



TVET reform plan begins

Phurpa Lhamo

Topography studies of the technical training institutes for expansion, curriculum formulations, Training of Trainers (ToT) by master trainers from outside Bhutan and skills development programmes have begun as part of the Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) reform plan.

The plan was approved on July 27 this year.

According to the Director of labour ministry's department of technical education, Norbu Wangchuk, the ongoing skills development programme and build Bhutan project (BBP) were part of TVET reform plan.

These on-going activities were also targeted to address the immediate issues concerning the workforce in Bhutan after the pandemic set in.

The skills development programme, which started in October this year, is training unemployed interested youth in various TVET courses.

Labour ministry plans to train interested youth in eight different TVET courses this month. The programme will introduce 108 courses in the following years.

Norbu Wangchuk said that while the ministry aimed to train around 10,000 youths within two year's time, the response from youth was not encouraging.

The TVET reform plan targets to improve current perception of TVET workers and also equip Bhutanese youth with 21st-century skills.

This will be achieved through four pillars of the TVET reform plan—product transformation, place transformation, people transformation and process transformation.

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► In their sixth international victory, Bhutan's cricket team beat Kuwait in the opening match of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup Asia Qualifiers 2021 by 40 runs at the ICC Academy Ground 1 in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates yesterday ► Pg 10

Phuentsholing beyond the 100 Covid-free days

Rajesh Rai | Phuentsholing

When Phuentsholing came out of the four-month lockdown in August this year, nobody expected the pandemic to fade easily. For days people remained indoors fearing transmission.

Much has changed since then. The town crossed 102 days without a single community case yesterday.

However, despite the best protocols in place, it is not without close and risky encounters, Phuentsholing has come thus far.

Protocol breaches

An increasing number of protocol breaches have been

reported this month.

On November 8, a 35-year-old Bhutanese man from Phuentsholing, who was working as a driver in Jaigaon, entered Phuentsholing illegally and discreetly using the jungle route below the Kharbandi Goenpa. He was arrested.

After this incident, several other incidents have also emerged.

In one incident, two male drivers were quarantined for breaching the protocols while travelling outside Bhutan. In another incident, a non-national man tried to sneak through the Sorchen switching point. He was intercepted by the police.

A 26-year-old woman from a high-risk area, who visited her son in the low-risk area was quarantined along with four other taxi co-passengers and the driver.

As per the Southern Covid-19 Task Force (SC19TF) daily bulletin, five percent of the 300 people surveyed did not wear their facemasks properly. Seven percent of the shopkeepers were found not wearing the facemasks properly.

Except for a few, Kuensel also found people wearing facemasks. However, usage of Druk Trace app and hand-washing habits have drastically dropped. ► Pg 2

Covid-19 Cases

Bhutan:

Confirmed Cases: 2,632

Recovered: 2,619

Active: 10 | Death: 3

Global:

Confirmed Cases: 257,547,285

Death: 5,150,618

India: 34,510,413

West Bengal: 1,609,845

Delhi: 1,440,666

Assam: 615,382

Arunachal Pradesh: 55,247

Sikkim: 32,169

Thailand: 2,064,581

Bangladesh: 1,574,088

Nepal: 819,019

Singapore: 252,188

Inside

HOME

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Weather



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Phuentsholing beyond the 100...

From pgl

A shopkeeper said that people must be tired of protocols. "What to do? I think they are fed up. But they will have to follow the protocols."

Another shopkeeper said most comply with the protocols. "They fear another lockdown," he said. "Another lockdown will have everyone pack and return to their respective villages."

As coronavirus spreads more in the cold season, people also fear an imminent local transmission. Covid-19 situation in West Bengal and Assam is also another concern.

On November 21, West Bengal reported 725 new cases and 12 deaths. Assam reported 247 new cases and five deaths.

A SC19TF member, Rixin Jamt-

sho said considering the recent increase of Covid-19 cases in Europe and neighbouring countries, it will not take time to reach Bhutan.

"Risk is there but we are still expecting there will not be a community case," he said.

Unlike in the past, Rixin Jamtsho said quarantine facilities have strict protocols with front line workers using all means of safety measures.

"People working at the Mini Dry Port and the Points of Entry use surgical masks," he said.

Rixin Jamtsho also said that shopkeepers are at higher risk than customers because all types of people visit their spaces. It was also found that many shopkeepers don't use facemasks properly, he said.

Meanwhile, the task force member said people should now use the three-layered masks.

"That is what shops must sell and customers should buy," he said.

Disposal of facemasks is another caution Rixin Jamtsho pointed out. The virus can survive on the mask even for seven days after it is disposed of and disposing it carelessly has the risk of spreading the virus through air.

Local economy

People are equally worried about their businesses. Phuentsholing saw a huge crowd of people during the Dashain and Tihar festivals. However, shopkeepers say there are not many people these days.

A shopkeeper, Tshering Dorji said that for Phuentsholing to bounce back in business, Chukha must open.

"Driver switching should be shifted to Chuzom from Sorchen," he said. "I am not saying other dzongkhags should open for us. Chukha alone will improve our businesses."

Tshering Dorji said that opening Chukha would be similar to dzongkhags such as Sarpang (for Gelephu) and Samdrup-jongkhar.

He said the business is down. Selling a carton of Marie biscuit, which took just a week before takes a month now.

A businessman, Karma Tshering Dorji said authorities should not facilitate unnecessary movement of people from

Phuentsholing.

"Only those going with genuine purposes, such as training and urgent work should avail the quarantine facilities and travel from Phuentsholing," he said, adding that letting people travel unnecessarily was costing both the government coffers while impacting the local economy in Phuentsholing.

Karma Tshering also said that Phuentsholing has come a long way since relaxation on August 12.

"It is time for us all to take individual responsibility to fight the virus," he said.

While front liners are actively monitoring the people in the town, Karma Tshering said they could sensitise people and not scold them.

