



FORUM
Dr. Prabin Manandhar



OPINION
Dipak Gyawali



VIEWPOINT
François-Xavier Léger

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World Disability Day 2020

One Bhatta's Tale

INSIDE



POLITICS
Upsurge For Monarchy



CHANDRA PRASAD DHAKAL
Goodwill Winner



FOREIGN POLICY 2020
Bundle Of Jargons



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Every year, the global community celebrates the World Disability Day with fanfare and slogans to safeguard rights of people with disability. Nepal is no exception. However, the sufferings and difficulties of large numbers of people with disability are yet to be addressed. With over 500,000 people with disability, as per Nepal government's census of 2011 and over 4500000 people as per the WHO model, Nepal has just recently started to recognize the people with disability as a distinct group and providing them limited amount of money under the social welfare scheme. Under Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI), various organizations have been effortful at making organization structures and infrastructure inclusive. As people with disability is also a broader aspect of GESI, many people interpret it as inclusion of women and other groups and discard the inclusion of people with disabilities and other sexual minorities. Although the government has announced several policies and programs directed at the welfare of people with disabilities, only a small number of people with disabilities are benefiting from it. From physical infrastructure to legal and policy level, there are many barriers. Despite legal provisions to make all service delivery offices accessible with construction ramps, overwhelming numbers of physical infrastructure are inaccessible. Similarly, public transport is also unfriendly to people with disability. Monthly social welfare allowances provided by the government are too small and too little. Although local levels are given the right to take care of the social welfare of people with disability, they are yet to develop the institution to carry out their role. Given the present scenario, we have covered a story of Nannda Raj Bhatta, a representative of the People with Disability, from Sudupashchim province. Bhatta, who writes from mouth and foot, shows a way how people with disability can live in self sufficiency.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

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Friend In Deed

By providing more than 100 ventilators and other materials to Nepal in response to COVID-19, the United States has shown its commitments towards helping Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

With the increase of COVID-19 related cases, demands for ventilators and ICU bed have also increased. However, Nepal is unable to fulfill the demands. At a time when Nepal desperately needs ventilators, U.S. comes to rescue Nepal from the health catastrophe, donating 100 ventilators, which is equivalent to existing numbers of ventilators in Nepal.

On November 13, 2020, the United States government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), donated 100 state-of-the-art ventilators to Nepal to assist its fight against COVID-19. For more than 70 years, through disaster, conflict and rough times, the United States has stood by Nepal in partnership and, continuing this collaboration, it was helping the people of Nepal through the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This is a great support for us at the time of major crisis. With these ventilators, Nepal’s health system will be now able to provide much needed life saving support to large number of patients of COVID-19,” said Minister of Health and Population Bhanubhakta Dhakal. Dhakal thanked US government for its continuation support in modernizing Nepal’s health sector.

As minister Dhakal said US has been providing much needed support to Nepal’s health sector since last seven decades or establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

From early stage of Nepal’s health sector development, U.S. has remained a major development partner providing all kinds of support to Nepal’s health sector, from community to policy levels.

As the United States, the world, and Nepal confront an increase in COVID-19 cases, America stands with the Nepali people to combat the pandemic that has hit both the countries hard. To help relieve the pressure on some of the most critical cases, the U.S. government is providing these highly versatile ventilators to help even the most remote communities. They are compact, deployable, and provide Nepal with portable flexibility in treating patients affected by the virus. For COVID-19 patients whose lungs are not

working adequately, this vital resource may prove life-saving.

During the event, U.S. Ambassador Randy Berry stated, “The United States remains committed to its partnership with Nepal through the best and worst of times. With these ventilators, we want to help Nepali families be prepared to help their loved ones that are the most affected by COVID-19.”

In addition to the ventilators, USAID activities have also supported 113 municipal contact tracing and case investigation teams, provided COVID-19 telephone counseling to almost two million families, conduct-

ed remote health counseling with more than 500,000 families during the lockdowns, identified more than 60,000 food insecure families and referred them to food aid programs, and reached more than 14 million people with mass media messages about COVID-19.

USAID is also funding a tailored package of ventilator support that

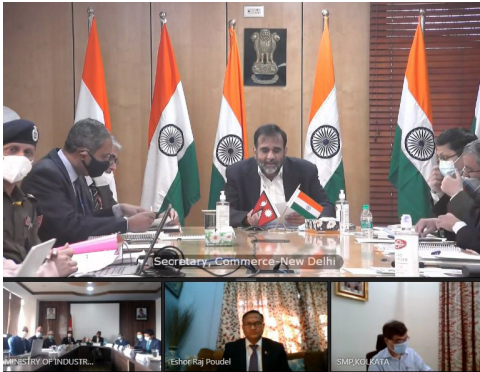


includes accompanying equipment, service plans, and technical assistance. This donation builds on the \$28.3 million (3.4 billion NPR) to active projects that USAID has committed to Nepal in response to the pandemic. The United States is committed to providing an All-of-America approach for life-saving support by coordinating with the Government of Nepal.

By providing 100 ventilators at the midst of major health crisis in Nepal, U.S has shown once again its commitment to health sector of Nepal. This is what makes U.S a friend in need for Nepal.

NEWSNOTES

Nepal-India IGC Meet On Trade, Transit And Cooperation



The Commerce Secretaries of India and Nepal co-chaired the meeting of the Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) on Trade, Transit and Cooperation to Control Unauthorized Trade that was held through

video conferencing.

Anup Wadhawan, Commerce Secretary, Government of India was accompanied by the Ambassador of India to Nepal Vinay Mohan Kwatra and a 15 member delegation drawn from various Ministries and the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu, while his counterpart, Dr. Baikuntha Aryal, Secretary (Commerce & Supplies) of Nepal was assisted by representatives of various Ministries and Departments of Government of Nepal.

The IGC is the apex bilateral mechanism for promotion of trade and investments between the two countries. The meeting reviewed progress made on several notable agenda items in the sphere of trade and commerce.

“These included discussions on comprehensive reviews of the Treaty of Transit and the Treaty of Trade, amendments to the Rail Services Agreements, measures taken for investment promotion, constitution of Joint Business Forum, harmonization of standards as well as synchronized development of trade infrastructure on the two sides. The two sides also discussed in detail various Government-level initiatives that need to be taken in future for further enhancing trade and commercial linkages,” stated a press release issued by Embassy of India Kathmandu.

The Inter-Governmental Sub-Committee (IGSC) at the level of Joint Secretaries met on 3-4 December 2020 in the preparation for IGC meeting.

EU Applauds Nepal For Commitment To Improve Air Safety

The European Union and its member states congratulate Nepal for International Civil Aviation Day that aims to generate awareness on the importance of international civil aviation for the social and economic development of the nation to cooperate and realise safe, efficient and sustainable air transportation.

“We applaud the Government of Nepal for its firm commitment to im-

prove safety mechanisms as progress has been made in recent years to address the challenges of aviation safety. The Commission is aware of the efforts that have been undertaken by the country, notably as regards the proposed new aviation legislation currently before Nepal Parliament. It would be key for this legislation to be adopted by the Parliament and subsequently implemented. This would allow the Commission to advance with the process of eventually removing Nepal from the EU Air Safety List: standard process specifically includes i) organising a technical meeting (in Brussels) with CAAN to review the progress made; ii) organising a subsequent on-site visit to Nepal by DG MOVE, EASA, and air safety experts from Member States, which is needed in order to make a determination about the effective implementation of the safety enhancements, and iii) enacting the eventual removal from the EU Air Safety List by way of a Commission proposal to be endorsed by the EU Air Safety Committee,” stated a press release issued by Delegation of the European Union to Nepal.

French Ambassador Hands Over Photos Herzog To Museum

Ambassador François-Xavier Léger handed over Photos of the French climber Maurice Herzog and the first successful Annapurna ascent to the International Mountain Museum, Pokhara.

Minister for Industry, Tourism, Forest and Environment of the Gandaki Province, Bikash Lamsal, and the members of the Nepal Mountaineering Association were also present during the program.

In his remarks, Ambassador Léger recollected the important contribution of Nepali Sherpas to the success of the mission and termed it a Franco-Nepali expedition. Ambassador Léger also read out a message from Elizabeth Herzog, spouse of late Maurice Herzog, in which she thanked the Nepali authorities and the museum for providing a space which is a tribute to both the Nepali and the French members of the expedition team.

On the occasion, Minister Lamsal recalled the importance of Herzog’s expedition in the development of the tourism in Nepal and how he (Herzog) helped spread the word about Annapurna and Nepal throughout the world through his book “Annapurna”.

Mrs Elizabeth Herzog from her home town Cham-onix France also sent a message to the program. “Although I would have loved to be with you all today for this important occasion but am unable to do so due to the current health crisis. I am extremely grateful to the Nepali authorities and to the International Mountain Museum for making this exhi-



bition possible and for providing a space. I am sure that my husband would have been very happy today to see his 1950 French expedition team be celebrated in Pokhara, 70 years after the first successful summit of an 8000m peak by him and his teammate Louis Lachenal. You know how attached my husband was to Nepal and having a space dedicated for this expedition in the International Mountain Museum means a lot to us. This is also a tribute to the Nepali Sherpas who accompanied the French expedition team. We are forever grateful to them for without their support, this ambitious mission to climb the first 8000-m would not have been possible at all,” said Mrs Elizabeth Herzog in her message.

Ambassadors Present Credentials To President Bhandari

Newly appointed ambassadors from Thailand Vosita Vorasaph, state of Israel Hanan Goder-Goldberger, Bangladesh Salahuddin Noman Chowdhury and ambassador from Myanmar Sein Oo



presented their letter of credence to president Bidhya Devi Bhandari at Shitalniwas amid a special function.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, chief of Army Staff Purna Chandra Thapa, secretaries of President Office, and high officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were present on the occasion.

Save The Children Calls For Protection Of Children

In the context of the increased incidences of violence against children in the country, Save the Children condemns such acts against children, particularly the sexual violence against girls.

Save the Children calls upon the federal and local government, and all relevant stakeholders to take strong actions to protect children of Nepal. As enshrined in the Constitution of Nepal, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Child Rights Act 2018, we urge the government to uphold the Rights of Children, ensure protection mechanism is mobilized effectively and efficient to protect children and prevents such cases from happening in the future.

“The recent reported cases of violence underscore the need for all acts of violence against children to be reported to the authorities and dealt with by the legal system. We urge the law enforcement agencies and judicial system to ensure swift application of legal redress,” said Jennifer Syed, Country

Director of Save the Children in Nepal.

Save the Children believes that it is possible to create a safer world for children. While fulfilling our own responsibility towards children, we would like to urge all relevant bodies to prioritize protection of children and respond to violence against children, including girls and women.



ADB Approves \$160 Million Loan To Upgrade Power Grids

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$156 million concessional loan to modernize power transmission and distribution systems in Nepal.

While majority of Nepal’s population has access to grid-supplied electricity, there is a need to increase the capacity and reach of power distribution networks to meet current and future demands, improve reliability and quality of supply, and reduce losses. The Electricity Grid Modernization Project will finance the automation of grid substations throughout the country, modernize distribution and transmission systems in various areas, complete the installation of smart meters in the Kathmandu Valley, and support sector reform and institutional strengthening of the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA).

“ADB has been actively involved in major policy and institutional reforms in the power sector, and this project is a continuation of our support to provide reliable and efficient electricity supply in the country,” said ADB Principal Energy Specialist Jiwan Acharya. “Moreover, this project will position Nepal to be better prepared in its post-pandemic economic rebuilding.”

The project will, among others, automate 34 existing grid substations, install 220-kilovolt (kV) and 132-kV automated grid substations, construct a total of 113 kilometers (km) of new transmission lines, upgrade 144 km of existing transmission lines with efficient conductors, and expand the installation of smart meters for 350,000 electricity consumers in the Kathmandu Valley. An electricity distribution system command and control center in Kathmandu will also be constructed.



BUSINESS BRIEF

NIBL Opens 126th ATM In Kathmandu



Nepal Investment Bank Ltd. a leading 'A' category bank, has expanded its operations by opening its 126th ATM at Chunnikhel Marg, Budhanilkantha Municipality.

