

DAO Kathmandu Regd. No. 148/11/063/064
ISSN: 2091-0711



OPINION
Dipak Gyawali



ARTICLE
Professor Dr. Mohan Pd. Lohani



GLOBAL VIEW
Abijit Sharma

NEW SPOTLIGHT

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July 02, 2021

FORTNIGHTLY

MONSOON FLOOD

Creating Havoc

INSIDE



NC LEADER DEUBA
Do or Die



UPPER TAMAKOSHI
Successful Testing

तपाईं हामी सबैले घरमै बसेर जनस्वास्थ्यका सबै मापदण्ड पालना गरे मात्र संक्रमितको संख्या घट्ने निश्चित हुन्छ । यसर्थ हामीले उत्तिकै सतर्कता अपनाउन जरूरी छ । निषेधाज्ञाका नियमहरू पालना गरौं ।



कोभिड-१९ का कुनै पनि लक्षण देखिने बितिकै आइसोलेसनमा बसौं
कोरोनाबाट आफू पनि सुरक्षित रहौं, अरुलाई पनि सुरक्षित राखौं

कोरोना संक्रमणबाट बच्नका लागि जनस्वास्थ्यका सबै मापदण्डको पालना गरौं



मास्क लगाऔं



भौतिक दूरी कायम गरौं



बेलाबेलामा साबुनपानीले हात धोऔं



नेपाल सरकार

सञ्चार तथा सूचना प्रविधि मन्त्रालय
सूचना तथा प्रसारण विभाग

Editor and Publisher

Keshab Poudel

Contributor

Sabine Pretsch

Design/Layout

Sahil Mokthan, 9863022025

Marketing Manager

Madan Raj Poudel

Tel: 9841320517

Nabin Kumar Maharjan

Tel: 9841291404

Editorial Office

Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 977-1-4430250

E-mail

spotlightnepal@gmail.com

P.O.Box: 7256

Website

www.spotlightnepal.com

Kathmandu DAO Regd. No.

148/11/063/64

Central Region Postal Regd.

No. 36/067/068

US Library of Congress Catalogue

No. 91-905060, ISSN : 2091-0711

(Print), ISSN: 2091-0754 (Online)

Printing

Megha Offset Printing Press P. Ltd.,

Dhapasi, Kathmandu

Tel. : 977-1-4363624

Notes From The Editor



With its geography and tectonic belt, Nepal is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. As the temperature is rising globally, so the extreme weather pattern bringing unusual and unexpected rainfall resulting in heavy rain and floods. At a time when climate change is going to affect the entire weather pattern, Nepal's ill-prepared policies of developing human settlements and markets along the river banks push the people into risky situations. As Nepal is also investing a huge amount of resources for hydropower development, the recent floods also indicate that they are under a great threat. Developed and settled within a decade following the construction of roads, the newly flourished cities along the major river banks are more vulnerable to floods and landslides. This year's flood and destruction in Melamchi and Manag district has reminded how the nature of disaster will likely be in the future. Instead of building the roads along with rivers and developing the cities for human settlement, the time has come to rethink our policies. Similarly, spending a huge amount of money annually for rescue, relief and rehabilitation, Nepal needs to find out a way to reduce water-induced disasters and floods bringing various ways. Although there are several other issues, we have decided to cover the destruction of floods as a cover story of this week,

Keshab Poudel

Editor

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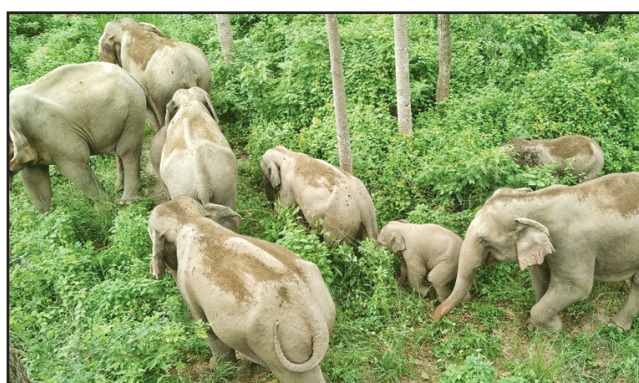
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Judge Dr. Salahuddin Akhtar Siddiqui As I Know Him



Dr. Salahuddin Akhtar Siddiqui is the 4th judge I became friendly with ever since we met at seminars and talk programs organized by the Nepal Council of World Affairs. Three other judges intimately known to me are Mr. Kedar Nath Upadhyaya, former Chief Justice and my classmate at Padmodaya High School and Mr. Arvind Nath Acharya, former judge of the Supreme Court and my classmate at Tri-chandra College. Mr. Hari Prasad Sharma, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and myself were members of the Nepali delegation to Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea that started in 1972 and continued for 10 years. But Mr. Sharma, then joint secretary in the Ministry of Law and myself, then Nepal's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, attended the Geneva session for one month in the late seventies of the last century.

Dr. Siddiqui, former justice of High Court in Nepal from 2009 to 2018, holds a PhD from Nepal Sanskrit University and is Founder of Mother Foundation with a reputation for serving the nation for peace and development. He is keen on strengthening international relations as a law diplomat for the development of Nepal. Even after retirement two years ago, he has maintained his reputation as a research scholar and a legal consultant. He is associated with Nepal Academy as a researcher. He has several publications to his credit. Two books *Family Regulations of Manusmriti* (Hindu Scripture and Family Disputes in Nepal, BS 2072) and *Family System of Scriptures*, BS 2073) are noted for their scholarship based on in-depth research. He is a life member of several social organizations and has gained wide ranging experience from his active involvement in activities relating to human rights, rule of law, social service and political interaction. He has received prestigious awards, such as Law Achievement Award (2015), Excellent Law Book Award (2016) and Freedom of Religion and Belief Award (2017).

Judge Siddiqui has distinguished himself as a serious thinker and a candid commentator on a variety of issues of national and global concern. Coming as he does from a Muslim community, he thinks that political parties have exploited this community for their own selfish interests. He is not happy with the Muslim Commission, a Constitutional body, which has become, in his opinion, a 'puppet' of vested interests. He holds Muslims themselves responsible for not allowing the Muslim Commission to function independently in the interest of the Muslim community.

Judge Siddiqui is against rampant corruption in public life. Again, he is critical of politicians who take loans from internal and external sources in the name of national development. But these loans are spent on luxurious living of a few politicians, relegating citizens' wellbeing to the background. He, however, welcomed the abolition of special funds for MPs in the budget for FY 2078/079.

Ensuring and maintaining public trust in the judiciary is a matter of deep concern to judge Siddiqui. He is of the view that at no cost should the impartiality and neutrality of the court be lost. All justices, he thinks, should be sensitive on this issue and take it seriously to enhance the prestige and dignity of the court. He quoted well known American

President Abraham Lincoln who once said that it makes no difference to the country if one thousand people are fools, but one leader's stupidity is enough to damage the image of the country.

According to judge Siddiqui, change in our behavior pattern is the need of the hour. On the imposition of lockdown to combat the Covid crisis, what is more important is how we behave to deal with this crisis.

In one of his messages judge Siddiqui commenting on a difficult situation that people of this country are passing through, he has advised all to keep on increasing their morale by constantly communicating with our loved ones, including our near and dear ones through dialogues and other exchanges.

Finally, I would like to conclude this brief article about judge Siddiqui by quoting an open letter he wrote recently to the Rt. Hon'ble Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The Chief Justice, Dr. Siddiqui said, represents the entire country as the Supreme Court is the final arbiter, interpreter and dispenser of justice under the constitution. At a time when people are losing their lives in their hundreds every day, it is the responsibility of the Apex Court to protect their lives from Covid infection as government response alone is not enough. Judge Siddiqui made an humble request to the Chief Justice to exercise his judicial authority to save the lives of Covid patients at Bheri hospital in Nepalgunj, Banke by instructing both the government and army medical corps to visit Bheri hospital in order to protect the people's lives.

I salute judge Siddiqui for his humanitarian gesture and spirit of service and cooperation. I am extremely delighted to find in him a conscientious and compassionate friend and well-wisher of all citizens in distress and desperately crying for help and cooperation. I wish him long life and good health. May God bless him to lead a peaceful life for many years to come.

Judge Dr Siddiqui has also sent a letter to Hon'ble Prime Minister of Shree Narendra Modi in which he has mentioned the special relations between two neighbors, Nepal and India. These bilateral relations are not only confined to formal diplomatic relations. They are marked by people to people contacts. Given this reality and considering the impact of Covid pandemic on both countries, judge Siddiqui has appealed to Hon'ble PM of India to pay attention to Nepalis in India who are placed in a critical situation due to the Covid crisis.

Professor Dr. Lohani is Former Ambassador, Former Head, Central Dept. of English, TU and Former President, Nepal Council of World Affairs

NEWSNOTES

Germany's Second Consignment Of COVID-19 Support Arrive In Nepal

Ambassador of the Federal Republic Of Germany to Nepal Roland Schäfer tweeted that second consignment of Germany COVID-19 support to Nepal arrived



This includes 29,000 pulse oximetry and 50 ventilators arrived at TIA. This is part of German people's emergency response to Nepal, facilitated through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism

Canada Hands Over Additional COVID-19 Relief Material to Nepal

The Canadian government has provided a consignment of critical medical support to Nepal to help fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

A Canadian Armed Forces flight carrying COVID-19 relief material arrived in Kathmandu on Sunday. The relief material, comprising 27 ventilators and related equipment, and over 16,000 units of PPE, was handed over to the officials from Nepal's Ministry of Health and Population by Dr. Buddha Basnyat, Canada's Honorary Consul to Nepal.

Canada, in a response to a request of Nepal government, delivered 27 ventilators and related consumables, 15048 face shields and 1,890 disposable gowns in a charter flight.

Ms. Deirdre Kent, Canada's Acting Ambassador to Nepal said: "Canada is proud to send additional relief material to Nepal that will help save lives of those suffering from COVID-19. Canada remains united with our friend and partner Nepal and continues to support its fight against the pandemic."



This delivery of medical relief supplies is in addition to the funding of CAD \$1.5 million to UNICEF to acquire oxygen concentrators and medicines, a grant of CAD \$1 million to the Nepal Red Cross Society to support the people of Nepal in their fight against COVID-19, and CAD \$50,000 to the ASK Foundation of Nepal in

support of its work in providing tele-medicine services to COVID-19 patients.

The government of Nepal has expressed sincere gratitude to the government and friendly people of Canada for the timely cooperation that will complement the ongoing efforts for prevention, treatment and control amid the second wave of the Covid-9 pandemic, a press release issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday said.

Indian Embassy Organizes International Day of Yoga 2021

Embassy of India, Kathmandu, organized the seventh International Day of Yoga on virtually as part of its ongoing celebration of India@75 'AzaadikaAmritMahotsav'.

The theme of the celebration this year amidst Covid-19 was "Be With Yoga , Be At Home" (GharGhar ma Yog) encouraging people to practice "Yoga for Wellness".

A lecture-cum -demonstration of Common Yoga Protocol approved by Ministry of Ayush, Government of India, was organized at the Swami Vivekanand Culture Centre of the Embassy, and was broadcast live on its Facebook page. The yogasanas were conducted by Yoga Guru Loknath Khanal and the event was widely viewed by people across Nepal.

The Common Yoga Protocol (with Nepali voice-over) was broadcast live on TV as well to take the message of Yoga and its benefits to every home in Nepal.

In addition, a conversation on "Relevance of Yoga in times of Covid-19" with YogacharyaShri Sunil Maan was broadcast today on ten prominent Radio FM channels covering all 7 provinces of Nepal.

People from all across Nepal participated in a Vlogging (video blogging) and Essay-writing contest organized virtually by Embassy.

It is well-known that the International Day of Yoga has been celebrated annually on 21 June since 2015, following its inception in the United Nations General Assembly in 2014. Honourable Prime Minister of India ShriNarendraModi, in his UN address, had suggested the date of 21 June, as it is the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere and shares a special significance in many parts of the world.



Italy Extends Support To Nepal To Fight COVID Pandemic

A consignment of medical equipment and supplies from Italy arrived early Friday morning to support Nepal fight the second wave of the pandemic through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Italy is among the 12 EU Member States –Spain, Finland, France, Belgium, Germany, Slovenia, Austria, Malta, Denmark and Ireland responding to Nepal's call for assistance. More support is expected soon from Lithuania and Germany.

"In these challenging times, Italy is at the front-line of the fight against Coronavirus, as testified also by the Global Health Summit co-hosted with the European Commission in Rome last May 21st. In the framework of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, this relief flight to Nepal is a sign of the support and solidarity of Italy towards our Nepalese friends. Once more, the United Nations Human-



itarian Response Depot (UNHRD) based in Brindisi, Italy, has proven to be a crucial logistic support to humanitarian airlifts everywhere in the world” said Ambassador of Italy to Nepal, Vincenzo de Luca.

The relief equipment donated by Italy consists of 20 ven-

tilators, 6000 isolation gowns and 10,000 protective overalls.