TVET reform plan begins

From pgl

Place transformation

As part of place transformation pillar, aesthetically appealing infrastructures, engaging and multiuse teaching and learning facilities, and institutes integrated with information and communication technology (ICT) would be built.

Norbu Wangchuk said that topography studies of eight TTIs in Bhutan were completed recently.

He added that with over 40 percent of land spatial under the TTI in Chumey, Bumthang, the institute has the prospects of becoming a mega institute. "Realising that, we decided to have a conceptual design first. We have set work to an architectural firm in India." The conceptual design is expected to be ready soon.

If the conceptual design is delivered well, work for the conceptual design for expansion of the TTI in Samthang would also be handed to the firm in India. Norbu Wangchuk said that in addition to space available with TTI Samthang, the ministry was also exploring to procure an additional 11 acres next to the TTI.

Product transformation

Under the product transformation pillar, Norbu Wang-

chuk said that diversified TVET programs aligning to the 21st century economy needs, and to embrace the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) or industry 4.0 are core targets. "We are looking at courses from various countries. The focus is more on digital and Internet Technology such as cloud computing and blockchain."

Norbu Wangchuk said that metal art and fabrication and electrical and hybrid technology curriculums have been developed.

People transformation

Building inspiring and visionary TVET leaders and managers, and world-class TVET professionals are some of the aspirations under the pillar.

As of today, around 13 master trainers were invited to Bhutan. The master trainers are from Thailand, South Korea and Germany. The master trainers have already provided ToTs and helped develop curriculums.

Norbu Wangchuk said that a master trainer from Thailand with trainers had also repaired numerous central heating systems including one at the national referral hospital. Another Thai master trainer also maintained 22 sliding doors

at Paro Airport, for which the workforce was usually outsourced.

A memorandum of understanding has also been signed with the Institute of Technical Education in Singapore, which will help develop and implement two diploma courses.

The Asian Development

Bank will also support ToT programmes in Bhutan.

Process transformation

Streamlining clear governance and institutional mechanisms to deliver quality and responsive TVET programmes, and ensuring clear and flexible learning and career pathways are parts of

process transformation.

Norbu Wangchuk said that the draft national TVET policy would be submitted to the government for approval. It will be the overarching policy for TVET.

Cost estimate to implement the TVET reform plan is around Nu 6 billion.



► Nyo Foundation of Bhutan and Ura Central School in Bumthang signed an MoU on November 20 to implement a project to create interactive digital classrooms to support the transition to qualitative education in the school. The foundation in partnership with ASIA Onlus based in Rome, Italy and with funding support from Provincia Autonoma Di Bolzano will provide nine digital smart boards to the school and develop a website for the school.

Myopia in children rising in the country

Nima Wangdi

Myopia in children is on the rise in the country, according to ophthalmologists at the Jigme Dorji Wangchuk National Referral Hospital (JDWRH) in Thimphu.

Myopia is a common refractive error in which the near vision is clear while distant vision is blurred. Myopia is also known as nearsightedness.

Paediatric Ophthalmologist Dr Dechen Wangmo said the patient load has increased from 4,000 to 5000 per month a few years ago to about 9,000 per month now.

"This means the ophthalmologists are attending to 300 patients every day in the hospital," she said.

She said that myopia is increasing in many other Asian countries. "We are seeing the same case here since we share similar parenting behaviours with the rest of the Asian countries."

What causes Myopia?

Myopia worldwide is caused mainly due to "near work".

Near work among the children in Bhutan is also increasing from a very young age, according to Doctor

Dechen Wangmo. "Near work means looking at devices like TVs, laptops, mobile phones, and books close to your eyes."

She also said other reasons for the increase could be because of increased awareness among parents who in turn bring their children to the hospital for check-ups.

Explaining how it is caused, the ophthalmologist said anything that is a near device causes the eye to physiologically get a little longer over time, and the condition is called physiologic myopia. "The environmental stimulus that we are subjecting our eyes to changes the development of the eye so that in the long term, children develop myopia," she explained.

The Bhutan School Sight Survey (BSSS 2019) conducted in 2019 covered 190 schools and over 5,000 students in the age range of 5 to 10 years. "Over six percent of the students were diagnosed with myopia," she said.

According to the survey findings, myopia was found to be more common among the students in urban areas than those in rural areas. It was also more prevalent among females over males,

and among children whose parents have higher education levels.

"Going by the science, this could be because the children in urban schools are engaged more in indoor activities, unlike those in the rural areas," she said. "Children of parents with a higher level of education are also focused more on academics while children in rural settings spend more time doing outdoor tasks helping their parents."

She also claimed that the case among the female students is high because girls in Bhutan usually tend to do fewer outdoor activities.

Doctor Dechen said that having realized these factors, schools in other countries are cutting down on indoor activities and encouraging outdoor activities. "Besides myopia, children also suffer eye infections, cataracts, glaucoma, corneal scars, and squints. If not corrected on time, these factors could lead to poor visual output," she said.

Solution

Dr Dechen Wangmo said myopia is a common problem and it requires only a pair of

the right glasses for the right reason. "It is also important that the children be brought to the hospital for eye checks, irrespective of their age. The professionals can check a baby's eyes as early as right after they are born."

She said babies could neither complain about their eyesight nor understand them. "But it is the responsibility of the caregivers to bring them to the hospital for a check up on time. Late diagnosis and treatment will fail to obtain an optimal outcome."

Ophthalmologists said that failing to get eye issues checked and corrected on time would lead to the condition known as amblyopia, a condition where eyes look normal but it would not function normally.

Dr Dechen said that many parents ask about permissible screen time for children, but there isn't anything recommended in the world so far. "The world's renowned academics like the American Academic for Paediatrics have recommended not giving any device to children below one year."

She said that not all eyes

are not suitable for contact lenses since they go with the shape of the eyes. "It could lead to eye infection and vision impairment if not consulting professionals before deciding to wear contact lenses."

