



NOVEMBER 6, 2021 · Nu 20

Bhutan: Confirmed Cases - 2,623 | Recovered - 2,614 | Active - 6 | Deaths - 3**Global:** Confirmed Cases - 248,606,783 | Death - 5,029,324**India:** 34,321,025 | West Bengal - 1,596,332 | Delhi - 1,440,003 | Assam - 611,656 | Arunachal Pradesh - 55,174 | Sikkim - 32,019**Thailand:** 1,951,572 **Bangladesh:** 1,570,485 **Nepal:** 814,115 **Singapore:** 210,978

Remittance in 2020 contributed 4.82% to the GDP

The amount was higher than the combined remittance of the past three years

Thukten Zangpo

At Nu 8.27 billion (B), remittance inflow in 2020 contributed about 4.82 percent to the gross domestic product (GDP), making it the highest remittance inflow so far. The amount is more than the remittance of the past three years combined.

Remittance in 2017, 2018, and 2019 amounted to Nu 7.8B, according to the Royal Monetary Authority's (RMA) October monthly statistical bulletin. Remittance inflow in 2017, 2018, and 2019 was Nu 1.9B, Nu 3B and Nu 2.9B respectively.

Remittance is a transfer of money by a foreign worker (non-resident Bhutanese) back to their home country. Remittance helps to improve the foreign exchange reserves and reduces the deficit in the current account by improving the country's balance of payments. [▶ Pg 2](#)



▶ Corresponding with the first day of the tenth lunar month, the Central Monk Body moved to Punakha, its winter residence. The monks will spend the next six months in Punakha Dzong. Initially, the entourage holds a night in Thinleygang. However, in compliance with the health protocols, the entourage moved straight to Punakha yesterday afternoon.

Focus Point

Admirable props!



ACC investigation reveals deep-rooted corruption at MDP

Rajesh Rai

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has interrogated 61 individuals and collected 87 statements so far as it investigates alleged corruption at the Mini Dry Port (MDP) and truck parking (temporary) port in Phuentsholing.

The ACC has detained eight people but four have been released. Of the other four, three are customs inspectors and a businessman. They are still under detention for further investigation. The businessman runs a hardware shop, sources said.

An official from the commission said, "The ACC is fully aware that cus-

tom officials who are yet to be investigated are already fabricating stories to cover up their ill-gotten gains using their relatives and friends."

The official said that anyone who is trying to interfere and frustrate the investigation will face rigorous examination and will not be spared from legal consequences.

Sometime in July 2021, the ACC was alerted about the possible existence of bribery and extortion by customs officials and loaders in connection to the import and transshipment of goods through the Mini-Dry Port (MDP) and other designated areas. The investigation was launched at a time when there was heightened

concern about the unrelenting surge in Covid-19 cases in Phuentsholing despite being under strict lockdown.

The MDP

The Mini- Dry Port (MDP) operation started in November 2019 under the Phuentsholing thromde and was handed over to the Department of Revenue and Customs in October 2020. The port was constructed in 2017 as a South Asian Subregion Economic Co-operation (SASEC) project at a cost of Nu 166.019 million.

Before 2020, imports from India and third countries entered through the main border gate, Phuentsholing.

[▶ Pg 16](#)



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Customs inspector at MDP allegedly collected millions in bribes

Rajesh Rai

A senior customs inspector stationed at the MDP, Truck Parking and Pasakha is one of the customs officials still facing custodial interrogations. He was arrested on October 8.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) investigation revealed that the suspect had been receiving illicit payments from multiple parties in relation to the import of goods. However, he concealed these bribes using the bank accounts of other private individuals.

He requested one of his old schoolmates working at Pasakha, to use his bank account. He convinced his friend

saying that he had money to receive from someone in relation to betel nut and that he was not comfortable using his own saving account as it would make law enforcement agencies suspicious. The suspect shared this bank account number with importers or suppliers in Jaigaon to transfer bribes. In less than a month, he collected about Nu 800,000 from four individuals. Every time a deposit was made, the suspect requested his friend to withdraw cash and deliver it to the containment area. On other occasions, he instructed the friend to transfer money to some accounts that he claimed to be his family members. After

some time, his friend refused to hand over Nu 50,000 to the suspect because the proceed became suspicious to him when he reviewed his bank statement.

The senior inspector then switched to another old schoolmate operating a small shop at Pekarshing in Phuentsholing. Using this account, the suspect collected about Nu 1.994 million from as many as 35 individuals or business entities. The suspect invested collected bribes to operate a beer supply business and at one time to sell betel nut. He engaged in a more deceitful means of hiding corrupt proceed by routing through additional

layers of account. He made his friend transfer money to BoBL account of one of his cousins working in Mongar who then transferred it to T-Bank account before sending it to one of the beer agents. Other times when the suspect personally approached and deposited cash with some acquaintance operating small businesses asking them to transfer the amount from their account to his cousin in Mongar.

The suspect also used another bank account registered in the name of a retail store, the business account of which was otherwise inactive after the proprietor discontinued the business. The account

was obtained through the brother-in-law of the license holder. Just as he did with the other two friends, the suspect told the brother-in-law that he wanted to use the account to collect money in connection to 'doma'. The official said that the investigation ascertained that about 15 individuals made deposits amounting to more than Nu 470,000 into the account.

The suspect also shared his friend's bank account with some of his colleagues in customs to receive bribes. The proceeds were then transferred to their own relative's account. As of date, eight individuals have been detained, three customs officials, for investigation.

Remittance in 2020...

From Pg 1

The growth in remittance was 185 percent, which has come as a help when the country lost foreign currency earning capacity because of the pandemic in 2020, compared to the previous year.

The Australian dollar (AUD) inward remittance contributed to more than half of the total remittances, with about Nu 5.34B (AUD 102.80M) followed by Nu 2.48B (USD 33.49M) in 2020. There were 3.5 times more AUD remittances in 2020 than in 2019.

Meanwhile, remittances in denominations such as pounds sterling, Euro, and other European currency roughly equated to Nu 758 M in 2020.

As of July of this year, the country's remittance inflow was Nu 2.98B, the two highest being AUD at Nu1.89B and USD at Nu 953.35M.

The exchange rate of dollar against the Ngultrum increased slightly to Nu 74.18 in July this year and was Nu 73.72 for the fiscal year average (2020-2021).

Remittance through formal channels

With a drop of -90.03 percent in air transport under the transport, storage, and communication sector (8.74

percent of the country's GDP) in 2020, remittances increased as Bhutanese abroad sent the foreign currency through formal banking channels.

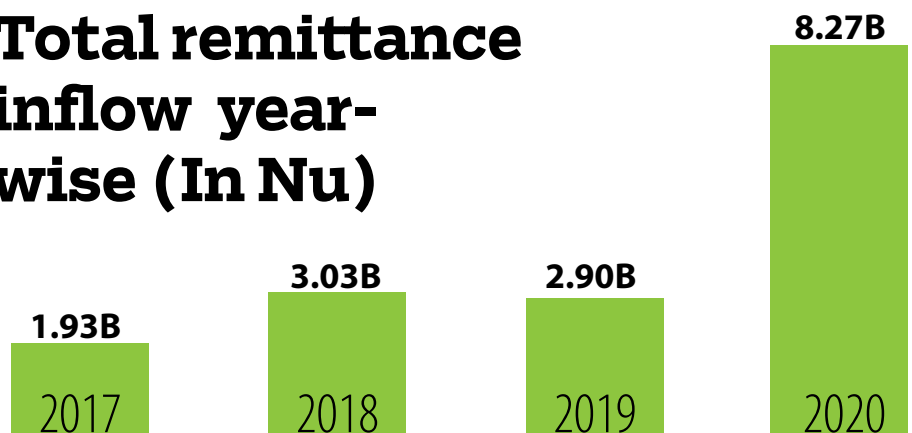
Although not independently verified, many attribute the increase in remittance to non-resident Bhutanese sending money to support their families and relatives during the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown in the country.

The RMA statistics show that the highest inward remittance amount of Nu 1.13B was received during the month of June 2020, followed by Nu 1.02B in November, and Nu 987.83M in July.

Bhutan confirmed its first Covid-19 case in March last year and the country saw the first 21-day nationwide lockdown beginning on August 11 last year. The second nationwide lockdown began on December 23 the same year.

Observers also say that the increase in remittance could be because it is sent through formal channels. "With the borders closed, there were not many Bhutanese returning home from abroad, especially Australia," said one. "Remittance could have been higher in the past years, but it was not formally recorded, as some brought in

Total remittance inflow year-wise (In Nu)



cash."

A Bhutanese working in Perth, Australia, Kezang Dorji said he sent money to support his parents during the lockdown and also to purchase properties in 2020.

Moreover, Kezang Dorji said that the increase in the limit ceilings of Tashi Bank Limited's (TBL) T-Pay Remit to AUD 20,000 from AUD 10,000 per month per registered user has also contributed to the increase in remittances.

He added that they commonly use T-Pay Remit for the transaction, as the fee is much cheaper than through the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, which was the platform for the money transfer two years before.