According to a press release issued by the bank, the ATM is located within the premises of Karuna Hospital and was inaugurated jointly by NIBL Deputy General Manager Bijendra Suwal, Budhanilkantha Nagarpalika Chairperson Shree Krishna Shrestha, Monasteries Development Committee Chairperson Bhicchu Thupten Jigdol and Karuna Hospital Chairperson Tirthalal Shrestha

NIBL has been catering to its customers from 83 branches, 126 ATMs, 19 extension counters, 10 revenue collection counters and 56 branchless banking counters. The bank, being the recipient of five Bank of the Year awards for exemplary service and business, was accredited with Euromoney awards for "Best Bank 2018" from the international publication - Euromoney. Further, ICRA Nepal (International Credit Rating Agency- Nepal) has given the bank a credit rating of A.

UK Provides Rs 678M To Groups Vulnerable To Covid-19

The UK government has provided £4.49 million (Rs 678 million) to help Nepal's most vulnerable people cope with the Covid-19 pandemic and provide food security and nutrition recovery support to their families.

The aid from the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office will allow the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to support close to 65,000 people affected by the socio-economic impact of Covid-19 with cash-based assistance.

According to the WFP, the assistance is part of its Livelihoods and Economic Recovery Project to help improve livelihoods and reduce food insecurity in five vulnerable districts of Province 2, Karnali and Sudur-Paschim provinces.

In rural areas across the country, the pandemic has destroyed work and livelihood opportunities for many households.

Currently, over 20 per cent of households in Nepal are severely food insecure while around 43 per cent of children between 6 to 23 months do not have enough variety in their diet, WFP said in a statement.

Additionally, the WFP said the pandemic has severely affected those families with vulnerable members, including the disabled, elderly, children, family members suffering from Covid-19 or with pre-existing medical conditions, as well as pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers.

WFP said the UK aid will help support these vulnerable groups through its various nutrition and livelihood projects.

"I am proud that we are providing UK aid to help some of the poor and vulnerable people of Nepal, particularly mothers and children, who have been especially hard hit. My thanks go to our WFP partners for joining us in this effort and helping us to make it happen," said Lisa Honan, development director at British Embassy in Kathmandu.

For those families who cannot take part in the livelihood project's 'cash for work' activities, the WFP said it will provide unconditional cash support to protect them against resorting to negative coping mechanisms such as eating fewer and smaller meals, child labour or child marriage.

NMB Bags Award

NMB Bank has been awarded the prestigious 'Bank of the Year-2020' by The Banker, The Financial Times, London, for the third time in four years.

The bank has had a remarkable growth trajectory evidently reflected in the growth in its balance sheet size and its balanced network expansion that covers urban-semi urban and rural corners of the country, as per a press statement.

NMB has positioned itself as the bank that does things differently and translated the same in its core focus areas: Renewable energy, agriculture, MSMEs/ SMEs, and digitisation.

The 'Bank of the Year' award defines banking excellence globally.

The winners are judged on the basis of their ability to deliver returns to shareholders, bank's financial performance, shareholders' value, customers' initiative, amongst others parameters.



Nepal To Import 250 MW Of Electricity From India For Winter

The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) is going to import up to 250 megawatt of electricity from India to ensure smooth supply of electricity during the winter, according to a RSS report.

The water level in the river recedes in the winter, especially during January, February and March, leading to lesser generation of power in the hydro power projects.

The NEA had placed a request with the government of India to procure electricity from December 1, 2020 to June next year.

Authority's Executive Director Hitendra Dev Shakya shared that the Indian side had approved the request.

Out of 250 MW electricity, 80 to 150 MW is needed for consumption for 24 hours while the rest would be used when needed.

Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Barshaman Pun, who also chairs NEA's Board of Directors, had directed the NEA to ensure quality and smooth supply of electricity to its consumers.



Laxmi Signs MoUs

Laxmi Bank has signed separate memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with Tribeni and Banphikot Gaupalika of Rukum-West to extend subsidised loans in agriculture sector to various farmers' groups, entrepreneurs, firms as well as cooperatives under recommendation and facilitation of the palika itself, as per a press release.

The agreement was signed by Dipesh Amatya, chief of Retail Financial Services on behalf of the bank whereas the Chairperson Duo Dharma Bahadur KC and Jhakku Prasad Gharti Magar signed the contract on behalf of Banphikot and Tribeni Gaupalika, respectively.

Ajaya Bikram Shah, CEO of Laxmi Bank, said that the bank has always prioritised agriculture sector.

Nabil Bank, Daraz Launch Sarathi

Nepal's leading commercial bank, Nabil Bank, and leading online marketplace, Daraz, have jointly launched the Sarathi Programme.

Under this strategic partnership, small and medium enterprises (SME) selling via Daraz online shopping marketplace will be able to obtain a wide range of credit facilities and benefits which they can use to grow their business, as per a media release.

This SME lending programme is a new merit-based approach with credit scoring, considering data points from Daraz and scorecard model of Nabil Bank.

That means sellers that perform well on Daraz get better credit offering. Under the Sarathi Programme, SME sellers

can get financing under different categories.

They will also be able to avail SME loan of up to Rs 10 million, especially designed for Daraz sellers at attractive interest rates.

Sukuntalal Hirachan Elected FNCCI Treasurer

Sukuntalal Hirachan has been elected as the new treasurer of Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI).

He was elected as the new treasurer of the FNCCI by defeating his contender DB Basnet. Hirachan is also an advisor to Federation of Contractors' Associations of Nepal.

The executive committee of the FNCCI elects the treasurer from among the executive committee members.

With the newly elected treasurer, the executive committee of the FNCCI has now got a full shape. Newly elected treasurer Hirachan has also taken the oath of office and secrecy, according to the FNCCI.

Hirachan will succeed Nirak KC as the FNCCI treasurer. Earlier, the FNCCI got the new executive com-



mittee led by its new president Shekhar Golchha. While Golchha was automatically elevated to the post of president from senior vice president, Chandra Prasad Dhakal was elected the senior vice president of the FNCCI.

10 MW Solar Plant To Be Installed At Gautam Buddha Airport

A 10 MW solar plant will be installed at the Gautam Buddha International Airport (GBIA) that is under construction in Bhairahawa of Rupandehi district.

The Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation and Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation discussed the possibility of electricity supply by setting up a solar plant at the airport.

The meeting has directed the concerned officials at the two ministries and Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) to prepare a detailed blueprint for the establishment of solar plant and submit it to their respective ministers within a week.

There is a plan to operate a 10 MW capacity solar plant on the vacant land of Bhairahawa Airport through the private sector with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Of the Rs 18.5 billion provided by ADB to Nepal for solar plants, the process of generating 5 MW in Jhapa, 7 MW in Butwal, 4 MW in Pokhara and 8 MW in Chanauta has already started. The NEA has also signed power purchase agreements for the plants to be constructed in Butwal and Pokhara.



Namrata Shrestha Wins Miss Nepal 2020

Namrata Shrestha was crowned Miss Nepal World 2020 at the 25th edition of the Hidden Treasure Miss Nepal pageant.

Shrestha bagged the 'Miss Nepal' crown beating 20 other contestants in the grand finale of the pageant, organized at Hotel Park Village in Kathmandu. Chairman of the Hidden Treasure Diwakar Rajkarnik announced Shrestha as the winner of the beauty pageant. Miss Nepal 2019 Anushka Shrestha crowned Shrestha, a teacher by profession.

She was awarded Rs 250,000 cash and a scooter. Similarly, Sandhya Sharma was declared Miss Nepal International and Supriya Shrestha clinched the Miss Nepal Earth title.



Royal Resurgence



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

An old Rig Vedic line praising Goddess of wisdom Saraswati as the Word Supernal points out that until we cleanse our thoughts by getting away from the thrall of improper words, our actions will neither be correct nor lead to worthy ends. This truth has now been brought painfully home to Nepal's current political discourse. Ostensibly noble sounding Left slogans that dominated the country's political thinking for decades are now seen as nothing more than seductive advertising of snake oil salesmen, words such as "*agragaman*" (moving forward or progression as opposed to regression which is "*pratigaman*").

Indeed, the Loktantrick (dis)order of 2005 was gifted by Mughlani spooks and EuroAmerican INGO busybodies to party leaders who had proved dismal failures a decade earlier, but were nevertheless carried to power by a self-styled "civil society" cravenly beholden to those leaders. It is increasingly coming to resemble a bus hastily assembled from junkyard parts post 2015 earthquake, now stuck in a blind alley. Moreover, the drivers and conductors are fighting each other, insisting that they can take it forward despite the impenetrable wall ahead and their demonstrated incompetence of the last three decades in matters related to statesmanship and statecraft.

The duped passengers had been seduced into believing that the only way was forward (*agragaman*) and that the squabbling incompetent drivers would get them to their destination ("*Sambriddhi*" or prosperity). What the Left's distorted discourse has propagandized as regression ("*pratigaman*"), i.e., backing out of the blind alley to the point where the wrong turn was made to head in the right direction, would normally be called a wise move. And for Nepali politics (as well as its international underwriters) that wrong turn is the November 2005 12-Delhi Deal, the subsequent induction into a resurrected but date-expired parliament of Noida-sheltered insurgent terrorists, and the jettisoning of the 1990 constitution.

Politically, the 2005/2006 shenanigans were not what ended the Maoist violence but rather deified and enshrined it in Nepali governance. The indigenous effort to end it was the 29th January 2003 ceasefire that was ultimately sabotaged by both the Mughlanis who felt their

sheltered acolytes were losing their asset value and the political parties who felt the King would get the credit for bringing the violence to a close.

Now, if the massive street demonstrations of the past weeks in major cities of Nepal are any indication, it does seem that many passengers are beginning to have serious second thoughts. In the slogan of demonstrators, one word was jettisoned and replaced by another that signifies a mental cleansing of the political discourse. The slogan of the Monarchists used to be "*Raja aau desh bachau!*" which is now "*Raja lyau desh bachau!*" The shift from "*aau*" to "*lyau*" is significant: it is no longer "O, King! Come save the country!" but "You incompetent party neo-feudals! You better bring the monarchy back to save the country!" It is no longer an appeal of the helpless to the King to come and rescue them: it is a serious warning to the Loktantricksters to move out of the way.

There were also diplomatic messages in the last weeks from our two neighbours that they too see the blind alley Nepali politics is stuck in, that perhaps the drivers as well as the bus itself will be junked anyway. In that eventuality, subtle shifts were apparent in their posture and realignment to protect what they see as their interests in the buffer zone that is Nepal.

Modi's 2015 adventurism with the blockade, which saw him overnight plunge from being the most popular Indian in Nepal to the most despised, cost India dear and perhaps for generations to come. By mistakenly believing that the "roti-beti" relations between the two countries were limited to a few Maithili and Bhojpuri elites of the Tarai between Bagmati and Kosi, they alienated Nepal's majority with multiple relations all over India. In the west Kumaon and Gadhwal to the east in Darjeeling, Sikkim and Assam, as well as in the rest of India from temple priests to businesses to security establishments, Nepal's have rich and close relations in India which suffered grievously. That Modi misadventure also provided the Chinese a diplomatic and psychological lottery windfall for no significant investment at all!

To break the impasse and begin repairing the damage, Modi fell back on his spooks (who ruined relations in the first place with their ill-advised blockade) and sent the RAW chief on a semi-clandestine mission to meet PM Oli

and other political figures. That choice was made mainly it seems because it is not Indian diplomats or political figures the current Nepali leadership listen to: the top honchos are beholden to the Indian intelligence agencies that nurtured and elevated them. It was followed by a ceremonial visit by the Indian army chief to receive the mutual confirming of honorary generalship. What must not be forgotten is that during the critical days of the 2005 November adventurism by the Sonia-led Indian establishment, the Indian army stood against the spooks and South Block proposed regime change in Nepal but lost that battle. Also, it was the pressure of the Indian Army that forced Modi and the spooks faction to lift the 2015 blockade of Nepal.

The subsequent visit by the Indian foreign secretary, leaving aside the procedural and ritual aspects, was significant for one major diplomatic message: his eulogizing King Prithvi Narayan Shah in Gorkha. The 2005 alliance of European proselytizers, Mughlani adventurism and history-distorting Nepali Left opportunism was to undermine the very foundations of Nepali nationhood and portray 240 years of Shah dynasty rule as the darkest period in Nepali history. The new shifting mood, at least in Delhi's corridors of power, seems to be a belated recognition of the need to base relations with Nepal on common cultural and historical foundations, and not on denying and displacing them with liberal Western political philosophy-inspired vision of a future under threat in its own Trumpian and Brexited homelands.

