The telecom equipment procurement process has raised concerns about transparency and fair competition. Citizens and stakeholders are calling for a thorough investigation into the selection process to ensure that the procurement of the equipment for TERAMOCS is conducted in a fair and lawful manner. The procurement process has cast doubt on the government’s intentions, leading to questions about the rule of law.

Governing Issues of the Week

1. According to the Turnaround Board, a staggering 117,287 tourists visited Lumbini in the month of October, marking the highest number of visitors in a single month to date. This record was realized particularly because of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a remarkable 6.04% growth compared to October 2019, when 110,622 tourists visited. Cumulatively, from January to October 2021, tourists visiting Nepal increased by 3.69%, representing a significant increase in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a remarkable 6.04% growth compared to October 2019.

2. Nepal’s telecommunications sector has become the center of a heated debate as the government launches the Telecommunication Traffic Monitoring and Fraud (TERAMOCS) project. Initiated under the Telecommunication Act of 2053, the government insists that TERAMOCS is essential for maintaining law and order and does not infringe upon citizens’ right to privacy. Nevertheless, actions taken during the equipment procurement process have raised serious concerns about corruption and irregularities within the telecommunications sector. The project, aimed at the development of various aspects of the telecommunications sector, has been pending with the Ministry of Home Affairs for over four years.

3. A bill aimed at amending and streamlining election-related laws has been pending with the Ministry of Home Affairs for over four years. The bill is part of an effort to address issues related to continuous voter registration, among other matters. The bill was introduced to the ministry on December 29, 2021. The Chief Election Commissioner has been pending with the Ministry of Home Affairs for over four years. The bill is part of an effort to address issues related to continuous voter registration, among other matters. The bill was introduced to the ministry on December 29, 2021.

4. The Lumbini Development Board has accelerated the tender process for the construction of the Lumbini Museum. The board has undertaken several measures to expedite the process, including the issuance of a revised tender document and the appointment of a technical committee to evaluate the bids.

5. The budget session of Nepal’s Federal Parliament, lasting six months, will focus on discussions related to meter badge (loan shark) victims. Out of the 180 days of the session, 43 days are allocated to discussions related to meter badge (loan shark) victims, a significant increase from the 39 days allocated in the previous budget session.

6. The project, aimed at the development of Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha, is still under the vision of the then-UN Secretary-General U Thant to Lumbini in 1967, is still in its infancy. The project, initiated under the leadership of the Lumbini Development Project, has incurred expenditures exceeding NPR 10 billion. The project is expected to provide significant benefits to the local community and the tourism industry.

7. Nepal has disposed of its armoured police force to begin the renovation and maintenance of boundary pillars along the Nepal-India border. This move comes as both countries reassess their understanding of the border between two countries, leading to challenges such as COVID-19 have delayed progress. The armed police force will work on restoring approximately 3,853 boundary pillars along the Nepal-India border, a significant milestone in addressing long-standing border disputes.

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