Honorary Consul to Italy, Pratima Pande joined by the EU Ambassador to Nepal, Nona Deprez handed over the equipment to Dr. Roshan Pokhrel, Chief Specialist from the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) at the Tribhuvan International Airport. In a true Team Europe spirit, the Ambassadors of Germany and France also participated in the ceremony.

“As long-standing friends and partners, the EU and its Member States support Nepal during these difficult times. These medical supplies will help against the spread of COVID and alongside public health measures will help save precious lives across Nepal,” EU Ambassador to Nepal, Nona Deprez said.

Alongside other donors, the EU will monitor the distribution and the use of the supplies across the country.

Canada Supports Tele-Medicine Services for COVID-19 Patients in Rural Nepal

Canada has announced funding of \$50,000 (NR4,821,602) to the ASK Foundation of Nepal in support of its work in providing tele-medicine services to COVID-19 patients residing in rural areas of Nepal. This funding is provided through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives and supports the Government of Nepal’s COVID-19 Response Plan.

As part of this project the ASK Foundation will provide services to those affected by COVID-19, with a particular focus on those in the remote and rural parts of Nepal, including:

1. a hotline providing medical consultations for COVID-19 patients;

2. monitoring of COVID-19 patients in home isolation and the provision of timely referrals;

3. tele-ICU services to connect patients with care centers, as well as connecting local doctors and nurses with experts in Kathmandu who provide on-line medical advice.



As a result of this project, approximately 20,000 COVID-19 patients from rural areas will receive medical counselling and hospitalization support for critical cases; an expected 1,000 COVID-19 patients in home isolation in rural areas will receive monitoring care and referrals for hospitalization; and an estimated 400 patients are also expected to benefit from tele-ICU services. In addition, the project will also provide on-the-job training to medical professionals practicing outside of Kathmandu to help them treat ICU patients.

The monitoring of patients in home isolation will be carried out in collaboration with Health Advance Programs (HAPSA), one of the members of the COVID Alliance. HAPSA will provide isolation kits, which include medical devices, medicines and leaflets containing information on related care for infection and a hotline number.

Deirdre Kent, Canada’s Acting Ambassador to Nepal, said: “Canada is pleased to continue supporting lifesaving efforts in Nepal by awarding funding to the ASK Foundation to provide tele-medicine services for COVID-19 patients in rural areas. Canada also recently contributed to Nepal’s fight against COVID-19 via grants of \$1 million to the Red Cross and \$1.5 million to UNICEF. In addition, a Canadian Armed Forces flight carrying donated medical supplies will soon be on its way. Canada stands with our friend and partner Nepal in its fight against COVID-19.”

Ask Foundation: ASK Foundation is a locally registered NGO carrying out health and education programs across Nepal. It will lead the project in collaboration with the COVID Alliance for Nepal. The organization has previous experience in delivering humanitarian assistance in large-scale disasters such as the 2015 earthquake and the 2017 Koshi River floods.

Canada Fund for Local Initiatives: The Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) provides modest funding for small-scale, high-impact projects in more than 120 countries. Projects are planned and implemented mainly by local organizations, and are selected and approved by the Canadian Embassy.

Japan Provides Digital Elevation Technology For Disaster Resilience And More Oxygen Generators

(Kathmandu: June 22): With regard to the natural disaster over the country caused by the current monsoon in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic, Ambassador Kikuta shared his condolences message for Nepali people via Facebook of the Embassy of Japan on June 21, 2021.

He offered his sincere condolences to all the victims as well as his respect and encouragement to those who are working hard in this trying time. He extended his



special condolences to the workers who lost their lives by the flood in Melamchi Municipality of Sindhupalchok, as many affected residents might be working for the Melamchi Water Supply Project, which Japan has been assisting in its important component, the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in Sundarjal, to supply fresh drinking water to Kathmandu.

He earnestly hopes that all residents who suffered from the Melamchi flood, the landslide in Helambu Rural Municipality and all other calamities may stay in the safe environment. The Government of Japan has been supporting Nepal, which is prone to earthquakes, landslides and floods, for more disaster-resilience. For the floods, we signed with Nepal to support “The Project for the Development of Digital Elevation Model and Orthophoto,” in last May 2020 as for the Grant Aid (equivalent to 1,319.9 million NPR).

This project is in accordance with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Strategic Plan of Action (2018-2030) of Nepal, and we strongly hope the hazard maps using the data of this project along with further research will reduce the flood risk of the Terai region, and improve people’s lives even in the monsoon season. Although the project has taken time to proceed at the moment due to the COVID-19 situation, we strongly urge to put it forward to secure lives and properties of Nepali friends once the pandemic subsides.

For the COVID-19, in addition to the oxygen generators already handed over to the Government of Nepal, the Embassy of Japan signed the agreement with the Government of Nepal on June 16, 2021 to procure 114 additional oxygen generators under Japanese Grant Aid. We hope our oxygen generators will support the smooth recovery of the COVID-19 patients, and they will be efficient for who suffered from the after-effects, assisting them to breathe safely in the stage of convalescence, to let them fully recovered and restart their daily lives. The Embassy hopes that our support in various sectors will contribute towards further strengthening the relationship, friendship and cooperation between the peoples of Japan and Nepal.

Nepal Receives 982 Oxygen Concentrators Provided By The World Bank



Nepal received 982 units of 10-liter oxygen concentrators, financed by the World Bank today. The concentrators are part of a long-term solution for augmenting Nepal’s capacities to supply therapeutic oxygen to public health facilities towards a stronger response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I am very pleased that we have been able to quickly bring in the oxygen concentrators, which will be dispatched to health facilities of greatest need across all seven provinces of the country,” said Sher Bahadur Tamang, Minister of Health and Population. “The government is working hard to strengthen availability of medical oxygen in all the public health facilities of Nepal, such that every Nepali citizen requiring oxygen is able to access it.”

The oxygen concentrators were procured through UNOPS under the World Bank-financed COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project, which has also financed seven oxygen generation plants, one for each province in Nepal. These plants will be brought in, installed and operationalized by UNOPS in a phased manner in seven provincial hospitals, in the next 6-15 weeks.

The COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project is supporting the purchase and deployment of COVID-19 vaccines for prioritized Nepali citizens, health system strengthening towards a robust public health response to the pandemic, community engagement and risk communication, and strengthening existing digital technology-based pandemic data, surveillance and monitoring systems.

“The World Bank has made available \$104 million to support Nepal’s immediate health response to the pandemic, including the procurement of life-saving COVID-19 vaccines, and strengthening the country’s health systems and preparedness,” stated Faris Hadad-Zervos, World Bank Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. “We are committed to support Nepal and Nepalis during this crisis, and by joining forces with the government and development partners, we have been able to have more impact.”

Ireland And Denmark Extend Support To Nepal To Fight COVID Pandemic

A large consignment of medical equipment and supplies from Ireland arrived early Friday morning to support Nepal fight the second wave of the pandemic through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. A day earlier on 17 June, Denmark dispatched its first consignment, followed by a second consignment arriving on Saturday, 19 June.

Ireland and Denmark are among 12 EU Member States responding to Nepal’s appeal for assistance to deal with the pandemic threat that has had a terrible toll on the Nepali population in the past months.

“It is important that we stand with the people of Nepal in their moment of need. The Irish Aid programme,



managed in my Department, is supporting the delivery costs of the donation, which has come from the Health Service and others, including the Nepal Ireland Society.” said Simon Coveney

Foreign Minister of Ireland.

The Danish Ambassador to Nepal, Freddy Svane states: “As foreign contributions are coming into Nepal for the relief of the COVID-crisis, it is a great pleasure to see the delivery of medical equipment provided by the Danish Govt. arriving in Kathmandu today. We stand with the people of Nepal through these difficult and testing times. Friendship matters.”

The EU and its Member States have been working hand in hand in the spirit of Team Europe to assist Nepal curb the rate of COVID infections and head gradually towards a phase of recovery and reconstruction of its social and economic sectors.

The relief equipment donated by Denmark consists of ventilators, nasal oxygen cannulas, visors, isolation gowns, FFP2 masks (See details below). Similarly, the equipment donated by Ireland comprises of oxygen concentrators, BPAP airflow machines, ventilators, pulse oximeters, respiratory monitors, defibrillators, thermometers, oxygen regulators, air regulators, protective coveralls, face shields and surgical masks to prevent the spread of the pandemic (see details below)

Following an appeal for assistance from the Nepal Government, the EU Member States that have extended their support so far include Spain, Finland, France, Belgium, Germany, Slovenia, Austria, Malta, Denmark & Ireland with more emergency supplies from Italy and Lithuania expected soon.

Representative of the Honorary Consul to Ireland, Ms. Madalasha Shrestha and the Honorary Consul to Denmark, Mr. Hari Dharel joined by the EU Ambassador to Nepal, H.E. Nona Deprez handed over the equipment to the honourable Minister of Health and Population (MoHP), Mr. Sher Bahadur Tamang at the Tribhuvan International Airport this morning. In a true Team Europe spirit, the Ambassadors of Germany and France also participated in the ceremony.

“The EU is working closely with other development partners and the MOHP to ensure that urgent medical supplies reach the hospitals and health care centres in different parts of the country. The recording of the quantity of supplies entering the country and quantities moving

out from the Humanitarian Staging Areas in Sinamangal, is done in the e Logistic Management Information System (eLIMS) of the MOHOP. At the ground level, we have been seeking the help of our project partners to monitor the use of the equipment and supplies,” EU Ambassador Deprez said.

Details of the medical equipment and supplies provided by Ireland:

Oxygen Concentrators: 72
BPAP Air Flow Machines: 12
Ventilators: 44
Pulse Oximeters: 400
Respiratory Monitors: 50
Defibrillators: 50
Thermometers: 100
Oxygen Regulators: 728
Air Regulators: 398
Protective Coveralls: 99750
Face Shields: 201600

Surgical Masks: 1008000

Details of the medical equipment and supplies provided by Denmark

Ventilators: 26
Nasal Oxygen Cannulas: 50
Visors: 96000
Isolation Gowns: 96000
FFP2 Masks: 96000

Canada Provides 600 Oxygen Concentrators

Nepal has just received 600 oxygen concentrators, generously funded by Canada and delivered through UNICEF’s ACT-A Supplies Financing Facility.

According to UNICEF-Nepal Twitter, the consignment will be handed over to be distributed to health facilities to help strengthen their response to #COVID19.

“We thank the Government & people of Canada Flag of Canada for such a valuable support to Nepal Flag of Nepal in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic,” tweets MoFA.



The World Bank Provides Rs. 17.78 Billion Concessional Loan To Nepal



The Government of Nepal and the World Bank today signed a \$150 million (Rs. 17.78 billion) concessional loan agreement to support Nepal's resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, protect the most vulnerable, and support sustainable growth.

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 project will help Nepal build back better and greener through reforms to the tax and customs systems, public investment management, environmental regulations and debt management," stated Sishir Kumar Dhungana, Finance Secretary. "The proposed budgetary support will be utilized in the physical infrastructural projects and economic recovery sectors as per the requirement and priorities of the Government of Nepal."

The first Fiscal Policy for Growth, Recovery and Resilience Development Policy Credit further supports reforms aimed at protecting the most vulnerable and supporting business growth. Reforms in this area focus on social protection, the intergovernmental framework, and supporting access to capital for firms. It will help speed up the ongoing large development projects to create jobs, accelerate markets, and support green recovery. The financing will be provided to the Government of Nepal through budgetary support.

"This project will help the country achieve sustained growth during and after the COVID-19 pandemic that is inclusive, job-creating and environmentally sustainable," 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 and stimulate economic recovery in Nepal

Germany Pledges EUR 34.4 million To Nepal For The Continuation Of Bilateral Support

The Government of Nepal and the Government of



the Federal Republic of Germany have signed the new development cooperation agreement on 14 June 2021 in a ceremony, held virtually. The German side has pledged fresh funds (grants) of EUR 34.4 million (more than NPR 4.8 billion) for the continuation of German support until

the year 2023 for Technical Cooperation and 2025 for Financial Cooperation.

The signing of today follows the Government Negotiations, held between Germany and Nepal in November 2020. The German Development Cooperation is focusing on three thematic areas: Health, Sustainable Economic Development and Energy Efficiency/Renewable Energy.

"Today's signing underlines the good relations between our two nations and also our ongoing common efforts for the people of Nepal. With our focal sectors of Health, Sustainable Economic Development and Energy we are strongly committed to achieving development together with the Nepali people. Besides our bilateral cooperation we see an important role with the civil society, which is an indispensable part of any development effort in Nepal", the Ambassador Mr Schaefer said.

The lion's share of the committed funds will be allocated to the sectors of health (EUR 23.7 m.), energy EUR 17.5 m. and sustainable economic development (EUR 15.4 m.). The geographical focus of the cooperation will remain on the rural regions in Nepal's Mid and Far West. Altogether, the German financial support to Nepal amounts to more than EUR 1 billion since 1959.

In times of COVID-19 Germany also strongly supports the people of Nepal in tackling the ongoing crisis. On 8 June 2021 the first German airplane with medical supplies had arrived at Tribhuvan International airport, carrying goods like ventilators, isolation tents or KN95-masks. Also additional funding of almost EUR 11 m. has been provided from the Emergency COVID-19 Support Program of the German Government. These funds will support efforts to increase and strengthen the resilience of the Nepali health sector in combating COVID-19 and other pandemic diseases, and to mitigate social and economic impacts.

