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OPINION
BINOJ BASNYAT



ENVIRONMENT
Batu Uprety



VIEWPOINT
Dr. K. Uprety

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PRITHVI NARAYAN SHAH

Remembered For A Reason

INSIDE



MAYHEM IN US CONGRESS
Blackest Day



POLITICS
Fight To Finish



LOOMING LOADSHEDDING
NEA SAYS NO

खर्गों ओदरु

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गोरुकरु गोरुकरु

जसरुले अरुवो भुतरुईभरु आरुफुनो रुरुषी रुरुओजुदरुखनु
उसरुतरुई वरुइ वरुइ सरुतरुभ गोरुदरुख ।



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Editor and Publisher

Keshab Poudel

Contributor

Sabine Pretsch

Design/Layout

Sahil Mokthan, 9863022025

Marketing Manager

Madan Raj Poudel

Tel: 9841320517

Nabin Kumar Maharjan

Tel: 9841291404

Editorial Office

Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 977-1-4430250

E-mail

spotlightnepal@gmail.com

P.O.Box: 7256

Website

www.spotlightnepal.com

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After a dramatic day of violence at the US Capitol, the House of Representatives and the Senate have confirmed Joe Biden's presidential victory certifying Joe Biden's election as US president and Kamala Harris as vice president. The storm by violent supporters of U.S President Donald Trump in the Capital Hill, a pillar of US democracy, shows democracy is not only vulnerable in a new country but even in countries like United States with strong institutions, traditions and long practices. One of the beauties of democratic order is peaceful transfer of power and rule of law. However, storming capitol with the instigation of a president of democratic world showed the rise of despotism is possible everywhere. Despite mayhem and despotic nature of individuals, the US institutions, overwhelming politicians of diverse political parties and democracy have been saved. Although President Donald Trump forced rejection of the results, the joint session chaired by Vice President Mike Pence, who strictly followed the constitutional order, traditions and practices, finally paved the way for Biden's victory.

Although this chapter has closed now, in the history of modern democratic world and in the history of United States, January 6, 2021 will be remembered as a dark day. Leaders from western world have condemned the violent scenes in Washington, where rioters supporting US President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol building. Many leaders called for peace and an orderly transition of power, describing what happened as "horrificing" and an "attack on democracy". For the people of Nepal, it is nothing surprising to see violent mob attacking democracy and forcing legitimate authority including monarch to accept forceful abdication from the street. The mob rule works in the country like Nepal where institutions are weak. With the strong institutions and commitments of overwhelming of people in the rule of law and rights of the people, some leaders can infringe the process not the democracy. What Alexis de Tocqueville in his book "Democracy in America", expresses is it's the very strength of democratic institutions Americans are able to retain democracy. He also warned weakness might lead to anarchy and disorder. The United States stands for democracy around the world and a peaceful and orderly transfer of power can still control the damage.

However, we have decided to cover Prithvi Narayan Shah and his role as a cover story of this issue. Given his important contributions in nation building and his views on inclusion, secularism, economy and institution building are highly relevant today. As the country is celebrating his birth anniversary, we have decided to cover Prithvi Narayan Shah's role in this context.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

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A Breakthrough

Secretary-level committees of Nepal and India have reached an agreement over a few contentious points of the Mahakali Treaty.

By A CORRESPONDENT

For Secretary of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, another feather was added to his cap. Lingering for over two and half decades on various contentious issues of interpretation of Mahakali Integrated Treaty during implementation, his team was able to make a breakthrough in the talks.

During recent meeting held in New Delhi, Nepal and India agreed on key points of Mahakali Treaty.

Given the nature of the treaty and its state, there are still many contentious issues of the treaty which was ratified by Nepal's Parliament in 1996 by two thirds of majority.

The agreement was finalized through bilateral talks held in New Delhi under the leadership of Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, secretary of the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, from Nepal and UP Singh, secretary of the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, from India.

As the issue of implementation of Pancheshwor Project had been emphasized during the recent Nepal visit by Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla, the agreement is seen as a breakthrough.

According to secretary of Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, both the countries reached an agreement on articles 3, 4 and 7 of the treaty. Article 3 discusses the cost-sharing of the Pancheshwor Multipurpose Project, Article 4 deals with the construction of the Dodhara and Chandani irrigation tunnel and Article 7 includes the provision of releasing water upstream.

Secretary Ghimire said that the Indian side was previously insistent on constructing irrigation canals in Chandani and Dodhara, which are Nepali territories on the other side of the Mahakali River, only after the completion of the Pancheshwor

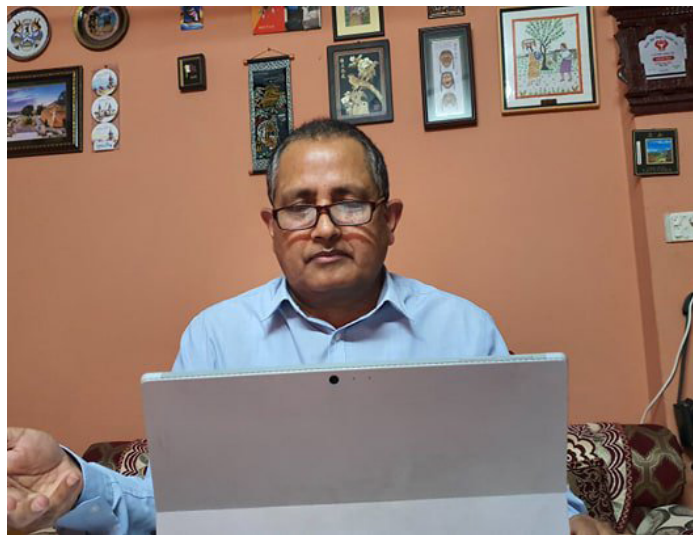
Project. However, it has now softened that stance. According to Ghimire, both sides have agreed to begin construction of the canals.

"Our focus should be to respect the needs and wishes of the people as it will help facilitate the overall implementation of the project. That is why we proposed building the canals," Ghimire said. "The Indian side took this positively."

Nepal had already prepared a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the irrigation canals in Dodhara and Chandani and submitted it to India. But no concrete progress had been made. But now, the Indian technical side has agreed to study and comment on the DPR and complete all the related works within two months. A 1.1-kilometre portion of the canal will have to be built on the Indian land.

The two countries have also agreed to share the costs of the Pancheshwor Project on the basis of the benefits each side will receive. The Mahakali Treaty was signed between Nepal and India in 1996 and one of its provisions was to build Pancheshwor as a bilateral multipurpose project aimed at generating a large amount of hydroelectricity, provide irrigation facilities and control the river.

Article 3 of the treaty mentions sharing the costs based on the benefits. Nepal has been stating that since it will only receive 50 per cent of the generated hydropower and will not get any advantage from the irrigation and river control aspects of the project, it will only bear the costs of the hydropower. Secretary Ghimire reiterated the same view in the latest meeting.



The Indian side has been claiming that 93,000 hectares of land in Nepal will be irrigated by the project and that Nepal will also be helped by the 18-kilometre embankment that will be constructed.

It asserts that Nepal will gain a benefit of 22 per cent. However, Nepal has been saying that it will not share the costs for these aspects because it is making alternative arrangements for the irrigation and has already constructed an eight-kilometre embankment on its own. "The Indians acknowledged our facts and have expressed their commitment that an expert group will study and conclude these matters as soon as possible," Ghimire said.

The issue of the Lower Sarada Dam was also discussed in the meeting. India has been using all the water from the Sarada Barrage since it was built in 1920. Nepal has been asking for a share of that water. The two sides agreed to discuss further on the issue.

The meeting also looked at the issue of water consumption in the coastal area above Pancheshwor Dam. The norm is to release five per cent water to the area but it appears that only one per cent may also be enough for consumption. So, the two sides have agreed to release one per cent of the water, or two per cent when needed, and utilize the rest for the project itself.

NEWSNOTES

India Hands Over NR 306 Million Cheque To CEO Of NRA



Namgya Khampa, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of India in Nepal met Shushil Gyawali, CEO of National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) today and discussed various Government of India assisted reconstruction projects.

She handed over a cheque of NRs 306.6 million towards reconstruction of educational institutions in earthquake

affected districts of Nepal. With this cheque handover, India has reimbursed an amount of NRs 819.8 million to Government of Nepal towards educational sector reconstruction projects.

Under India's committed grant assistance of US \$ 50 million towards reconstruction of educational institutions in Nepal, 71 projects have presently been taken up by NRA, including the Central Library building of Tribhuvan University. These projects are located in Gorkha, Nuwakot, Ramechhap, Dolakha, Kavre, Dhading, and Sindhupalchowk districts of Nepal. While 3 schools in Gorkha and 5 in Nuwakot have been completed, construction of 56 schools in five districts is underway and seven schools are in final stage of award of contract.

During the meeting, progress of various Government of India funded reconstruction projects in Housing, Health and Cultural Heritage sector were also discussed. India has committed US \$ 150 million towards reconstruction of 50,000 houses in Gorkha and Nuwakot districts, US \$ 50 million for reconstruction of 147 hospitals/health posts in 10 districts and another US \$ 50 million for restoration/reconstruction of 28 cultural heritage sites in 8 districts of Nepal. While housing sector projects are nearly completed and handed over to beneficiaries, projects in Education, Health and Cultural Heritage sectors are at various stages of active implementation.

Japan Provides Equipment To Dadeldhura Blood Bank

The Charge d'Affaires a.i. of Japan to Nepal, Yoshioka Yuzo signed a grant contract with Madan Raj Chataut, President of the Nepal Red Cross Society, Dadeldhura District Chapter, for installing equipment at Dadeldhura Blood Bank.

The project is funded under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) of the Japanese Government and involves a grant of USD 56,364 (approximately NPR 6.58 million).

The project will support installation of medical equipment including refrigerators, a component preparation set, an automated blood grouping machine, microscope, micro pipette, electric balance, incubator, needle destroyers, deep freezer and uninterrupted power supply (UPS).



At the online grant signing ceremony, Mr. YOSHIOKA said he hoped the assistance would contribute towards enhancing better hospital ser-

vices for people needing safe blood for treatment.

The Nepal Red Cross Society Dadeldhura District Chapter was established in 1967 and has been providing blood transfusion services at the recommendation of authorized doctors of the Dadeldhura Hospital and other polyclinics. It also has an ambulance service and has been engaged in promoting hygiene and sanitation, and humanitarian assistance.

The Embassy of Japan believes the project will contribute towards improving medical services for patients in the district. It also believes that the support will contribute towards further enhancing the friendship between the peoples of Japan and Nepal.

Pakistan Lauds Nepal's Role To Take SAARC Forward

Pakistan has lauded Nepal's constructive role in taking SARRC process forward. Pakistan's foreign secretary Sohail Mahmood said so while receiving Nepali ambassador to Pakistan, Tapas Adhikari.

Pakistan's foreign secretary 'Deeply appreciated Nepal's constructive role (as Chair and host) in taking SAARC process forward', Pakistan's foreign ministry, sharing information in its twitter handle, quoted secretary Mahmood as saying during the meeting with ambassador Adhikari.

"Foreign secretary underscored importance Pakistan attaches to cordial and multifaceted ties with Nepal and our resolve to further upgrade them," said Pakistan's foreign ministry.

SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Summit has not been held for over six years. The 19th SAARC Summit scheduled to be

held in 2016 in Pakistan's capital city of Islamabad was cancelled at the eleventh hour mainly due to India's unwillingness to participate in the Summit.

As the Chair of the SAARC, Nepal has been trying to persuade all the other member countries to hold the Summit in Pakistan as agreed in the 18th SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu.



Cambodia Gifts Medical Equipment To Nepal

The government of Cambodia has gifted medical supplies to help Nepal manage COVID-19. At a function held at Tribhuvan International Airport, Permanent Secretary of Cambodia Ouch Borith handed over the supplies to Minister for Health and Population Hridayesh Tripathi.

The goods brought in two chartered flights include 2 million face masks, 100,000 fabric masks, 20,000 N95 masks, 20,000 goggles, 20,000 PPE sets, 20,000 face shields, 1,000 safety plastic shoes and 500 thermal guns, according to joint spokesperson of the Ministry Samir Ku-

mar Adhikari.

On the occasion, Minister Tripathi, on behalf of Government of Nepal, thanked the Cambodian government for the assistance.

Finance Ministry Agreement With ADB For Grid Modernization

The Ministry of Finance (MoF) has signed a loan agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the electric grid modernisation in the country.



Asian Development Bank

MoF and ADB signed the loan agreement worth Rs 18.25 billion for the modernisation of Nepal's electric grid. The agreement was signed by MoF Joint Secretary Shree Krishna Nepal and ADB Office In-Charge for Nepal Residential Office, Rudy Van Dale.

The major objective behind inking this agreement is to improve the power transmission capacity of the country. Joint Secretary Nepal said that the government has signed the agreement with ADB to improve the power transmission and distribution system under the Electric Grid Modernisation Project.