T-pay Remit charges AUD 12 per transaction for up to AUD 10,000 and AUD 18 per transaction above AUD 10,000.

The Chief Executive Officer of Yala Real Estate, Kin-

zang Lhendup said that up to 90 percent of property buyers are Bhutanese living in Australia, and about 10 percent are from the United States of America.

According to the RMA report 2020, the sharp spike in inward remittances could be due to the increasing number of overseas expats returning due to the outbreak of Covid-19, who have remitted their savings back to Bhutan.

Statistics with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shows that 10,248 Bhutanese came back home from March to December from 61 countries last year. Furthermore, 12,415 Bhutanese returned from 68 countries as of May this year.

To encourage remittance inflows, the RMA launched a cash incentive scheme for Bhutanese who live, work, or study overseas as a pilot phase from June 1 this year until May 22 next year.

The beneficiaries will receive a cash incentive of one

percent upon converting the remitted amount into Ngultrum using the prevailing or applicable exchange rates through banking channels and the international money transfer operators.

The RMA launched RemitBhutan in September 2016 to provide a platform for non-resident Bhutanese to remit their savings and earnings to Bhutan through formal banking channels.

By the end of October 2020, the number of accounts opened through RemitBhutan grew by 19.6 percent (2,001 accounts). There are currently 2,347 accounts.

Meanwhile, remittance routed through Prabhu Money Transfer facility and T-Pay Remit initiated by TBL accounted for 83.84 percent of the total remittance as of October 2020. The remaining 16.16 percent was via Western Union and the normal banking channels of commercial banks.

Study finds switching planning cycle to 3 years is feasible

As the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) Secretariat is currently reviewing the five-year-plan system, a study has recommended that the government change the planning cycle from five years to three.

The study, conducted by a group of civil servants based at the Centre for Bhutan Studies, found it was feasible to shorten the planning cycle to three years.

The study, which was released yesterday at the Centre, claimed that despite the common perception that donor projects and government-funded activities must begin and end within the five-year-plan cycle, it was proven otherwise. "On the contrary, projects and activities have their own life cycle of varying durations."

Having studied budget and expenditure data for all the projects implemented in the 11th and 12th Five-Year Plans (FYP) to verify the actual duration of implementation of projects, the study revealed that the average implementation duration of plans was

around 2.6 years, which is why the study concluded that a three-year-planning cycle could replace the decades-old five-year-planning system.

The data revealed that the major chunk of donor projects (77.4 percent of projects for 11th FYP and 91.8 percent of 12th FYP) had implementation durations of less than three years.

"The three-year planning system will also provide flexibility for the government of the day to quickly integrate its development manifesto into annual plans and budgets," the research found.

Today, there are 49 bilateral and multilateral development partners supporting Bhutan's development activities through various projects. In the 12th FYP, grants constitute about 20 percent of total expenditure and about 55 percent of capital expenditure.

The study also found that switching to a three-year planning cycle would not change much, as all donor projects' duration ranges from one to several years within and across FYPs.

"Instead, donor partners' strategies would accordingly adjust with Bhutan's plan period duration," the study found.

In the 12th FYP, a total of 1,311 donor projects were implemented; more than 40 percent of the projects were implemented in one to two years.

However, the study stated that a three-year planning cycle would require a rigorous planning and efficient manpower to strengthen the policy and planning division of GNHC, including local governments.

Alignment of election cycle and plan cycle

One of the key reasons for the need to review plans was the mismatch between the planning and election cycle, where the five-year plan is prepared by the government of the day but is endorsed and implemented by the incoming government.

The study also found that five-year plans did not align with the election cycle because of the vacuum created

during the interim government and that to align with the plan and government's tenure, the plan must move forward by three months.

According to the study, a two-year plan cycle could also be an alternative, as future governments can implement one full plan.

"With this, the commencement of the two-year plan wouldn't have to be moved forward to align with an incoming government's term," the study stated. "Making changes to plans would be relatively smooth with a two-year plan system because the time gap between one plan and the next would be shorter."

It also claims budget forecasts for plans would be relatively more accurate.

However, if a three-year plan cycle is adopted, the possibility to complete most of the projects within the plan period is higher, the study stated.

Meanwhile, the study recommended a separate institutional set up for spatial planning to respond to the

evolving and inclusive planning landscape in the country. "There is a need to strengthen the current spatial planning system with the development of spatial plans at all levels, including at the local government level."

The study found that there was a requirement for ramifications suited to the developmental needs of the modern world and bring balanced regional development.

"There is a need for extensive awareness on spatial planning for planners, especially at the local government level to have maximum participation and input from them. This would lead to inclusive and comprehensive planning," the report stated.

The Works and Human Settlement Ministry has drafted a Spatial Planning Bill which is expected to be tabled in the winter session of Parliament.

Contributed by
Yangchen C Rinzin,
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Centre for Bhutan and
GNH Studies.

Supreme Court convicts drangpon wife in Wamrong battery case

Thinley Namgay

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday upheld Wamrong drungkhag court's judgment on a battery and trespassing case.

In July of last year, the drungkhag court convicted defendant Tshering Yangki to 18 months in prison for battery and trespassing.

Tshering Yangki was ordered to pay a compensation of Nu 260,000 and medical expenses to the victim within a month from the day the judgment was passed.

After the lower court judgment, she appealed to Trashigang dzongkhag court, the High Court, and finally to the SC on August 23 of this year.

Tshering Yangki's grounds for appeal was that the victim

had also fought with her, but the video that went viral online showed only her. She also reasoned that the victim's neck injury was related to diabetes and not because of the fight.

She also claimed that she should not have to pay compensation to the victim, as the victim is doing her usual work.

However, the SC judgment stated that regardless of the victim's medical condition, Tshering Yangki intruded into the victim's house and battered her, which damaged her neck, and she could not recover even after a year.

Tshering Yangki claimed that the SC should verify the legality of freelance journalist Namgay Zam's one-sided



► Supreme Court

story on social media that supported the victim.

She claimed that the post had mentally affected her and her family. "Namgay Zam should write stories by attending court hearings like Kuensel and the Bhutan Broadcast-

ing Service Ltd, but she wrote the story by contacting the victim over the phone."

She also questioned if Namgay Zam and the victim's daughter could crowdfund through social media.

But the SC dismissed

her claims, stating that such matters have to be dealt with by relevant ministries and departments based on their rules and regulations, and that issue is not related to the battery and trespassing case.

Corruption: hurdle to change and progress

The scale and impact of the corruption cases the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) is investigating in Phuentsholing is evident in its report. Even as they continue investigating a nexus of corrupt activities in the border town, the anti-graft commission seem to have lost hope for the major transformation that the nation and its leaders are hoping for when we exit the pandemic.

The commission is convinced, even without completing the investigation, that ground realities, if not changed, would not only be the bottleneck to our hopes for major changes post Covid-19 pandemic, but also a grim reminder of where we are heading.

ACC is an investigating and prosecuting agency. Its remarks indicate the seriousness of the issue. Corruption is not new to Bhutan. But the fact that officials and people entrusted to ease the burden during a pandemic had misused authority, bribed or received bribes and let people evade tax is hard to digest.

Since the border gates were sealed, all focus was on saving lives and livelihoods. Fiscal and monetary policies were rolled out to help people ease the burden of the pandemic and thereby on the economy. Royal Kidus were granted without differentiating people and His Majesty The King had led the fight against the pandemic providing hope and inspirations that we will come out of this pandemic unscathed.

It happened at a time when the country needed revenue to fund the escalating cost brought by the pandemic. The bribery cases that led to leakage in revenue to the tune of millions of Ngultrums is a case of sheer betrayal. The mini dry port was converted to a one-stop centre for transshipment of cargo, facilitating trade and for efficient tax collection. What happened was it became a centre of extortion, bribery and tax evasion as officials and workers saw loopholes and made the most of it.

Many say that what the ACC found is only the tip of the iceberg or that it is nothing new. On a positive note, the pandemic has brought this into the open. What the ACC investigations confirmed is what had been happening all these years. Allegations of under-valuing goods or bribing tax inspectors are common tricks to evade taxes. It happens to the extent that traders or business people budget what is called a “non-harassment tax” when they calculate their profit. The non-harassment tax is basically a bribe to officials.

Once the ACC completes its investigations, those found guilty would be taken to task. What we can learn from this is that we know the weaknesses in our system. An active ACC may not be enough. Today, our systems are obstructing rather than facilitating ACC investigations. And, given the usual sensitivities of our small society, many of us accept rather than confront such decisions.

Investigators are already seeing a new challenge as they expose more and more people. If those being investigated use their “networks” to interfere in the investigations, we are not helping ourselves. The ACC had warned that those trying to interfere and “frustrate the investigation will face rigorous examination and will not be spared from legal consequences.” What we need today is cooperation to help strengthen our systems including fixing accountability.

The loopholes are many and this is an opportunity to plug them.