For such a change in mindset, it is imperative to recognize that Nepal's founding King had a seminal role in preserving core cultural elements of South Asia. As the inspirational icon of Nepal Army, which is the oldest surviving Nepali state feature since the side-lining of the monarchy, it must be remembered that it was Prithvi Narayan Shah who succeeded in creating and preserving an independent "Asli Hindustan" in Nepal when Shivaji, Rani of Jhansi, and Ranjit Singh (to say nothing of the Mughlani remnants of Bengali Sultans and Punjabi Nawabs) failed and succumbed to British onslaught.

The Chinese too seem to have similar after thoughts as indicated by the symbolic diplomatic message of the 8-hour Nepal visit of the Chinese defense minister and state councilor. Ostensibly as part of the 65th Anniversary to celebrate the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Gen Wei Fenghe spent the substantive bulk of his time at the Nepal Army headquarters, while meeting the prime minister and president only as a short formality on the way to the airport. There is little doubt that the Chinese, despite attempts to forge party-to-party ties with Nepal's ruling communists, are deeply disappointed with Nepal's feckless kleptocrats, and are struggling to find reliable partners in Nepal that are firm Nepali nationalists but value Chinese friendship.

In light of all these shifts, what is one to make of

the changing Nepali mindset about the failed Loktantrick dispensation, and what would have to replace it? A decade and a half ago, because of the apartheid practiced by the Loktantricksters towards traditional forces including religious ones, none would have dared come out to protest in the streets. Today, they are supported in droves by youth born after the Panchayat system was done away with, by common small-time business folks groaning under a nepotistic kleptocracy and even ordinary members



of Kangress and UML deeply disappointed with their own leaders. A major rupture and breakdown of order is possible where the Nepal Army would have to step in.

However, if a sense of self-preservation prevailed upon the Loktantricksters, a less radical way out would be to go back to the 1990 constitution and start the reform processes from where the wrong turn into the blind alley was made. Such a reform could include even participatory referendum on critical issues of secularism, republicanism and federalism that they fraudulently denied the people between 2006 and 2008. Reforms would have to include preventing legislative representative MPs from becoming executive ministers, a major flaw in the imported Westminster model of democracy where the required separation of powers is violated. And why not? The parties themselves have argued for "one person, one post": why should a member of the legislature be derelict in the duty of oversight on the executive and become simultaneously an expertise-bereft minister?

Other reforms would have to be the need to get at least 50% of the votes in an election, going for run-off among the top two contenders if necessary. These and other such measures will all have to be initiated to improve upon the 1990 constitution. But for that, first this 2015 unworkable dispensation together with the failed leaders of the last three decades must be consigned to the junkyard, peacefully or thrown out by more robust public disgust.

INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY VISIT

Restoring Trust

After completing his visit to Nepal, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Indian Foreign Secretary, has succeeded to restore the trust between the people of two countries

By KESHAB POUDEL

From his first statement delivered at Tribhuvan International Airport VIP lounge to his last statement delivered at a talk program and his remarks in Gorkha, Indian foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla, a highly qualified and capable professional cadre of Indian Foreign Service, did not spare any time while winning the heart and mind of the people.

With a remark in Nepali at Tribhuvan International Airport's VIP lounge saying that he feels like coming home, secretary Shringla started his first official visit winning the heart and mind of people. Native Nepali made a psychological edge over the mind of people.

His praiseworthy remarks on the role of Prithivi Narayan Shah at his birthplace Gorkha was another gesture of respecting Nepal's unification. He paid respect to Prithvi Narayan Shah, founder of modern Nepal who launched the unification motion to make Nepal original Hindustan, for his contribution to expand bravery of Gorkha all over the world including India. This was another soft point which touched sentiments of Nepalis.

Foreign Secretary Shringla travelled to Gorkha and inaugurated three schools construct-

ed with Indian reconstruction assistance. Those include Shree Mahalaxmi, Shree Ratnalaxmi and Shree Tara Secondary Schools. During the inaugural statement, foreign secretary Shringla expressed his regards to founder of modern Nepal.

Frustrated by the role of mainstream political leaders, who denounced and de-

same. He reached to the common people showing proximity of language. He has made efforts to revive and restore people's traditional faith on India. Although one visit cannot make many differences, this visit has opened up to find out common interest and common civilization and culture.

Handled by professional hands of Nepal's Ministry of For-



stroyed the statue of Shaha, Indian foreign secretary's statement revitalized the minds of common people.

Not seen in the last few years, Indian foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla's approach was different although policy remained the

eign Affairs and secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal, the visit of foreign secretary of India set a new tone in the relations between the two countries.

Even political leader including prime minister K.P. Sharma Oli and main opposition leader Sher Ba-

hadur Deuba, who passed the new map in haste last time, came with different tones stressing the need to have dialogue to settle all the bilateral problems.

As they have already passed the map including disputed portion of territory, their recent tone for dialogue has no meaning. By passing

linkages between India and Nepal are so powerful that people in the government only complement these.

Delivering a distinguished lecture at a program organized by Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs (AIDA) in Kathmandu, Foreign Secretary Harsh

secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla addressing the lecture program.

Religious Link

In his official visit, Indian Army Chief visited Pashupatinath Temple and Kumari Temple, two important Hindu temples of Nepal showing common connections. Inaugurating the monastery, Indian foreign secretary Shringla has touched other areas of commonality.

Thriving in common civilization, Nepal and India share common religion and culture. "Given our genetic profiles, what works for India is likely to work for Nepal as well. Together we will recover from the pandemic and together we will protect our people," he said.

In his last engagement before leaving Nepal that also signifies the diverse bilateral development and cultural cooperation, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla virtually inaugurated the Tashop (Tare) Gompa mon-

astery constructed at Shree Kharaka village in Manang district.

Visiting the places like Gorkha, Kingdom of founder of Nepal Prithvi Narayan Shaha and inaugurating the monastery in Manang and speaking in Nepali language in all the places, the foreign secretary has made efforts to revive India's deep connection with Nepal. However, given the present set of ruler without any conviction on Nepal's civilization, culture and history, there is the need of a long march.

Indian Foreign secretary conveyed enough of a message to Nepal with his sober and soft tone. However, it remains to be seen how Nepal's current political leadership including ruling NCP and Opposition Nepali Congress who have been exploiting civilization based Nepal-India relations for individual gain and loss handle the new scenario.



the map unilaterally and issuing officially, Nepal has closed the door. The question now is will they amend the map again in case of the settlement?

In 2015, Nepal promulgated the new constitution in haste discarding the request of India. This created distrust between the two neighbors.

Although the visit of Indian Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane, had helped to ease some misunderstanding between the two countries, foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla has further opened a new link to Nepal.

Issued following the bilateral secretary level meeting led by foreign secretary of Nepal Paudyal, Indian foreign secretary's official statement mentioned Nepal's foreign ministry for arranging a successful visit.

People To People Relations

Foreign Secretary of India Shringla said that people to people

Vardhan Shringla laid out the foundational multi-dimensional strength of the ties between the two countries and the vision for taking it forward.

"The people-to-people linkages are so strong and so powerful that quite frankly we in government only complement these," he said while addressing a limited gathering of leading civil society members on India-Nepal relations at an event hosted by AIDA

According to him, the relations between the two neighbors rest on four pillars - development cooperation, stronger connectivity, expanded infrastructure and economic projects, and easier and enhanced access to educational opportunities in India for the young people of Nepal.

Dr. Madan K Bhattarai, Former foreign Secretary, delivered opening remarks. Similarly, chairperson of AIDA Sunil KC delivered opening remarks thanking foreign

POLITICS

Upsurge For Monarchy

As nationwide mass upsurge demanding the restoration of monarchy is taking shape, prime minister Oli has called an all-party meeting urging unity among the republican forces

By A CORRESPONDENT

As there has been a political rivalry in the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) continuing over the last months, the state machinery has been paralyzed. The economic disruption created by COVID-19 pandemic and inefficiency of the government forced thousands of people to go jobless,

Having seen no hope in the current dispensation, people across the country have launched a nation-wide peaceful rally and agitation demanding the restoration of constitutional monarchy.

Following ten days of nation-wide peaceful agitation demanding monarchy and Hindu state, forces in favor of current ruling dispensation, who were responsible to promulgate the new constitution, have come together to find out a way to pacify the people.

Fed up with internal party feuds, corruption and inefficiency, more people are coming to street on a call of unknown political forces resting new hope on revival of constitutional monarchy.

For Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli who is facing serious challenges for his leadership from within the party, pro-monarchist rally give a chance to defend the work of government and defend the current constitution and republic.

Taking the all-party meeting as an opportune time, Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, who has been facing internal rebellion within the party, called for unity among those for the current change to prevent the upsurge of regressive and monarchist forces.

ed economic recovery programs.

As his party colleagues are demanding his resignation and opposition parties are blaming him for failure, Prime Minister Oli has called upon all the pro-change parties and forces to be united for protecting the federal democratic republic



However, there were few buyers to his argument. Leader of main opposition party Sher Bahadur Deuba blamed PM Oli and his government for the failure to contain the resurgence of monarchists.

However, Prime Minister Oli said that resurgence of pro-monarchist movement has nothing to do with government, claiming that his government successfully handled COVID-19 and other relat-

achieved through people's struggle.

Welcoming the leaders to the all-party meeting of the national parties represented in the Federal parliament at his official residence in Baluwatar, he made it clear that the anti-constitutional and violent activities taking place in the recent days in the name of regression would not be tolerated.

The all-party meeting also held discussions on the prevention

of COVID-19, safeguarding the achievements of the democratic movement and anti-constitutional activities, among other contemporary issues, the Press Advisor to the PM, Surya Thapa, said.

Leaders of the political parties represented in the parliament, including the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP), main opposition Nepali Congress (NC), Janata Samajwadi Party (JSP), Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) and Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP) were present at the meeting

In a meeting, leader of Rashtriya Prajatantra Part Dipak Bohara said that his party has moral support for agitation demanding to restore constitutional monarchy. He urged all political parties to amend the constitution for this.

PM Oli called the meeting after massive protests demanding restoration of monarchy were held across the country. Slogans

have been chanted in favor of the monarchy and the Hindu nation in various parts of the country, including the Kathmandu Valley. The Nepal Communist Party, the ruling party, has accused the government of patronizing such activities.

However, the growing frustration is likely to take a violent course in case ruling dispen-

sation makes efforts to suppress the monarchist and pro-Hindu rally.

Nepal has promulgated a new republican, secular and federal constitution without broader consent of the people. Corruption and inefficiency have intensified following the promulgation of new constitution and elections at three tiers of governments.

The recent Transparency International Report shows Nepal among the most corrupt nations in the world.

As people are losing the faith on the current political dispensation, one cannot rule out the possibility of mass rebellion throughout the country against the present constitution. In case, pro-republican parties decide to launch a rally aiming to suppress monarchists, it will invite more chaos.



Security Concern

Chinese Defense Chief's visit to Nepal indicates the growing security concerns

By A CORRESPONDENT

With over 1400 km long border in most difficult parts of Tibet, Nepal has always been a highly sensitive buffer zone for Chinese security apparatus. This was what the recent 7-hour stopover visit of Chinese State Councilor and Defense Minister Wei Fenghe indicated.

Given the globally shifting power balance and emerging new world order amid COVID-19, Chinese interest in Nepal is likely to intensify in the coming days. This is also what the recent visit indicated.

After spending most of his time discussing security matters at Nepal Army Headquarter, Chinese State Councilor and Defense Minister Fenghe paid a courtesy call to Prime Minister and defense Minister K.P. Sharma Oli and President Bidhya Devi Bhandari at the end of the visit.

Upon his arrival, General Wei was presented with a Guard of Honour at the Army Headquarters. General Wei then paid an official call on General Purna Chandra Thapa, Chief of the Army Staff, Nepali Army, at the latter's office.

On that occasion, the distinguished visitor, General Wei and General Thapa held a cordial discussion on various issues of bilateral interest. A representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also present during the discussion.

After the call, General Wei Fenghe and his delegation were given a short presentation on the history and roles of the Nepali Army. Bilateral discussions were then

held at the delegation level mainly on issues pertaining to resumption of training and student exchange program and follow-up on defense assistance that have been impacted due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to a press release issued by Public Relations and Information Directorate of Nepal Army, General Wei and the delegation viewed both the proposals positively.