"The EU has already exported 240 million doses to 90 countries, which is about as much we have used within the EU. Germany alone is contributing 100 million euros to the COVAX initiative for equal distribution of COVID-19 vaccines", added German Ambassador Roland Schäfer.

Sunil Kumar Dhungel Appointed As A Chief Executive Officer of Sanjen Jalavidhyut Company

The board of Sanjen Jalavidhyut Company Limited (SJCL), a subsidiary of Chilime, has appointed Sunil Kumar Dhungel as a Chief Executive Officer of the company. Retired from Nepal Electricity Authority as Deputy Managing Director, he served 36.8 years in various capacities in the NEA.

Having a long experience in construction of tunnel and other hydro-power projects, Dhungel is an electrical engineer. Following his retirement, he also involved in the testing and commissioning of Melamchi Tunnel as a consultant.

Completed diploma from Norwegian Technical University NTNU PG Diploma (Electrical Distribution systems and Power systems) Power systems in 1996 – 1997, he also served Managing Director Tanahu Hydro Power limit-



ed from March 2014 to November 2016 almost 2 years 9 months.

Sanjen Jalavidhyut Company Limited (SJCL) is a subsidiary of Chilime and was incorporated in March 2010 as a public limited company. SJCL has planned to develop two new projects—Sanjen Hydroelectric Project (SHEP) having capacity of 42.5 MW

and Sanjen(Upper) Hydroelectric Project (SUHEP) of capacity 14.8 MW in Rasuwa district of Central Development Region.

The company will manage the debt requirement of the project from the EPF for which tri-partite loan arrangement has been signed between EPF, Chilime and SJCL. The equity investment will be made through 51% promoter share and 49% public share. Chilime has 38% shareholding in SJCL. The promoter share will be raised first then after public share.

KOICA Provides US\$ 8.6 Million To Establish Polytechnic Institute In Province 2 Of Nepal

KOICA and Education Ministry signs Record of Discussion (RoD) worth USD 8.6 million for Establishment of Polytechnic Institute for Construction Workforce Development in Province 2, Nepal.

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) on behalf of The Government of Nepal and The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) on behalf of The Government of the Republic of Korea signed the Record of Discussion (RoD) for the project “Establishment of Polytechnic Institute for Construction Workforce Development in Province 2, Nepal” on 14 June, 2021.

The RoD was signed by Ram Prasad Thapaliya, Secretary of MoEST and Mr. Sunghoon Ko, Country Director of KOICA in Nepal. Korean Government through KOICA will spend US\$ 8.6 million for this project. The project period is for 7 years (84 months) starting from 2021. The project will be implemented by KOICA and the CTEVT - at its polytechnic institute in Bardibas, Mohattrai District.

The main objective of the project is to produce competent workforces ready to meet the domestic and global needs of the 21st century by aligning with the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) policy and 15th National Plan. The project also aims to contribute to economic growth of Nepal through the development of skilled workforce to meet the need of construction industry and increasing their employability.

KOICA established Polytechnic Institute in Bardibas will be the first model polytechnic after the federalized government system in Nepal. Currently unemployment is one of the major challenges faced by youths of Ne-

pal. On the contrary, the infrastructure building activities such as roads, railways, airport, and hydroelectric power has increased significantly.

To provide skilled human resources in nation building infrastructure activities this model institute will function as a technical hub conducting TVET in the sector of construction and produce skilled manpower. In addition, the project shall strengthen industry-TVET linkages and supports to gain relevant skills required for the workplace in partnership with Nepali employers and creates employment services. Furthermore, the project deliver TITI training such as training of trainers (ToTs), Instructional Skills (IS), Occupational Skills Upgrading (OSU) and National Skill Testing Board (NSTB) skill testing, Design/Develop NVQ-based TVET curricula for construction sector, Enhance capacity of teachers and students.

KOICA will construct a Polytechnic Institute building with the approximate floor area of 4,600 m2. The basic component of the buildings will be a lecture building and a workshop building for practical learning. KOICA will also provide equipment, furniture and learning facilities for the main building and indoor and outdoor workshops. KOICA will provide technical guidance and support for the development of Master Plan of the Polytechnic Institute identifying short-term training reflecting local needs, operational plan of the institute, career service package, partnership with industry, and school management system. KOICA has been continuously supporting Nepal government in the TVET sector since long time

Thapaliya, Secretary of MoEST expressed that the project will produce skill and competent workforces to meet the of construction industry though TVET as it is align with Government National Plan. He further thanked KOICA for the continuous support to the Government of Nepal and for prioritizing TVET sector which is much necessary for developing country like Nepal.

Similarly, Country Director of KOICA, Ko shared the project will support to contribute the economic growth of Nepal through the development of skilled workforce in construction sector and increasing their employability. Furthermore, he shared that KOICA has been continuously supporting Nepal in various sectors. KOICA has been supporting Nepal to fight COVID-19 pandemic as well. Government of the Republic of Korea has been supporting the Government of Nepal through KOICA in various areas of health, education, IT and rural development since 1991.



Coping with the “Wickedness” of the Climate Problem



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

Reversing Trumpian vandalism of established international agreements and relations, US President Joe Biden declared “*America is back, ready to lead the world*”. He was referring to a wide swathe of treaties that Trump, with his “America First”, had unilaterally abrogated or withdrawn from, including the Iranian JPCOA, the strategic arms reduction START, Trans Pacific Partnership, World Health Organization as well as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. While the first part of Biden’s statement, i.e., America returning to the civilized fold of international agreements was met with an immense sense of relief by the rest of the world, it was the second part of his statement of taking up the driver’s seat that continues to raise many eyebrows.

Each of the international agreements listed above are, in Cultural Theory terms, what are called “wicked problems”, i.e., problems where let alone solutions, protagonists cannot even agree on a single definition of “what the problem really is”. They were there before Trump won the US presidency and will continue to plague and outlive Joe Biden and his successors in the future as well. Wicked problems are very different from “tame problems” where there is broad agreement on the nature of the problem as well as an agreed set of tools needed to solve them. Tame problems – whether in engineering, banking, or medicine – are amenable to established textbook methods, also called “comfortable knowledge”, to arrive at neat solutions.

Wicked problems, on the other hand, come nexused with allied quandaries of concern within multiple disciplines and divergent socio-political interests. They require the generation, or at least recognition, of “uncomfortable knowledge” to arrive at “clumsy solutions” of partial agreements and compromises. For example, urban degradation and its rejuvenation is not just a civil engineering problem of housing and roads but also of water scarcity, waste disposal, clean-up of water bodies, legal issues of land encroachment, relations with its food-producing and labour supplying hinterlands, open space and heritage conservation as well as many more. The same is true of climate change, and environmental sanity, which is the focus of this essay.

The problems of global greenhouse gas emissions and the resulting climate change have been infuriatingly intractable ones since they were first identified over half a century ago. International efforts to solve them since the first Conference of Parties (COP) in Berlin in 1995 till COP26

in Madrid in 2019 are mired in high rhetoric mixed with the lack of meaningful substance and covered with procedural fetishism. Moreover, in the US-led “unipolar liberal, globalized world order” that pervaded the ethos of the first COP, markets were seen not as the underlying problem of climate change but instead ironically its trading mechanisms were elevated to unquestioned solutions. In much of the Global South, including Nepal, this letting loose of unbridled market forces, and the religious beliefs of development agencies that they should be given more power while thwarting state interventions, continue to make a mockery of efforts to cut down CO₂ emissions.

A bigger problem of markets and their short-term investment efficiencies over long-term social and environmental needs tied to equity and justice has led to another entrenched problem in the Global South: technological lockedness. Given the massive overt and covert subsidies enjoyed by the fossil fuel industry (which includes cars, trucks, highways for them as well as a range of allied infrastructure from petrol pumps to brain-washing car races), developing countries are now “locked-in” into this set of technologies with fossil fuel addiction and growing carbon footprint being the consequent result. As an example, despite being blessed with abundant hydropower potential, Nepal’s fossil fuel imports for its vehicles have ballooned eight times from the 1994 figures when it affiliated itself with the UNFCCC to those in 2018. The mad rush to build ill-designed roads – the iconic symbols of development – in fragile Himalayan mountain slopes is additionally contributing to increased landslides, debris deposition raising river bed levels and causing devastating floods.

Interestingly, there is another more mountain- and climate-friendly technology – the ropeway or cable cars – that have a negligible impact on slope stability and use only half the energy, and that too renewable hydropower as opposed to fossil fuel for trucks, to transport the same weight of goods up to mountain villages from shops and roads at valley bottom. This technology languishes in disdain, ignored by both the government and the international development agencies that support it despite its proven successes. Afterall, in another two years, Nepal will be celebrating the centenary of the introduction of ropeways in the country by the Ranas, and subsequent successful implementation of a ropeway project each by both USAID and the EU. The

political economy of technological lock-edness has created a vicious circle that nothing from Kyoto to Katowice and Madrid has made a dent in reversing.

If this fossil fuel lockedness is so bad in a hydro-rich but under-developed Nepal that could have easily avoided it and leap-frogged to a renewable energy transport system, can one even begin to imagine how bad it must be in countries of the Industrialized North and why the history of failure from Kyoto to Paris is so pathetically obvious? This is why eyebrows were raised around the world when Joe Biden made the claim of return to climate leadership: the political reality in societies where market interests predominate over those of larger societal ones will easily debilitate and sabotage any high-minded Green initiatives.

It is not for nothing that economic Trumpism is alive and well not just in the US but also via its clones in UK, France and Australia. The Chinese media were the most sarcastic in shooting down Biden's claim when they wrote that America could not come back to Paris Agreement and immediately as birthright claim leadership: *"You are only a truant schoolboy returning to school and that too without doing the necessary homework!"* They were referring to the US not having lived up to the Paris requirements including submitting revised Nationally Determined Contributions.

Indeed, most environmental organizations globally have reacted negatively to both the climate summit called by Joe Biden as well as the G7 summit in the UK earlier this month. They have ridiculed the proposed \$100 billion commitment to climate finance as not only tiresome repetition of unmet previous commitments but also lacking in detail as to where and how much from each of the G7 countries the money is to come from. While they regard as positive the phasing out of support to coal overseas, they point out that nothing is said or done to stop or reduce the use of coal and fossil fuel at home! Indeed, this is already causing friction with G7 allies such as Australia and negative reaction from big economies catching up with the West such as China, Russia and India who see Western attempts as trying to stymie their own developments and maintain Western hegemony in the global economy.

The real challenge before environmentalists across the globe, North and South, lies in the very debilitating nature of development as propagated since the last eight decades and even earlier since colonial times. With neo-liberalism dominating Western policy space since the Washington Consensus post-Berlin Wall, narrow economic efficiency that has benefitted multinational corporations and oligarchs



controlling them is not going to help solve the climate crisis as long as real cost externalization to the environment and the global poor is going to be its bedrock. Criticizing China and other BRICS countries for their rapidly increasing CO₂ output will not cut much ice either as much of that is really due to Western over-consumption that has outsourced its basic “polluting” production to these countries.

The real environmental battle now has to be taken to new conceptual areas such as water and energy footprints of the goods we do consume. This essay is being written on Asar 15 (June 29 this year) which is the traditional “Rice Planting Day” in Nepal. Sadly, news has also just come in this morning that in the last eleven months, communist-ruled Nepal imported 48 billion rupees worth of rice, in addition to billions more of vegetables and fruits that could have easily been grown in Nepal. The sad truth is that with unbridled neo-liberal globalization, Nepal was pushed in the 1990s following the Washington Consensus into de-industrialization, export of labour and the concomitant decline in its hill agriculture, including abandonment of centuries of terraced farming. This is because, with the focus on “free trade”, potatoes and other vegetables grown in the hills of Nepal (often organic and tastier) cannot compete against subsidized imports guzzling fossil fuel in transport from India to Malaysia to even Latin America!

A system that accounted for the water and energy footprints of such products (and not just vegetables) and taxed them appropriately to promote local agriculture and industry is where the next major environmental battle will have to be fought. But those who pushed debilitating neo-liberal market policies in the name of development from the Industrialized North – and continue to do so making a wicked problem much more intractable – cannot lay claim to current or future climate leadership!

NC LEADER DEUBA

Do or Die

As the hearing in the apex court regarding the constitutionality of the dissolution of the House Of Representatives continues, the situation do or die for former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba

By A CORRESPONDENT

Leader of Nepali Congress and former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has expressed his confidence that the constitutional bench of Supreme Court will restore the House of Representatives and direct the president to appoint him, as prime minister.

ty president because I want to make our party no one as it was in the past,” said former Prime Minister Deuba.

Nepali Congress President Deuba has also expressed the confidence that the decision in the ongoing case on the dissolution of the House of Representatives would be one that

ing without and protection from the government, installing their own government is beneficial in many ways.

If Court accepts his plea and restores the HoR, Deuba will automatically reach the center of power. This will drastically change the internal equation in the party electing him as



Addressing a group of media, Deuba, who is leading now a communist-dominated front against communist Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, firmly said that restoration of dissolved house accepting his plea to form the government is a way out to bring the politics right on the track.