"We are expecting this agreement to play a crucial role in making the power supply sustainable and reliable by modernizing the power grid in the country and to develop and strengthen the capacity of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA)," Nepal said.

According to Nepal, the total investment cost of the electric grid modernization project is about Rs 22.81 billion. Of this amount, ADB will bear Rs 18.25 billion, while the remaining Rs 4.56 billion will be invested by the NEA.

Nepali UN Peacekeepers Avert Rebel Attack

Nepali UN Peacekeepers Deployed in Central African Republic helped to thwart an attack by unidentified combatants contributing to restore peace in Central African



Republic. According to Nepal Army, Nepali Peacekeepers prevented rebels from attacking peace keepers.

Three UN peacekeepers have been killed by unidentified combatants in the Central African Republic, the United Nations said, as the country prepares for a general election and fighting continues between rebels and government forces.

The news came after a rebel coalition called off a ceasefire and said it would resume its march on the capital, as well as the arrival of troops from Russia and Rwanda to shore up the government of the resource-rich country.

Marie Stopes Launches New Hotline Number 1143

Sunaulo Nepal Parivar and Marie Stopes, humanitarian organisations that provide services such as safe abortion, contraception, and methods of family planning across Nepal have introduced a hotline service 1143 for service-seekers.

The free telephone service will provide people with information on issues of safe sex, family planning and safe abortion.

Marie Stopes, since 1976, has been advocating that women should give birth to children by choice not by



MARIE STOPES
INTERNATIONAL
Nepal

force. In line with this, the organization has been playing a crucial role in spreading knowledge about the importance of family planning in rural parts of Nepal since 1994.

Marie Stopes, issuing a press release, said the toll free number '1143' is also used as a colloquial term of "I love you". It is expected to spread love and understanding between partners. "All people can call the number where our counsellors (meri saathi) will give advice about sex health, contraceptive measures, safe abortion and other measures of family planning." Counselling is held every day from 7:00am to 12:00pm at Marie Stopes centres.

Marie Stopes also provides abortion for unwanted pregnancy at a nominal cost. It has also been organizing various educational programs related to the issue and urging people to utilize the fundamental human right of sex and maternity.

BUSINESS BRIEF

Himalayan Bank Limited Hands Over Phaco Machine To Eye Hospital

Himalayan Bank Limited handed over Phaco Machine amounting Rs. 3.5 million to Dr. Ram Prasad Pokharel Eye Hospital.



Registered under Nepal Netra Jyoti Sangh, the hospital, which is situated in Dhankuta, has been providing various services related to the eye.

Under HBL's Corporate Social Responsibility, Sunil Bahadur Thapa, the board of directors of the

bank, handed over the equipment to the representative of the hospital amid a function.

NIFRA Names NIBL Ace Capital Its Issue Manager

Nepal Infrastructure Bank Limited has appointed NIBL Ace Capital Limited as its issue manager for the IPO issuance. This is the biggest IPO in the history of Nepal's capital market. The bank is issuing IPO of 40% of its issued capital i.e. 8 crore units, worth NRs. 8 Arba, from Magh 02, 2077 to Magh 06, 2077.

NIFRA has a paid-up capital of NRs. 20 Arba, and the company had collected NRs. 12 Arba paid-up capital from its Promoter Shareholders. Remaining NRs. 8 Arba will be collected through this IPO to meet its paid-up capital.



NIBL ACE CAPITAL
Managing shares. Managing investments.

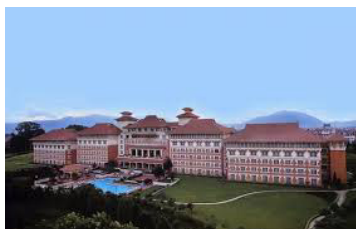
As per the current share market scenario it is expected that no applicants will

go empty handed in this largest IPO.

Nepal Infrastructure Bank Limited (NIFRA) is established by Banks and Financial Institutions (BFIs), Life and Non-life Insurance Companies and other private sector leading entities and team of entrepreneurs in joint participation with the Government of Nepal (GoN).

Hyatt Regency Kathmandu Awarded By SATA As Leading Luxury Hotel

Hyatt Regency Kathmandu has announced that it has been awarded with the "Leading Luxury Hotel / Resort" by South Asian Travel Award. The award was received on December 20, 2020 at a ceremony conducted virtually on December 15, 2020.



This is the second consecutive win of the award for the hotel. Hyatt Regency Kathmandu is a distinct showcase of fine architecture and craftsmanship. The subtle

fusion of creativity with novelty ensures modern-day comfort and convenience, with a flavor of the rich cultural heritage that Kathmandu is famous for. The entrance to the hotel is marked by life-sized mythological animals, welcome towers and beautifully carved niches.

GATE College Receives Affiliation From EHL University

Global Academy of Tourism and Hospitality Education, GATE, has received a formal affiliation from EHL University, a world renowned technical university of Switzerland.

"The Global Academy of Tourism and Hospitality Education, GATE has gone through constant growth in the past 14 years! We are a National and International Award-winning Vocational and Undergraduate academy, training students to work at all entry-level jobs in the Hospitality industry. To its great credit GATE admitted onto its Mandikatar Campus students from 19 nationalities, creating an international learning environment for the Nepalese youth," said Khem R. Lakai, CHE Founder/CEO.

"We have obtained world-class trainers, equipment, and opportunities to serve our students. These students are coming from cities and villages with no discrimination to their economic status. We are truly indebted to our original DREAM TEAM support for their vision and belief that this new hands-on way of education was possible. We also value the continued belief in the vision and results shared by our valued stakeholders, without which this dream would not have been possible," said Lakai.

Starting 01/01/21, GATE will be a Member of the EHL [Network of Certified Schools](http://www.ehl.edu) (www.ehl.edu). GATE is now a partner in Switzerland's first Hospitality pioneer certification program that was established in 1893. This certification program was founded by Jacques Tschumi, and developed to its international standards by the Swiss Hotel Association. EHL ranks #1 in the QS global hospitality education ranking.



NIBL Ace Capital Ltd. Launches Free DEMAT Account

NIBL Ace Capital Ltd. has launched Free DEMAT account and Free MEROSHARE registration starting from Poush 01, 2077 (December 16, 2020). This offer is for limited time period only. The Free DEMAT Account and Free MEROSHARE is offered from NIBL Ace Capital Lazimpat, Kathmandu and its branches as well as from all the branches of Nepal Investment Bank Ltd.

In addition to this, they have assured to provide demat account number and meroshare registration in the same day.

NIBL Ace Capital has promised to provide many more services that would ease their customers and would like to extend a sincere thanks to their entire customers, who have been associated and contributed with their feedback and suggestions.

Himalaya Airlines Supports Prayas Nepal With Essentials Supply



The Nepal-China joint venture donated year-long supply of notebooks as well as Covid-19 essential supplies to the organization on the New Year's Eve at the premises of Prayas Nepal.

The contribution included 1,650 notebooks, two infrared thermometers, 24 bottles of hand sanitizers and 1,000 surgical face masks.

Himalaya Airlines has been continuously contributing essential educational and snack/grocery supplies over the past three years in an attempt to make a difference in the lives of children in the organization. This year too, a total of 27 students aged between 8 to 20 years will be receiving yearlong school necessities to follow their academic courses.

During the handover programme, Ujjwala Dali, Head of Department – Brand and Service Improvement of the Himalaya Airlines remarked, “2020 has been a year of uncertainty and dampened spirits, especially for children all over. Fear of COVID-19 spread and social distancing has hit schools and colleges hard. However with vaccines around the corner, there's a light at the end of the tunnel and educational institutions are now gearing up to reopen. With our persistent pledge to make meaningful contributions, we thought this is the right time to fulfill our annual commitment to Prayas Nepal and we are determined to continue our support to the organization's efforts to groom the children in all walks of life.”

While expressing gratitude on behalf of Prayas Nepal, President Mani Joshi, said, “We are sincerely thankful to Himalaya Airlines for their continued support to our children, since 2017. Himalaya's contribution every year has not only helped in boosting morale of our children in this pandemic year but has also inspired us to ardently strive for the better upkeep of our children. We wish for steady progress of Himalaya Airlines in the coming years.”

Himalayan Bank Supports Madan Bhandari Garden And Park Committee



Himalayan Bank Limited Provides Rs. 500,000 in financial support to Madan Bhandari Memorial Garden Protection Committee to purchase various kinds of plants

and trees and protect the public park and garden.

According to a press release issued by the bank, under its Corporate Social Responsibility, the bank has provided the money to the committee, which has been protecting and expanding the park for a long time.

ADB Loans For TIA, Gautam Buddha Airport

Nepal and Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed US\$ 150 million concessional loan agreement to finance South Asia Sub Regional Co-operation (SASEC) Airport Capacity Enhancement Project and US\$ 40 million concessional loan and US\$10 million grant for the implementation of Priority River Basins Flood Risk Management Project.

According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance, Shreekrishna Nepal, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Finance, and Rudi Louis Hendrikus Van Dael, Officer-in-charge, Nepal Resident Mission, ADB signed the agreement on behalf of their respective institutions.

As per the agreement, ADB will provide concessional loan worth US\$150 million for the Airport Capacity Enhancement Project.



This project will enhance the airport capacity by constructing parallel taxiway extension, hanger apron and next phase work design of Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) and construction of second terminal building at Gautam Buddha Airport (GBA).

Likewise, the ADB will provide concessional loan worth US\$ 40 million and US\$ 10 million grant for said Priority River Basins Flood Risk Management Project.

The project will contribute toward improving flood protection infrastructure, enhanced flood forecasting and response system and improve flood prevention and preparedness capacity, read the press statement.

Addressing the signing program, Nepal said, “The implementation of these programs will significantly contribute to the national economy by increasing the existing capacity of Nepal's airspace and flood protection infrastructure.”

Nepal's Political Consternation



BY: BINOJ BASNYAT

Two years and seven months passed by beckoning for the unity of the communist parties. And has for another time witnessed similar dismay in Nepal's political course that usually tend to transpire after political alterations once every decade. The two communist parties the United Marxists Leninist (UML) and the Nepal Communist Party Maoists (NCPM) united to contest the elections, where they thrived in recording nearly two third in the federal legislature after two decades in recent election history. The unconvincing harmony did not ensue due to mainly personality, ideological differences, theology, vision and precedence of the Peace Process now steering to the announcement for a new mandate for 30 April and 10 May 2021 with dissolution of the House of Representative (HoR). The optimism for stability and economic enhancement for the Nepali people has been abandoned and has been twisted merely to be a planning fallacy. There is a domestic political compulsions for PM Oli who just acquired temporary settlement. Challenges are at a march-time with a probability of another political discourse in the coming months. The consolidating and strengthening of the focal transformations to federalism, secularism and republicanism is once more in question. The people this day and age cannot be misguided with popular political slogans as people and institutions are aware of realisms, the geopolitical and geo-strategic significance of Nepal in the region.

The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2006, ended the 10 year old conflict, but the country is still waiting to bring to an end the peace process with the verdict from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP) for justice and reparation. During this time, Nepal has ascertained 12 heads of government, three heads of state, two Constituent Assembly elections in 2008 and 2013, proclamation of the constitution in 2015, and local, federal and provincial elections in 2017 besides intermittent violence resulting in dozens of deaths.

The UML and the NCPM amalgamated with a five point agreement in 17th May 2018 and to compete all levels elections with a nationalist fervour, anti-Indian oratory and different political events unfolding stemmed apart on 22nd Dec 2020. The country had passed through different phases of diplomatic and political manoeuvring, while the prominent political personalities reckoned the end of the fight for political freedom and a new era of economic advancement. Diplomatic resentment and optimism shaped Nepal's path within and with immediate neighbours; while both China and India are seeking their own stance in South Asia as well as in the global platform with US pivotal shift to the Indo-Pacific Region (IPR).

Even if the NCP government was projected as a two third government, it was in effect a UML subjugated largest par-

ty administration with contribution from the NCPM. Tempt for unity occurred and consolidated amongst two co-chairs of the NCP. The proceedings and surrounding insinuate that the uncompleted unity is more for Prachanda or Oli to grasp the party or head the executive.

The opposition Nepali Congress is ineffective, while opposition within the ruling party thrived. Though political parties express their arrogance on the President's decree recommended by Oli of the dissolution of the HoR, it is yet to resolve due to different interpretation of constitutional arrangements, which is legally being contested at the Supreme Court (SC). Politics of convenience is afloat once again in Nepali political diaspora with plans for agitation in the streets.

Politics yet again has detracted the socio-political, political-security and political-economy impacts and challenge that the country will have to address during and post COVID-19. A great set back, which indicates the political dominance in Nepal's system of governance and the political-economic progression that the government had under taken has gone on limbo. Israel that was established in 1948 with migration from around the world is an example. Israel is about to hold the fourth election in two years, yet it remains the most powerful country in the Middle-East.

The ruling NCP have not given up their old ways, and power tussles, ideological polarisation, competition and differences are the order of the day which threatens to get out of hand and lead to fragmentation of parties and familiar political uncertainty. The Madhes-based parties is firm in their demand for an amendment in the constitution.

