



THE KATHMANDU POST

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

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27.0° C -2.5° C
Janakpur Jumla

TODAY

NATIONAL

As most of Nepal is under the cover of haze and fog, some districts of Sudurpaschim, Karnali and Gandaki provinces will witness light rainfall on Monday night and Tuesday, according to the Met Office. **Pg 3**

OPINION

Referring to Saturday's cyberattack on Nepal government websites, columnist Achyut Wagle says fortunately or unfortunately, Nepal does not have a large military or strategic installation dependent on information technology. **Pg 4**



MONEY

The export value of listed goods expressed in rupees shot up by 32 percent in the first half of the current fiscal year, largely due to the weakening of the Nepali rupee. **Pg 5**

LIFESTYLE

The extreme stimulation and dopamine surge the human brain gets from digital devices results in mental fatigue, hence regular break from technology is strongly recommended, writes mental health advocate Sujina Manandhar. **Pg 8**

Suicide bomber kills 46, wounds 150 at a mosque in Pakistan

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PESHAWAR, JAN 30

A suicide bomber detonated explosives during crowded prayers at a mosque inside a police compound in Pakistan on Monday, causing the roof to cave in. At least 46 people were killed and over 150 wounded, officials said.

Most of the casualties were police officers. It was not clear how the bomber was able to slip into the walled compound, which houses the north-western city of Peshawar's police headquarters and is itself located in a high-security zone with other government buildings.



Sarbakaf Mohmand, a commander for the Pakistani Taliban, claimed responsibility for the attack on Twitter. The main spokesman for the militant group was not immediately available for comment.

Pakistan has seen a surge in militant attacks since November, when the Pakistani Taliban ended their ceasefire with government forces. This was one of the deadliest attacks on security forces in recent years.

More than 300 worshippers were praying inside the mosque, with more approaching, when the bomber set off his explosives vest. Many were injured when the roof came down, according to Zafar Khan, a local police officer.

Rescuers scrambled to remove mounds of debris from the mosque grounds to reach worshippers still trapped under the rubble, police said.

Peshawar is the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where the Taliban have a strong presence.

Maoists in bargaining mood as Congress, UML vie for President

Some Maoist leaders say the party should ask for five years for Dahal as prime minister in return for their support in the March 9 presidential election.



(From left) Congress chief Deuba, UML chair Oli and Prime Minister Dahal during the PM's floor test in Parliament on January 10.

PURUSHOTTAM POUDEL
KATHMANDU, JAN 30

The Election Commission on Monday announced March 9 as the date for the election of new President and March 17 for electing Vice President.

With the commission's announcement, competition among political parties for the coveted posts is likely to further heat up.

While the two largest parties in the legislature, the Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML, each seek the help of the third-largest party, the CPN (Maoist Centre), in their respective bids for presidency, the Maoist Centre wants to capitalise on the uncertainty.

The elections for President and Vice President are based on a weighted voting system. The electoral college for the presidential and vice-presidential polls has 884 members, including 275 from the House of Representatives (lower house), 59 from the National Assembly (upper house) and 550 members from the seven provincial assemblies.

In the election for President, a vote cast by a member of both upper and lower houses will be considered to have the weightage of 79 votes whereas a vote cast by a member of the provincial assembly will carry the weight of 48 (the weightage ratio is expected to change based on the new population published in the new census).

Dahal is saying he would try to elect new President based on consensus.

In the weighted voting system for the President, the Maoist Centre, which has a total of 47 lower and upper house seats, and 82 seats in the provincial assemblies, will play a decisive role. The party is, therefore, looking at three qualities a candidate for

President should have, said Maoist Centre leader Matrika Yadav.

"The Maoist Centre expects the new President to help resolve the remaining issues of the peace process, support the current constitution and the federal republic system, and play a coordinating role in a challenging political situation that may develop from a hung parliament," Yadav said.

Though two transitional justice bodies were established in 2015 and are still in existence, they have failed to fulfil their mandate. The truth commission has received 63,718 complaints, while the disappearance commission has 3,223 complaints in its docket.

Although the Maoist Centre had earlier agreed to cede the presidency to a UML nominee in exchange for the latter's backing for Dahal's prime ministerial bid, Dahal now has publicly disowned that possibility, saying that political ground realities have shifted, making the two-party understanding irrelevant.

>> Continued on page 2

Protect sovereignty while engaging neighbours, says top US diplomat

In all high-level meetings, Victoria Nuland discussed the MCC compact as well as the transitional justice process.

ANIL GIRI

KATHMANDU, JAN 30

Visiting US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland has urged Nepali officials to protect national sovereignty while dealing with neighbours, particularly on economic partnerships.

Addressing a press conference in Kathmandu before wrapping up her two-day Nepal trip on Monday, Nuland, the first foreign dignitary to visit the country after the formation of the Pushpa Kamal Dahal government, said Nepal could pursue economic relationships with all its neighbours, "but just ensure when you do that, you are protecting your own sovereignty... that the deals that you apply to are good for Nepal."

Responding to a query by the Post on how the US sees the increasing geo-political rivalry between the US and China in Kathmandu in the wake of the ratification of the \$500 million Millennium Challenge Nepal (MCC) compact, Nuland said, "Rather than geopolitics with Nepal's two big countries, we want Nepal to make a sovereign decision about its interests."

She arrived in Kathmandu on Sunday evening as part of her seven-day Asia tour during which she will also visit India, Sri Lanka and Qatar.

Ahead of the MCC compact's passage last year, both Washington DC and Beijing were engaged in heated exchanges over the compact.

Despite strong reservations from Beijing, Nepal's Parliament in February last year ratified the compact, which will come into effect from

August this year. Nuland also said any economic assistance or partnership should be free of corruption.

"We welcome Nepal having good relations with all of its neighbours. In fact we obviously have very strong relationships with India. You saw that with regard to China that President Biden and President Xi Jinping sat down together in November and we will have more engagement with China in the coming weeks," she said. "So it's not about [choosing] one or the other, it is about what is good for Nepali democracy, Nepali prosperity."

Any economic aid or partnership should be free of corruption, Nuland said.

She added that everything the US was working on in Nepal would benefit Nepalis, the American people and "strengthen everything that we do together as democracies."

Earlier too, whenever American diplomats visited Nepal, they always urged Nepal to have economic cooperation and partnership with China and India, including on the China-led China-led Belt and Road Initiative. They also said Nepal should ensure these initiatives and partnerships are free from corruption and irregularities and uphold international standards on environment, quality and other parameters.

>> Continued on page 3

The promises and pitfalls of ChatGPT in Nepal

Experts say less than five percent people in Nepal are using this new conversational chatbot, creating a digital divide.



A ChatGPT prompt is shown on a device near a public school in Brooklyn, New York on January 5. The chatbot powered by artificial intelligence is proving to be adept at creating disinformation.

ANUP OJHA
KATHMANDU, JAN 30

ChatGPT (generative pre-trained transformer), a chatbot launched by the American AI company Open AI, has taken the tech world by storm, and is being talked about across the world. More than a million people had used it within a week of its launch in late November. Some used the chatbot to write stories about love, poetry in different forms and genres, while others used it for creative inspiration.

The buzzy chatbot developed by a research laboratory based in San Francisco, US is also responsible for tools like GPT-3, and DALL-E2, the breakthrough image generator that came out last year. The chatbot is capable of writing essays, stories, poems as well as solving maths and science problems and can produce working computer code.

Although the chatbot is reaching out to everyone, and people in developed countries are talking about its impact and possibilities, there has hardly been any public discourse on it in developing countries like Nepal.

As a test, the Post asked the chatbot to write a 500-word report on how Artificial Intelligence (AI) like ChatGPT impacts developing countries, by weighing both pros and cons. It immediately wrote answers with four positive and negative impacts each. In pros, it listed low-cost, improved access to

information, job creation and increased efficiency. As disadvantages, it pointed out possible job losses, unequal access to technology, privacy and safety concerns, as well as ethical concerns.

Recently, ChatGPT successfully aced licensing exams for lawyers and medical doctors in the US.

But in the context of Nepal, the chatbot's reach is limited.

"Only a handful of urban people are using ChatGPT in Nepal, and there has not been much discussion over its use here," said Romkant Pandey, head of the ICT (Information and communication technology) Department at Tribhuvan University.

He said the majority of those taking advantage of the chatbot are those with fairly good English, and those in the Information Technology sector. "There is a risk that technologies like this might increase the digital divide in developing countries like Nepal," Pandey said.

>> Continued on page 2

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NATIONAL

Government names members of the planning commission

KATHMANDU: The government appointed three members of the National Planning Commission on Monday. According to Minister for

Communication and Information Technology Rekha Sharma, the Cabinet meeting has inducted Sushil Gyawali, Anjan Shukya and Kushendra Shahi Mahat as the new members of the NPC. Shukya was appointed Nepal's ambassador to

Israel by the UML chair KP Sharma Oli-led government while Gyawali was the chief executive officer of the National Reconstruction Authority. Mahat worked as a member of the Karnali government's expert team.

ChatGPT may widen digital divide in Nepal

>> Continued from page 1
There are 38.38 million internet subscribers in Nepal as of mid-October 2022, according to a management and information system report by the Nepal Telecommunications Authority.

"But, in my estimate, less than five percent of our internet users have used ChatGPT," Pandey added. "But this is just a personal estimate as there has been no good research on the issue."

Last month, the New York City Department of Education blocked access to ChatGPT on its network devices due to fears about cheating, negative impact on student learning, and accuracy of content produced. In the West, a few educational institutions are even thinking of changing their education curriculum after the chatbot's launch.

Stressing the negative impact of chatbot in Nepal, Pandey said AI tools like ChatGPT could have discriminatory effects on some sections of society due to unequal distribution of infrastructure, resources and technical expertise.

