods is expected to exceed \$32 trillion in the next five years, according to Zhao. (REUTERS)

White House sets policies for federal AI use

WASHINGTON: "Concrete safeguards" for government use of artificial intelligence were announced by the White House Thursday, as it vowed they would serve as a model for "global action." "When government agencies use AI tools, we will now require them to verify that those tools do not endanger the rights and safety of the American people," Vice President Kamala Harris said as she briefed reporters on the new rules laid out by the Office of Management and Budget. She gave the example of a Veterans Administration hospital that uses AI for medical diagnostics, saying it would need to first demonstrate results are not biased because training data focused on one race and gender. (AFP)

Exports of high-value Nepali products rise 5 percent

The export earnings from goods identified by NTIS 2023 totalled Rs65.68 billion in the first eight months of the current fiscal year.

Nepal's export of high-value products increased by 4.85 percent in the first eight months of the current fiscal year due to a rise in the shipment of iron and steel products, cement, ginger, readymade garment and medicinal herbs.

According to the Department of Customs, export earnings from goods identified by the Trade Integration Strategy (NTIS) 2023 totalled Rs65.68 billion in the review period, out of Nepal's Rs100.61 billion exports.

Nepal reviewed the NTIS basket in the current fiscal year, adding 20 products and services to the list.

According to Trade and Export Promotion Center statistics, the export of iron and steel jumped by 74.4 percent to Rs11.63 billion during the review period. Iron and steel comprised the highest share of the export at 11.57 percent.

Nepal's cement export totalled Rs1.28 billion in the first eight months of the current fiscal year, up from Rs111.42 million in the same period last fiscal year.

The export of ginger sharply increased by 39.9 percent to Rs1.03 billion during the review period.

Readymade garment exports increased by 15.9 percent to Rs6.18 billion in the first eight months of the current fiscal year.

The export of medicinal herbs increased by 38.7 percent to Rs1.61 billion during the review period. The export of noodles, footwear, dog chew, lentils, vegetables, coffee and honey also increased during the review period. Dog chew export increased by 2.8 percent to Rs1.98 billion in the first eight months of the current fiscal year.

Noodles and pasta exports rose by 10.1 percent to Rs1.33 billion during the review period. Similarly, footwear exports increased by 1.6 percent to Rs814.86 million.

Likewise, lentils export increased



Farmers harvest large cardamom in Sandakpur, Ilam.

by 21.3 percent to Rs353.28 million.

Nepal exported vegetables worth Rs566.83 million, coffee worth Rs42.99 million and honey worth Rs27.87 million in the first eight months of the current fiscal year.

However, the export of yarns, woollen carpet, jute and its products, cardamom, felt, tea, pashmina, fabrics, rosin and resin acid, Nepali paper, gold and silver jewellery and textiles declined in the first eight months of the current fiscal year.

The export of yarns declined by 4.1

percent to Rs7.51 billion during the review period. Woollen carpet export declined by

6.2 percent to Rs6.92 billion in the first eight months of the current fiscal year. The export of jute and its products declined by 7 percent to Rs4.97 billion during the review period. Cardamom export declined by 11.8

percent to Rs5.17 billion in the first eight months of the current

Similarly, felt product exports declined by Rs3.08 billion during the review period. Tea exports also declined by 11.9 percent to Rs2.46 bil-

lion in the first eight months of the

current fiscal year. Pashmina export declined by 4.1

percent to Rs2.02 billion in the first eight months of the current fiscal year. The export of fabrics also fell by 2.7 percent to Rs1.66 billion in the first eight months of the current

Rosin and resin acid export sharply declined by 29.6 percent to Rs800.50 million during the review period.

The export of Nepali paper also shrunk by 2.4 percent to Rs742.54 million in the review period.

Export of silver jewellery declined by 15.1 percent to Rs113.01 million while gold jewellery fell by 75.2 percent to Rs27.27 million. The export of textiles declined by 38.70 percent to Rs3.31 billion during the review period. Government officials said that in the context of the planned graduation of Nepal from the least developed countries (LDCs) category by 2026, it has launched schemes to boost exports.

According to the government estimates, it would require Rs463 billion of investment to implement the new trade integration strategy. The major target of NTIS 2023 is to attain Nepal's trade-to-GDP ratio of 55 percent by 2026 from 43.81 percent in 2021.

Gajendra Kumar Thakur, joint sec retary of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, said that the ministry has allocated a budget amounting to Rs30.99 million for the current fiscal year for the implementation of NTIS 2023.

