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**OPINION**  
Dipak Gyawali



**INTERVIEW**  
Yutaka Kikuta



**PERSPECTIVES**  
Pratima Pande

# NEW SPOTLIGHT

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FORTNIGHTLY

## UPPER TAMAKOSHI Get Set To Go

### INSIDE



**EU SUPPORT TO EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY**  
Successful Completion



**NEPAL BRITAIN SOCIETY**  
Painting Diplomacy



**POLITICS**  
No Magic Number



# TANAHU HYDROPOWER LIMITED

Tanahu Hydropower Limited (THL) was established as a subsidiary company of NEA to develop 140 MW Tanahu Hydropower Project (previously known as Upper Seti HEP). All pre-construction works including camp facilities and access to the project sites have been completed, whereas the major construction activities under Package 2 (Powerhouse, Waterway and Related Equipment) and Package 3 (Transmission Line) have commenced from January 2019. Following the termination of the Package 1 (Headworks), the Invitation for Re-bid II was again issued 28 February, 2020. After evaluation of the technical and financial bid of the bidders, the Contract has been awarded to the Song Da Corporation and Kalika Construction JV.



The salient features of the project area as follows:

Installed Capacity : 140 MW

Annual Energy : 585.7 GWh

Design Flow : 131.2 m<sup>3</sup>/s

Dam Height/Type : 140 m/concrete gravity

Headrace Tunnel : 1162 m (7.4 m Dia)

Surge Shaft : 61.5 m (ht.), 28 m (Dia)

Penstock Pipe : 160 m (L), 5.7 m to 4 m (D)

Turbine : Vertical Shaft Francis

Powerhouse : Underground Type

Transmission Line : 33.9 km



The total cost of the project is estimated to be 505 million USD. The project is co-financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) and the European Investment Bank (EIB).

THL has engaged Tractebel Engi GmbH (Lahmeyer International GmbH), Germany in association with Manitoba Hydro International Limited, Canada as the Project Supervision Consultant, whereas Electro Consult (ELC), Italy in association with GEOCE Consultant Limited, Nepal has been working as the Environmental and Social Management Service Provider (ESMSP).



The project is scheduled to be completed by December, 2025.



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**Notes From The Editor**



Completing mega-projects like Melamchi and 456MW Upper Tamakoshi is a technically challenging and complicated feat to accomplish. High risks are involved and safety factors need to be addressed with meticulous considerations. Following a failure in the first testing, in which two people were killed, Melamchi Drinking Water Project made the second testing a grand success. With the inauguration of the project, Melamchi is now supplying drinking water to taps in the Kathmandu Valley. As Nepal starts its journey to New Year 2078 BS, the 456MW Upper Tamakoshi, another mega-project, is ready for its testing and commissioning phases. With risks involved in testing the infrastructure, Upper Tamakoshi is walking step by step making all safety considerations. Following successfully testing of headwork, including dam and desilting basin, the project is now planning to start further testing from April 24. During this period the project will test tunnel and penstock, diverting small amount of water from head works. If everything goes well, it will generate electricity from the end of May. The project is now making efforts to finally generate electricity from the first unit. Passing through a very difficult period, including great earthquake of 2015, Upper Tamakoshi Project, the largest hydropower project of Nepal, is now headed in the right direction. Under the capable leadership of Chief Executive Officer Bigyan Prasad Shrestha and his entire team, Upper Tamakoshi will be another great gift to Nepali people for the new year. As Nepalese celebrate the New Year, New Spotlight also takes this occasion to wish Happy New Year 2078 to all readers, patrons and well wishers. Although Nepal is entering the second phase of COVID-19, hopefully, it will manage the situation as it did the last year.

**Keshab Poudel**

Editor

# CONTENT

## EU SUPPORT TO EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY

Successful Completion 3

NEWSNOTES 4

BUSINESS BRIEF 6

## OPINION

Dipak Gyawali 8

POLITICS  
No Magic Number 10

DIPLOMACY  
Foreign Policy Dilemma 13

ENVIRONMENT  
Batu uprety 17

INTERVIEW  
Yutaka Kikuta 26

VIEWPOINT  
Dr. Chandra Lal Pandey 29

RAHUL CHAUDHARY  
Hospitable For Hotels 31

THE WORLD BANK  
Support For Vaccine 32

PERSPECTIVES  
Pratima Pande 33

NEPAL BRITAIN SOCIETY  
Painting Diplomacy 34

ARTICLE  
Hemang Dixit 36



COVERSTORY: UPPER TAMAKOSHI: Get Set To Go

19



MELAMCHI COMPLETION: Japan's Pleasure

12



NEPAL'S ECONOMY: Growth At 2.7%

14



# Successful Completion

*Following the successful completion of earthquake recovery project, European Union and Nepal are preparing to close the NEARR facility*

By A CORRESPONDENT

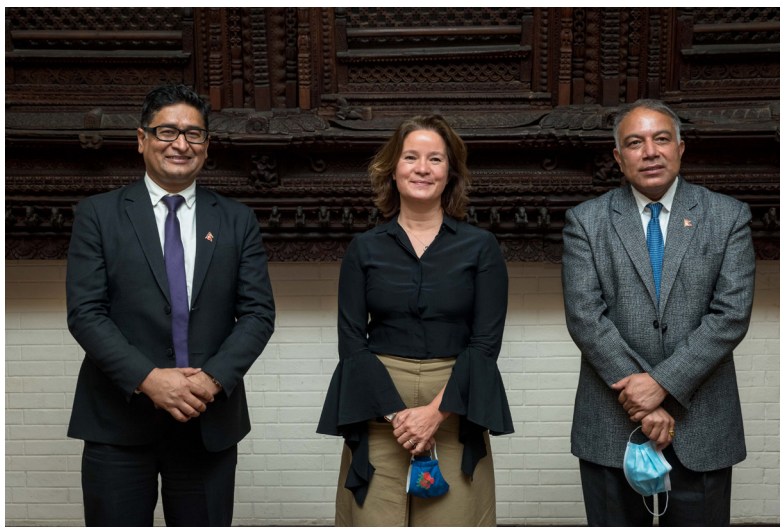
Devastated by major earthquake of 2015, Nepal was in a desperate need of support to recovery and reconstruction. Responding immediately to a call for humanitarian support to Nepal, EU funded a facility for action on Nepal's recovery and reconstruction.

After five years of successfully supporting the earthquake recovery and reconstruction program, the Nepal EU Action for Recovery & Reconstruction (NEARR) Facility has finally closed.

To formalize its closure, NEARR hosted its official ceremony on the 9th of April amidst a function, reflecting on the 'overall recovery and reconstruction context', as well as 'aspects of governance behind the reconstruction scenes'.

From reviving the old settlements supporting reconstruction, EU provided all necessary support through NEARR. Working with government agencies, NEARR showed an example of how to make a better collaboration happen.

The European Union (EU) has been supporting the government and people of Nepal with reconstruction and recovery measures after the earthquake in 2015. This includes a State Building Contract (budget support) of 90 million euros, and the contracting of the German Consulting Group GFA to establish a 'Reconstruction Facility' under the 'Nepal EU Action for Recovery and Reconstruction' Programme (NEARR). The Facility provided demand-driven, flexible technical assistance, advisory services and products, and capacity development for the National Reconstruction



Authority (NRA), responsible for the oversight and coordination of the earthquake recovery and reconstruction process.

In the event, some of the key accomplishments of the Facility were highlighted, including how its mandate as a 'demand-driven, adaptable and close-proximity technical assistance development partner' has proven extremely effective in the complex operational context of Nepal.

It also reflected on how its work with the main government agencies involved National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) and National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA). The NEARR Facility has provided a wide range of advisory services and products over these past four years, including through its core team, through several international and national experts, and with the use of a flexible incidental budget. Experiences, challenges faced, and a set of recommendations were also included in the programme presentations, and an official handing

over ceremony.

"The EU congratulates the NRA and NDRRMA and all stakeholders involved for the progress made so far in advancing reconstruction process in Nepal. It is important that the current momentum be maintained and indeed increased in the time ahead so as to 'build back greener and better' for the benefit of the Nepali people including the most vulnerable communities," said EU Ambassador Nona Deprez.

Participants included representatives from the European Union Delegation to Nepal, Development Partners, National Reconstruction Authority, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance, and the Department of Archaeology.

During the closing ceremony, participants shared their experience working in most difficult time to carry out the recovery and reconstruction work.



## NEWSNOTES

### Israeli Ambassador To Nepal Teaching Tech West Management To Nepali Students



Israeli ambassador to Nepal Hanan Goder-Goldberger visited various schools to teach students the ways to manage such dry batteries, which have a direct impact on public health.

On Wednesday, Ambassador Goder-Goldberger visited a private school in New Baneshwor with an empty water jar, requested the principal, administrators and teachers of the school to collect the dry batteries used by the students and teachers and collect them in the empty water jars kept in the school.

He arrived at the school intending to encourage the students of different schools in the capital to save the environment by collecting and managing such dry batteries at the initiative of the Israeli Embassy in Nepal.

He said that dumping of the used dry batteries would adversely affect insects, grasshoppers and animals on land and water and destroy the fertility of the soil.

Ambassador Goder-Goldberger asked the school management to drop the used e-waste in the empty water jars kept at the school and inform him so that he could send such waste to the concerned authorities for proper disposal.

The Israeli envoy also highlighted the diplomatic relations between Nepal and Israel and expressed his confidence that the friendship between the two countries would be even stronger in the future.

### Nepal Gets EU Debt Service Relief Worth NPR 582M

Nepal is among 28 countries to receive a debt service relief amounting to EURO 4.299 million (NPR 582 million) through a European Union contribution of EURO 183 million to the 'Catastrophe Containment Relief Trust (CCRT)' set up by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The CCRT aims to provide debt service relief on instances of disasters and catastrophes to the poorest and most vulnerable countries.

Jutta Urpilainen, European Commissioner for International Partnerships, said: "Through this contribution to the CCRT, Team Europe continues to stand in solidarity with its most vulnerable partners. In this difficult period, the resources freed up can provide social services for the most vulnerable people, such as access to essential healthcare and education for young people, including girls. Team Europe's Global Recovery Initiative is working to provide debt relief and sustainable investment for the SDGs."

"We are happy to share the good news and believe that the debt relief will create a fiscal space enabling Nepal to move to a green, resilient and inclusive recovery from the COVID pandemic," said EU Ambassador to Nepal Nona Deprez.

Ambassador Deprez said that the debt relief for Ne-



pal is in line with the European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen's Global Recovery Initiative, which called for linking investments and debt relief to the SDGs.

The European Union supports its partner countries in maintaining their commitment and path towards the Sustainable Development Goals despite dire financial situations. Debt levels were already high before the crisis. In many countries, they are becoming unsustainable due to public expenditure required to address the COVID-19 pandemic. More than half of low-income countries are in high risk or already in debt distress.

The European Union alongside the development partners community has been supporting Nepal in its green, resilient and inclusive recovery from the adverse impacts of the pandemic. The announcement of an aid package of Euro 75 million (NPR 9.8 billion) in April last year was a move in the same direction.

The CCRT provides grants to pay debt service owed to the IMF by eligible low-income member countries that are hit by the most catastrophic of natural disasters or battling public health disasters—such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

CCRT-eligible countries are those eligible for concessional borrowing through the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) and whose annual per capita gross national income level is below \$1,175. Vulnerable countries most seriously affected by the COVID-19 crisis benefit from the CCRT.

### Nepali Army Renovates Seven Border Pillars In Dolakha

Nepal Army concludes Operation Himal Darshan in Dolakha upgrading the border pillars and ensuring the safety in Bigu Rural Municipality-1, reports The Rising Nepal.

The Nepali Army has been conducting this operation every year to ensure the safety of the locals, check land encroachment and upgrade pillars.

At the border point of Lapche, Bigu Rural Municipality – 1, which sprawls up to 90 kilometres, there are seven pillars that draw the line between Nepali and Chinese land. Built in 1962 and 2006, these pillars have been monitored by one of Nepali Army's battalions stationed in Dolakha.

Dolakha, the nearest Himalayan district from Kathmandu, borders Ramechhap in the west, Sindhupalchowk in the south and the neighbouring China in the east and the north.

While mountainous terrains, and rivers act as borders separating China from Nepal, boundary pillars have also been erected in the checkpoints of Dolakha.

In the process, the army officials cleared columns that were covered with vines and bushes and also repainted letters and numbers, which had faded over time.

According to Anil KC, Lieutenant Colonel of the Dolakha Battalion, a team of 30 army personnel was deployed to carry out the work dubbed as Operation Himal Darshan.





## Ambassador Of Pakistan Scholarships Provided To 550 Nepali Students



President of Nepal-Pakistan Friendship & Cultural Association Himalaya Shumsher Rana gave the Pakistan Embassy Scholarships to recipients at a ceremony.

Rana gave away Ambassador of Pakistan Scholarships to 550 Nepali students.

The scholarships amounting to NRs 10000/- each were awarded to deserving/ bright students of government schools from across Nepal.

Speaking at the occasion Rana appreciated the efforts of Pakistan Embassy to enhance people-to-people contact between the two counties especially in the field of education.

This, he said, was a reflection of the friendly ties between Pakistan and Nepal. He expressed appreciation for the Embassy's efforts which, he said, had gone a long way in bringing the youth of the two counties closer.

Pakistan Ambassador Syed Haider Shah expressed his resolve and desire to further expand the scholarship programme and expressed gratitude to Himalaya Shamsher Rana for gracing the ceremony.

## India Supports Construction Of Two Schools In Kavre

Maniram Gelal, Secretary, National Reconstruction Authority, performed Bhomipooja for the construction of Shree Harisiddhi Secondary School at Roshi Rural Municipality and Shree Siddheshower Secondary School at Mahabharat Rural Municipality.