"The Nepali Army is confident that this visit will help in further strengthening and expanding the cordial military to military relations between the two countries," said the press release.

as soon as possible, including exchange of high level visits. General Wei also pledged to provide additional assistance to the Nepali Army in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic," read the statement.

He was the highest-ranking Chinese official to visit the plateau country after China's top leader visited Kathmandu in October 2019.

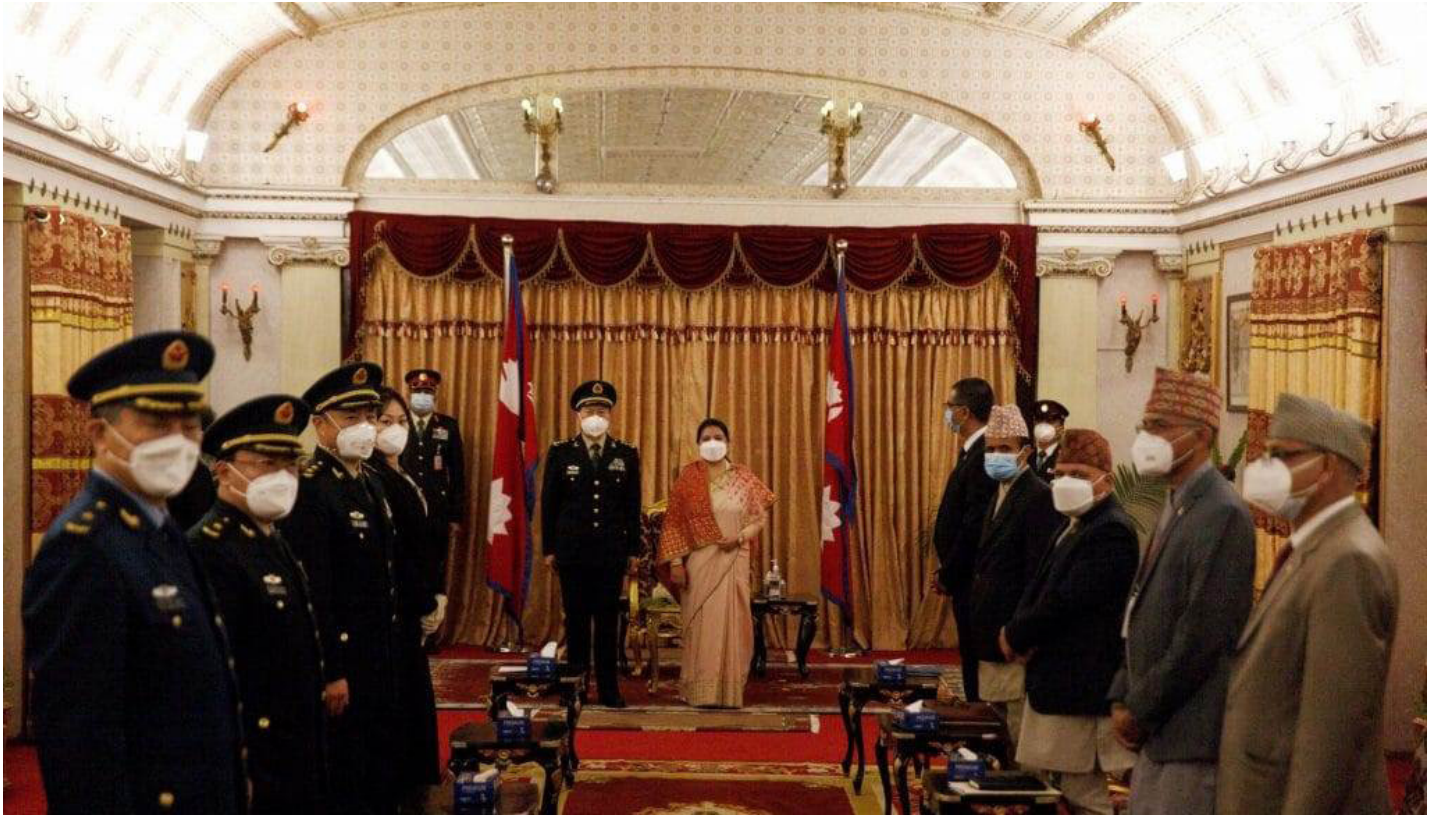
"When Wei met President Bidya Devi Bhandari and Prime Minister and Minister for Defense KP Sharma Oli, they discussed economic cooperation amid the framework of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative



"General Wei and the delegation viewed both the proposals positively and affirmed that the bilateral cooperation should resume

and military exchanges," reported Global Times, a Chinese media close to Chinese Communist Party.

As in the past, Chinese de-



fense minister Wei noted that China firmly supports Nepal to safeguard its national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and will continue assisting Nepal's military development, contributing to regional peace and stability.

Wei also discussed the international and regional situations and bilateral diplomatic and military relations with Nepal's Chief of Army Staff General Purna Chandra Thapa.

Wei's trip came days after Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla visited Nepal. Indian officials have paid frequent visits to Nepal since late October, including Samant Goel, chief of India's Research and Analysis Wing and Indian Army Chief.

Chinese media reported that Wei's visit is also a warning for anti-China hardliners in India who do not reflect on themselves but seek to sow discord between Chi-

na and Nepal and provoke trouble.

During his call on Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, he said that his visit was aimed at implementing the bilateral agreements made by the head of states and head of governments of the two neighbours in the past.

Earlier, speaking after his welcome by Home Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa at the Tribhuvan International Airport, he had said that his visit also had the objective of enhancing the bilateral military assistance and strengthening the relations between the two countries.

Wei was welcomed by Minister Thapa, Secretary of the Home Ministry Reshmi Raj Pandey, Lieutenant General of Nepal Army Prabhu Ram Sharma, Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Hou Yanqi, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kali Prasad Pokharel and other dignitaries.

Talking to the media persons at the Tribhuvan International Airport, Wei said that the objective of his one-day visit was to bolster mutual military cooperation and further strengthen the bilateral ties between the two countries.

During the call-on, views were exchanged on matters of mutual interest including the further promotion of traditionally friendly relations between Nepal and China.

Stating that Nepal and China have strong relations, the visiting Chinese dignitary said that he had arrived in Nepal with a goal to take Nepal-China ties to a newer height. "I am confident that the visit would be result-oriented. My visit to Nepal is slightly delayed by the COVID-19 but it will be a special one," he said.

Whatever Chinese Defense Minister said his visit has indicated that Tibet Security is their major and only one concern in Nepal.

Bundle Of Jargons

As in the past, the new government led by Nepal Communist Party-NCP has announced Nepal's Foreign Policy 2020

By KESHAB POUDEL

As soon as Nepali Congress formed its government in 1991, Prime Minister late Girija Prasad Koirala declared that Human Rights and Democracy would be the foundation of Nepal's foreign policy.

In a similar manifestation and declaration, rebel leader prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, in his first address to the nation, said Nepal is no more a yam between two nations, but a dynamite between the two. Merely 10 months in power, Prachanda led Maoist government was blasted out of power.

As a prime minister, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai declared that the era of equidistance was over and he propounded a new theory of Nepal as a link between the two big countries.

A government formed under the leadership NC leader in 2017 constituted a high level committee to draft Nepal's Foreign Policy. However, the government was ousted without receiving the document.

Coming to power three years ago, harping on anti-Indian slogans, Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli has also endorsed the Foreign Policy 2020. Amid a function, Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali released the document. He declared Nepal's Foreign Policy is for a rule-based, just, inclusive human rights-centric world system.

"We are for a rule-based global system, the current deal-based system would be detrimental for the interest of the small nations. Therefore, the policy aims at rule-based, just, inclusive and human-centric world system," declared Finance Minister Gyawali in the program.

"Foreign Policy, 2020 has integrated the varying components of diplomatic practices across the sectors ranging from defense to the United Nations.

This will be the central policy of the country's foreign relations, on the basis of which other related policies would be formulated or amended," said Gyawali.

Being a small country between big powers, Nepal's geographical position has not changed since the country constituted itself as an independent and sovereign nation over 230 years ago.

Its political geography has not changed and its foreign policy and challenges remain the same. However, individual rulers have brought out such documents from time to time to project their views. All of them have turned out irrelevant and out of context. What it shows is that Nepal is in continuity as a nation with continuity of real policy destined by its geography.

As American scholar late Leo

has been facing the same problems, the only differences will be in style.

With a small nation situated between two big powers with diverse political system, Nepal has a very thin space to play and it has many limitations. Among two nations, Nepal's relations with southern neighbor are closely tied by common civilization, culture, religion and history.

Given this reality, Nepal's foreign policy is defined by its destiny. "Nepal has every right to determine its foreign policy matters. However, it has its limitation which impinges upon her. Taking into account the reality of its geo-strategic situation," one foreign policy expert opined, "Nepal's freedom of choice is obviously limited by the exigencies of power politics.... Nepal's



Rose in his book Strategy of Survival says from King Prithvinarayan Shah to present ruler King Mahendra had faced the same limitations and challenges. Even Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli

strategic location afforded its scope of maneuvering within limits. These limits are, in practice, set by what India and China consider to be their minimal interest in a given situation. As long as



Nepal keeps within these limits, it is free to manipulate in any way it likes in relations with its immediate neighbors and other countries,” writes former foreign secretary Professor Bishwa Pradhan in his book *Diplomatic Strategy for Nepal*. “If Nepal is tempered to overestimate its strength and loses sight of the practical limits of its capacity to maneuver, it encounters real danger.”

Whether the policy looks at Nepal’s reality is another matter. However, the government has claimed that this is the first time an integrated foreign policy has been brought out for the country.

“The main aim of the policy is to protect and promote the national interest. The country needs a policy that can define its role in the changed geopolitical and global political context,” said Foreign Affairs Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at a program organized at the ministry to launch the policy and annual report of the MoFA.

The policy is the synthesis of various past practices such as the National Main Policy of the Panchayat era and reports of the commissions like task force led by Murari Raj Sharma in post-2006 change and commission led by Prof. Shreedhar Khatri in 2015.

It has taken references from the past study reports as well as National Dialogue on Foreign Policy organized last year. The policy is also the

product of the consultation of Buddha’s teaching on peace and non-violence, Prithvi Narayan Shah’s *Dibyopadesh* on geopolitical considerations and demographic diversity in the country.

According to Minister Gyawali, the new policy has offered the policy requirement needed for the relations with the immediate neighbors to the multilateral organizations like the United Nations, and track-two diplomacy.

It aims at expanding and strengthening the bilateral relations with all friendly countries including the immediate neighbors on the basis of equality, mutual respect and benefits.

“Nepal’s international borders would be kept intact. The border issues would be resolved through diplomatic and peaceful means on the basis of historical agreements, treaties and evidences,” it read.

Contradictions

Every country pursues its foreign policy to protect and promote country’s core interests; Nepal’s foreign policy is unclear within. At a time when global perception on the Palestinian issue has changed drastically with oil rich Gulf countries have started to recognize and establish diplomatic relations with Israel, Nepal is still following same old dictum to cast votes in UN system against Israel supporting Palestinian cause.

Nepal has several economic other interests with Israel and Nepal can benefit a lot from maintaining neutrality in the case of Israel-Palestinian issue. Despite no greater interest attach with Palestine, Nepal has been voting for the Palestinian cause UN System since last many years. In many cases, Nepal can easily win Israel’s favor if absent in voting. That can make a lot of difference for Nepal.

“Nepal has to decide in voting where Nepal’s interest is protected more,” said former foreign secretary and secretary-general of SAARC Arjun Bahadur Thapa. “Since Nepal and Israel established diplomatic relations over 60 years ago and Nepal’s relation with Israel is economically more valuable for the country, there is no reason for Nepal to vote in favor of Palestinian in every issue. Nepal can register as absentee.”

Realizing the importance of Israel for Nepal’s economic development, Nepal’s two visionary leaders King Mahendra and democratically elected leader B.P. Koirala took the riskiest decision but most favorable decision in Nepal’s interest during 1960. However, Nepal has failed to carry on the spirit of visionary leadership supporting sovereignty and integrity of small country like Israel which serves Nepal’s interest as well.

Although protection and promotion of Nepal’s interest is a core

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issue of newly announces foreign policy, it is unclear how Nepal will deal with the issue of Israel and Palestine.