The trend of recommending ordinances and dissolution of the HoR has been a means in Nepal's politics but now for the sixth time it was Oli to prompt his supremacy and grip in power. This recaps what President elect of the US Joe Biden said "The right to be heard. To have your vote counted. To choose leaders of this nation. To govern ourselves. In America, politicians don't take power-people grant power to them."

The people in general look for honest and accountable governments and the recent peaceful agitation in the streets in the last few weeks for reestablishment of a Kingdom and a Hindu state is an expression of frustration but more is the lack of people's democratic participation in the political and social transformation process right from the signing of the CPA. Examples can be South Africa and Zimbabwe's socio-political and political-economy transformation and where both countries stand in the global judgement today.

The political declaration has resulted in creating three narratives leading to eight challenges to national security. Narrative one – the President's endorsement followed by election, two - If the HoR is restored by the SC and the third is the call for

opening of the parliament by the Chairperson of the HoR, who is part of the Nepal-Prachanda faction. The challenges remain to be one, question of legality with provisions in the constitution, two, formal split of Nepal Communist Party, three, formation of democrats alliance if election is to materialize which will raise the likelihood of the political amendments with election manifestation, four, argument of Federalism, Secularism and Republicism with role of Presidential system, Hindu state and a space for Monarchy post-election, five, political disorder leading to social collision and law and order distress with Emergency and Presidential Rule, six, economic challenges during and post COVID-19, seven, population frustration and deepening of distrust on political parties and finally the diplomatic challenge is placing Nepal in the new geopolitical environment mainly with the rising of Chinese political interests raising question to traditional security order of South Asia. The IPR is refocussing and progressing on value based system of governance with democracy versus communism and on the potential of alliance and coalitions.

Conclusion

Nepal is going through multiple crisis from political instability, pandemic disease, miss governance, economic contraction to systemic inequity and environmental degradation, the interlink challenges of sustainable development have not been vibrant.

National security challenges are mounting with the split of the NCP, weak opposition, and politicalised institutions including the Judiciary, fragile governance and failure of federal system, which will invite political instability and security disorder as well as restlessness within the political sphere.

Religious intolerance, marginalized cultural and traditional values and the rise in unemployment will tempt social collision.

The economic impact by COVID-19 will limit economic opportunities with the fall of remittance and limited economic activities.

With today's political, economic, security and social strides and continued politicisation; all have to visualise how Nepal will figure post COVID-19 and shape in the next decade? Question of ideology versus realism, the world geopolitical environment and Nepal's geostrategic placement in the IPR must be visualized agreeably.

It is also an occasion and an opportunity for the people to perceive what is the precise appropriate political system or administrative model for Nepal. For this four concerns necessities to be contemplated for the sovereign people to give their verdict without fear and influence with all the lost years nonetheless with lessons learnt.

First is about addressing corruption as institutionalization of corruption as the major factor in curtailing the people to exercise their universal rights of freedom. The personalities that have held public positions politician, civilians or people in uniform need to verify their rights of ownership of both money

and assets with political self-determination and by means of international pressure.

Second, individual interest took lead and priority and neglected the political party's manifestations. Intra party opposition was stronger than the principal opposition in the parliament.



Politicization of institutions has been the core challenge to systemizations, institutional memory and professionalization.

Third, frequent changes in government have led to unclear economic policies. The economy is being shaped more for the benefit of the political party in power than for the country's overall development. National economic policy to be floated as economic growth has decelerated due to defect in policies

Lastly, is conducting of the election in a free and fair manner for desired ends with one, digitalizing the system of casting votes to avoid invalidity two, all Nepalese citizens in whichever part of the world they may be to be able to utilize their electoral rights three, to bring policies and measures to discourage intra and inter competition and more cooperation amongst the security forces involved in implementing security measures four, executing the election in normal security environment with law enforcement forces five, electoral financial expenditure and to be made public by all agencies for financial transparency and accountability and lastly political seats and vacancies should be allotted to the political professionals contrary to financial precedence.

The current episode has two angles and a long practice of the past. Palace existed to blame for any political mess. Internal rift of the NCP and the tempt to stay in power adds to the practice where immediate neighbours concerns and impromptu visits fits in like the visit by the Chief of Raw and Analysis Wing, India, visit by the Defense Minister and State Councillor of China Wei Fenghe, the upcoming visit by Chinese Vice Minister Yezhou and PM Oli to India.

Basnyat is a strategic analyst and a Maj. Gen. (ret'd) of the Nepali Army

Security Concern

As usual, the message of Chinese high-level delegation was around the concern over the security on Tibet following a new political development in Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

Veteran foreign relations expert and scholar Rishikesh Shaha said geography is a major factor determining the destiny of the country. He wrote in his article that geography is a determinant to decide the fate of relations with any country and Nepal is no exception.

With its south facing topography with large stretch of flatland in the south and higher mountains in the north, with hostile terrains to develop easy access, there is a limitation for the northern neighbor due to the geography.

Unlike speculations and expectations, the Chinese high level delegation came and left. With its limited capacity to bring any change in the political, social and economic order of Nepal, China's policy towards Nepal remains unchanged: Encourage parties to unite and maintain stability.

China sees the stability in Nepal is a pre-requisite for the security interest of Tibet. Chinese scholar Wang Xung in his book Nepal's National Defense Strategy and Nepal China Relations writes open border of Nepal and India, accessible geographical terrain and strong presence of Tibetan Refugees in Nepal are three major threats to China's security in Nepal. He writes only politically stable Nepal can protect Chinese interests in Nepal.

Although China has intensified its activities and presence in Nepal following the declaration of republic and federal order in 2006, China is not in a position to intervene in political crisis.

Their recent unsuccessful bid to bring unity in ruling Nepal Communist Party indicates their weakness in

Nepal. Although China has been supporting communists in Nepal since 1950, Chinese Communist Party is unable to turn the party in its favor.

A Chinese delegation led by Vice-minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of China Guo Yezhou recently visited Nepal. During the visit Chinese leaders met President Bidhya Devi Bhandari, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, co-chairpersons of Nepal Com-

power to turn Nepal into its influence zone including China.

People in power see China as a counter balance to reduce the influence of India and a section of Indian and Nepalese intellectuals also oversensitize the issue of Chinese influence in Nepal. The failure of the visiting high-level Chinese delegation in achieving anything substantial has exposed its weakness.

The crisis erupted on Dec.



munist Party (NCP) Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Madhav Kumar Nepal, and senior NCP leader Jhalanath Khanal.

The delegation also held meetings with Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba and Chair of the Federal Council of Janata Samajwadi Party-Nepal Baburam Bhattarai.

Geography Matters

Destined by geography, culture and civilization, it is virtually impossible in the present context for any

20 when Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, decided he could no longer work with rival factions within his Nepal Communist Party (NCP), which was formed in 2018 to unite the Marxist-Leninist and main Maoist parties following their success in elections in late 2017.

With two years of his term to run, Oli dissolved parliament and called for fresh elections in a move that foreign diplomats say caught Chi-



na by surprise and plunged the impoverished nation of 30 million people into uncertainty.

Within days, Beijing dispatched to Kathmandu Guo Yezhou, a vice-minister in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) International Liaison Department, which manages relationships with foreign political parties of all hues, both in power and opposition.

"It is evident that China is angered by Oli's abrupt move amid a pandemic ... they are clearly concerned about the massive investments they have pledged," said a senior European diplomat.

"They are shocked as to how Oli could make a bold political move without prior consultations," said the diplomat, requesting anonymity as he is not authorized to speak to the media.

Guo has held separate meetings with Oli, and rivals in the communist party to get their sides of the story, as well as leaders of the main opposition party and other politicians.

Commenting on the delegation's visit to Kathmandu, China's foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said China hoped "all the various parties in Nepal can put national interest and the overall situation first, and proceed from there, while properly handling internal differences and

working towards political stability and the country's development."

Madhav Kumar Nepal, a former prime minister and one of the main critics of Oli within the Nepal Communist Party (NCP), was high on Guo's dance card, and Ram Karki, the NCP's deputy chief of the foreign affairs attended their meeting.

"They want to listen more than they speak. They wanted to know the reason leading to the split in the party," Karki said of the Chinese delegation.

"China always wants stability in Nepal. Since the CCP has a fraternal relationship with the NCP, they are concerned about the present situation. Certainly, they tried to know whether there is any possibility of uniting the party," Karki said.

Guo also held talks with the opposition Nepali Congress Party leader and former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba.

"Irrespective of any change in Nepal, China wants to continue its relationship with all political parties and its economic cooperation including the Trans-Himalayan Multi Dimensional Connectivity Network," Dinesh Bhattacharya, a Deuba aide present at the meeting, told Reuters.

Still, some foreign diplomats

in Kathmandu viewed Guo's mission as a brazen demonstration of China's growing influence over Nepal's internal affairs.

"Why would a country rush a delegation to a neighbouring nation amid a pandemic? It's rather obvious they control the internal politics of Nepal as they want to expand investments in near future," a senior Western diplomat said.

Sandwiched between India and China, Nepal's tilt into China's orbit is a growing concern for

India. Oli has raised border disputes between Nepal and India at a time when India is already dealing with the worst tensions in decades along sections of its long frontier with China in the Himalayas.

They claimed that the delegation was not in Nepal to discuss Nepal's domestic affairs as rumoured in the media. However, their claim was taken with a pinch of salt.

Political scientist Dev Raj Dahal said China was using its soft power to influence Nepal by sending CPC leaders. He said the Chinese side was concerned about security and stability in Nepal as Nepal lay below Tibet, 'the geopolitical loophole of China'.

He said China was concerned about stability in Nepal also because it was eyeing India's vast market and doing business with India through Nepal would succeed only if Nepal remained politically stable.

According to Dinesh Bhattacharya, who was present in the Chinese delegation's meeting with Deuba, the Chinese side appreciated the role of the NC in promoting relations between Nepal and China both at party-to-party and country-to-country levels.

Nepal – Chini Bhai Bhai!



BY: ABIJIT SHARMA AND NISCHAL DHUNGEL

Given its resources, efficiency in carrying out activities and a highly capacitated human resource, China is in a unique position to lead the economic recovery in the post pandemic world. As stated in China's much publicized White Paper, China is ready to join hands with other countries to address the looming global recession. In May, Chinese President Xi Jinping said that his country would provide USD 2 billion over two years to help other countries respond to the impact of the Covid-19. Nowhere can China's support be more helpful than in its neighborhood, especially South Asia where countries will most definitely struggle to revive the economy post the pandemic.

The current situation has thus provided China another opportunity to extend its support to Nepal.

The post-pandemic world is certain to be a very different one than the existing with many experts predicting the emergence of China as the de-facto global leader. In this context, China has a huge potential to support Nepal's economic recovery post the pandemic. This might not only be through economic aid but also through measures like encouraging Nepali tourism and implementing its pledged project. This will not only strengthen Nepal-China ties but also help cement China's position as a friendly neighbor in the entire South Asian region. To play the role of a true friend, it will be better if China extends its hand of support but at the same time, does not increase 'aid dependency' in Nepal as has been the interest of many donors previously.

One of the first areas China can help is in tourism. With the spread of pandemic, the tourism sector has not only experienced a huge slump but now faces the risk of complete collapse. In this context, Chinese support in the tourism sector can be crucial. In the past few years, number of Chinese tourists visiting Nepal has drastically increased with Chinese nationals constituting the second largest group of tourists visiting Nepal. In 2019, for instance, out of the 1.17 million tourists who visited Nepal, 15% or 169,453 were Chinese. In 2018, the figure was 153,602 which was a 46.8% increase from the previous year. In 2020, the government had set a target of bringing in 500,000 Chinese tourists to Nepal before the Covid-19 outbreak. While a 500,000 target might not be feasible given the current context, China can definitely help promote Nepali tourism sector within its borders which can provide a much-needed boost to Nepali economy. This would also provide a huge respite to hotels and restaurants which have been reeling under the pressure of the pandemic. When Chinese President visited Nepal in 2019,

the first one to do so since 1996, he had said that he would encourage Chinese tourists to visit Nepal. Xi was quoted saying that "Nepal is the first South Asian country to be designated an approved destination for Chinese tourists". Now would be the apt time to put Xi's pledge into action.

Contribution to FDI could be another way the Chinese could support Nepal. When Chinese investors committed to an FDI of USD 8.3 billion in the Investment Summit in 2017, many were skeptical about whether this would translate into action. With Nepal's economic growth for 2020 and 2021 expected to languish at extremely low levels, now would be the right time for those Chinese investors to prove the naysayers wrong. There is no doubt that Nepal needs to improve the red-tape bureaucracy to welcome foreign companies, but China on its part should particularly look at bringing in some of its manufacturing industries in Nepal with the intent of knowledge and technology transfer. An example of how Chinese FDI has helped economic growth is evident in Africa where it has contributed significantly to economic growth and become a source of job creation in several countries, as companies have established operations, particularly in labor-intensive manufacturing. The World Bank claims that Chinese investment in Africa has had a direct impact on African economy via rising trade, investment aid, and flows and an indirect one via China's demand for and impact on the prices of global metals and minerals.