MY COUNTRY, MY TOWN



Atypical plant pots: Tyres, a tub and what looks like a casserole of sorts, all seem to serve the purpose admirably Photo: Phuntsho, Thimphu

Send in your pictures to: formcmt@gmail.com

Government must help to establish worker's association in Bhutan

Right to wages as agreed in the contract of employment is the basic right of every worker under Section 118 of the Labour Act 2007. Violation is liable for a fine at the rate of the Daily Minimum National Wage Rate to a maximum of 90 days. Yet the recent news of our young workers not paid for months after working in construction says otherwise. The news states that “the workers did not receive their wages on time” even after lodging complaints. Further, the workers could not go to the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (MoLHR) to complain because “complaining consumes a lot of time and workers had to work to survive.” Further, workers also raised their doubt as to whether the government would even help them considering their employers are powerful and influential. Thus, establishing worker's associations may address such issues much faster and more efficiently. Further, workers will trust their association more than the government.

Section 176 of the Act gives the right to form a worker's association if that enterprise or business or employer employs twelve or more workers. The formation of such association is aimed at representing the employees concerned in any matter affecting their rights and interests arising out of their

employment and to ensure the worker's right to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement with the employer relating to the terms and conditions of employment.

However, even after 14 long years since the enactment of this law, there is not a single worker's association in the country and workers continue to suffer at the whims and fancies of the employers. In many instances, workers won't be able to raise their grievances because an individual worker faces more challenges in raising their voice especially when the time is of essence to the worker.

If worker's associations are formed, one of the immediate positive impacts would be the ability to exercise “collective bargaining.” International Labour Organization describes collective bargaining as fundamental to “establish fair wages and working conditions.” It states that collective bargaining generally “includes wages, working time, training, occupational health and safety and equal treatment.” Through collective bargaining, it will also help address numerous issues, rights, and responsibilities of both the employers and employees in a harmonious and amicable means.

With the Covid-19 pandemic hitting hard on the entire sector across the globe, many Bhutanese have returned and

joined the Bhutanese labour market. Thousands of Indian labourers leaving Bhutan created immediate opportunities for our young Bhutanese in the construction sector though it is a physically strenuous job because of the promise of good pay and allowances. But that same promises are shattering their lives gradually possibly setting an alarm to the rest of the youth not to join this sector.

If we must encourage more young Bhutanese in these sectors and retain those who are already there, protection of worker's rights needs better support and attention from the state. Though no worker's associations are formed in Bhutan, on a few occasions including during the lockdown period in Punatsangchhu, the Indian workers held a peaceful protest to protect their rights. The time has come that the MoLHR must now come up with comprehensive rules on the formation of associations. The government must help establish a few associations initially and promote the associations. The merits of establishing worker's associations in the country far outweigh demerits.

Sonam Tshering
Lawyer, Thimphu

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are author's own.

Vehicle scam raises more questions

Phurpa Lhamo

As 27 retrieved vehicles remain parked in front of the Punakha district court, vehicle owners and the buyers who fell victim to a scam are worried about loan repayments.

Almost all of the vehicle owners have loans, which they had been paying with the income from hiring out the vehicles. No one is sure whether the vehicles will ultimately be returned.

Will the buyers be reimbursed the money paid to the suspects? Will a maintenance fee for the vehicles be returned? These are just some of the questions.

One of the vehicle owners, Kinley Dorji, said that after his vehicle was taken by one of the suspects in July, he received about 45 days' worth of the hiring charge. Without the vehicle, he currently has no source of income. "I haven't made the loan payment for this month."

Since the case was first

reported on September 22, Punakha police have retrieved 27 vehicles and completed the investigation. The police have detained five suspects: one man and four women.

Twenty-four cases were filed against the five suspects. The cases were forwarded to the Office of Attorney General (OAG) on October 25.

Another vehicle owner, Tshering Tobgay, said that his Bolero pickup truck was in terrible condition and would require maintenance.

He added that many owners had trusted the suspects, as they claimed that the vehicles would be used for delivering goods for de-suups.

Among the many buyers who fell victim to the scam, Jit Bahadur Powdel Chhetri, availed a Nu 500,000 loan to buy a single cabin Bolero pickup. The vehicle, bought for his son to transport goods in Dagana, was seized after the case was reported to Punakha police.

He said that without an income now, he wasn't sure how he would pay the monthly installment of Nu 9,900.

Trusting and verifying legal documents

Out of the 27 vehicle owners scammed, one has the vehicle's ownership transferred to a third party as part of the scam.

A vehicle owner, Phurba, said that when his vehicle, which was hired by one of the suspects, wasn't returned as agreed, he suspected something wrong and visited the Road Safety and Transport Authority of Bhutan (RSTA) to check the vehicle ownership. "I found that the ownership was changed online to a woman."

Section 26 of the Road Safety and Transport Regulations 1999 states that a transfer of vehicle ownership should be accompanied by a deed of sale that includes the sale price of the vehicle and the sig-

nature of the seller and buyer, signed across a legal stamp by both the parties and a witness from each party; the registration certificate for the vehicle; and credit Information Bureau (CIB) to provide access to the system for online verification of hypothecation status by the Authority.

RSTA's chief transport officer, Sithar Dorji, said that RSTA wouldn't deny vehicle ownership transfer if the buyers and sellers submit the required documents, including legally produced sale deeds.

He added that the transfer made in the case was done after verifying all required documents.

Reportedly, some of the sale deeds made between the suspects and new buyers were also accompanied by a certified search report from the Royal Monetary Authority.

Phurba said that she shared a photocopy of his identity card on WeChat with one of the suspects. "She said that she

needed the details of my documents to receive payment after completing her deliveries. So I shared a copy with her."

Of the 27 vehicles retrieved by the police, there were only three that hadn't been sold to a third party by the scammers.

As cases unfolded in Punakha and number of the scammed vehicle owners increased, it was found that many of the vehicles had been sold to several individuals by forging signatures on the sale deeds.

Many were sold online via social media platforms.

According to a vehicle owner, the scammers prepared agreements before taking the vehicles. Terms and conditions, he said, ensured that the vehicles would be maintained and the owners would receive a refund in case of an accident.

A Nu 35,000 hiring charge for a month was also paid to vehicle owners before the vehicles were taken.

Kidney patients in Paro avail free bus service

.. a philanthropist pledges to provide them with a dialysis machine

Phub Dem | Paro

For Tshering Tobgay in Paro, seeing his neighbour struggling with a kidney problem and having to travel to Thimphu for dialysis during the first nationwide lockdown moved him to act.

Tshering Tobgay, the proprietor of Metta Resort, decided to procure a dialysis machine and set up a home-like dialysis unit at Paro hospital, if provided with infrastructure and technical experts. However, the pandemic delayed the import of the machine.

While waiting to import the machine, he is providing free transportation to the kidney patients residing in Paro.

Tshering Tobgay said that the patients and attendants had to bear the high cost to travel to Thimphu for dialysis. "I hope to procure the machines and establish a unit in consultation with the hospital and Bhutan Kidney Foundation (BKF) as soon as possible."

He added that the bus service would continue even



► Patients and their attendants board the bus to Thimphu

after contributing a dialysis machine.

For those with kidney problems, access to dialysis treatment is not an issue, but reaching the treatment unit on time and travel costs are.

Kinzang Wangchuk, 37 from Satsham, started his dialysis programme in 2018 and usually commutes by bus. When he misses the bus, he takes a taxi, which costs Nu

1,000 and Nu 1,500 per trip. He said that there were about 16 of them in Paro facing similar challenges. "We are thankful to him for this generous support."

A patient attendant, Tshering, said that they spent more than Nu 17,000 a month, only on transportation. He said that recently his wife, a kidney patient, had to wait for three hours due to a roadblock near Chuzom, adding that she was

a debilitated patient and the risk was significant.

Recently, the BKF started a bus service for patients. However, according to the chief executive officer of the BKF, Tashi Namgay, the bus had to make four trips twice a week to pick up and drop off the patients. He said that such generous support from the businessman would benefit the foundation.

Highlighting the impor-

tance of timely treatment, he said, "They can survive because of the dialysis."

He said that more than 90 percent of the patients face difficulty acquiring transplant options, among other issues. The foundation paid the taxi fares for needy patients, but it was not sustainable.

He said that the foundation would facilitate discussion with the Ministry of Health regarding health specialists and infrastructure, as Tshering Tobgay showed interest in setting the machine up at Paro hospital. "This type of intervention will benefit the patients in Paro and nearby dzongkhags."

Considering the rising number of renal cases, he said there is a need for a dialysis machine in Paro, adding that many prefer to stay in Paro, considering the high home rental cost in Thimphu.

The number of kidney patients in the country has increased from eight cases in 1998 to 280 kidney patients today.

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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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National Pension and Provident Fund would like to announce the following vacancies:

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1	Security Guard	2	Samdrup Jongkhar	Nil. However, age should be 30 to 50 years old at the time of application.	5 years as armed forced personnel OR 10 years' experience as a security guard.	GSP	One-year contract and may be renewed based on need and performance till 2024 only.
		1	Thimphu				
2	Wet sweeper	1	Samdrup Jongkhar	nil	1 year of relevant work experience.	GSP	One-year contract and may be renewed based on need and performance.

Please visit www.nppf.org.bt for complete details.