The Industry Ministry is a coordination unit and needs integrated support from the Finance Ministry, Agriculture, Nepal Bureau of Standards and Metrology, Forest Ministry and other relevant ministries and government bodies for the successful implementation of the new trade strategy, Thakur said.

"Most of our exportable goods are being returned from the border in the lack of labs. If labs are established at border points and international accreditation is obtained for them, this will boost exports further,' Thakur said. "It will also help in the quality test for goods imported from neighbouring and third countries," he said.

Integrated initiatives are being taken to boost exports, he said.

The Industry Ministry has also formed the National Programme Implementation Unit under the chair of Industry Minister Damodar

China lifts tariffs on Australian wine, ends three-year freeze in trade

REUTERS BEIJING, MARCH 28

China will lift anti-dumping and anti-subsidy tariffs on Australian wine from March 29, the Chinese commerce ministry said on Thursday, ending three years of punitive levies and offering long-awaited relief to Australian wine producers.

The tariffs, of up to 218.4 percent, were first imposed in March 2021 for a period of five years along with a host of other trade barriers on Australian commodities when ties soured after origins of COVID-19.

Ties have improved significantly since last year, leading China to steadily lift trade hurdles on Australian goods ranging from barley to coal, and raising hopes the punishing tariffs on shipments to Australia's top wine export market would soon be removed.

"Given the situation in China's wine market has changed, the anti-dumping and anti-subsidy tariff imposed on wine imported from Australia is no longer necessary," the commerce ministry said in a

Previously, Australian wines imported into China were subject to zero tariffs after the signing of a free trade agreement in 2015, giving them a 14 percent tariff advantage over many other wine-producing nations.

In the first half of 2023, Australian wine accounted for only 0.14 percent of Chinese wine imports compared with 27.46 percent in 2020 before the duties were imposed, according to the commerce ministry statement. "We welcome this outcome, which comes at a critical time for the Australian wine industry," the Australian government said in a statement.

"Since 2020, China's duties on Australian wine effectively made it unviable for Australian producers to export bottled wine to that market. Australia's wine exports to China were worth \$1.1 billion in 2019.'

Australian wine makers had been preparing for the dropping of Chinese tariffs for months.

"This is great news," said Campbell Thompson, the Beijing-based Australian CEO of wine importer and distributor The Wine Republic. "We are delighted and we look forward to re-introducing some great wines to China very soon."

Australian wine makers had been preparing for the dropping of Chinese tariffs for months. Trade data show almost 2.5 million litres worth of wine from Australia entering Hong Kong in December, up from around 685,000 litres a month in recent years and the most since September 2019.

Beijing started imposing tariffs on Australian products in 2020, prompting Canberra to complain to the World Trade Organisation (WTO). When the tariffs on Australian wine were levied

in 2021, Canberra urged the WTO to arbitrate in the dispute.

Under the joint efforts of both sides, China and Australia reached a consensus on the proper settlement of disputes under the WTO framework, He Yadong, a spokesman at the Chinese commerce ministry, told reporters on

The removal of the Chinese duties means Australia will discontinue its legal proceedings at the WTO, according to the Australian statement.

Australia's top publicly listed winemaker, Treasury Wine Estates, and will start partnering with customers in China to expand sales and marketing, as well as brand management.

"Today's announcement is a significant positive not only for Treasury Wine Estates, but also for the Australian wine industry and wine consumers in China," CEO Tim Ford said in a statement.

According to Simon Woods, CEO of Australia's Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai (AustCham Shanghai) the announcement will "raise confidence within the Australia-China business community."

"This is fantastic news and is the product of hard work on the part of Australian and Chinese governments and businesses," he said.

The lifting of the tariffs will also be a welcome move for vine growers in Australia as millions of vines are being destroyed to rein in over-production amid falling consumption of wine worldwide.

China's Xiaomi enters car market with new electric vehicle

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE BEIJING, MARCH 28

Chinese consumer tech giant Xiaomi launched its first electric vehicle in Beijing on Thursday, injecting itself into a fiercely competitive sector in the world's largest car market.

China's EV sector has grown rapidly in recent years—propelled by purchasing subsidies that were discontinued in late 2022—and dozens of stiff price war to get ahead in a crowd-

Xiaomi is known for its affordable smartphones and home appliances, and CEO Lei Jun says he is now putting his "reputation on the line" with the SU7 EV, challenging Chinese car giant BYD and Elon Musk's Tesla.