"Nepal has to follow changing context of Israel-Palestinian issue in current changing circumstances when Oil rich Gulf countries have recognized Israel's existence giving their old policy," said Thapa in his interview to an online.

Reviewing Treaties

Bilateral treaties and agreements with the neighbors and other friendly countries would be reviewed and amended in the national interest and new treaties would be signed as per the need. Current commerce, transit, railway service, trade and payment and transportation agreements and treaties would be amended as per the changing national and international scenario.

"Any policy needs to be based on realistic assumptions. If it fails to address realistic issues, it is doomed to fail," said Professor Dr. Lok Raj Baral.

As Nepal's Foreign Policy 2020 talks about amending and rewriting the treaties, it naturally attracts India with whom Nepal signed several bilateral treaties. Nepal's communist leaders including the current leadership in the government thrived in the party calling some of those treaties as unequal.

"Bulk of our foreign policy engagements is with India. Whether one likes it not, the geo-politics is such that, as immediate neighbors, we are bound to have bilateral problems of multi-faced character in our relations with India. Basically, Nepal's foreign policy is India policy which covers most of the aspects of it ranging from the socio-economic to political fields," writes former secretary Pradhan.

Professor Dev Raj Dahal in his article Geopolitics of Nepal, Survival Strategy of Small States, writes, "because of interdependence, Nepalese foreign policy must be based more on national and regional consensus, explicit and implicit, by taking the national interest into account."



The policy aims at emphasizing the United Nation's central role in multilateral diplomacy to make contribution in the promotion of world peace, human rights and sustainable development.

"Collaboration with the international community would be forged for the complete disarmament of atomic, biological, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction," read the policy. It also includes a provision for the solidarity and cooperation with the international community against all forms of terrorism and extremism.

Enhancing Nepal's role in international platforms like the UN Human Rights Commission and forums of landlocked and least developed countries, and playing effective role in the reduction of greenhouse gas and adaption to combat the challenges posed by climate change and its negative impacts are also the policy priorities.

In terms of the regional cooperation, the policy aims at increasing the regional interdependency and interconnectivity to achieve development and prosperity.

Similarly, it has duly recognized the importance of the foreign policy in the mobilization of foreign economic and development cooperation, foreign direct investment, export

trade and tourism promotion which are fundamental for the development and prosperity of the country.

Managing foreign employment, utilizing the knowledge, skill, capital, technology and access of migrant Nepalis in economic development of the country, protecting the interest of Nepali nationals in foreign land, and application of track-two diplomacy are in the priority.

With so many limitations in foreign policy imposed by Nepal's geo-strategy, Nepal's policy needs to address the reality. Late Leo Rose in his book Nepal, Profile of A Himalayan Kingdom, writes, "it is a normal phenomenon for the foreign policy of any society to be strongly affected by domestic political and economic factors, and this is certainly the case in Nepal. But the reverse principle-namely, that international factors have a strong and decisive impact on Kathmandu's policies-is even more apparent."

As ancient Greek adage stated, "the strong nation do what they will do and the weaker ones do what they must." Given Nepal's geo-strategic position, Nepal has very thin space to play between two big neighbors. Nepal has to follow the course where Nepal's core interest lies and get much.

Role Of CSOs In UNSCR 1325



BY: AAGYA POKHAREL

UNSCR 1325, a United Nations Security Council resolution on women, peace and security, captures the impact on women due to armed conflict and recognizes the under-estimated and underrepresented involvement of women in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peace building. UNSCR stresses women as equal partners in preventing violent conflict and involves them in promoting peace and security for lasting stability.

There are 4 pillars of UNSCR 1325: participation and representation of women in all spheres of decision-making process; protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence; preventing violence against women; and relief and recovery measures through a gendered lens considering the needs of women and girls.

The global commitment is to ensure that the women and girls are comprehensively assimilated into peace process and conflict prevention. It is necessary to bring change through collective efforts of UNSCR 1325. The action of resolution is done through the development of government led National Action Plan, where Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) remain critical to improve consideration of gender, security and peace process.

CSOs are an integral element of the global society due to their perception, proficiency and partnership building capabilities to bring wider changes. They work in a coordinated approach in the field of conflict and post conflict areas to develop understanding and knowledge on the linkages of security and gender equality for implementation of UNSCR 1325. As the world is celebrating the 16-day campaign against gender-based violence from November 25 to December 10, 2020, UNSCR 1325 agenda complements the commitment to challenge stereotypes and harmful gender norms and practices.

Based on the good practices from around the world, CSOs can participate in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the following ways:

- CSOs as a monitor to ensure gender equality as well as supporting inclusiveness representation to pre-

- vent, manage and resolve conflict and violence
- CSOs as an advocate and influencer in the implementation and effectiveness of National Action Plans on 1325 from local to global levels
- Advancing women leadership and women organization in peace and security agenda through CSOs
- Advocating quota system of women in political participation, national reconciliation and political reform process
- Supporting in the areas of gender, violence against women in conflict and post conflict time
- Promoting women led CSOs as a peace builder through activism and participation
- Addressing women's rights in conflict setting, peace negotiation and post war reconstruction
- Capacity building (Trust building and solidarity, negotiation and mediation and negotiation with armed groups), raising awareness for active engagement in the peace keeping and transitional process
- Strengthening accountability and transparency linking international standard like SGGs and CEDAW
- Preparing shadow reports on the implementation status of National Action Plans
- Advancing 16-days of activism against gender-based violence

It is true that in warfare women and children are made the easy targets by the armed groups. Due to conflict, communities are torn apart and families are divided, so we must take holistic approach that recognizes the needs and opportunities.

Effective National Action Plan development, implementation and monitoring require clear government commitment and leadership, both at political and technical levels. Nevertheless, CSOs have critical role in the implementation and monitoring of UNSCR 1325. Women must be on the forefront of this agenda.

(Aagya Pokharel, Master in Human and Natural Resource Studies from Kathmandu University, can be reached via aagya.pokharel28@gmail.com)



CHANDRA PRASAD DHAKAL

Goodwill Winner

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, newly elected senior vice president of Federation Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), has stood firm on his election commitment and vision for all its members to work together

By KESHAB POUDEL

When a gentleman wants to establish himself, he also helps others to establish themselves. When he wants to be successful himself, he also helps others to succeed. He judges others by what he knows of himself. These are the thoughts of Confucius.

Delivering his first public statement, following formal assumption of office, newly elected senior vice president of FNCCI Dhakal, who fol-

lowed a soft and reconciliatory tone during the whole of election period, has set the same tone urging his colleagues to come together to help each other to be successful themselves.

“Now election is over as our competition and confrontation. The time now is to help each other to make FNCCI a strong and efficient organization to raise the issue faced by business and industrial sectors amid COVID-19 Pandemic,”

said senior VP Dhakal, while calling all colleagues to come together “to protect and promote the interest of business and industrial community.”

As Chinese philosopher Confucius said helping others to establish themselves is a mantra for someone to establish himself as well. Although he defeated a rival supported by a big powerful establishment faction, Dhakal has sent a gesture of friendship to those who have lost the elections

showing that helping them to succeed in future will help him to be successful.

“Now on, we are colleagues and there is no more enmity among us. Our common goal is to support and rescue business and industrial sector,” stressed Dhakal, who is widely popular at the base of FNCCI.

Although some of his colleagues have lost the elections in a close fighting, senior vice president Dhakal repaid their contributions and support in the elections with kindness. “I don’t forget the contributions and dedication offered by my colleagues to elect me. Similarly, I don’t have any hesitation now with those who contested the elections against me and my panel,” said Dhakal, the first person elected by defeating a candidate of the establishment, showing kindness towards his colleagues.

E l e c t i o n s



medium, newly elected team led by president Shekhar Golchha and senior vice president Dhakal has to face a mammoth task.

For president Golchha, senior Vice President Dhakal is going to be a big asset given his wider contact, punctuality, hard work and strategic mind. As Confucius suggested, the first thing a leader would not take a commander who fight tiger with his bare hands or crosses the river without a boat. Confucius said that he wants somebody who approaches difficulties with cautions and who chose to succeed by strategy.

business success from a small cold store up to the Nepal’s largest recreation industry to leading Global-IME Bank shows how he succeeds by strategy. Having worked in the same team for a long time, President Golchha is well aware about Dhakal’s capacity and capability.

Senior Vice-President of the FNCCI Dhakal has assured that the newly elected executive committee of the federation will work united and also urged all the members to work together putting aside the election results.

Responding to the media, Dhakal said that the panel formed during the election has been dismissed and now all the FNCCI members have to work as one team.

“Now that the election has been completed we should not keep focusing on who won and who lost the election,” he said, adding, “I believe all of us will be working together for the bet-



Over, Struggles Begin

At a time when the COVID-19 Pandemic has badly affected business enterprises and industries, particularly small and

Senior vice President Dhakal always approaches difficulties with caution and chooses to succeed by strategy. His

terment of the organization and the concerned stakeholders.”

The victory of Dhakal is a historical power shift in

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FNCCI. He is not only the first outsider of traditional industrial group of Nepal but also a first commoner industrialist to reach that height within FNCCI.

Shekhar Golchha President

For Shekhar Golchha and Golchha Group of Industries, this is a long due dream in the sense that it took them decades to lead the apex organization. Although late Diwakar Golchha had made efforts to be president of FNCCI, he failed to achieve that.

Having walked very carefully and strategically, junior Golchha, highly qualified

over the presidency to Golchha.

As the senior vice president of the organization gets automatically elevated to the post of FNCCI president, Golchha took over the leadership of the FNCCI from 23 November from outgoing FNCCI President Rana, the first woman to lead the apex business organization.

New FNCCI President Golchha said that he was confident of the new executive committee dedicating itself for the benefit of the federation as well as the overall private sector by forgetting all election-related grudges and misunderstanding, if there were any.

According to Golchha, the strategic paper incorporates immediate, medium term and long term reform plans that the government and private sector can implement for various sectors to build a sustainable, robust and resilient economy

Rush For Meeting

With COVID-19 epidemic and lockdown, business and industrial sector has been badly shaken. According to a study, large numbers of industries and business organizations have been fully or partially shut down and there is a long way to go for their recovery. For this, they need stimulus financial packages.

Given such a bleak scenario, the newly elected office bearers have no time to take rest. The newly elected central committee members of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), in a meeting with Finance Minister Bishnu Prasad Paudel, urged the government to fully implement the measures unveiled in the monetary policy.

“To help the small enterprises in their recovery plan, there is a need to enforce targeted special stimulus packages,” a FNCCI press statement quoted FNCCI President Shekhar Golchha as saying.

According to the FNCCI, the umbrella organization has also stepped up its efforts to prepare a ‘vision document’ with support of the international organizations. The document is set to pinpoint the short-term, medium-term and



and soft spoken person, has fulfilled an aspiration of Golchha group, one of the largest and oldest industrial houses of Nepal.

As per the rule, Golchha has become the 19th president while Dhakal will be the 20th president of the biggest umbrella organization of the private sector in the country. Under this provision, Bhavani Rana handed

“I do not need to repeat here that we are united now even if there were any panels and factions until the election. We have understood the importance of unity,” said new FNCCI President Golchha. “I cannot implement all my plans and strategies alone. Our executive committee will now unite for the implementation of those plans,” he added.

long-term goals for the country.

Elected with a promise to help industries and business, senior vice president Dhakal

Dhakal beat his competitor Kishor Pradhan by 147 votes. Dhakal was able to secure 522 votes while Pradhan

The newly elected executive members of the federation are Rajan Shrestha, Taranath Adhikari, Kamal Kumar Shrestha, Chakra Bahadur Adhikari, Arunraj Sumargi, Dev Kumar Shrestha, Rameswar Manandhar, Shobha Kant Poudel, Sur Krishna Baidya, Gajendra Bhagat, Kubir Kumar Shrestha, Kaman Bahadur Khadka, Gopal Kedia, Mahendra Kumar Shrestha, Kamal Kumar Shrestha, Umesh Dalmiya and Kishore Kumar Acharya.

A total of 119 candidates were vying for a post in the executive committee including

also stressed the need to implement recovery packages. "We are preparing packages by incorporating the successful models of various countries," said Dhakal.