NOTIFICATION

ROYAL MONETARY AUTHORITY OF BHUTAN



RMA/ADM-44/2021-2022/1781

The Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan would like to notify the Bhutanese importers that as per 'Section 24 & 25 of the Foreign Exchange Rules and Regulations 2020' (FERR 2020), importers executing advance payments against the import of goods from India and Countries other than India (COTI) are required to submit the documentary evidence (Customs Declaration Form) of goods having entered the country within 180 days from the time of executing the advance payments.

However, it has been observed that some of the importers are not complying with the existing provisions of the FERR 2020. Therefore, all the Bhutanese importers are hereby advised to submit documentary evidence of goods having entered the country within stipulated time to the authorized bank as mandated.

Violating the provisions of the FERR 2020 and other guidelines issued by the RMA shall be liable for penalties as per the 'Penalty Rules and Regulations 2019'.

For further clarification, please contact **Mr. Yeshey Dorji, Foreign Exchange Officer at 02-323111** at the Head office, Thimphu or **Mr. Chojay Wangdi, Sr. Foreign Exchange Officer** at the Regional Office, Phuentsholing at **05-253899** during office hours.

Management



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Rent: Office space available at Motithang near RUB. Contact 17727028.



- CLASSIFIED ADS - VACANCY

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Vacancy: Head cook, cook and two other staff for Hotel Taktshang Village view located at Drukgyel, Paro. Contact 17617627/ 17373215.

- CLASSIFIED ADS - OTHERS

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NU. PER UNITS OF FOREIGN CURRENCY as of yesterday

	NOTES	
	Buy	Sell
US \$	73.30	75.55
POUND	98.35	101.10
EURO	84.50	86.85
YEN (100)	64.30	66.10
HK \$	9.40	9.65
AUS \$	53.95	55.45
SING \$	54.10	55.60

Courtesy BNB

Sudoku

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			2					
3				4		5		
		1	7		3	9		
		4		8				1
					2			
	9		3			8		
1			4			2	9	7

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★☆

How to play

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3 X 3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

1	3	6	4	5	9	8	2	7
7	9	2	1	3	8	5	4	6
4	8	1	9	2	7	6	3	5
5	4	8	9	2	7	6	3	1
6	2	4	5	8	3	7	1	9
8	5	1	7	2	3	9	8	4
3	9	7	1	4	6	5	8	2
8	6	3	5	7	2	9	4	1
4	1	8	9	7	2	3	6	5
2	8	5	9	6	1	7	4	3
9	7	3	8	4	1	2	5	6

Answer

Kwik Xword

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
9								10						
								11						
12										13				
										14				
15								16					17	
								18						
19												20		21
												22		
23		24						25						
								26						
27												28		
29												30		

November 3, answers

Across: 1 Sparing, 5 Jupiter, 9 Calypso, 10 Meeting, 11 Usage, 12 Transpire, 13 By the book, 15 Sully, 16 Fleet, 18 Bad temper, 21 Guerrilla, 24 Tarot, 25 Tension, 26 Elation, 27 Relieve, 28 Askance.

Down: 1 Succumb, 2 At least, 3 Implement, 4 Gloat, 5 Jam-packed, 6 Press, 7 Trivial, 8 Roguery, 14 On balance, 15 Sweet talk, 16 Fighter, 17 Eternal, 19 Portion, 20 Retinue, 22 Raise, 23 Arena.

Quick CLUES

Across

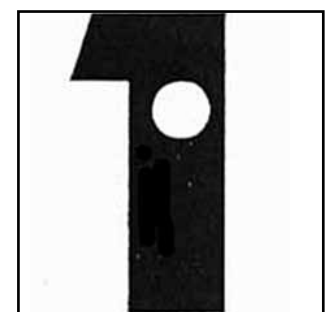
- 1 Give rise to (6)
- 4 Totally disorganized (3,2,3)
- 9 Clothes (6)
- 10 Matter to be discussed (8)
- 12 Well-to-do (8)
- 13 Without charge (6)
- 15 Practical joke (4)
- 16 Province of Canada (4,6)
- 19 Great painters of the past (3,7)
- 20 Platform for throne (4)
- 23 Worldwide (6)
- 25 Showing strong feeling (8)
- 27 Lacking confidence (8)
- 28 To reflect (6)
- 29 Become unkempt (2,2,4)
- 30 Grow less (6)

Down

- 1 Ruler of ancient Egypt (7)
- 2 Peremptorily (3,2,4)
- 3 Follow up (6)
- 5 Extol (4)
- 6 Theoretical (8)
- 7 Author of Gulliver's Travels (5)
- 8 Loss of memory (7)
- 11 Boorish (7)
- 14 Obstacle preventing access (7)
- 17 Considerably (2,1,6)
- 18 Capital of Syria (8)
- 19 Currently in progress (7)
- 21 Liberate (3,4)
- 22 Italian city (6)
- 24 Beginning (5)
- 26 Strong desire (4)

Solution on Tuesday

Rebus



hole in one

Health Capsule



DOES LONG-DISTANCE RUNNING HAVE CARDIO BENEFITS?



TO THE CONTRARY, LONG-DISTANCE RUNNING HAS BEEN SHOWN TO CAUSE PREMATURE AGING OF THE HEART, AS WELL AS ARRHYTHMIA PROBLEMS. LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS ARE NOW KNOWN TO HAVE AN INCREASED RISK OF CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE AND HEART ATTACKS.

BHUTAN 25 YEARS AGO

Denmark approves DKK 14.965 million to help develop the Bhutanese media



Nov 9, 1996: The Finance Secretary, Dasho Yeshey Zimba, and the Resident Coordinator of the Liaison Office of Denmark, Mr. Peter Mark, agreed that the Bhutanese media had an important role to play in the kingdom's development.

BC



Most former gups in Tsirang and Dagana recontesting

Choki Wangmo | Tsirang

The gewogs throughout Tsirang and Dagana have more aspiring candidates in the upcoming local government (LG) elections than in 2016.

Sources said that compared to the last LG election in 2016, the number of aspiring candidates at both the chiwog and gewog levels has increased by threefold.

Former Khebisa gup, Namgay, who is also recontesting in the upcoming election, said that Thomgang chiwog had only two gup candidates in 2016. "There are nine gup candidates this year from the chiwog."

Former Karmaling gup in Dagana, Gyan Bahadur Subba, said that there are six gup candidates in his chiwog. "This is a drastic increase from only one candidate in 2016."

In Tsirang's Mendrelgang gewog, one of the chiwogs has eight gup candidates.

Many in the locality are attributing the increased number of aspiring candidates to the disruption caused by the current pandemic, which rendered many jobless.

Some said that the LG post has become lucrative due to incentives and other opportunities.

Former Rangthangling gup, Bal Bahadur Tamang, said that people are now more aware of the importance of LG, so they are showing more interest. "The LG works closely with people and can bring meaningful impact. The government has also encouraged participation through the media."

He said that now, the pay is good too. "Before, when I joined LG service some three decades ago, the monthly income was Nu 100."

Former Sergithang gup Man Bir Rai said that not many realised the importance of LG in the past. "Now the public understands the importance of the LG. Even the number of people who are attending the dhamngoi zomdu has increased this



► Dhamngoi zomdu in progress in Gosarling gewog, Tsirang



► Dhamngoi zomdu started from Dorona gewog in Dagana

time compared to 2016."

It was learnt that most aspiring candidates are young.

With the exception of one gup who is still undecided, 11 former gups in Tsirang are recontesting in the upcoming elections. Similarly, except for one, 13 former gups are recontesting in Dagana.

Most of them said that the first term was just enough to gain experience, and they would need another term to complete the intended development work in their gewogs.

Some gups claimed they are contesting because the community members asked them to run again.

"The public has placed its trust in me for many terms. They want me to recontest," said a former gup in Tsirang who has served for 21 years.

Meanwhile, the dhamn-

goi zomdu in Tsirang started on November 5 from the four gewogs—Barshong, Gosarling, Tsholingkhar and Sergithang. According to the election officer, from the six

chiwogs, there were five gup candidates.

In Dagana, the dhamngoi zomdu started from Dorona gewog yesterday. The returning officer Tashi Dorji

LG post has become lucrative with incentives and other opportunities.

said that there was only one gup candidate from Dorona chiwog.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) has extended the last date for registration of postal ballot to November 10.

According to the ECB it was being done in order to facilitate higher postal ballot registration and to reduce crowding on the poll day. The commission stated that it is necessary given the current pandemic situation and to mitigate the risks of Covid-19 local transmission.

Interested registered voters can register for the postal ballot online through ECB's website or through this link: <https://berms.ecb.bt/postal/registration>.

For more information, contact ECB's toll-free number 2008 during office hours.



► The lone candidate for the post of Samdrupjongkhar thrompon from Samdrupgatshel demkhong, Thinley Namgay, 39, secured 57 Yes votes and six No votes during the dhamngoi zomdu yesterday. The former thrompon has not recontested after he completed his second term recently.

Green tax for green fund

A newspaper headline reads: “Bhutan does not have enough funds for climate change reduction, mitigation, and adaptation: Foreign Minister”.