Dr Dechen said in the digital age, we should help our children grow with the devices. "There is a rule called 'the 20-20-20 rule', where you take a break every 20 minutes from the screen, rest for 20 seconds and look at an object 20 feet away."

Meanwhile, a study conducted in 2020 has found that there is a rapid rise of myopia among school-age children in East and South-east Asia over the last 60 years, which showed that the recent myopia boom is attributed primarily to the educational pressure in Asian countries, which prompts children to read for long hours, often under poor lighting, and on computer screens.

The study stated that the practice severely limits the time spent outdoors and reduces exposure to sunlight and far vision. "As a consequence, the eyes become myopic."

Fake finance minister account on social media

... Lyonpo says it is irresponsible use of social media

Staff Reporter

After the debate on the transfer of Nu 19 million (M) from the General Reserve (GR) to five gewogs of Paro went viral, a Facebook account user posing as the finance minister tried to spread fake news yesterday.

"I will be resigning as Minister for Finance [sic], Bhutan should there be any issue related to sending money to my Paro gewogs," the fake account post read.

Finance Minister Namgay Tshering was quick to take to his official Facebook page to clarify that it was a fake account and that he had no plans to resign. "The posts were made by an imposter account," he posted.

The ruling party, Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa, also shared the finance minister's clarification, asking netizens to be aware of fake accounts.

There are many social media accounts, most of which are believed to be used by people inclined towards certain political parties.

However, the finance minister said that he did not want to think about who was behind the fake account.

"This is an irresponsible use of social media," Lyonpo Namgay Tshering, adding that the fake news had not affected him.

However, he added that the fake account user had misused his picture, and that the person could be traced

and held accountable.

The issue of using funds from the GR, which has been highlighted in the annual audit report of the fiscal year 2020-21, has been one of the most discussed issues on social media.

A social media user said that having fake social media accounts had become part of 'playing politics'. Some of the fake accounts and pages, he said, are actively writing about politics on social media.

A source said that many fake accounts have been created to criticise the elected government or politicians. "These include party workers, including candidates and elected representatives

themselves."

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) has issued two press releases, one on the audit observation and the other on the finance minister's clarification.

It has questioned the finance minister's moral and legal rights to transfer the money to meet the capital expenditure of the gewogs in his dzongkhags.

The finance minister also has given several interviews to the media alleging the former prime minister, Dasho Tshering Tobgay, of using GR for unproductive purposes.

Lyonpo Namgay Tshering alleged that the former prime minister had diverted GR of about Nu 485,000 for

his visits to Samtse as prime minister.

But the finance minister has said that such "technical adjustments" of the budget were allowed under the Public Finance Act and the Financial Rules and Regulation 2016.

The PDP stated that Paro gewogs, which also comprise the constituency of the Finance Minister, are the only gewogs of the 205 that have been the privileged beneficiaries of the GR fund.

It added that the GR "misuse" is a serious breach of good financial governance by the very authority who is the custodian of the nation's financial asset and on whom the country has reposed its trust.

Ensuring road safety

Road Safety and Transport Authority (RSTA) officials Sunday observed the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims in Thimphu. It was, besides remembering the many millions of road traffic victims throughout the world, a sobering moment to reflect on some of the inherent issues that help to make our roads one of the biggest killers.

We can and must acknowledge the crucial work of emergency services; call or draw attention to legal response to culpable death and injuries; call for better support for road traffic victims and victim families, but these alone will go only some way in addressing some of the biggest problems in the system that we have built over the years.

Over the period of four years—until June 2021—we saw 4,446 accidents and 382 road traffic-related deaths. This is an alarming number. What we know, with pain, is that these deaths could have been prevented. It is in this perspective that the remembrance day, themed “Act for Low Speeds,” assumed special significance and gravity.

It called on us to look deeper inside and impelled us to act—with great speed—to make our roads and driving safe. That means promoting evidence-based actions to prevent further road traffic deaths and injuries.

According to RSTA, the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic adversely affected the authority’s targeted outcome achievement. But then, thankfully, due to Covid-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, we seem to have also experienced fewer road traffic deaths—73 between July 2020 and June 2021 compared with 109 between July 2018 and June 2019. Even in these challenging times, the Authority was able to conduct road safety awareness to 2046 drivers, traffic officials, and de-suups between July 2020 and June 2021.

RSTA has finally come up with Road Safety and Transport Regulations (RSTR) 2021 which will supersede the 20-year-old RSTR. It is expected to come into force from January 2022. This is a significant stride in the right direction but we will need more than RSTR to get a grip on our road traffic-related fatalities.

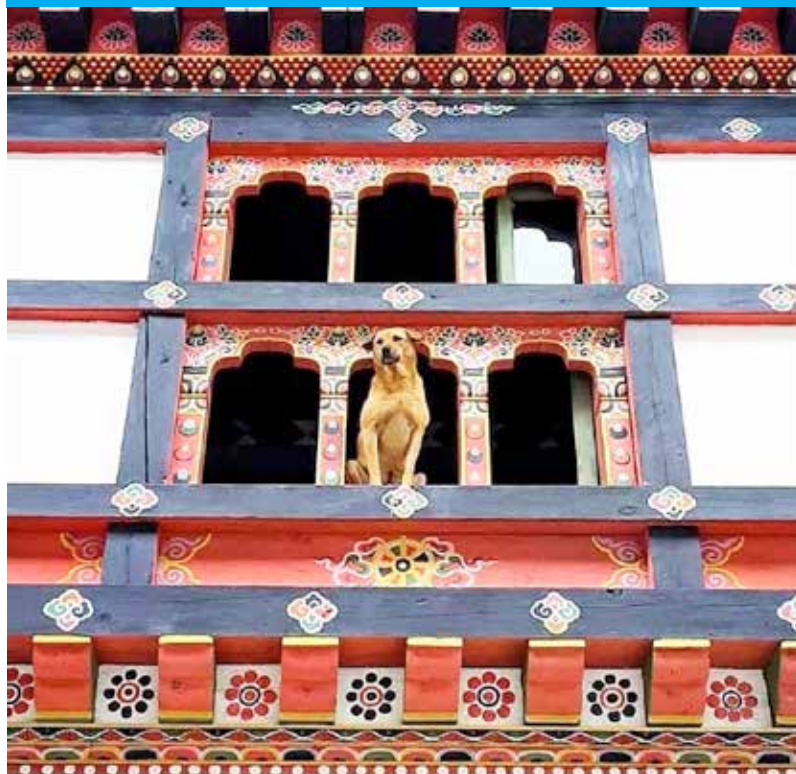
The new regulation will certainly bring about much-needed clarity but what is important is that we need to ensure strict and uniform implementation of regulations across the country. We also need better roads. Otherwise, we would just be observing World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims year after year forgetting the increasing numbers of lives lost to road traffic accidents.