Soumya C, First Secretary (Political) Embassy of India, and mayor of the Roshi Rural Municipality were also present on the occasion.

The Shree Harisiddhi Secondary School is being reconstructed at a cost of NRs 28.4 million and Shree Siddheshower Secondary school is being reconstructed at a cost of NRs 39.6 million.

Similarly, three contract Agreements for reconstruction and restoration of Government of India funded Cultural Heritage projects were signed by National Reconstruction Authority and Contractors.

## BIMSTEC Meeting Concludes

Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali led the Nepali delegation to the 17th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting through a virtual mode.



Addressing the Meeting, Foreign Minister Gyawali stated that fighting against pover-

ty and hunger and ensuring decent jobs and sustainable sources of livelihood for our people stand as daunting as ever. He said that only a dynamic and resilient BIMSTEC can catalyze growth, spur innovation and propel development and prosperity taking into account the special needs of LDCs and LLDCs and stressed the need to focus on such core areas as connectivity, energy, trade, investment, tourism, and agriculture.

Stating that stronger political will and commitment of Member States is essential for advancing the regional body, the Foreign Minister underscored the necessity to chart a course that delivers tangible results on the ground and bring positive changes in peoples' lives. While recalling the 4th BIMSTEC Summit held in Kathmandu in 2018 that envisioned a better legal and institutional framework for BIMSTEC, he underlined the need to make the 5th BIMSTEC Summit successful in furthering and deepening the regional cooperation for a larger benefit of the region.

## India Hands Over 13 Road Projects To Nepal

Vinay Mohan

Kwatra, Ambassador of India to Nepal and Basant Kumar Nembang, Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport, jointly dedicated to the people of Nepal the Terai Roads built with Government of India grant assistance.



Joint dedication of 13 of 14 Terai Roads packages to the People of Nepal by Ambassador of India to Nepal and Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport of Nepal, the India and Nepal bilateral relationship has seen another milestone in the development cooperation between the two countries.

Under a Memorandum of Understanding between India and Nepal regarding the strengthening of road infrastructure in the Terai region of Nepal, the Government of Nepal identified ten priority roads to be built under Government of India funding of NR 800 crore.

## Two India-Funded Projects Inaugurated

Karun Bansal, Head of Administration Wing of the Embassy of India to Nepal, inaugurated two projects built with Government of India grant assistance of total cost of NR 89.2 million.

According to the Embassy of India, the newly upgraded Fateh Bal Eye Hospital in Nepalgunj and the newly built Rapti Cold Storage Building in Lamahi Bazar of Lamahi were jointly inaugurated with local authorities.

Both projects have been completed under 'Nepal-Bharat Development Cooperation' program as High Impact Community Development Projects. The new Hospital has general ward, private ward, operation theatre, training hall, doctors quarters, inside road and drainage systems and was built at a cost of NR 46.64 million Indian grant assistance.



## BUSINESS BRIEF

### Radisson Hotel Kathmandu organizes “Jyoti Ko Paila”



Radisson Hotel Kathmandu organized “Jyoti Ko Paila”, an initiative to educate students of Shree Jyoti Secondary School, Jalapa, Khotang as a part of corporate social responsibility with themes “Think Planet”, “Think Community” and “Think People”.

The hotel organized “Jyoti Ko Paila” on 1st April where 40 students of grade IX & X of Shree Jyoti Secondary School, Khotang were hosted for an educational day tour at the hotel.

The event started off with welcome greetings, brief introduction about hotel industry, career opportunities and hiring procedures which provided an insight to the students regarding the career possibilities in one of the largest industry of Nepal. A show around of the hotel’s services and amenities like rooms, banquets, restaurants and fitness center was something the students really enjoyed as 95% of them had never left their district Khotang. They were delighted to experience the look and feel of a 5 star hospitality. Followed by the show around, an activity showcasing food preparation by the Chefs of Radisson Hotel Kathmandu where students were divided in teams and each team was involved in preparing various dishes out of the resource provided to them. They wholeheartedly enjoyed trying out exclusive delicacies prepared specially for them by our chefs. The main agenda of the educational day tour was to provide exposure on education, learning and understanding where the students can explore their interest as well as skills.

“On one hand, we feel extremely privileged to have given an opportunity to host such young students from the eastern village of Nepal giving them a brief introduction about the hotel industry. On the other hand, we were elated to catch sight of joy and happiness reflected on their innocent faces. We are confident that this opportunity of experiential learning will be an epiphany moment for their professional and personal growth,” said a press release issued by Hotel.

Radisson Hotel Group is known globally for their responsible business practices. Likewise, Radisson Hotel Kathmandu has put up continuous effort by showing that they care about the lives of people outside the walls of their businesses by conducting numerous CSR activities every year. The company encourages and advocates on sharing resources with need based entities to unite for common causes.

### NCC Gets New Executive Committee Presided By Malla

Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC) has got a new executive committee under the leadership of Rajendra Malla.

The first meeting of the elected members of the NCC executive committee selected Malla as its president unanimously.

Similarly, the meeting elected Kamlesh



Kumar Agrawal as the senior vice-president of the 55-member executive committee of the chamber.

Similarly, Deepak Kumar Malhotra (Commerce) sector, Urmila Shrestha (Industry), Deepak Shrestha (District), Surendra Kumar Shrestha from (Commodity Associates) and Tribhuvandhar Tuladhar (Chamber of Commerce and Industry Institutional) have been elected as vice-presidents.

### Nepal And Qatar To Collaborate For Tourism Promotion

CEO of Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) Dr Dhananjay Regmi and Qatari Ambassador to Nepal Yousuf Bin Mohamed Alhail held a meeting at the former’s office and discussed prospects of collaboration between the two countries for tourism promotion.

A press statement released by the NTB has shared that CEO Dr Regmi and Qatari Ambassador Yusuf’s held the talk on a positive note. Both agreed to work together for forging bilateral cooperation to promote tourism.

The Qatari envoy, hailing Nepal as a “unique gift of nature”, opined that Nepal could attain economic development through tourism provided Nepal underscores the development of physical infrastructures.

“The natural beauty of Nepal is so mesmer-

## BUSINESS BRIEF

izing. I am often spellbound by the beauty of Nepal. Many foreign tourists have not been able to make Nepal their destinations in lack of proper facility of trans-



portation and expensive airfare for the foreigners,” he said, urging the authority concerned to pay attention to this issue.

He reaffirmed the Qatari government’s support in the promotion of Nepal’s tourism. Similarly, CEO Regmi said that the government and private sector had been emphasizing the development of physical infrastructure.

Regmi also said that Nepal had forwarded a new plan for the promotion of tourism in Middle East countries including Qatar. He reassured that Nepal was ready to host Qatari tourists by providing them facilities they look for such as ‘Halal’ food, and prayer room, among others.

### Nepal Has To Focus On Exporting Value-added Products: EU Ambassador Deprez

Nepal needs to diversify its exportable goods rather than just focusing on the niche products in order to gain from trading with other countries.



Speaking at a program, European Union (EU) Ambassador to Nepal, Nona Deprez stressed that Nepal needs to switch to more value-added goods than its traditional products while exporting to the European countries. According to her, Nepali products have been receiving good recognition in the EU countries.

The EU, through its initiative entitled ‘Everything but Arms’, has been providing duty-free and quota-free access to all imports except armaments from the least developed countries. “However, Nepal has failed to get optimum benefits out of the targeted program,” said Deprez at the program recently organized by the European Economic Chamber (EEC) Nepal.

Deprez said that the EU is keen to assist Nepal to upgrade the use of green technology. She said the EU has now been focusing on improving the food supply chain, short value chain products, traditional herbs and cereal production in Nepal. “The country has to take prudent steps to control the fast-depleting natural resources while forwarding the development activities,” she added.

### Glochha Group Signs PPA With NEA For 2 MW



### Solar Power

Golchha Group has signed an agreement with Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) for the production of 2 MW solar energy through PPA (Power Purchase Agreement). This proposal was signed by the Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority Hitendra Dev Shakya and Chairman of Golchha Group Shekhar Golchha. Shekhar Golchha stated that they are planning to complete this project within 3 months. He further added, “The experience that we will gain from this project will further help us develop more projects in the coming future.”



# Missing In Nepal's Infrastructure Debate: Purbadhar Lacking Purba Sahamati



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

The lexicology of development hides more than it reveals. In England during the Industrial Revolution, as rural economy underwent wrenching upheavals and pauperization of the population, the process was justified as ‘improvement’ that one could really not be against *per se*, followed by ‘progress’ before we came to today’s ‘development’. The same is true of ‘infrastructure’: the term was unknown just some fifty years ago when such development activities used to be called ‘public works’. In [an insightful article](#), Alex Marshall describes how it was the French military planners who used this word in the late 1800s. It moved into the English language when it was picked up by NATO in the 1960s; and foreign aid agencies subsequently transported that to the rest of the “under-developed” world thereafter.

In Nepal, a word had to be quickly found to explain donor requirements through infrastructure development, and lo! it was *bikas ko purbadhar* or “pre-existing foundation for development”. Just as the current word for development, i.e., ‘bikas’ did not exist a century ago, the word then being ‘*unnati*’ which Oli-speak is replacing by ‘*sambriddhi*’ (or ‘prosperity’), *purbadhar* is a recent creation. The military ethos behind the word ‘infrastructure’ resonates in current debates in Nepal. Should the Nepal Army be building roads or state-fed to idleness waiting for an improbable war? Should Nepal accept the strategic baggage of the US’s MCC with its Indo-Pacific Strategy? What about the Chinese BRI and the fear of a debt trap?

Given that these are the only two major global (foreign) infrastructure initiatives around, what underlies their push? US’s IPS is a continuation of the market hegemony of maritime powers whereas the BRI is an alternative Eurasian landmass development initiative. How should land-locked Nepal approach these public works ventures? These and many such concerns welled up my mind at a recent two-day residential workshop organized at Gokarna by Policy Entrepreneurs Inc with The Asia Foundation.

Great rulers have always invested significant effort and resources in developing public works that have survived till today: the Romans did it with their roads and aqueducts and our own Lichhavis and Mallas did it too with *pokharis* and *dhungey dharos*. It was with the rise of capitalism and its expansion into what subsequently

became colonized lands that public works such as railways, ports and even educational establishments were executed in the Global South to facilitate market penetration and resource exploitation by the colonial powers. It was justified as ‘modernization’, and post-World War-II with the Bretton Woods arrangements and foreign aid as a driving industry, as development.

Nepal’s encounter with infrastructure began with modernization mimesis under Chandra Sumshere: the Sundarjal hydroelectric plant in 1911 and, using its electricity, the Swayambhunath Ropeway from Halchowk to Lainchaur to ferry construction material in 1924. It was followed in 1927 by a 22 km Tri Chandra Nepal Tara Ropeway from Dhorsing near Bhimphedi to Matatirtha in Kathmandu. Around this time, a narrow-gauge railway line was extended from Raxaul to Kathmandu. These promising technologies that today we consider mountain- and climate-friendly were soon overshadowed by fossil-fuel burning trucks plying on rapidly expanding road network starting with the Tribhuban and Hetauda-Bharatpur highways in the late 1950s. This equating of infrastructure development with roads, to the exclusion of better alternative technologies, continues unabated today: indeed, the UML’s 2017 local election manifestos promised rural voters “roads within three minutes walking distance from every home!”

Post-World War-II and post-Rana rule, Nepal’s infrastructure development was determined by foreign aid which saw three phases. Till the 1970s and the major Oil Crisis, it was dominated by the search for goodwill among donors, also with an element of country competition, from which, however, the Soviets and the Chinese eventually withdrew leaving the field to Western-led agencies and India. Even among the latter, Western bilateral agencies moved away from hard infrastructure to soft development issues, funneling their share of the hard stuff to the World Bank and Asian Development Bank.

By the mid-1980s, a second phase set in with an underlying sense of “donor fatigue” best expressed through the Structural Adjustment Program. It has rightly been called “fatalism in development”, meant to protect the lender’s loans and to marginalize the receiving state’s

involvement in favour of market players. By the time the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union collapsed, the dominant Western players saw even less reason to pamper countries of the Global South: their Washington Consensus decreed that henceforth the End of History was nigh and neo-liberal markets were to be the vehicles of salvation.

The third phase is on-going: it has become obvious that markets failed to deliver, indeed markets (as the 2008 financial crisis showed) were themselves part of the problem; and foreign aid as an institution is on the decline and maybe even on the road to irrelevance. Moreover, infrastructure is not so much a private good amenable to market methods: it is mostly a public good requiring larger state intervention in its management. Given that good infrastructure lasts generations, it also requires society's deeper moral values promoting behavioural changes. That entails its citizens to treat infrastructure as a "common-pool good", not something they own but one which they are custodians of for future generations. What new institutions and players will emerge with what new driving ideologies and mechanisms is currently all up in the air.

Nepal's experience with foreign-aided infrastructure development has been mixed. When the Nepali state was in the driver's seat, as during much of the early Panchayat, the dominance of the public goods aspect of its infrastructure initiatives enjoyed widespread consensus. This was as true in hydropower developments such as Trisuli, Sunkosi and Panauti as in highways such as Tribhuban, Arniko, and Prithvi as well as airports big and small, or institutions such as the Rashtra Bank.

When by the 1970s foreign aid, and today foreign investors, started calling the shots, when international and national merchants of development began to corner a larger share of the aid money by means fair and not so fair, that national consensus (*purba sahamati*) has broken down when it comes to infrastructure (*purbadhar*) projects in Nepal. One would have thought a democratically elected parliament would be that forum where a consensus would be forged; but given its dysfunctional character, primarily because Nepal's Loktantrik politics is oiled by corruption money, the parliament has failed to play that role. It was true of Mahakali Treaty in the mid-1990s and it is turning out to be even more true for MCC as well a quarter of a century later.

