9,590 govt employees fail to disclose property details

Himalayan News Service
Kathmandu, May 24

As many as 9,590 government employees have failed to submit their property details in the fiscal 2021-22. This accounts for 1.32 per cent of the total number of employees who were obliged to abide by the existing law.

According to the annual report (2021-22) recently submitted by the National Vigilance Centre to the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority, 719,157 out of a total of 728,747 employees had submitted their property details. The employees include all three levels of government. However, the number of government employees submitting their property details has increased by 0.89 per cent compared to the previous fiscal 2020-21, said the NVC, the anti-corruption watchdog under the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers.

Civil servants are required to submit their property details to the NVC through the Department of Civil Personnel Records. Nepali Army personnel are required to furnish the details to Army Record Office, police personnel to Police Record Management Department, school teachers to School Teacher Record Office and other persons holding public office to the concerned agencies.

The NVC said it had written to the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority, requesting the anti-graft body to initiate legal action against erring employees. As per the Prevention of Corruption Act, 2002, any person who joins public office is required to submit the updated statement of property in his/her or his/her family members' name along with sources or evidence thereof to the body prescribed by the government within 60 days from the date of joining such office and thereafter within 60 days from the date of completion of each fiscal year.

If the person does not submit the statement of property details within the extended time frame, he/she will be liable to a fine of Rs 5,000 and the concerned body or official may launch investigation into the property in his/her and his/her family members' names.

The NVC has introduced online system to ascertain the submission of property details by public post holders in accordance with the existing law.

RSS

Tourists seen in Futfute waterfall situated at Narchyang on the way to Annapurna Base Camp in Annapurna Rural Municipality, Myagdi, on Wednesday.

JSP-N chair Yadav pinpoints drawbacks of federalism

Himalayan News Service
Kathmandu, May 24

Janata Samajwadi Party-Nepal Chair and member of the House of Representatives Upendra Yadav has pointed out five shortcomings in the complete implementation of federalism.

Speaking in the discussion on policies and programmes in the meeting of the House of Representatives today, JSP-N Chair Yadav said government decision was flawed while naming the province. He argued that federalism would not be strengthened without correcting the drawbacks. "It is mentioned in point number 11 of the policies and programmes that federalism will be implemented, but without overcoming its shortcomings this cannot be possible," he said.

"The provinces have been named after rivers which lack the historical significance of sovereign Nepal. Should it be named on the basis of historical background and identity or not? Should it not be rectified? Have the provinces been able to exercise the rights stipulated in the schedule of the constitution?" he questioned.

He also questioned the transfer of security personnel to provincial governments. He argued that the situation of administration and employees had worsened by putting a brake on the Federal Civil Service Act. "How can federalism blossom if the provincial governments' jurisdictions are encroached by the federal level?" he asked.

He pointed out the seventeen places where the federal government has tried to encroach on provincial and local governments. "I think the central government has forgotten that we have federalism. The policies and programmes carries an anti-federal sentiment," he said.

Likewise, Nepali Congress leader and lawmaker Bimalendra Nidhi said the Citizenship Bill, which was pending in the President's office, should be approved by President Ramchandra Paudel immediately. Speaking at the zero-hour of the House of Representatives meeting, Nidhi claimed there were no constitutional and legal obstacles for President Paudel in certifying the bill.

Nidhi also urged the government to follow necessary procedures for the verification of the bill which was passed twice by the Federal Parliament. "We saw news in today's newspapers that there was a discussion between the president, prime minister and ministers about validating the Citizenship Bill," he said. "Advisers to the president are the prime minister and the Council of Ministers. Now the bill that was passed twice by the Parliament should not come back to the Parliament. It should be approved immediately," he said.

He also said approval of the bill passed by the Federal Parliament twice and sent by the president was in accordance with the constitution, and added that no consultation or discussion was necessary for that.

'Reduce trade deficit'

Rastriya Samachar Samiti
Kathmandu, May 24

Minister of Industry, Commerce and Supplies Ramesh Rijal has urged all to play their part with honesty to reduce the trade deficit.

Minister Rijal said so in a meeting related to 'Trade Deficit Reduction Action Plan and Implementation of Nepal Trade Integrated Strategy' organised at the ministry today.

Saying that policies are formulated in the country but are less implemented, and even the implemented policies have not given the desired results, he urged the sectors to play a supportive role in reducing the trade deficit.