Addendum

The heating system at the Centre for Bhutan Studies and Gross National Happiness Research, which the recent audit report stated as non-functional reported in the story ‘Punatsangchu I tops irregularities’ dated November 20 is functional.

FOR NEWS, VIEWS, AND
FEEDBACK
Call 324684 or email
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MY COUNTRY, MY TOWN



How much is that doggie in the window?:

This canine is obviously quite comfortable with heights and not a victim of vertigo

Photo: Tashi Phuntsho

Send in your pictures to: formcmt@gmail.com

MY SAY

Marry the Five-year plans and Gewog Development Plans for modern Bhutan

Bhutan’s journey from an isolated nation to a modern state was only possible through her carefully prepared and judiciously implemented five-year plans. Therefore, the discussion and speculations of doing away with the drafting of the 13th Plan and leaving it up to the next government to come up with its system makes our emotions roll like thunder behind the dark clouds of electoral politics and sluggish bureaucracy. The proposal to do away with the five-year plans may be evaluated under the following scenarios:

Politicised and disoriented civil service

Bhutanese civil service lies at the heart of government effectiveness no matter whichever party comes in power. They translate the national vision and political direction into the policies and programmes that keep Bhutan healthy, educated, safe, and productive. To do so, they need to have both the right plans, resources, and institutional support to implement them effectively. Therefore, doing away with the five years and leaving to the next government will lead to

last-minute politicised planning and a disoriented civil service. As a resource-constrained nation, having a detailed five-year plan will help Bhutan’s development partners to commit or omit their involvement in the plan projects and avoid the possibility of any external interference in national elections. Preparing a detailed five-year plan will engage civil servants, the Gross National Happiness Commission, NSB and the Centre for Bhutan Studies in reviewing the previous plans and make recommendations for future areas for investment.

Detail Gewog Develop Plans

Not only the national five-year plans, but Bhutan needs a detailed Gewog Develop Plans under the four pillars of GNH capturing the topography, demography, resources and socio-economic potentials and challenges in every gewog. Such a plan should capture the pulse of the villages and be aligned to the national visions. GNHC and relevant agencies must encourage capacity building of the gewog administrative officers and gups to prepare detailed gewog plans to document using

its Local Development Planning Manual and such document must be discussed and refined at different levels. Concepts such as gewog tourism could be a few options to study and try on a pilot basis on a few gewogs. These plans should be explained and made available to every household and such information will help citizens to choose the best Mangmi/ Gup/MP/NC who will be able to bring funds and implement the projects and not just share a few rosy pictures on Facebook. A detailed Gewog development plan aligned with the national five-year plan may attract the interest of Bhutan development partners and change the lives of rural Bhutan. It may be a worthy idea if the gewog develop plans are taught as a part of social/environmental science to the local schools and students taken for a field trip to see the proposals and projects at the ground level to inculcate a sense of ownership and encourage place-based learning. It will reinforce and nourish the dreams of one nation, one vision at the national as well as grassroots level.

Dhrubaraj Sharma



NOTIFICATION

ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)

ECB/NOTIF-01/2021/5486

Issuance of the Final Electoral Roll for the Third Local Government Elections, 2021

The Election Commission of Bhutan, pursuant to Notification ECB/NOTIF-01/2021/5357 dated November 10, 2021 and as required under Section 118 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan (2008), is pleased to hereby issue the final Electoral Roll and Postal Voters List for the Third Local Government Elections, 2021.

The final Electoral Roll, after due incorporation of changes received from the Dzongkhags and individual voters during the "Claims and Objections" period from 11th to 20th November 2021, has a total of **463,040** voters of which **236,836** are Females and **226,203** are Males as on 1st of October 2021, the qualifying date for the Third Local Government Elections, 2021.

The Dzongkhag-wise break-up of the Electoral Roll is as follows:

Sl.No.	Dzongkhag	Male	Female	Total
1	Bumthang	4993	5635	10628
2	Chhukha	12994	13263	26257
3	Dagana	13453	13447	26900
4	Gasa	1036	1147	2183
5	Haa	3915	4353	8268
6	Lhuentse	8526	9471	17998
7	Monggar	17863	19277	37140
8	Paro	9622	10565	20187
9	Pema Gatsel	13648	14443	28091
10	Punakha	8725	9590	18315
11	Samdrup Jongkhar	13396	14448	27844
12	Samtse	26653	24647	51300
13	Sarpang	15447	15622	31069
14	Thimphu	3631	3987	7618
15	Trashigang	9686	10494	20180
16	Trashigang	24610	26338	50948
17	Trongsa	5236	5654	10890
18	Tsirang	12961	12540	25501
19	Wangdue Phodrang	9997	11801	21798
20	Zhemgang	9811	10114	19925
Total		226,203	236,836	463,040

Out of the total registered voters in the country, **44,231** (39,453 in-country, 4,778 overseas) have registered as conventional Postal Voter, **95,599** have registered for Paper Ballot Facilitation Booth and **15,026** have registered for Mobile Voting Booth for the Third Local Government Elections, 2021.

