

NATIONAL

Covid-19 hospital in Janakpur caught off guard by second wave

None of the ventilators at the hospital are in working order, officials say.

SANTOSH SINGH
DHANUSHA, MAY 6

On Wednesday noon, a Covid-19 patient from Mathani in Mahottari got admitted to Provincial Covid-19 Hospital in Janakpur for treatment. The 54-year-old woman was immediately put on ventilator support because of her critical condition.

But her condition worsened after the ventilator went out of order after some time.

"We requested doctors to manage another ventilator, but the doctors told us that all the ventilators at the hospital were not in working condition," said the woman's son.

The patient was still in the ventilator ward of the hospital on Thursday but without ventilator support. Her condition is still critical, her son told the Post.

Dr Manish Pandey, spokesperson of the hospital, says the hospital has five ventilators but all of them are out of order. "The ventilators were purchased last year. None of them are working now. The hospital is trying to get them repaired."

There were 31 critical Covid-19 patients from Dhanusha and Mahottari districts at the hospital on Thursday.

The Health Ministry has put Dhanusha in 19 districts outside Kathmandu Valley where coronavirus infections are spreading "dangerously".

According to Pramod Yadav, medical superintendent of the Provincial Hospital, they have asked the provincial government to send new ventilators. "The government sent two new ventilators on Wednesday. We are preparing to install them and hopefully will be able to run them," he said.

On Thursday Provincial Covid-19 Hospital, set up last year by the provincial government inside the premises of Janakpur Nursing College, was crowded with Covid-19 patients and their attendants.

Some patients' attendants said they were buying medicines even though



The hospital is currently crowded with Covid-19 patients and their attendants.

the treatment for Covid-19 is free of cost at government hospitals.

"We are purchasing medicines from outside," said the son of the 54-year-old Covid-19 patient from Mathani.

According to him, the same health workers who are assigned to non-Covid-19 patients are tasked with the treatment of the Covid-19 patients. "I have to run and call for a doctor from the other wards to take a look at my mother in the Covid-19 ward. It's chaos here," he said.

Dr Manish Pandey, spokesperson of the Provincial Covid-19 Hospital in Janakpur, says the shortage of health workers has hit the hospital hard.

"Health workers of Provincial Hospital in Janakpur have been assigned to work at the Provincial Covid-19 Hospital here. They are working at both hospitals," said Pandey. "The provincial government did not manage human resources, medical equipment and necessary medicines on time. Now we are pooling all our resources together to run the Covid-19 hospital."

According to him, both Provincial Hospital and Provincial Covid-19 Hospital are being operated with a limited manpower.

"The Covid-19 hospital has only provided supplemental oxygen and beds free of cost," said Pandey, adding that medicines, meals, drinking water and other necessary items are being managed by Covid-19 patients themselves.

However, Gyanendra Yadav, minister of internal affairs and law for the province, also the spokesperson of the provincial government, claimed that the government has been providing treatment and medicines to Covid-19 patients free of cost. "We haven't been able to provide meals to patients due to staff shortage."

The Provincial Hospital had demanded 91 health workers to operate the High Dependency Unit and 91 employees for the Provincial Covid-19 Hospital.

The initial plan for the Provincial Covid-19 Hospital had 100 beds but only 62 beds were set up due to a lack of infrastructure and health workers.

Pramod Yadav, medical superintendent at the Provincial Hospital, said: "Currently, the Provincial Covid-19 Hospital is running only 63 beds out of which 12 are ICU beds and 41 have oxygen supply. The rest are being operated as general beds."

Oli's preference for politics to virus crisis is an affront to people, analysts say

>> Continued from page 1

Finding himself cornered, Oli who since March 7, when the Supreme Court revived the UML and the Maoist Centre, had been on a clarification seeking spree against his opponents, is now sending feelers to the Nepal-Khanna faction.

At Thursday's Standing Committee meeting, Oli said that he would telephone Nepal to discuss how his faction's grievances could be addressed, according to Subas Nembang, deputy leader of the UML, Parliamentary Party and a close aide to Oli.

"What has stopped Nepal from raising its issues in the party committee?" Nembang told the Post. "We are always ready to discuss if they have any issues but they are expressing their viewpoints through the media. They should come through proper party channels."

What has left Oli worried is the Nepal-Khanna faction's recent discussions whether to resign en masse as lawmakers. Oli so far has sought clarification from as many as 27 lawmakers from the Nepal-Khanna faction, which claims to control around 30 seats in Parliament.