"Success will be achieved in export trade promotion, trade deficit reduction and current situation of earning foreign exchange by running targeted activities with required resources as per the Nepal Trade Integrated Strategy, 2023," Minister Rijal said.

National Action Plan related to Trade Deficit Reduction was passed by the Cabinet on April 11 to address the increasing trade deficit. A Cabinet meeting held on May 9 had passed Nepal Trade Integrated Strategy, 2023.

· ONCE OVER

Public holiday

KATHMANDU: The government has announced a public holiday on Thursday in Kathmandu valley on the occasion of Bhoto Jatra, which marks the conclusion of the Rato Machhendranath Jatra. Thursday is set for exhibiting bhoto (a customary vest) of Rato Machhendranath to the public. Issuing a press notice, the Ministry of Home Affairs said there would be public holiday on Thursday on the occasion of Bhoto Jatra in three districts — Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur. The legendary bhoto is exhibited at Jawalakhel of Lalitpur each year during the festival. — RSS

Two girls drown

BANKE: Two girls drowned while swimming in the Rapti River in Banke on Tuesday evening. The deceased have been identified as Sharad Chaudhari, 29, and Sarita Chaudhary, 25. They drowned in the Sidhaniyaghat in Duduwa Rural Municipality on Tuesday evening. A group of six persons, including the deceased girls had reached the river banks for picnic. Sharad Chaudhari, 29, of Kohalpur Municipality and Sarita Chaudhary, 25, of Nepalgunj sub-metropolis, Koreanpur died while swimming in the river, said Spokesperson for District Police Office, Banke, DSP Ram Prasad Gharti Magar. — HNS

Leopard found dead

RAMECHHAP: A leopard was found dead in Sindurekhola of Manthali Municipality, Ramechhap, on Wednesday. Locals informed police after seeing the dead female leopard. Division Forest Officer Om Sagar Bhandari said the wild animal is 7 to 8 years old and has received injuries in the body. The dead leopard was buried in the presence of representatives of forest, police, and local people's representatives. — HNS

'Save Binu Yadav's life'

KATHMANDU: The National Human Rights Commission has urged the government to pay heed to save the life of Binu Yadav, who has been staging fast-onto-death for some days. Issuing a press release, NHRC Spokesperson Tikaram Bhattarai urged all sides concerned to pay heed to the health condition of agitating Yadav and proceed with legal measures to address her demands. "Yadav, a resident of Siraha Municipality, complained that she was raped by various persons and denied justice by government bodies. "Moreover, she was forced to withdraw the complaint she lodged," NHRC Spokesperson Bhattarai said, adding, "Yadav has been staging fast-onto-death at Maitighar Mandala in Kathmandu for two weeks. Her condition is deteriorating." The NHRC team reached the protest site to take stock of Yadav's situation. She has health-related problems which have been further exacerbated by the hunger strike, according to the rights body. — RSS

RSS

A view of the sunset seen from Chhireshwarnath Municipality in Dhanusha, on Wednesday.

Panchakunda, a glacial lake, beckons nature lovers

Rastriya Samachar Samiti
Beni, May 24

The Panchakunda Glacier Lake situated at Narchyang of Annapurna Rural Municipality in Myagdi district has a charm of its own.

The lake has been a favourite destination for those trekking up to the Annapurna Base Camp.

Situated at an altitude of 4,100 metres and lying on the lap of the Mt Annapurna, the glacial lake spans across 20,000 square metres in area. The turquoise coloured water in the Lake is enchanting for visitors.

Pradeep Pun of Annapurna Rural Municipality, who reached the ABC for the first time, shared that he was smitten by the beauty of the Lake in the foothills of Mt Annapurna (8,091 metres), the tenth highest mountain in the world. According to him, he felt that time went by quickly when he stood in awe of the vastness of the lake, the bizarre shape of glaciers, the colour of the water akin to the sky's colour, among others.

In winter, five different pools (Pancha Kunda) are visible in the Lake. The lake therefore acquired the name Pancha Kunda after this unique feature, shared Tej Gurung, a local tourism entrepreneur.

Earlier the Lake was named Dikicho. The locals later coined the word Pancha Kunda for the Lake based on the geographical shape, size and property, he added.

The Lake can be reached in a trek of a day or two from Narchang.

World's most ancient reptiles in serious trouble

Bal Krishna Sah
Kathmandu, May 24

The world's most ancient reptiles before the Dinosaur era are in serious trouble as endangered species, thanks to lack of conservation on the part of concerned authorities.