Kickback commission deals that began with Kulikhani-1 have become the norm in all infrastructure devel-

opment projects from hydropower to roads and railways and even airports, and not just by Nepalis but international donors as well (see a previous [writeup on larceny in infrastructure](#)). Many senior politicians and their political parties thrive on it, indeed it being the main reason they raise money for expensive electioneering and personal pelf. There is increasing frustration among the citizens at the inordinately high cost of infrastructure development which ends up at the tax-paying citizens' wallet and makes Nepal's economy uncompetitive. Why should Nepal's hydropower projects cost, on an average, some



\$2500 and more per kW (Arun-3 was planned at \$5400!) when Ethiopia has been able to build the 6000 MW Grand Renaissance Dam at \$800/kW? Why is the proposed 400 kV transmission line to be built under MCC three to four times more costly per km than what the NEA (no paragon of virtue) has been able to build? The same holds true for roads, airports, hospitals and everything else.

It can safely be concluded that the trend we are seeing of declining foreign aid, its being tied with the security and foreign policy requirements of donor countries in a more blatant manner, is only going to accelerate in a post-Covid world. Nepal's public finances are wholly dependent on remittances and the indirect taxes they allow as people buy better nutrition, healthcare and education for their children. In comparison, foreign aid is losing relevance and foreign direct investment remains negligible for understandable reasons: when Nepalis are reluctant to invest in long-term industries (for fear their investments will be lost to thieving political parties and rent-seeking bureaucracy), why would foreigners be interested in investing here?

Getting out of this economic quagmire will require an ethical Green Democratic Socialist politics, which sadly is nowhere on the horizon!



## POLITICS

# No Magic Number

*With just 139 members in the opposition, the government led by PM KP Sharma Oli does not feel any threat*

By A CORRESPONDNET

**M**aoist Center leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda has declared recently that the country will see a new government next month. However, his claims do not match with the fact of the numbers of parliament members in the House of Representatives.

“Don’t worry, Oli’s government will be ousted soon from the post,” said Prachanda addressing a meeting. “We, three parties, are forming an alliance to pull down this government. Maoist Center will withdraw its support once we agree to form the government.”

However, pulling down Oli’s government is a Herculean task. The number of members of parliament representing the three parties is short by three to four seats. In the House of Representatives, four parties have the following numbers: CPN-UML 121, Maoist 48 (following expulsion of five and one speaker), Nepali Congress 61 (two suspended) and 33 (1 expelled).

Count with this, RPP 1, Nepal Workers and Peasant Party 1, Chakka Lama 1, Nepal People’s Forum 1. Along with three parties, there will also be the need to lure independent members.

Looking at the fragile numbers, Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba said they don’t have formidable numbers of MPs to oust PM Oli. “Although I wanted to oust Oli but my efforts were not succeeding as there was not enough support

for the next government. He said he would not make any futile attempt and would not oppose anybody who wanted to become the next prime minister.

“I have not said that I must become the next prime minister, if somebody wants to be the next PM, he or she can try,” he added. Deuba said if the current stalemate prolonged there might not be an alternative to elections.

He took a sarcastic jibe at CPN-Maoist Centre Chair Pushpa

by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli. He said he tried to make Dahal the prime minister several times, but he did not succeed as he backed Oli.

“Don’t you know that we tried to make Dahal the PM several times. He does not take a stance. Now that Oli has kicked him, he has learnt a lesson the bad way,” he said.

At a time when Maoist leader Prachanda is counting the days of PM Oli, NC leader Deuba has his own perceptions to put forth.

At a time when main oppo-



Kamal Dahal for refusing his offer of premiership after the last general election.

Addressing a program organized by Civil Servants National Association, Deuba said that Dahal learnt a lesson when he was kicked

sition Nepali Congress expressed reluctance, the Janata Samajbadi Party-Nepal, which is a key player in the formation of the next government, is yet to decide who to side with -- CPN- UML or the Nepali Congress and the CPN-Maoist Centre.

NC President Sher Bahadur Deuba had held a meeting with the CPN-MC and the JSP-N and asked them to support his party to lead the next government. The party is undecided whether to support Deuba or not.

“Our party had begun discussion on the NC proposal to form the next government and the office bearers would continue dwelling on the issue,” said JSP-N leader Keshav Jha.

JSP-N leader Rajendra Mahato said divergent views were expressed in the meeting and hoped that a collective view would emerge soon on who the party should throw its weight behind.

According to inside sources, Mahato and Mahantha Thakur are of the view that government should not be the party’s priority. Their main concern is whether their demands are addressed. Upendra Yadav and Baburam Bhattarai, on the other hand, say that the party should be ready to aid the NC and the CPN-MC’s effort to form the next government.

Mahato said the KP Sharma Oli-led government seemed positive on addressing their demands and the party should wait and watch, instead of rushing to form the new government. Mahato said the party should wait for the CPN-MC to withdraw its support to the government.

“Once the process of forming a new government begins in the HoR, we’ll then take a call on whether we should try to form the government under our leadership or some other party’s leadership,” Mahato added. The JSP-N has been demanding that the government release party lawmaker Resham Lal Chaudhary, who has been indicted in Kailali carnage case.

It has also asked the government to withdraw false cases slapped

against its cadres and leaders, amend the constitution to address concerns of Madhesis and marginalized groups and communities, immediately pass the citizenship bill, and make public the Lal Commission report on killings of Madhesis in 2015.

“Our party would withdraw support to the government only after



reaching an understanding among the parties that the HoR would not be dissolved before its full five-year term. Oli still wants to dissolve the HoR. Withdrawal of support will give him a pretext to dissolve the HoR,” said CPN-MC Chief Whip Dev Prasad Gurung.

As NC president has been expressing skepticism over the numbers, senior leader of Nepali Congress Ramchandra Poudel has said his party will take all necessary steps to overthrow the government. “We will pull down this government at any cost to protect the parliamentary democracy,” said Poudel.

Poudel reminded that NC had fought for democracy for seventy years. “Major responsibility at present is to protect the system. For it to happen, concerted efforts are imperative,” he emphasized, adding that system was more important than government at present.

As opposition parties are making a strategy to pull down the CPN-UML government led by

Oli, CPN senior leader and former Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal viewed that political problems within the party would be resolved through dialogue and by following norms and values.

Groups within the party could be wiped out through talks.

“We are ready to resolve party problems by leaving behind bitter experiences in the past,” he said and accused the party leadership of not taking initiatives in this regard.

Nepal’s statement indicates that they don’t have required members of parliament to split the party and support the opposition to form the government. However, Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli has challenged Maoist center to withdraw the support.

“Let the Maoist withdraw the support and we’ll take a decision,” said Oli. PM Oli’s threat is understandable as he will still lead the minority government as per the constitution.

Given the current political scenario, the impasse will end only calling fresh elections in November or May 2022. Only question now is who will lead the election government.



## MELAMCHI COMPLETION

# Japan's Pleasure

*Japan government and JICA have welcomed the completion of Melamchi Watery Supply Project*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Waiting for 30 years, Kathmandu's residents celebrated the inaugural of Melamchi Drinking Water Project as a day for jubilation. Having paid a heavy price for drinking water for so long before, people took the beginning of water supply from their tap as matter of joy.

Following the inauguration of the project by President Bidhya Devi Bhandari, materializing the dream of bringing the water of Melamchi to Kathmandu, there was satisfaction among development partners as well.

Major development partners Japan and Asian Development Bank, along with other donors, expressed happiness over the completion of the project. Secretary Madhav Belbase, who has played a key role in finishing the project as Bhagirath, thanked all the concerned for the successful completion of the project.

Japanese government shared this jubilation with people of Kathmandu, sending high level representatives at the inaugural ceremony of Melamchi Drinking Water Project and showing solidarity with government and people of Nepal.

"The Government of Japan is pleased with the successful completion of the Melamchi Water Supply Project, the national pride project of Nepal that will distribute safe drinking water to the residents of Kathmandu Valley," said a press statement issued by Embassy of Japan.

From the embassy, the Deputy Chief of the Mission was present in the ceremony. The representation of Japan at the inaugural program was another important milestone. Japan has been providing support to Nepal through JICA to improve access to drinking water in the country.

The Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in Sundarijal is a crucial component of the overall project and it was funded by Japan. Japan provided loan assistance of around 5,494 million Japanese Yen (equivalent to NPR 5,806 million) for the construction of the plant. The Government of Japan signed an E/N on this loan with the Government of Nepal in March,

at Brikutimandap, Kathmandu. The tap water was supplied through facilities of the Melamchi Water Supply Project.

JICA has been one of the major development partners of GoN to implement the Melamchi Water Supply Project by constructing the 85 MLD (million liter per day) Water Treatment Plant (WTP) at Sundarijal.

Since March 2001, with signing of the Loan Agreement amounting to 5.49 billion JPY between the Government of Nepal and JBIC to construct the WTP, the project faced several disruptions until it was substantially completed in December 2017. Even after its substantial completion, the WTP had been waiting for the water from Melamchi diversion tunnel for its full operation.

The Water Treatment Plant is the largest in the country equipped with modern technology and database system. Components like SCADA system are some of the salient features of the WTP.

Completion of major infrastructure of the project would bring additional 170 MLD water to Kathmandu valley. Since current supply of water is considered 91 MLD in average considering the loss, the Melamchi Project will dramatically improve water supply in Kathmandu Valley, fulfilling the huge gap of water supply services provided by the Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanepani Limited (KUKL), the sole water utility of the capital city.

To show solidarity and partnership, Chief Representative Yumiko ASAKUMA attended the program. ADB Office In-Charge for Nepal Residential Office, Rudy Van Dale was also present during the inauguration.



2001 and the construction was completed in December, 2017.

The Plant has the capacity to purify 85 million liters per day, making clean water available for Kathmandu residents to keep in water tanks in their homes, or the communal wells when they need.

The Embassy of Japan in Nepal hopes the clean water from the Melamchi River will contribute to better health, improving daily lives and upgrading the standards of living of Kathmanduites. "We hope that the successful completion of the project will further strengthen the relationship between Japan and Nepal, and the friendship of people in the two countries."

JICA also welcomed the completion of Melamchi Water Supply Project, the most awaited project by the denizens of the Kathmandu valley. It was inaugurated by opening the tap at a program venue

# Foreign Policy Dilemma

*Nepal's foreign policy dilemma is harming its core interests*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Every country pursues its foreign policy to protect its national sovereignty and promote its core interest. To protect its interest, the country also adheres to policies to condemn violence and terrorism. Nepal is not an exception.

Whether it is an oversight or policy shift, Nepal has, recently, to everyone's surprise, did not take any notice of Maoist Terrorist attack in India.

In between, Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali called External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar on April 9 requesting him for the supply of COVID-19 vaccines to continue administering in the second dose.

During the telephone conversation with Minister of External Affairs of India Dr. S. Jaishankar, minister Gyawali talked about various issues. However, the minister's statement did not mention the terrorism of a form on Nepal has its firm stands.

When Minister Gyawali called on his Indian counterpart, there was condemnation coming from different parts of the world against Indian Maoist killing 22 security personnel.

Although different countries around the world including Turkey, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka condemned the terrorist attack, Nepal's non-committal reactions might have sent a working message.

Had foreign minister Gyawali condemned the attack, it would have made a lot of difference in seeking humanitarian support. Despite the banning of export, India announced to send one million doses of vaccine to Bangladesh and 500,000 to Bhutan. However, Nepal was missing from the list.

Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli and Foreign Ministry issued statement condemning the oppression of democratic activist by Myanmar's military government. Nobody understands the reason not to condemn a terrorist and violent attack in India my Maoist.

Since Nepal claims to be an adherent and supporter of peace and the



country has been condemning every violent act all over the world, not condemning the violence and terrorist act in the neighborhood is not in the interest of Nepal. As India is a close neighbor, the trouble and pain in one neighbor is the pain to the other.

Requesting Indian foreign minister for vaccine, foreign minister Gyawali made it clear that Nepal relies on the supply of Indian support to make vaccination campaign in Nepal successful.

Foreign Minister Gyawali expressed sincere thanks to the Government of India for supporting Nepal in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, including through the generous gift of one million doses of COVISHIELD.

According to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the External Affairs Minister of India assured him of continued support to Nepal in its fight against the pandemic, including through the supply of vaccines.

During the conversation, the two sides exchanged views on intensifying efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

Being a longest serving foreign minister in post 1990's government, Minister Gyawali has found a lot of time to adjust Nepal's current foreign policy to suit the changing global order.

Gyawali, a through gentleman personally, has followed the policy prepared during the cold war era. With so many changes in global and regional or-

ders, there is the need to tune foreign policy to preserve Nepal's core interest.

Whether in close neighborhood or far away, Nepal's foreign policy is guided by individual interests. With institutional disorder due to over politicization, foreign ministry's institutional capacity has declined further.

Although Nepal established diplomatic relations facing all challenges with state of Israel recognizing the importance of sovereignty of a small country, Nepal's international support to Israel has never matched its foundation and spirit of establishing relations with Israel.

Nepal voted all the time against the core and vital interest of state of Israel. At a time when Arab countries have changed their policies towards Israel establishing diplomatic relations, Nepal is yet to tune its policy looking at the changed context.

In one of the public programs, ambassador of Israel to Nepal Hanan Golder-Goldberg humbly said, "Isn't This the Time, Honorable Minister, That Nepal Will Make The Change In Your Voting Pattern?"

With so much of knowledge, backing of prime minister and efficient foreign secretary, whether in neighborhood or middle-east, Gyawali can make a change to protect Nepal's national interest to benefit Nepali people.



# Growth At 2.7%

*The World Bank's recent study has shown that Nepal's economy will grow by 2.7 percent in 2021/22 fiscal year*

By A CORRESPONDNET

With new upsurge and second wave of COVID-19, the world's economy is facing an uncertain scenario. Nepal is no exception. As countries around the world have been announcing the stimulus packages to maintain the economic growth, Nepal is yet to make such announcements to provide incentives and relief to the industries.