Bhutan implemented green tax on motor vehicles and petroleum fuel in 2012 after the 9th session of the first parliament.

Green tax in the transportation sector is imposed based on the engine type and engine capacity of the vehicle. The vehicle with spark-ignition engine and cylinder capacity less than 1500cc, 1501-1799cc, 1800-2500cc, 2501 cc- 3000cc and more than 3000 cc are imposed green of 10 percent, 15 percent, 20 percent, 25 percent, and more than 30 percent, respectively. Vehicle with both spark and electric motor ignition engine type is charged 5 percent less green tax in each category of cylinder capacity. Vehicles with electric motor ignition and are electrically operated are exempted of the green tax. With this, 5 percent tax is also imposed on fuel, including both diesel and petrol.

The primary aim of the green tax was to reduce import of fossil fuel-based vehicles, promote electric vehicles, and ultimately reduce vehicular emissions. Economically, green tax has two advantages, called double dividend, one for the benefit of economic growth and other for environmental protection. The latter is conceptualised on internalising the cost of pollution by fixing accountability of vehicle-based atmospheric pollution on a vehicle owner.

Trend of vehicle import

The data from the National Statistics Bureau of Bhutan shows import is increasing by 9.2 percent annually – roughly about 9,000 new vehicles plying on Bhutanese roads every year. Out of these, less than 200 are electric vehicles, a paltry 2.2 percent. The rest are fuel based. However, the introduction of green tax with specific goals to promote



electric vehicles and reduce fuel-based vehicles seems to have had no noticeable positive effect on reduction of vehicular emission.

Impact and pricing nexus

Although green tax is imposed on vehicle ownership, economic growth per capita is the main factor that drives the purchase of vehicles. Lifestyle change, improvement of livelihood and living standards, and limited alternatives for electric vehicles only encourage buyers of fuel-based vehicles.

Green tax is imposed only once, during the purchase of the vehicle based on engine type and capacity. However, if we are to take an account of “impact versus pricing”, the monetisation of the impact from pollution would be higher than the tax imposed. For instance, the price of an Alto car with a motor engine capacity less than 1,500cc is Nu 500,000. Imposing 10 percent green tax is just paying about Nu 50,000. But would this make up for the cost of pollution, its impact on human health, and the increase in need for carbon sink throughout the working life of the vehicle?

Green tax based on engine type and engine capacity is clear and simple. However, options are wide too. If the point is to pay for the price of the emission, we need to consider factors

for emissions. The current pricing is not on contributing factors for emissions, but merely on one-time purchase of vehicle.

This concept looks, at times, like a reason for a social disparity because taxis would obviously travel more than other vehicles. However, with a proper policy and practical solutions such as putting up fast and available charging stations would encourage the shift to electric vehicles.

The pricing based on the emission factors would be more reliable, although it is not accurate and precise matrix to calculate the impact. Moreover, tax based on travel coverage – one factor for emission – discourages people from commuting short distances like between office to house and back. This not only helps in reducing traffic congestion and emission reduction, but also promotes healthy lifestyles. The emission from a vehicle can be estimated by the amount of the fuel it consumes. The data can be digitally archived at the fuel recharging stations.

Emissions from transport sector

In 2015, the major emission sources in Bhutan were energy, industrial process and product use, waste, and land use related emissions from forestry and agriculture (AFOLU). Without

rank followed by the energy sector.

Transportation, which includes both road and air, contributed the highest emission of 60.01 percent from the energy sector. The Department of Renewable Energy, MoFA, reported that in 2015, a higher amount of fuel was consumed by buses, taxis, and trucks. This shows that emissions are higher from those categories of vehicles.

Green fund from green tax

In European countries, green funds that stem from environmental taxes are implemented as a major environmental policy. They earmark the income generated from environmental taxes as a separate green fund for other environmental schemes. They, for instance, invest in clean technology and promote energy-saving equipment. This means that they do not have to designate a share from the general fund of the country to invest in environmental plans and activities.

In Bhutan, despite no clear accountability of funds from green tax, appropriate investment is lacking. We could venture into the idea of earmarking income from green tax into a green fund. The green fund will be invested in environmental activities such as risk reduction, mitigation, and adaptation strategies to climate change. For instance, poor road conditions and traffic congestions also significantly contribute to emissions from the transportation sector.

Taking the recent case of erratic rainfall damaging the paddy into account, we could use funds from green tax to insure farmers.

Green tax is one story in Bhutan. We have other stories where environmental fees that we collect from fines for breaching the rules could be invested into environmental plans.

Contributed by
Chandra Man Rai
chandramanrai@gmail.com

... vehicle import is increasing by 9.2 percent annually – roughly about 9,000 new vehicles plying on Bhutanese roads every year.

removal of emission i.e. not considering sink capacity of forest, AFOLU accounts for the highest emission at 57.2 percent of total emission. The industrial process and product use accounts for 20.88 percent of total emissions, followed by the energy sector with 18.56 percent, and waste accounting for 3.32 percent of total emission. However, considering the carbon sink capacity of forests, the emission from industry would top the

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PAGE 10

Saturday, November 6, 2021 | KUENSEL



INVITATION FOR BIDS

PHUENTSHOLING THROMDE

Post Code 21101, Post Box No. 02, Pelhill Lam

PT/ID-1/2021-2022/01696

Sl. No	Name of Works	Contract Class	Bid Security (Nu.)	Pre-bid meeting date and time as per e-GP	Closing date and time as per e-GP	Bid opening as date & time as per e-GP
1	Civil preparatory works for the construction of a fully self-contained permanent Quarantine Center at Amochu, Phuentsholing Tender ID No.9969	(Large, W3)	2.30 million	12/11/2021 at 10.00 AM	19/11/2021 at 9.30 AM	19/11/2021 at 10.30 AM

The interested eligible Bhutanese Contractors registered with CDB holding valid trade license may participate for the above works through website www.egp.gov.bt. W.e.f **5th November 2021**. The bidders are encouraged to visit e-GP website regularly for any additional information or changes made in connection with this bidding process.

Executive Secretary

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

BHUTAN SILICON METAL PVT. LTD.

Bhutan Silicon Metal Pvt. Ltd is pleased to announce the vacancy for the following posts for immediate recruitment:

Position	Slot	Qualification	Experience Requirement
Civil Engineer	01	BE in Civil Engineering/ Diploma in Civil Engineering	Degree candidate must have working experience at least 4 years & above. Diploma holder must have working experience of 7 years & above. • Drawing & Design • Estimation & Costing • Drawing interpret • Materials inspection/ Quality Assurance/ Quality control. • Building (Bhutanese) & Road. • Field layout & execution etc. • Basic survey knowledge.
Electrician/ Technician	04	TTI/ NC-1, 2 & 3	Work experience of 1-2 years. Fresher can apply for the position. Non TTI who have industrial experience in electrical department can also apply.
Fitter & Welder	3+3	TTI/ NC-1, 2 & 3	Work experience of 1-2 Years. Fresher can also apply for the position. Non TTI who have industrial experience in mechanical department can also apply.

Please note that the salary is negotiable based on the experience and qualification. Interested applicants may submit the job application along with CV and documents to HR/Admin department during Office hours or mail it to bsmplhr@gmail.com before **November 17, 2021**. For further information contact HRO at **77319381** during office hours.

Management

ANNOUNCEMENT



BHUTAN DEVELOPMENT BANK LIMITED

BDB/HRM-11/2021/

BDB is pleased to announce the date and venue for the conduct of VIVA for the various position announced earlier in print and broadcast media.

For detailed information, please visit the Bank's website: www.bdb.bt

Management

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

MEDIA COUNCIL OF BHUTAN Thimphu

MCB/Adm-01/2021-22/270

The Media Council of Bhutan is pleased to invite proposals from eligible Bhutanese firms for the revision of the **Code of Ethics for Journalists**.

The bid must be submitted latest by **November 12, 2021 before 3:00 pm** BST via eGP system (www.egp.gov.bt)

For any clarification, kindly email at gyangzom@mediacouncil.gov.bt or contact us at **02-331347/48** during office hours.

Media Council of Bhutan



INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

BHUTAN DEVELOPMENT BANK LIMITED

Bhutan Development Bank Limited (BDB) is pleased to re-announce the Invitation for Expression of Interest (EOI) from interested land/plot owners for the sale of land at Gelephu. The last date for submission of the required documents has been extended to **November 23, 2021**.

Please visit our BDB website www.bdb.bt for detailed information.

Administration Division

KUENSEL would like to request all our valued clients to mention the bill number against which you are making the payments in the **particulars column** in your e-payment instruction voucher and similarly in the deposit slip for over the counter deposits, and kindly mail the payment instructions/deposit slip to revenueofficer@kuensel.bt

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT



BHUTAN TELECOM LIMITED

BTL/Mkt-01/2021/

Bhutan Telecom Limited is pleased to announce the vacancy for **1 Security Guard and 1 ESP**. Therefore, interested and eligible applicants may submit your application with the job application form and all required documents latest by **November 19, 2021 before 1700 hours**.

For details, please visit www.bt.bt or contact Regional Director, South Western Region at **02343434 Ext. (7004)** and Regional Director Central Region at **02343434 Ext. (6002)**.