Turtles are known to have originated around 230 million years ago during the Triassic period. Multiple catastrophic mass extinctions had killed dinosaurs before they became extinct. However, the habitat and lives of ancient reptiles are in serious trouble due to human carelessness.

There are 360 species of turtles worldwide, while there are 17 species and 19 sub species of turtles in Nepal. Most turtles are found in the lowland or Tarai region of Nepal. However, the number of turtles is declining due to poaching.

Turtles play a significant role in balancing the aquatic ecosystem by consuming slow moving animals, snails and dead fish which help to maintain the water quality. But their habitats are becoming more vulnerable due to irresponsible human activities and climate change. According to the Turtle Conservation Fund, more than half of these species are threatened and nearly 75 per cent of them are on the verge of extinction due to increasing exploitation and ignorance of ecological roles and facts about the species.

In Nepali society, turtles are supposed to be a link between heaven and earth, making them naturally divine. Turtles are taken as religious symbols, good luck and fortune, protection and security, wisdom and knowledge.

From the perspective of religion, in Hinduism, the turtle is associated with Lord Vishnu, one of the principal deities, and symbolises stability, protection, and the cosmic ocean.

In Buddhism, turtles represent steadfastness and endurance, embodying the idea of a long and arduous journey towards enlightenment.

For Christians, the turtle is a symbol of an unclean spirit of combat, and evil.

In Sufism, the hatching and return of baby turtles to the sea is a symbol for returning to God through God's guidance.

However, the Tharu community has been found consuming it as meat. Likewise, they are also killed for their shell and bone and used as magico-religious amulets by faith healers.

According to Assistant Professor of PK Campus Chandra Mani Aryal, it is very difficult to fund small species like turtles while funds for animals like tigers, rhinos, and elephants are easily available, which is one the major causes of not having a lot of data on turtles. "Despite being an endangered species, the government has not paid enough attention to research and protection. Even the national parks and wildlife department have not conducted a separate programme for turtles," Aryal said, adding, "Chitwan's Kasara is regarded as a turtle breeding centre. But in terms of protection, it is very low." He said the government had not given priority to conservation of turtles. "The government's argument is that when big animals are protected in a large area, smaller ones will also be protected," he said, adding, "Turtles are not prioritised by the government. Turtles outside the protected area are very vulnerable." He said, "Although turtles are found in many places, it is difficult to find all species of turtles."

A survey conducted by Chitra Rekha Basyal in Morang has revealed that there are four species of critically endangered, seven endangered, three threatened, two vulnerable and three of least-concern species of turtles in Nepal. "People use turtle's eggs and flesh as a source of food. They also have religious importance and medicinal values. Likewise, they are used for decoration," researcher Basyal told *THT*. "Turtles adapt to artificial feeding despite being an elusive species," she said. "Three major factors that pose threat to turtles are illegal poaching, water pollution and casual killings in the course of fishing."

According to another researcher Pooja Poudel, lack of awareness and conservation efforts, their consumption as food, the false perception that they have medicinal value, and increasing trade in these species are putting them at the risk of extinction.

CORRIGENDUM

Please read the name in the caption of the photo published in the *The Himalayan Times* on 24 May 2023 as Prabhu Ram Sharma and not what was inadvertently printed. The error is regretted - ed

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

OFFICE	PHONE NO.
Police Control Room	100
Traffic Police Control Room	103
Fire Fighters	101
Traffic Jam Information (SMS)	JAM 4321
Emergency Police Service	4228435
Crime Information	4412748
Child Missing	104
Nepal Electricity Authority	4153164
Blood Bank, Pradarshani Marg	4225344
Nepal Red Cross Society, Teku	4270650
Bhaktapur Red Cross	6611661
Army Hospital	4271940
Bir Hospital	4221988
Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital	6611532
Chirayu National Hospital	5905888
Kanti Children Hospital	4411550
Norvic Hospital	4258554
Police Hospital	4412430
Patan Hospital	5522295
Om Hospital	4476225
Star Hospital, Sanepa	5550197
Teaching Hospital	4412505
Grande Hospital	5159266
Dr. Iwamura Memorial Hospital	6612695
Ishan Children and Women's Hospital	4959560
Tilganga Hospital	5970048
Nidan Hospital	9745619619
Hearse (Shav Vahan)	6612266