A basic SU7 model will cost 215,900 yuan (\$29,868), Lei told a glitzy launch news conference in Beijing on Thursday evening.

The sleek and sporty SU7 will be available in nine colours and includes "sound simulation", Lei said, "to recreate the thrill of driving a sports car"

It also offers plenty of other gimmicks, such as karaoke equipment and a mini-fridge.

Xiaomi has promised it will be "the best-looking, best-driving and smart-

est car" priced under 500,000 yuan. "The 200,000 to 250,000 yuan range, that actually is the most competitive segment in the China EV space at the moment," Johnson Wan, an analyst at Jefferies Financial Group Inc, told Bloomberg.

Lei told Thursday's news conference that his company's debut vehicle was comparable to Tesla's Model 3 and surpassed the American maker's sedan in some aspects.

"I think we can provide a better product for Model 3 users," he said.

Xiaomi is the world's third-biggest smartphone maker, and its experience Lu Weibing, Xiaomi's president,

told CNBC last month that there were around 20 million people who used the company's premium smartphones, a figure that helped it price the SU7. "I think the initial purchasers will

be very overlapped with the smartphone users. So that's our strategy," "By entering the premium segment,

Xiaomi can carve out a niche against established brands like Tesla and Nio," Abhishek Murali, senior electric vehicle analyst at Rystad Energy, "Targeting affluent Chinese con-

sumers with a premium EV allows Xiaomi to potentially offset the high manufacturing costs typically faced by EV startups," Murali said.

China is the world's largest producer of greenhouse gases, but officials plan for most domestic car sales to be made up of electric and hybrid models

Blond vs pink: French-Swiss battle for 'fourth' chocolate

□ AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

PARIS, MARCH 28

A fourth chocolate—"blond"—has been slowly making inroads into French confectionary, but has failed to win official recognition and faces competition from a pink Swiss variety. Blond choccy was born from an

French pastry chef Frederic Bau was demonstrating his skills at an exhibition in Japan, and left his white chocolate warming a little too long in

a bain-marie... four days, to be precise. "By chance, by magic... it became blond! This chocolate appeared with an incredible colour and smell", recalls Bau, who is creative director for chocolatier Valrhona

Bau immediately smelled the commercial potential of this happy blunder, but it took seven years of testing to perfect its unique aromatic qualities and consistency. The recipe remains a secret but has been officially registered by Valrhona, and is sold under the name Dulcey since 2012.



Pastry chef from Nice Philippe Tayac prepares tartelettes with hazelnuts and 'blond' chocolate at Valrhona chocolatier in Paris on March 1.

However, the basic chemistry is well-understood. It is the "Maillard reaction", a sequence of chemical reactions between amino acids and reducing sugars, causing browning and aromas that are close to toasting.

To taste, blond chocolate has the milky fattiness of white chocolate but is much less sweet, with a soft caramel flavour and an aftertaste of roasted coffee.

French pastry chefs tend to snub white chocolate, associating it with the big slabs they gobbled as children.

But blond opens up new possibilities. "It's very different from other chocolates. It gives a very biscuity, very delicious taste," Nice-based pastry chef Philippe Tayac told AFP, who combines it with hazelnuts for a tartlet.

Bau combines it as a pure fondant dessert with freshly roasted apples and a Tahitian vanilla cream, and he also recommends "breaking it up" with more distinct fruity combinations, such as citrus or red fruit.

Despite efforts, Valrhona has not

managed to convince French lawmakers to reopen its legal definitions. So blond remains formally just

another type of white chocolate, which was the last to be legally recognised-after dark and milk chocolate-after its invention in the 1930s by Switzerland's Nestle.

And France's Alpine neighbours are not waiting to be beaten to the punch on a fourth variety.

Valrhona's key competitor in the world of professional-grade chocolate, Swiss giant Barry Callebaut, launched a marketing campaign in 2017 for its own fourth type: this one bright pink and derived from Ruby cocoa beans grown in Ecuador, Brazil and Ivory Coast. Barry Callebaut calls its Ruby chocolate "the biggest innovation in chocolate in 80 years"

The company was diplomatic when asked about the rivalry by AFP, saying in a statement: "The best chocolate in the world is the one that gives you a moment of indulgence-no matter where it was produced and no matter the colour."

France beatable, Germany resurgent, Italy seek redemption at Euro 2024

Over the recent international break, the French lost soundly to Germany and England were defeated by Brazil, underlining their vulnerability and showing that perhaps there's no overwhelming favourite.