If all the lawmakers from the Nepal-Khanna faction resign, Oli's position will become untenable, as the Janata Samajbadi Party which has 34 seats (two suspended) is a divided House.

On Wednesday, Oli met with Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba to seek his party's support. The Congress refused. His meeting with Deuba came after the Maoist Centre withdrew the support it lent Oli back in February 2018, thereby turning his government into a minority.

"Chances of Oli and Nepal going hands have diminished now," said Krishna Pokhrel, a professor of politics at the Tribhuvan University. "There seems to be a better prospect of the Nepal faction, the Maoist Centre and the left leaning group of the Janata Samajbadi Party coming together."

The Upendra Yadav-Baburam Bhattarai faction of the Janata Samajbadi Party is making an all out effort to form an alliance with the UML. The faction controls around 16 seats in Parliament of the 34 lawmakers (two suspended) it has. This leaves the Mahantha Thakur-Rajendra Mahato group with 14 seats, as two are sitting on the fence.

The Thakur-Mahato faction is ready to extend support to Oli but he won't be able to garner a majority if the lawmakers from Nepal-Khanna faction resign.

Analysts say Oli is largely to blame for inviting a political crisis in the country. But ignoring the pandemic that has created a serious public health crisis is an affront to basic standards of morality and decency and the people and the country, accord-

ing to them.

"Prime Minister Oli can be compared with Nero, the fifth Roman emperor who entertained gladiators for fighting when Rome burnt... for his indifference towards people's plight," said Rajendra Maharjan, a Nepal-Khanna factionist. "He is not a bit worried even though people are dying for a lack of beds and oxygen."

According to Maharjan, if Oli is facing a political crisis, it was brought upon to him by himself.

"If Oli as the prime minister really cared about the citizens, he would have employed the whole state machinery to control the pandemic outbreak by playing such dirty politics just to cling on to power," said Maharjan.

The fresh political games Oli has currently launched come at a time when a vaccine import scam surfaces, with some media suggesting businesspersons close to Oli scuttled the plan to procure the jabs against Covid-19.

Oli's ministers last year also came into spotlight when they were accused of corruption in import of medical supplies needed to fight the pandemic. The situation at present is more dire than ever before in the country. And the government's own projection shows as many as 11,000 people will be infected on a daily basis, come July.

Oli's peddling of pseudoscience and disregard for experts' advice have already met with massive criticism. The coronavirus and Oli's self-centric politics now make a lethal combination, analysts say.

"Pandemic never became Oli's priority. And it was evident from his statement asking people to drink turmeric water or gargle with guava leaves to get rid of the coronavirus," said Shrestha Anuruddha Gautam, a political analyst. "Something called accountability he has thrown out of the window. He has abdicated his responsibility as prime minister and he is solely focusing on elections."

Had Oli's December 20 House dissolution move not been overturned by the court, the country right now would have been in the middle of the two-phase snap polls he had declared.

Though the House was revived, Oli has been making every effort to justify that Parliament has become irrelevant. His sudden plan to seek a vote of confidence on May 10 also stems from his intentions to get the House dissolved, this time constitutionally, and take the country towards polls.

Many say with the coronavirus sweeping across the country, with no substantial efforts by the government to control the spread, an election will be a recipe for disaster. India's Covid-19 explosion is blamed on the state elections.

"Oli still thinks he could win the elections and in a bid for early polls,

he has left the people to fend for themselves," said Gautam. "His priority should be saving the lives of the people, not elections. No political leader with the most basic standards of morality sets priorities the way Oli has been doing."

Even though the government claims hospitals have enough beds, people have been dying for want of them. There are no vaccines to administer to around 1.3 million people who took their first shots between March 7 and March 10.

Experts say the way the virus is spreading shows the only way to save lives is vaccinating as many people as possible. Nepal needs to inoculate 72 percent of its 30 million total population (around 22 million people), and it needs 44 million doses.

The government's over-reliance on India has hampered its import scam surfaces, with some media suggesting businesspersons close to Oli scuttled the plan to procure the jabs against Covid-19.

While failure to regulate and manage the Nepal-India border in time is partly to blame for the surge in virus cases, experts mostly blame Oli's bad governance for the explosion.

Cases have been soaring at such an exponential rate that international media has now turned its focus to Nepal.

"Nepal's cases skyrocket, prompting concern the country's outbreak could mimic India's," CNN wrote on Thursday.