There also needs to be a focus on implementing approved projects. The Nepal Investment Board has approved investment for the development of the 164MW Kaligandaki Gorge Hydropower Project in Mustang and Myagdi. The project is being developed by Chinese Yunnan Xinhua Water Conservancy and Hydropower Investment Company. Similarly, in 2018 the government awarded the 762-megawatt Tamor Reservoir Hydropower Project to a Nepali and Chinese joint venture firm, Hydroelectricity Investment and Development Company Ltd (HIDCL) of Nepal and Chinese state-owned Power China Corporation. While construction of these project will take some time, injecting investments for these projects at a situation like this will provide a positive encouragement to the Nepali economy. Not only this, it can also help generate thousands of jobs for Nepalese who have lost job due to the pandemic.

(Abijit is a Political Science graduate from University of Delhi and an LLM graduate from ECUPL, China)

(Nischal is an Economics and Policy Graduate Student at Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, NY, USA)



Growing Fast

Merger helps Global IME Bank to strengthen its role

By A CORRESPONDENT

As Chanakya says a successful person starts work by finding satisfactory answers to questions of why he or she is doing it. What might be the results? Will I be successful?

As Chanakya says in his book Arthshastra, Chandra Prasad Dhakal, Chairman of Global IME Bank Ltd, who is also the first senior vice-president of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce of Industry (FNCCI), knew the answers to these questions before he started the banking venture. Thus, Dhakal has made Global IME Bank, the largest bank, in just a matter of 14 years.

Humble and gentle, Dhakal, who won the elections of FNCCI with a comfortable margin, said that the bank is able to provide dependable and quality services to its customers by modernizing networks following its merger with various other banks and financial institutions. In his message on the occasion of 14th annual ceremony, he said that the bank has a long experience of merger and successful operation after merger.

In a short period of its establishment, the bank has become the largest and strongest bank in Nepal in terms of capital, business, branch/network, as per a media release.

He hoped that the experience gained by the bank will further encourage improving the services. "After the merger and acquisition, bank's capital has increased along with competitive capacity along with banking activities, human resources and capacity," said Dhakal.

Chairman Dhakal said that the bank's credibility and trust has enhanced due to continuation of banking services during COVID-19 pandemic.

He also said that the bank is able to help and support enterprises, industrialists and entrepreneurs providing various kinds of concessions and relief, proving the bank as a dependable friend at the time of crisis.

"Our customers will remember us for continuing our business and services at the time of globally terrifying and complex COVID-19 Pandemic. This also proves that our bank is not only for business but a friend at the time of crisis," said Dhakal. "We will further strengthen our services and our behavior."

As per the directives of Nepal Rastra Bank, the bank has offered various relief packages extending the period payment of interest and loan, reduction in interest rate to private sector. This shows that the bank can work with private sector side by side at the time of national crisis. We also learn that the crisis can be managed only through unity not division.

The bank's current paid-up capital is around Rs 19 billion (more than Rs 21 billion after the proposed 14 per cent bonus) and the reserve fund will reach Rs 27.24 billion, a total deposit of Rs 249 billion and a total loan of more than Rs 211 billion.

Similarly, the bank aims to provide access to banking services to all sectors and classes in all seven provinces and 73 districts. It is providing services from about 797 service centers including the representative office.



Likewise, the bank has been making significant contributions to the economy of the country by receiving remittances from the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, India and Jordan.

Chief Executive Officer of bank Ratna Raj Bajracharya said that Global IME Bank is now standing as Nepal's strong and largest bank after merger with various banks and financial institutions.

"Following mergers, Global IME Bank is the largest and the best bank in terms of many indicators. We need to expand our branches in all 77 districts to materialize slogan banks for all," said CEO Bajracharya.

Global IME Bank Ltd has grown in 14 years of its initial capital. Within a short period of its establishment, the bank is the largest and strong bank expanding its network of branches and increasing its capital.

The bank's paid capital is now about Rs.19 billion (with proposed 14 percent bonus, it will reach Rs. 27.24 billion and its total deposit is 249 billion and total loan is 211 billion).

ENERGY

LOOMING LOADSHEDDING

NEA SAYS NO

With frequent power cuts without notice, there is a growing concern over the possibility of load-shedding. NEA refuted this saying that there is no possibility of load shedding

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when almost all hotels, schools and industries, which used to consume over 90 MW of electricity, in Kathmandu Valley are shut down, frequent power cuts look very unusual. As the undeclared load-shedding lasts for hours, media and people have started to assume that new load-shedding is on the horizon.

By ending over decades of load shedding in the country, Kul Man Ghising, former MD of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), had injected the confidence among the people about the possibility of an uninterrupted power supply. Since the completion of his tenure in September and appointment of new acting managing director Hitendra Dev Shakya, the frequent power disruption has become a norm like in the past.

As NEA has 90 MW of surplus electricity in the hand compared to last year, frequent power cuts all over Nepal have raised the question of whether Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has imposed a new undeclared load shedding.

Not only common people, even Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Top Bahadur Rayamajhi expressed his concern recently. He invited all NEA's senior staffs, including acting Managing Director Hitendra Dev Shakya at his office and directed to take necessary steps to prevent power cuts.

Minister Rayamajhi also directed NEA's management to work for the improvement of power supply

and distribution. Following the expiry of tenure of Kul Man Ghising, large numbers of consumers have lost the confidence in the institution's ability to sustain the gains.

The frequent power cuts have further justified people's fear about the possibility of revival of load shedding. Given a chaos and uncertainty, Nepal Electricity Au-

thority (NEA) has refuted the claims that load shedding has begun again.



thority (NEA) has refuted the claims that load shedding has begun again.

When people, after facing frequent disturbance in power supply, started suspecting whether the NEA was introducing load-shedding, it issued a clarification that load shedding ended three years ago and there was no chance of repeating it again.

NEA said that the supply was halted giving prior notice while carrying out preventive work of power supply and distribution systems.

"NEA's attention has been drawn to the reports of various me-

dia and online portals that unannounced load-shedding has begun and the power supply has not been managed," read the statement.

Electricity will be cut off due to shifting of electricity poles, replacement of transformers, maintenance and other reasons, NEA said.

"Load-shedding occurs only when the supply is less than

the demand. At present, the NEA is importing and supplying electricity from its own, private producers and even from India, so there is no load shedding and it is unlikely to happen in the future," read the statement issued by NEA spokesperson Madan Timsina.

It said the NEA was working diligently to solve such problems immediately when the power supply in the power system gets disrupted.

The supply was disrupted due to a technical problem in the system which has been solved, it said. With the installation of 315 MVA transformers in Dhalkebar Substa-



tion, NEA also has now the option to increase the import of electricity from India for additional 100 MW.

Dhalkebar Sub-station

Although it took several years to complete due to several reasons, following the charge of Newly Installed 315 MVA Transformer at Dhalkebar Substation also gives alternative technical tools to prevent the shortage of electricity.

Acting Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority Hiten-dra Deb Shakya said that the newly installed 315 MVA Transformer of Dhalkebar Substation charged from last night. He said that NEA can now import an additional 100 MW from India.

Situated in Dhanusha District, the Dhalkebar substation is the largest substation in Nepal. Under the Capacity Enhancement Project

supported by the government of Nepal, a 315 MVA, 220-132 transformer, was added.

Following the charge of new 315 MVA transformer, the capacity of the Dhalkebar substation has now reached to 635 MVA. Out of two 315 MVA transformer, the process of installation of another one is currently undergoing.

Charged a few months ago, the 400-200 kV Dhalkebar substation will have transformers with 945 MVA. After the insulation of the new transformer, it will help to export additional energy generated by the 456 MW Upper Tamakosi project.

Head of Transmission line Directorate of Nepal Electricity Dirghayu Kumar Shrestha said that Nepal can import an additional 100 MW if it is necessary from this line as per our agreement. We have been

importing 270 to 280 MW of electricity from Dhalkebar. However, we can import 100 MW additional electricity from India,” said Shrestha.

NEA has signed a PPA agreement with NTPC India to purchase 250 MW from July to November 350 MW from December to April and 200 MW from May to June through the Dhalkebar-Mujaffarpur Transmission line which has already charged to 400 kV. The agreement is valid till 30 June 2021. As Nepal does not have a 400 kV Transmission line, Nepal is transmitting the electricity converting it through a 132 kV transmission line.

Currently, Hetauda-Dhalkebar- Inaruwa 400 kV Transmission line is under construction and Khimti Dhalkebar 220 kV transmission line is now under 132 kV capacity.

Pity The Nation

The other day a friend sent me a quotation of Khalil Gibran:

“Pity the nation whose people are sheep and whose shepherds mistreat them; pity the nation whose leaders are liars and whose sages are silenced, and whose bigots haunt the airwaves. Pity the nation that raises not its voice except to praise conquerors and acclaim the bully as Heroes and aims to rule the world by force and by torture.....”

Reading this set me thinking about the existing situation in Nepal and comparing with what has been happening down the ages in other countries. The history of the world over the last 15 thousand years has had its ups and down. Though initially a question of self survival it automatically led to the survival of one's community. Starting with the move and crossing over of some Mongol tribes across the Bering Strait to the Americas the story goes on about the travels of the Mongols from the wilds of Siberia to to present day Finland and be labelled as Lapps.

During the subsequent centuries, people such as the Aryans, Mongols, Romans, Greeks, Byzantine and Turks set up various alliances and combinations and set out periodically to rule parts of the world. The initial rulers worldwide – both in the East and West were the religious ones or priests, who with the aid of collaborators set up - Caesars, Emperors, Tsars, Kings, Princes, Rajas and Sultans who ruled over the almost illiterate masses and taxed them. It was not surprising therefore that in the course of time the masses rose for their rights.

It was from the books of the East, concentrated in the Library at Alexandria, that knowledge of numerals and algebra was taken to the West. Later, the inventions such as paper and gunpowder discovered by the Chinese were also introduced to Europe. It was the application of that knowledge on a larger scale that propelled Western communities to be much ahead of us in the third world.

The countries of Europe which in those early days were small enclaves, principalities or duchies combined or separated as per the wishes of the religious leader at Rome. Combinations and deductions led to formation of pioneering forces in the countries of Belgium, England, France, Germany, Holland, Portugal, Russia, Spain and Turkey which then separately set out at various times to subjugate distant lands across the seas.

Initially the Pope ruled over the kings and the people of Europe until a division occurred and the Greek Orthodox Church separated from the church at Rome. Later the Protestants of many lands of Europe distanced themselves too from Rome. The beheading of Charles I of England was followed by eleven years of Republican rule under Cromwell until monarchy was restored. The French Revolution of 1789 was also a rising up of the masses against the ruling clique which included the church in 1793. It led in the succeeding 250 years



BY: HEMANG DIXIT

to the formation of the First Republic lasting 10 years, then an Empire of 11 years followed by a monarchy of 34 years. This was followed by the 2nd Republic of 4 years and then the 2nd Empire of 18 years. Later established 3rd and 4th Republics were of 75 and 12 years respectively. The current 5th Republic with Charles de Gaulle as first head came into being in 1958. Thus the establishing of a republic is no easy matter.

Following the two World Wars one had hoped that sense would universally prevail. The possession of the atom bomb by US, England, France, Russia and the near capability by others was touted at one time as ensuring peace as its first use by any country would be tantamount to world destruction. One wonders on this score, as the current fear is of North Korea and Iran plus other likely contender lurking about!

So where does this all put us? Subsequent to the British leaving these shores, the Indian subcontinent initially became two and later three entities. The princely states had been amalgamated to create the present Union of India. A worrying point for us in Nepal is the fact that we are as King Prithvi Narayan Shah stated, ‘A yam between two stones’. Our politicians, novice midgets by world standards, who have been ruling had never been able to function independently for national interests. Irrespective of whichever party was in power, they have always been toeing the line delineated by the masters. And we the populace at large have been voting to put them in that place again and again. Sadly, though good leaders emerge from under the canopies of faith and trust from amongst the people we have not been lucky so far. Will the election, said to be on the horizon be any different? One cannot be sure of this for it might just be a mirage like the oasis afar off.

What has been our record since the time of King Prithvi Narayan? He created Nepal by conquering chaubises, baieses and other states. Shah Kings then ruled from 1768 to 1846 when Jung Bahadur took control of government and Ranas held power for 104 years. The subsequent 10 years respite was followed by 30 years of Panchayat rule. Then came Parliamentary rule and Constitutional Monarchy followed by direct rule and ten years of constitution making and finally the establishment of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. The country is now decreed as just ‘Nepal’.

As we ponder over the situations in the USA with the Trump tantrums and the periodically occurring mass unrest events in France, one realises that democracy too has to have time to take roots. For the past seventy years we have been putting back to power the same old and tested out leaders who have failed us time and time again. Why should we the people always be made to suffer? Can we not hope for anything better than these individuals? Must we all pity ourselves and our nation?