FNCCI will prepare an investigative report on the impacts of COVID to businesses and industries and will come up with recommendations for the economic recovery of the country. The federation said although the budget and monetary policy have tried to address the recommendations forwarded by the private sector the relief measures have hardly been implemented at the local level.

FNCCI's Elections

The 54th General Assembly and Election has elected a new executive committee including a senior vice president and three vice presidents.

received 375 votes. Similarly, Dhakal secured 59 percent votes and his rival Pradhan secured 39 percent votes in the commodity group that has a weightage of 20 percent of the total votes. In the district-municipal group that has a weightage of 50 percent of the total votes; Dhakal secured 52, while Pradhan bagged 53 votes.

Dhakal was able to secure a total of 54.23 percent of the total votes cast by securing 12.04 percent votes in the commodity, 24.76 percent in industry/commerce, and 17.4 percent in the associate group.

Similarly, Anjan Shrestha has been elected as vice president for Commodity while Ramchandra Shanghai has been elected as vice president for Associates. Meanwhile, Dinesh Shrestha has been elected as vice president for Industry and Commerce.

the senior vice president, three vice presidents, and 43 executive committee members. Over a thousand delegates cast their votes to elect the new executive committee of the umbrella organizations of the business community across the country.

As Confucius says in conducting yourself in business, combine firmness with tact; in dealing with people, combine kindness with principle. Forget the favor you did for others, but forget not your own faults. Remember the favors you received, but remember not the injuries others did to you.

Senior vice President Dhakal, who will lead FNCCI after three years, is helping president Golchha to make FNCCI strong and efficient organization to address the challenges.



Triumphed Over Annapurna And The French Expedition Team



As a French Ambassador to Nepal, it gives me immense pleasure and an honour to be here amongst you today for this important occasion.

BY: FRANÇOIS-XAVIER LÉGER

2019 and 2020 are very important years in the history of Nepal-France relationship. In 2019 we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Nepal-France diplomatic relations and in 2020, we are celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Annapurna ascent by the French expedition team led by Maurice Herzog.

In June 2019, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli had visited France in 2019 and he was in Chamonix, the place of which Herzog was a Mayor and the place which has a deep connection with Nepal especially in the domain of mountaineering.

I find myself fortunate that 70 years after that famous Annapurna ascent, I am here today to be part of this inauguration where we inaugurated some pictures from that very important day in the history of the development of tourism in Nepal: 3 June 1950. This was the day when men triumphed over Annapurna and the French expedition team led by Maurice Herzog was able to successfully summit the 8000-metre peak for the first time.

As you can imagine this was not an easy feat and it required months and months of preparation and a very careful planning. Although this was a French expedition with Herzog and Louis Lachenal being the first to climb Annapurna, I

would like to call it a Franco-Nepali expedition because without the invaluable help, support and local knowledge of the Nepali Sherpas, this mission would not

have been successful and the outcome could have been devastating. Hence, I take this opportunity to thank and pay homage to Ang Tharkey and other Sherpas who were a vital part of the expedition team.

Actually we had planned this inauguration to coincide with the celebration of 70th anniversary of the ascent in June, but it was not possible due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The spouse of late Mr. Herzog was also supposed to be here with us but as you can imagine, it was not possible. Nevertheless, I do have a small message

from her which I am going to read:

In conclusion, I would like to sincerely thank the Honourable Minister for their time and for being here today. I would also like to thank the Nepal Mountaineering Association and the International Mountain Museum for being a

partner in this project and for providing a space for the exhibition which would benefit the Nepali and foreign visitors coming to this museum as I'm sure that these photographs and the article would make their visit more fruitful.

François-Xavier Léger is an Ambassador of France to Nepal. Excerpts of his statement delivered at the program.



COVID-19 Vaccination And Leave No One Behind Agenda



The COVID-19 has been spreading for the past 11 months affecting every country across the world with more than 55 million confirmed cases and more than 1.3 million deaths. The vast majority of people in the richer or poorer nations are still vulnerable to the virus.

Now we have a vaccine to fight the infection, but the question is when everyone gets it. There are concerns that poorer nations could get left behind.

Through the pledge to Leave No One Behind, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are designed to bring the world to several life-changing 'zeros', including zero poverty, hunger, AIDS and discrimination against women and girls. How can the world live up to the Agenda - Leave No One Behind when it comes to the COVID-19 vaccine?

The SDG 3 ensures healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages among other goals. There is also a target under SDG 3 to fight communicable diseases. Now there is a real test before us whether these Global Goals help the world to fight against this global crisis ensuring everyone gets the vaccine.

Looking at the history, there are vaccines to prevent more than 20 life-threatening diseases. At present, immunization annually saves 400 million lives and approximately 80% of worldwide children are vaccinated against several diseases. Yet, many children and adults in low income countries have insufficient access to vaccines.

Many died from preventable diseases.

BY: DR. PRABIN MANANDHAR

A research from Duke University in North Carolina estimates that 6.4 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines have already been bought, and another 3.2 billion are either under negotiation or reserved as "optional expansions of existing deals". No wonder, the research found that the vast majority of vaccine doses that have been bought so far are going to high-income countries.



It is likely that the low- and middle-income countries will start getting the vaccine probably by the mid and the end of next year. Unfortunately, this will leave many people behind even in 2022 if the vaccine is not shared far and wide.

Vaccination is a human rights issue as we have the right to life and the right to health.

Achieving Leave No One Behind requires the partnership of governments, private sector, civil society and citizens. The richer nations must be generous while the poor nations must take proactive measures to get the vaccines to their citizens alongside health measures and better treatments.

Let us be reminded that no country will be safe until all countries are safe from this pandemic. We need to act now and act together.

Author: Dr. Prabin Manandhar is an expert of international development. Currently, he is working in Iraq as Country Representative of The Lutheran World Federation. He is the Former Chair of the Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN). He is also a visiting faculty at the Kathmandu University and the Tribhuvan University Institute of Crisis Management Studies. He can be reached at prabin.manandhar11@gmail.com

World Disability Day 2020

One Bhatta's Tale

As the global community has celebrated the World Disability Day 2020 by organizing various programs calling on all to protect the rights of People with Disability amid COVID-19 Pandemic, Nanda Raj Bhatta, a person with disability from Far Western Province of Nepal, has shown how to live with dignity and respect. With support from his wrist and mouth, Bhatta, who was born without palm, has been using all modern communication equipment and launching programs to encourage people with disability to live in self reliance

By KESHAB POUDEL

When Nanda Raj Bhatta was born in remote Surnaya-3, Baitadi, with incomplete physical body, the first reaction of his neighbors to his mother and father was to throw the child in the Mahakali River.

“Coming from a conservative and tradition-based society, the villagers held the view that the birth of a child with short foot and without the palm was ill-timed.

They had tried to convince Bhatta's mother and father that birth of such a child is a curse and it is better to throw the baby in Mahakali for the sake of salvation,” narrates Bhatta.

Rejecting such inhuman suggestion, mother Parbati Bhatta and father Rani Bhatta decided to make the boy a model for society and people with disability. Having faced several difficulties to fulfill their determination, the poor family of Rani

Bhatta and Parbati Bhatta moved side by side with son Nanda Raj Bhatta.

With strength, patience and courage, his mother and father discarded such cruel suggestion, taking a challenge to make her son self reliant in the competitive world. Facing all kinds of discrimination, she finally proved to her community and other people that being born with disability is not a curse.

Born in Sunarya Rural



Municipality-3 in 2045 and Bhatta went to Shree Virendra Higher Secondary School, Shahilek, Baitadi. Now he is a source of inspiration.

The villagers who once pressured Rani and Parbati to throw the baby to the Mahakali river look at Bhatta as an icon for many people with disabilities in the area.

"My parents have shown the way to all villagers how a person with disability can make differences. Of course, we are physically disabled but we are mentally fit. We can work more than able persons," said Bhatta, who has been busy all the day taking part in various programs and seminars.

Living with an extended family of 12 and wife Kabita Bhatta and four years daughter Arina Bhatta in Dhangadhi, Nanda Raj Bhatta has suffered a lot, including lack of disabled friendly transport, office buildings and restaurants.

"It is unfortunate that I had no access to any disa-

bled friendly education buildings. Despite certain improvements, things have not changed much in the country," said Bhatta.

Writing from mouth and his foot, he has completed his master's degree. Having made a love marriage in 2071, Bhatta has a 4-year old daughter.

According to World Health Organization Definition, there are over 15 percent of the people globally with one or the other kind of disability. If one takes this definition, there are 4.5 million people in Nepal with disability. However, National census of 2011 found 1.98 percent of population with disability or over 500,000.

Although his financial condition was not good and going to school in the mountain area was not easy, his parents helped him much to complete his education.

"After completing studies in my village, my parents took me to Dhangadhi with my School

Leaving Certificate. Looking at my physical condition, the campus chief declined to admit me," recalls Bhatta, who has been categorized in the second layer of disability under Nepal's three category of disability.

According to Nepal's law, only a person with red and blue cards, among red, blue, yellow and white, receive monthly social benefits. Red receives Rs. 3000 and blue receives Rs. 16,00.00 per month. Hence, Bhatta also receives Rs. 1600.00 per month. He has been receiving this benefit for the last 10 years.

With support from one of his villagers, he was admitted to the college. Then he never turned back.

"Following completion of my certificate and bachelor levels from Dhangadhi, I decided to join Tribhuvan University for my master's degree. Many people discouraged me from going to Kathmandu, but my determination to complete the master's degree did not stop."

Bhatta's Determination

COVERSTORY



Bhatta, a Community Service Worker from Dhangadhi, has shown that physical disability cannot prevent a person's ability to work and complete with other normal people.

Now Executive Director at HDDS-Nepal, a local NGO working to protect human rights and rights of People With Disability, Bhatta is a person with high demand in the region to hold different classes and orientation to people with disability. Bhatta has been travelling extensively in the region as well as different parts of the country and managing the HDDS-Nepal.

Although he also faced all kinds of discriminations in the society, Bhatta did not care it much. He made the destiny for his surviv-

al on his own way. From early morning to late evening, Bhatta visits different villages to encourage and inspire people with disability in Sudur Paschim Province and organizes programs to protect the rights of people with disability.

As COVID-19 has badly hampered the mobility of people with disability in the region, Bhatta is calling for Greater Inclusion amid Covid-19.

If a person has the will, courage, determination and family support, he or she can make a difference in the world. This is what Bhatta has shown. Although he was born without the palm, finger and wrist in remote Far-western part of Nepal, Bhatta has shown the way to other people with disability to live independently working in competitive environment.

Although Bhatta (Spandan) was born without fingers, wrist and palm, he used other physical parts of the body as alternative to use lap-

top, mobile and other equipments.

Completing Master's Degree in Rural Development from Tribhuvan University, Bhatta is an icon of people with disability in Sudur Pachism province. He attends every program related to the protection of rights of people with disability.

He conducts research, seminars and other programs aimed to make people with disability self reliance in economically and protect their rights. Married with a daughter, Bhatta holds the view that people with disability are no different than other people. "What we need is the courage, determination and will," said Bhatta.

As the world is celebrating International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2020, Bhatta has a bit of frustration over the recent action of the government not showing any interest to provide welfare and other scheme to people with disability.

"As per the constitution, people with disability need to be included in all the development process and there is the need to have policies and programs to mainstream people with disability,"

He was facilitating disability, early detection and mainstreaming training at Dhangadhi





organized by Province health Headquarters Sudurpashchim province Nepal.

As there were growing voices for greater inclusion amid COVID-19 ahead of World Disability Day on December 3, Bhatta was championing the cause from Dhangadhi.

UN Secretary General Call For Greater Inclusion

Ahead of World Disability Day on December 3, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for greater inclusion of persons with disabilities in society, including in COVID-19 response and recovery. "Realizing the rights of persons with disabilities is crucial to fulfilling the core promise of the 2030 Agenda: to leave no one behind," Antonio Guterres said, referring to the global action plan to bring about a more just and sustainable world.

The UN chief was addressing countries that are parties to the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. International Day of Persons with Disabilities

(IDPD) was proclaimed in 1992 by a United Nations General Assembly resolution to "promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society..."

International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2020 Theme: "Building back better: towards an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post COVID-19 world by, for and with persons with disabilities" is the focus in the pandemic year. UNESCO will also organize a Global Awareness Raising Campaign "Tell our stories, enable our rights".