ANNOUNCEMENT

ORGANIZATION FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

OYE/16/2021/320

Organization for Youth Empowerment, Thimphu is pleased to announce the advanced training on Buddhist Iconography for 25 slots for duration of 3 months. Interested candidates with minimum qualification of class XII are eligible to apply.

Registration ends by **November 15, 2021 at 5 pm**. For further information visit www.bhutanoye.org or contact at **02-328470/17745995**.

Executive Director

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

THIMPHU TECHPARK

TTPL/HRA-05/2021/528

Thimphu TechPark Limited, a DHI owned company, invites applications for the following positions:

Positions	Slot
General Manager, Finance Division	1
Software Developer, BITS Project	1
Program Manager	1
EDP Trainer	1

For further information, please visit at www.thimphutechpark.bt

Chief Executive Officer

TIME EXTENSION

KHOLONGCHHU HYDRO ENERGY LIMITED

A Joint Venture of Druk Green (Bhutan) & SJVN (India)
Incorporated under the Company's Act of Kingdom of Bhutan, 2000.

Kholongchhu Hydro Electric Project (600 MW)

04/KHEL/P&C/NIT/2021/5549

Time Extension for Invitation of Bid (IFB) for Procurement of Lighting Accessories and Fittings

With reference to our enquiry No. 04/KHEL/P&C/NIQ/2021/5218 dated October 5, 2021 for "Procurement of Lighting Accessories and Fittings" to Kholongchhu Hydro Energy Limited (KHEL), Tashiyangtshe, the last date of submission is hereby extended till **November 19, 2021**. The quotation should be received by undersigned on or before **November 19, 2021 up to 10:30 AM (BST)** and will be opened on the same day at **11:00 AM (BST)**.

All other entries, terms and conditions of the above quotation shall remain unchanged.

Chief (Procurement & Contracts)



STATE MINING CORPORATION LIMITED

SMCL/HRAD/PROC-01/2021/01

State Mining Corporation Limited, Samtse invites sealed bids for following:

1	Name of work	Supply and delivery of office supplies, lavatory items and safety gadgets
2	Earnest money deposit	Nu. 50,000.00 (Fifty thousand only)
3	Availability of bid document	November 6 to 22, 2021
4	Last date of submission of bid & opening	November 22, 2021 at 10:00 hrs & shall be opened on same day at 10:30 hrs in conference hall, SMCL

Complete sets of bidding document can be downloaded from website (www.smcl.bt) at free of cost. For further information, contact Procurement (Manager) at **05-365887** during office hours and at **+975-17743273** during office hours/holidays.

Management

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Love, hate and tragedy: A three-part history of Bhutan-Cooch relations

Part 2: The middle period of neighbourly contestations

Bhutan enjoyed a historical relationship with Cooch Behar that predated the founding of the Bhutanese state by Zhabdrung Rinpoche who consolidated and promoted this relation. Successive Maharajahs of Cooch Behar offered their sovereign recognition to Zhabdrung's newfound state.

However, everyday interactions, particularly along the long fluid border, was often fractious. As well as trade, there were invariably border disputes including the involvement of the Bhutanese in raids often for livestock, gold, coins, jewels, and most importantly, slaves.

In 1700, the Bhutanese had been called to Sikkim to assist Pendiongm (Phende Wangmo) the half-sister of the Chogyal of Sikkim in overthrowing her brother. The Deb Raja of Bhutan (the 5th Desi Gedun Chopel, r. 1694-1701) sent a force that overran Sikkim. The Bhutanese stayed in Sikkim for six years before the exiled Chogyal Chadhor Namgyel (1686-1717) returned from Tibet. The Bhutanese retreated but still maintained substantial land tracts.

The historical archives from Bhutan make only passing reference to Bhutan's forceful expeditions into neighbouring territories as they were predominantly concerned with hagiographic descriptions of spiritual leaders. However, more reliable accounts of its forceful conduct of foreign affairs, particularly during the reigns of strongman lay rulers like the fifth and sixteenth Desis, have been recorded in the annals of the neighbouring countries as well as in British records.

Throughout the 18th century, the route through Bhutan and the Chumbi valley continued to gain significance when the rising Gurkha power in Nepal blocked the passes through Morung and Demising.

Bhutan's trade in the plains extended to Rangpur and annual Bhutanese

caravans to that place were already ancient custom. Further, the Bhutanese had gained control of large parts of the western Duars, which traditionally belonged to Koch chieftains before attempting an outright annexation of Cooch Behar.

In around 1770, the capital of the Limbu kingdom, Vijaypur, which was under Bhutanese suzerainty failed to pay its annual tribute. Therefore, Cooch Behar aligned with its suzerain power, Bhutan, and the joined forces invaded Vijayapur and killed its ruler, Kamadatta Sen. They installed the Prime Minister Buddhi Karna Raya Khebang as the next king.

Meanwhile, in Cooch Behar, Debendra Narayan, the cousin of Dhairjendra Narayan (the king who joined the Bhutanese expedition to Vijaypur), was ill-treated and eventually assassinated by the Maharajah of Cooch Behar. The Bhutanese strongman, Deb Zhidar, intervened and took Dhairjendra and his son as captive to Buxa in 1770 installing Rajendra Narayan, a royal relative, as a nominal ruler.

Bhutanese interventions in the royal household affairs were an ongoing reality in Cooch Behar from the end of the seventeenth century onwards. The Bhutanese professedly took side of the Mahi Narayan line as the legitimate royal line of Cooch Behar against rival claimants.

By this time, Cooch Behar was virtually controlled through the Bhutanese frontier official called Pagsam Drungpa (Buxa Subba in British record). However, this particular incident set in motion a train of events which precipitated the first Anglo-Bhutan war (1772 - 1774).

Formal relations between the East India Company and Bhutan originated with the expedition sent in 1773 for the relief of the Raja of Cooch Behar, who had appealed for help against the Bhutanese who contin-

ued to raid and take hostage their people, livestock and jewels. Captain Jones won the battle of Cooch Behar and the Bhutanese were driven out although they continued in the Duars till 1774.

Through the intermediation of the 6th Panchen Lama (1738-1780) who was then the regent of Tibet, the Anglo-Bhutan peace treaty was signed with mutually favourable terms on 25 April 1774 formalising the Anglo-Bhutan relations.

The treaty kindled Warren Hastings's (the first Governor General of Bengal, r. 1772-1785) imagination of the prospect of commercial relations with Tibet through Bhutan. The Anglo-Bhutan treaty of 1774 secured the northern frontier of Bengal against Bhutanese incursions.

The political acumen of Warren Hastings's policy toward Bhutan is unsurpassed in the annals of Northeastern frontier of India. George Bogle led the first British mission to Bhutan and Tibet for a commercial reconnaissance. Bogle's report from Tashichhodzong dated 11 October 1774 records the first ethnographic details of everyday life in Bhutan as well as the country's political and economic structures. Bogle advocated for preferential treatment towards the Bhutanese, and led to the establishment of dedicated trade and other facilities for Bhutanese citizens in Indian territories.

In 1815, Babu Krishnakanta Bose and Rammohan Roy were sent to Bhutan by David Scott. Krishnakanta Bose undertook the journey ostensibly to settle boundary disputes between Cooch Behar and Bhutan. His impressively extensive account of Bhutan was translated into English by David Scott.

The British conquest of Assam (1826) projected Bhutan as a major factor affecting the Northeast frontier. For the first time, the Bhutanese hierarchy became apprehensive of British intentions.

Pemberton's mission of 1838 to Bhutan was a political fiasco only less dramatic than the later mission under Ashley Eden (1864). The Court of Directors admitted its failure though they recommended it for the collection of "valuable miscellaneous information". In his report, Pemberton recommended the attachment of the Assam Duars. He thought it perfectly practicable either to open a dialogue with the Tibetan authorities or to dictate terms to the Bhutan government "as long as the Duars continued attached".

The opposition of the Trongsa Penlop frustrated the plan for a formal treaty with Bhutan. The idea of placing a British representative in Bhutan was given up. The pervading distrust and jealousy in Bhutan ruined hope of securing the cooperation of the Bhutanese hierarchy in reopening communication with Tibet.

In fact, the fate of Cooch Behar after 1772, the territorial losses sustained by Nepal and Sikkim in 1816 and 1817, and the annexation of Assam in 1826 had deeply disturbed the Bhutanese mind. The Bhutanese officials on the border from the Penlop down to the Zinkaff (Zingarps, minor court officials) rested in a manner which British officials described as delinquency. But the ceaseless disturbances on the Cooch-Bhutan frontier were the result of their fear of British intentions.

After 1850, there were new men with new ideas, most of which were either indifferent or inimical to the tradition of appeasement towards Bhutan. When Major Jenkins became in charge of the Bhutan frontier in 1851, he recommended that "there ought to be no interference unless we are called upon to settle a dispute and then only as to the particular case in question".

The policy was dangerous since it did not envisage a settlement of the entire boundary through negotiations with the Bhutanese

authority, central or local. In fact, the idea of negotiations receded and the idea of retaliation against Bhutan gained ground. This in turn led to more wars and annexations.