An individual voter can check his/her voter registration status and information about Polling Station on the website of the Election Commission of Bhutan: www.ecb.bt under the "check your enrollment" link using Citizenship Identity Card number and Date of Birth.

The final Electoral Roll can be inspected at the respective Dzongkhag Election Offices or the Offices of the Returning Officers or at the Election Commission of Bhutan, Head Office, Kawajangsa, Thimphu.

Issued on the 18th Day of the 10th Month of Female Iron Ox Year of the Bhutanese Calendar corresponding to 22nd November 2021.

Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan



ANNOUNCEMENT FOR VIVA-VOCE INTERVIEW



ROYAL MONETARY AUTHORITY OF BHUTAN

RMA/DAF/HR.1/2021-2022/2003

The Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan (RMA) is pleased to announce the date & time for the viva test for various posts announced earlier in Kuensel dated **October 23, 2021**.

The viva test is scheduled from **December 08 - 10, 2021 at the head office, Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan (RMA), Thimphu**. The candidates must bring original documents for verification.

The detailed information of the candidates, date and time of the interview are provided on the RMA website. For further queries, please contact HRD Section at **+975-2-323111 (Ext. No. 232)** during office hours or please visit www.rma.org.bt.

Management
Department of Administration and Finance

ANNOUNCEMENT



ROYAL INSURANCE CORPORATION OF BHUTAN LIMITED

RICB/CO/ GID/AGENTS/2021/38405

The Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan Limited (RICB) has been unable to release Agent's Commission from **July to September 2021** for some RIBB Agents because of discrepancies in their Bank Account and TPN Numbers.

Therefore, those agents who have not received their commission for these months are requested to update their Bank and TPN details at the earliest. The respective agents can visit our website, www.ribb.bt for a detailed list.

They may also visit our nearest office or call us @**1818** for assistance.

Management

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



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Tuesday, November 23, 2021 | KUENSEL



PUBLIC NOTIFICATION ON MULE ACCOUNT'S

In line with RMA's notification on mule account & money mule, Druk PNB Bank would like to inform our customers that a 'Mule Account' is a bank account belonging to a legitimate person who has allowed another person to use/operate the banking transactions. The process of allowing a bank account to be used by another person turns the legitimate bank account into a 'Mule Account'.

A 'Money Mule' is a person who is recruited by another person to transfer or illegally transfer money on another person's behalf, either for a fee/commission in return. A 'Money Mule' is not aware of either the source of funds or the use of funds, for which they could be liable for prosecution in the court of law as a part of a fraud or money laundering activities carried out in violation of the law in vogue.

1. Therefore, Druk PNB Bank Ltd. would like to request, our valued clients to refrain from such activities and if anyone has opened a bank account but is operated/used by another person, it is solicited to close such accounts by **December 31, 2021**;

Failure to close such mule accounts by **31.12.2021** shall be dealt in accordance with RMA cautionary note to public that:

1. Such mule accounts after the aforesaid deadline shall lead to suspending the bank account and freezing the funds without further consideration;
2. The mule accounts shall be forwarded to the relevant law enforcement agencies for further probe and initiating appropriate legal actions in accordance with the relevant laws of the country.

Management

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- CLASSIFIED ADS - OTHERS

Announcement: NLD Training Institute offers a full scholarship training in Bhutanese, Food Production and Food Production NC2 and NC3 for the duration of 12 months. For registration, contact 17777676 / 77777676 or email nldbhutan@gmail.com

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NU. PER UNITS OF FOREIGN CURRENCY as of yesterday

	NOTES	
	Buy	Sell
US \$	73.15	75.40
POUND	98.15	100.85
EURO	82.60	84.90
YEN (100)	64.10	65.90
HK \$	9.40	9.65
AUS \$	52.95	54.40
SING \$	53.65	55.15
Courtesy BNB		



Water project gives hope to Patshaling farmers

Choki Wangmo | Tsirang

With the inauguration of a flagship water project in Patshaling gewog in Tsirang yesterday, 48 households in three villages are hopeful that their long drinking and irrigation water woes will be solved for good.

Most of the residents in these villages depend on vegetables and cardamom, the cultivation of which have been hampered by water shortage.

Currently, the farmers in Tsakaling use drawn water from a stream, Kharay Khola, through pipes for drinking and irrigation.

Kinzang Namgyel from Tsakaling said that he has bought water pipes worth Nu 38,000 since 2016 to draw water from the source for drinking and irrigation. He grows vegetables and cardamom on five acres.

According to him, the challenges due to water shortages in his village date back to 2012.

A villager, Rinchen Tshering from Patshaling Maed



► Without a reliable water source, taps have in the village remain dry

said that since his mandarin yield was affected by a disease, he has cultivated cardamom on his three-acre plot of land. "Water shortages worsen during winter months," he said, adding that people did not even have sufficient drink-

ing water.

He said that people faced water shortages after the road construction started in the villages. "Water sources have started to gradually dry up."

Villagers allege that in the past, they were provided with

water tanks, but due to poor planning and monitoring, it was a failure.

"As the water source was located in a risky area with a constant threat from elephants, we couldn't clean the water tanks," Kinzang Namgyel said.

Two years ago, a heavy monsoon washed away the water source, further worsening the condition.

He said that with the project, his family will have sufficient water for drinking and irrigation.

Currently, he takes turns with his wife to monitor and water the fields every two hours, even at night. "It is tedious."

Chimi Dema from Tsakaling said that the burden from water shortage has been heavy on women and children. "His Majesty has recognised our challenges and has gifted us this project. I am hopeful for the future."

She fetches water from a spring near her house which remains dry for almost eight months. "When it dries up, I have to fetch water from other areas for household use."

The second of its kind in the dzongkhag, the water project will be built at a cost of Nu 5.05 million. The project will be carried out by 60 deployed desuups. It is expected to be completed within the next four months.