"At present, the five percent of the population who use this app will be able to utilise its expertise and reap the benefits, while the remaining 95 percent who cannot use or are not using the tool will fall behind," said Pandey.

The revolutionary chatbot has become a great tool for computer learning, and solving many academic problems. In more developed parts of the world, the current discourse seems

centred on concerns over its impact on education.

"I don't see the chatbot making much of an impact in Nepal right now, but then as it can give you answer to almost any question, that might not always be the case," said Ramesh Prasad Pokharel, assistant director and spokesperson at the National Information Technology Center under the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology.

However, the chatbot sometimes fails to give specific information, and it lacks the critical skills the human minds possess.

"One potential threat I see is its possible misuse by hackers who can use this platform to generate Java Script codes that can be used for hacking," said Pokharel.

Nepal is vulnerable to data theft and all government websites are vulnerable to cyberattack.

On Saturday, hackers attacked hundreds of Nepal government websites, an incident that also hit international travel due to the shutdown of the immigration server.

Digital rights activists and AI experts, meanwhile, say with challenges brought by ChatGPT, there are possibilities too. For example, many educational institutions in the US have been forced into reevaluating their whole education system after the advent of this new revolutionary chatbot.

"This is really good if you have an open book exam system, but that is not the case in Nepal right now," said Santosh Sigdel, an internet freedom

advocate and president of Digital Rights Nepal. Under an open book exam system, the examinee can take to the exam centre notes and other resources as reference material. The goal is to teach students to apply their knowledge rather than to regurgitate what they cram.

Sigdel said if ChatGPT really catches on in Nepal, the country too could have open book exams.

Pokharel on the other hand said if the chatbot becomes as widely used as social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, this will make teachers more responsible, as students can check their knowledge of relevant issues.

Meanwhile, Pandey of TU's ICT Department said the arrival of chatbots could create more opportunities for Nepal's IT workers, even though it could also take away some jobs of content writers.

"Its immediate impact will be seen in content writing and mainly in the education system," said Sigdel. For instance, some travel agencies in Nepal are already using ChatGPT to generate informative online content on travel destinations. Students can do their homework or solve their academic problems with the help of the chatbot.

Sigdel further said the positive thing about ChatGPT is that it is good at sourcing information from the vast pool of knowledge available online. "But the problem for developing countries like Nepal is that they have very limited locally-produced content online," Sigdel said.

Government of Nepal
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Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC)
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Email: info@aepec.gov.np Website: www.aepec.gov.np

Vacancy Announcement

Date of Notice publication: 31 January 2023

Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC): implementing Promotion of Solar Energy in Rural and Semi-urban Regions of Nepal (DKTI Project). AEPC, DKTI Project is seeking application from qualified, energetic and self-motivated Nepalese citizens meeting the eligibility requirement mentioned in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the below mentioned positions.

- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Expert
- Civil Expert (Rooftop PV, Solar Minigrid & Solar Irrigation Pump)

• Detail ToR can be downloaded from the website: www.aepec.gov.np or can be obtained from the office of AEPC, Mid-Baneswar, Kathmandu, Nepal.

• Interested eligible and Qualified persons are required to submit the application along with **Cover Letter, CV, Citizenship and latest academic certificates** to the office of AEPC, Mid-Baneswar, Kathmandu, Nepal by Hand/Courier/Email on or before 05:00 P.M. on 08 February, 2023.

Invitation for Bids
Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City
Office of the Municipal Executive
Dhangadhi, Kailali
INVITATION FOR THE BIDS
Date of Publication: 31st January 2023 (2079/10/17 B.S.)

1. Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City, Office of the Municipal Executive invites electronic bids from eligible bidders for the works mentioned below under National Competitive Bidding.

S. N.	Contract Identification Number	Description of Work	Total Project Cost Excluding VAT (NRs)	Bid Security (NRs)	Bid Document Price (NRs)	Remarks
1	39/DSMC/2079/080	Supply, Delivery, Installation Testing & Commissioning of Smart Street Lights	86,40,192.18	2,55,000/-	3,000/-	Hard Copy Not Acceptable
2	40/DSMC/2079/080	Supply and Delivery of Hume pipes at allocated Locations within Dhangadhi Sub Metropolitan City	1,02,20,800.00	2,90,000/-	3,000/-	Hard Copy Not Acceptable

2. Eligible Bidders may obtain further information and inspect the Bidding Documents at Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City Office, Dhangadhi, Kailali, Email: dhangadhimun2013@gmail.com, Phone no. +977-091-525506 or may visit PPMO e-GP system www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp.

Chief Administrative Officer

Presidential election stirs coalition politics

>> Continued from page 1

Dahal changed his tone after the largest party, the Nepali Congress, gave him a trust vote in parliament on January 10. After that, Dahal has been publicly saying that he would try his best to elect the next President, based on consensus. But Dahal's change of heart has irked UML, his major coalition partner.

The majority of the Maoist Centre party leaders speaking at the Standing Committee meeting that kicked off on January 26 also called for national consensus on the new President.

Meanwhile, some Maoist Centre leaders have said that in the changed context (after the trust vote by Congress), the Maoist party has room to claim full term as prime minister for Dahal in return for the party's support to one of the other two

parties' bid for the country's top constitutional post.

"The party now has a chance to negotiate for a full-term premiership for Dahal as both the Congress and the UML have shown tremendous interest in securing the presidential position," a party leader told the Post on the condition of anonymity. "As the President serves for five years, it should be the same for the prime minister."

However, Haribol Gajurel, political advisor to prime minister Dahal, who is also deputy general secretary of the Maoist Centre, said there had been no such discussions in the party. "I don't think the party will claim a full term for prime minister in return for its support to any other party in the Presidential election."

UML leaders deny the possibility of any negotiation on the presidential position on the condition of giving a full-term prime ministership to Dahal. Rather, a leader close to UML chair KP Sharma Oli recalled the context in which Dahal had joined hands with Oli to become prime minister.

As per the existing understanding between the UML and the Maoist Centre, Dahal's party should vote for UML's presidential candidate and hand over prime ministership to UML chair Oli after two and a half years.

"Dahal met with our party chief Oli after India pressured Congress not to let him [Dahal] become prime minister from the Congress-led coalition," the UML leader told the Post on the condition of anonymity. "On January 16, the day of cabinet expansion, they had a five-hour meeting during

which the presidential election was one of the main agendas." The UML leader quoted Oli as saying, "The external power that prevented you from becoming prime minister is now attempting to rig the election of the President." Oli questioned Dahal: "Are we electing the President on our own or again falling into their trap?"

Prime Minister Dahal agrees that other forces shouldn't be permitted to interfere in the presidential election. Meanwhile, UML Secretary Yogesh Bhattarai said the two parties' leadership has already settled the matter and there is no question of further negotiation on presidency.

"There is no confusion between Prime Minister Dahal and our party chair Oli over the presidential position," Bhattarai told the Post. "As the Nepali Congress has given a vote of confidence to the prime minister, he and his party might have said that the election of the President should be based on consensus. They may be obligated to say so, but it will be the UML candidate who will be elected the President."

However, Congress' spokesperson Prakash Saran Mahat said his party expects Prime Minister Dahal's help in the presidential election.

"We have seen how incumbent President Bidya Devi Bhandari has politicised the presidency to achieve her personal goals. So we want to elect a President who works based on democratic principles," Mahat said. Mahat also said that the Maoist Centre had set no condition such as a full-term prime ministership for Dahal in return for its support to a Congress candidate for President. "We will discuss such a proposal as and if it comes."

Madi Municipality
Office of Municipal Executive
Basantapur, Chitwan
Bagmati Province, Nepal

Invitation for e-bid

Second date of Publication: 31st Jan 2023 (2079/10/17)

- Madi Municipality, Office of the Municipal Executive, Madi, Chitwan, Nepal invites open competitive Bidding (electronics bids only) from eligible Nepalese bidders for the works as mentioned in the table below under National Competitive Bidding (NCB) procedures.
- Bidders may download the bidding document for e-submission from PPMO's website: <http://www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp>. Bidders, submitting their bid electronically, should deposit the cost (as specified table below) of bidding document in the project Rajaswa (revenue) account specified below and scanned copy (Pdf format) of the bond deposit voucher shall be uploaded by the bidder at time of electronic submission of the bid.
- Information to deposit the cost of bidding document in Bank:-
Name of the Bank: Agriculture Development Bank Limited / Madi Branch
Name of Account: Madi Nagarpalika
Bid Document Deposit Account no.: 0508800915977148 (Antarik Rajaswa khata)
Bid security Deposit Account no.: 0508800915977091 (Dharauti khata)
- The eligible Bidders shall submit its bid along with additional document: scan copy of Updated company /firm registration certificate, VAT & PAN registration certificate. All Tax Clearance certificate of F/Y 2078/79 and all other documents mentioned in Bid Document
- Pre-bid meeting shall be held on 7th Feb 2023 (2079/10/24) 2:00 PM at Madi Municipality, Basantapur Chitwan.
- The bids must be submitted through PPMO's web site: <http://www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp> on or before 12:00 Noon of 15th Feb 2023 (2079/11/03). Bids received after this deadline will be rejected.
- Bids must be valid for a period as mentioned in table below after the bid opening and must be accompanied by a bid security issued by an authorized bank or Financial Institution (Commercial Bank or Financial Institution eligible to issue Bank guarantee as per prevailing Law) or Scanned copy of the bid security in pdf format in case of e-bid, amounting to a minimum as mentioned table below, which shall be valid for 30 days beyond the validity period of the bid.
- Bids shall be opened in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 1:00 PM on (16th day from Second time of notice published) at Madi Municipality, office of Municipal Executive, Madi Chitwan. Non-attendance of any or all of the Bidders' representatives shall not hinder the opening of the bids. Bids must be valid for a period of as mentioned in table below after the date of bid opening.
- If the last date of purchasing and /or submission falls on a government holiday, then the next working day shall be considered as the last date. In such case the validity period of the bid security shall remain the same as specified for the original last date of bid submission.
- The Person, firm or company black listed as per public procurement Act-2063 with amendment, shall be ineligible to submit the bid and also proprietor of such firm or company shall ineligible to submit the bid from another new firm or Company.
- Eligible Bidders may obtain further information and inspect the Bidding Document at the **Madi Municipality, Office of the Municipal Executive, Madi, and Chitwan, Nepal** or may visit PPMO's website: <http://www.bolpatra.gov.np/egp>.
- The name and identification of the contract are as follows:

S. N.	Contract ID	Description of Works	Estimated Cost (Without VAT & coti.) (NRs)	Bid Security Amount (NRs)	Bid Documents Fee (NRs)	Bid Validity Period	Bid Security Validity period
1	NCB/MMO/5/2079-80	Upgrading and Maintenance of Municipal Health Care Center Building in Sitalpur, Sidhuwa, Radhapur, Jagganathpuri, Krishnanagar & Hanumanjhula.	3298065.78	96,000.00	3,000.00	90 days	120 days

Chief Administrative Officer

राहदानी हरायो
मिति २०७९/०९/१० गते विपि चौकदेखि जयसपुर तर्फ जाँदै गर्दा मेरो निम्न व्यहोरा भएको राहदानी हराएको हुँदा पाउनु हुने महानुभावले नजिकको प्रहरी कार्यालय वा फोन नं. ९८२२४५४९१० मा खबर गरिदिनु हुन अनुरोध गर्दछु।
नाम: **बिप्राज अलि जोलाह**
राहदानी नं.: ६६९०३२
ठेगाना: साईगाड ८, बाँके

मोटरसाइकल हरायो
मिति २०७९/१०/०७ गते दिउँसो २ बजे मध्यपुर थिमी न.पा. ०३ कोसलटार, तेसाँटार घर आगाडि पार्किङबाट बा.प्र. ०२-०२१५.१७५८ (TVS Ntara 125CC) रातो/कालो रंगको मोटरसाइकल हराएको हुँदा पाउनुहुने महानुभावले नजिकको प्रहरी कार्यालय वा निम्न फोन नम्बर ९८४१३७२४०९ मा सम्पर्क गरिदिनु हुन अनुरोध छ।
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KALAIYA SUB METROPOLITAN CITY
Office of Municipal Executive
Kalaiya, Bara
Madhesh Province (Nepal)
Date of Publication: 2079-10-17

35 Days Notice for Claim

Since, the following machinery goods have been left unattended in Jeetpur Simara Sub Metropolitan City Ward No. 18 (previously VDC Manaharwa Ward No.3) and Kalaiya Sub Metropolitan City Ward No.24. This Public Notice has been published to be present in the office of this Kalaiya Sub Metropolitan City with their required evidence to make claim whoever owns the mentioned goods within 35 days. This is to notify that the office of this Kalaiya Sub Metropolitan City shall do according to law if no one makes any claim or complaint regarding these goods.

Particulars:
(i) Mixture Plan
(ii) Road Roller
(iii) Crane
(iv) Tripper
(v) Grader

Office of Kalaiya Sub-Metropolitan City
Bara, Kalaiya

OPINION



OUR VIEW

Rule v Rabi

Questioning the apex court verdict for the benefit of one politician sets a dangerous precedent.

Rabi Lamichhane was allowed to register a political party, stand for election, take the oath of office as a lawmaker and join the Cabinet—even without a valid Nepali citizenship. The legal process questioning the dual citizenship of the former American citizen started only after he was elected with a resounding mandate. This is why, Lamichhane's legions of supporters argue, his current legal travails are politically motivated. Following the same line of argument, they say Lamichhane should duly be reinstated as home minister, now that he has regained a valid Nepali citizenship and been restored as the head of the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP). And if he becomes a minister again and is to remain in the Cabinet for more than six months, the law says he needs to win a by-election from his old constituency and return as a lawmaker. Leaders of the CPN-UML, the senior partner in the ruling coalition, have added their voices to the chorus of his supporters. They are now openly saying that Lamichhane's prosecution is part of a conspiracy to dismantle the coalition.

It is irresponsible of an established party like the UML to see conspiracy behind the decision of the Supreme Court to strip Lamichhane of his official positions. If a party with the UML's rich political legacy starts trifling with the rule of law, and in a case where there is clear evidence of wrongdoing on the part of the defendant, then Nepali democracy is really in a crisis.

Nor does the argument that a case against Lamichhane was pursued only after he became a powerful lawmaker hold. In fact, media reports questioning his dual citizenship had surfaced long before. It is another thing that the Election Commission allowed him to contest the federal elections without properly looking into his background. This calls for an investigation of the commission as well. But its oversight also cannot be used to undercut the severity of Lamichhane's crime. Most of the arguments that are being made in his defence are fallacious too: For instance, why aren't other senior leaders too being investigated for their reported crimes? And when countless NRNs hold dual citizenship, why target one person? Again, a lapse in the legal process in one case does not justify a deliberate oversight in another. If it did, then there would be no civilised society.

The basic tenet of a civilised society is that no one is above the law; and even if the law is not always fair all the time, it will punish the guilty when there is adequate basis to establish their guilt. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal made a grave error by including Lamichhane in his Cabinet before the latter had cleared his name on the citizenship issue. UML chief KP Oli is undermining the rule of law by asking his loyalists in the party to question the apex court's verdict and by personally lobbying for the RSP president's reinstatement as home minister. In his rush to get back into government, Rabi Lamichhane, the supposed torchbearer of alternative politics in Nepal, betrays the same kind of lust for power and perks that he once decried. He also clearly does not mind the obvious conflict of interest in presiding over a ministry that is overseeing a police case against him. This is not the kind of alternative politics the country needs right now. This brand of self-serving politics, we are not afraid to say, is old wine in the new bottle of alternative politics.

THEIR VIEW

Eradicate global deforestation

A decrease in forests could accelerate global warming.

Forests are shrinking across the globe. A primary cause is illegal logging. Japan, as a major consumer of timber, must make efforts to strengthen measures to eradicate this illicit practice. In addition to housing, wood is used in various products ranging from furniture to paper. The use of timber has increased with the development of the global economy, and illegal logging has become conspicuous. About 180 million hectares of forest were reportedly lost worldwide over the 30 years from 1990. This figure represents five times the area of Japan.

Forests absorb carbon dioxide. A decrease in forests could accelerate global warming. It is necessary to halt deforestation by preventing illegal logging. Illegal logging refers to violations such as a failure to comply with the volume and area limits set by the laws and regulations of each country, logging in such prohibited locations as national parks and protected areas, and theft in which logging is conducted without permission on the property of others. Such illegal acts have reportedly been rampant in Southeast Asia, Russia, Africa and South America in particular. Timber from unlawful felling is often exported from producer countries at unreasonably low prices. If governments of consumer countries have allowed these products to be purchased easily, it can be said that they are also greatly to blame.

The Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Ministry and other entities plan to require importers and lumber manufacturers to confirm that the wood they handle does not come from illegal logging. A framework is envisaged to make it possible for authorities to penalize businesses that fail to comply by taking such steps as issuing an advisory to take corrective action, publishing their names or imposing fines. In Japan, the Law on Promotion of Use and Distribution of Legally Harvested Wood and Wood Products, the so-called Clean Wood Law, came into force in 2017 to prevent the distribution of illegally logged timber. However, its call for verification is nonbinding, and there are no penalties under the law. Currently, only about 40 percent of the timber distributed in Japan, including imports, has been confirmed as legally logged, and it has been said that the law's effectiveness is limited. It is only natural for the government to start work on revising the law.

Once illegally logged timber from foreign countries is imported and becomes available in the domestic market, it is difficult to check its legality at the processing stage. Halting criminally felled timber at the nation's borders is the most effective solution. It is also essential for the government to collect information and provide support to importers. Illegal logging was put on the agenda at a summit of major countries in Britain in 2005. Since then, the United States, the European Union and other parties have implemented measures accompanied by penalties to ban the trade in illegally logged timber.

As Japan has lagged behind in taking such steps, it is important for the nation to make efforts that will ensure the prevention of illegal logging. If timber is produced domestically, it is easier to confirm whether logging was conducted illegally. For this reason, the wider use of domestic timber rather than imported products could be one measure to tackle the problem.

—The Japan News/ANN

Nepal is ill-prepared to handle cyber attacks because of inadequate institutional arrangements.

ACHYUT WAGLE

Hackers knocked down Nepal government websites for five hours last Saturday in a brazen display of contempt towards the country's cyber security systems. The Nepal Government National Portal and 500 other websites with the .gov.np domain name went offline. Databases of the immigration and passport management systems under the Government Integrated Data Centre (GIDC) were disrupted due to what is known as a Distributed-Denial of Service or D-DoS attack. Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu was crippled. The immigration desks at the arrival and departure lounges were unable to provide travel clearances to hundreds of passengers, and several international flights were delayed for at least three hours as a result. Luckily, it was the weekend, and vehicle registration, land revenue and driving licence issuance were closed, and didn't have to face the humiliation of being shut down by attackers.

Sporadic cyber attacks of varying magnitude on government websites have lately become a common feature worldwide. Powerful countries blame their strategic rivals when such incidents take place. Nepal has experienced such disruptions in the past, but this one went deep. As usual, officials at the National Information Technology Centre (NITC) that operates the GIDC have vowed to track down the culprits. But it is easier said than done.