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](https://twitter.com/manidixithd)

Blackest Day

By KESHAB POUDEL

For a majority of Nepalis, the United States is a guardian of democracy. They get the first hand definition of democracy from Abraham Lincoln -- by the people, of the people and for the people. The mayhem carried out by the supporter of a sitting President on January 6 shocked the people of Nepal.

"Today is the blackest day in the history of democracy. That is not only in America but around the world," said Eminent Constitutional lawyer Badri Bahadur Karki. "I cannot believe that this kind of situation happens in the US."

Political leaders of Nepal, who have been facing a new turmoil following the dissolution of the House of Representatives, also expressed their shock. "It is natural for us to see mob ruling. It is unimaginable for us to see attack against democracy in United States," said NC leader Prakash Man Singh.

As the land of Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, America has greatly contributed for the rights of the people and constitutionalism.

However, Alexis de Tocqueville saw this kind of greatest danger century ago. Majoritarian systems are a major threat to democracy. What Alexis de Tocqueville in his book "Democracy in America", expresses is that it's the very strength of democratic institutions Americans are able to retain democracy and it is the same institution which will likely bring anarchy and disorder. Today's mayhem showed how a sitting president can destroy the value of democracy and weaken the process.

The United States stands

for democracy around the world and a peaceful and orderly transfer of power. The US Capitol was in an act of insurrection that shattered a more than 220-year tradition of peaceful transfer of power. Around the world, political leaders have watched in disbelief as chaos unfolded in Washington.

"What happened today in Washington DC is not American, definitely. We believe in the strength of our democracies. We believe in the strength of American democracy," French president Macron added.

US lawmakers certify Joe Biden election victory

After a dramatic day of violence at the US Capitol, the US House of Representatives and Senate certified

by a mob of outgoing President Donald Trump's supporters who stormed the US Capitol.

Vice President Mike Pence formally presides over the session counting the electoral votes. He rejected Trump's claim he had the power to reject electors that have been "fraudulently" chosen.

"To those who wreaked havoc in our Capitol today — you did not win," he said after reopening the disrupted session in the Senate.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell called the storming of the Capitol a "failed insurrection."

Supporters of President Donald Trump have stormed the US Capitol in the most violent rejection of Trump's election loss yet. Critics say the president is to blame for the unprecedented disregard for democracy.

Armed protesters storming a parliament building over the sounds of mayhem in the streets — not a scene you're used to seeing in the United States. But after weeks of US President Donald Trump not accepting his election loss and telling his supporters to not let Democrats steal the election from them, that's exactly what was happening around the Capitol in Washington DC.

Although the institution prevails over the individual whim, what it has damaged is a democracy all over the world. It will likely take decades to cover the damage made by the mayhem.

As Winston Churchill said democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time. As the rule of the people, we have no alternative other than to follow it. However, mayhem in US has taught us a great lesson not for Americans for the countries around the world.



Joe Biden's election as US president and Kamala Harris as vice president.

Vice President Mike Pence declared that Congress had confirmed the Electoral College result. The formal tally of Electoral College results counts the total 538 electoral votes, out of which Biden won 306 and Trump 232.

Pence, as the session came to an end, said the count "shall be deemed a sufficient declaration" of Biden's victory, but offered no words of congratulations to the incoming administration.

It capped an extraordinary day of chaos, violence and division. Proceedings had been disrupted earlier



POLITICS

Fight To Finish

With the intensification of political dispute, NCP's two factions are in a do-or-die stage of politics

By A CORRESPONDENT

“Ours is the original Nepal Communist Party. The faction led by Prachanda-Nepal duo is a splinter. Thus, the sun is the symbol of our party. The Election Commission will recognize us,” thundered Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli. “People will discard leaders of splinter group and throw them out of politics.”

“Prime Minister Oli is in

minority. An overwhelming majority of party workers are with us. Election Commission will provide us our election symbol, of the sun, by recognizing us,” said Madhav Kumar Nepal, chairman of newly-split Nepal Communist Party. “Once the court restores the dissolved House, PM Oli camp will be deserted.”

If the statements of two former comrades and close allies

for long, PM Oli and Nepal, are any indications, they show that NCP leaders are now in a fight to finish the other in the politics.

As the issue of the dissolution of House of Representatives is under a hearing by a five-member constitutional bench, rival factions are organizing political rallies in different parts of the country.

Leaders of both the fac-

tions are making personal attacks, terming the other side as a demon, in public meetings. Having built their political career by being associated with CPN-UML, the top brass, Madhav Kumar Nepal, Jhalanath Khanal, KP Sharma Oli and Amrit Bohara, will have to finish the other to survive in politics.

Delayed Hearing

With the decision of Member of the Constitutional Bench formed to hear writs on House dissolution Justice Hari Krishna Karki has decided to excuse himself from hearing the writs henceforth, the bench postponed the hearing on the constitutional issue till January 13.

Justice Karki's decision follows questions raised regarding his inclusion in the bench as he was appointed the Attorney General during KP Sharma Oli's first stint as the Prime Minister in 2015.

Lawyers had argued that Karki shouldn't have been picked as a member of the bench for the

very reason. Given the nature of appointment of judges in the Supreme Court on the basis of party closeness, petitioners will raise the same question on the loyalty of justices.

This will not only delay the process of hearing but also question the judgment of the court in coming days.

Fight To Finish

If the current individual clashes and infighting between the warring factions of ruling Nepal Communist Party continue for some time to come, this will likely displace many established political leaders of the party.

As the split has already reached to the rural municipality level, it is likely to create a political ripple from center to local levels. Following the split at the center, both the factions have already started to strengthen their positions expelling the provincial leaders from the party.

Prachanda-Nepal led Ne-



pal Communist Party has already expelled the current chief ministers from the party membership. Oli-led NCP has reciprocated by announcing the expulsion of the members of rival group.

With the infighting reaching the provincial level, six provincial governments are in a trouble to maintain their majority strength sending a signal of political instability.

"We will pull down all the provincial chief ministers from Province 1, Bagmati, Gandaki





and Lumbini,” said Narayan Kazi Shrestha, spokesperson of Prachanda-Nepal led NCP.

With the withdrawal of support from PM Oli led NCP, the provincial governments in Karnali and Sudur Paschim have lost the majority. “We will replace two chief ministers from Karnali and

Sudurpaschim soon,” said DPM Ishwor Pokharel.

At a time when two factions of NCP have already filed petitions claiming the legitimacy of the party, the Election Commission has amended its rules to formalize the split in the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP).

As earlier rules didn’t allow the poll panel to recognize a split in a party after announcement of general elections, the EC can now decide which faction of the NCP is authentic and which should register with the poll panel under a new name.

Spokesperson for the Elec-



tion Commission Raj Kumar Shrestha said the amendment meant that the EC could hear claims and counter claims of parties' factions about who should use the original party's name, flag, and election symbol during the election. According to Shrestha, previous rules prohibited the EC from recognizing a splinter group as a new party even after it submitted signatures of 40 per cent of Central Committee members and the Parliamentary Party.

Forming 1100 members' central committee, both the factions are claiming themselves as a legitimate party. The process of recognizing the party is likely to take at least two months.

Watch And See

At a time when the factions of ruling Nepal Communist Party are calling the support from opposition parties Nepali Congress and JSP-N, both parties have ruled out any truck with Dahal-led NCP.

Once bitten twice shy -- that's how the Nepali Congress and the Janata Samajwadi Party-Nepal are reacting to the proposal of joining hands with the dissident faction of the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) even for a common cause.

The NCP led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Madhav Kumar Nepal has postponed its Standing Committee meeting for a couple of days to hold talks with other political parties, particularly the NC and the JSP-N, to launch a joint protest against the dissolution of the House of Representatives.

However, both the parties have ruled out joining hands with the Dahal-Nepal faction of the NCP.

Joint General Secretary of NC Prakash Sharan Mahat, ruled out any possibility of a joint protest with Dahal-Nepal faction of the NCP. "The HoR dissolution is unconstitutional and undemocratic and we will protest against it on our own," he said. He added that his party did not



want to join hands with Dahal-Nepal faction since leaders associated with that faction kept mum when the Oli-led government moved bills violating constitutional provisions to curtail people's freedom. Moreover, when the government took no initiative to hold election for deputy speaker of the HoR they didn't utter a word, he added.

Mahat said the Dahal-Nepal faction would join hands with Oli the day their self-interests converged with that of Oli's. "Even if we do not join hands with others to protest the dissolution of the HoR, it will create positive momentum against the government's act in the society and

that will ultimately serve the public interest," Mahat added.

JSP-N leader Rajendra Mahato also ruled out any truck with the Dahal-Nepal faction. He recalled that Madhesi Janajati forces had jointly fought for political change in the 2006 popular movement, but the major forces promulgated the new constitution after brutally suppressing Madhesi agitation and killing scores of people in the region.

As the factions of ruling party NCP are launching a nationwide fight to finish agitation, this will end the political careers of many political leaders whether elections are held or House revived.

PRITHVI NARAYAN SHAH Remembered For A Reason

Several other Kings and monarchs of Indian sub-continent including Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Ranjeet Singh, and the Queen of Jhansi had launched movements to preserve unique diversity of culture, values and religions retaining unique character of this region. However, King Prithvi Narayan Shah, a King of small hill, succeeded to liberate a small portion of the region declaring it as a garden of diverse ethnicity, culture and race with its identity of original Hindustan. Along with unification of Nepal, King Prithvi Narayan Shah also injected all ingredients of modern nationhood including secularism, inclusion, equality and sovereignty of the nation. Nepalese are celebrating the birth anniversary of Shah, who gave Gorkha an identity of bravery, loyalty and greatness, on January 11

By KESHAB POUDEL

Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh V Shringla, who had served as India's Ambassador to the United States of America and the Kingdom of Thailand and as High Commissioner to Bangladesh before being ap-

pointed the foreign secretary, recalled Prithvi Narayan Shah for his role in championing for the word Gorkha as a symbol bravery in India and all over the world.

Inaugurating a school

building constructed under Indian Government Support beneath the Palace of Shah in Gorkha last month, the statement given by Indian foreign secretary Shringla, who has connections with Indian Gorkha, is highly important.



Suppressed by politicians of current ruling dispensation under the guidance of Maoist leader Prachanda and his gorilla, current Nepalese state does not recognize his status officially as they have tried to delete his legacy.

However, president Bidhya Devi Bhandari is the first head of the state following declaration of republic to show courage to visit the statue of Prithvi Narayan Shah and paid homage to him. With a blood of Kalu Pande, prime minister of Prithvi Narayan, president Bhandary paid respect to founder of the nation.

Nepal Army

Although Nepal Army faced all kinds of assaults, as with the name of Prithvi Narayan Shaha, following signing of peace agreement between seven parties and Maoist, Nepal Army took a strong stand in favor of the founder of the institution.

As a founder and commander, Nepal Army also hangs a life size drawing of Shaha at the center of Nepal Army's formal halls where every high level meeting takes place -- Shaha's portrait stands as an eye-witness.

Despite state's policy to discard the legacy of Prithvi Narayan, Nepal Army has never

given up its respect and glory to founder of Nepal Army. Even after abolition of monarchy, Nepal Army respects him as in the past.

Chandragiri Hills

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, the founder of Chandragiri Hill Resorts and senior vice president of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), had rarely imagined that the full statue of Prithvi Narayan at the top of the hill would be the most visited place by visitors in his recreation center.

However, the statue of King Prithvi Narayan, which was unveiled by President Bidhya



Devi Bhandari three years ago, is one of the most visited selfy sites for all the generations in Chandragiri Hill and cable car.

Whether with family or individually, tens of thousands of photographs are posted in different social media sites by various groups of people from that venue. Taking risk of possible vandalism by political hooligans and threat of ruling class, Dhakal, a gentle person, had erected the statue in a spot from where Shah drew the plans for national unification.

Discarded for almost a decade and disowned by the political dispensation, people from different walks of life have realized the need to highlight the important step taken by Shah in nation building and unifying the people of different ethnic and

religious groups to preserve the unique culture, religion and values of this subcontinent.

However, Prithvi Narayan is one of the popular figures among all groups of people. He was popular not only in Nepal but all over the world.

Gorkha, the state in which Shaha was born, is regarded as a place of pride and bravery outside Nepal. "So great is the sense of pride felt by all the Nepalese for the name and tradition of Gorkha that even social and political organizations of the Nepalese domiciled in India and elsewhere are often called Gorkha," writes Rishikesh Shah in his book *Heroes and Builders of Nepal*.

With the division of black and white around the world and when the right of the people

was nowhere to exist, Shaha had propounded the concept of inclusion, secularism, anti-colonialism, socialism and nationhood. He emphasized strong people can make the ruler strong, encouraged use of the locally made goods, and not going for foreign goods. He wished to have a tailor (untouchable) as his prime minister.

By calling his newly built state a garden of all castes, creeds and religions within true Hindustan, he made Nepal a total fabric of customs and traditions that have evolved through centuries.