"In all our actions, our goal is clear: a world in which all persons can enjoy equal opportunities, participate in decision-making and truly benefit from economic, social, political and cultural life. That is a goal worth fighting for," the UN chief said at the 13th session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention.

World Disability Day was being held in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic this year. The pandemic has deepened inequalities affecting around one billion people with disabilities globally. The UN chief said, even under normal





circumstances the people with disabilities were already less likely to be included in their communities.

“While I celebrate that there are now 182 parties to the convention, the pandemic has made evident that there is still a long way to go in fully understanding the human rights model of disability enshrined in the convention, and therefore in fully implementing its provisions,” Guterres said in a video message.

In May, the UN chief issued a policy brief highlighting the disproportionate impact COVID-19 is having on persons with disabilities. He has called for pandemic response and recovery to be more disability inclusive, starting with recognizing and protecting the human rights of persons with disabilities.

“We must also ensure that the vision and aspirations of persons with disabilities are included and accounted for in a disability-inclusive, accessible and sustainable post COVID-19 world,” he said.

Nepal's

As the whole world was marking the 29th International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Bhatta had his message to other women and men with complete or partial disabilities that proper guidance, support from family, friends and education only can help make people's life easier and independent and happy.

He said although there are dozens of private and non-governmental organizations working in the sector of persons with disabilities, the government's own National Disabled Fund, under the Ministry Women, Children and Senior Citizens, has been doing its best to provide all possible support to the persons with disabilities across the country with the available resources and the fund the government provides them annually.

Bhatta's message for people with disability is that the sky has no limit, what is required

Cause

is determination and dedication to do something for the betterment of society and community.



India Sees Itself As Nepal's Natural And Instinctive Responder In Times Of Crisis.



I want to say that I have been to this wonderful city of Kathmandu after a gap of a decade or so. People who ask me, "Does it feel different this time?" The answer is both "yes" and "no". "Yes", because I have never previously visited Nepal wearing a mask; and "no" because the buzz and vibrancy of Kath-

BY: HARSH VARDHAN SHRINGLA

mandu are undiminished, rather they have been enhanced.

The transformation of the city is apparent. Economic and social upgrade, a construction push, the energy of youth and enterprise – it is all extremely impressive. And it is apparent even in these restrictive pandemic conditions. The hearts and smiles of friends and interlocutors I have met remain unchanged. These hearts and smiles, and such sentiments, are unreservedly reciprocated by us in India.

The Nepal-India relationship is intricate and exists in various paradigms. We share the same geography, civilisational heritage, culture and customs. There are affinities in religious and spiritual traditions, even food habits. The people-to-people linkages are so strong and so powerful that quite frankly we in government only complement these. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi put it during when he visited Nepal two years ago, "India's relations with Nepal are familial and friendly, which stand on the strong foundations of mutual and deep relationships between its people, which are much above the relationship between the two governments." 6. Recent years have given the relationship a new momentum. For India, Nepal is fundamental to our "Neighbourhood First" approach. India's development and modernisation are incomplete and intrinsically and symbiotically linked to the development and modernisation of neighbouring countries such as Nepal.

That is why leaders from our neighbouring countries were invited to Prime Minister Modi's swearing-in ceremony in 2014 and in 2019. We are deeply appreciative of the Nepalese leadership's gesture in travelling to New Delhi for these cherished occasions.

They celebrated our mutual commitment to inclusive democracy and governance, dedicated that to the welfare of all citizens and all sections of society. 7. Our Prime Minister's visit to Nepal in August 2014 was the first at that level in 17 years. It injected a fresh energy into the relationship and created a steady stream of two-way travel and developmental initiatives. Over the past six years, Prime Minister Modi has visited Nepal

four times and the Prime Minister of Nepal has been welcomed in India seven times. At the level of head of state or head of government, our leaders have met 16 times. At the level of Foreign Minister, our Joint

Commission has convened three times, and there have been innumerable other official engagements. Our bilateral calendar has never been busier. 8. Our people – Nepal's people and India's people – are our strength, and our endeavours are meant to assist and enable them.

Our aspiration of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas" and your goal of "Samriddh Nepal, Sukhi Nepali" are entirely compatible. In my meetings here in Kathmandu, with the President and the Prime Minister of Nepal, the Foreign Minister, and my counterpart, the Foreign Secretary, and other dignitaries and officials, I have been left with no doubt that our countries are on the same page and share the same vision. I must acknowledge here that the welcome that my delegation and I have received. It has been moving and memorable.

Aside from our common civilisational inheritance, India's relationship with Nepal rests on four pillars – develop-

ment cooperation; stronger connectivity; expanded infrastructure and economic projects; easier and enhanced access to educational opportunities in India for the young people of Nepal. Underlying all of these is a steadfast principle: we will work to Nepal's priorities. The structure that the pillars hold up is also well-defined and unchanging – mutually beneficial people-to-people contacts. And in all this technology, particularly digital technology, is to my mind a force multiplier.

India sees itself as Nepal's foremost friend and development partner. Developmental experiences that we share with you are developmental experiences that have proved successful and beneficial in our own country. Given our similarities in environmental conditions and socio-economic challenges, there is so much we can learn from each other.

Let me illustrate with an example of my own career. As a younger officer, I have vivid memories of an iodised

As a neighbour and friend, India sees itself as Nepal's natural and instinctive responder in times of crisis. The devastating earthquake of 2015 was a test for the people and government of Nepal. The courage and resilience of the citizens of Nepal, the grit and determination in rebuilding lives and livelihoods, was an inspiration for us in India and across the world.

DOCUMENT

salt programme that India supported in the hilly remote districts of Nepal. It helped address the chronic ailment of goitre, and mirrored India's own battle against this pressing health problem. As someone from the hills myself I personally experienced the incidence of Goitre in many of our hill districts in India. One programmatic mechanism that we have used to good effect is that of High Impact Community Development Projects, implemented in Nepal with India's support. These projects are tailored to the needs of the local community, create community assets, and promote socio-economic welfare at the grassroots level. We are mindful in designing sustainable programmes that contribute to the community and don't in any manner encumber it.

Such development projects have been implemented in all 77 of Nepal's districts and over a hundred of them have been completed since 2014 when our Prime Minister visited Nepal for the first time when he took over. They cover diverse sectors such as education, health, irrigation, drinking water, preservation of culture, skill development, youth training, and agriculture. These are projects that have immediate and positive impact on the lives of people, touching everybody in society.

Enhancing cross-border connectivity and infrastructure projects are also critical. They unlock potential of millions and in millions. Connectivity projects come in various forms. Physical connectivity projects such as highways, rail and air links and inland waterways enhance movement of goods and people. Energy connectivity – whether power transmission lines or petroleum pipelines – contribute to the well-being of each other's citizens, and build mutual trust and partnerships. Digital connectivity through optical fibre networks is our route to the future, particularly, and as we find in India, with remote access to education, healthcare and other services through the digital medium. Finally, trade facilitation through upgraded border infrastructure makes for easier transit and seamless commerce.

Several examples can be provided in each of the categories. I will mention only a few: ·The Motihari–Amlekhgunj petroleum pipeline was the first of its kind in the region. It has created capacity to carry two million metric tonnes of petroleum products into Nepal, and has already led to savings of over Nepali Rupees 800 million for the people of this country ·Brisk implementation of the 900 MW Arun III hydropower power project is underway, and cross-border power transmission lines have been upgraded ·The Jayanagar-Kurtha cross-border rail line should be operational shortly. It will make Janakpur so much quicker to visit from India. Tourism from India would be an important area of employment, commerce and opportunity. We want to promote it to the extent that we can. ·The modern integrated check-posts at Birgunj and Biratnagar have transformed cross-border movement of people and goods, and work on the integrated check-posts at Nepalgunj has commenced.

That is why leaders from our neighbouring countries were invited to Prime Minister Modi's swearing-in ceremony in 2014 and in 2019. We are deeply appreciative of the Nepalese leadership's gesture in travelling to New Delhi for these cherished occasions.

The spectrum of our bilateral cooperation is all-encompassing. It traverses centuries, quite literally. An element of our cooperation that is often missed is the restoration and conservation of the cultural heritage of Nepal. Some years ago, at your request, we shared proposals for the conservation of monuments in the revered Pashupati temple complex. After the earthquake of 2015, India cooperated with Nepal in the restoration of 30 heritage locations, including the iconic Seto Machindranath temple in Kathmandu, the Hiranyavarna Mahavihar at Patan, and the Jangam Matha at Bhaktapur.

Our best domain specialists are at the service of the living history of Nepal.

Yet, our endeavours are meant to not only preserve and celebrate the past but also build and nurture the future. Given the young population – both in India and Nepal – education is a crucial bridge. Seventy schools and 150 health facilities are coming up in 12 districts of Nepal with Indian support. I know that our Ambassador Vinay Kwatra and his colleagues have been working ceaselessly to ensure that many of these commitments that are being made at the level of our lead-

ership are implemented in a timely manner. And I think going over, taking stock of the implementation projects, I find that we have done extraordinarily well despite Covid in this context. Few projects are as satisfying as those that promote learning and the health for the well-being of our citizens.

As a neighbour and friend, India sees itself as Nepal's natural and instinctive responder in times of crisis. The devastating earthquake of 2015 was a test for the people and government of Nepal. The courage and resilience of the citizens of Nepal, the grit and determination in rebuilding lives and livelihoods, was an inspiration for us in India and across the world. On our part, we were happy to contribute to this process, as first responders and then towards long-term reconstruction. 18. The outlay of Indian earthquake-related assistance is US\$ 1 billion but its true value is not in monetary terms. It lies in how it has helped communities on the ground. To cite an instance, 46,000 houses have been built in Gorkha and Nuwakot. They incorporate earthquake-resilient technologies in line with your motto of "Build Back Better", and they epitomise humanity's ability to triumph over adversity.

The year 2020 has brought with it an additional challenge in the form of the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been the most globally disruptive event since World War II. Its devastating impact on society and on the economy is still being tabulated. Recovery, resilience and rebuilding will require both perseverance and planning. Through this period, Nepal and India have been together. We have suffered together and we have fought back together.

... For more Details Please go to www.spotlightnepal.com
Harsh Vardhan Shringla is a Foreign Secretary of India. Excerpts of his statement delivered at a lecture program organized by Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs, Kathmandu.

Reward & Recognition

UNMISS peacekeepers from Nepal received UN Medal for their service in South Sudan

By A CORRESPONDENT

“I’m very proud to be a part of UNMISS,” says Captain Chunadevi Paudel, a peacekeeper from Nepal, upon receiving the United Nations medal for her commitment to the cause of durable peace across South Sudan. “I think what I have been most struck by are the people of South Sudan. They have been through so much, but their resilience and positivity have touched every interaction I have had in the course of this year,” she continues.

This is Captain Paudel’s first peacekeeping mission and she left behind her young son to wear the iconic blue beret.

“Staying away from one’s children is hard,” she reveals, “but at the end of my deployment, I can truly say that I have learnt a lot—from the host community and from all my fellow peacekeepers from different countries.”

Captain Paudel is one of 850 Nepalese peacekeepers who received the UN medal for their immense contribution to the mission’s mandate delivery during a most challenging and extraordinary time, when conflict and displacement in the world’s newest country have been exacerbated by the spread of COVID-19.

This Nepalese battalion has, in the past 11 months, conducted operational activities in some of the most sensitive areas of South Sudan, especially in the Equatorias, undertaking diverse tasks such as force protection, community engagement and enhancing UNMISS’ situational awareness. Most importantly, they have protected civilians and



prevented conflicts from escalating.

Addressing the parade, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Head of UNMISS, David Shearer, commended the awardees for their professionalism, commitment and dedication. “I would particularly like to thank you for the support you provided to reinforce Pibor, during a period of intense intercommunal violence and large-scale displacement of civilians. As such, you the Battalion, should be justifiably proud of your efforts to create positive and meaningful change for the people of South Sudan,” said SRSR Shearer.

For his part, Colonel Saroj Kumar Adhikari, Contingent Commander for the Nepalese battalion, reiterated his country’s commitment to United Nations Peacekeeping. “Our country has a long history of contributing troops to the United Nations. As peacekeepers what we try to bring to all our deployments is the

ability to understand the on-ground situation, respect the rule of the land, be dedicated to the mission’s objectives and always have a sense of pride in the duties we perform,” he stated.