For Deuba, who is contesting the election for the party president for the next five years in the forthcoming convention, the revival of the HoR is crucial in his long political carrier. If the apex court rejects the dissolution and revives the house, naturally Deuba will be the prime minister till holding the elections next year.

“I am not going to take rest till the party back on the track. I have decided to contest the election for par-

would enhance the respect of the independent judiciary. He said the court should deliver its verdict without coming under the pressure and influence of any side.

Like three of his bedfellows Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, CPN-UML rebel Madhav Kumar Nepal and former Prime Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, removing Oli and capturing power is highly important for Deuba in the context of the forthcoming General Convention of Nepali Congress.

Thus, former Prime Minister Deuba is desperately pushing his own agenda to become prime minister again through the court's order.

For the majority of Nepali Congress workers, who have been liv-

a president.

Nepali Congress President Deuba said that the dissolution of the House of Representatives had put democracy at risk.

“The refusal to receive an application to claim the prime ministerial post signed by a majority 149 members of the lower house as per the president's call in this regard was an attack on democratic norms and values,” said Deuba.

“The formation of a united front of five main opposition parties means working for national welfare, to safeguard the constitution, democracy and save people from the pandemic of diseases and natural disasters,” said Deuba.

The former prime minister



accused the incumbent government of dissolving the HoR twice, exercising power through ordinance and interfering with the free judiciary and constitutional bodies and failing to effectively prepare to save the lives of people from natural disasters and provide the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

This is the reason. NC leader Deuba, who is regarded as soft towards India, has signed a statement blatantly blaming India for indulging in Nepali politics. Prepared by communist leaders, former Deuba has signed the statement without any hesitation.

Not only in a group, former Prime Minister Deuba is also criticizing India with his close coteries. In a recent meeting with his near and dear colleagues, Former Prime Minister Deuba accused India of encouraging his rivals to unseat him.

Deuba's reaction came after one of his trusted colleagues Bimlenendra Nidhi has defied his call to elect him for the party president. Instead,

Nidhi had announced his candidacy.

The announcement of candidacy by Nidhi gave a big jolt to Deuba. Following the rebellion in the camp, Nidhi also organized a meeting of three young siblings of NC leaders. He hosted a meeting with Dr. Shashanka Koirala, Prakash Man Singh and himself as a troika or son of BP Koirala, Ganesh Man Singh and Mahendra Narayan Nidhi.

Although Ram Chandra Poudel and Dr. Shekhar Koirala have also announced the candidate for party president, Deuba sees the recent process of making the troika alliance as a threat to him.

Deuba's anti-Indian battering in a private and indicative statement on foreign interference is his inner feeling about the new emerging powerful alliance. If three offsprings of three leaders decide to contest, it will create a ripple against incumbent president Deuba.

Known as a very clever politician, former Prime Minister Deuba

aims to neutralize India publicly criticizing its role in the party.

For Deuba revival of the HoR is crucial and key to control the party through convention and neutralizing India is his target.

Although communists have time and again betrayed him and his party including the last elections, former prime minister Deuba has no option now other than to lead the communist-dominated front.

Deuba knows that joining the communist-dominated front will erode his party's ideological stand. However, it is more beneficial for his individual political carrier.

Despite his so many personal differences with Nepali Congress leader late Girija Prasad Koirala, former Prime Minister Deuba blankly follows the power politics followed by him. For late Koirala, power is the first thing then come party, friendship and relations.

Late Koirala is against India whenever out of power and against the

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communist whenever in the center of the power. However, he embraced the communist to reach power.

As the last leg of his political carrier, former Prime Minister Deuba is following the path shown by the late Koirala. Although Koirala's policy has ideologically ruined Nepali Congress pushing it brink of collapse, he reaped all the benefits of the political power.

For former Prime Minister Deuba, a communist leader like Prachanda is the savor of democracy and national independence. Groomed in the liberal political orientation of BP Koirala and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, Deuba is now listening to the lecture on democracy by Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who groomed under the ideology of Mao, Stalin, Lenin and Marx.

"The current alliance's only aim was to defend democracy, constitution and national freedom. Protecting the constitution, constitutionalism, democratic norms and values and national independence is the need of the day, said CPN (Maoist Centre) Chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' in a public program attended by Deuba.

In the same program, another communist leader Madhav Kumar Nepal also delivered a long lecture on democracy and freedom.

"The agenda of the alliance is not personality-oriented but a fight to preserve democracy and constitution, and maintain rule of law and good governance in the country," said Nepal.

Janata Samajbadi party leader Ashok Kumar Rai said the alliance will continue to exist until the need for it is relevant while Rashtriya Janamorchha leader Durga Poudel said nobody could break the alliance that is united for the Constitution and democratic norms and values.

PM Oli: One Vs Rest

At a time when all four prime ministers including his own time colleague Madhav Kumar Nepal is ganging against him, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has asserted that the current political course is heading towards right path.



PM Oli, also Chairperson of the CPN (UML), hit out at the Nepali Congress (NC) leaders saying that it went to tie up with CPN (Maoist Centre) Chairperson Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to forge an opposition alliance against the incumbent government.

He also took a jibe at CPN (UML) expelled leader Madhav Kumar Nepal who seems to be "enjoying" to be a cadre of once-his-allay Prachanda.

Whoever comes to power, Nepal has a long tradition to isolate the person in power. Prime Minister Oli is not the single one.

Although the current politics is PM Oli Vs the rest of the political leaders, this not the first time that opposition join against the prime minister. Like all his predecessors, PM Oli is fighting against all rivals.

For former Prime Minister Deuba, who is facing the general convention and elections for the party president next month, any alliance which strengthened his position is justifiable. Revival of the dissolved House of Representatives and neutralizing India is a matter of political life and death for Deuba.

Second Wave Of Covid-19 In India: Deadly Blow To The Economy



BY: ABIJIT SHARMA

When the Covid-19 ravaged countries across the world last year, India was hailed for acting swiftly and preventing a major catastrophe. Modi even compared India's battle against the pandemic to the epic battle of Mahabharat and said that while the Mahabharat war was won in 18 days, India would get rid of the pandemic in 21 days. While the enormity of the challenge did not allow India to get rid of the virus in 21 days, it did fare much better than other European countries.

Come a year later, the situation is different. The second wave of the pandemic hit India so brutally that scenes of mass cremation, weeping relatives and overcrowded hospitals became a staple image. India had not expected such a severe impact and was hence caught completely off guard when the severity started to show. Until now, the country has seen a total of 389,000 deaths from the virus out of which more than half have come in the second wave.

Along with human casualty, the second wave also had a deadly impact on the country's economy. This was not so last year in the first wave. One of the reasons of this is the nature of the first and the second wave. A prolonged lockdown and relatively better control of the pandemic during the first wave meant that rural economy continued to function despite manufacturing and urban economy coming to a halt. Although other sectors such as manufacturing and service were hit, agriculture continue to grow. It further benefited from good monsoon and cheaper and higher availability of labor since many of the laborers working in the city went back to their homes. Reflecting on the GDP figures, the agricultural economy grew by 3.4% while the overall economy contracted with 7.7% in FY21.

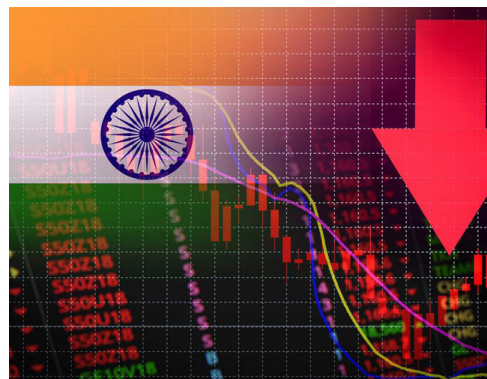
The first wave of the pandemic in India was primarily urban in its spread. But the second wave hit the rural areas quite badly. Rural areas in the state of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala were the worst impacted. The situation was further aggravated due to the inadequacy of medical infrastructure in the rural areas and the rush of patients from villages and smaller towns to urban centers. This then affected the agriculture sector severely. The surging cases resulted in stricter lockdowns even in rural areas. This thus resulted

in closures of Mandis, vegetable vendors and processing industries. The average wage growth for the agriculture sector for the period of November 2020 to March 2021 was thus reduced to 2.9 percent (2nd wave) from 8.5 percent in April to August 2020 (1st wave).

On the other hand, manufacturing saw a severe blow in both the phases. To control the coronavirus spread, most of the manufacturing sector had to work at a lesser capacity or shut down. The fear of prolonged lockdowns led to migration back to villages. In addition, the global and local supply chains had also not fully normalized after the first wave. With manufacturing industry hit severely in other parts of the world, many experts had hoped India would help drive global economy by boosting its manufacturing sector. But that was before the second wave hit. The manufacturing industry now stands in shambles. So does the service sector.

On May 31, the Indian government released the data for GDP that during the financial year 2020-21, GDP contracted by 7.3 percent. It is the most severe contraction from the time India got its independence. But what is more worrying is what lies ahead. For the current financial year, the Reserve Bank of India has anticipated growth of 10.5 percent. But experts say that is highly ambitious and many doubt that India will touch double digit growth this year.

India's plunging economy does not spell doom only for the country, it means that the global economy is going to be equally affected. India is itself the fifth largest economy in the world and contributes significantly to world economic growth. It is one of the largest trading partners to USA and China. With its economy seeing such a severe impact, the US and Chinese economy will inevitably see disruptions in their supply chains. Moreover, Emerging markets are slated to contribute 64 percent of global economic growth this year. India's 2020 GDP was just over \$2.7 trillion. If India were to grow at only 5 percent this year, instead of the 12.5 percent the IMF predicted, it would still cost the world over \$200 billion in potential growth.



MELAMCHI DRINKING WATER PROJECT

Miraculous Survival

Despite heavy floods of a century, Melamchi Drinking Water Project tunnel miraculously survive

By A CORRESPONDNET

“My opinion regarding the decision taken to dewatering the Melamchi Tunnel in the process of inspection just two days before the major flood in Melamchi river was the blessing of Lord Pashupatinath. Had the tunnel had not closed for dewatering, the flood would have created more complications to the project,” writes former Secretary of Ministry of Water Supply and now the member of Public Service Commission Madhav Belbase in his Facebook wall.

Belbase, who has played a major role to successfully bring the water from Melamchi and distribute in the valley, is a well-known engineer. Following the completion of the project paving the way for the inauguration, Belbase is also given the title of Bhagirath for his contribution to bringing the water to thirsty Kathmandu as what Bhagirath, a saint had done bringing Ganga from heaven to earth.

The flood triggered by heavy rainfall on June 16 damaged the road to the starting point of the project, dam of the project, audit tunnel, headwork, bridge and structures at the starting point.

Although temporary structures have been damaged, permanent structures of the project such as the main tunnel have not been affected by the flood, according to the project.

Melamchi Flood Washed Away Cofferd Dam Of The Melamchi

Drinking Water Project

Rajendra Panta, the spokesperson at the Melamchi Drinking Water Development Committee, said that the head work of the Melamchi project was found to be buried while the bridge over Ambathan has also been destructed.

Panta said that the Melamchi flood has also damaged other tempo-

Although the Melamchi flood has washed out the project offices, equipment, seven employees, temporary cofferdam, bridges road and equipment and construction materials, the tunnel remains safe and secure.

Took almost two decades, 27.5 kilometer tunnel is a major part of the project. Since the flood had not done any harm to the tunnel, it will



rary structures of the project. According to Panta, the flood had washed off the project's labor camp and had buried the headwork.

Given the level of water and destruction the muddy floodwater of Melamchi had done in the surrounding areas up to the Melamchi market, it has not done any harm to the tunnel due to the decision to close the tunnel to dewatering for inspection.

likely start the distribution of the water within three to four months.

Panta said that track opening work to the headwork area has been started in coordination with wards no 1 and 2 of Helambu Rural Municipality.

The Melamchi Water Supply Development Board has informed that the repair and reconstruction of the road to the project site from Melam-



chi bazaar, which is 18 km in distance, has started so as to reach the headwork area of the project.

The MWSDB spokesperson expressed optimism that water could be supplied to Kathmandu by October end once clear water starts flowing in the river as the floods have not damaged the permanent structures of the project site.

Inspection of the tunnel for any necessary improvement could be done by entering from its end point in Sundarijal, according to him.

As the temporary tunnel of 200 meters in length at Ambathan has been filled with sand carried by the flood, it needs to be cleaned. The tunnel could be filled with water again by October end by cleaning the tunnel, according to the project.

The technical team that was heading for the starting point of the project tunnel to assess the damage caused to the project structures could reach only near

the site, some 3 kilometers from Melamchi Bazaar.

The 7-member team comprised of technicians from the project, Construction Company and Consultant Company reached as far as Kyul of Sindhupalchok and returned as it could not move further as the road was damaged.

The team returned because it was deemed necessary to take tents and materials for living and food items there, said spokesperson Pant. The

team will visit the site within a few days.

He said that upon inspecting the flooded area via helicopter the team found that the flood had caused loss worth billions of Rupees to the project.