Water woes of the Gyalpoizhing College of IT

Tshering Namgyal | Mongar

The students of the Gyalpoizhing College of Information Technology (GCIT) face water issues not only in the lean winter months, but also in peak monsoon season.

In summer, the faculty and students blame the monsoon rain that triggers erosion and flash floods along the newly constructed farm roads for washing the pipelines away. In winter, the problem is a drying water source.

Students said maintaining hygiene has been difficult in summer when they cannot bathe for days due to water scarcity. They also claimed the water is undrinkable due to hygiene issues.

"Even if it's maintained, the water is muddy," a student said.

The pipelines were con-

nected from a source that caters to Gyalpoizhing town, but at a different point.

Students said they manage with packaged water bottles bought in bulk from Bhutan Agro Industries in Lingmethang.

The deputy chief councillor, Choki Lhamu, said students consume about 60 to 70 cartons of water that are delivered in a van by Bhutan Agro in a week. "They cater as and when we place the order and availing it instantly is not so difficult, but not all students can afford it."

However, for cleaning and washing purposes, the college management is exploring some possible solutions.

GCIT president Lhatu Jamba said the water distribution is managed on a rotational basis between faculty members and students due



► Students depend on mineral water without adequate supply

to the current water scarcity. "Students get their share of water connected to hostels during the day and diverted to faculty at night."

He also agreed that the water is brown and unhygienic in summer due to ero-

sion from the farm roads.

In order to address the issues, Lhatu Jamba said the college is planning to pump in water from the Kurichhu river below for the students to wash their clothes. "We're also planning to dig a bore-

well on the campus but we could not bring the machines in, as the only two machines in the country are not functioning. The Covid-19 pandemic has hampered bringing in technical persons to service them."

Health Capsule

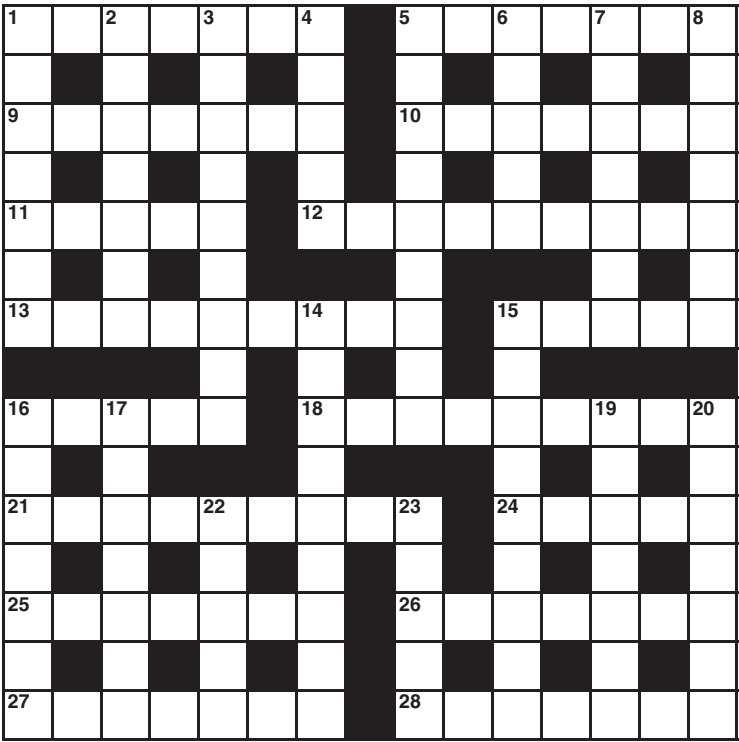
WHAT SUPPLEMENTS SHOULD I TAKE WHILE RECOVERING FROM LUNG CANCER?

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RESEARCHERS HAVE FOUND THAT THOSE WHO HAD THEIR LUNG CANCER SURGERY IN THE SUMMER, AND HAD HIGH LEVELS OF VITAMIN D (THE SUNSHINE VITAMIN) THROUGH DIET AND SUPPLEMENTS, WERE MORE THAN TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE ALIVE FIVE YEARS LATER. THE RDA FOR VITAMIN D IS 400 MG.

Health Capsules is not intended to be of a diagnostic nature.

Kwik Xword



Nov 20 answers

Across: 1 Rattle, 4 Tribunal, 9 Delius, 10 Grasping, 12 Chitchat, 13 Absent, 15 Logo, 16 Far and away, 19 Close ranks, 20 Tiff, 23 Tycoon, 25 Budapest, 27 Emblazon, 28 Fleece, 29 Diatribe, 30 Gratis.

Down: 1 Radical, 2 Talking-to, 3 Launch, 5 Rare, 6 Busybody, 7 Noise, 8 Lightly, 11 Bahamas, 14 Back out, 17 White heat, 18 Debonair, 19 Cut dead, 21 Fitness, 22 Caller, 24 Cobra, 26 Comb.

Quick CLUES

- Across
- 1 Sudden inclination (7)
 - 5 A pungent sauce (7)
 - 9 To shock (7)
 - 10 Monastic hair style (7)
 - 11 A dozen dozen (5)
 - 12 Soothing (9)
 - 13 Dismantle (4,5)
 - 15 Shabby-looking (5)
 - 16 Group of lions (5)
 - 18 Incorrectly aligned (3,2,4)
 - 21 Gratuity (9)
 - 24 Thump with the fists (5)
 - 25 Follow example of (7)
 - 26 A fortified white wine (7)
 - 27 Top (7)
 - 28 To ease (7)

- Down
- 1 Visible (2,5)
 - 2 Bird of brilliant plumage (7)
 - 3 Make laws (9)
 - 4 Weird (5)
 - 5 Retaliation (3,3,3)
 - 6 Commonplace (5)
 - 7 To compress (7)
 - 8 For all to see (7)
 - 14 Reparation for wrong (9)
 - 15 Tone down (4-5)
 - 16 Make known generally (7)
 - 17 Hint (7)
 - 19 Regular procedure (7)
 - 20 Final stage in chess match (7)
 - 22 Lift with great effort (5)
 - 23 Author of the Iliad (5)

Solution on Thursday

Sudoku

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.