Nepal ranks 94th among 194 countries in the Global Cyber Security Index published by UN specialised agency the International Telecommunication Union. Apart from large-scale hacking incidents like the recent one, Nepal's cyberspace is generally considered to be insecure, with widespread and repeated incidents of online swindling, banking fraud and ATM theft, cyber bullying, data theft, violence against weaker sections of society and revenge porn. But Nepal has not equipped itself well to protect its cyberspace from malicious attacks.

What is at risk? Fortunately, or unfortunately, Nepal does not have large military or

Stop that hacker



SHUTTERSTOCK

strategic installations dependent on information technology for their operation. But critical services like banking, aviation, health, education and government service delivery depend on cyber security for unhindered online operations.

Perhaps the most vulnerable is Nepal's financial sector worth about Rs5.5 trillion, nearly 115 percent of the national GDP, with more than 16 million customers enjoying banking, insurance and remittance services. The aviation sector, in terms of contribution to the national economy, is relatively small; but due to its almost absolute dependence on information and communication technology (ICT) for operations, any disruption results in instant chaos. Government services are at higher risk of attack and may retard the pace of ICT adoption.

Needless to say, Nepal is ill-prepared to handle cyber crimes and cyber attacks. Legal and institutional arrangements are inadequate. A National Cyber Security Policy was drafted in 2016 but has not been enforced. A revised version was circulated among government agencies, but it is yet to be implemented. The Electronic Transaction Act 2008, IT Policy 2010 and ICT Policy 2015 are key legal arrangements to govern the sector. But their implementation and coverage remain suboptimal, to say the least.

As regards the institutional set-up, the Department of Information Technology is the nodal government agency, but the industry barely feels its

presence. The government's regulatory body, the Nepal Telecommunications Authority, has announced the establishment of a "fire-fighting" squad named the Computer Emergency Response Team, but its procedures are yet to be formulated. There are a few private sector initiatives, but their presence was not felt during the latest crisis.

The Cyber Bureau is perhaps the most dedicated unit under the Nepal Police to deal with all aspects of cyber crime. Its mandate includes investigating cyber crime, coordinating among the stakeholders to promote cyber security, investigating cyber attacks on sensitive infrastructure, preparing manpower to handle cyber crime, and functioning as the national and international coordinating unit to contain such offences.

Lack of specialists

Even then Nepal is severely constrained in developing its capacity to contain high-tech crimes like D-DoS and hacking. Lack of human resources is the biggest bottleneck. According to an estimate, there are fewer than 100 specialists, including about three dozen in the Cyber Bureau of Nepal Police, trained in detecting and foiling cyber crimes like system disruption and hacking. Rapidly growing global demand for such manpower is causing massive brain drain, which is one of the reasons for the shortage locally.

ICT infrastructure is inadequate and poor. Mass awareness about risky behaviour like sharing critical person-

al information online is limited. Even at the corporate level, awareness about the importance of setting up remote data recovery terminals (DRTs) is limited. Massive use of pirated software, even in rich industries like banking, is intensifying the risk of data theft and potential cyber attacks.

Chronic underinvestment, both public and private, in three key sub-sectors of technology development, namely human resources, infrastructure and no-lag technology adoption, has put Nepal in a pitiful state. According to National Statistics Office data, Nepal's ICT sector contributes only about 2.2 percent to the national GDP, which is very low compared to even moderately developed economies. India and China's ICT sectors contribute 13.4 and 16.2 percent respectively to the GDP. Their cyber security protocols and regimes are far better fortified.

For Nepal, protecting whatever limited success it has achieved in the ICT sector from attacks is increasingly becoming daunting. The porousness of our government websites has already been exposed. Nepal's government and ICT industry should act swiftly to install safeguard systems to prevent possibly more vicious cyber attacks in the future.



Wagle is an econo-political analyst and professor with a PhD in economics.

Rethinking higher education

Nepali universities should be willing to embrace new technologies and academic concepts.

PUSHPA R JOSHI

A few weeks ago, Tribhuvan University (TU) announced a re-examination of the Research Methodology subject for some of its bachelor's-level management stream students. The reason for rescheduling after more than a year of the initial examination was unbelievable—the exam sheets had gone missing. There wasn't much hullabaloo and the students complied with TU's directive. This might seem normal in Nepal but is unimaginable elsewhere. It is not only a mistake by the responsible authority but also a punishable offence.

A university is considered the alma mater—the nourishing mother—of students because it provides academic prowess and empowers them with valuable behavioural lessons. It chisels a student's entire life. Unfortunately, this concept has been ignored in Nepal. The example above amply shows that universities take the students' concerns for granted. This article focuses mainly on TU, but the points raised are equally relevant for other universities.

TU and higher education

The history of higher education in Nepal is not very long. The first university, TU, was established in 1959, and it took 27 more years for the second university, Nepal Sanskrit University (NSU), to be established in 1986. There are 15 universities in Nepal today. The sole torchbearer of higher education, TU had initially contributed immensely in expanding higher education throughout the country. At present, TU and its affiliated colleges have more than 460,000 students, about 8,000 teaching, and 7,500 non-teaching staff. According to the Times Higher Education Ranking, TU ranks among 801-1000 universities in 2023 globally.

The reputation and credibility of TU were different during its heyday, especially after the introduction of a new education policy in 1971. The university was recognised worldwide and received financial support from international agencies. During that time, state-of-the-art research institutes like the Centre for Nepal and Asia Studies (CNAS) and the Research Centre for Applied Science and Technology (RECAST) were established. TU is still reaping the fruits of these institutes,

the seed of which was sown almost five decades ago.

The downfall of universities started immediately after the re-establishment of multi-party democracy in 1990. The universities got squeezed between the scuffles of the political parties. Rather than educational shrines, all public universities were gradually converted into political warehouses. With changing times, Nepali universities need to go hand in hand with new technology and new academic concepts. For that, a swift overhaul of the existing concepts is required. The lost glory of the universities could be restored only after that. Following are the steps that need to be implemented to rejuvenate the pioneer higher education institutes of the country.

Reducing political influence

Alienating TU from political influence is the most challenging but, if implemented, the most effective measure to resuscitate the universities. For the last few decades, universities have been

Staff recruitment and subsequent promotion should be based strictly on merit and not on political inclination. For that, universities should be transformed into self-regulatory bodies, and the provision of the prime minister being the chancellor should be discontinued. A steering committee elected by the stakeholders of the respective universities should be formed. Internationally accepted criteria (teaching experience, regularly updated didactic competence, research aptitude and funding accusation) should be implemented in tenure tracking of teaching staff.

Need for student councils

Normally, universities are free from political influence. However, student politics is still prevalent in some parts of the world, including Nepal. This was the practice that developed mainly during the colonial era. Academic institutes were the ideal platforms for igniting the flame of revolution. Student wings of political parties were estab-

lished in Indian universities to oppose the atrocities of the British regime. This concept also inspired Nepali students, who grouped together to protest against the autocratic Rana regime, the Jayatu Sanskritam Movement of 1947 being a prominent example. Later, student wings of various political parties were formed during the Panchayat regime, which played an important role in the reinstatement of multiparty democracy in 1990. In fact, the current batch of the leadership of main political parties is mainly the product of student politics. They had a mission of establishing democracy, which has been accomplished by now. This is the

right time that student politics should be detached from the universities. In place of that, student councils, alien from party politics, that would advocate the legitimate demands of the students should be introduced in all universities, colleges and schools.

Contemporary technology

After the rapid development of information technology, universities should include technical subjects such as telemedicine, e-journalism, contemporary didactic, etc., in their curriculum. A more practical approach should be introduced instead of existing theoretical courses. The present syllabus should also be remodelled according to contemporary technological demands and the teaching method should be upgraded as per modern global trends. This approach will bring our universities into the league of leading global universities.

The new government has been formed, and an education activist has been selected to lead the Ministry of Education. The main responsibility of the education minister should be to reform the existing academic practice, including university-level education, by introducing contemporary teaching concepts. In this endeavour, the above-mentioned points will reference the concerned authorities.

On a personal note, the experience and suggestions of Nepali citizens working in leading universities abroad will also be useful. In my experience, many international universities are interested in cooperating with Nepali counterparts and our universities should utilise such opportunities. In this perspective, a partnership contract was signed between Martin Luther University (MLU), Germany and Kathmandu University (KU) in 2017. A delegation of KU visited MLU in 2019 to identify possible fields of collaboration. However, the process has been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Similar collaborations and knowledge-exchange initiatives could also be started with other universities. Hence, the concerned authorities should focus on this direction. The reformation of the education system, modernisation of universities and international collaborations will upgrade the level of our universities, producing a new generation of competent and competitive manpower.



Joshi is a senior scientist and assistant professor of neurobiology at Martin-Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany.



SHUTTERSTOCK

converted into political entities. With every government shuffle, the vice-chancellor (VC) and the executive team of the universities are changed. There were many instances when an active political cadre, instead of a career academician, had been appointed the VC. For example, despite grave accusations of plagiarism, an active member of the Nepali Congress was appointed as VC of TU in 2015, which had declined the reliability of TU in the global academic arena. Learning lessons from this incident, a reputed career academician with high moral integrity should be selected to lead the universities.