A total of six laborers, three Indian and Chinese nationals each, working at Melamchi Drinking Water Project have gone missing in the Melamchi River flood.

“The camp in Ambathan where the laborers were residing was swept away by the flood. Since then, they have gone missing,” said Panta.

Following the initial study by experts, it is reported that Melamchi floods may have been caused by Cloud Burst, Landslide Dam Outburst or Avalanche, or some other cause. This is also a major lesson for other hydropower and drinking water projects to prepare all necessary safety measures and risk assessment before taking the venture.

Although Nepal has seen several such cloud outburst including one in Kulekhani in 1993 which had made enormous damage to the road and the Kulekhani project, Nepal failed to learn the lessons.



KP Oli Government, Covid-19 And Vaccine Diplomacy



BY: NISHESH DHUNGANA

As Nepal struggles for COVID-19 vaccines amid the rising death numbers from Covid 19, China pledged to support on Vaccines and other necessary medical equipments.

Recently Nepal received 800,000 of one million vaccine doses after President Xi Jinping and President Bidhya Bhandari had a phone conversation.

Nepal passed through severe deficiency of essential lives saving medical supplies including oxygen and vaccines in recent period.

Nepal's vaccines scarcity raised after India was not able to provide 1 million doses of vaccines, known as Covishield, as cases in India was rising to peak and its Supreme Court ordered on prohibition of vaccine exports.

Due to these reasons millions of senior citizens, who received the first dose of Covidshield few months back are waiting for next dose to vaccinate.

While Nepal's two giant neighbors – India and China – have supplied the country with life-saving medical needs but vaccine diplomacy has also proved tough for Kathmandu. Nepal government was on difficult position from India's concern not to approach for support from China. China was eager to help Nepal with vaccines, but the government seemed hesitant to request its neighbor. The reason is that it didn't want to provoke India on this emergency health pandemic.

Beijing, meanwhile, will also benefit from its vaccine diplomacy as it competes for influence in South Asia, where India has traditionally been the dominant power in this region.

These measures of China will further effectively support developing countries in their fight against the pandemic and restoring economic development, and provide a powerful boost to the construction of a global community of health.

Aside from the deadly second waves of virus, Nepal's need for vaccines was also driven by the necessity to vaccinate its people after the PM KP Oli government declared mid-term elections in November.

Also Coronavirus variant that is being linked to Nepal has been found in many people in the UK and is a mutated version of the strain identified in India.

Experts have alerted ministers to the new virus which has apparently also spread to several European coun-

tries. The report in some international media regarding the detection of the Nepal variant of covid 19 virus are not true and authentic recently issued a notice by of the Ministry of Health and Population.

The ministry also urged all not to spread such disinformation without acquiring adequate information and verification from relevant agencies.

PM Oli and His Government

President Bhandari, who has a mostly ceremonial role has been highly criticized and opposed supporting PM KP Oli on his every motives and actions. Likewise PM Oli and President Bidhya Bhandari jointly are ignoring the values of Constitution in very undemocratic and unconstitutional intentions to remain in power of long period as dissolving the parliament two times in few months. Especially PM Oli is not following the norms of the Constitution and showing characters of an autocratic and dictator ruler, neglecting his opponents and breaching rules of law and citizens rights.

The government instead of focusing more on controlling spread of the virus and saving the lives of the people and managing the hospitals, oxygen, and vaccines, it has dissolved the parliament and announced for costly midterm polls. Thus only hope and trust remain present in Nepali people are now in Supreme Court, Chief Justice Cholendra S. Rana and Judges where hearings are happenings for fair judgment by restoring the House and paving way out for next new government and postponing election.

Further Oli government has not been able to provide economic relief packages for people who need the most like laborers and daily wage workers who are in massive economic hardships and other necessary supports for the safety and protection of frontline medical and security workers. The expenses of health and medical care in private hospitals are very expensive where people find very hard to afford their urgent treatments. As in this time of severe health and economic crisis and Nepali people are not prepared for expensive elections as they do want to vote these old generation of political leaders and aspire for new young leaders who are honest, visionary and trustworthy.

Writer Dhungana (MALLB) is Advocate/Lecturer of Law and Researcher in International Relations/ Diplomacy Email: nishesh.dhungana@gmail.com

MONSOON FLOOD Creating Havoc

As the monsoon floods are routine, rescue, relief and rehabilitation are the regular parts of the disaster and flood management in Nepal. With the shift of human settlement in the river banks and low land flood-prone areas and construction of roads and other development activities, the destruction of life and property has also intensified in those areas. Badly damaging two new settlements by Melamchi, Indrawati and Marsyangdi rivers have shown settlements and infrastructures developed along with riverside are under growing risk. As the temperature rises, there also increase the extreme weather resulting in the flash floods and GLOF

BY KESHAB POUDEL

Normally, the onset of the monsoon would be used to less devastative than the middle or end. However, the phenomenon has been changing. In the last few years, Nepal has started to see flood havoc all over the country. This year monsoon has brought the massive flood in Melamchi and Manag district killing doz-

ens of people and destroying property and infrastructures at a massive scale.

Five fatalities with a further 19 people reported missing and loss of infrastructures including roads, bridges after heavy monsoon rainfall in Nepal triggered floods and landslides in Manag and Melamchi of Sindhupalchok districts.

At least 16 people have died and 22 others are missing as flash floods wreaked havoc in Manang and Sindhupalchok. Heavy rains have battered the Himalayan region since Sunday, as Monsoon arrived in full fury.

A recently completed 27-kilometer long tunnel survived by chance. However, the flood of the



Melamchi river damaged headworks, washed-out roads, bridges and site offices and equipment.

“We are yet to receive a report about the damage to the structures and properties. The Government is now focusing on search, rescue, and providing relief materials to those affected. In the past one week, since June 19 we have recorded 21 fatalities, 22 reports of missing and 11 cases of injuries in landslide and flooding incidents across the country,” said Janakraj Dahal, Spokesperson at the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Till now Lamjung, Myagdi,

Mustang, Manang, Palpa, Kalikot, Jumla, Dailekh, Bajura and Bajhang along with Sindhupalchok districts were the worst-affected areas due to floods and landslide, the ministry stated.

Sindhupalchok and Manang Districts have recorded damage in terms of lives and structures. Another hilly district of Dolakha, 25, issued a release warning people living near the Tamakoshi River of a possible flash flood.

The District Administration Office (DAO) of Dolakha had said, “Landslide after a heavy rain at Ron-gxia city of Tingri Country in Ne-

pal-China border point has blocked the flow of the river and it is likely to witness a flash flood in Tamakoshi River at any time.”

The DAO has also urged people living along the Tamakoshi riverbank and Nepal-China border area to stay alert and move to higher ground.

Landslides and Floods

Landslides and floods kill hundreds in Nepal every year during the monsoon. Earlier, meteorologists of Nepal and other South Asian nations had predicted that the monsoon for the year 2021 will arrive earlier than last year and that

Nepal and some other Asian countries are expected to receive normal to above-normal rainfall.

As per Meteorological Forecasting Division, the monsoon has already hit Nepal from June 1 and it will continue for about three months.

As of early 29 June, 20 people have died, 25 were reported missing and 50 people were injured as a result of floods, landslides and heavy rainfall in Nepal. As many as 250 houses have been completely destroyed and dozens of others damaged.

The worst of the flooding struck in Helambu, Sindhupalchowk District, where 7 people have died, 6 injured and 15 reported as still missing. Flooding struck on 15 June 2021. Damage assessments are ongoing.

Other fatalities were reported in Ribdikot in Palpa District after a landslide on 15 June; in Machhapuchhre, Kaski District after flooding on the same day; and in Kisingh, Doti District after a landslide on 16 June.

People were reported missing in Chhatradev, Arghakhanchi

District; Aarughat, Gorkha District; Mallarani in Pyuthan District; and in Temal in Kavrepalanchowk District after floods early on 17 June.

Flooding and heavy rainfall destroyed houses in Galyang, Shyanja District (8 houses destroyed); Madi in Kaski District (13); and Mandavi in Pyuthan District (4).

Heavy rain is still falling heavily in some areas. Ambapur in Dang Deukhuri District recorded 106.6 mm of rain in 24 hours to 17 June 2021. Kanyam in Ilam District recorded 61.6 mm and Rikhu in Dolakha District recorded 61.4 mm during the same period.

River levels had jumped to above the danger mark in 2 locations on 15 June. Since then levels across the country appear to be falling. As of 17 June, the Raughat Khola river at Raughat in Myagdi district was above the warning (second highest) level.

According to Nepal Police spokesperson and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Basanta Bahadur Kunwar, a total of 102 people, including 94 from Sindhupalchowk

and eight from Salyan, have been rescued. They have been taken to various hospitals for treatment.

Roads in various places that got blocked due to landslides and floods have been reopened by the security bodies. Work is underway to remove landslides in Darchula, Humla, Surkhet, Kalikot, Salyan and Dailekh, according to the highway blockade information issued by National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Authority.

So far, a total of 199 houses have been inundated due to the floods. Similarly, a total of 138 houses, 11 cowsheds, 12 bridges, one school and seven government offices have been damaged. A total of 1,760 people from 528 households have been displaced and 516 livestock have died. Also, the area police office in Sindhupalchowk has been shifted to Helambu and police post to Talamarang due to floods and landslides.

Bedh Nidhi Khanal, the assistant spokesperson for NDRRMA, said that a joint squad of Nepal Police, Nepali Army and Armed Police





Force from the concerned police officers are actively involved in the rescue and mitigation of the damage in the affected areas.

In addition, the rescue team is working to relocate the families at risk of floods and landslides in safer places in coordination and support of various agencies and local representatives.

Relief and Rescue

As in all-natural disasters, Nepal Army is leading the mission of rescue and relief with the backing from Nepal Army, Armed Police and district administration. They also received the local population.

Like in all major disasters, Nepal Army rescued dozens of people in Sindhupalchok and Manang. Nepal Army deployed its helicopters to rescue people from flooded hous-

es.

Having a long experience of working in disaster management, Nepal Army remains a frontline force to launch the rescue and relief operation in the country.

NDRRMA Chief Executive Officer Anil Pokhrel said that the government has now focused on relief distribution and proper rehabilitation of those rendered homeless from the monsoon-induced disaster.

“The government (Ministry of Home Affairs) has directed to distribute relief to the flood and landslide victims and other affected families through the one-door system. The Ministry has given written and verbal instructions to the district administration offices to distribute relief materials only through the local level,” CEO Pokhrel said.

The Ministry has directed to immediately provide Rs. 15,000 for a family of up to five members and Rs. 20,000 for those having more than five members who have lost their homes and have displaced, he said.

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, Rs. 999.1 million is currently in the disaster management fund of all 77 districts for relief management. Similarly, the National Disaster Management Fund headed by the Home Minister has Rs. 1.30 billion. The Central Disaster Relief Fund, chaired by the Prime Minister, has Rs. 4.14 billion.

Health Risk

Health Experts have warned about the risk of multiple diseases along with COVID-19 vulnerability to calamities victims cit-

ing the surging incidents of flood and landslide in the country.

During the incidents of natural calamities, people lose their settlements, access to food, transportation and medical supplies.

Dr. Basudev Pandey, Former Director of the Epidemiology and Disease Control Division (EDCD) and also a virologist, said that in such a grim situation, people are compelled to live in a rescue shelter, which is confined and lacks basic amenities and health hygiene sanitation.

“This, in turn, makes people prone to the attack of many water-borne diseases. Apart from it, mental health issues are often witnessed in victims of natural calamities who lost their properties and loved ones,” said Dr. Pandey.

He said that the first four

weeks are a very crucial time for calamities victims following relief and rescue. In the first week symptoms like vomiting, nausea, diarrhea starts to appear in people living in a grimy hoarded shelter, eating stale food and unsafe water.

In the second week, Typhoid, Cholera, Dysentery is observed, and in the third week, a more deadly disease like Jaundice, Meningitis is witnessed, leading to more serious disease like Dengue in the fourth week.

“Therefore, the concern should be to protect the vulnerable from water and airborne diseases by facilitating with basic needs such as by cleaning the water source, providing mobile toilets and fresh food” added Dr Pandey.

He further pointed out the one-door policy needs to be adopted

in the rescue shelter to ensure that fresh food and water are provided and it also minimizes the risk of transmission of COVID-19 infection in the community.

Dr. Sagar Rajbhandari, Director at the Shukraraj Tropical and Infectious Disease Prevention hospital has also reinforced that in rescue centers there is a lack of basic health hygiene as the focus is poured on to rescue and relieve.

Dr. Rajbhandari, said, “In such cases, people make the best of what they have and are compelled to live off in stale food, unsafe water, and practice unsafe latrines.

Unsafe safe water invites water-borne diseases and flies from haphazard latrine transmit the disease to food and water. Unsafe washing facilities further impure water, this cycle continues grappling many





with a severe water-borne disease like Malaria, Jaundice, and Cholera.”

Dr Krishna Poudel, Director of the Division of Epidemiology and Disease Control, who is also the spokesperson of the Ministry of Health and Population, said that the Division of Epidemiology and Disease Control has formed Rapid Response Groups at all local levels and local health organizations and health workers are involved in it as the risk of health-related diseases and problems may increase after the floods and landslides.