Answer

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

Rebus

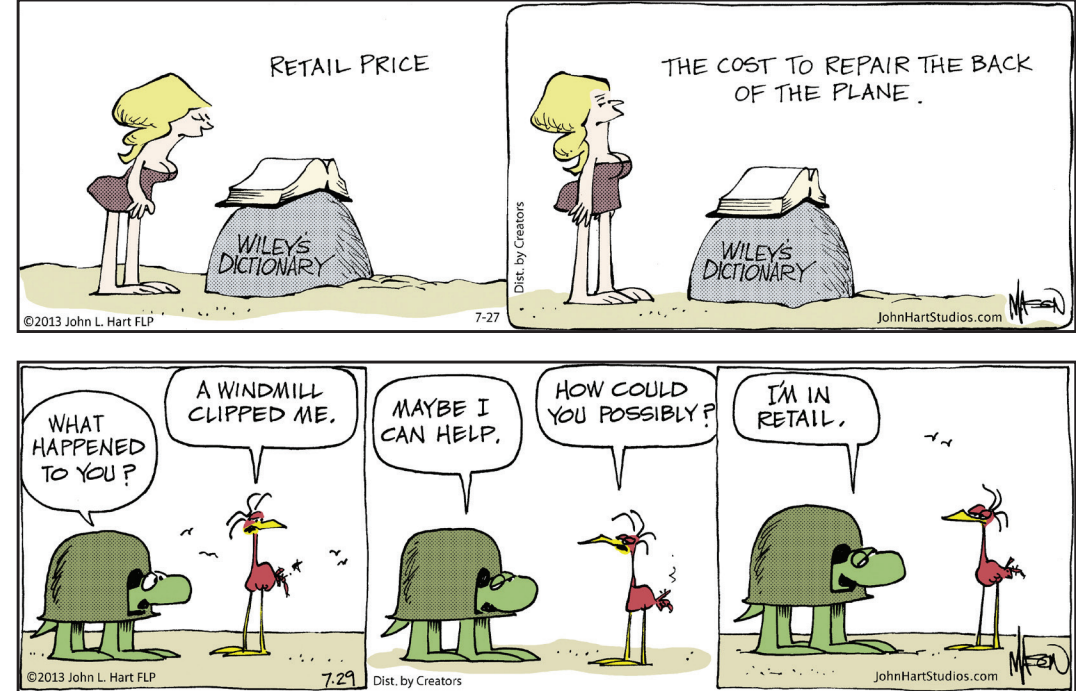


Lowest power



Made in China

BC



Australia to allow entry for fully vaccinated visa holders from Dec 1

Australia will allow foreign visa holders to enter the country from the start of December, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said on Monday (Nov 22), the latest step to restart international travel and support its economy.

Australia shut its international border in May 2020 and allowed only restricted numbers of citizens and permanent residents to enter in a bid to curtail the spread of Covid-19.

The rules were relaxed in recent weeks to allow foreign family members of citizens to enter, and Morrison said this will be scaled up from Dec 1 to allow vaccinated students, business visa holders and refugees to arrive.

"The return of skilled workers and students to Australia is a major milestone in our pathway back," Morrison told reporters in Canberra. Australia will also allow in

vaccinated tourists from South Korea and Japan from Dec 1, he said.

The return of foreign students, who are worth about A\$35 billion (S\$34.5 billion) a year to the Australian economy, will be a major boost for the education sector.

More than 235,000 foreigners, including about 160,000 students, held visas for Australia at the end of October, government data showed.

Many Australian universities have come to rely on foreign students, who make up about 21 per cent of total enrolments, and the border closure led higher education facilities to lay off hundreds of staff.

Many students locked out of Australia have said they would switch to alternative universities if they were unable to begin face-to-face learning in 2022.

The relaxation of the bor-



der rules is also expected to ease labour shortages, which threaten to stymie an economic rebound.

"This will be critical relief for businesses who are struggling to find workers just to keep their doors open and for those who need highly specialised skills to unlock big projects," said Jennifer

Westacott, chief executive of the industry body, the Business Council.

Border rules, swift lockdowns and tough social distancing rules helped Australia to keep its coronavirus numbers far lower than many other comparable countries, with around 200,000 cases and 1,948 deaths.

Most new infections are being reported in Victoria state, which logged 1,029 cases on Monday. New South Wales, home to Sydney, reported 180 cases. Other states and territories are Covid-free or have very few cases.

The Straits Times
ANN

EU weighs changes to Covid-19 certificates, travel rules during infection surge

The European Union is discussing this week how to update its digital Covid-19 certificates and its approach to travel within and outside the bloc as member nations take varying steps to counter the latest wave of the pandemic.

Vaccine booster shots will be a topic of conversation when European affairs ministers meet in Brussels on Tuesday (Nov 23), along with a debate over whether to change the length of time a Covid-19 vaccination certificate is valid for, according to EU diplomats who declined to be named on confidential preparations.

The ministers, who have the task of preparing the next EU leaders' summit on Dec 16-17, will also discuss vaccine hesitancy, which has fuelled sometimes violent street protests in several member states in recent days, one of the diplomats said.

Governments across the EU have so far taken contrast-

ing steps as the pandemic worsens.

While some western European nations have stemmed a deadly outbreak with high vaccination rates, Germany has lagged behind, with less than 70 per cent of the population fully vaccinated. Austria, which is back in a lockdown, is imposing fines of up to €3,600 (S\$5,500) on those who refuse to get a coronavirus vaccine once mandatory inoculations kick in next year.

Chancellor Angela Merkel's government has increased pressure on Germans to get inoculated by announcing plans to restrict many leisure activities for the unvaccinated. In contrast, Belgium has reimposed mandatory teleworking rules while keeping nightclubs open.