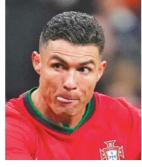


Jude Bellingham





Tony Kroos



ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON, MARCH 28

Kylian Mbappe

The 24-team lineup for the European Championship is complete after Poland, Ukraine and Georgia became the final teams to qualify for the tournament in Germany.

Here's a look at the how the favourites, title outsiders and underdogs stack up with less than 80 days to go until the opening game:

The favourites

France will likely go into the tournament as the favourite, given their status as the leading European team in the FIFA ranking-at number two-and having been the champions or runners-up at three of their last four major international tournaments.

Fronted by Kylian Mbappe, the French squad remains deep and will be motivated by their loss in the World Cup final in Qatar. Number three ranked England have

regrets after losing the title match against Italy at the last Euros in 2021 and have their strongest pool of players for 20 years, with Jude Bellingham now a star at Real Madrid. Over the recent international break,

France lost soundly to Germany and England were defeated by Brazil, underlining their vulnerability and showing that perhaps there's no overwhelming favourite

Belgium have lost some of their luster and will be concerned by the absence of goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and the persistent injury issues of Kevin De Bruyne. Portugal, meanwhile, have so much talent in their squad and were the only team to qualify with a flawless record. At 39, can Cristiano Ronaldo win the Euros for a second time?

The host nation

Never write off Germany.

After a miserable 2023 ended with friendly losses to Turkey and Austria, the Euro 2024 host kicked off this year by beating France and the Netherlands over the last week. Former Bayern Munich coach Julian Nagelsmann seems to have Germany ticking again with help from Real Madrid midfielder Toni Kroos, who was back in the German lineup for the first time since the last Euros in 2021. Bayer Leverkusen's 20-year-old attacking midfielder Florian Wirtz set a record with his goal just seven seconds into the win over France.

Germany will have something to prove as hosts. Group-stage exits at the last two World Cups and a round-of-16 loss to England at the last Euros mean Germany have won just three of their last 10 games at major tournaments. Facing Scotland, Hungary and Switzerland in the group stage at Euro 2024 seems a relatively kind draw.

Robert Lewandowski

The defending champs

There is a familiar feel to Italy seeking redemption at the European Championship after failing to qualify for the previous World Cup. However, the defending European champions have faced more upheaval over the past year with coach Roberto Mancini quitting and key player Sandro Tonali banned for gambling.

While there is no doubting new coach Luciano Spalletti's credentials after he led Napoli to their first league title in more than three decades last season, there are some question marks about the talent he has at his disposal. There have been positive signs as Spalletti appears to have Italy playing the type of entertaining football he delivered at Napoli, but the Azzurri still have problems in attack.

Lazio forward Ciro Immobile was dropped by Spalletti after struggling with form, as was Atalanta's Gianluca Scamacca. That means an Argentina-born player could be leading the way for Italy in Germany. Mateo

INSIGHTS

Six teams were unbeaten during qualifying - France, England, Portugal Belgium, Romania and Hungary.

Portugal are the only side to have won every match in qualifying. They scored 36 goals and conceded only two.

Spain and Scotland lost their only one

qualifying match. Manchester City forward Erling Haaland and Arsenal

midfielder Martin Odegaard will not be in the Euro 2024 as Norway failed to qualify.

Sweden will not play a part in Germany as they failed to qualify for the first time since 1996. Georgia will be playing their first major

tournament at Euro 2024.

Cristiano Ronaldo.

Retegui spent his entire playing career in the South American country before moving to Genoa this season. He has Italian citizenship through his maternal

The title outsiders

The European Championship has produced previous surprise winners in a way the World Cup has not. Denmark won in 1992 after the players came back from vacation when the team was put into the tournament as a late replacement for Yugoslavia. Greece stunned the football world by taking the title

With 16 of 24 teams advancing to the knockout rounds in the current format, the chance to go on a hot streak is always there. In recent Euros, Austria and Turkey were fashionable dark horse picks, although they both flopped.

Austria's 6-1 win over Turkey in a friendly on Tuesday suggests coach Ralf Rangnick has created a team of substance. Austria also caught the eye by scoring the fastest-ever international goal last week-through Christoph Baumgartner after six seconds at Euros-bound Slovakia. However, Austria are in a tough group with France, the Netherlands and Poland.

The Dutch have a solid foundation for a title shot with a defence led by Virgil van Dijk. But that would require winning a Euros knockout game for the first time in

Switzerland also have the talent for a deep run and are in what looks like a relatively weak group aside from top-seeded Germany.