Despite sluggish economic activities, there is a good sign for Nepal, as well. The World Bank says that Nepal's GDP is projected to grow by 2.7 percent in the fiscal year 2021-22 and recover to 5.1 percent by 2023.

After contracting for the first time in 40 years in FY2020, Nepal's economy is projected to grow by 2.7 percent in FY2021, driven primarily by services as social distancing measures continue to be relaxed and vaccines rolled out for priority populations. Agriculture is also expected to perform well, on the back of recent favorable monsoons. Exports could be a powerful platform to boost post-pandemic recovery and enable Nepal to transition towards green, resilient, and inclusive development, states the World Bank's latest Nepal Development Update.

Upbeat by the World Bank's recent report, Finance Minister Bishnu Poudel has already started the formulation of the budget giving focus to the areas which support Nepal's growth.

Economy projected to

grow by 2.7 percent in FY2021 due to easing of social distancing and good monsoons. The update notes that the tourism sector may not fully recover without reforms to readjust to a post-COVID-19 tourism market. The current account deficit is expected to widen marginally in FY2021 to 1.2 percent of GDP as imports and remittances recover modestly while exports remain tepid. Revenue performance is also expected to remain weak. This coupled with additional spending on economic relief measures, vaccinations, and the resumption of project implementation should contribute to increase the fiscal deficit close to 7 percent of GDP in FY2021.

While the government has outlined a program to address the impacts of COVID-19 to mitigate the attendant risks to the outlook, the Nepal Development Update highlights the importance of improving export competitiveness for a resilient economic recovery.

"Nepal's untapped export potential is estimated to be around US\$9.2 billion, 12 times its actual annual merchandise exports," said Dr. Kene Ezemenari, World Bank Senior Economist and lead author of the update. "This export potential represents an opportunity to create an estimated 220,000 new jobs, with significant implications for productivity growth. Realizing that potential is not unrealistic in the medium term."

The report outlines six key priorities for Nepal to achieve

its export potential. These include reforming the tourism sector for a quick and resilient recovery; simplifying and streamlining processes to attract more FDI; modernizing export promotion and upgrading exporters' capabilities; reducing trade costs; investing in phytosanitary and quality control-related infrastructure; and boosting digital trade and e-commerce for more opportunities linked to global value chains.

"Nepal's economy is on the path to recovery amid the severe impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic which affected people lives and livelihoods, and businesses," stated Honorable Finance Minister, Bishnu Prasad Paudel. "The recommendations that can help harness the potential of exports in supporting Nepal's economic recovery are in line with the government's policies and priorities. The Government of Nepal is working together with development partners and the private sector on a green, resilient and inclusive development agenda to help Nepal build back better and greener from the pandemic."

The Government of Nepal's relief, restructuring and resilience plan addresses the pandemic's impacts from the immediate to the long term with a focus on a green, resilient, inclusive recovery. The first stage of the plan is focused on relief support to businesses and households most affected by COVID-19. In the restructuring phase or medium-term, the focus is on recovery through investments to promote

and create green jobs that sustain the country's natural capital base. In the long term, the plan focuses on sustainability and resilience for inclusive growth.

"We welcome the government's planned reforms to support Nepal's green, resilient, and inclusive development. This will be the foundation for Nepal to emerge stronger from the crisis," stated Faris Hadad-Zervos, World Bank Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. "We look forward to continued collaboration with the government and development partners in this effort, particularly on investments that harness

Nepal's export potential to support a sustainable and resilient recovery."

"The Bank's report encourages us to work for recovery of our economy. Given the last six months' data, what I can say is that Nepal is in the right track to achieve almost 3 percent GDP growth in the coming fiscal year," said minister Poudel.

The outlook for Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan has also been revised upward, supported by better than expected remittance inflows: Bangladesh's gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to increase by 3.6 percent in 2021; Nepal's GDP is projected to grow by 2.7 percent in the fiscal year 2021-22 and recover to 5.1 percent by 2023; Pakistan's growth is expected to reach 1.3 percent in 2021, slight-

ly above previous projections.

Prospects of an economic rebound in South Asia are firming up as growth is set to increase by 7.2 percent in 2021 and 4.4 percent in 2022, climbing from historic lows in 2020 and putting the region on a path to recovery.

But growth is uneven

upward revision of 4.7 percentage points from January 2021 forecasts.

"We are encouraged to see clear signs of an economic rebound in South Asia, but the pandemic is not yet under control and the recovery remains fragile, calling for vigilance," said Hartwig Schafer, World



and economic activity well below pre-COVID-19 estimates, as many businesses need to make up for lost revenue and millions of workers, most of them in the informal sector, still reel from job losses, falling incomes, worsening inequalities, and human capital deficits, says the World Bank in its twice-a-year-regional update.

The latest South Asia Economic Focus, South Asia Vaccinates, shows that the region is set to regain its historical growth rate by 2022. Electricity consumption and mobility data is a clear indication of recovering economic activity. India, which comprises the bulk of the region's economy, is expected to grow more than 10 percent in the fiscal year 2021-22—a substantial

Bank Vice President for the South Asia Region. "Going forward, South Asian countries need to ramp up their vaccination programs and invest their scarce resources wisely to set a foundation for a more inclusive and resilient future."

While laying bare South Asia's deep-seated inequalities and vulnerabilities, the pandemic provides an opportunity to chart a path toward a more equitable and robust recovery. To that end, the report recommends that governments develop universal social insurance to protect informal workers, increase regional cooperation, and lift customs restrictions on key staples to prevent sudden spikes in food prices.



## साना किसान विकास लघुवित्त वित्तीय संस्था लि.

सुबिधानगर, तिर्हुने, काठमाण्डौ

फोन नं: ०१-४१११८२८, ४१११९२३ ४१११८५२

इमेल: info@skbbl.com.np, वेब साइट: skbbl.com.np

“साना किसानको समृद्धि: कृषिको रुपान्तरण र उद्यमशीलताको विकास”

समेटीएको क्षेत्र:

जिल्ला: ७३

पालिका: ४८४(६४%)

लाभान्वित परिवार  
सङ्ख्या: ९.५ लाख  
महिला सहभागिता:  
७९%

नेपालको कृषि रुपान्तरण र उद्यमशीलताको विकासमा सकृय रहने प्रतिबद्धता सहित नया वर्ष २०७८ को पावन अवसरमा सम्पूर्ण नेपालीमा कोभिड महामारीलाई परास्त गर्दै मुलुकको आर्थिक समृद्धि प्राप्त गर्नमा सफलता मिलोस् भन्ने हार्दिक मङ्गलमय शुभकामना।

—डा. शिवराम प्रसाद कोइराला

प्रमुख कार्यकारी अधिकृत तथा वित्तीय संस्था परिवार

कार्य सञ्जाल/वित्तीय सेवा:

वित्तीय संस्था कार्यालय: १२

साझेदार संस्था: १३०४

ऋण कारोबार: रु. ६२ अर्ब

(वित्तीय संस्था: रु. २२.२४ अर्ब)

साझेदार संस्थाको आन्तरिक स्रोत: रु. ४६ अर्ब

# Environmental Assessment: Prosperity Through Complex Regulatory Efforts



BY: BATU UPRETY

Four decades of continuous use of environmental assessment [in general, Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)] tool through policies and nearly two and half decades of its use through legal provisions postured Nepal a country of preparing and ‘low or not implementing’ IEE or EIA report of the prescribed projects. High-income countries introduced EIA

for major infrastructure projects in 1970s. Its use was ramified in other developing countries in 1980s. Almost all countries started its use to make their projects sustainable and environment-friendly since 1990s. Attended by the then Prime Minister of Nepal, Girija P. Koirala in 1992, the Principle 17 of the Rio Declaration, an outcome of the Rio Earth Summit, states ‘EIA, as a national instrument, shall be undertaken for proposed activities that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment and are subject to a decision of a competent national authority’. High-level political commitment on EIA made its use ‘mandatory’ in almost all countries, including Nepal in 1990s.

Nepal’s 6<sup>th</sup> periodic plan (1980-1985) committed to undertake EIA of the major infrastructure projects. Policies related to the use of EIA - a planning and predictive tool - were reflected in all periodic plans from 6<sup>th</sup> to current 15<sup>th</sup> plan (2019-2024). In addition, sector policies formulated after 1990 adequately focus the need for conducting EIA for all environmentally sensitive projects. Since the last one and half-decade, periodic policies have also emphasised on conducting environmental monitoring and auditing. The National Environmental Policy (2019) commits to internalise environmental aspects into all phases of development projects, make the environmental study reports credible, and conduct environmental monitoring and auditing regularly.

The Government through its Environmental Impact Study Project (EISP), established in 1981, conducted EIA of projects namely resettlement, Bhrikuti paper mill, Sagarnath forest development, Chandra canal irrigation, Jomsom small hydel, minor irrigation (Labdhu-Sera, Nuwakot), magnesite industry and leather factories during 1984 and 1987, and drafted preliminary guideline on EIA. Inadequate conceptual clarity on EIA resulted to undertake EIA of on-going projects. Mr. Sushil Bhattarai, Project Chief of EISP streamlined studies after receiving one month long training on EIA from Aberdeen, UK and started organising workshops and training on EIA in Nepal from 1984 to 1987. These studies provided opportunities to understand sector- or project-based environmental impacts and select appropriate measures to enhance and mitigate beneficial and adverse impacts respectively.

In March 1987, Nepalese delegate, attending a ‘Senior Level Expert Workshop to Evaluate Benefits and Constraints

of the EIA Process in SACEP Countries’ in Colombo, informed that the Government has entrusted EISP to carry out EIA but it lacks legislation, technical expertise and implementation of 7<sup>th</sup> plan provisions on EIA.

The September 2 in 1990 marks the beginning of the development of a national system for EIA through a national workshop under the National Conservation Strategy (NCS) Implementation Pro-

grammes. This workshop drafted EIA guidelines by mobilising ‘Environment Core Group’ members through ‘learning-by-doing process’. The National EIA Guidelines was refined, tested and finally approved by the Council of Ministers, and gazetted in 1993. This Guideline listed number of projects requiring IEE or EIA and the Government also instructed to conduct EIA of the Bara Forest Management Plan in 1995. However, EIA of this forest plan was of the strategic level. It happened so due to lack of understanding on the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

After 15 years of policy experience, studies, and use of 1993 Guidelines, Environment Protection Act (EPA, 1996) and its Rules (EPR, 1997) included legal provisions on conducting either IEE or EIA for the ‘prescribed projects’ and details on their approval processes with ‘conceptual clarity’. The environmental law provisioned not to implement any project or proposal that requires IEE or EIA level of study without ‘environmental clearance’, that is, approval of its IEE or EIA report. Violators of this legal provision (including amendment) were penalised from NRs. 1.00 to NRs. 20 lakhs.

In principle, IEE or EIA is used to identify, predict and evaluate environmental impacts of any project and make efforts to avoid, minimise or compensate the adverse impacts, and enhance the beneficial ones. Provisions for the implementation of enhancement and mitigation measures, environmental monitoring and auditing are essential components of these reports. However, IEEs and EIAs are carried out for small and large scale projects respectively. This largely depends upon the nature, location and sensitivity of the projects. There are no fundamental differences on process for IEE and EIA or other impact assessments.

The Government has enforced EPA (2019) and EPR (2020) by repealing the previous Act and Rules. The EPR (2020) follows threshold approach and lists projects or proposals requiring Brief Environmental Study (BES), IEE and EIA. The 2019 EPA also provisions for Strategic Environmental Analysis (known as Strategic Environmental Assessment in impact assessment communities).

Several workshops and training were organised to build or enhance capacity in carrying out IEE or EIA. The Government published guidelines, guides and manuals. Dr. Ram B. Khadka in 2013 and I myself in 2003 wrote books on EIA process



## ENVIRONMENT

to assist proponents and consultants to prepare and/or improve quality of IEE/EIA reports. In spite of these efforts, 'cut and paste' continued and under-quality reports were submitted and approved. Implementation of approved IEE/EIA report is weak and people used to say 'once IEE/EIA report is approved, environment is automatically managed'. However few projects implemented approved reports, conducted environmental monitoring and auditing and have provided lessons on 'what worked and what did not'. Although I indicated to 'close my inputs' on EPR (2020) (<https://www.spotlight-nepal.com/2020/07/13/environment-protection-rules-2020-regulated-and-impractical/>), recent 18-hours IEE training organised by the IPTM Nepal with technical support from Chem Tech Engineering and Research Centre from 23 March to 5 April 2021 encouraged me to flag few issues. It includes issues also raised by the participants.

Over two decades of extensive enforcement of EPA (1996) and EPR (1997) provides number of lessons and learning to improve this planning and predictive tool. Review of EPA (2019) and EPR (2020) clearly indicates an IEE and EIA process 'complex' in a number of ways.

Section 4 of the EPA (2019) provisions for detail alternative analysis and does not clarify to select 'appropriate alternative' and impacts of the selected alternative.

Rules 6 of the EPR (2020) provisions for conducting public hearing while preparing the report. Report is prepared as per approved ToR and suggestions of such hearing. It does not provide local people and stakeholder an opportunity to know and voice their concerns on impacts and proposed measures, including environment management plan (EMP).

EMP is prepared to implement benefits enhancement and adverse impacts mitigation measures, including monitoring in a structured and planned way. Section 10 of the Act obliges the proponent to prepare an EMP as prescribed before the implementation of the proposal and provides guidance on aspects to be included in an EMP. Furthermore, this Section instructs to prepare action plan to implement an EMP. The IEE and EIA report formats also include a framework for EMP. If a 'stand-alone' EMP is to be prepared as per Section 10 of the EPA, question arises on implementation of EMP of the legally approved IEE or EIA report in the prescribed format.