"Nepal facing 'human catastrophe' similar to India's amid Covid surge," said the Guardian.

The New York Times led its web front page with an AP image of burning funeral pyres of the Covid-19 dead, at Pashupati Aryaghat.

Amid criticism of his government's poor response to the pandemic and inaction to save people's lives, Oli on May 3 made a clarion call to the international community, urging it to supply vaccines and lend other support.

Analysts, however, say despite the country plunging deep into a virus crisis, Oli has shown no urgency to make genuine efforts to control the pandemic. The callousness Oli has demonstrated towards the plight of the people who are suffering and dying from the coronavirus is stark, they say.

"For Oli, people don't matter; they are mere voters for him," said Surendra Lath, a political commentator. "People's sufferings do not worry him. He is just worried about protecting his chair and his politics."

(Binod Ghimire contributed reporting)

Government of Nepal
Ministry of Water Supply
Department of Water Supply and Sewerage Management
Urban Water Supply and Sanitation (Sector) Project
PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE
Panipokhari, Kathmandu

Notice of Intent to Award Contract
(Date of publication: 7 May 2021)

As per Invitation for Bid published on 25 February 2021, the employer hereby publishes this notice of intent to award the contract to the following mentioned lowest evaluated substantially responsive bidder as per Clause 27 of the Public Procurement Act 2063 and Clause 40.1 of Instruction to Bidders. Following the deadline of this notice, the employer will go on recognizing the bid eligible to be approved.

Contract Number	Details of Work	Lowest Evaluated Substantially Responsive Bidder	Corrected evaluated bid amount NPR (inclusive of 13% VAT)
UWSSP/OCB-15/Sharadanagar Chitwan	Construction of Sharadanagar Water Supply and Sanitation Project, Chitwan	M/S Sharma & Co. Pvt. Ltd.	NPR 339,084,869.97

Project Director

Government of Nepal
Ministry of Physical Infrastructure & Transport
Department of Roads
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IMPLEMENTATION DIVISION
STRATEGIC ROAD CONNECTIVITY AND TRADE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
Jwagal, Lalitpur

Amendment to the Invitation for Prequalification

Notice No.: SRCTIP/8/2077-78, RFP Notice No. : SRCTIP/5/077-78 and REOI Notice No. : SRCTIP/9/2077-78
Amendment Notice Publication : May 7, 2021

It is notified that the deadline for submission of (i) Applications for prequalification (ii) RFP and (iii) REOI for following contracts are extended as mentioned in the table below. Furthermore, details of the amendment are also available in the website mentioned below.

Notice No	Contract Identification Number	Amendment on	Details of the amendment available on
SRCTIP/8/2077-78 (First Publication Date 25th March, 2021)	SRCTIP-DOR-W-NNM-ICB-3	Deadline for Prequalification Application Submission and Opening. Application submission deadline is 27th May, 2021 Time 12:00 Hours Local Time. The opening of the Applications - 27th May, 2021 Time 14:00 Hours Local Time	Public Procurement Monitoring Office website http://bolpatri.gov.np and DoR's website: https://dor.gov.np/home/notices
SRCTIP/5/077-78 (First Publication Date 25th December, 2020)	SRCTIP-DOR-CS-QCBS-11; Consultancy Service for Conducting Road User Satisfaction Survey and Preparation of Necessary Reports	RFP Document. Deadline for RFP 1st June, 2021 Time : 13:00 Hours Local Time; Opening on 1st June, 2021, Time: 14:00 Hours Local Time.	Submission is DoR's website: https://dor.gov.np/home/notices
SRCTIP/9/077-78 (First Publication Date 26 April, 2021)	SRCTIP-DOR-CS-IND-13; Hiring of Individual Consultant - Financial Management Consultant (FMC) SRCTIP-DOR-CS-IND-15; Hiring of Individual Consultant-Social Development Advisor (SDA) SRCTIP-DOR-CS-IND-16; Hiring of Individual Consultant-Environmental Advisor (EA)	REOI Notice The Expression of Interest submission deadline is extended up to 31st May, 2021.	DoR's website: https://dor.gov.np/home/notices

Project Director

Pandemic is getting out of hand, as government has its focus misplaced

>> Continued from page 1

"As we are not working with any other options, extending prohibitory orders is the only choice we have at present," said an official at the Health Ministry who spoke on condition of anonymity.