The underdogs

Who else might the neutrals be rooting for at Euro 2024? How about Georgia, who will be the biggest underdog when the country making their debut at a major tournament after qualifying through the playoffs.

gives star forward Kvaratskhelia—one of the best players in Europe over the past two seasons—an even bigger stage to shine.

Other underdogs to watch out for are Albania, appearing in only their second major tournament, and Scotland, whose tartan-wearing fans will be noticeable and whose team's run of impressive results under Steve Clarke has included a win over Spain.

Acharya clinches NPGA Tour

Nepal number one amateur golfer Sadbhav Acharya recorded a seven-stroke victory over pro Bhuvan Nagarkoti to win the title of the Surya Nepal NPGA Tour Championship, the sixth event under the Surya Nepal Golf Tour 2023-24, at the par-72 Gokarna Golf Club on Thursday.

Overnight leader Acharya carded a bogey-free 3-under 69 for the 72-hole total of 14-under 274 to claim the third major career title. Acharya became the youngest winner in the Tour by winning the Surya Nepal Challenge last year. He won the season-opening Surya Nepal Central Open and became the first player to win two titles in the 2023-

Pro Nagarkoti finished overall second with the score of 7-under 281 after he faltered to 3-over 75 in the final round. He was one stroke behind Acharya going into the final round and finished first among pros winning the top prize money of Rs140,000.

Amateur Vijay Shrestha Einhaus finished as runner-up in amateur section. He was tied for overall third with pro Niraj Tamang at 4-under 284 Einhaus carded 1-under 71 in the final round while Tamang carded 2-under 70. Tamang received runner-up prize money of Rs96,000. Dinesh Prajapati finished third among pros with the total score of even-par 288 and earned Rs74,000. Prajapati played 3-over 75 in the final round.

Tashi Tsering fired second straight 1-under 71 to finish third among amateurs at 1-over 289 and was sixth overall. National team member Rahul



Amateur Sadbhav Acharya recorded a seven-stroke win over Bhuvan Nagarkoti for his third major career title.

Bishwakarma was seventh at 291 after he played 2-over 74 in the final round.

Sanjay Lama and Dhana Bahadur Thapa shared fourth position among pros at 4-over 292. They received Rs54,500 each. Former top pro Rabi Khadka (74) was sixth at 5-over 293 and walked home with Rs42,500. Rame Magar and Bhuwan Kumar Rokka shared the seventh position at 7-over 295. They bagged a purse of Rs37,250 each. Yuvaraj Bhujel and Bal Bhadra Rai were tied for ninth at 299 and they got Rs 32,000 each.

RNGC Scramble Golf tomorrow



POST PHOTO: HEMANTA SHRESTHA

Organisers of RNGC Scramble Golf Tournament meet the press in Kathmandu on Thursday.

SPORTS BUREAU KATHMANDU, MARCH 28

RNGC Scramble Golf Tournament is set to take place at the Royal Nepal Golf Club (RNGC) on

A total of 29 corporate houses are sponsoring the participating teams in the one-day event, according to RNGC captain Mithun Rai.

Each team comprises a professional and three amateur golfers chosen by the sponsors.

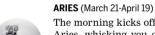
This will be an 18-hole tournament with a shotgun start. Each team will compete for the lowest 18-hole score. Each team member will hit a tee shot on every hole, with the best drive selected as the ball in play. The team will choose the position where the best tee has landed for the next shot. It continues until the hole is completed. The best score among the four-member team will be decided as the winners of the tournament played in stroke play scratch handicap format. Ncell, Matrika Eye Centre, Himalayan Bank and

Salt Trading have two teams each, while Roadhouse Cafe Pvt Ltd, Heidelberg, Arshiya Couture, Creations Soft Nepal, AEDA, Dynasty Air, Sahara Builders, Integrated Solutions, Altitude Air, San Soju, Bhatbhateni International Pvt Ltd, Lama Excursion Pvt Ltd, JGI, Vijay Motors, Wisdom Law Solutions, Bad Boys Group, Leon Motors, Premier Organics, SALICO and Kailash Helicopter will have one team each.

Scramble golf often has a relaxed atmosphere. making it fun for golfers of all skill levels.

RNGC has been organising the tournament since 2006. The tournament aims at gathering corporate houses under one roof to promote golf. It will also help the Nepali golf professionals with financial incentives.