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This concept also inspired Nepali students, who grouped together to protest against the autocratic Rana regime, the Jayatu Sanskritam Movement of 1947 being a prominent example. Later, student wings of various political parties were formed during the Panchayat regime, which played an important role in the reinstatement of multiparty democracy in 1990. In fact, the current batch of the leadership of main political parties is mainly the product of student politics. They had a mission of establishing democracy, which has been accomplished by now. This is the

FOREX

US Dollar	130.70
Euro	142.59
Pound Sterling	162.25
Swiss Franc	142.29
Australian Dollar	92.72
Canadian Dollar	98.13
Singapore Dollar	99.66
Japanese Yen	10.06
Chinese Yuan	19.36
Saudi Arab Riyal	34.82
Qatari Riyal	35.68
Thai Bhat	4.00
UAE Dhiram	35.58
Malaysian Ringit	30.80
Korean Won	10.65

Exchange rates fixed by Nepal Rastra Bank

SHARES

Nepse (in percent) 2,127.37 pts -1.90%

HIGHEST LOSERS

UMRH	SGHC	SIC	SPHL	NABBC	BARUN
-7.14	-6.71	-6.44	-5.8	-5.74	-5.7

MODERATE LOSERS

VLBS	TRH	HHL	TPC	KPCL	SPC
-5.56	-5.33	-5.24	-5.24	-5.23	-5.13

MODERATE GAINERS

UNL	NEF	PBD88	NBF2	3BD80/8	KLBSL
0.54	0.55	0.61	1.11	1.22	1.51

HIGHEST GAINERS

NICAD8283	PHCL	SJLIC	BHPL	ADLB	LGIL
1.99	5.03	5.14	6.56	10	10

BULLION PRICE PER TOLA

Fine Gold	Rs 106,300
Silver	Rs 1,365

SOURCE: FENEGOSIDA

BIZLINE

Sprite launches 'Piro Ko Jhatka Sprite Le Meta' campaign



KATHMANDU: Nepal's loved lemon-lime beverage, Sprite has introduced a brand-new campaign titled, "Piro ko Jhatka Sprite Le Meta" which translates to "Get relief from the kick of Spice with Sprite". The new campaign aims to establish Sprite as a refreshing drink that calms the taste buds after eating something spicy and aids to continue enjoying the spicy meal. The new campaign also comes with a new television commercial featuring actors Jassita Gurung, Najir Husen and popular dancer Kabita Nepali, reads the press release issued by the company. (PR)

India to use emergency law to maximise coal power output

NEW DELHI: India plans to use an emergency law next month to force power plants that run on imported coal to maximise output, two government sources told Reuters on Monday, in preparation for expected record consumption this summer. Many Indian coal-fired plants, including those owned by Adani Power and Tata Power in India's western Gujarat state, have not operated at full capacity in the recent years because they have found it difficult to compete with power generated from cheap domestic coal. India expects its power plants to burn about 8 percent more coal in the financial year ending March 2024. (REUTERS)

Export value in rupee terms soars as currency weakens

Shipments of listed products in the first six months were worth Rs22.93 billion, according to the Department of Customs.

POST REPORT

KATHMANDU, JAN 30

The export value of listed goods expressed in rupees shot up by 32 percent in the first half of the fiscal year, largely due to a depreciation of the Nepali currency vis-à-vis the United States dollar.

Shipments of products in the Nepal Trade Integrated Strategy (NTIS) catalogue were worth Rs22.93 billion, according to the Department of Customs.

Exports during the same six-month period from mid-August to mid-January in the previous fiscal year were valued at Rs17.36 billion.

Trade experts say that higher cost of raw materials and supply bottlenecks boosted producer prices too.

Exports of fabrics, textiles, yarns and ropes increased to Rs7.89 billion in the first six months from Rs5.9 billion during the same period of the last fiscal year.

Carpets worth Rs5.51 billion were exported compared to Rs4.40 billion previously.

The export of large cardamom increased to Rs3.70 billion from Rs2.28 billion.

Tea exports also swelled to Rs2.51 billion from Rs1.85 billion.

Pashmina exports amounted to Rs1.77 billion, up from Rs1.60 billion.

Ginger exports increased to Rs546.69 million compared to Rs231.51 million in the same period of the last fiscal year.

The export of medicinal herbs increased to Rs303.74 million from Rs225.75 million.

Among the products that showed a drop in exports, footwear shipments decreased to Rs534.11 million in the first six months from Rs617.18 million in the first six months of the last fiscal year.

Leather exports also plunged to Rs110.76 million from Rs244.23 million. Former commerce secretary Purushottam Ojha said it was too



Trade experts say that higher cost of raw materials and supply bottlenecks boosted producer prices too.

POST FILE PHOTOS

early to say why exports of Nepali goods showed an increase. "Most probably it is the appreciation of the US dollar."

According to Nepal Rastra Bank,

the Nepali currency fell against the US dollar by 3.14 percent in mid-December 2022 from mid-July 2022. The buying rate was Rs131.64 per \$1 in mid-December 2022 compared to

Rs127.51 in mid-July 2022. Nepal identified 19 high-value goods and services for export through the NTIS in 2010.

In the following years, the government revised the list by removing

Nepal is a champion country for fair recruitment, but on paper only, observers say

Migrant workers are still paying a huge amount for recruitment fees despite laws to prevent such expenses.

POST REPORT

KATHMANDU, JAN 30

Nepal is considered one of the champion countries of "Objective 6" of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, commonly known as GCM.

The objective is to facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguarding conditions that ensure decent work.

However, the reality is different. The data from Recruitment Advisor, a global recruitment and employment review platform shows, many migrant workers still pay exorbitant amounts of recruitment fees while going for foreign employment.

"The average fee paid to the recruitment agencies for securing a foreign job by 2,244 Nepalis was around Rs100,000," said Sunil Neupane, South Asia coordinator of Recruitment Advisor, speaking at a programme in Kathmandu on Monday. "The project was launched in Nepal, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines in 2017."

One of the conditions under "Objective 6" says, "Improve regulations on public and private recruitment agencies in order to align them with international guidelines and prohibit recruiters and employers from charging recruitment fees to migrant workers in order to prevent debt bondage, exploitation and forced labour."

Observers say that Nepal has laws, only on paper, which say Nepali migrant workers do not need to pay more than Rs10,000 as a service fee to private recruitment agencies.

The highly ambitious 'free-visa, free ticket' provision was introduced



POST FILE PHOTO

A survey carried out in Bangladesh showed that it takes a migrant worker around 17 months to recover their recruitment fees.

in 2015 aiming to make the employer bear the recruitment cost in order to prevent workers from falling into debt bondage by taking loans at a high-interest rate to finance their recruitment.

"The platform was launched with objectives to connect aspiring migrant workers with decent recruitment agencies, promote ethical recruitment as well as provide information about laws of the destination countries," Neupane added.

Hari Bahadur Thapa, who represented the National Network for Safe Migration, an umbrella organisation of 32 civil society organisations in the

country working in the field of labour migration and development, said Nepal may not be a champion country in terms of fair recruitment.

The labour agreement between Nepal and Malaysia in 2018 had a provision that exempted workers from the charges as the Malaysian employer is supposed to bear all the expenses of recruiting workers.

"That too has not been implemented effectively," according to Thapa.

"Recruitment fee is one of the most important aspects for fair recruitment, which has only increased in Nepal recently," Thapa said.

Though some employers in

Malaysia have started taking workers under the zero cost provision, many Nepali migrant workers paid around Rs200,000 to secure the jobs, he said.

Labour migration to Malaysia has increased steeply in recent months.

According to the data of the Department of Foreign Employment, Malaysia has become the top labour destination among Nepalis with 125,670 new labour permits issued in the first five months of the current fiscal year.

Rajendra Bhandari, president of the Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agencies, said only a few employers provide the service fee to the recruitment agencies.

"The current provision must be changed by allowing recruiting agencies to collect a service fee from the migrant workers—equivalent to their one month's salary," said Bhandari. "There are many issues in the existing Foreign Employment Act which need an amendment for the benefit of workers as well as recruiters."

Neha Choudhary, national project coordinator, Migrant Rights and Decent Work, ILO Nepal, said they have started working with the Central Bureau of Statistics to conduct the recruitment cost survey on the national level.

"The similar survey carried out in Bangladesh showed that it takes a migrant worker around 17 months to recover their recruitment fees," said Choudhary. "We hope the survey results, once published, will help Nepali authorities to discuss appropriate policy with labour destination countries."

poor-performing items and adding new ones in a bid to streamline the plan.

The list of products and services identified for special treatment was whittled down to 12 from 19.

Lentil, honey, noodle, handmade paper, silver jewellery and iron and steel products were chucked out. In the services list, health, education engineering and hydroelectricity were also dumped.

Fabrics, textiles and yarns, leather and footwear were added to the list.

"The goods have been listed since 2010, but their export growth is not satisfactory," said Ojha.

The government is reviewing the NTIS catalogue again after exports failed to improve.

The government is reviewing the NTIS catalogue for the third time after exports did not improve amid a changing global trade landscape.

Ojha said that although increased demand for goods does not typically drive up prices much on its own, the increase in demand coincided with rising global supply constraints.

"The international supply has been disturbed due to the Russia-Ukraine war impacting production," said Ojha. "Also, it will be good if our products keep up with increased momentum."

Nepal developed and adopted the NTIS 2010 as an updated version of the Nepal Trade and Competitiveness Study 2004 that focused on the development of 12 goods and seven services to contribute to the government's poverty reduction goal by making trade inclusive and equitable.

Carrier Emirates test flies Boeing 777 on sustainable fuel

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI, JAN 30

Long-haul carrier Emirates successfully flew a Boeing 777 on a test flight on Monday with one engine entirely powered by so-called sustainable aviation fuel. This comes as carriers worldwide try to lessen their carbon footprint.

Flight number EK2646 flew for just under an hour over the coastline of the United Arab Emirates, after taking off from Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international travel, and heading out into the Persian Gulf before circling back to land. The fuel powered one of the Boeing's two General Electric Co engines, with the other running on conventional jet fuel for safety.

"This flight is a milestone moment for Emirates and a positive step for our industry as we work collectively to address one of our biggest challenges—reducing our carbon footprint," Adel al-Redha, Emirates' chief operation officer, said in a statement.