50 People Are Missing In Landslides In Helambu

At least 50 fifty people are

missing in Helambu following a landslide triggered by heavy rainfall. According to a report in Deshsanchar, the landslide washed out seven houses of Timbu Bazar areas of ward 1 of Helambu Rural Municipality of Sindhupalchok district,

The landslide also washed out nine ponds build to grow rainbow trout. However, the people living in Timbu market are safe and secure, According to the online quoting ward chair of war no 2 Chhiring Gyalbu Lama, those includes 39 persons working in the Melamchi Project and 11 workers of the rainbow trout farm

The flood-affected ward 1, 2, 3,4,5,6 and 7 wards of the are-

as close to headwork of Melamchi Drinking Water Project,

Police and local people are launching the rescue work; however, it is badly disturbed due to the damage of roads linking to the landslide sites.

Floods in Manang have swept away a rural municipality building, police post, hotel buildings and buildings of Prabhu Bank and Prime Commercial Bank.

Bishnu Lamichhane, Chief District Officer of Manang, informed that the office building of Naso Rural Municipality was washed away as the flood entered the settlement with the Marsyangadi River swollen due to in-

cessant rains for the last three days.

The police post located in Dharapani of the same rural municipality was damaged by the floods.

CDO Lamichhane said Dharapani bazaar was at a huge risk as the Marsyangdi river was getting swollen with the rains.

The flood has washed away a belly bridge to Tachai and a suspension bridge in the Tilche area. Both of these areas lie at the lower region of Manang, a Himalayan district.

Flood has damaged the electric poles, drinking water pipes. As the poles have been pulled down, there is no electricity in the district headquarters and most people have got their mobile phones switched off. The health post located at Dharapani is at great risk, according to CDO Lamichhane.

Locals of Dharapani are taking shelter at a relatively safe village

Similarly, the identity of seven people who had gone out of contact from Helambu after the flood hit the area has been ascertained.

According to the Assistant Chief District Officer of the district, Madhav Bhandari, 31 and Ganesh Jyoti, 42, of Helambu-2, Tikamaya Khadka, 66, of Helambu-3, Gyanendra Kakshapati, 55, of Helambu-7, Chyangba Tamang, 50, and his wife from Helambu-6 and Surendra Nepal, 23, of Sangachowk Gadhi-6 have gone missing in the flood.

The flood on the Melamchi River from Tuesday night has caused a huge loss. "We have requested the locals to move to a safer place as soon as possible," said the Assistant Chief District Officer.

Sindhupalchowk district recorded a huge loss of lives and property due to landslides last year too. Tamang said that some people have

He shared that 26 people have been rescued from Nepal Army's chopper from the Melamchi area this morning and a truck of relief materials has been sent for the area from Kathmandu.

According to the Home Ministry, preparation has been made to send relief materials for Manang from a helicopter. Five hundred people have been evacuated and moved to safer places in Manang.

Looking at the damage seen in the initial information and news, it seems that there has been an unimaginable flood. Another serious issue is that there are thousands of markets and settlements in Nepal like Melamchi Bazaar, at the same risk!

Based on the floods in Achham and Baglung of the last year and Melamchi and many other incidents, the government has to take a decisive



of Odar Gaun. The police said settlement nearby rivers are at high risk.

Melamchi Loss

The incessant rainfall from the past few days had increased the water level in the Melamchi River, which has swept away many houses, police stations, project camps, and government buildings among others.

also gone missing in Salyan, Bajura, Gorkha and Jajarkot districts.

The task of collecting other details is underway, according to the Centre. Tamang added that arrangement is being made to rescue those trapped in flood and landslide, to distribute relief materials to victims and to shift them to safer places.

decision to minimize the loss of life and property by assessing the risk of cities, markets, and settlements along the river. The current early warning system and structural prevention measures do not seem to make much of a difference in emergencies and catastrophes of this nature.

Applications of Drones in DRR: Prospects and Challenges in Nepal

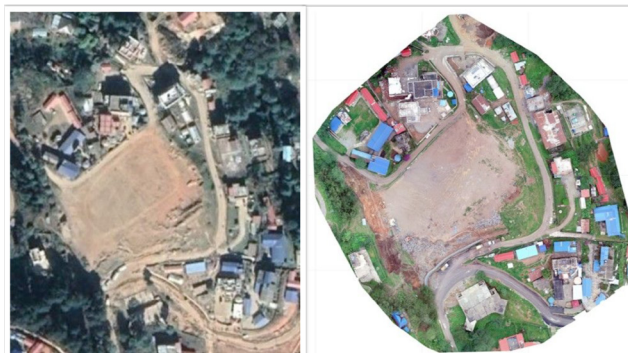
BY: UTTAM PUDASAINI, DR. SUMAN KUMAR KARNA, BIPLAV PAGANI AND SURAJ GAUTAM

Following the global trend and emerging practices, Nepal is making continuous progress in implementing cutting-edge technologies in Humanitarian response and Disaster Risk Reduction. The process is simultaneously supported and championed by the diverse range of partners and stakeholders involved in the development, sensitization and adoption of such technologies in the local context. One such popular and useful technology, which is slowly gaining momentum in its usage in Nepal is Drones, also known as Unmanned Aerial System (UAS).

UAS refers to a system including an uninhabited flying vehicle that is operated by the pilot based on the pre-entered program and/or on its own recognition of the surroundings. They can be remotely controlled, semi or fully autonomous, or a combination of any of the above modes of operations. The UAS is not just a tool for beautiful aerial photography but is a flying device with the capacity to carry-out different types of aerial missions and payloads capturing accurate and detailed high-resolution images and spatial data from the ground and with the ability to use it as a lightweight cargo. The major type of payload includes cameras, multispectral sensors, cargo boxes, etc. Due to their portability, agility, ever-advancing technology and ever-increasing accessibility, UASs are increasingly becoming popular and seeing widespread use by relevant professionals and practitioners every now and then.

Since the Gorkha earthquake 2015, the application of UAS in Nepal is gradually growing. The UAS is now frequently used by different sectors like; private, academic, tourism and entertainment industry for different purposes of their interest. More commonly, the UAS is used for activities like; aerial photography and videography, topographical surveying & mapping, glaciological research, surveillance and traffic monitoring, emergency preparedness and response and so on. The increase in the popularity of UAS among people and authorities, has led to better acceptance of drones, and their utility in different phases of disaster risk reduction and resilience building. With the release of more systematic UAS guidelines by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2019, the application of this technology is becoming more prevalent across several sectors particularly for following major reasons:

1. Whether optical images or multi-spectral, as the UAS flies close to the earth surface and hence they can **capture aerial images of high spatial resolution and quality**.



Left Google Earth Image ,Right Image UAS High Resolution

2. UAS are **quickly deployable and cost-effective** technology as it does not require any major logistical and technical setup unlike other options. Furthermore, they can be frequently flown, and offer higher temporal accuracy.
3. UAS can fly above risk areas with ease in disaster affected regions supporting better planning of humanitarian assistance by **mitigating the level of risks to emergency responders**.
4. UAS can fly below the clouds and its capacity is **unaffected by the cloud coverage**, which makes it more popular and effective.
5. **Unique viewing angle:** Drones can fly very close to the damaged structures. Some drones with exoskeleton hardware, they can even go inside a building and capture data. They can provide unique viewing angles that may not be possible from manned aircraft.



Figure 2: Left(Satellite Image-Cloud Cover), Right (High resolution Image by UAS on same day) - Tanzania Flood 2017,Image Source : Tanzania Flying Labs

POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS OF DRONES IN DRRM

Every year Nepal faces a number of disasters: floods, landslides, windstorm, fire, snowstorm, etc. These incidents result in the loss of hundreds of lives and billions of Nepalese rupees. Frequent disasters in difficult terrain makes disaster risk management a daunting task in Nepal. However, it is not only limited to the hazards; the increasing urbanization, haphazard growth, changes in the land use pattern and poor infrastructure planning have also resulted in the increase of vulnerability and exposure component; thereby imposing a serious disaster risk. These components have thus aggravated the challenges in disaster risk reduction and implementation of effective response strategies. In this regard, accurate and up-to-date geo-information is very critical and indispensable. Though there are some instances of technology adoption, the Rapid Response Teams of the Government of Nepal still rely on conventional ways of gathering necessary information in post-disaster response. In this context, UAS can enable highly portable and quick-to-deploy alternatives for situational awareness to aid with efficient disaster planning, response and management activities.



Disaster Simulation training on UAS Coordination in Humanitarian Action September 2019, 40+ government officials from different agencies participated in the five-days workshop

For any kind of hazards or disasters, UAS can be used in all phases of the disaster i.e. pre-disaster, during and post-disaster. Some of the priority usage of drones in all three phases are as follows:

PRE-DISASTER

- High resolution data and images captured from drones and outputs generated utilizing drone images such as Digital Elevation Model and Orthophoto maps, which are useful for a number of hazard mapping and modelling related activities. Eg: high resolution DEM from drones can be used in precise flood and landslide modelling works.
- Highly accurate maps from high resolution UAS images can be used to accurately map the utilities, road networks, and other geographic objects, so that authorities will have an accurate and updated baseline dataset of capacities for better emergency preparedness planning.
- High resolution images could be utilized to identify and map

safe and open spaces for humanitarian purposes particularly in dense urban areas.

- High resolution images from drones and outputs from them such as point clouds and DEM could be used in high accuracy risk modelling and risk profiling works.
- Point clouds datasets of any area and optical images produced by UAS can be used to prepare a geomorphological map which could be later used to extract morphological features.
- The ortho images and videos obtained from the drone can be subjected to the spatio-temporal analysis of the study area. This can contribute to the study on changes of Land Use Land Cover analysis, and so on.

DURING -DISASTER

- Drones can fly very close to the ground surface, thus it can be used for the **Surveillance** purposes. It will thus help the emergency responders with a clear situational awareness.

- In the areas with complex terrains, topographies, serpentine roads, and hard-to-reach areas, drones can be a suitable alternative to transport and supply small packages of relief items like medicine, test samples, and other essential goods.

- Deployment of Drones can also help in the real time assessment of the disaster scenario and can thus help the decision makers to plan for effective response.

- Both in disaster scenarios, or with more common search and rescue missions, it's important that missing persons are found as soon as possible to maximize their chance of survival. The drones cover multiple acres of land in a very quick time and therefore provide a full and detailed view of the terrain which helps to speed up the search and rescue mission.

- For journalists, drone images and videos are the best support for drafting a true and live story. They can show the extent of damage and seriousness of the situation through high resolution photos and videos.

POST DISASTER

- Drones can be deployed for the **Initial Rapid Assessments (IRA)** to quickly understand the ground scenario.
- Drones can also be deployed for various assessments like the assessment of the impacts of disaster, Damage and Loss Assessment (**DaLA**), Post Disaster Needs Assessment, and so on.
- Drone mapping not only creates an immediate record of damage after an emergency, but it also helps to conceptualize the damage in a more operational way during the recovery and reconstruction planning phase.

Recent Examples of Use of Drones in DRRM

Right after the Nepal Earthquake 2015, an unprece-

ARTICLE

dent number of small and lightweight UAS were flown by a vast range of journalists and humanitarian responders. Majority of the journalists flew drones to capture aerial contents for the media while several humanitarian responders used it for rapid damage assessment and tested its application to provide better information for reconstruction planning. Globally, drones have been used in a range of different emergency situations and humanitarian settings. The National Disaster Management authority in India has already carried out a scoping study on Role of UAVs in Disaster Management. Later in early 2021, the Indian authorities used drones and a range of several other technologies such as radars and remote cameras to assess the ground situation, plan rescue operations and look for missing people in a situation of heavy floods.

In 2017, UAV helped search and rescue crews to locate a group of five missing persons (snowboarders and skiers) at Ski resort in British Columbia. Likewise, the U.S. Fire Administration has been using drones to fight wildfires, as they can fly close to the ground in spite of low visibility, provide better situational awareness data, and also put the responders out of the risk. During the devastating hurricane season of 2017 in Miami and Houston in USA, drones were used to identify the location of hurricane survivors, those needed to be rescued and to evaluate routes towards saving those caught in floods.

Recently, Zipline, a California based world's leading on-demand delivery service company has delivered hundreds of thousands of live saving blood and medical supplies to hospitals and health centers in countries like, Rwanda and Ghana. They also recently signed a deal with Nigeria to begin the use of drones to deliver Covid-19 vaccine. Besides, Nepal Flying Labs with BNMT have been deploying cargo drones since 2019 to aid the diagnosis of Tuberculosis patients in Pyuthan for which the Labs has been internationally recognized with the AUVSI XCELLENCE Awards 2020 in Humanitarian category during the AUVSI XPONENTIAL 2020 and the International Air Cargo Association's Sustainability Awards in 2020.