While reviewing formats for ToR and report, several inconsistencies are noted. For example, ToR for IEE (Schedule 7) and IEE report (Schedule 11) formats sufficiently confuse proponent to prepare a good quality and practical ToR and IEE report. Similarly, Schedule 4 and 9 of the EPR (2020) provides format to collect written suggestion for environmental scoping and IEE report respectively. Both notices look similar but objective of scoping and report is substantially different. Based on Schedule (9), proponent is not obliged to inform the project affected people about the likely environmental impacts and cor-

responding measures of the proposed project.

Schedule 13 of the EPR (2020) lists academic qualification and experience of experts required for the preparation of BES, IEE and EIA reports. This is broad-based but lacks flexibility and selection of appropriate subject specialists because of the conditions specified. Section (6) of the EPA (2019) provisions for following government standards to maintain quality of the report and not to involve consultant who does not comply with the standards or submits under quality report up to 5 years. If the

proponent changes the report before submission, consultant may be penalised as per the legal provisions. This raises a 'big' question of 'ownership' over the report. It seems that proponent can't prepare report and 'must involve' consultant.

Schedule 14 of the EPR (2020) provides format for recommendation letter of the local level and/or concerned agency and informs to provide concrete recommendations with reasons on whether

the proposal can be implemented or not. What happens with the 'non-implementation' recommendation if standard and good quality report recommends for project implementation?

Environmental law is silent on approval process of BES, IEE or EIA if the same institution is the proponent and approving agency.

Review indicates less than 5 percent of the total project cost for enhancing environmental benefits and mitigating adverse impacts, including environmental monitoring and auditing. For example, EIA report of the upgrading of Nobel Hospital mentioned 1.43 percent of the total project cost as environmental cost (cost for implementation of enhancement and mitigation measures for physical, biological social, economic and cultural aspects during construction and operational stages, environmental monitoring and auditing). If the proponent is unwilling to invest environmental cost and government is unable to enforce environmental laws, let us forget about the importance of this tool which is widely used in almost all countries to make the project sustainable.

Environmental assessment is universally understood as a predictive tool. Impacts are identified and predicted using best available scientific methods. Still there exists lots of 'uncertainty'. Some flexibility and trust to the proponent and consultant is required. Quality control is the part of the approving agency. If a report is of under-quality, approving agency can disapprove. Inconsistencies and 'confusions' in legal provisions recalls impacts of 'cut & paste syndrome', or 'green vision syndrome' that may limit timely implementation of economic and infrastructure projects and affect government's single agenda of making Nepal 'prosperous'.



# UPPER TAMAKOSHI Get Set To Go

*Completing a mega-project like 456MW Upper Tamakoshi is technically a challenging and complicated feat. High risk and need to consider safety factors are involved in every step. With that side by side, Upper Tamakoshi is moving closer to completion. As Nepal starts its journey to new year 2078 BS, 456MW Upper Tamakoshi, another mega-project after Melamchi, is preparing its testing and commissioning of tunnels and other infrastructure. For non-technical persons, the lengthy process followed by the project looks like time consuming. Following successfully testing of head-works, including dam site and de-silting basin, the team of Upper Tamakoshi under the leadership of Chief Executive Officer Bigyan Prasad Shrestha is now planning to start the final testing from April 24.*

BY A CORRESPONDENT

Facing several difficulties and natural disasters including Great Earthquake 2015, design changes and COVID-19, 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi, a first mega project constructed by Nepali engineers with Nepalese investment is getting set to generate electricity by Mid-May.

In the presence of Man-

aging Director of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and Chairman of Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited Hitendra Dev Shakya, all the agencies involved in the project, including contractors and consultants, assured to start final testing and commissioning of the tunnel and electro-mechanical instruments from April 24.

Pressured by the inauguration of Melamchi Drinking Water Project, the first national priority project to complete, Upper Tamakoshi is expected to begin production in mid May, making Nepal a power surplus country capable of exporting electricity.

Although there is a psychological and other pressure, Upper





Tamakoshi Project is moving towards its final destination of testing and commissioning taking all precautionary safety measures. Looking at the failed first testing and commissioning of Melamchi Drinking Water Project, Upper Tamakoshi Team is fully following the safety compliances.

Tamakoshi is the largest hydroelectric project in Nepal. It is located in the Dolakha District, 197 km east of the capital Kathmandu. The project was conceived as a peaking run-of-river project with an 822 m gross head, a design discharge of 66 m<sup>3</sup>/s and an installed capacity of 456 MW.

“We have been conducting testing of individual components very carefully taking all safety measures. This kind of high head mega project is very complicated and need

to follow the safety compliances. This is what we have been doing in the testing process,” said CEO of Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Ltd Bigyan Shrestha.

Located at the Tamakoshi river, construction work on the 456 megawatt project began in 2012.

“We still have to go to most critical parts of the project taking all safety protocols. There are the finishing touches like final weld checking, testing and commissioning the project to be done,” said Shrestha, chief executive officer of the project. “All these are technically most challenging and risky for this 822 m high head waterways.”

Shrestha said that following all protocols of testing and commissioning, the plant was expected to come into operation by mid-May. He said that the consequence of

Covid-19 pandemic and poor performance of the hydro-mechanical contractor pushed back its operation deadline.

According to the revised deadline, the national pride project plans to bring the first unit into operation by Middle of May, adding 76 megawatts of electricity to the national grid. The project has a total of six turbines. The other five units will start generating electricity within five months of the first unit being switched on.

The energy produced by the project will be transmitted to a substation at Khimti via the 220 kV Gongar-Khimti transmission line which has already completed. The power evacuated to the Khimti substation will be transmitted to Kathmandu Valley and other cities.

Initially, the project had

aimed to start generating electricity by mid-November 2020, but the deadline had to be pushed back due to the poor work executed by the hydro-mechanical contractor, Texamo Railway Engineering. The installation of the penstock pipes had been slated for 2018.

### MD Shakya's Visit

Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and Chairman of Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited Shakya, who had recently visited the site, said that the first unit will start generating electricity by mid-May this year.

"Despite facing various problems such as earthquakes, floods and landslides, the project is now back in right point where it can start generating electricity. This is possible due to continuous efforts. The remaining work should be done in parallel to generate electricity ahead of schedule," said Shakya. "The entire construction should be completed within the current fiscal year

and 456 MW of electricity should be generated."

Despite facing several hurdles and difficulties, Upper Tamakoshi is now at the final stage of planning to divert water to the tunnel and penstock. Constructed under domestic investment, the work is now going on in a fast pace.

Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and Chairman of Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited Shakya inspected the construction site and discussed with the project officials, consultants and all the three contractors about the schedule for filling the tunnel.

Meeting jointly with contractors and consultant at project site, Shakya directed all concerned to prepare for testing and commissioning of structure as soon as possible completing the remaining work.

After the joint meeting headed by MD Shakya, all concerned, including project office, decided to complete all work by April 23. According to the working plan,

from April 24, the project will start testing tunnel and penstock diverting small amount of water from head works. If things go smoothly, the technical testing will complete between 7 and 9 days.

Currently the work is taking place in dam, tunnel, transmission line, substations and other remaining minor works in civil and mechanical site.

Final phase works on the 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project is moving in full swing.

The final phase of the penstock pipe connection between the upper vertical shaft and the lower vertical shaft is being carried out at present.

Lot 2 hydro mechanical contractor company has committed to complete the welding and painting work at the joint of the pipe within April 19, 2021.

At present only some of the gates on the hydro mechanical side and some concreting work related to





## COVERSTORY

penstock pipes are left.

With the completion of the remaining minor work, the project has planned to conduct technical testing of sensitive structures such as penstocks, main tunnels, surge shafts, surge tunnels, penstock pipes and gates, manholes and valves from mid-April this year.

The technical testing of hydro mechanical equipment such as dams, intakes and civil structures,

ing units gradually, Shakya said. According to Shrestha, Chief Executive Officer of the project, the commissioning and testing will be done considering all the safety measures.

“The country’s largest project, currently being built with domestic investment, has been hit by a major natural disaster and the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has reached the stage of power generation. It is a matter of happiness for

koshi Hydropower Project (UTHP) is scheduled to generate 76 MW of electricity from mid-May.

Many people have likened this to the project’s New Year gift to all Nepalis.

The project is under construction at Lama Bagar of Vigu Rural Municipality-1 in Dolakha district for a decade now.

Dr. Ganesh Neupane, spokesperson for the project, said



including gates, has been successfully completed.

“Following successful completion of water testing in civil and hydro mechanical structures, the water collected in the main tunnel and penstock will be used for testing and commissioning of six turbines and generators connected to the underground power house,” said MD Shakya.

The project has six units of 76 MW each. After generating electricity from the first unit, electricity will be generated from the remain-

all,” he said.

For the chief executive Bigyan Prasad Shrestha, who has been quietly leading the most talented team, this is the most cautious and careful moment. Leading the Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Company Ltd for last eight years facing all difficult and frustrating time, CEO Shrestha, with full assurance and support from all concerned agencies including NEA, is waiting to see the final commissioning of the project. This will be the new year gift for all.

The 456 MW Upper Tama-

that the major construction of civil structures, such as dam, intake, main tunnel and power house, had been completed, along with technical tests of water-filled dams, sand thawing ponds and hydro-mechanical equipment such as gates and stop plugs.

He added that minor works related to civil and mechanical sides of the dam, like tunnel, transmission line and substation were in progress now, and that the target was to test the water in the main tunnel after completing all those works by April 28.

Stating that the test work



would be completed within a week if there were no complex problems in the civil and hydro-mechanical structures while filling the water, he said that the first unit would start generating electricity within mid-May.

The project has six units, each having 76 MW.

He expressed his hope that the full 456 MW of electricity would be generated by completing the entire construction within the current fiscal year.

### Nepali Model

This is the first largest but second project constructed by Nepali engineers and Nepali investment. The majority stakeholders in the project are government agencies--NEA, NTC, Citizen Investment Trust and Rastriya Beema Samsthan while the general public and residents of Dolakha District will also have stakes.

Employees and contributors in the Employees Provident Fund (EPF), NEA & Company staff and staff of financial institutions providing loans will also have their shares. Citizens Investment Trust, EPF, CIT and RBS are the lending institutions.

### Upper Tamakoshi Hydro-power History

In 1985 the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA); while preparing a Master plan of the Koshi Basin Water Resources Development, had identified a 'TA-6' project close to the existing project site of the Upper Tamakoshi Hydro-electric Project. During a study of the Himalayan region in 1999, an Austrian, Christian Ulhar carried out pre-feasibility studies and concluded that the project would have an installed capacity of 120 MW. Because of the competitively low project cost and its overall attractiveness, NEA conducted the first stage detailed feasibility study in 2001 mobilizing their own physical, financial and human resources.

This study showed that the new feature of the project, when installed, would have a capacity of 250 MW and an annual average energy generation of 1570 GWh, at a cost of US\$ 1100 per KW. During the study, they completed a detailed engineering design of a 28.5 km long access road and seven different bridges. The study was completed in 2003.

With the financial and environmental attractiveness of the

project, it was recommended for the second phase of the Detailed Feasibility study, as per international standards. Accordingly, with financial assistance from the Government of Norway, the Norwegian consultant Norconsult AS completed a Bankable Detailed Design Feasibility Study in May 2005. This study presents the installed capacity of the project at 309 MW, with an annual average generation of 1737 GWh of energy. Later during detailed design and tender preparation with the help of the Consultant JV of Lamhyer GmbH-Norconsult AS, Upper Tamakoshi has enhanced its capacity to 456 MW by optimizing Rowaling river basin with annual average energy of 2281 GWh.

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) established an autonomous company named Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited (UTKHPL) in March 2007 (2063/11/25 B.S.) as an executing agency for the implementation of the Project. There are six full time and two invitee members in the Board of Directors (BoD) at present. Out of six full time members, four members from NEA, one from Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and one from Nepal Telecom (NTC) are in the BoD.





## COVERSTORY

Similarly, representatives of Citizen Investment Trust (CIT) and Rastriya Beema Sansthan (RBS) are also in the BoD as invitee members. The majority share (51%) of the Company is held by four public entities, namely, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), Nepal Telecom (NTC), Citizen Investment Trust (CIT) and Rastriya Beema Sansthan (RBS). NEA has 41% stake, NTC has 6% and CIT & RBS each has 2% stake in the Company. Similarly, general public and residents of Dolakha District will have 15% and 10% share respectively. The remaining 24% share will be taken over by contributors in Employees Provident Fund (EPF), NEA & Company's staffs and staffs of financial institutions providing loans. The Upper Tamakoshi Hydroelectric Project is the national priority project and when it is completed, it will be the largest hydroelectric plant in Nepal. The Project is entirely financed from the domestic financial institutions and companies. The Company has planned to develop hydropower projects in Tamakoshi River basin as below:

### Salient Features

Type of Development	= Peaking Run-of-River (PRoR)
Location	= Lamabagar VDC, Dolakha District, Janakpur Zone, Central Development Region
Headwork Location	= Lamabagar, Lamabagar VDC
Powerhouse Location	= Gongar Gaon, Lamabagar VDC
Maximum Output	= 456 MW
Annual Energy	= 2,281 GWh
Gross Head	= 822 m
Design Discharge	= 66.0 m <sup>3</sup> /sec Hydrology
Catchment Area	= 1,745 km <sup>2</sup>
Min. Mean Monthly Flow	= 14.1 m <sup>3</sup> /sec.
Mean Annual Flow	= 67.2 m <sup>3</sup> /sec.
Design flood Q1,000	= 885.0 m <sup>3</sup> /sec
Diversion Dam	= 22 m x 60.0 m (H x L)
Live Storage	= 1.2 Million m <sup>3</sup>
Settling Basins	= 2 Nos. L=225 m
Headrace Tunnel	= 8.4 km (Cross Sectional Area = 32.14 m <sup>2</sup> )
Penstock (Vertical Shaft and Horizontal Tunnel)	= 1,134.0 m
Power House (Underground)	= 142.0m x 13.0m x 25.0 m (L x B x H)
Number of units	= 6
Tailrace Tunnel	= 2.9 km (Cross Sectional Area = 35.0 m <sup>2</sup> )
Access Road from Charikot of Dolakha District	= 68.0 km
Transmission line	= 220 kVA Double Circuit, 47.0 km (Gongar to Khimti Substation)
Construction Cost	= NRs.35.29 Billion equivalent to US\$ 441 Million (Excluding Interest During Construction)
Construction Time Period	= 6 Years



# Populist Agenda

*Following the populist slogans of political parties, FNCCI has also announced a populist package aiming to boost GDP to US\$ 100 billion in 10 years*

By A CORRESPONDENT

From railway to waterway, making international aviation hub to gas pipeline, Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli has left no populist slogan to his rivals and friends to add.