Emirates described the sustainable fuel as a blend "that mirrored the qualities of jet fuel." It included fuel from Neste, a Finnish firm, and Virent, a Madison, Wisconsin-based company.

Virent describes itself as using plant-based sugars to make the compounds needed for sustainable jet fuel, while Neste's fuel comes from vegetable oils and animal fats. Those fuels reduce the release of heat-trapping carbon dioxide typically burned off by engines in flight.

Aviation releases only one-sixth the amount of carbon dioxide produced by cars and trucks, according to World Resources Institute.

Adani's market loss swells to \$70 billion as its fight with short-seller escalates

REUTERS

NEW DELHI, JAN 30

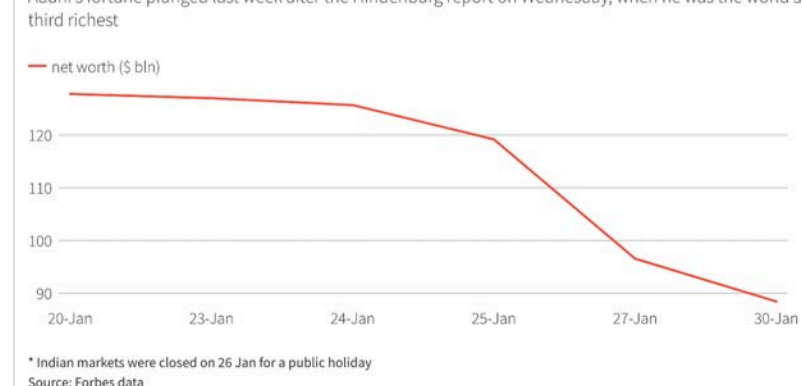
Adani group shares extended their sharp falls on Monday as the Indian conglomerate's rebuttal of a US short-seller's criticism failed to pacify investors, driving stock market losses for the companies to almost \$70 billion over three days.

Flagship Adani Enterprises, which is facing a crucial test this week with a follow-on share offering, fell 2.5 percent, reversing its initial gains of as much as 10 percent and staying significantly below the offer price.

Adani, led by Asia's richest man Gautam Adani, has locked horns with Hindenburg Research and on Sunday hit back at the short-seller's report of last week that flagged concerns about its debt levels and the use of tax havens. Adani said it complies with all local laws and had made the necessary regulatory disclosures.

Gautam Adani slips to world's eighth richest person

Adani's fortune plunged last week after the Hindenburg report on Wednesday, when he was the world's third richest



Adani Transmission, Adani Total Gas, Adani Green Energy, Adani Power, Adani Wilmar and Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone fell

between 4.2 percent and 20 percent on Monday.

Adani Enterprises' \$2.5 billion secondary share sale entered its second

day amid weak investor sentiment. The stock was trading at 2,686 rupees, 13.6 percent below the 3,112 rupees lower end of the offer price band. The upper band is 3,276 rupees.

Initial data from stock exchanges on Monday showed Adani has now received bids for 687,840, or 1.5 percent, of the 45.5 million of shares on offer. The deal closes on Tuesday.

Foreign and domestic institutional investors, as well as mutual funds, have made no bids so far, according to the data.

"Retail participation is likely to have a shortfall with current market prices still trailing the offer price and sentiment taking a hit due to the Hindenburg controversy," said Hemang Jani, equity strategist at Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

"While there is a risk that the share sale does not go through, it will be crucial today to wait and see how institutional investors participate."

Adani Group told Reuters in a statement on Saturday that the sale remains on schedule at the planned issue price, even as sources said bankers of the country's largest secondary share sale were considering extending the timeline beyond January 31, or tweaking the price due to the fall in its share price.

Indian regulations say the share offering must receive minimum subscription of 90 percent, and if it does not the issuer must refund the entire amount. Maybank Securities and Abu Dhabi Investment Authority are among investors who bid for the anchor portion of the issue.

Maybank said in a statement "there is no financial impact" on it as the subscription to Adani's offer was fully funded by client funds.

State-run insurance behemoth Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) told Reuters on Monday it was reviewing the Adani group's response to

Hindenburg's report and would hold talks with the management within days.

LIC took 5 percent of the anchor portion, worth around \$734 million. It already holds a 4.23 percent stake in the flagship Adani firm, while its other exposures include a 9.14 percent stake in Adani Ports and 5.96 percent in Adani Total Gas.

Index provider MSCI has said it was seeking feedback from market participants on Adani and was monitoring the factors that "may impact the eligibility of those relevant securities" in MSCI indexes.

In its response on Sunday, Adani highlighted its relationships with local and international banks and touted its access to diverse funding sources and structures, listing US banks Citigroup and JPMorgan Chase & Co and European lenders such as BNP Paribas, Credit Suisse and Deutsche Bank.



कान्तिपुर लुम्बिनीको सामर्थ्य

अर्थ-सामाजिक शक्ति, सम्भावना, समस्या र सम्बोधन

विश्वको सांस्कृतिक मानचित्रको केन्द्रमा छ लुम्बिनी। शान्तिका दूत गौतम बुद्धको जन्मस्थल लुम्बिनी विश्वसम्पदा सूचीमा समेटिएको मात्र छैन, यसले पर्यटन र पूर्वाधार निर्माणलाई पनि उत्प्रेरित गरिरहेको छ। विकासको कडीले जोड्दा उत्पादन, सेवा उद्योग, व्यापार, कृषि, शिक्षा तथा स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्रमा पनि बल पुगेको छ। त्यसैले समग्र देशकै अर्थतन्त्रमा योगदान गर्नेमा लुम्बिनी प्रदेश तेस्रो स्थानमा छ। छिमेकी मुलुक भारतको उत्तर प्रदेश र बिहारसँग जोडिएको यस प्रदेशलाई थप गतिशील हुँदै मुलुककै समृद्धिको संवाहक बन्ने अवसर पनि छ।

१२ जिल्ला समेटिएको लुम्बिनीको अर्थ-सामाजिक शक्ति, सम्भावना, समस्या र सम्बोधनबारे विमर्श गर्न कान्तिपुर प्रस्तुत गर्दछ लुम्बिनीको सामर्थ्य।

सत्रहरू

पहिलो

संघीयता
संस्थागत गर्ने समय

दोस्रो

पालिका
र पूर्वाधार

तेस्रो

अर्थतन्त्रका
अवरोध

चौथो

पर्यटनको
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प्रत्यक्ष प्रसारण

यही माघ २१ गते शनिबार कान्तिपुर टेलिभिजन, कान्तिपुर सिनेप्लेक्स तथा इ-कान्तिपुरमा



Cement
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Market
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Partner



Health Care
Partner



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Partner



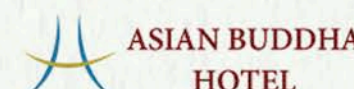
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Liverpool's FA Cup defence over

The Reds concede a goal in the second minute of stoppage time to lose 2-1 at Brighton and become the latest high-profile club to exit the FA Cup.



ASSOCIATED PRESS
BRIGHTON, JAN 30

Liverpool's FA Cup title defence is over.

On a dramatic day of late goals, Liverpool became the latest high-profile club to exit the FA Cup as the defending champions conceded a goal in the second minute of stoppage time to lose 2-1 at Brighton in the fourth round.

It's only January but Liverpool are already out of the FA Cup and League Cup, languishing in ninth place in the Premier League and their only realistic chance of silverware this season is in the Champions League—where a last-16 matchup against Real Madrid awaits next month.

"I feel sorry for the fans... We let them down again," Liverpool defender Andy Robertson said.

Fifth-tier Wrexham, under its Hollywood owners, are still alive and well in the famous old competition.

Sheffield United left it even later than Brighton—much to the despair of Ryan Reynolds.

The movie star, who co-owns fifth-tier Wrexham with fellow Hollywood actor Rob McElhenney, flew in to watch the match at the atmospheric Racecourse Ground with one of his daughters and was put on an emotional roller coaster in a 3-3 draw against the visitors from the second tier.

Sheffield United scored their equal-

iser in the fifth minute of stoppage time to force a replay, meaning Wrexham—the lowest-ranked team left in the competition—will be in the draw for the last 16 being held on Monday.

Mitoma dazzles again

Japan winger Kaoru Mitoma produced a brilliant piece of skill for Brighton's winner against Liverpool by feigning a shot to deceive two defenders and then driving a close-range finish into the roof of the net.

Mitoma, who played for Japan at the World Cup, is proving a revelation in his first season at Brighton, scoring or

FA CUP RESULTS		
Brighton	2-1	Liverpool
Stoke	3-1	Stevenage
Wrexham	3-3	Sheffield United

setting up a goal in eight of the team's last 11 games. His latest strike earned Brighton a come-from-behind win, backing up a 3-0 thrashing of Liverpool in the Premier League two weeks ago.

This was a closer contest than in the league, with Harvey Elliott's 30th-minute opener for Liverpool cancelled out by a flicked finish from Brighton defender Lewis Dunk nine minutes later. Dunk said he knew little about his finish, which came off



“We have to improve, body language, a couple of boys have to do much better.”
Liverpool manager
Jurgen Klopp

AP/RS
Brighton's Kaoru Mitoma (left) celebrates after scoring his side's second goal during the FA Cup fourth round football match against Liverpool in Brighton on Sunday.

a speculative shot from Tariq Lamptey from outside the area.

Eleven Premier League teams have been eliminated before the fifth round. League leaders Arsenal were eliminated by Manchester City on Friday, joining nine other top-flight clubs—including Chelsea and Newcastle—who were ousted in the third round.

Liverpool came close to winning a quadruple of major trophies last season, triumphing in both domestic cups, losing the Champions League final to Real Madrid and finishing second to Manchester City in the Premier League by a point.

This season is proving very different. "We have to improve, body language, a couple of boys have to do much better," Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said. "But the last game here we couldn't have won. I think today nobody would have been surprised if we had won the game."