Local Children Gather to see the Medical Cargo Drone used in DrOTS Project at Pyuthan



Inaugurating the DrOTS Project at Pyuthan 2019

Drones are also being used to identify and analyze the mitigation measures in case of any serious event happens in the future. UAVs were used by the emergency service providers to monitor the health of the Toddbrook Reservoir walls in Derbyshire, UK which later became unstable in 2019 and threatened to flood the nearby town. Since the detailed scanning was done earlier, the authorities were able to accurately identify and plan the appropriate mitigation measures in advance.

Likewise, authorities in different countries are also learning from each other's experience and best practices. In June 2020, The Governments of Kazakhstan and China attended a virtual session facilitated by UNICEF and shared best practices and exchanged experiences in emergency management and disaster risk reduction systems. China has been using the drones particularly focusing on pre-disaster prevention and integrated disaster mitigation efforts. Besides it is equally being used in post disaster damage assessment and communication during disasters.

CHALLENGES

In spite of some progress, the applications of UAS in Nepal is largely limited to commercial purposes, and therefore its significance and acceptance in the disaster risk management, is yet not been fully realized and championed. Various agencies and non-profit organizations have undertaken initiatives to make the use of UAS in humanitarian aid and disaster context, however, due to several systematic and technical reasons that the use of UAS technology is yet not institutionalized in the DRRM sector in the country. The challenges of UAS technology and its use in DRRM in Nepal can be further categorized as follows:

- **Lack of skilled manpower (data analysts, professional certified pilots):** Despite the vital role of UAS in disaster assessments and in overall DRRM context, it is yet to be properly explored, formalized and scaled-up for country-wide application. The emergency responders, DRR volunteers still largely use conventional tools and techniques for DRRM activities. We lack DRRM professionals

who are certified pilots and data analysts, and its absence hinders the robust and nationwide wholesome use of this technology.

- **Drones use in emergency -Absence of standardization:** Generic guidelines do exist, but we lack standard guidelines on the use of UAS during emergencies and standard operating procedures (SOPs) that would be very important for effective coordination among multiple responders and humanitarian agencies during a disaster situation.
- **Lack of centralized digital system for UAS:** While there have been few positive changes in the recent UAS directives, few crucial mechanisms are yet to be included like; the digital registration process, provision for monitoring and surveillance of UAS flights and approvals of UAS pilot institutions, registration of drones without purchase documents (those purchased way back, or the ones donated by foreign institutions/individuals).
- **Data privacy guidelines and concerns:** Using UAS nowadays is much easier, but it's unregulated use without considering the privacy of the people and other data privacy concerns could lead to new tensions and disputes in the middle of a crisis. We still lack a disciplined and regulated approach towards humanitarian responses using UAS. To overcome this problem, the relevant agencies should come up with a national UAS code of conduct that includes data capture, data protection, data sharing and community engagement guidelines.
- **Drone Pilot licensing policies and dedicated course:** There are no institutions providing UAS pilot certification in Nepal. Also, there is no clear policy and guidelines regarding the licensing. This has negatively impacted the market standard, in terms of quality of drone services. In addition, the situation is also making the process tedious for any professional to use UAS more frequently i.e., as and when required. This limitation can be managed by focusing on preparing proper guidelines around pilot licensing standards and a suited course.
- **UAV insurance:** When we talk about insuring a drone, only 3rd party insurance is available as it is extremely challenging and difficult to insure the whole UAS hardware. Particularly, due to the absence of insurance providers with proper UAS guidelines. Appropriate insurance policies adoption by the insurance companies is thus needed.
- **Hardware issues:** Most of the drones used in Nepal are imported. While only a few UAV repairing shops are available and that too are only capable of doing minor repairs and replacements. In this situation, it is very challenging and costly to get the UAS repaired in case of any serious damages.
- **High cost of sensors (to capture large and dense vegetation cover :)** Most common and affordable UAVs in the market rely on RGB cameras/sensors, while they are unable to provide quality data over the areas with dense vegetation cover. In Nepal, majority of areas are covered with vegetation, and the alternative lidar-based UAV technology to be used in such cases is highly expensive, hence making it non-economical in Nepalese market.

WAY FORWARD

- Nepal has significantly progressed and has figured out an increase in the applications of drones in multiple sectors. The number of drones registered in the country in the last decade has already surpasses the total number aircrafts registered in the country in the last 5 decades. Hence it is high time for drafting appropriate UAS regulations and policies and necessary capacity should be built on to meet the increasing demand and flow in the airspace.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs, the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal and the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology are the key agencies who review drone permission requests based on different types of UAS. Although a digital system exists for different purposes, a centralized system to facilitate the UAS registration process, UAS flight permissions and its monitoring of the flights is urgently required. Similarly, the centralized integrated system should keep in track the entire drone missions that are being carried out throughout the country alongside the inventory of the drones and drone pilots.
- UAS are very useful technology but at the same time very sensitive too. There has seen a significant increase in use of drones for photography purposes. The UAS being a cutting-edge tool for rapid deployment during disaster, authorities providing permissions need to develop an effective and smooth process for the UAS coordination during disaster emergencies. Besides, a few drone operations have been reported that have not been complying with the standard operating procedures. Such kinds of flights should be discouraged and taken into strict regulations.
- Nepal Flying Labs, the first ever flying lab co-created after the Gorkha earthquake 2015, has done several pilot humanitarian projects in the field of humanitarian action, medical health and DRRM coordination, for which they have been globally awarded several times. Likewise, amidst the Covid lockdown, the Robotics Association of Nepal prepared a national level UAS operators (pilots) database. Kathmandu University has been leading several UAS college projects and research works. Furthermore, ICIMOD has pioneered UAS for glaciological research. Similarly, several other private as well as non-government agencies have been using UAS and its products for accurate mapping disaster communications, and some risks, hazard modeling works. To benefit from this multiple users, the concerned government authorities need to organize a multistakeholder interaction and prepare a drone task force which could be mobilized all across the country during emergency situations and when needed.
- Nepal has a good potential to be a leading example regarding the use of UAS in DRRM as the country's topography is challenging with the multitude of disasters. Nepal is the country which released the UAS guideline very early in 2015 and over the time, it has been amended to ensure smooth, ethical and contemporary applications in Nepal. Likewise, the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal at the moment is working on new regulations as per the ICAO model regulations. Furthermore, they are developing a digital system to facilitate the UAS registration, hence the future for UAS in Nepal looks good and promising. Besides, a government led effective and coordinated approach recognizing and involving all key stakeholders for preparing necessary strategy, guidelines, manuals and SOPs could be a good move towards operationalizing the scientific use of UAS in Nepal.

DOCUMENT

NEPAL INDIA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

Open For Wildlife

Political demarcation divides Nepal and India, the geographically both the countries open for all human and wild animal activities

By A CORRESPONDENT

As it said, tens of thousands of people cross the Nepal India border every day, one of the largest open borders with free mobility of people from both sides. Similarly, thousands of wild animals like the Asiatic Elephant, Royal Bengal Tiger, one horn rhinos and other wild animals crossing the border every day.

However, only a few incidents of the crossing of small wild animals notice, and large numbers of others go unnoticed. With the human settlement increases in the Ganges plain, a large portion of wildlife habitat destroyed in Nepal and India. Most of the wildlife corridors that existed between the two countries vanished and there is cut off,

With the support from World Wildlife Fund, a project was implemented to encourage the transboundary movement of wildlife between Nepal and India. On June 10, a group of 40 to 45 elephants entered Bardiya district in Lumbini Province of western Nepal, coinciding with the news stories of a group of elephants in China embarking on their unknown journey.

The elephants, ranging from calves to adults, entered Shiva Community Forest in Bardiya through Khata Wildlife Corridor from Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in India on Thursday. The distance between Bardiya National Park and Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in India is only about 10 kilometers.

According to Dr. Rabin Kanderia, conservation officer at the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), Bardiya Conservation Programme, as the monsoon approaches, elephants in India usually migrate to Bardiya through Shiva Community Forest.

They stayed in the Forest for the first day of their migration on June 10. "The next day on June 11, they entered Bardiya National Park (BNP). They will stay here for one-and-a-half months and again return to Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in India's Uttar Pradesh state. A few of them may remain here," Dr. Kanderia informed.

"The seasonal migration of elephants is not new as a group of 10 to 15 elephants migrate every year from India to Nepal and this is the second time within two months the elephants entered Bardiya from India," he said. A group of elephants was also seen in the area on May 19.

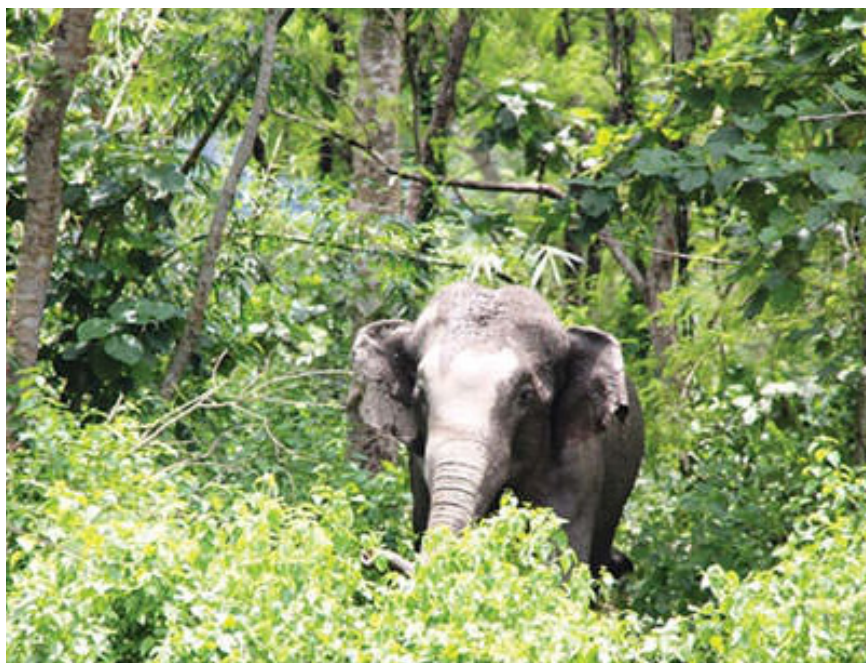
Bishnu Prasad Shrestha, chief conservation officer of BNP, said that adding the group that entered the park, the number of wild elephants in Bardiya has reached 100 to 120. "When the elephants come and stay in Nepal, they will be counted as ours and when

they enter India, they will be counted as theirs," Shrestha said.

According to him, the number of elephants included in the census is also from both countries. The corridor is their traditional route. They walk the same path. They do not enter human settlements and do not harm anyone, Shrestha said. "They might be annoyed and harm people if they are disturbed or find any obstruction on their route," he said.

"Migration of such a large number at a single time might be the reason for good grassland management. We have maintained good habitat and grassland in and around the National Park," Shrestha said.

Dr. Dinesh Neupane, wildlife expert and executive director of Resources Himalayan Foundation, said that it was extremely rare to see such a large herd of elephants entering Nepal at once.





“It is quite common to see smaller herds of elephants within the area but a large group of elephants is seen for the first time after 1994 possibly because of the lack of human movement due to COVID-19 restrictions. Dr. Neupane, a Ph.D. in elephants, said the group does not

cause any destruction in the human settlements and stay within their annual migration areas but march throughout the villages.

Land cover in Bardiya district is predominantly forested, followed by agricultural lands. BNP is the largest protected area in southern Nepal, and home to diverse wildlife, including the Asian elephant, one-horned rhinoceros, and the Bengal tiger.

According to Dr. Neupane, residential elephants are limited to BNP due to the establishment of human settlements in and around BNP. Northward movements of elephants within BNP are prevented by steep terrain, according to a research article titled “Changes in habitat suitability over a two-decade period before and after Asian elephant recolonization” by Dr. Neupane and his team.

Bengal tigers and Asian ele-

phants are both listed as Endangered. There are just 2 500 wild Bengal tigers left globally; most in India, and around 235 in Nepal, including some that roam between the two countries.

The number of Asian elephants is uncertain but will have declined since the most recent estimate of 40 000-50 000 in 2003. Around 150 elephants live in Nepal and the border area with India.

Why are Bengal tigers and Asian elephants threatened?

Both species need to roam across large expanses of forest and grassland, which is being rapidly lost to agricultural expansion, and divided by roads and infrastructure. Swathes of potential habitat can no longer support tigers, as over-hunting of deer and boar has left insufficient prey. Small populations in fragmented patches of habitat become less and less viable, as genetic diversity can no longer be maintained.

Tigers and elephants prefer to avoid contact with humans, but as they are squeezed into smaller areas, there is a greater likelihood of ‘human-wildlife conflict’: competition between people and wildlife for resources. Across our target landscape, much of the rapidly

growing human population live well below the poverty line, dependent on forests for fuel, fodder, timber and grazing land. Human-wildlife conflict can lead to predation of livestock, damage to crops and buildings by elephants, and deaths and injury for humans and animals alike.

Elephants and tigers are also deliberately poached for the illegal wildlife trade: tigers for their skins and for body parts for bogus medicines, and Asian elephants for ivory and – a newly emerging threat – their skins.

What is ZSL doing to help?