"The second half of the 18th century, King Prithvi Narayan Shah of Gorkha decided to stand against colonial power to protect the holy land and preserve the culture and religion of



sub-continent. It was during this period that the British East India Company began to engage itself in making the plan of strategy for the establishment of its hegemony over the land stretching from the Himalayas to Cape Camorin.

“Although Nepal is small in size, she is one of the oldest countries of the world and a very bright record of philosophical, religious, poetic and artistic activities of her people. In all the ages she has been the pure fountain of spiritual salvation to all the Hindus. The inhabitants of this country have always endeavored to keep vigil against the foreign tormentors of this holy land and thus have preserved her cultural heritage by all means,” writes Hit Narayan Jha, professor of History, Culture and Archeology of TU.

Jealousies and intrigues were the order of the day, and corruption and inefficiency had sapped the vitality of all the states. Under such circumstances, not only the freedom and independence of the people but also their culture, religion and values were in a great threat.

Visualizing the troubles ahead, Prithvi Narayan Shah took upon himself the task of keeping the banner of freedom and cultural heritage high by unifying the minor states under his leadership. He exhorted the people to make sustained efforts to meet the danger any time. As he was the per-





son to make correct assessment of the world and his surroundings, Shah jumped to take lead to protect the civilization.

“Prithwinarayan Shah stepped onto the stage of Nepali history at a time when the whole Indian sub-continent was in a ferment. The sap of the Mughal Empire had dried up and the leaves were weathering on the branches. Rot had set in, and there was no lack of those who were prepared to seize advantages. The Marathas in the west, the scheme of Haidar Ali in the south and least of all, the relentlessly growing influence of the British factory at Kalighat (Calcutta), all were more than sufficient to shred the peace of the land,” writes Ludwig F. Stiller, SJ in his book *Dibya Upadesh*.

As a diplomat, he was unique figure in his time. After

conquering Nepal, he wanted to make his victory a stable one. That is why he did not do any such work which would affect social, religious, economic as well as cultural lives of the Newars of Nepal. Rather he encouraged them to follow their tradition without any fear both from within and without.

As people of different walks of life are preparing to celebrate Shah’s birth anniversary, Manisha Koirala, a popular Bollywood actress and granddaughter of BP Koirala, recently called a meeting of broader group of people to celebrate the founder of nation without any political bias.

“As a Nepali, all of us need to be proud of him and his contributions. He is equal to all who are proud as Nepali,” said Koirala.

In the word of academi-

cian Dipak Gywali nationhood core value of Prithvi Narayan Shah, national unity, one king and one nation. Socialism, secularism and in-divisible nation are some of the core philosophy Prithvi Narayan Shah propounded.

Recognized and reckoned by foreign diplomats, scholars, historians and common people, Prithvi Narayan Shah is a great King. “Prithvinaryan Shah’s valour, statesmanship and administrative qualities fill Nepalis with a sense of pride and glory. As a result of his foresight and wisdom, a synthesis of Hinduism and Buddhism exists to this day in Nepal. The strong nations he created were to be for a long time the only free and independent Hindu nation in the world,” writes late Rishikesh Shaha in his book *Heroes and Builders of Nepal*.

NEPAL ARMY

Preserving History

Nepali Army Launches Unification March from Gorkha

By A CORRESPONDENT

Started as a way of remembering and commemorating the historic unification campaign of Nepal by King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the Nepal Army is organizing the unification march this year as well.

History has it that the National Hero King Prithvi Narayan Shah's conquest of Kathmandu started from Gorkha moving along Dhading and Nuwakot.

On a recent morning, the march was set afoot at Gorkha – the starting point of the unification campaign as a band of army officials left for Kathmandu – the endpoint of the Unification Trail. “To preserve our history, and ignite a feeling of unity among us Nepalis, we have initiated this concept,” said Binay Bikram Rana, Major General of Nepal Army's West Division Headquarters. “The trail will also be helpful in reviving historical tourism in the country,” he added.

With reference to the path taken by the then King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the army personnel will follow the unification trail enroute to Kathmandu. The band of soldiers is scheduled to reach the capital on foot on Poush 27 to mark Prithvi Jayanti, the late King's birth anniversary.

In a special ceremony held at Hanuman Chautari inside the Gorkha Durbar premises, the personnel participating in the walk were bade adieu amidst the humongous uproar of panchebaja.

The team of 40 individuals left for Kathmandu carrying the



torch, the National Flag, as well as flags of five companies of the Nepali Army, established back in the time of King Prithvi Narayan Shah (Shreenath, Kalibaks, Purano Gorakh, Bardabani and Sabud Battalion), informed Ujjwal KC, Lieutenant Colonel and Battalion Head of Ranasingh Dal Battalion, Gorkha. The army squad will also include personnel dressed in traditional army costumes from the time of unification.

Rajanraj Pant, Mayor of Gorkha Municipality, during the farewell ceremony said, “History can't be wiped out, which is why we should honor and preserve it,” he said lauding the march. “Gorkha Municipality will always be keen on helping promote such activities like unification march.”

“As the squad navigates through these places, local authorities can host special cultural programs to entertain the squad while also enthralling and informing the

locals about the unification march,” exclaimed Gorkha's Chief District Officer Tirtha Raj Bhattarai.

These groups will also be welcomed along the trail with cultural events. The team will march from Gorkha to Dhading border and will hand over the army flag and torch to the Dhading-based Devidutta Battalion and the Dhading-based army battalion will carry the flags and torches from Dhading to the Nuwakot border.

Similarly, the army battalion in Nuwakot will hand over the flags and torches to the army in Kathmandu. He said that the trek will reach Kathmandu on Poush 27.

The Unification March began only last year on Poush 18, which Nepali Army seems adamant to continue in the coming years. Last year, the army had even conducted a marathon on the occasion, but given the pandemic scare, it has been discontinued this year.

Climate Change: Policy Priorities And NDC2



BY: BATU UPRETY

In Climate Vulnerable Forum (7 October 2020) and Climate Ambition Summit (12 December 2020), the Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli called to limit global warming to 1.5°C, and informed to submit enhanced Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) by the end of 2020. In December Summit, Prime Minister also informed Nepal's aims to 'move towards a zero-carbon economy' and 'extend protected area from 23% to 30% by 2030'. Nepal's second NDC was uploaded on 8 December 2020 in UNFCCC website while statement of the Head of the Government on 12 December mentioned 'will submit enhanced NDC'.

The 2020 NDC contains ambitious targets for sector-based greenhouse gases (GHGs) emission reduction (<https://www.spotlightnepal.com/2020/11/24/ambitious-draft-ndc-2020/>). It reflects the strong commitments of the Head of the Government in reducing GHGs emissions, promoting climate-resilient adaptation plans in all local levels, and developing climate finance strategy and roadmap by 2021. On 16 December 2020 at the launch of the Human Development Report 2020, the Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Pradeep K. Gyawali, linking with the 5th anniversary of the Paris Agreement, informed, *inter alia*, Nepal's commitment on climate-resilient development, and zero-carbon economy.

Nepal's targets as contained in the NDC2 are mostly conditional upon international support. Unlike 2016 NDC, the 2020 NDC embraces the original concept of GHGs emissions reduction in spite of her 0.027 percent share on the global total GHGs emissions. There is a possibility to meet the targets on residential cooking and biogas energy through the effective implementation of Nepal's CDM (Clean Development Mechanism) projects on improved cookstoves and biogas, including Rural Energy Policy (2006) and Renewable Energy Subsidy Policy (2016). Increasing use of LPG for cooking purpose in rural areas and REDD+ initiatives may support to maintain 45 percent forests. In addition, targets related to the preparation of the strategies, action plans, guidelines or mechanisms will be met easily as Nepal is very active in formulating 'non-legally binding' policies. With this in perspective,

the following section focuses on priorities of the national sectoral policies on climate change.

After the adoption of the Climate Change Policy in 2011, over a dozen sectoral policies have included provisions for addressing climate change impacts in Nepal. Prior to 2011 Policy, Industrial Policy (2010) mentioned to take special measures to promote green industries and make the established industries pollution free and 'zero to carbon emissions'.

Of 16 national policies reviewed, over 80 percent focus on adaption and mitigation of climate change impacts rather than GHGs emissions reduction. The National Climate Change Policy (2019) which repealed 2011 Policy also provisions for increasing carbon storage in forests, identification of GHGs emitting points in industry and

transport sectors, implementation of standards for emission reductions, promotion on uses of electric vehicles & energy efficiency, and phasing out of highly polluting means of transportation. Similarly, zero emission concept has been introduced for tourist places. The Environment-friendly Vehicle and Transport Policy provisions for replacing fossil fuel-based vehicles to electric vehicles and reduce GHGs emissions and commits to operate elec-

tric vehicles at least 20 percent of the total vehicles by 2020. However, this target has not been met in 2020. The National Forest Policy intends to increase wood production to reduce carbon emissions, including a strategy to utilise an opportunity for payment from international mechanisms for carbon emissions reduction from forests. The Rangeland Policy has a provision for conducting research on rangeland's contribution in carbon sequestration.

The policies on wetland, irrigation and agriculture biodiversity have focussed to adopt appropriate adaptation options and implement mitigation measures to address climate change impacts. The policies on water-induced disaster management and land use provision for integrating cli-

In 2020, the Government has issued policies on water resources and foreign relations. The Water Resources Policy provisions to implement plans and programmes that are adaptive to the effects and impacts of climate change, including update of climate data, and adoption of adaptation technologies such as rain water collection, pond construction etc.



urging to implement 'polluters pay principle', 'common but differentiated responsibilities', and 'carbon trading'. This Policy also provisions for, *inter alia*, expansion of 'petroleum and gas pipelines', actively coordinate and collaborate to reduce climate change effects; and project 'carbon-neutral' Nepal at the international level. Except on 'carbon-neutral' Nepal, other policies and strategies focus only on mitigation of adverse impacts of, and build adaptive capacity, to climate change.

The above policies reflect national priorities on adaptation, and mitigation of climate change effects or impacts while Second NDC commits to reduce GHGs emissions. In a discussion forum on draft 'eNDC', one person urged to submit more ambitious NDC to inform international

community on Nepal's strong commitment on GHGs emissions reduction, with clear reflection that there is no need to fulfil such commitments. With simple guess, this 'thought' dominated in finalising NDC2. It is simply a 'confidence without clarity'. Implementation of NDC2 started on 1 January 2021. It is most likely that a review on NDC implementation in 2025 and 2030 may conclude that both 'conditional and unconditional targets' have not been met as priorities of the national policies and commitments in NDC2 look like 'banks of the same river.'

Policies with provisions on Climate Change

1. Industrial Policy, 2010
2. Rangeland Policy, 2012
3. National Wetland Policy, 2012
4. Irrigation Policy, 2013
5. Environment-friendly Vehicle and Transport Policy, 2014
6. Agri-Biodiversity Policy, 2014 (amendment)
7. Water-induced Disaster Management Policy, 2015
8. Land Use Policy, 2015
9. Renewable Energy Subsidy Policy, 2016
10. National Health Policy, 2019
11. National Forest Policy, 2019
12. National Agro-Forestry Policy, 2019
13. Poverty Alleviation Policy, 2019
14. National Climate Change Policy, 2019
15. Water Resources Policy, 2020
16. Foreign Policy, 2020

Upriy is a former Joint-Secretary (Tech) and involved in institutionalizing Environment Assessment system in Nepal, then Ministry of Environment. E-mail: upriybk@gmail.com

mate change adaptation into medium-term and long-term plans, and land use plan to reduce climate change effects.

In 2019, the Government issued 5 national policies (health, forest, agro-forestry, poverty alleviation, and climate change) that provision to address and mitigate adverse effects or impacts of climate change, develop climate-resilient ecosystem, build capacity, and implement adaptation programmes.

The 2019 Climate Change Policy has objectives of enhancing capacity of climate vulnerable on adaptation, developing ecosystem resilience, promoting green economy, accessing international resources, and mainstreaming gender and social inclusion in mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts. This Policy gives a clear message on national priorities on adaptation and mitigation of impacts which aligns with the statements of the Heads of the State and/or Government at international fora.

In 2020, the Government has issued policies on water resources and foreign relations. The Water Resources Policy provisions to implement plans and programmes that are adaptive to the effects and impacts of climate change, including update of climate data, and adoption of adaptation technologies such as rain water collection, pond construction etc.

The Foreign Policy, released in December 2020, considers 'conservation of the planet' as one of the guiding principles, commits to align the sectoral policies with this Policy, and 'minimise climate change effect'. The Policy provides provisions for playing effective role on adaptation and GHGs emissions reduction to fight against climate change challenges and its adverse impacts. Strategies focus to playing an active and 'frontline' role on international processes, accessing necessary financial resources and technologies for adaptation and effects mitigation, and

Nepal's Growth At 0.6

The World Bank projects a bleak growth outlook for Nepal's economy in 2021

By A CORRESPONDENT

As Nepal's political crisis has entered a new era following the dissolution of the House of Representatives by Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, the recently released report of the World Bank shows a bleak economic scenario.