The failure of Ashley Eden's mission to Bhutan in 1864 directly led to the outbreak of the famous Duar war. The unpublished correspondence of Sir John Lawrence, the Viceroy of India (1864-1869) and Sir Charles S. Wood, the Secretary of State, reveal the strategy of economic blockage enforced against Bhutan. It was eminently successful. The Paro Penlop and the leaders in western Bhutan who monopolised the lucrative trade with Cooch Behar and the plains became apprehensive.

Bhutan accepted the terms offered by Col. Herbert Bruce at Sinchula. By the Treaty of Sinchula signed on 11 November 1865, Bhutan surrendered the Eighteen Duars bordering the districts of Rangpur, Cooch Behar and Assam, and accepted the principle of free trade although the way to Tibet was still closed.

The principal conditions dealt with the surrender all British subjects, and all subjects of Cooch Behar and Sikkim detained in Bhutan against their will; and maintaining free trade and allowing the arbitration by the Government of India of all disputes between the Bhutan Government and the Chiefs of Cooch Behar and Sikkim. Thus, Bhutan's relation with Sikkim and Cooch Behar became formalised and arbitrated by the British.

The Government of India used gun salutes to indicate the relative status of a state. In June 1911, Bhutan was granted a permanent salute of 15 guns, which was two more than was afforded to Cooch Behar.

Contributed by Julia Booth (University of Sydney) and Dendup Chopel (The Australian National University).



Deserted in the middle of Damphu town

Choki Wangmo | Tsirang

The Lam, Namgay Tenzin, said that when he was first posted to the temple about eight months ago, it was in dire need of renovation and maintenance. No one took responsibility for caring for the surroundings of the temple, even when Damphu town beautification was carried out. “The six-acre land the temple is located on was neglected by development. The streetlights in the area were damaged.”

He said that such conditions were the result of authorities more concerned with passing responsibilities back and forth among themselves. While the thromde said that the temple was under dzongkhag administration, the dzongkhag administration maintained it belonged to Tsirang Dratsang. The dratsang gave the responsibilities to the gewog, he said.

“But it is a gift from His Majesty The Fourth King to



Debveys inside Tharpachoeling Lhakhang before renovation

people. We should remember that,” he said.

Pandit Mani Karna Gautam said that the temple was built in the early 1970s by late Lyonpo Tamshing Jagar.

Since his appointment

as the pandit in 1992, except for minor maintenance, no major renovation has been carried out. “We proposed renovations to the dzongkhag administration many times.”

In the temple, both Hindu

and Buddhist sanctums are in need of renovation. The entrance of the Buddhist temple, to the right, houses choe-long-trul-sum statues. There are no religious instruments and no carpets on the floors.

The Lam said that through the support of donors, he has bought some carpets.

The conditions are no different in the Hindu side of the temple. The windows are damaged and paintings are flaking off the mud walls in which rats have made their homes.

A resident said that he volunteered to repaint the walls but it was against the rules set by the culture department. “There are people interested in supporting its renovation.”

Another resident said that the temple is crumbling without proper care and maintenance. “Such spiritual sanctuaries are supposed to help people relax and rejuvenate. The place looks cold and unwelcoming.”

Mani Karna Gautam remembers the place brimming with visitors.

Without caretakers, the lam and the pandit claim that they have to cut the grass,

clean the surroundings, and build minor structures such as drains.

“The temple area needs a major facelift, including meditation houses,” a resident said.

Another said: “There are cleaners and sweepers in the town but not in the temple. They carried out development work up to the temple gate and then neglected the temple area completely. It is shameful.”

The temple gets water only once a day.

“We get water at around midnight. If we want people to seek spiritual solace in the temple, we need such amenities,” Namgay Tenzin said.

One of the reasons for fewer visitors, some say, is the construction of lhakhangs and *mandirs* in gewogs. There are more than 24 lhakhangs and *mandirs* in 12 gewogs in Tsirang.

According to the Tsirang’s senior culture officer, Kelzang Jamtsho, the dzongkhag administration arranged wall painting and *debveys* maintenance at the lhakhang. He said that the tender for renovation was awarded to the contractors.



Some residents in the area were unaware of the eviction notice

Thromde yet to implement its notice on demolishing Olakha junkyard

Chhimi Dema

More than three months after Thimphu thromde issued an eviction notice asking landowners and business operators in the junkyard beside Olarongchu to demolish temporary structures built in the area, there is no sign that any action has been taken.

The place was initially identified as a site for an interstate bus terminal, but has become a junkyard of old cars.

According to the eviction notice issued on July 16, the temporary structures should be demolished within three months from the date of notice issue.

However, thromde officials said a few occupants requested a time extension, and the thromde is looking into the grievances.

Officials also said that negotiations were underway with a landowner who has not accepted the land compensation.

Meanwhile, many residing in the area do not know what is next for them. Some were not aware of the eviction notice when asked.

“We did not get any notice,” Mongar Singh Limbu said. He owns a scrap shop. “If the thromde wants us to move out, we will. We are grateful for the thromde letting us stay here for the past nine years.”

There are five scrap dealers in the area.

Pema Wangmo, 39, has lived in the area for the past 13 years with her three children and husband. Her husband drives a taxi on lease. She pays a rent of Nu 4,500.

“We live here because



Thimphu Thromde issued the eviction notice in July

we cannot afford to live in other areas. If we have to move out, I don’t know where I will take my family,” she said.

The scrap dealers said that identifying a new place to handle scrap would allow

them to continue their business.

The owner of the lubricant shop near the gas station, Jigme Jamtsho, said that he received the notice, but has not decided on where to go next. “I haven’t

even stocked the shop,” he said. “It is expensive to find a shop space in the workshop area. I don’t know what to do.”

He said that he had not heard about the extension of the deadline.

Bhutan to sign MoU with UK to employ Bhutanese nurses

Nima Wangdi

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) will sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the United Kingdom (UK) to provide employment to Bhutanese nurses.

Foreign minister Dr Tandin Dorji said this during the 'Fridays for Health' programme at the Ministry of Health (MoH) yesterday. "It is a good deal and countries like the UK, Australia, and Canada have requested nurses from us."

He said that Bhutan was facing an unemployment problem. "To solve this, we can train our young people as doctors, nurses, health professionals, physiotherapists, and technicians and send them to work."

He claimed that based on his long career in different hospitals in the country, Bhutanese as Buddhists are compassionate by nature. "The care and skills of our nurses are truly amazing."

Lyonpo Dr Tandi Dorji said that nurses could go to the UK and come back with skills after



► Lyonpo Dr Tandi Dorji speaks at the Fridays for Health event yesterday

working for three to five years. "This is the reason why we made a request with the Ministry of Health and removed science background requirements for those wanting to join GNM diploma courses."

He said that for those intending to pursue a bachelors degree, either a science background or diploma in health is

required. "People might worry about losing our nurses with this programme but we can set our own protocols. Those who have studied in private institutes and have no obligation to work for government hospitals can continue going abroad."

Explaining what the MoFA is doing for the health sector, Lyonpo said he requested that

institutes increase their intake, as jobs are practically guaranteed. "We will get the same deal with Australia and Canada."

Talking on the topic "Visioning the Health Sector in the Post-pandemic era" Lyonpo said private health practices should be allowed in the country. "People express their worry of losing doctors to private

hospitals and the breeding of illegal practices but a good monitoring system in place can prevent them."

He also said a private health practice from one room is unacceptable but at least at a hospital-level practice should be allowed. "The law requires a private hospital to be of a five-star standard."

Lyonpo said the Prime Minister has asked Druk Holding and Investments (DHI) to invest in a private hospital and run it. "Rather than giving hospital licence to individuals, it should be given to DHI which is a semi-government organization."

Meanwhile, 'Fridays for Health' is a programme that will take health officials beyond the four walls of their cubicles and create a free and open learning atmosphere, according to MoH officials.

The programme will be organized on one of the Fridays every month and there will be a speaker. It is being organized with support from the WHO Country Office.

Farmers earn income through the milk processing unit in Gasa

Phurpa Lhamo | Gasa

Members of the Khamoed Dairy Group in Gasa earned their first month's income after the October 2 installation of the milk processing unit.

According to the dairy group's chairperson, Damcho Wangchuk, 42 members received payment for supplying milk to the unit.

"The members received a minimum of Nu 1,500 and a maximum of Nu 16,000," he said.

The milk processing unit structure was built with budget support from the dzongkhag. The dzongkhag also provided equipment such as pasteurizers, a cooler, a display fridge, and deep freezers.

Damcho Wangchuk said that the unit currently produces yoghurt, local cheese, butter, buttermilk, and fresh milk.

He said that the products were supplied to the Bjishong

Central School in Gasa.

"Yogurt is produced twice a week for the school. Local cheese and butter is also supplied to the school."

While the unit sells cheese, butter, and milk in Gasa town, the demand for yoghurt is minimal. "About 100 cups of yoghurt a week have been enough for the people in Gasa, while the milk, butter and cheese haven't been enough," Damcho Wangchuk said.