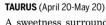
HOROSCOPE





Aries, whisking you off to a world of fantasy and introspection. You'll feel reinvigorated and ready to take action toward your dreams, pushing you to broaden your horizons





GEMINI (May 21-June 21)



A sweetness surrounds you and flows through the community this morning, dear Bull. Allow this cosmic climate to soften your heart, making space for love and new connections. You'll crave intimacy and adventure all at once

Allow unrealistic expectations to dissolve into the

ether, dear Gemini. This energy is perfect for appre-

ciating where you're at and what you've built, taking

a more gracious approach toward attaining more.

Your thoughts shift toward matters of the heart.



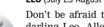
LEO (July 23-August 22)

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

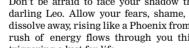
ing with the divine. Your attention shifts this afternoon, nudging you to catch up on any work

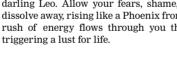
and spiritual self, dearest Cancer. This energy

encourages you to know yourself better by connect-



Don't be afraid to face your shadow this morning, darling Leo. Allow your fears, shame, and grief to dissolve away, rising like a Phoenix from the ashes. A rush of energy flows through you this afternoon,





with a bit of soft flirting

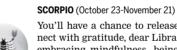


VIRGO (August 23-September 22) You'll have a hypnotic presence, dearest Virgo, winning the admiration of others. If you're currently crushing on someone special, harness these vibes



appreciating beauty wherever it may lie.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22)





nect with gratitude, dear Libra. Take the edge off by

embracing mindfulness, being fully present while

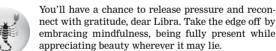
Consider how being gentler with yourself can provide

a sense of nurturing and emotional security. You'll

perk up this afternoon, heightening your energy lev-

els and popularity. While many will demand your

attention, be mindful of where your focus is directed.



SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21)



CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19)

Seek personal space this afternoon.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18) You'll come across as both down to-earth and incredibly dreamy this morning, dear Aquarius. This energy will be particularly beneficial within financial and

professional matters, helping you sway things in your

(ou'll have a soothing effect on those you encounter

this morning, dear Sea-goat. Use this energy to your

advantage, looking for opportunities to expand your

network, share ideas, or sell others on your visions.





Follow the light and invite in blessings this morning, dear Pisces. Your sweetness will be contagious and the universe will be eager to reward kind gestures However, you'll be forced back down to reality, expand-

ing your horizons and ability to manifest success.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS Large boat "Be quiet!" 10 Elec. unit

14 False gems 15 Always 16 Greek god of

war

13 Campbell of

'Scream'

17 Standard of perfection 18 "Your guess is as good as -19 Placard

21 Angry (2 wds.)

23 Hideaway 25 Rowing need 26 Buyer of stocks and bonds 30 Sweetens 34 Briny deep 35 Lukéwarm

37 Fiend

— Land' 40 Station 42 Change purse item 43 Musical work 45 Song and dance

show 47 Formerly called 48 Clippers 50 Adjacent (hyph.) 52 Wire measure 53 Nevada city 54 Fruits in a

bunch

58 Obscure 62 Sign of the future

63 Broadcast 66 Crafted 67 Fail to include

68 Notched 69 Gen. Robert 70 Costa del -

71 Basted

72 Split

DOWN Ginger cookie "Last Action -3 Currier's partner

4 Mortar and 5 Lively 6 Held

Employ Top pérformer God of the sun

10 Eager 11 Bill of fare 12 Make ready 15 Came into view

20 Compass point 22 Praise 24 Cowboy with a **lariat** 26 British

27 Under

28 Worth

29 Get mellow

— acid.

32 Doomed lover

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

BELOVED O V E R A T E E X P L O D E AWESERGE LIBRARY YEP N E T C E N T A F T E R A S D E E M O O R E D TOPDRYGRATA F A T T R O T A N O N E N E DEARTH MILKMAN ANIONALE TORTE SAGGINGEDITION SCORPIO EVENTS LEDGE TREAT

© 2024 UFS, Dist, by Andrews McMeel for UFS

33 Derisive look 36 White Cliffs locale

39 Determined 41 In formal dress "— go bragh!" 46 Lab burner 49 Works hard

51 Windowed rooftop structure 54 Hisses Bullets

Harris

57 Father

Actor — Patrick

59 Cabbage 60 Perfect place 61 "A friend — Jones Industrial

Average

65 Suffix for "Japan'

14 17 18 21 27 28 29 30 32 33 35 36 38 40 42 39 43 44 53 55 63 66 68 69 72

SUDOKU

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

A mimicry on existentialism

Sudam CK's 'Ubur Ubur Tikki' is a dialogue-free exploration of human boundaries, emotions and the search for meaning through body movement and music.