Brighton were without Moises Caicedo after the Ecuador midfielder publicly declared his desire to leave amid reported interest from Arsenal and Chelsea.

No repeat shock

Stevenage wasn't able to reproduce their exploits from the third round.

The fourth-tier team that delivered one of the most stunning wins in the last 64—beating Premier League club Aston Villa away—were beaten 3-1 by second-tier Stoke.

The greatest? Djokovic may have settled the debate

The Serb only appears to be getting better with age and the young talents are still unable to get near him.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE, JAN 30

In drawing level with Rafael Nadal's record 22 Grand Slam titles, Novak Djokovic reignited the debate about who is the greatest men's tennis player of all time.

For some, the Serb settled it with his record-extending 10th Australian Open crown.

Certainly his vanquished opponent on Rod Laver Arena thinks so. "He's the greatest that has ever held a tennis racket, for sure," said Stefanos Tsitsipas after losing 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/5).

It seems inevitable that Djokovic, who returned to world number one with his dominant victory in Sunday's final, will win more Slams.

At 35 he is a year younger than great rival Nadal and except for hamstring trouble early on in Melbourne, he appears to be in excellent physical shape.

In contrast, Nadal's battered body broke down again at the Australian Open and he limped out with defeat in the second round, his title defence over and the Spaniard in pain with a hip injury.

Roger Federer, the third of the "Big Three" who have dominated men's tennis for the past 15 years, retired last year with 20 Grand Slam titles.

Federer will always be the "people's champion" in the eyes of many because of the graceful way he played, but it is Djokovic who looks primed to pull away with the record number of men's major crowns.

Djokovic seems to thrive on pain and feed off adversity. Two years ago he won in Australia despite tearing stomach muscles, this year it was a hamstring that did not allow him to practise between matches. If not for Djokovic's vaccine status, which saw him deported from Australia a year ago and prevented him competing at the US Open, he may well have already been on 23 or 24 Slam wins.

Nadal, at 36, may be able to recover from his latest injury and even find the will to achieve another triumph on the clay of Roland Garros in May. But he could bow out sooner rather than later. There is a theory that he could call it quits at this year's French Open. It is his favourite tournament and a 15th title there would provide a story-book ending.

Djokovic only appears to be getting better with age and the "Next Gen" of young talent are still unable to get near him over five sets.

His coach, Goran Ivanisevic, believes there are a few more years at the top—and more Slams—to come.

"Definitely two, three more years," Ivanisevic told reporters after

Sunday's final. "The way he's taking care of his body, the way he approaches everything, the food, it's amazing. It's unbelievable the level."

Some tennis fans will always take convincing to accept Djokovic as the greatest, despite what the number of Grand Slam titles says. He polarises opinion, whereas Federer and Nadal are universally loved for how they are on and off the court. There are those who see something too calculating in the intense, brooding Djokovic.

Controversy is never far away. Last year it was his Covid vaccination status. This year it was his father Srđjan posing with a fan holding a Russian flag featuring Vladimir Putin's face.

Before that, Djokovic's infamous default from the US Open in 2020 for petulantly swiping a ball which hit a female line judge laid his character bare, said the critics.

But Djokovic supporters say those traits are what have driven him to glory.

The Grand Slam numbers don't lie. But gaining universal acceptance from tennis fans as "the greatest" may be an even bigger achievement.



AP/RS
Novak Djokovic of Serbia poses with the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup in the gardens of Government House the morning after winning his 10th Australian Open and 22nd Grand Slam, in Melbourne on Monday.

Coach Thapa calls up 43 players for closed camp



Ananta Raj Thapa

SPORTS BUREAU
KATHMANDU, JAN 30

The newly-appointed women's team head coach Ananta Raj Thapa named a 43-member preliminary squad for the upcoming international friendly football match against India.

According to the All Nepal Football Association (ANFA), the national team training camp will begin from Tuesday. The Football governing body of the country on Sunday had announced Thapa as the head coach for the friendly against India.

The date for the friendly, however, has not been confirmed. The Nepal women's football team is scheduled to visit India sometime between February 13 and 25.

It will be the first national team assignment for the Nepal Police Club head coach and former Nepali international midfielder. He will be assisted by Ganga Gurung, while Suraj Kumar Lama will team up with Thapa as the goalkeeping coach.

The national women's team has been without a coach since September last year after Kumar Thapa parted company with ANFA following Nepal's 3-1 loss to Bangladesh in the SAFF Championship final. The defeat was the first loss against Bangladesh in any competition, which also denied Nepal a place in history.

PRELIMINARY SQUAD

Amisha Karki, Amrita Jaishi, Anita Basnet, Anita KC, Anjali Waiba, Anjana Rana Magar, Anjila Tumbapo Subba, Anushka Sherpa, Bimala BK, Bimala Chaudhary, Chandra Bhandari, Dipa Neupane, Dipa Shahi, Ganga Gurung, Ghim Kumari Gurung, Gita Rana, Hima Chaudhary, Hira Kumari Bhujel, Kabita BK, Kabita Dhimal, Khusma Rai, Kusum Khatiwada, Manika Kuswar, Manjali Kumari Yonjan, Menuka Ale Magar, Nirmala BK, Nisha Thokar, Preeti Rai, Rashmi Kumari Ghising, Rekha Poudel, Renuka Nagarkote, Sabita Rana Magar, Sabitra Bhandari, Samiksha Ghimire, Sanju Kumal, Sapana Rai, Saraswati Hamal, Saraswati Ayer, Saru Limbu, Srijana Chemjong, Srijana Singh Thakuri, Sunita Chaudhary, Usha Nath.

HOROSCOPE

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

Wires may get crossed around the office this morning. Be sure to double-check your work, and consider indulging in some stretching or a brisk walk in order to promote mental clarity.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) ***

The universe will use synchronicity and coincidence to communicate with you this morning. Unfortunately, an imbalance could make it difficult to decode these messages, especially if you're standing at a personal crossroads.

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

You could inadvertently step on a few toes. Avoid taking an overly authoritative stance right now, especially where business dealings and intimate relationships are concerned.

CANCER (June 22-July 22) ***

Try not to take it personally if arguments arise within your love life today. It will cause you to become more sensitive than usual, and it would be easy to misconstrue the advice or opinions of others as criticism.

LEO (July 23-August 22) ***

The bad habits of others could rub off on you this morning, it could also cause you to get lost in your social media feeds, bringing forth issues if you begin to slip up with your to-do list.

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

Your professional confidence may falter today. Avoid speaking on topics you're not totally familiar with unless your agenda is to learn and ask questions. You may also want to double-check your work.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22) ***

Try not to let your emotions cloud your intuition this morning. Your hopes could take you away from what's practical, making it important that you find a balance between what you hope will happen and what is likely to occur.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21) ***

Your words may come out more sharply than you intend this morning. These vibes could also manifest internally, making it important that you maintain a positive narrative and avoid obsessive, jealous, or negative thought patterns.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21) ***

Your generous nature is one of the qualities that makes you so lovable, you may want to conserve your resources. It could also create issues if you begin to feel taken advantage of.

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

The universe will give you a little nudge if you haven't been taking care of your health. Try to embrace mind/body connectivity right now, and be sure to eat plenty of nutritious foods, stretch, and stay hydrated.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18) ***

Your self-awareness could take a small hit this morning. Be mindful of what you say and think right now, as it would be easy to misread situations and people. Give yourself permission to be as outgoing and wacky as you please.

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

You'll feel particularly sensitive to the emotions of others. Unfortunately, an unbalanced connection could cause you to feel distracted or overwhelmed by your surroundings, making it important that you find ways to protect your aura.

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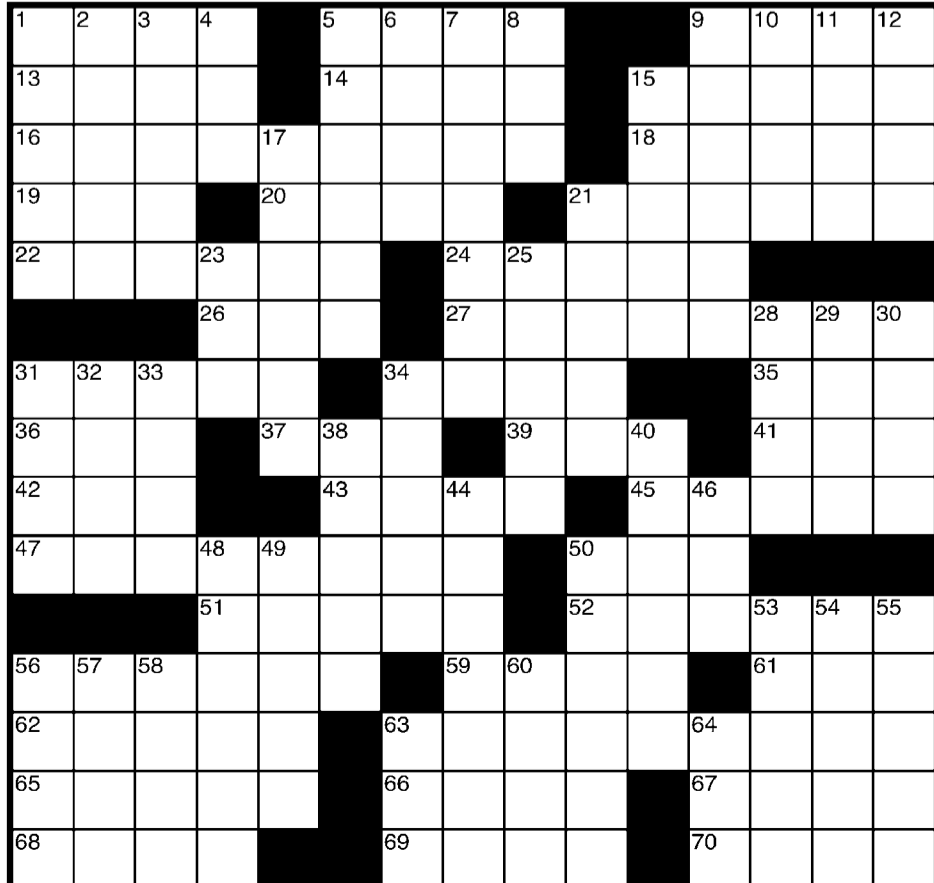
CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- Translucent mineral
 - Skin opening
 - Become limp
 - Garbage bin output
 - Pitcher in a basin
 - Chocolate bean
 - Unwillingness
 - Beautify
 - Took a load off
 - Domed recess
 - Chic
 - Go by
 - More slippery
 - Cabinet dept.
 - Stress
 - Open-air lobbies
 - Top player
 - Gift tag word
 - Mekong native
 - Relay segment
 - Fed. property manager
 - Ginza purchase
 - "The Name of the Rose" author
 - Many August people
 - Not chic
 - Decline in status
 - Instant lawn
- DOWN**
- Telegraph code
 - Optimal
 - Terra —
 - "Exodus" character
 - Chirped
 - Holds the deed
 - Voucher
 - Before, to poets
 - Nonswimmers, maybe
 - Holy image
 - Shortening
 - Broadway award
 - Gives a darn
 - Not formal
 - Rows of seats
 - Frat letter
 - Rocky ledges