Additionally, Colonel Adhikari paid tribute to the generous spirit of South Sudanese communities.

As one of the first medal parades to be held in Juba following the outbreak of COVID-19, it has been a special day, not just for those being honored, but for everyone attending and a testament to the peacekeeping mission’s commitment towards ensuring a just, equitable and sustainable peace for all communities in South Sudan.

Nepal’s first deployment to UNMISS was in 2011; since then its commitment has grown to over 2000 personnel including military observers, staff officers, two Battalions, the High Readiness Company, as well as a Formed Police Unit and Individual Police Officers.

Children Under Stress

Anxiety and depression are the most common functional difficulties amongst children in Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

With the spread of COVID-19, schools are still under a lockdown even after seven months. Despite efforts to start classes online, they are unable to cover all due to lack of equipment, such as computers. Thus, children in Nepal have been suffering a lot.

A recently published report of UNICEF showed that anxiety and depression are the most common functional difficulties reported amongst children in Nepal due to obstruction of various activities including teaching and learning.

According to UNICEF, 1 in 12 children aged 10-14 years and 1 in 10 aged 15-17 years experience anxiety, and 2 per cent of 10-17-year olds suffer from depression.

To mark the World Children's Day on 20 November, various programs were organized to highlight the issues around children's and young people's wellbeing. UNICEF Nepal hosted a virtual children's parliamentary session and a virtual festival of visions and voices of young people. In addition, UNICEF Nepal is launching a mental health campaign 'Ma Chhu Ni' to help to build an allyship among young people.

Of particular concern during the COVID-19 pandemic and consequent lockdown is the mental health of children and young people. Beyond their immediate experiences, mental health issues and distress can have a lasting impact on children's long-term development and the current pandemic has exposed the extent and severity of the global mental health crisis.

Children and adolescents account for 1 in 9 of reported COVID-19 infections, according to a new analysis released ahead of World Children's Day.

UNICEF warned in a new report of significant and growing conse-

quences for children as the COVID-19 pandemic lurches toward a second year.

Released ahead of World Children's Day, Averting a Lost COVID Generation is the first UNICEF report to comprehensively outline the dire and growing consequences for children as the pandemic drags on. It shows that while symptoms among infected children remain mild, infections are rising and the longer-term impact on the education, nutrition and well-being of an entire generation of children and young people can be life-altering.

"Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a persistent myth that children are barely affected by the disease. Nothing could be further from the truth," said Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director.

"While children can get sick and can spread the disease, this is just the tip of the pandemic iceberg. Disruptions to key services and soaring poverty rates pose the biggest threat to children. The longer the crisis persists, the deeper its impact on children's education, health, nutrition and well-being. The future of an entire generation is at risk."

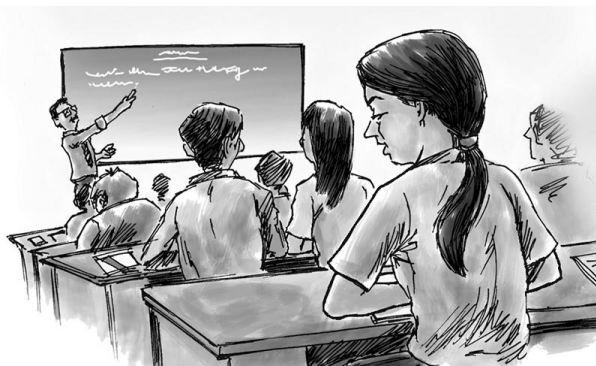
The report finds that, as of 3 November, in 87 countries with age-disaggregated data, children and adolescents under 20 years of age accounted for 1 in 9 of COVID-19 infections, or 11 per cent of the 25.7 million infections reported by these countries. More reliable, age-disaggregated data on infection, deaths and testing is needed to better understand how the crisis impacts the most vulnerable children and guide the response.

While children can transmit the virus to each other and to older age

groups, there is strong evidence that, with basic safety measures in place, the net benefits of keeping schools open outweigh the costs of closing them, the report notes. Schools are not a main driver of community transmission, and children are more likely to get the virus outside of school settings.

COVID-related disruptions to critical health and social services for children pose the most serious threat to children, the report says.

Using new data from UNICEF surveys across 140 countries, it notes that: Around one-third of the countries analyzed witnessed a drop of at least 10 per cent in coverage for health services such as routine vaccinations, outpatient care for childhood infectious diseases, and maternal health services.



Fear of infection is a prominent reason.

There is a 40 per cent decline in the coverage of nutrition services for women and children across 135 countries. As of October 2020, 265 million children were still missing out on school meals globally. More than 250 million children under 5 could miss the life-protecting benefits of vitamin A supplementation programmes.

65 countries reported a decrease in home visits by social work-

ers in September 2020, compared to the same time last year.

More alarming data from the report include: As of November 2020, 572 million students are affected across 30 country-wide school closures – 33 per cent of the enrolled students worldwide.

An estimated 2 million additional child deaths and 200,000 additional stillbirths could occur over a 12-month period with severe interruptions to services and rising malnutrition.

An additional 6 to 7 million children under the age of 5 will suffer from wasting or acute malnutrition in 2020, a 14 per cent rise that will translate into more than 10,000 additional child deaths per month – mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Globally, the number of children living in multidimensional poverty – without access to education, health, housing, nutrition, sanitation or water – is estimated to have soared by 15 per cent, or an additional 150 million children by mid-2020.

To respond to this crisis, UNICEF is calling on governments and partners to: Ensure all children learn, including by closing the digital divide.

Guarantee access to nutrition and health services and make vaccines affordable and available to every child.

Support and protect the mental health of children and young people and bring an end to abuse, gender-based violence and neglect in childhood.

Increase access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene and address environmental degradation and climate change.

Reverse the rise in child poverty and ensure an inclusive recovery for all. Redouble efforts to protect and support children and their families living through conflict, disaster and displacement.

“This World Children’s Day, we are asking governments, partners and the private sector to listen to children and prioritize their needs,” Fore said. “As we all reimagine the future and look ahead toward a post-pandemic world, children must come first.”

8848.86M: Nepal, China Jointly Announce New Height Of Mount Everest

Nepal and China jointly announced the new height of Mt. Qomolangma or Mt. Everest or Sagamatha in Nepali.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali announced that the ‘new height’ of the peak is 8848.86 meters.

Mt. Everest’s revised height was officially announced by Nepali and Chinese officials, virtually.

Minister Gyawali and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi were present at the virtual program, who read out the letters written by their respective heads-of-the-state — President Bidya Devi Bhandari and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Also present at the program was Minister for Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation Padma Kumari Aryal.

The announcement came as Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Nepali counterpart Bidya Devi Bhandari exchanged letters jointly announcing the height.

Xi said in his letter that China and Nepal reached consensus last year on the joint announcement of the new height of the peak.

For more than a year, the two countries’ survey teams have

overcome all kinds of difficulties, solidly carried out their work, and finally reached a conclusion on the snow-covered height based on the International Height Reference System, he said.

Calling Mount Qomolangma “an important symbol of the China-Nepal traditional friendship,” Xi said it is agreed by both countries as the boundary peak and the “Peak of China-Nepal Friendship.”

Xi said the joint announcement of the new height of Mount Qomolangma with his Nepali counterpart is of great significance in carrying forward the undertakings of the predecessors to the future, and showcasing the high level of the continuous development of China-Nepal relations.

China is willing to join hands with Nepal to actively promote the cooperation in ecological and environmental protection and scientific research, and better safeguard the precious wealth and home of both peoples, Xi said.

Mount Qomolangma straddles the China-Nepal border, with its northern part located in Xigaze of southwest China’s Tibet Autonomous Region.



Ram Rajya Or Utopia?



BY: HEMANG DIXIT

Though all organisms on this earth, at the time of their birth had an equal right for survival, in practice it has not been so. We have had over the years heard or read about Ram Rajya or Utopia but this state has not ever been attained. It is those who are the top, who enjoy the fruits of being in power.

After all it is as they say in Nepal: Afnu Haath Jagannath. One can do whatever one wants to and get away with it.

To start at the beginning; groups of people - some small, some large were living apart from each other and so the concept of the ruling over others did not arise. This came about later as the population increased. However, though we read of the conflict of Ram over Ravan the concept of Ram Rajya came into being after that.

After this period, at the time of Christ, it is stated that he and his twelve disciples with their living and sharing together were the first group of people living as a community / commune where all are equal. This lasted until Christ was betrayed by Judas Iscariot.

In the subsequent years we have had a host of leaders who have had over the centuries attempted to rule part of the world or the regions around them. These range from Attila the Hun, Ashok, Alexander, Julius Caesar, the Pharaohs, Genghis Khan, Kublai Khan, Napoleon, Queen Isabella of Spain, Kings of Belgium, Holland plus Portugal, and finally the British Monarchs whose realm was 'One where the sun never set'!

As a result of this, we have had in the last few centuries, the oppression of various groups of people around the world by Britain, Belgium, China, France, Japan, Portugal, Russia, Spain and Turkey. Those were the times when the riches were ransacked, villages pillaged, slaves taken and many killed. The story of all the victors was similar irrespective of whether they were white, black or ethnics.

You may as well ask as to why I am dwelling on all these historical events of the past? This reaction has come about as a result of the events that have been unfolding in the US following the election of 3rd November this year. The rest of the world was given to understand that this country was a beacon of democracy in our midst. This country, it has been claimed, is one in which every individual, irrespective of ethnicity; colour or sex would be an American once given the 'Green card' and citizenship. True, but there is a history of both white and black beings, the mulattos and the ethnics who then were labelled redskins and are now a minority who have different tales regarding treatment in the land of hope and glory. The point now is that the US which has played a large part in world affairs during this last century and was thought to be a Beacon of Democracy is not really that, at heart. Withdrawal from organisations

concerned with the welfare of humanity is being implemented. Plans for creating rifts in countries of the East namely Asia seems to be on the cards – almost a warmongering effort! This after all is the practice of neo colonial powers towards the smaller countries of the third world.

Surprisingly the present leader of US, now rejected by the people of his native land i.e. which goes for the united states has put into action many steps with a view to stay in power. This is, in fact a blatant exhibition by the leader to the rest of the world that those in authority, even for limited terms of power are not subject to the laws of the land. When a leader of the so called 'Free World' refuses to act as per the wishes of the people he represents, does this land have the right to claim and teach about Democracy to others? The statue of Liberty, a gift of the people of France, if living would certainly be ashamed!

There is a saying that 'Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely'! Before the end of 1990 it was accepted that the USA and the USSR were the two world powers. The USSR in the subsequent years became Russia and is said to not be a world power as such. Has this resulted for such behaviour by the sole world power? In this process of working it has alienated many of its well-wishers. Unless drastic steps are taken by the new coming head of state the situation is going to a point of no return. What must also be remembered is that many other satraps in other parts of the world will think that holding on to power by whatever means one can employ is possible in a leading country such as the USA, then why not elsewhere in Europe, Asia, South America and Oceania?

It remains to be seen as to how much the authority the State Governments of US have. Can the Federal Government overrule the state authorities? In India it is the question of the Central Government and the thirty-three state governments and the powers that they have. As far as we in Nepal are concerned it is power struggle between the PM's Office in Singha Durbar and that of the Provincial Heads at the seven Pradesh capitals. Looking at what is happening in Washington and USA, is there a lesson for us to learn? Or should we ascribe to the dictum, 'East is East and West is West and the twain shall never meet'?

We are currently claiming that Ram was born in Parsa of Nepal. Does that qualify us to demand Ram Rajya? Is our present almost 2/3rd majority government capable or likely to do that? Cannot we in this age of Covid-19 hope for better life for us Nepalīs? Or is the Utopia that we are thinking about just a will-o'-the-wisp?

The author is a retired medical doctor and writes fiction under the pen name of Mani Dixit also. Website: www.hdixit.org.np. Twitter: @manidixithd



बनौ आदर्श
ii वागारिक

बाइ बाइ

जसले अरुको भलाईमा आफ्नो खुशी खोज्दछन्
उसलाई वाइ वाइ सलाम गर्दछ ।



लैङ्गिक हिंसाको अन्त्यः समृद्ध नेपालको गन्तव्य



नेपाल सरकार
सञ्चार तथा सूचना प्रविधि मन्त्रालय
सूचना तथा प्रसारण विभाग

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Get quick and easy **Gold & Silver** loan with
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