At a time when Nepal needs a strong government to take drastic economic reforms, the government has turned out to be a lame duck and weak with no authority to take a major decision. As the ruling NCP splits following the dissolution, the new government will be a coalition of different political parties.

Till a few months ago, Nepal's economy was moving in the right direction with the implementation of federalism. The recent report shows a much grimmer situation. With the growth in average of 7 percent in the last four years, Nepal had made an enormous progress.

Nepal's economic growth in 2021 will likely to be around 0.6 percent. According to the World Bank's Global Economy Report, South Asian economy is projected to expand by 3.3% in 2021. The report warns that development risks remain as economic activity and incomes are likely to stay low for extended period.

"The region is projected to grow by 3.3% in 2021. Weak growth prospects reflect a protracted recovery in incomes and employment, especially in the services sector, limited credit provisioning constrained by financial sector vulnerabilities, and muted fiscal policy support," states the report.

The forecast assumes that a vaccine will be distributed on a large scale in the region starting the second half of 2021 and that there is no wide-

spread resurgence in infections. In India, growth is expected to recover to 5.4% in 2021, as the rebound from a low base is offset by muted private investment growth given financial sector weaknesses. In the financial sector, non-performing loans were already high before the pandemic.

In Pakistan, the recovery is expected to be subdued, with growth at 0.5% in FY 2020/21. Growth is projected to be held back by continued fiscal consolidation pressures and service sector weakness. In economies that rely on external sources of growth such as manufacturing exports (Bangladesh) and tourism (Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka), the recovery is likely to be particularly modest.

Tourism revenue is likely to remain significantly below pre-pandemic levels because of depressed demand as potential tourists remain wary of social interactions and continued restrictions on international travel, although recent vaccine news offers hope.

Risks to the outlook are tilted to the downside. They include more severe and longer-lasting infection rates from the pandemic, financial and debt distress caused by an abrupt tightening of financing conditions or possible widespread corporate bankruptcies, adverse effects of extreme weather and climate change, weaker than-expected recoveries in key partner economies, and a worsening of



policy- and security-related uncertainty. Additional stress on domestic banks in the region could be triggered by the economic consequences of a more protracted recovery from the pandemic, which in turn could lead to a rise in bankruptcies and weaken balance sheets of the banking and non-banking sectors among several economies of the region (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Sri Lanka). Extreme weather events also remain an important regional risk.

The global economy is expected to expand 4% in 2021, assuming an initial COVID-19 vaccine rollout becomes widespread throughout the year. A recovery, however, will likely be subdued, unless policy makers move decisively to tame the pandemic and implement investment-enhancing reforms, the World Bank says in its January 2021 Global Economic Prospects.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused deep output losses and contributed to a sharp rise in poverty and unemployment in South Asia. Output in the region contracted by an estimated 6.7% in 2020, reflecting the effects of the pandemic and nationwide lockdowns, particularly in Bangladesh and India. Activity rebounded in the second half of last year, led by industrial production, as initial stringent lockdowns were eased. In India, the pan-

demic hit the economy at a time when growth was already decelerating.

Output is estimated to contract by 9.6% in Fiscal Year 2020/21, reflecting a sharp drop in household spending and private investment. The informal sector, which accounts for four-fifths of employment, has also been subject to severe income losses during the pandemic.

Recent high frequency data indicate that the services and manufacturing recovery is gaining momentum. In the rest of the region, the economic impact of COVID-19 has been somewhat less severe but still significant.

Economies that depend heavily on tourism and travel have been especially hard hit (Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka). In Bangladesh, which had been one of the fastest growing emerging market and developing economies prior to the pandemic, growth is estimated to have decelerated to 2% in FY2019/20. In Pakistan, growth is estimated to have contracted by 1.5% in FY2019/20, reflecting the effects of localized COVID-19 containment measures as well as the impact of monetary and fiscal tightening prior to the outbreak.

Although the global economy is growing again after a 4.3% contraction in 2020, the pandemic has caused a heavy toll of deaths and illness, plunged millions into poverty, and may depress economic activity and incomes for a prolonged period. Top near-term policy priorities are controlling the spread of COVID-19 and ensuring rapid and widespread vaccine deployment. To support economic recovery, authorities also need to facilitate a re-investment cycle aimed at sustainable growth that is less dependent on government debt.

“While the global economy appears to have entered a subdued recovery, policymakers face formidable challenges—in public health, debt

management, budget policies, central banking and structural reforms—as they try to ensure that this still fragile global recovery gains traction and sets a foundation for robust growth,” said World Bank Group President David Malpass. “To overcome the impacts of the pandemic and counter the investment headwind, there needs to be a major push to improve business environments, increase labor and product market flexibility, and strengthen transparency and governance.”

The collapse in global economic activity in 2020 is estimated to have been slightly less severe than previously projected, mainly due to shallower contractions in advanced economies and a more robust recovery in China. In contrast, disruptions to activity in the majority of other emerg-

while, in an upside scenario with successful pandemic control and a faster vaccination process, global growth could accelerate to nearly 5 percent.

In advanced economies, a nascent rebound stalled in the third quarter following a resurgence of infections, pointing to a slow and challenging recovery. U.S. GDP is forecast to expand 3.5% in 2021, after an estimated 3.6% contraction in 2020. In the euro area, output is anticipated to grow 3.6% this year, following a 7.4% decline in 2020. Activity in Japan, which shrank by 5.3% in the year just ended, is forecast to grow by 2.5% in 2021.

As severe crises did in the past, the pandemic is expected to leave long lasting adverse effects on global activity. It is likely to worsen

the slowdown in global growth projected over the next decade due to underinvestment, underemployment, and labor force declines in many advanced economies. If history is any guide, the global economy is heading for a decade of growth disappointments unless policy makers put in place comprehensive reforms to improve the fundamental drivers of equitable and sustainable

growth.

The most pressing policy priority in the short-run in most countries is likely to be rapid and widespread distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. However, beyond this immediate policy priority, more action is needed to promote a return to robust long-term growth. But priorities will differ among individual countries depending on their country characteristics. At the country level, some of the most pressing reforms are long overdue; other long-standing reform needs have been cast into a new, more urgent light by the pandemic; and yet other reforms are needed to address new challenges raised by the pandemic.



ing market and developing economies were more acute than expected.

“Financial fragilities in many of these countries, as the growth shock impacts vulnerable household and business balance sheets, will also need to be addressed,” Vice President and World Bank Group Chief Economist Carmen Reinhart said.

The near-term outlook remains highly uncertain, and different growth outcomes are still possible, as a section of the report details. A downside scenario in which infections continue to rise and the rollout of a vaccine is delayed could limit the global expansion to 1.6% in 2021. Mean-

Budhi Gandaki Re-Imagined

From A Nexus Perspective



BY: PRATIK POUDEL

Budhi Gandaki water infrastructure project has been promoted as a storage type hydropower project located near Benighat (85 km from Kathmandu) between Gorkha and Dhading districts at the confluence of Budhi Gandaki river with Trisuli. Having a dam height of 263 m, it stores the monsoon river flow to provide peak power during the dry season when the output of other hydroelectric power plants in the Nepali grid (which are of run-of-river type) come down to only a third of their installed capacity. Storage hydroelectric projects such as Budhi Gandaki would be critical to balance supply and demand in the system; but the project is stuck, and going nowhere. Why?

The Indian government showed its first interest in the project during the visit of the Indian PM Chandra Shekhar after the political change of 1990, [writes](#) Dr. Hari Man Shrestha. During separate meetings with the secretaries of the Indo-Nepal water ministries, the Indian counterpart showed interest in joint survey and investigation of this project as well, in response to which the Nepalese side showed the prefeasibility study conducted by the Nepalese side in 1982. At the time, the power generating capacity was 600 MW. It was shelved until the Baburam Bhattarai's government revived this project in 2010. Bhattarai named it a national pride project and created a separate Development Committee to develop this project. Various intellectuals feel this move was unnecessary given the fact that we already have Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) to initiate and develop such a project. Tractebel Engineering S.A., a french consultancy firm which was hired by the Dr. Baburam Bhattarai government recommended to increase its power potential from 600 MW to 1200MW as stated in its [official website](#).

Budhigandaki Hydropower Project has always been at the forefront of controversy since then. Whether Former PM Dr. Baburam Bhattarai [accusing](#) three other PMs (two former and one current) of taking bribes for giving license to the developer or PM Prachanda [giving licensing contract](#) to a Chinese company without compet-

itive bid after which it was again [canceled](#) by his successor, Sher Bahadur Deuba due to the then parliamentary committee's decision. Now the Oli administration wants to [hand over](#) the project back to the Chinese company. The Chinese developer however seems [reluctant](#) to initiate the project.

The annual runoff in Nepal is monsoon centered which substantiates the need to make a reservoir based project like this which will have a double benefit of controlling flood water during monsoon and releasing it during dry season. According to a [report](#), the surface water availability in Nepal is around 225 billion cubic meter (BCM), which is equivalent to an average flow of 7125 m³/s. This figure looks attractive. But the less discussed side is that 80% of the average rainfall occurs in the 4 months between June and September. Even the perennial rivers have only around 12.5% of dry season flow annually. To speak specifically, the volume of monsoon flow to the average annual flow is 73-75% in the case of large rivers and 83% in the case of medium sized rivers. Medium sized rivers such as Babai, Bagmati and Kankai river basins are referred to as "deficit basins", whereas large rivers such as Koshi, Gandaki, Karnali and Mahakali are referred to as "surplus basins".

The \$2.5 billion, Budhi Gandaki hydropower Project is one such multipurpose water resource project; but it has been promoted as a "power generating" project only. It can be a boon to a power deficit country like Nepal since Nepal [imported 653 MW](#) of electricity out of the total electricity demand of 1243 MW in 2019. In addition, it has immense non-power benefits, which would make the project even more attractive if they were included in the project benefits without loading all the costs on the electricity component only.

A review of the project's overall design chaired by former water resources minister Dipak Gyawali examined its flaws and provided recommendations, one of which was to opt for an 8 km long tunnel from the reservoir

The provision of dead storage in the current design of Budhi Gandaki does not look convincing either. Water journalist Bikash Thapa has stated in his [report](#) that the Tractebel company has designed a "dead storage" in this project from which around 50% of the water will go unused. Usually around 10% of the water is kept as a dead storage in other hydropower projects.

voir at a site called Durbung till Chitwan's Fisling, which would provide an additional 61 meter head that would produce more energy with the same amount of water, thus easily paying for the cost of the tunnel and making the project more feasible. In addition, the tailwater could be diverted to central and western Chitwan through a tunnel to Shaktikhor. This, together with downstream development of a re-regulating pondage and increase in flow at Sapta Gandaki, could create massive year-round irrigation benefits of around 1 lakh hectares in Chitwan and Nawalparasi.

The other benefits this project could create is navigation benefits. Within Nepal, a 45 km long reservoir which would reach north Gorkha almost to the Chinese border that, if developed for inland navigation, would obviate the need for almost 240 km of high mountain equivalent road. This could reduce logistic cost massively in a landlocked country like Nepal since energy economics say that one horsepower engine can move 150 Kg of truckload on road, 500 Kg on railway and 4000 Kg on waterway.

Across the border, the Indian Government has declared Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hoogly as National Waterway 1 (NW1) which stretches from Allahabad of Uttar Pradesh to Haldia of West Bengal. NW1 is very important to Nepal because this waterway is adjoining National Waterway 37 (NW37). Indian government have allocated Rs. 12.91 crore for developing NW37 which is a 300 Km Gandak River stretch from Hajipur to Bhaisa-lotan Barrage which is next to the Nepalese border in Nawalparasi. With the completion of NW37, it will be possible to move vessels upto 1000 ton to and from the Nepalese border. The development work has already started from Ganga confluence in Hajipur to Bagaha bridge under Phase 1. However, one of the challenges in the Indian Waterways in the consistency of water flow to make

it navigable. One of the Ex Chairman of Indian Shipping Board have said that "In NW-1, the availability of water throughout the 1620 km is not consistent round the year. So there is an urgent need to maintain the depth of at least 2.5 m throughout the NW-1 for the entire waterway to be navigable". Therefore, with the development of Budhi Gandaki Hydropower Project, around 1,670 million cubic meter (MCM) of augmented water could be regulated downstream, which can add up to the navigability of the Indian waters. This is an important transboundary benefit to the lower riparian India at the social and environmental cost of the upper riparian Nepal, and which needs to be

negotiated appropriately.

The provision of dead storage in the current design of Budhi Gandaki does not look convincing either. Water journalist Bikash Thapa has stated in his report that the Tractebel company has designed a "dead storage" in this project from which around 50% of the water will go unused. Usually around 10% of the water is kept as a dead storage in other hydropower projects. Deadstorage is the volume of water which is below the level of the spillway or other outlet. In other words, it is the volume of water that cannot be released from a dam but will store the silt and sedimentation. He has stated in his report that through the around 4.4 billion cubic meter (BCM) is be stored, out of which only half, i.e. 2.2 BCM water is planned to be used in this project as designed.