The commission is also due to submit proposals to the bloc's ambassadors on Wednesday on how to revise



recommendations on non-essential travel between the EU and third countries, one of the diplomats said.

There are currently no plans to curb travel, but the evolution of the pandemic and potential lockdowns may affect travel for people who have been vaccinated.

The commission's proposals on non-essential travel are not binding on member

states. EU countries agreed earlier this year to harmonise travel restrictions.

Currently, countries can require quarantine or testing if people come from an area with a high enough infection rate, and can impose stricter restrictions on people travelling to or arriving from areas coded "dark red" on the EU's common map.

The framework also lays

out recommendations for approaching travel from outside the EU.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, is expected to come up with a proposal on the validity of Covid-19 certificates, one of the diplomats said. Harmonisation is needed, as the current patchwork of regulations may complicate attempts to counter the pandemic, the diplomat added.

The Covid-19 certificates have helped facilitate travel around the EU, although some countries are beginning to impose new restrictions. Germany recently announced that people from Belgium, Ireland, Greece and the Netherlands who are not vaccinated or recovered from Covid-19 will have to self-isolate upon arrival, while Austria has banned leisure travel into the country until Dec 13.

The Straits Times
ANN

The girls have done it again!

Thinley Namgay

Bhutan beat Kuwait by 40 runs in their maiden match at the 2021 International Cricket Council's (ICC) T20 World Cup Asia Qualifiers in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) yesterday.

Bhutan won the toss and opted to bat first. In the first inning, Bhutan acquired 114 runs at a loss of six wickets in 20 overs. In the next inning, Kuwait managed 74 runs in 19.3 overs with the fall of all the wickets.

Comparing the performance of the 10 overs, Bhutan played a notable game. Bhutan got 65 runs with the loss of three wickets, whereas Kuwait fetched 36 runs and lost five wickets.

Team Bhutan displayed a better game yesterday. During the two warm-up matches against UAE on November 18 and 19, the women managed less than 60 runs on both occasions.

Bhutan is currently ranked 44th in the world, and Kuwait 34th.

Bhutan Cricket's chief executive officer, Damber S Gurung, said: "Winning a match is a good start. I think this win will give them a boost to perform

Bowling



Bowlers	Overs	Runs	Wickets
Anju Gurung	3	7	0
Tshering Yangchen	2	8	0
Sonam Choden	4	23	0
Karma Samten	3.3	9	2
Tshering Zangmo	4	12	1
Dechen Wangmo	3	12	2

better in the tournament."

He said that bowling and fielding made a difference yesterday. "A couple of players batted well to take the score to defend a total. Now the matches will be tough, and if we put up good total runs on the board, we can beat any side."

Meanwhile, the UAE defeated Malaysia by 30 runs yesterday.

The win against Kuwait was the sixth international cricket match the Bhutanese women's cricket team has won since its inception in 2007.

The Bhutan women's cricket team made its debut at the 2009

ACC Women's T20 Championship in Malaysia. Bhutan won against Qatar by 42 runs. In the same tournament, Bhutan also defeated Oman by 101 runs.

In the 2011 ACC Women's T20 Championship, Bhutan defeated Oman again but lost to Kuwait. Bhutan defeated Malaysia and the UAE in the 2013 ACC Women's Championship.

The tournament in Dubai started yesterday, and it will be completed on November 28. Other teams in the tournament are Malaysia, UAE, Kuwait, Hong Kong, and Nepal.

Bhutan will face Nepal today at the ICC Academy Ground 2.

Batting



Batters	Runs	Balls	4s	Strike rate
Ngawang Choden lbw Khadija Khalil	6	8	1	75.00
Sonam Paldon b Amna Tariq	11	13	1	84.61
Dechen Wangmo run out (Mariamma Hyder)	17	20	2	85.00
Yeshey Choden b Maryam Omar	11	14	1	78.57
Tshering Zangmo NOT OUT	34	36	4	94.44
Pema Seldon run out (Maryam Omar)	18	25	1	72.00
Sonam Choden b Maria Jasvi	0	1	0	0.00
Yeshey Wangmo NOT OUT	5	3	0	166.66
Anju Gurung	-	-	-	-
Karma Samten	-	-	-	-
Tshering Yangchen	-	-	-	-
Extras (w 11, b 1)	12			

Team Agay Zhoem wins veteran football championship in Trongsa



▶ Referee brandishes the yellow card to a player of Agay Zhoem for a nasty tackle

Staff reporter

Team Agay Zhoem and Team Upper Trongsa played in the final of the fourth season of the veteran football championship in Trongsa yesterday.

Team Agay Zhoem won the tournament, scoring three goals against Upper Trongsa.

Eleven teams from the dzongkhag participated in the tournament.

The winner was awarded a cash prize, trophy, and individual prizes.

As per an official, the tournament was organised to promote physical health and wellbeing through games and

sports, and also to promote social harmony.

"The game was organised to promote physical engagement for non-communicable disease reduction among elderly citizens and to encourage senior citizens to participate in games and sports," an official said.



TOMORROW

Good Day

- to perform Lhabsang Thruesoel
- to appease local deities
- to perform wealth accumulation ritual
- to consecrate
- to hand and take over office
- to learn astrology
- to appoint to new post
- to shift house
- to enter into new house
- to marry
- to start new business

- to hoist Lungdhar
- to approach higher authority
- to sow seeds

Bad Day

- to venture into long journey

A good day for rituals (laza):

those born in the tiger and rabbit years.

Generally a good day (sogza):

those born in the monkey and rooster years.

A bad day (shedza):

those born in the ox and dragon years.

WEATHER

SUNRISE : 6:28am | SUNSET : 5:07pm

Time of issue: 4:00 PM,
November 22, 2021

Gasa	Trongsa	Bumthang	Sarpang	Phuentsholing
11°C	13°C	14°C	26°C	25°C
1	7	6	19	13

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

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