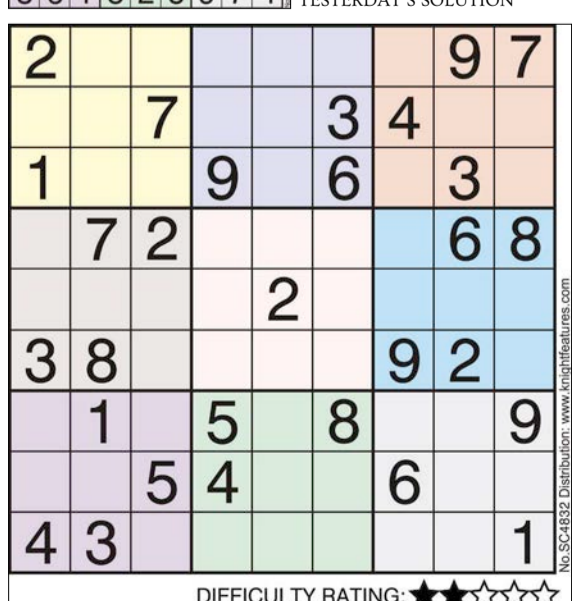
PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED



- Sci-fi landers
- Takes at gunpoint
- A Great Lake
- Knighthood Guinness
- Baja fast food
- Compartment
- Gushes forth
- Distast
- Greek god of light
- Actor's place (2 wds.)
- Fruit cooler
- Royal decrees
- Sheath
- Thin
- Spiny-leaved plant
- More wise
- Vote in
- Balance
- Former Montreal player
- Flower garlands
- Collar style
- Cribbage counter
- Short snooze



SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Digital drug

Technology has become an intricate part of our daily lives. It becomes a problem when digital usage takes the form of addiction.



stant high amount of dopamine. To figure out, if you or someone you know has a digital addiction, looking out for some of its indications could be helpful. The most obvious sign would be the lack of control over digital use; characterized by prolonged usage that is difficult to stop, once started. It might also be that constant urge to check and use the phone. When digital usage is completely cut off for a day or two, withdrawal symptoms like irritability, anger, anxiety, depression, and brain fog may become visible.

Researchers have indicated that extreme stimulation that our brain gets from the usage of digital devices along with the dopamine surge, results in the brain getting fatigued. It leads to slower activity in the brain, which in turn hinders the ability to think or focus properly. It has been found to occur alongside psychological issues like internet induced Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), depression, anxiety, social anxiety, and aggression. This co-occurrence does not necessarily imply that digital addiction causes these disorders; rather, the individual who already has them may be overusing their devices to alleviate the discomfort caused by their psychological concerns. Even physical health conditions like insomnia, excessive cravings for sugary, fat, or junk food, back and muscular issues like Tech-Neck, and obesity may occur due to long-term digital addiction.

There are things we can do to protect ourselves from this digital drug. However, complete abstinence from digital devices is not a feasible solution in today's world. Nevertheless, tracking daily device usage through apps can provide insights into the problem. Setting reminders and taking regular breaks from technology can help break the cycle of excessive dopamine release. For children and teenagers, parents can establish a balanced screen time schedule where the real-world activities take up at least twice as much time as something that uses digital devices.

However, in cases of severe addiction, or when this addiction is accompanied by psychological conditions such as attention deficiency, depression, or anxiety, consulting a mental health professional would be necessary. Treatments for these coexisting conditions along with managing digital addiction would be essential in such cases.

Manandhar is a mental health advocate. She also provides psychosocial counselling.

SUJINA MANANDHAR

A few days ago, I started working on an important project. However, while working on it, I found myself going through some funny videos. Hours later, I realized that I was nowhere near getting my task completed and regretted my doing so. I remember unlocking my phone to search for something, but somehow I got distracted halfway through and ended up watching some irrelevant video and then, until I lost track of time, I went again on a scrolling spree.

This incident made me curious. I became more aware of my phone usage and came to the realization that this incident was not a one-time thing and I had been spending too much time on my phone without even realizing it. So, I decided to find out just how much time I was actually spending on my phone each day using a screen time recording app. The result was a big surprise as my lenient guess turned out to be much smaller than the actual staggering number. This took me into a rabbit hole of wanting to know why we spend so much time on our digital devices and fail to get our work done.

I noticed that it was not just me struggling with this issue. A few of the adolescent clients I recently helped were dealing with problems like social anxiety, depression, and attention deficiency. Parents of each of these clients blamed digital addiction as the source of these mental health issues. While excessive digital usage



— MENTAL HEALTH —

could be a contributing factor to mental health issues, it is not the sole culprit causing the ailments. For a lot of individuals, digital addiction could just be a means of escaping from reality and the already existing stress in their lives.

These technologies have become an intricate part of our daily lives. However, it becomes a significant problem when digital usage takes the form of an addiction which causes an individual to have an impairment or distress due to their inability to refrain from such actions.

A chemical called dopamine plays the biggest role in taking us from merely using digital devices to becoming addicted and controlled by them. The unlimited access to entertainment provided to us by these technologies release a huge amount of dopamine in our brain. Dopamine makes us seek pleasure and it encourages us to repeat the activities that we find enjoyable. And, since our bodies did not evolve to handle sudden surges of Dopamine when we engage in such activities, the more we use it, the more we become dependent on it, just like drugs. Hence, the vicious cycle of addiction starts where we repeatedly carry out such activities to get that con-

The possibilities of HCI

Professor Paul Doney, the head of Computer Science at Leads Beckett University, talks to the Post on Human Computer Interaction.

POST REPORT
KATHMANDU

Professor Paul Doney, the head of Computer Science at Leads Beckett University, arrived in Kathmandu early in the morning of January 23. This is his second Nepal visit, he first came to the country back in 1989 for a week long backpacking trip. This time, however, he is here for work.

Doney will spend a majority of his week-long trip at The British College (TBC) teaching the computer science students and assisting the staff to refine the BSc in Computer Science and MSc in Information and Technology syllabuses so that they are on par with what the Leads Beckett University teaches. Faculty from the British university visit TBC every year for the same purpose.

With an interest in Human Computer Interaction (HCI), professor Doney has also been investigating the use of persuasive technology as applied to systems promoting positive behaviour change. Here, he gives the Post a brief introduction to HCI, it's applications and how it can be utilized in the context of Nepal.

Could you introduce HCI to our readers?

HCI is a multidisciplinary field of research in the use of technology and design that focuses on interaction between humans and computers. The research I've done in the past is on 'persuasive technology' under HCI. I'm particularly interested in how technology can be used to persuade people to adopt better behaviour. For example, for weight management or to help someone quit smoking.

What has your research on HCI been on?

The main context on which I have worked on HCI is weight management—especially with people in the UK. Weight is a difficult subject to tackle. It is very tough for people in that situation to work on this

issue. So through our research, we are trying to find ways in which we can support those people.

My research led to the finding that although most apps and technologies that work in the weight management field are simply platforms for monitoring weight—that is not what most people wanting to lose weight struggle with. People knew how much weight they were losing. The issue was planning. So, we are trying to provide them

sustainable, HCI can be used to educate the farmers on more sustainable ways of farming and get them to understand that there could be better practices. It could be used with the aim of providing a platform which steers agriculture in a sustainable direction.

HCI can be used in many fields. I just gave the example of it being used in agriculture because that is what came off of the top of my head right as I heard the question.



POST PHOTO: KESHAV THAPA

with tools that would help them plan ahead and motivate them to stick to the plan. It could start with things like making it easy to have a good selection of recipes that are suitable for healthy eating so that they are not making the wrong decisions in the moment. This actually persuades people to lose weight.

How do you see HCI being used in the future?

Like all fields of technology, HCI is a work in process. We are always looking to improve the interfaces of the technology. We have considered things like the Metaverse (which is a new interface itself) that offers all sorts of possible potential. But I'm just giving an example here, Metaverse is a completely different interface. So, again we need to understand how HCI is going to work for people in the most effective way. Not just for the geeks that may be drawn to it but for anybody entering that world and whatever they want to achieve through that.

How could HCI be used in the context of Nepal?

In the context of Nepal, HCI could be used in agriculture. I do not know the specifics of the agricultural scene here. But for example, if the agricultural practices aren't

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