Attending as a chief guest, Oli looked a bit uncomfortable at an event of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) when its president Shekhar Golchha announced a 100-billion dollar strategy for next ten years.

The country needs to have ambitious slogans to move forward. However, it should not be unrealistic and populist. At a time when the global economy is badly hurt by COVID-19 pandemic, FNCCI's ambitious announcement does not fit in real context.

However, announcing its 10-year vision 'National Economic Transformation-2030,' FNCCI president Golchha expressed the hope that Nepal's private sector can make it possible.

The federation unveiled the National Economic Transformation-2030 (NET2030) with the aim of expanding Nepal's economy to USD 100 billion within next ten years.

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli launched the paper on the occasion of the federation's 55th annual general assembly and the FNCCI Day-2021.

Prime Minister Oli assured that the government was committed to work together with the FNCCI and the entire private sector of the country to implement the transformative vision and provide all necessary support.

The vision paper aims to achieve a double-digit growth and create an additional 2.2 million jobs through sustainable high economic growth.

FNCCI president Shekhar



Golchha said that the National Economic Transformation 2030 is an effort to drive forward the economic transformation in the country through active multi-stakeholder participation and cooperation and a highly engaged private sector.

"Based on the three vision goals, the NET 2030 has identified 19 key focus areas and 100 initiatives. Efforts have been made to define the roadmap to extend and integrate the past and present work of the FNCCI and the government," he said.

While implementing the vision paper effectively, about 150 billion dollars will be invested.

Of this, 108 billion USD will come from the private sector. Currently, the country's economy is worth USD 34 billion.

Golchha said that 40 out of 100 schemes prepared by the federation could be implemented within two years.

He urged the government to increase the budget in the productive sector by cutting unproductive expenditure rather than increasing the size of the budget.

The vision paper also calls for reforms in 14 different laws, he said.

Senior vice-president of FNCCI Chandra Prasad Dhakal said that increasing investment in the infrastructure sector would help economic development and cut spending in unproductive sectors.

He said that one or two year's of hard work is not enough to transform Nepal into a prosperous nation, which requires a decade-long vision, clear planning and effective implementation.

Dhakal said that joint effort from the government and the private sector was a must to implement the vision paper effectively.

The vision paper has explored the possibilities and potentialities in the agriculture, service and industry sector for economic growth, employment and reduction of trade deficit in Nepal. He said that this document would be a milestone for economic transformation and prosperous Nepal.

Various speakers highlighted the importance of the pronouncement saying that it is achievable. However, the time has come for FNCCI leadership to show that their slogan is not just merely a populist document.



# "Japanese People Have A Special Sense Of Intimacy Toward Nepal"

*Having served different parts of the world, YUTAKA KIKUTA, a career diplomat of Japan, is the newly-appointed ambassador of Japan for Nepal. Ambassador Kikuta, who has been serving at Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had worked as part of a Japanese mission in several countries including Thailand, the Netherlands, India and Bhutan. He was the ambassador for Nigeria prior to the appointment of ambassador to Nepal. Newly appointed ambassador spoke to Senior Executive Editor Somnath Lamichhane and Executive Editor Yekraj Pathak of RSS. Excerpts*

**Nepal and Japan enjoy warm and friendly relations for a long time both at the government-to-government and people-to-people level. How will you further strengthen Nepal-Japan relations in the days ahead in your term?**

First of all, I am very pleased to be designated as Japan's envoy to this fascinating country, Nepal, where Sagarmatha lies, and whose motto is **जननीजन्मभूमिश्च स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी** "Mother and motherland are greater than heaven". I am looking forward to working with the government and people to see "Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali" (Sambriddha Nepal, Sukhi Nepali).

Nepal and Japan have been enjoying a long-term friendship, as I will describe later. I have unforgettable memories of my own, too. Based on such friendship, I will spare no effort to further strengthen our bilateral relationship. My strategy is to meet as many Nepali people as possible, both high ranking leaders and common people, and to visit as many places in Nepal as possible.

I believe Japan has a variety of tools to further strengthen the existing cordial relationship. By hearing people's voices, and seeing the various charms and challenges of this country, I will explore how best Japan can cooperate with Nepal, using its policy mix to the largest extent possible.

There is a long and deep history between Japan and Nepal, all started with the visit of a Japanese monk, KAWAGUCHI Ekai, to Kathmandu in 1899. Japan and Nepal established official diplomatic relations in 1956, and we have been strengthening our relationship as true friends ever since.

High-level exchanges between the two countries have been quite active; the Rt. Hon. President Mrs Bhandari visited Japan and the Foreign Ministers from both countries travelled to see each other recently.

Next year, 2022, is the 120th anniversary since the first eight Nepali students were dispatched to Japan for their studies.

Personally speaking, my hometown is Fukushima in Japan. Therefore, I was so grateful to Nepali people for their

prayers and help when the Great East Earthquake hit the Tohoku region in 2011. As you can imagine, it was still so cold in the mountainous northern part of Japan in March.

The people there, including my parents, relatives, and friends, had no food, no electricity, no heat, no gasoline, etc. At that moment, the 5,000 blankets Nepal kindly sent to the region in fact save thousands of lives. Freshly cooked Dal-Bhat and warm Nepalese coffee also encouraged their hearts and bodies to survive.

That was why Japan provided support for Nepal soon after the 2015 Gorkha Earthquake, of which tremor I felt in New Delhi, sending emergency rescuers and relief materials and have been assisting the reconstruction of schools, residential homes, and supporting Nepal to be a more disaster-resilient nation.

In return, Nepali people in Japan kindly visited Kumamoto in 2016, volunteering to cook Dal-Bhat for the Japanese who were affected by the Kumamoto Earthquake in April 2016. It was said that they would like to show their appreciation for the Japanese Government's assistance during and after the 2015 earthquake in Nepal.

In this way, the strong friendship between Nepal and Japan is based on mutual help and respect between the countries and heartfelt sympathy among the people even in those difficult times.

**Japan remains one of the largest donor countries for Nepal for the upliftment of Nepal's development efforts, including infrastructure, socio-economic, education, health etc. In the changed context of globalization, how Nepali entrepreneurs can attract Japanese investment, technology, and technical support? How the Embassy can help Nepali entrepreneurs to achieve this goal?**

When President Bhandari visited Bangladesh recently, the President stated that in order to increase and strike a balance in trade, it is important to remove difficulties in trade, develop infrastructure, and ensure easy market access.



I totally agree with the President. I would say the same can be said to attract foreign direct investment, too. Rather than increasing the hurdles, how much the Nepali entrepreneurs and businesspeople could show their charms to attract Japanese investors under conducive government policy really matters.

One of the opportunities may be EXPO 2025 OSAKA, KANSAI, JAPAN, in which Nepal will participate. This special occasion will be a showcase for Nepal to present its prosperity and happiness to the world.

Japan has been supporting Nepal as a long-term friend by assisting agriculture, healthcare, education, infrastructure, good governance, peace-building, and helping Nepal's recovery from the earthquake by making Nepal a disaster-resilient nation, as well as helping in various other sectors for Nepal's social and economic development. Not only money, but Japan has also been extending a lot of technical assistance as well because we believe that nation-building starts with human resource development.

**Your Excellency, the COVID-19 pandemic has created huge loss of employment, economic opportunities, and access to basic services as health, education. How the Japanese government is thinking over to help countries like Nepal? Are there any plans?**

Yes, we have made some significant contributions

so far and we have plans for the future. Since last year Japan has been contributing to formulating the COVAX Facility and announced its financial contribution of 200 million US dollars in total.

I landed at Tribhuvan International Airport on the morning of March 7th, 2021, travelling from my former posting in Nigeria, as one of the passengers of a flight that happened to carry the COVAX vaccines to Nepal. I had a chance to talk with Mr Tripathi, Minister for Health and Population, and ambassadors of donor countries, and members of international organizations, who gathered there to welcome the vaccines (not me) on that day. It was just a coincidence, but it was my very first experience in Nepal.

The vaccine is important, but the cold chain is also vital. On March 9th, 2021, the Government of Japan decided to extend Emergency Grant Aid of approximately 41 million USD to 25 South East and South West Asian and Pacific Island countries, including Nepal. This grant is to assist cold chain equipment, including medical equipment such as cold-storage facilities and transportation, to ensure the vaccines reach down to the last person as "Last One Mile Support" to ensure vaccinations for each country, through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Besides these direct remedies, Japan has been supporting Nepal on the issues caused by COVID-19. For example, we assist food security in Nepal with WFP, USD 3.47 million has been provided to implement the mother and the child health and nutritional programme in the vulnerable districts of Province 1 and 2.

In the future Japan will continue to work together with the international community in this fight against COVID-19; based on its commitments made as a member of G7 and Quad (Japan, US, India, Australia) such as:

- We, the leaders of the Group of Seven, met today and resolved to work together to beat COVID-19 and build back better. (G7 February 19th).

- We will accelerate global vaccine development and deployment (G7).

- We resolve to agree on concrete action on these priorities at the G7 Summit in the United Kingdom in June (G7).

- We will join forces to expand safe, affordable, and effective vaccine production and equitable access, to speed economic recovery and benefit global health (Quad March 12th).

- We will combine our nations' medical, scientific, financing, manufacturing and delivery, and development capabilities and establish a vaccine expert working group to implement our path-breaking commitment to safe and effective vaccine distribution (Quad).

**What could be the area of cooperation between Nepal and Japan in the future? How can both countries develop a long-term partnership?**

One of the key areas of cooperation should be the reconstruction of the society which will be more resilient to natural disaster, based on the concept of BBB "Build Back Better." For example, stronger structures for houses and schools



## INTERVIEW

will be effective for the affected communities to enable them to restore their lives and move forward. As I mentioned before, we have a shared experience to this effect.

Moreover, Japan has been assisting Nepal's economic growth through social and economic infrastructure, power and water, health systems and education. For example, the Sindhuli Road (BP Highway) makes the daily lives of Nepali people better through the smooth transportation of goods within the country. For better access to medical care and education, we have been working with the Nepal Government and local NGOs to achieve this.

With regard to the water issue, it is my great pleasure to see the Melamachi water finally reached Kathmandu on Sunday, March 28th. This achievement is the result of a construction project of Water Treatment Plant (WTP) at Sundarijal funded by Japan and related projects financed by ADB and others. Japan's support for the Plant was JPY5,494 million (equivalent to NPR 5,806 million), which purifies water of 85 million litres per day (MLD). I hope the clean water from the Melamchi River will help the daily life and improve the standard of living of Kathmandu.

We understand that Nepal has been striving to consolidate democracy, and Japan has been working together with Nepal for good governance, and we would like to encourage Nepal's aim to graduate from LLDC in 2022 and upgrade to a middle-income country in 2030, which will be achieved by the poverty reduction programmes under the Nepal Government.

Environment protection and climate change are the most challenging issues which we should tackle together as the international community. Nepal is no exception when it comes, for example, to global warming as a country that has Himalayas glaciers. Another example would be air quality within the city area. This may be eased by less traffic congestion in the Kathmandu Valley; which Japan has been working on as well. I must say solving such issues will lead to the better health of future generations.

People-to-people exchange is one of the important elements for both Japan and Nepal, to know each other further and to enhance our long-term partnership. We have a student scholarship programme by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), under which a number of Nepali academics have studied in Japan, and a programme called JDS (The Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship) by JICA for young Nepali civil servants to study in Japanese graduate schools.

We always appreciate the alumni's contributions in the various sectors of Nepal society, helped by their experiences in Japan, and their love for Japan as their second

home. In addition to those student exchanges, there is a new opportunity opened in 2019, for Nepalis as "Specified Skilled Worker," we welcome highly-skilled Nepali people to come over to Japan for work as well.

I am also looking forward to seeing the tourism sector between the two countries expands more, as tourism always give us a new perspective of our world. It was a pity to hear that the Visit Nepal 2020 campaign was affected by COVID-19. However, the direct flight between Japan and Nepal by Nepal Airlines will be the key for travellers.

Last year we marked the Golden Jubilee of the first Japanese summit of Sagarmatha, achieved by Mr UEMURA Naomi and Mr MATSUURA Teruo and it was also the 45 years anniversary of Ms Tabei Junko, a Fukushima native, becoming the first woman mountaineer reached to the summit of Sagarmatha. Once the COVID-19 situation settles down, we would like to welcome more Nepalis to visit Japan for sightseeing and to enjoy Japanese culture as well as our traditional cuisine "Washoku," and of course, many Japanese mountaineers and travel-lovers are waiting to visit Nepal soon.



**How the Japanese people treat and assess Nepal in their country Japan? Have you been to Nepal before? If so, what was the most memorable moment?**

I think Japanese people have a special sense of intimacy toward Nepal, stemming from the beauty of its nature, Buddhism and culture, food, and the people. The flower of Fukushima, my hometown, is Lailiguras, the national flower of Nepal.