A Cabinet meeting presided over by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on April 19 had decided to resume contact tracing, increase testing, and set up quarantine, isolation and holding centres. But even after 17 days of nationwide contact tracing has resumed, no quarantine, isolation centres and holding centres have been set up.

The Ministry of Health has issued a statement requesting local levels to resume contact tracing but they haven't done so. Local level representatives say they lack resources.

"When a decision made by the Cabinet itself is not implemented, what else can be implemented," said the official who spoke anonymously.

After hospitals started to get overwhelmed, the Health Ministry last week threw its hands up, saying the situation had become unmanageable. After much criticism, the ministry, in a damage control bid, said it was adding beds and isolation centres.

Experts, however, say without fulfilling the basic requirements like contact tracing and testing, the chain of infection cannot be broken. Government officials have another excuse for not resuming contact tracing.

"We do not have sufficient antigen test kits to conduct tests after contact tracing," said Mahendra Shrestha, chief specialist at the ministry.

When the Post spoke with Shrestha, there was a meeting going on at the ministry on how to fly in antigen test kits now that international flights have been halted.

But such tests need to be done in huge numbers. As the second wave hit India in early April and cases started to rise in Nepal, authorities ordered antigen tests at border points. But they were done in limited numbers.

Public health experts say allowing people to go home without testing will spell catastrophe.

"Didn't they know tests are necessary and for that testing kits are required? Sufficient testing kits in stock should have been ensured before enforcing a ban on international flights," Dr GD Thakur, former director at the Epidemiology and Disease Control Division, said.

"No agency is taking it seriously and coordination is lacking not only between the inter-government agencies but also within the different agencies of a particular ministry."

With no testing, there is no contact tracing. Authorities are therefore focused on increasing the number of hospital beds, whether it is Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli or Kathmandu Metropolitan City Mayor Bidya Sundar Shakyu.

Unless there is widespread testing and contact tracing, for now, lockdown seems to be the only answer.

Officials as of now see lockdowns as the only way to check the spread.

But despite the prohibitory orders enforced in most of the districts, the number of new cases has not been declining. Almost half of the people tested have positive results.

"Situation has become very grave," admitted Shrestha, the chief specialist at the Health Ministry.

Some Health Ministry officials say even the prohibitory orders came a bit late.

According to them, had the agencies concerned implemented their recommendations and enforced lockdown some three weeks earlier, infections would not have been widespread in communities and health facilities would not have been overwhelmed.

The Ministry had issued a statement about a month ago to shut down schools but the Education Ministry issued another statement asking schools to continue in-person classes.

Experts had warned against large crowds, but political leadership encouraged rallies. Beer festivals were held and an international cricket tournament was organised in the Capital.

But unless there is widespread testing and contact tracing, for now, lockdown seems to be the only answer. Officials now see prohibitory orders could be in place for as long as three months.

"Lockdown has to be extended to lessen the pressure on hospitals," Dr Sher Bahadur Pun, chief of the Clinical Research Unit at the Sukraraj Hospital told the Post.



Government of Nepal
Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport
Department of Roads
Development Cooperation Implementation Division
STRATEGIC ROAD CONNECTIVITY AND TRADE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (SRCTIP)
Jwagal, Lalitpur

AMENDMENT ON REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
Contract No. SRCTIP-DOR-CS-QCBS- 11
AMENDMENT No.-1

Name of Consulting Services: - **Consultancy Service for Conducting Road User Satisfaction Survey and Preparation of Necessary Reports**

Contract Identification No. **SRCTIP-DOR-CS-QCBS- 11**

As per the provision of Instruction to Consultants ITC 13: Clarification and Amendments of RFP, Amendment No.-1 has been issued as per following:

Amendment On	Amended As
The provision in Section 2. Instructions to Consultants E. Data Sheet, RFP page number 33 ITC Reference 17.7 and 17.9: The Proposal must be submitted no later than: 17 May, 2021	Section 2. Instructions to Consultants E. Data Sheet ITC Reference 17.7 and 17.9: The Proposal must be submitted no later than: 1st June, 2021
The provision in Section 2. Instructions to Consultants E. Data Sheet, RFP page number 31 ITC Reference 12.1: Proposals shall be valid for 120 calendar days after proposal submission deadline i.e. until 14 September, 2021	Section 2. Instructions to Consultants E. Data Sheet ITC Reference 12.1: Proposals shall be valid for 120 calendar days after proposal submission deadline i.e. until 29 September, 2021