There is suspicion among water experts that this design have some linkage with the river linking project of India, due to which 50% of the water will go to India for free while Nepal would pay the social and environmental costs. The Gandak Treaty signed between Nepal and India mentions irrigation benefits provided to Nepal, but it says nothing about the irrigation benefit provided to India. Similarly, the Gandak Treaty restricts Nepal from transferring the natural flow of water from one basin to another. However, this should not apply to non-natural flow, produced water that Nepal must be free to use.

Therefore if this project is developed as not only



a power project but also irrigation as well as a navigation, fisheries, flood control and possibly tourism development project then it will carry more attraction among foreign investors. It should be re-thought from

a nexus perspective that brings in water, energy, food, navigation, flood control, fisheries as well as other side benefits such as tourism in the reservoir area. Regarding construction of the project, it can be solely constructed by Nepal since Rs. 37 billion has already been collected through infrastructure tax levied on each liter of petrol on consumer. We can learn from Ethiopia who constructed the \$4.8 billion Grand Renaissance Dam solely on its own through mobilizing domestic money. Nevertheless, re evaluating this project from a nexus approach can help in justifying the need to make this multipurpose water infrastructure project.

Book

Remembering Past

With a long memory of the transformation of Nepal, Hemang Dixit pens it all down into a book

By A CORRESPONDENT

As Confucius says, past directs persons to achieve better results in the future. Passing knowledge and sharing experiences enrich the society and new generation.

In societies, including India, people of various professions write books after their retirement. However, only a few of them can share their authentic experiences and encounters.

In his recent book, Dixit collected the memory of different periods of Nepal, including the latest COVID-19 crisis and its implications. Touching on experiences from Rana's period to Nepal's geography, culture, society and international exposure, the book provides insights into Nepal's changing scenario.

Ramesh Kant Adhikari, professor and former dean of institute of medicine writes, "The present volume, *Reflections Down the Ages*, reads like summary of what he had been experiencing and reflecting on throughout his working life. It is a culmination of his work over the last six decades or so. It is a both memoir and collection of essays on various topics. His treatment of different issues reflects views of common man swayed by conspiracy theories and fake news as well those of an insider who has access to the powerful. Thus, opinions are helpful to put the understanding in proper perspective and very educational."

Writing starts with a specific experience followed by his reflections on the implications or the ramifications of the experience and ends with his opinions or suggestions. Sometimes, the experiences seem overwhelming and with too many diverse implications.

Hemang Mani Dixit is among a few people who have greatly enriched the society by publishing various books and articles on contemporary issues.

Born in 1937 in Kathmandu and educated at Shreewood College, Nainital and Bishop Cotton School Shimla in India, Dixit went to the U.K. to study medicine. He did so at the Charing Cross Hospital Medical School on the strand in London qualifying in 1961.

Since Nepal has gone through several phases from being a traditional isolated society to current modern and exposed one, Dixit is a witness to so many changes.

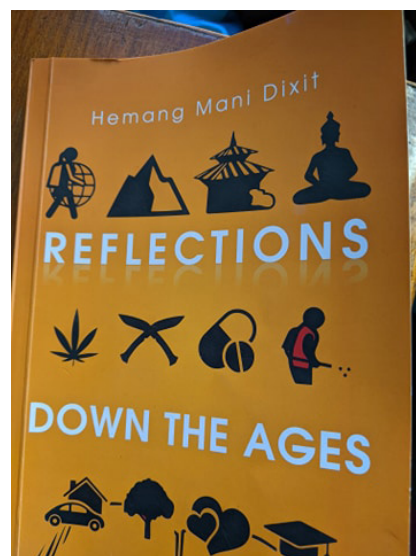
Although he is professionally a medical doctor, he has the passion to write and writing is his inborn quality. Starting the writing career as the chief editor of the *Journal of Nepal Medical Association* in 1965/68, Dixit went to become the chief editor of the journal of *Institute of Medicine* from 1983 to 1992.

As a writer to have published fictions and non-fiction books and write-ups, Dixit knows how to present all kinds of events and changes in interesting manner. This is what one can see in this book.

Divided into five different chapters, the book starts from Nepalian, old time, present time, future time and afterword.

Writing reflections of the past is not an easy task, one needs to visualize the collections of memory in sequences. Having published a number of books and numerous articles on contemporary issues, Hemang Dixit, a prolific writer, has accomplished the task very well in the new book showcasing his vast memories of Nepal.

Author Dixit writes, "Our country is unique in the sense that we are a nation. Apart from that our forefathers used to say Ajab, Kashmir gazaab Nepal. It is part of our heritage. We are also extraordinary in the sense that we are a nation damned. It was the wife of



Reflections Down the Ages

By Hemang Dixit

Pages: 268

Published by Makalu Publication House

Dillibajar Kathmandu

Price: Rs. 550.00

Bhimsen Thapa who whilst proceeding to Kashi reached the rim of the valley, looked back to what was then referred to as Nepal and damned every one of her detractors. This country from this time has been said to be a "country cursed by Sati."

These words of author Dixit show how he has tried to describe Nepal's own culture and values narrating the society. In a sense, this book gives readers vivid pictures of Nepal. Written in simple English with short sentences, every page is more interesting than the earlier one.

This book is useful for all generations, particularly for new generations, who will get a glimpse of Nepalese society and culture. Dixit has again proved himself as a prolific writer to explain the society through his own experiences and knowledge.

Book

Nepal And The Great First World War

Diary of scholar Hem Raj Sharma is about the participation of Nepalese in the First World War

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although thousands of Nepalese soldiers took part in the first world war under the umbrella of the Great Britain and many lost their lives, only a few books have described Nepal's participation in the war.

Thanks to the initiative and effort of Prakash A. Raj, the grand son of scholar late Sharma, a book is published in Nepal which detailed Nepal's participation in the First World War.

Collected by late Sharma as a daily diary, the book is the first of its kind to show how Nepalese soldiers were recruited, deputed and compensated for their sacrifice in the war.

From the establishment of War Office by Chandra Sumsher and his message to the nation in the pretext of the First World War, the book is the first of its kind which has published the entire process of recruitment for the various positions required in the army.

As a scholar with his access to various sources of information particularly newspaper published from Kolkata, late Sharma details the reason behind the war and also draws the conclusion.

He mentions the alliances of the first world war, Russia, France and the Great Britain against Germany led alliance. Showing Austria's relations with Russia and Germany, the book is full of facts and analyses of the First World War.

Due to author's closeness with Ranas, particularly prime minister Chandra Shumsher, scholar Sharma had access to information with different sources.

It seemed that scholar Shar-

ma, who was appointed to look at the War Office, was also responsible to analyze the event of the war and to present to the rulers.

However, scholar late Sharma honestly kept a copy for his own collection. At a time when sources of information regarding Nepal's participation in the first world war were rare, this book has filled the gap to an extent.

For scholars and researchers who want to write on Nepal's participation in the first world war and Nepal's contribution, this book can be used as a main source.

With the intense analysis of contemporary world through the secondary information gathered through the newspapers published from India and the discussion with British residences based in Kathmandu, scholar Sharma had shown his high quality analysis capability to see the First World War from far away country like Nepal.

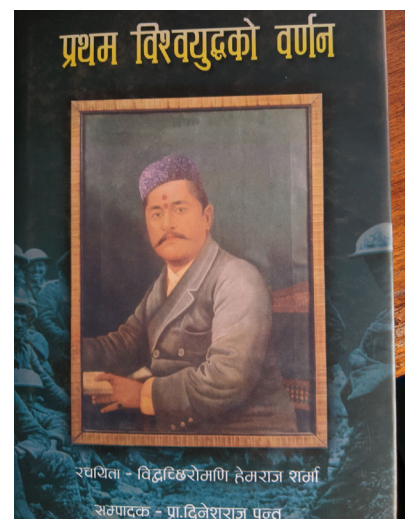
Not only the salary sheet of soldiers, their diet and other facilities provided to them, the author also collected all the information regarding the deployment of Nepalese soldiers and the sketch their departure schedule.

Although the Great First World War concentrated in Europe and the countries involved in the war included Europeans, Nepal backed British due to its close military alliance. For the first time, large numbers of Nepalese soldiers reached different parts of Europe siding with British.

These soldiers returned to Nepal after Britain led alliance announced the victory and surrender of German Empire and its alliance.

Thanks to Prakash A Raj, professor Dinesh Raj Panta, Nepalese readers have found the first book to learn about how Nepal managed to send its soldiers and what the terms and conditions, remuneration and benefits, provided to Nepalese soldiers who went to Europe as part of the forces of British Power, were like.

For years, Nepalese historians relied on the British and Indian archives to learn of Nepal's participation in the world war. However the publication of the book has ended the information gap. This book represents a true part of Nepal's state in the first world war and its participation.



Pratham Bishwoyuddhako Barnan (Description of the Great First World War)

Written by Scholar: Hemraj Sharma
Edited by Professor: Dinesh Raj Pant

Published by Scholar :Hemraj Puraskar Guthi
Price: Rs.620.00

Building Hope Between Order And Chaos



BY: DR. K. UPRETY

Our collectively untutored judgment followed by hasty decision has no doubt led us to the tumultuous situation we are individually, and as a Nation, facing today. We, the people, believed wholeheartedly in the promises of political leaders that would later be broken; put unquestioned faith on leaders who would ultimately choose to lead only selectively; agreed to change our identity to someone else's, undermining our own cultural and geographical originality, to be brutally awakened by the shocks of guilt; trusted their commitments to good governance, to the advancement of livelihood for all, and to the creation of a just society, that would all be later unceremoniously sidelined, leaving many genuine souls to be disappointed, dismayed, disgusted, and disillusioned.

But, although 'mea culpa' is still missing, a sea-change in perception of position, even from the most radicalized of activists of the past, has recently come to light. Certainly, in a place where forming and deforming alliances without respect for any principle has been common practice for decades, this is not surprising, but in the present context, is certainly noteworthy.

But beauty, as a famous dictum suggests, is in the eyes of the beholder. While the darkness is obvious for many, it is completely overlooked by some, and shallow and ambiguous messages continue to be conveyed by those self-appointed political preachers and welcomed by those who readily endorse such messages *in toto*, without question. The mass, chaperoned by the preachers, continues to be thrilled with joy from the elixir of propaganda.

A few years ago, that unfathomable joy also led to sealing a marriage of political convenience amongst the institutions which were, by definition, supposed to stay firewalled per the concept of separation of powers. That marriage, which then relied on the doctrine of necessity and political expediency, was not only unholy but also was sure to create several future perceptual misjudgments, mishaps and miscarriages. And now, the sudden death situation ignited by the decision to dissolve the House, call for fresh elections, and nominate and dismiss party cadres and elites will surely make the landscape foggy and confusing. The confusion will also taint all future pronouncements on the constitutional breaches with doubts and disapproval. Understandably, now, there are speculations on all extremes galore.

On a completely different front, the harsh, constantly judgmental, and unpredictable civil society has started protestst-

hat appear to thicken more and more. But given the many inherent contradictions in their demands, adequate traction seems to be missing, allowing curious and critical minds to even question whether the system has forgotten to gauge what is just, fair and reasonable. These unchaperoned protest movements may appear strong and spontaneous at first sight but fall short of generating a united and collective strength with a snowball effect. Such

movements, despite their cacophonous intensity, however, cannot represent *vox populi*. The fragmented movement groups first need to unite and prepare for a common front, with a clearly articulated agenda, to become a force not to be reckoned with.

But amid all this, the New Nepal continues to bleed. The wound is severe. The cure proposed yet is debatable and a solution remains remote and unseen. Also, while consultation is continuing and consensus is awaited, the gap between debate pertaining to a system that 'ought to be' or a system that 'can be' keeps widening. At this juncture, whether people and leaders have the courage to take bold steps, including, if needed, those to correct the mistakes of the past, remains the most relevant question. Those who are challenging the constitutional actions of today as serious breaches of the law of the land, curiously and interestingly had failed to question similar breaches of the past, and ironically, the

players happen to be the same. In a span of a few months only, the position of anointed experts flip-flopped rapidly. The whirl of the Northerly and the Southerly gales appear to have again affected the decision-making capacity of the gurus of issues of polity.

Indeed, change, whatever its form may be, appears to be inevitable and imminent. Affected by the above, a series of stirs followed by gifting the people with another untested model of governance seems likely. But that would also need to pass the test that people will not feel duped, this time, as happened two decades earlier. Nonetheless, optimism for a better future stays close to our chest, despite the law-and-order of today causing chaos in all direction.

However, the change should not be only for the sake of change. It should be to strengthen the Nation's stability, to enhance its prosperity, to protect the peoples' rights, to ensure their equality, and to guarantee adequate and equal development opportunities for all. The change, to be sustainable, should not be only to replace one icon with another and continue to practice the same rituals.

But this time, it will also be critical to follow the due process, respect the principles of natural law, observe the local mores and cultural values, and secure the rights of each without ever over-promising the impossible. Only, with such rigor, the people will be able to pave the much needed path of an adequate and balanced governance for a sovereign Nepal!



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Kathmandu, Ph.: +97 1 4430250

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