🔲 AARATI RAY

o elaborate sets, no dialogues, no named characters--just body movement and music. That's the signature style of director Sudam CK. Following 'Aiya! Maya' and 'Paanch', CK returns with yet another movement and soundbased theatrical play which uses the body to tell a story, or rather, many stories this time around.

Unlike the usual plays driven by dialogues, in 'Ubur Ubur Tikki', there is no fixed storyline. The audience can interpret the play as they see fit.

The play 'Ubur Ubur Tikki', currently staged at Kausi Theatre in Teku, Kathmandu, stars Akash Nepali, Binita Gurung, Sarita Kathayat, Nistha Tripathi, and CK. However, attempting to decipher the meaning behind every movement will lead to confusion.

What you need to do is just let your emotions and intuition take over logic and reasoning. I understood this 10 minutes into the play. As I was fretting over every little detail, I realised that not everything needs a crystal clear explanation. Rather, I should simply enjoy the experience. And that, I believe, is the point of this play.



We are often so lost in finding meaning and understanding everything about life, and where our paths and actions are headed, that we forget to live in the moment. The play encourages us to feel and live within the moments and be more conscious of our body movement. In doing so, we might comprehend less but feel more. Sometimes things become much clearer when we stop searching for meaning.

The bell rings and play begins. We see five actors, seemingly portraying insects chasing something akin to a ray of light. Sometimes, they run after their shadows, other times after each other. Sometimes support each other and other times, they fight one another. Throughout the play, I struggled to discern whether they were enemies, friends, different insects altogether, or different body parts of the same insect.

One thing that seemed constant, though, was that they were running after something, trying to find something, perhaps to find themselves in the dark.

The motifs, shadows, and the premise of characters running after light remind the audience of Plato's 'Allegory of the Cave'. In it, ceive shadows on a wall as reality because they have never seen the outside world. Similarly, in 'Ubur



Actors playing the character of insects in a scene from 'Ubur Ubur Tikki'.

Ubur Tikki', the characters represent individuals trapped by their own perceptions or social con-

From what I have understood from Plato's allegory, the play might also be challenging the audience to differentiate between illusion and reality in their own lives. Especially, the absence of dialogue and reliance on physical expression blur the lines between what is real and what is perceived, prompting viewers to question their understanding of

While both the 'Allegory of the Cave' and 'Ubur Ubur Tikki' explore philosophical concepts of perception, reality and liberation, they do so through different mediums and narratives. Plato's allegory is a philosophical thought experiment, while the play presents these ideas through song and body movements.

The play also invites the audience to explore existential themes of identity, question, and purpose. This can be linked to Shakespeare's famous lines from 'Hamlet', "To be or not to be, that is the question", where he contemplates the nature of existence, wondering whether it is nobler to endure the hardships of life or to end one's suffering through death.

ery of intriguing themes, the play excels in its musical composition. Music director Naresh Gajurel's



background score keeps the audience engaged till the end. If the music wasn't as good, the play might not have worked. Even the audience not habituated to watching plays void of dialogues arawn thanks to its score. Moreover, the coordination of actors' body movements and expressions with music is very smooth.

Throughout the play, a whiteboard is used as an empty prop. In many scenes, we see insects looking at the whiteboard, getting shocked, bored or amazed. The either as a mirror that shows the reality of one's life or as an empty canvas that is waiting to be filled

by colours inside every individual. A noteworthy aspect of the play is the effective use of lighting. The skilled handling of light behind the scenes brings the production's

minimalistic aesthetic to life. miere, CK shared his interpretation of the play, saying, "We are conditioned to include and exclude, to see and not see, to hear and not hear, to accept and not accept, to follow and not follow, to praise and to loathe. We want to be different, and yet, we also want to be like others. The play is about the experiences of such human boundaries and to acknowledge or perhaps celebrate, frailties and contractions.'

As CK suggests, 'Ubur Ubur Tikki' does focus on emotions, human experiences, and intuition over logic, which can be connected to various art and literary movements, like Romanticism, that prioritise emotional expression and intuitive understanding over strict rationality.

The play's emphasis on silent communication through physical expression and music and its exploration of inner struggles and existential themes resonates with the Romantic notion of the 'sublime'—the idea that emotional experiences can transcend rational understanding.

Moreover, the play's focus on the human condition and the complexities of relationships echoes Romantic literature's exploration of the individual's connection to nature and society, as well as the tension between the rational and the emotional.