The unit has the capacity to produce about 350 cups of yoghurt daily.

Damcho Wangchuk said that about 80 litres of milk were collected from farmers in Khamoed gewog, which was not enough. "We have discussed the concern with the dzongkhag livestock department and have requested that they encourage farmers to increase production."

Azha Pasa, an online platform, has also approached the



► The MPU in Khamoed gewog, Gasa was inaugurated last month (Photo: Gasa dzongkhag FB page)

group to market their products.

Looking to market the products in Thimphu, Damcho Wangchuk said they are

discussing the pricing.

Meanwhile, the unit has a problem availing yoghurt cups, which are imported from

India. "It takes time for the cups to reach here. Most houses are scattered, so transportation is also a challenge."

ACC investigation ...

From Pg 1

After the international border closed in March 2020, consignments entering Phuentsholing came through Bow Bazaar.

MDP has been designated as one of the self-containment areas. In each batch, 20 customs inspectors are placed at the MDP and truck parking on a monthly shift basis. They work in shifts every alternate day.

Importers have to register with the customs before entry. The registration officer sends the list of vehicles every evening to the Shift-In-charge for clearing on the following day. The importer is required to provide the vehicle number, clearing agent, along with invoices as an attachment. The Indian truck carrying the consignment is allowed to enter through Gate 1 and temporarily held in the holding area. The Shift-In-Charge forwards the invoices to the clearing agents to initiate the declaration process. Once the invoices are entered in the BACS, items are classified and the declaration form is printed, a temporary registration number is assigned for each declaration. The vehicle is then moved to the transshipment area where goods are unloaded from the Indian trucks and loaded into the Bhutanese trucks. Customs inspectors who are on physical inspection duty may or may not inspect the goods. Some transshipment and physical inspection take place in the truck parking. No transshipment is required for vehicles carrying single or homogenous commodities which are headed for warehouses under escort.

Upon completing the physical inspection stage, the importer is required to pay the assessed tax amount. The tax payment has to be deposited into SBA which will be verified by the revenue officer before issuing the money receipt and assigning a permanent registration number. For third-country import, the assessment and tax settlement are done at the regional customs office. For non-taxable items, the process ends with a customs official assigning the permanent registration number. Once the payment process is completed, the trucks are allowed to exit through gate 2. A form has to be sequentially endorsed and signed by the official sitting on temporary registration, physical inspection and revenue officer.

Rampant bribery

The commission's investigation

revealed the prevalence of bribery and extortionary practices mainly involving loaders and customs officials at the MDP. Loaders demanded money from importers more than the prescribed official rates. The demand went up if they came across contraband or prohibited items like tobacco, narcotics, plastic etc. a source said.

The source said that one time a group of loaders discovered tobacco products hidden inside the consignment belonging to a businessman. The loaders demanded Nu 100,000 but later negotiated for Nu 80,000. However, the man informally sought the assistance of a policeman to get back the money. Out of fear of being reported to the police, the loaders returned the money after the policeman's intervention but, in retribution, lodged a complaint against the man for importing tobacco. He was subsequently arrested by the police in June 2021 and is being charged in Phuentsholing drungkhag court.

Earlier attempts to break into the bribery racket were not so successful since the exchange of bribes and kickbacks were done in cash. However, during the pandemic period, the situation changed. The entry of goods became regulated and the transshipment process made importers difficult to evade declarations. As the border was closed and under stringent enforcement of Covid-19 protocols followed by intermittent lockdowns, cash transactions became difficult forcing businessmen to use mobile app and RTGS. Under the new normal, person to person interface in a containment area was practically not feasible and monetary transfers had to be routed through banks. Covering the tracks of one's misdeeds became difficult.

The source said that it is becoming clear that customs inspectors were involved in soliciting bribes from importers and suppliers in a more discreet way. They used social messaging app for surreptitious communication and to pass on bank account details where the money is to be deposited. To disguise the origin, they resorted to using bank accounts of acquaintances and business people to blend their money with normal business-related financial activities. They held their illicit fund in other people's accounts and either moved from one account to another or invested in commercial

activities or interest-bearing deposits held in the name of their relatives.

"The nexus is deep-seated, complex and exist in varied form. In general, bribe paying parties are mostly from across the border and often facilitated by a middleman (dalal) and clearing agents," the source said.

In most cases, the bribe payer and the receiver did not have direct contact. The bribe component is built in the cost of the goods and billed to the Bhutanese importers. In one consignment, the supplier calculated Nu 30,000 as 'customs setting' from smuggling in 60 bags of plastic which is a prohibited item. Some Custom inspectors had set up with some suppliers in India as well as some importers in Bhutan. In such cases, suppliers sent their consignments only when the relevant customs inspector was on duty, the information which would have been already relayed in advance. An importer dealing in supply of betel nuts and leaves, who is believed to have made fortune during the pandemic, sought to establish a link with customs officials as it was unpredictably and risky for him to bring undervalued or illegal consignments with an established setting with customs, according to the source.

Officials found evidence that showed that importers arrange with suppliers across the border to undervalue their invoice by 50 percent for declaration at the customs check post. Half of the tax evaded, sometimes even more went to the customs officials whereas the remaining half remained as a benefit to the importer.

It was found that the demand for bribes mainly comes from customs inspectors whose day's shift fell on physical inspection. The payments collected from parties are shared among themselves. However, the one who signs on the declaration forms takes a bigger cut for taking the risk.

Other suspected reasons for bribery are falsifying declaration i.e. understating quantity of higher tax items and vice versa; passing contraband items like tobacco and narcotics; arranging and certifying fake import documents for sending RTGS; facilitating the release of stranded consignments without imposing demurrage charges; assisting the movement of physical cash through the border and with-

holding of invoices from processing for declaration.

Corruption worsen during pandemic

Preliminary investigation revealed that two private individuals teamed up to venture on betel nuts supply business. They imported vegetables and doma using four licenses. Between 2020 and mid-September 2021, the combined value of betel nuts or leaves imported amounted to Nu 176.419 million which accounts for more than 56 percent of the total betel nut import through Phuentsholing. However, they were also involved in the smuggling of tobacco products hidden in vegetables and betel nut consignments as well as other fraudulent financial scams. They are also suspected to be sending cash collected

from selling tobacco to Jaigaon through some carriers. One of them was arrested for smuggling tobacco in June 2021 and is currently released on bail.

The duo established a link with certain customs officials and paid bribes ranging from Nu 11,000 to Nu 80,000 per instance. They paid bribes to evade 20 percent sales tax on half the value of betel nut consignment. They also evaded tax by falsifying the proportion of consignment between betel nut and betel leaves because of wide differences in tax rate which means they declared more quantity of items with lower tax rates or zero tax rate and vice versa when the reality was otherwise. The pattern of their travel showed that they cleared their consignment late in the evening when the MDP is about to close its business hour.



TOMORROW

Good Day

- to perform Lhabsang Thruesoel
- to build new monuments
- to consecrate
- to appease local deities
- to appoint to new post
- to learn astrology
- to shift house
- to enter into new house
- to start new business
- to marry and celebrate

- to hold good discussions
- to set up storage
- to sow seeds

Bad Day

- to take new born baby out of the house and celebrate birth

A good day for rituals (laza): those born in the dog year.

Generally a good day (sogza): those born in the sheep year.

NOVEMBER 8, MONDAY

Good Day

- to perform regular offerings

- to start new business
- to till and excavate land
- to venture into long journey

Bad Day

- to appoint new military leader
- to inaugurate military training
- to hand and take over office
- to learn astrology
- to roof house
- to shift house
- to marry

A good day for rituals (laza): those born in the snake and horse years.

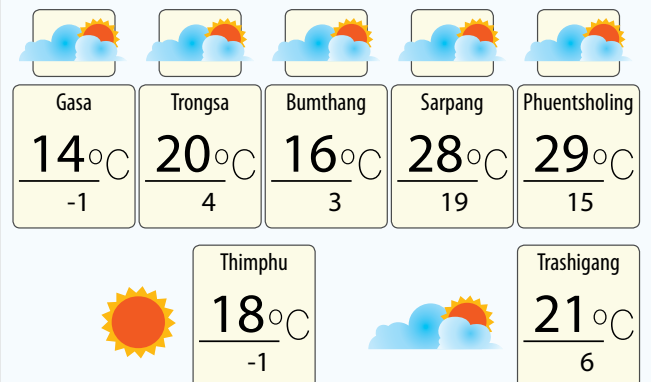
Generally a good day (sogza): those born in the rat and pig years.

A bad day (shedza): those born in the monkey and rooster years.

WEATHER

SUNRISE : 6:15am | SUNSET : 5:14pm

Time of issue: 4:00 PM, November 5, 2021



Source: National Center for Hydrology and Meteorology. For any weather information: Call hotline 335578

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- Deposit Tenure: Min. 1 year / Max. 20 years
- Loan available against Deposit

Simple Recurring Deposit

- Min. Monthly Installment: Nu.100
- Max. Monthly Installment: No Limit
- Interest calculated on month end balance
- Deposit Tenure: Min. 1 year / Max. 20 years
- Loan available against Deposit

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