I remember the beautiful light-purple flowers on the jacaranda trees within the Valley when I visited Kathmandu as Director of the South-west Asia Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan many years ago. On that occasion, I visited the Budokan, a Japanese-style sports facility, which was built by Matsumoto City, Nagano Prefecture as a sister city of Kathmandu.

Former Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Ryutaro Hashimoto, who loved the mountains of this country, visited this Budokan for the opening ceremony in 2002. Both Mr Hashimoto and I have 6th grade in black belt in Kendo, the Japanese swordsmanship martial art. I enjoyed practising Kendo at the Budokan with young Nepali Kendo players.

In 2005, I welcomed the then Crown Prince Paras and Crown Princess Himani to EXPO 2005 AICHI JAPAN. The wooden wall decoration bestowed to me by Princess Himani has been my family treasure since then, and I found an ornament of the same motif in my office at the Japanese Embassy here this time!

# Nepalis Are Optimistic: Findings Of SNP 2020



On 9 April 2021—a yearly report of a longitudinal study called ‘A Survey of Nepali People’ in 2020’ was released jointly by the Vice-Chancellor of Kathmandu University and Madam Ambassador of Australia to Nepal in the gracious presence of highly dignified audience inclusive of, inter alia, veteran scholars, law makers, representatives from federal, provincial and local government bodies, and colleagues from Media houses. This is the third report (2017; 2018 and 2020) in the series. The study was based on public opinions—a nationally representative sample of 7,060 Nepalis, randomly selected from 588 wards across the country’s seven provinces to capture public mood on five key areas, which include ‘public outlook and national mood’; ‘personal safety and dispute resolution’; ‘identity and social relations’; ‘governance and political participation’; and ‘economic outlook and access to information’.

Capturing public mood through opinion surveys are established vehicles and are expected to help the government of the day to better grapple with public moods and priorities and to realign the course of development, service delivery and overall governance system. In this context, although a snapshot of a particular time, the report can provide important insights and path forward because the findings presented in the report may be generalized as the respondents are randomly selected from the Nepali population from the national, provincial and local levels, employing all the rigors of contemporary polling science. However, one important point that needs to be flagged out here, for this particular report, is that the fieldwork for the survey was conducted in February–March 2020, just before the Government of Nepal (GON) decided to impose a national lockdown to contain the novel coronal virus (COVID-19). As this survey timeframe captured perceptions of Nepalis just before the influence and impacts of COVID-19 in the country, the SNP 2020 can also serve as a baseline for future research, comparing the national mood before and after the national lockdown.

The results of the survey show that majority of Nepali (65.6%) believe that the country was moving in the right direction by February–March period of 2020 and they were more optimistic about the country’s direction than

they had been in 2017 and 2018. The findings also demonstrate that the top four reasons for optimism are better roads (73.8%), improvements in the supply of electricity (46.0%), increases in access to health services (31.8%), and increases in access to education (30.7%). A number of other positive findings include issues such as improv-

ing personal and local security related problems or threats (85%); improving social conditions (84.3%); improving local economic conditions (78.5%); increasing trust with local government bodies (84.6%); improving local political conditions (55%). Furthermore, Nepalis levels of satisfaction with health (6.25 out of 10), road (6.26 out of 10) and education (6.35) are also over average. These findings show that the country was moving towards right direction in 2020 prior to Corona Virus forced national lockdown and socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 in Nepal.

However, the findings of the report also present some crucial issues that need immediate attention. For examples, more than two-thirds (68.4%) of Nepalis are still unaware about the changes brought by the constitution of Nepal 2015; approximately three-fourth of the Nepalis (71.6%) are entirely unaware about any development projects or

budget planned for implementation by their respective local governments, provincial governments or federal government. More than four-fifths (85.5%) of Nepalis have not participated in preparing any local development plans for implementation in their local areas and only a small percentage

of Nepalis, from 16.6% to 23.2%, have heard about public hearings and public audits. It indicates that the public participation in development processes and decision-making is still scanty in Nepal. Only 43.8% of the respondents regard political parties as trustworthy institutions while 91.8% of them regard media to be the same. Nepalis identify corruption as one of the most prominent challenges for national development.





## VIEWPOINT

Overall, the report is comprehensive as it captures five broad categories as noted above and sought public opinions on many issues that Nepalis encounter in their day-to-day life. The report is available online freely and the data of the report is also publicly available for perusal and further research. In sum, the report has presented mixed feelings of Nepali people. On the one hand, the majority of Nepalis are optimistic that the country is moving towards right direction yet a large number of people, although minority, do not seem to be feeling so. While better roads, improved water services and improved electricity services are the reasons of the optimism, poor quality roads, no-timely maintenance of roads are also the reasons of the pessimism. While development activities and outcomes are the sources of the optimism, inadequate public participation and communication of information about public hearings, public audits and tax increases are the reasons of the pessimism. The finding also shows that the more people are educated, the better they understand the system and tend to be less optimistic. The report indicates that more people need to be made aware about constitutional changes;

about public services made available by the three layers of governments; about inclusive public participation and voice through improved, reliable and transparent communication and governance system, focusing not only on the outcomes but also valuing the processes of development, service delivery and governance system. This may generate hope and aspirations and Nepalis may be more optimistic.



Dr. Chandra Lal Pandey is the Coordinator and A. Professor of Community Development Program, SoA, Kathmandu University. He is also the author of “Personal Safety and Dispute Resolution” and “Governance and Political Participation” chapters of the Survey of Nepali People 2018 and 2020. The views expressed in this article are of the authors only.

# समयमै श्रम अडिट गरौं । जिम्मेवार प्रतिष्ठानको परिचय दिऔं ।



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सञ्चार तथा सूचना प्रविधि मन्त्रालय  
सूचना तथा प्रसारण विभाग

RAHUL CHAUDHARY

# Hospitable For Hotels

*Headed by Rahul Chaudhary, managing director of CG Group, its Fern Hotels and Resorts capture a large chunk of the Indian Hospitality Sector*

By A CORRESPONDNET

**L**ike father, Rahul Chaudhary, managing director of CG Group, who is the son of the first Nepali Forbes Billionaire Binod Kumar Chaudhary, has established himself in the hospitality industry in a short period.

Despite the disruption crated by COVID-19 pandemic globally, CG Group's Fern Hotels And Resorts has made a big progress in India capturing the largest chunk of Indian tourists.

This was revealed by a study made by HVS Anarock India Reports. According to the report, the Fern Hotels & Resorts capture a larger chunk of the Indian Hospitality Sector. For this, the credit goes to junior Chaudhary.

Based in India, he has been able to promote CG's hospitality chain in the global market making it competitive in terms of quality and services. The recent report is a testimony to his work.

HVS Anarock issued a comprehensive report providing an overview of the Indian hospitality sector, its performance, top brands, prevalent trends and more. The Fern Hotels & Resorts was enlisted as one of the most rapidly growing and expanding hospitality groups in the industry

The report says the Fern Hotels & Resorts celebrates being the top hospitality operator with the highest number of properties opening in 2020 as per the HVS Anarock issued 'Indian Hospitality Overview 2020' report recently.

The hotel group is a member of CG Hospitality, the hospitality arm of CG Corp Global. Notably, for two consecutive years the company has basked in the glory of achieving the number one position in Indian hospitality sphere. The study also highlights major factors at play that reshaped the Indian hospitality in the last one year. One of the main trends observed was a 40% decline in brand signings by keys year-on-year in 2020.

Despite the pandemic induced repercussions and hurdles, the hospitality industry overall registered growth in the past year. Mid-segment hotels emerged as market leaders in the industry in regards to the number of properties signed in 2020. Upscale hotels have also

displayed significant increase in market share as compared to the year before. In terms of keys, midscale hotels is the most preferred segment in the country, accounting for 41 per cent of the total signings in by keys in 2020, followed by upscale (37 per cent of total signings), economy (11 per cent of total signings) and luxury (11 per cent of total signings).

The Fern Hotels & Resorts (a member of Concept Hospitality Pvt Ltd & CG Hospitality) has opened the highest number of properties in India in the calendar year 2020, The India Hospitality Review 2020 published last week by HVS India in its report said. "The domestic brands overtook their international peers by opening 69% of properties and 55% by keys," the report stated. The four other leaders were Marriott, Sarovar Hotels, IHCL and intelli Stay respectively.

CG Corp Global's Hospitality arm- CG Hospitality, in partnership with Concept Hospitality Pvt Ltd, expressed their gratitude towards the recent findings portrayed by HVS Anarock report on the Indian Hospitality Sector for the year 2020.

In terms of number of keys opened The Fern hotels stood at No. 3 position. IHCL opened the maximum number of hotel keys in 2020 followed by Wyndham hotels in the second position. Overall "the industry set a record with the opening of 4,537 branded keys", it added. The top four companies in terms of number of keys were, IHCL, Wyndham, The Fern Hotels& Resorts and Sarovar Hotels.

Reacting to the findings of the reports, Suhail Kannampilly, CEO, Concept Hospitality said, "It brings us a great deal of pride and satisfaction to have been positioned as the top player in terms of number of properties opened by us. This is a sheer example of our commitment towards the Indian market and we are in full steam ahead to make our presence more astute."

The company is confident of 2021 as they plan to open at least 13 hotels in different locations this year. This will take their ex-



isting number to 87 hotels. In terms of number of keys, they are likely to add 1156 keys which will take their overall key number to 5217 keys.

The year 2021 witnessed the company successfully foraying into newer cities like Jabalpur, Junagadh, Mussoorie, besides officially entering the north-eastern part of the country with a hotel opening in Gangtok, Sikkim.

Expressing his thoughts on this milestone, Rahul Chaudhary, Managing Director, CG Corp Global, said, "This is a pivotal turn to our story in India where we have been constantly engaging, hustling and harping on the many opportunities it offers. Even though many disruptions were faced globally and domestically, our vision to grow along the Indian hospitality industry is evident and justified with the conclusion of this illuminating report. Considering this immense potential, we are determined to further expand & grow enormously in the coming future, breathing life into a common goal shared by each and every member of our team."

Currently the company is managing 82 Fern, Zinc by The Fern and Beacon hotels across 67 locations in India, Nepal and Seychelles. The group is at the forefront of responsible hospitality and sustainable tourism. The environment-sensitive philosophy has won brand recognition and accolades for the group. It is the recipient of over 200 National and International awards.



# Support For Vaccine

## *Nepal and World Bank sign \$75 million Additional Financing Agreement for COVID-19 Vaccines*

By A CORRESPONDNET

With revenue shrinking due to the shutdown for four months, Nepal is in a very difficult financial situation. However, Nepal needs to purchase the vaccine to administer to its population and revive economic activities.

As Nepal has set a target to vaccinate over 70 percent of the population by mid of 2022 to achieve the herd immunity, it requires a huge amount of additional resources for this. Although Nepal has already ordered for 2 million doses of Astra-Zeneca vaccine and published notice to purchase another 5 million, the country needs the resources for it.

In this context, the agreement reached between Nepal Government and the World Bank is highly important. Nepal and the World Bank signed an agreement for additional financing of \$75 million to support to access safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines for Nepal's prioritized populations.

The agreement was signed by the Finance Secretary, Sishir Kumar Dhungana on behalf of the Government of Nepal and the World Bank Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, Faris Hadad-Zervos.

"The additional financing is an important and timely support to the government's overall plans to vaccinate at least 72 percent of the Nepali population," stated Sishir Kumar Dhungana, Finance Secretary. "It supports the government's health response to the pandemic, by supporting procurement of COVID-19 vaccines as well as strengthening health systems for their effective deployment as per the National Deployment and Vaccination Plan."



The additional financing builds on the \$29 million for the original COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project that was signed in April 2020. The project will be implemented under the leadership of the Ministry of Health and Population by the Department of Health Services and associated institutional bodies.

About 90 percent of the additional financing will support the purchase, supply and distribution of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines. The rest of the financing will support existing public health measures to test, trace and treat the COVID-19 infection through a strengthened health system; community engagement and risk communication to improve the demand and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines; and project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and learning.

"Equitable and fast access to effective and safe COVID-19 vaccines is vital to save lives and support a resilient recovery from the pandem-

ic," stated Faris Hadad-Zervos, World Bank Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. "The World Bank is committed to support the government's pandemic response to protect lives, strengthen systems for public health preparedness, and stimulate economic recovery in Nepal."

The World Bank, one of the largest sources of funding and knowledge for developing countries, is taking broad, fast action to help developing countries respond to the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19. This includes \$12 billion to help low-and middle-income countries purchase and distribute COVID-19 vaccines, tests, and treatments, and strengthen vaccination systems. The financing builds on the broader World Bank Group COVID-19 response, which is helping more than 100 countries strengthen health systems, support the poorest households, and create supportive conditions to maintain livelihoods and jobs for those hit hardest.

# Great Britain Has Always Been Our Great Friend And Ally



BY: PRATIMA PANDE

It is my great Pleasure to inaugurate, "he Beauty of Nepal Flora" by the very Talented and the Only botanical illustrator in Nepal Mrs. Neera Joshi Pradhan with H.E. Ambassador Nicola Pollitt at the Siddhartha Art Gallery this evening.

You may be wondering why I am speaking first. It is only because I am eager to introduce H. E. Nicola, who has been here for already a year in Kathmandu. Due to COVID-19, our Nepal Britain Society has not been able to welcome her in grand manner and conduct any programmes. Now with vaccinations on the way and with covid-19 protocols we are finally able to meet her and also to enjoy this art exhibition, and meeting friends this evening.

H.E. Nicola is the first lady British Ambassador in over two hundred years and is the 40th British Ambassador to Nepal which is making history for both Britain and Nepal.

