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## BRIEFLY

### » Move for health

Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay will lead the move for health walk team from Khasadrapchu middle secondary school today at 8.30am. The team is expected to reach the clock tower square, Thimphu by 1.40pm after two stops at Namseling and Babesa. More than 2,000 people are expected to join the walk themed, 'invest in health.'

## What's Inside

**Pg.3:** Expert group discuss joint technical survey modalities

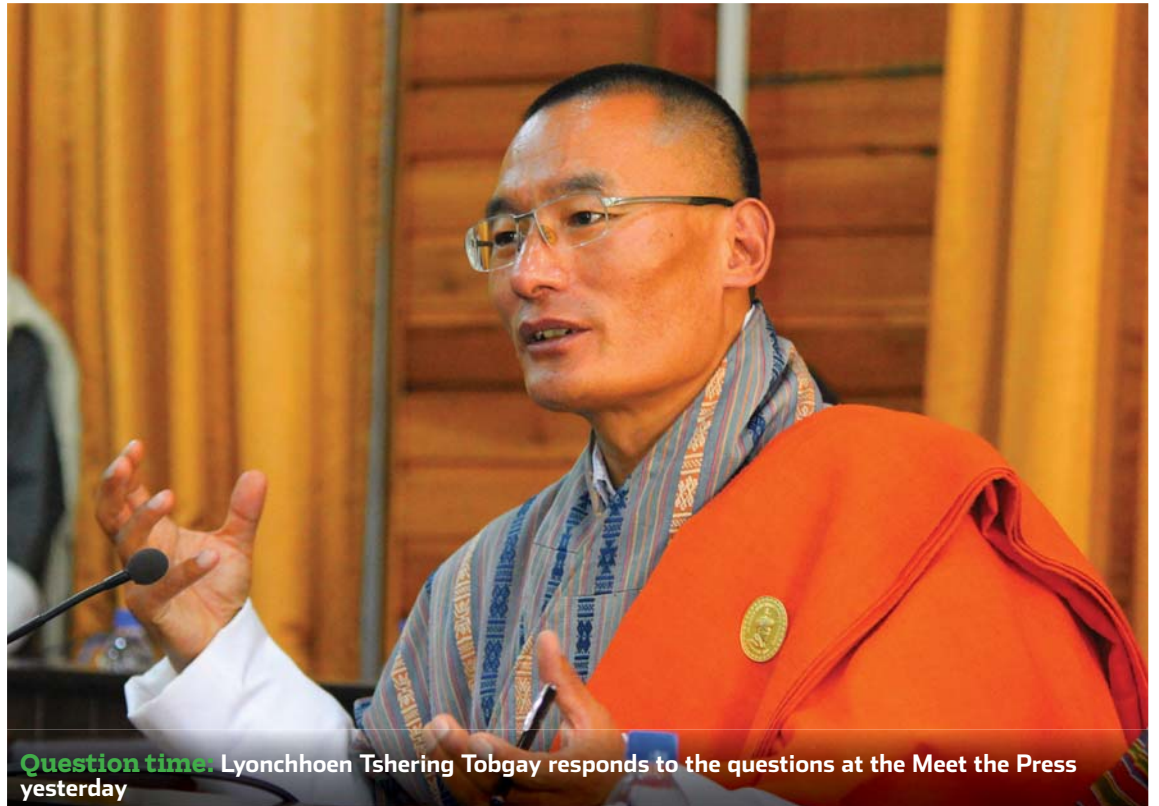
**Pg.8:** Annual inflation rate on the rise : CPI

**Pg.12:** Unlicensed guides clutter up an already crowded field

**Pg.17:** India still committed to 10,000MW by 2020

## FOCUS Point

Testing fit!



**Question time.** Lyonchhoen Tshering Tobgay responds to the questions at the Meet the Press yesterday

# Google Apps yet to be taken all on board

*Some govt. agencies have been slow to make the switch though their accounts are being paid for*

**Gyalsten K Dorji | Thimphu**

Concerns are being raised that some government agencies are transitioning to the online office suite, Google Apps, too slowly and, therefore, wasting resources.

**ICT**

Since it was launched in June, 3,653 Google Apps accounts have been activated, based on statistics available with the Department of Information Technology and Telecom (DITT).

However, not even half of

these accounts are being used today. Only 1,467 Google Apps accounts are being used as of Thursday.

The government is paying around Nu 1,900 or USD 30 for each account for the first year of its subscription.

**Pg.18**

# Govt. will not interfere in corporate pay raise: PM

*Corporations have been given leeway, it appears, to go ahead with their salary revision*

**Tshering Dorji | Thimphu**

Corporate sectors, including the state-owned enterprises, could go ahead with salary revision of their employees, if they can afford to do so,

**WAGES**

the Prime Minister, Tshering Tobgay, indicated yesterday.

With the civil service salary revised, employees of corporations have been expecting a similar revision.

Earlier in 2011, based on the affordability of each state-owned companies, the finance ministry came out with a broad guideline to revise the salary of corporate employees, including the pay structure. **Pg.2**



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# Cabinet overrules decision for NC

*The NC will no more have to route through the Cabinet Secretary and can communicate directly with the ministers*

## Tshering Palden

The Cabinet overturned the Committee of Secretaries' (CoS) decision to bring closure to an impasse between the National Council and Cabinet secretariat that prevented deliberations on the Right to Information bill in the last session and made it a disputed bill.