Effective use of lighting and a good background score are the play's noteworthy aspects.

Through these connections, it is evident that CK's play is an exemplary expression of art. But it also cannot be ignored that this form of play is an avant-garde experiment in the Nepali theatre scene.

For someone who is not familiar with plays driven by bodily movements and no dialogue, 'Ubur Ubur Tikki' might be confusing and possibly boring.

If you are enthusiastic about art and theatre, 'Ubur Ubur Tikki' is a must-watch. The play is a step towards revolutionising Nepali theatre with its silent yet strong narrative. It also promotes the notion that there are other forms of expression and communication besides vocal speech and words.

UBUR UBUR TIKKI Where: Kausi Theatre, Teku, Kathmandu Director: Sudam CK Music director/composer: Naresh Gajurel Akash Nepali, Binita

Gurung, Sarita Kathayat, Sudam CK **Duration:** 1 hour Till March 31

Tuesday), extra 1:00 pm show on Saturday

Ariana DeBose to host Tony Awards for the third straight time

ASSOCIATED PRESS NEW YORK, US

t's a new location but the same host for the Tony Awards: Ariana DeBose will make it three in a row as MC of theatre's most watched event, which this year moves uptown to Lincoln Center.

The Academy Award winner and Tony Award nominee, who hosted both the 2023 and 2022 ceremonies, will be back this year for the show on June 16, and will produce and choreograph the opening number.

"I couldn't pass up the chance to host the Tonys one more time, at Lincoln Center. I'm excited to collaborate with the team to create an incredible celebration of this season's achievements Broadway for our community and for everyone at home," DeBose in a statement.

DeBose was widely cheered for the way she hosted last year amid the Hollywood writers' strike, leading a show that had no script and opening the telecast by dancing and leaping her way through the lobby of the United Palace Theatre. She earned an Emmy nomination for her work.

DeBose is a theatre veteran, with roles in 'Summer: The Donna Summer Musical', 'Hamilton', 'A Bronx Tale', 'Pippin', 'Motown the Musical', 'Bring It On: The Musical' and 'Company'. She won an Oscar for her role in Steven Spielberg's remake

of 'West Side Story' and was in 'Schmigadoon!' on Apple TV+.

This year's location—the David H Koch Theater—is the home of the New York City Ballet and in the same sprawling building complex as Lincoln Square Theater, which houses the Broadway venue Beaumont Theater.

Like last year, the three-hour main telecast will air on CBS with a pre-show on Pluto TV, with some Tony Awards handed out there. The Tony eligibility cut-off date

for the 2023-2024 season is April

25, and nominations for the

2024 Tony Awards will be





World Theatre Day celebrations at Mandala Theatre



Prize winner Jon Fosse. The mes-

sage underscored theatre's ability

tivity. The event also marked the

to foster social change and culturandala Theatre al dialogue. Nepal celebrated A highlight of the event was the World Theatre Day announcement of the 3rd Nepal on Wednesday, unit-International Theatre Festival ing the global thea-(NIT Fest) 2025, themed 'Light of Indigenous Wisdom'. Scheduled for March 16 to March 27, 2025, the festival aims to celebrate diverse cultures and traditions, offering a platform for indigenous communi-

ties to showcase their heritage. Additionally, the Mandala Alumni Drama Festival (MAD Fest) and its theme 'Youth, Roots, and Stage' were announced. Scheduled for July 5 to July 7, MAD Fest will provide graduates of Mandala Theatre Nepal with a platform to showcase their crealaunch of 'Reflections Vol II', a compilation capturing the essence of the 2nd NIT Fest held in 2022. Through articles, interviews and reflections, this book preserves the festival's legacy for future gen-Attendees also viewed the

screening of a documentary highlighting the memorable moments of the 2nd NIT Fest, offering insights into the behind-the-scenes efforts that bring theatre to life. A panel discussion, featuring

senior theatre artists, explored the possibilities of theatre and offered valuable suggestions for future festivals. Emphasis was placed on inclusivity, accessibility, and artistic integrity in festival organisation and management.

POST REPORT

KATHMANDL

tre community for a day of cultural exchange and artistic reflection. Guests, including Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Hit Bahadur Tamang, as well as litterateurs and artists Abhi Subedi, Sabitri Kakshapati, Bijay Bisfot, Joerg Andrees, Dayahang Rai and Buddhi Tamang were present at the event.

reading of a powerful message from the International Theatre Institute, penned by 2023 Nobel

The event commenced with the

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