The Nepal Britain Society Celebrated the 200 years of Nepal Britain Relations in 2016 with plenty of programs with talk programs at exhibitions, a Shakespeare play 'A Midsummer's Night Dream, a musical evening and plantation program at the Botanical Garden in Godawari by President Bidya Devi Bhandari with Plants from the Royal Botanic Gardens of Edinburgh in Scotland supervised by Dr. Mark Watson from Edinburgh and his team and distinguished Regius Keeper Simon Milne MBE was also present with Late Ambassador Richard Morris. Since this exhibition is about botanical art and the exquisite flowers and Nepalese plants that Neeraji depicts, I would like to share with you my visit to the Royal Botanical Gardens in Edinburgh. Besides visiting the fabulous gardens with our family, Dr. Mark Watson, chief of Flora & Fauna, who was our friend and guide and who is a great friend of Nepal. We were also very privileged to see the archives and library and filing system of flowers, plants & flora at the main library which was a rare treat for us.

Neera Joshi herself has exhibited in Scotland and in 2015, at the Kathmandu Contemporary Art Center in Patan Museum. She took Part with British artists from the Royal Botanical Gardens in Edinburgh where their Beautiful

drawings and art work were their Beautiful drawings and art works were displayed. In 2016, she also displayed her works for 200 year relations in Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh.

The highlight of the two hundred years of Britain Nepal Relations was of course the Royal visit of Prince Harry, Prince Henry of Wales, which sealed the goodwill and friendship of our two countries and especially after the 2015 earthquake which was a very big national disaster for Nepal.

Great Britain has always been our great friend and ally and has contributed millions of pounds in aid for the development and poverty alleviation of Nepal. Besides exhibiting in Britain and many other countries which are mentioned in the catalog which I have personally sponsored. Neera will also be participating in the Florence Biennale in Italy, the first time that a Nepalese artist has been invited to Participate which is very exciting for the Nepalese artists could follow after her shining example.



In September the Nepal Britain Society is Planning to put on 'As you like it. by William Shakespeare at the Shuilpee Theater and the actors are the New Shakespeare Wallah's promoted by our very own Nepal Britain Society. We hope that all of you will be able to attend and enjoy this wonderful drama directed by Mrs. Greta Rana (MBE), our devoted Board member of the Nepal Britain society. She is also a writer and has published many novels. She is Present amongst us today.

I Would like to wish Neera Joshi Pradhan a great success for her beautiful exhibition today and thank Mrs. Sangeeta Thapa for curating and organizing as always, a wonderful show at her gallery.

I would like to thanks Amit Agrawal of greenline for sponsoring and providing the wine & Sanjiv Pandey NBS member for helping with the exhibition.

Finally, I would like to thanks H. E. Nicola Pollitt, British Ambassador, for accepting our invitation and graciously opening the exhibition this evening.

*Pande is the president of Nepal Britain Society. Excerpts of her statement delivered at inagural ceremony of Art Exhibition of Neera Joshi Pradhan at Siddhartha Art Gallery.*



# Painting Diplomacy

*President of Nepal Britain Society Pratima Pande has shown an example of how people level organizations can strengthen bilateral relations*

By A CORRESPONDNET

Although she arrived in Nepal about a year ago, British Ambassador Nicola Pollitt rarely had a chance to interact with a diverse set of people in one place. Last week, however, she found an occasion to interact with audiences at a solo art exhibition. The exhibition at Siddhartha Art Gallery featured paintings of flora by artist Neera Joshi Pradhan.

Ambassador Pollitt attended the painting exhibition as the chief guest. Catalogued by Pratima Pande on behalf of Nepal Britain Society, The Beauty of Nepal's Flora was devoted to botanical paintings of Neera Joshi Pradhan.

Since Pande took up the presidency of Nepal Britain Society, she has been immensely contributing to strengthening the over two century's old diplomatic relations between Nepal and Britain despite COVID-19 Pandemic, which forced such programs to be less frequent. Following all the health protocol, Pande took the initiative to get the exhibition opened from British ambassador Pollitt.

Under the leadership of Pande, Nepal Britain Society had contributed to commemorate the 200 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Britain. President Pande was part of the successful visit of Prince Harry in 2016 when Nepal was facing a deep crisis.

An ardent lover of heritage and art, Pande and her husband Prithvi Bahadur Pande, chairman of Nepal Investment Bank Ltd, have been supporting heritage conser-

family are collectors of Nepali art. They have also been supporters of the work that the Gallery has been doing over the years and have been patrons of the Kathmandu Triennale since 2009," said Sangeeta Thapa, director Siddhartha Art Gallery and Siddhartha Art Foundation.

"You may be wondering why I am speaking first. It is only because I am eager to introduce Her Excellency Nicola who has been here for already a year in Kathmandu and due to COVID, our Nepal Britain Society has not been able to welcome her in a grand manner and conduct any program," said Pande, elder daughter of prominent civil society leader and first governor of Nepal Rastra Bank Himalaya Sumsher Rana.

Over 50 collections of botanical paintings were exhibited at the exhibition. Inaugurating the exhibition, British Ambassador Pollitt

said that people to people relations between the United Kingdom and Nepal are deeply rooted.

In the presence of over 70 people, the ambassador also keenly took glances of the paintings exhibited at the gallery.



vation in Kathmandu Valley. During the visit of Prince Harry, Pande was invited to Patan Durbar Square to present the restoration work to Prince Harry.

"I would like to share that my sister Pratima Pande and her

## ART EXHIBITION

a tip of the iceberg. Nepal is a paradise and popular for its natural resources, bio-diversity and green vegetation. We have more than 6000 flowering plants in Nepal,” said artist Joshi Pradhan.

“I had a great experience to work with scientists and professionals at the Gardens in United Kingdom and Nepal too. I have put the native flowers Yellow Orchid, *Sungava Dendrobium Densiflorum* and *Bergania Ciliata* called at *PashanVed* in Nepali language, in this exhibition,” said Joshi.

Supporting the exhibition and encouraging and promoting painter like Joshi, Pande has been contributing to preserve Nepalese paintings. For Nepal-Britain relations, the plants and paintings have historic connections. The first British Resident to Nepal Brian Hudgson collected Nepal’s indigenous plants and flower. It was his collection of Nepal’s plants that got its fame.

Thanks to president Pande, new ambassador Nicola Pollitt also connected with larger Nepalese audiences while opening the exhibition of paintings of plants.



“It is my great pleasure to inaugurate The Beauty of Nepal Flora by the very talented and the only botanical illustrator of Nepal Neera Joshi Pradhan with Ambassador Nicola Pollitt at the Siddhartha Art Gallery,” said Pratima Pande, president of Nepal Britain Society.

“Artist Neera Joshi is the daughter of the celebrated artist late Ramananda Joshi. Though Neera did not receive formal academic training in the arts, her eventual journey to become an artist is an interesting one. Her art and botanical paintings which merge science and art is a visual tool to educate, conserve and research the diversity and beauty of floras,” said Thapa, director of Siddharth Art Gallery.

In 1995, Neera graduated with a master in Plant Science from Tribhuvan University. It is while she was making the required anatomical drawings of plants that Neera found that she was stunned by the beauty of the flora she was documenting. The change of career from plant scientist to artist is a testament of Neera’s love for nature.

“Her art and botanical paintings which merge science and

art is a visual tool to educate, conserve and research the diversity and beauty of floras,” said Thapa.

“I would like to mention that the Siddhartha Art Gallery, the Siddhartha Arts Foundation, the Kathmandu Contemporary Art Center and the Kathmandu Triennale have received the generous patronage of both the British Embassy and the British Council and I look forward to continuing our enduring cultural relationship,” said Thapa.

“Today’s collection is just





# Finger & Thumb



BY: HEMANG DIXIT

On 29th March I suddenly recalled to mind a Pop Song with the above title which I had heard many, many years ago. The whole song which was popular and a hit consisted of just these three words. A new version in plural i.e. titled 'Fingers & Thumbs' sung in Western cowboy style has been brought out in 2020 by the US Teague Brothers Band. Surprisingly on 29/03/2021 I recalled, in line with this thinking in my mind a book titled just 'Finger' by Christopher Wilkins and published by Pan Books in 1972. This is a rather off the track book but it gave birth to the thought that our government should 'Aunla Thad au' to all the 'bhunde' contract defaulters. Is this a correct stance? Are those in power or those who were, in a position to do so?

On this same day there was a Tweet in Twitter showing three girls crossing a river on a twine displaying perhaps the reality of what exists in many parts of Nepal. That these would be something of a past era was a commitment made by our government. Sadly it needs to be fulfilled still. Side by side with is picture of the Dharahara, a National project in the last stages of completion. Coupled with this, there is for the capital inhabitants the projected / 21 story Kathmandu View Tower in the old bus park with an uncertain date of completion. Furthermore there are various view towers of varying heights of iron rods and solid concrete to gaze at mountains which can be seen quite easily from ground level. Also in vogue are welcoming / farewell bidding concrete gate structures of many towns. Lastly are yet to be built concrete bridges in different parts of Nepal by politically connected construction firms which though past their contract limitation periods show no sign of being completed soon. Surely all these were made with legal commitments? Have both we and our leaders got out priorities right.

The Rising Nepal, a government mouthpiece had an item regarding the delay in the 59 % constructed Postal Highway. Delay in the initial contractors work and subsequent obstructions were the causes. Most important was the government delay in paying compensation to the owners of the land which they would have to sacrifice. Compensation for it was their right. Another requirement to be fulfilled was going through or bypassing the protected National Forest Reserves i.e. areas or park. Lastly was the hesitancy or even disappearance of the contractor or delay in starting the work. Last but not least was the delay by the contractor for almost two years to start the work.

The truth is the almost eternal refrain of all such politically favoured contractors is that it is the shortage of 'Sand & Gravel' while the reality is that illegal procurement of sand and gravel has been going on unchecked for years. This is the standard cry or 'belona' of contractors awarded various contracts as per their nearness to the political parties!

As I recollect that it was during the time of Chandra & Joodha Shumsher that Nepal had helped the British in India to build railroads to transport troops to the war fronts. Even after their independence it was customary for Nepal to transport rocks and even big boulders to India. One recalls that whilst travelling from Tansen to Butwal that passengers have to get down and traverse across a stretch of the road on foot as the movement of the bus might start the hurtling down of rocks from above. After passengers had crossed this stretch, then only would the empty bus traverse this hazardous stretch and pick up the passengers on the other side. There have been past instances when a rock has come hurtling down the mountain and killed passengers travelling in a jeep or car along the road below! What was apparent even some forty years ago was the absence of rock in the river along side the road as they had all been transported by truck to India. Such was the mentality of us Nepalis to transport boulders using imported fuel, paid for by Dollars to India. A corresponding action by the South Koreans was to export expensive electronic equipment to different parts of the world with similar fuel imported from elsewhere but in a wise manner. We should perhaps learn and develop

With the entire nation building that is being done centrally and in all the Pradesh governments it is necessary that we use the resources that we have at hand for the building of Nepal. These should be used for the benefit of our own people. So far, we Nepalis have been involved in what is called entrepot trade or 'eitherka mal udhar aur udharka mal either'. This perhaps is however going to be the reality for us as we are sandwiched with two great neighbours – both North and South. Interconnectivity is in the airways and by the optical fibres of the twenty first century, but what is required in movements along by road and rail if quick improvement is what is required. Why don't our computer savvy youngsters develop software's plus websites and market these abroad as is being done by individuals in Bangalore and Hyderabad of India?

The talk these days is about saving our environment so that we leave it the same condition that we found it in for future generations. Are we doing that is a grave question that we should put all our minds too? What we are currently doing is cutting down the trees and plants and replacing all with high-rise building reminiscent of what can be termed a 'Concrete Jungle'. Many might query, "What to do with the current population explosion?" An apt question about which we all have to put our minds to! At this time of Holi revelry, I on my part am inclined to mumble just 'Sand & Gravel, Sand and Gravel' on and on again in this age of concrete!



# TRISHULI JAL VIDHYUT COMPANY LIMITED

## Upper Trishuli 3B Hydroelectric Project (37MW)

### SALIENT FEATURES OF UPPER TRISHULI 3B HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT



#### Hydrology

Catchment Area: - 4577 km<sup>2</sup> Length: - 185.33m

Design Discharge (at 70 % PoE): - 51 m<sup>3</sup>/sec

#### Penstock

Diameter: - 4.2

Thickness: - 18mm

#### Head Pond (Connected to UT3A Tailrace Pond)

Size: 29 (L) x 5.2 to 11.0 (B) x 7.35 to 14.8 (H)

Lowest Bed Level: - 714.20 m

Intake: - Bell Mouth

#### Powerhouse

Type: - Surface

Type Size (L X B X H):  
- 40.4m x 19.30m x 33.81m

#### Approach Pressure Conduit/Tailrace Conduit

Type: - Box Culvert Type: - RCC

Length: - 243.47 m + 40 m Length: - 180 m (5.323 m (B) x 3.6 m (H)

Size: - 5.1 m x 5.1 m Square and 5.1 m diameter

#### Turbine

Type: - Vertical Axis Francis

#### Headrace Tunnel

Shape: - Horseshoe Capacity: - 2 X 19.715 MW

Length: - 3805.48 m

Diameter: - 5.1 m ~ 6.1 m

#### Audit Tunnel

Shape: - Inverted D

Length of Adit 1: - 463.3 m, Diameter: - 4.0 m + 1.5 m -

Length of Adit 2: - 119.17 m Diameter: - 5.95 m ~ 6.1 m

#### Surge Tank

Type: - Restricted Orifice

Diameter: - 15.0 m

Height: - 39.3 m

#### Transformer

Type: 3 Phase Oil Immersed Outdoor ONAN

Capacity: - 2 X 23 MVA

Voltage- 11kV / 132kV

#### Transmission Line

Voltage Level: - 132kV, Double Circuit (3km)







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\*Conditions apply.