## PROCEDURE

Lyonchhoen Tshering Tobgay said the government has decided to respect the National Council rules of procedure even though they are not passed by the Parliament to the extent that other Acts and the Constitution are also respected.

"What we have decided is that National Council should inform the ministers rather than the cabinet secretary on the condition that the matter is of national importance and that the minister would send the most appropriate person to

the committee's requests or its instructions," Lyonchhoen said.

He said the government hoped that this decision would resolve the issue and that the government has to date also didn't want to overrule the committee of secretaries' decisions.

"However, having been made aware of the Council's concerns repeatedly, we discussed this at length and that the channel of communication should be independent but should be through the ministers and the ministers should decide who should attend."

National Council's spokesperson and deputy chairman, Tshering Dorji, said the government took a wise decision in overturning the CoS's decision.

"Council communicating directly with the ministers to seek information or summon officials to make presentations was the norm before and what we had requested through a resolution," he said, adding

that this process would greatly facilitate the house of review in discharging its duties.

The Council in their resolution passed in the 13th session stated that the National Council Act, 2008 empowers its chairperson to summon any person to attend the proceedings of the house for the purpose of giving evidence, provide information or produce documents in that person's custody or control.

The resolution also cites section 39 of the council's Act, which says, "A member shall have the right to be provided with information by the Government and to inspect any official document on any matter of relevance in the exercise of his parliamentary mandates".

It asked the government to immediately rescind any office order or notification that may have been issued by any person or institution under the Executive, including the Lhengye Zhungtshog, such as the decision of the Committee

of Secretaries concerning the correspondences with the National Council that violates any provision of the Constitution or other laws.

The CoS decision taken during the last interim government required all requests from the National Council to be routed through the Cabinet secretary, which the Council said violated the principles and provisions of the Constitution and the National Council Act.

While the NC's foreign relations committee repeatedly sought presentations on the RTI from the information and communications ministry, the ministry said the request had to be routed through the cabinet secretary. But routing the request through the cabinet secretariat was deemed as executive meddling with the affairs of the legislative arm. It was also not the norm. Thus the standoff continued.

The Prime Minister then intervened and instructed the

Cabinet secretariat to ask the MoIC to make the presentation on the bill.

When the Council deliberated the bill, the foreign relations committee chairperson reported that since the Committee could not get a presentation on time from the Ministry of Information and Communications, it could not conduct consultative meetings with relevant stakeholders and carry out in-depth study on the Bill.

The bill was then declared a disputed bill, ironically without any deliberations at the house of review.

Lyonchhoen said the Cabinet is also reviewing the committee of secretaries and its relevance.

"As far as the CoS is concerned, the Cabinet also decided to review the whole committee and to find out the legal basis, the overall objectives, and the continuing relevance of it," Lyonchhoen said. "Based on that the Cabinet will decide."

## Govt. will not interfere in corporate pay raise: PM

### From Pg. 1

The Cabinet then decided on the raise, and companies were also given the choice to go lower than the percent the government prescribed. The raise came into effect after about six months since the civil servants' salary was revised.

However, Lyonchhoen said the government does not have unilateral authority to increase salaries and allowance at its whims. He said any revision in pay and allowances are bound by rule of law.

With regard to the civil servants and public servants, including the local government, the Prime Minister said a pay commission should be formed.

For state-owned enterprises, including the DHI companies, Lyonchhoen said they have their own way of establishing remuneration.

"All companies have their own charters, which define how

and who would increase the pay and allowances," he said adding that it was neither the role of government nor would it interfere.

In earlier revisions, salaries of corporate employees are maintained 15 percent higher than civil servants. "But bottom line now is how much the companies can afford," he said.

For the companies that are subsidised, Lyonchhoen said that the companies have to justify the subsidy thoroughly to the government.

The total pay and allowances of Nu 478.530M for the SOEs constitutes about 16 percent of their annual gross revenues. Should the pay and allowances of SOEs be maintained at 15 percent higher than the civil servants', the proposed increase of civil servants' pay and allowances will translate into additional Nu 71.78M.

According to the second

pay commission's report, published in March, considering the performance and expenditure growth in past five years of the SOEs, the gross revenue would be sufficient to meet the 15 percent increase in their pay and allowances, except for the Wood Craft Center, Bhutan Post, and Bhutan Broadcasting Service.

"The SOEs under finance ministry will have to meet any salary revisions through gains in efficiency and reduction in other operating costs as the government may not provide any funds for meeting the salary revision cost," states the pay commission's report.

For DHI, the remuneration of the employees, the royal charter that formed the investment arm of the government, empowers the DHI board to determine the pay and allowances.

Meanwhile, DHI has al-

ready formed a task force to study the possibility of pay revision.

DHI chairman, Dasho Sangay Khandu, earlier told Kuensel that the task force would first study the inflation rate and corresponding erosion in purchasing power of money, besides looking into the external factors like revenue, profit and growth of each companies.

He, however, said it would not be fair to base the revision on individual company's performance. For instance, the Druk Green Power cor-

poration, which is the highest revenue generating company, can afford a bigger raise, but it is the national resource the company is banking on. "We can't take what we think we can afford also," he said in earlier interview.

Some SOE's, excluding the DHI-owned or linked companies, are waiting for the finance ministry's direction or guidelines, because this was the norm in the past.

But it seems that it need not wait for the direction, as indicated by the Prime Minister.

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