Protecting Asian elephants and Bengal tigers is a major challenge. ZSL focuses on the Terai Arc Landscape: a narrow strip of plains, forest and lowland hills, running for 700km below the Himalaya, linking Nepal and northern India. Despite a high density of human habitation and significant wildlife trafficking routes, this landscape is home to exceptional biodiversity and provides the last great highway for wildlife in this region.

Protecting and connecting core habitats

Effective conservation means protecting core breeding areas, while



also working collaboratively for ‘connectivity conservation’ to enable tigers and elephants to disperse.

ZSL is working with national governments in five protected areas across Nepal and India: the 2 000 km² Chitwan-Parsa complex (made up of Chitwan National Park and Parsa National Park, home to around 135 breeding tigers), Suklaphanta National Park, Bardia National Park, Banke National Park and Nandhaur Wildlife Sanctuary.

TTC Project Map

To tackle poaching, we have built four guard posts and three watchtowers provided solar power to 63 guard posts and set up Rapid Response Networks (surveillance cameras in the forest automatically send images to command centers, which assess these and can send out a rapid response team to protect wildlife and arrest poachers). Camera traps monitor tigers and their prey across 2 451 km².

ZSL engages communities in combatting wildlife crime, including establishing 35 Community-Based Anti-Poaching Units. We have also trained 400 rangers in SMART patrolling,

helping them log data on wildlife and threats, analyze this, and use it to inform conservation decisions.

As a result of these collaborative efforts by ZSL and our partners, tiger numbers in Nepal are now stable or growing in five core protected areas, and Nepal is on track to achieve its goal of doubling its tiger numbers by 2022.

From human-wildlife conflict to coexistence

For elephants and tigers to thrive and disperse safely between core areas, people that live in these forest corridors must be supportive of conservation and see benefits from coexistence with wildlife. Terai Arc communities have a long history of living in harmony with their wildlife, and across Nepal, many rural communities have robust rights to manage local forests, through Community Forestry. With our partners, ZSL is reconnecting habitats through a matrix of community-managed corridors. This combines support to sustainable local livelihoods, with involving communities in conservation and reducing the risks of living alongside wildlife. We have helped commu-

nities build hundreds of predator-proof corrals for goats and cattle, and set up early warning systems to protect livestock and crops. Sustainable, equitable use of grasslands benefits many species.

Alongside this, almost 3 000 local people have benefitted from livelihood interventions such as micro-loans schemes and cooperatives that enable women to save, to invest in increasing the productivity of livestock, and to market dairy products. We have helped create almost 100 additional jobs in ecotourism.

The Nepal and Indian Governments have made international commitments to double their tiger populations, and are deeply committed to the recovery of this iconic species. To support this, we bring stakeholders together; push for infrastructure decisions that protect biodiversity and support community-managed forest corridors; provide new technologies (such as a secure database for all intelligence collected on poaching in Nepal); and raise awareness on tiger conservation, reaching over 3.5 million people

Successful Testing

After successfully testing and commissioning of tunnel, it is matter of time for Upper Tamakoshi to commence power generation

By A CORRESPONDENT

Long waiting for the upper Tamakoshi project to come to an end. Finally, 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi project, Nepal's national priority project, has successfully completed tunnel water filling last night.

"Pleased to inform that the tunnel water filling of Upper Tamakoshi Hydroelectric Project has been completed successfully last night after observation for 48 hours at its final level (i.e. 1987 masl)," writes Bigyan Shrestha, Chief Executive Officer of Upper Tamakoshi Hydro Power Ltd in his Facebook wall.

"This is indeed a BIG MILESTONE for the entire project. Today, we are conducting an electrical SOAK test for the first unit and wait for 24 hours of observation prior to synchronization. Similarly, 220 kV transmission line is ready up to Dhalkebar Substation and final 220 kV line-in line-out arrangements at New Khimti Substation are likely to be completed within this week. This will pave the way for synchronization of the first unit (76 MW) to the integrated national power system (INPS) and will follow by further load tests."

"We are thankful to the Contractors Sino Hydro, Andritz Hy-

dro, KEC International and Consultant JV Norconsult-Lahmeyer for this achievement. We are also thankful to all board members (present and past), financiers, all concerned government officials and all concerned stakeholders for supporting us to accomplish this national pride project," writes CEO Shrestha.

Testing of the tunnel of the Upper Tamakoshi Hydroelectricity Project successfully completed on Sunday. The project had started to fill the tunnel on April 29.

The 456 Megawatt national pride project was under construction for the last decade at Lamabagar of Bigu Rural Municipality of Dolakha district. It is the largest hydroelectricity project developed with domestic investment.

Initially, water was filled in the intake culvert and sedimentation pond and sent to the 8.4-kilometer long main tunnel and 1,165-meter penstock pipe.

Spokesperson of the project Dr. Ganesh Neupane said that the water was sent to the tunnel and pipe in nine steps. "A small amount of water was sent to the tunnel then stopped for 12 to 48 hours for the monitoring. All the structures and equipment are inspected minutely and



thoroughly," he said.

In the final stage, the tunnel was filled for 48 hours and there was no leakage. After that, the first unit is undergoing the shock test for 24 hours and a team of engineers is inspecting it.

The Nepal Electricity Authority is connecting the electricity generated by the Upper Tamakoshi Project to the national transmission line through a 220/132 kV substation at Phulasi of Ramechhap district. Currently, wire is being installed in four multi-circuit towers to take the energy to the substation.

The NEA has shut down the Khimti-Lamo Sanghu transmission line from Sunday morning to install the wires. The installation of wires will be completed in three days and after conducting other necessary tests, 76 MW electricity generated by the project would be distributed through the national transmission lines.

The project has six turbine units with a capacity of 76 MW each. The second unit will come into operation after a week of the commencement of the first unit. All units will start electricity generation by mid-November this year, said Dr. Neupane.



FAT TO FIT



BY: DEEPAK RAJ JOSHI

Beauty is defined as the quality of things or people that generate visual pleasure, delight, or admiration but today our society and the mass media, who have been given the role of transmitters of values and models of behavior, have been charged with giving a vain and exaggerated sense of physical beauty and The body forms, and have generated that this is an added social value, leaving aside the characteristics inherent to the personality.

They have made men and women an object of commercial advantage and practitioners of cultural consumption, which has led them to adopt behavior in which there is an exacerbated concern to care for, nourish and maintain the physical form of their bodies what is known as “Body worship”

Women are the most affected because they are the most bombarded by advertising to be super thin, with a perfect face and an eternal youth. Anorexia and bulimia are the most known disorders and are characterized by a fear of being fat.

With the rise of mass media, the popular image of women, in general, has undergone a substantial change throughout the twentieth century. The body shapes of the most admired and beloved models have remained consistently thinner, representing an almost impossible ideal for ordinary women.

The journey of fat begins in the mouth, moves to the stomach, and then flows into the small intestine, where it is ultimately absorbed. The inner linings of these digestive organs secrete enzymes, which are proteins that perform biochemical functions such as shredding molecules into smaller pieces. Once fat enters the stomach, the enzymes in the digestive tract called lipases begin their hard work.

Do not look at the scale, look in the mirror. Although for years we have lived under the tyranny of numbers that measure our efforts in kilograms (as if instead of people we were fruits of a supermarket), the truth is that to check whether or not you are thinner you need to know if what you have lost is weight or fat. How? Observing the changes or contrasting the measurements each month. diets too restrictive may make you lose weight, but not fat. That is, it will be water, glycogen and in the worst cases even lost muscle mass in the process, without which it will be much easier to recover everything lost as it is responsible for burning the calories we consume.

Weight is a tricky subject and we all know that it is not always the best indicator of one's health or size, and any size and shape of the body is a very personal issue. Being

overweight can be embarrassing and it knocks your confidence, so it's only natural that you do not want to highlight this between friends and even with the couple, but it's worrying that so many women are beginning to believe their own lies.

Educators should be aware that stereotypes about weight are strong especially in the female gender, leading to unhappiness with the body that is developing through a natural process. School health promotion programs in schools can guide students to understand and accept differences in their own bodies.

We need to emphasize other characteristics (wit, integrity, talent, intelligence, sense of humor ...) when assessing the “value” of people and especially women. it will be difficult for individuals to have a healthy attitude towards their own body.

Physical beauty is always associated with happiness, social and professional success. Your happiness does depend on weight. Certainly, Beauty is not happiness Praise people for reasons other than physical appearance. Be active. Exercise at least 60 minutes almost every day of the week.

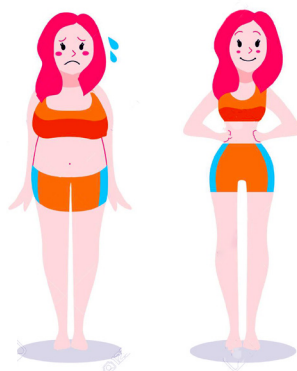
Eat well. Eat smaller portions, consume foods with less fat, sugar, salt, and calories, eat lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Try to eat five servings of healthy food every day. When you look in the mirror, make sure you perceive what you like about your appearance and remember it.

People who are overweight or obese enjoy no more than thin people, rather suffer more from cardiovascular and degenerative diseases, sleep worse, their sexual relations are not satisfactory and they become depressed more.

It is shown that when the scale raises proportionally low the quality of life of the person.

An obsession to lose weight leads to continuous discomfort with ourselves. They realize that the real problem is usually in the head and not on the scale. It is important to stop transmitting to society, and especially to young people, that happiness will be brought by physical and superficial things as a certain weight.

Beauty is in the mind, in the spirit, and in love, but please do not confuse yourself, love yourself is also to love life, and with those extra kilos, only the same life that you say so much to love. It's not the height, the weight, the muscles, it's the inner beauty, heart, and humility that makes you a great person.



Why It's In India's Interest To Quell The Political Crisis In Nepal



BY: RANJIT RAE

Even as the Covid 19 pandemic rages and Nepal has appealed for international assistance, a bizarre political scenario is unfolding in the country.

The Health Minister has been replaced. A Government that has announced General Elections in November this year and one that has not secured a vote of confidence of the Lower House of Parliament has now been expanded to include three Deputy Prime Ministers. In all ten Madhesi leaders from a faction of the Janata Samajwadi Party (JSP) have been sworn in. A further expansion is awaited as key portfolios such as Home and Defence remain unfilled. Erstwhile foes have become uneasy bedfellows. There is a compromise of values and principles on all sides in the quest for cold power.

Norms of constitutional propriety and principles of democratic governance are being consigned to the dustbin. Facts speak for themselves. Within a period of six months the lower house of Parliament has been dissolved twice. After the first dissolution was ruled unconstitutional, a series of questionable steps were taken that ensured continuation of the current Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli.

Even as Oli lost support of the reinstated House, he was reappointed Prime Minister as leader of the single largest party and given thirty days to seek a vote of confidence. Neither did Oli seek the vote, nor did he resign. Sanguine in the belief that an alternative government is not possible given the deep fragmentation witnessed in several political parties, he recommended that a clause relating to the appointment of an individual Member of Parliament who has the backing of the majority, be invoked. Despite having publicly acknowledged that he did not have majority support – within his own party, the Communist Party of Nepal (UML) or UML, the group led by former Prime Ministers Madhav Kumar Nepal and Jhalanath Khanal had parted ways with Oli and the JSP was split down the middle with a faction loyal to Madhesi leaders Mahant Thakur and Rajendra Mahato supporting Oli and another loyal to Upendra Yadav and former PM Baburam Bhattarai opposed- Oli rushed to the President claiming support of 153 MPs including those belonging to the Madhav Nepal and Upendra Yadav groups. Rival Sher Bahadur Deuba of the Nepali Congress accompanied by a large number of MPs including former PM Madhav Kumar Nepal as well as Upendra Yadav personally submitted a list of 149 signatures to the President and staked claim to Prime Ministership. The list comprised MPs from the NC, NCP (Maoist Centre) led by Prachanda, and the Madhav Nepal and Upendra Yadav factions of the UML and JSP respectively. Instead of inviting Deuba to form a new Government, the President rejected both claims on the ground of overlapping names, thereby allowing Oli to continue as PM;

thereafter, on the recommendation of the Cabinet she promptly dissolved the House in a late night Presidential declaration plunging the country into yet another political crisis. The matter is now being heard by a Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court.

A widespread perception prevalent in Nepal is that PM Oli has India's backing; participation of the Mahant Thakur faction of the JSP that has traditionally been close to India in the Oli Government (Oli has however, brought an ordinance on citizenship that meets some concerns of the Madhesi leadership) as well as a series of high level visits starting with Secretary (R), Army Chief, Foreign Secretary and the Head of the Foreign Affairs Cell of the BJP to Nepal and the visit of the Nepalese Foreign Minister to India in quick succession are cited in support of this view. Statements referring to ongoing political developments as "internal matters of Nepal" have further strengthened this perception.

While it is necessary for India to work with whichever Government is in power, India cannot ignore the long term damage by Oli led governments to bilateral relations, particularly with respect to the boundary. The Oli regime is also responsible for the significant expansion of Chinese presence and influence in Nepal, including in domestic political matters and for unleashing anti-India nationalist rhetoric since 2015. Nor should India ignore the other political actors, in particular democratic forces such as the Nepalese Congress with whom India shares a friendly relationship over several decades. Oli's attempts to undermine the structure of constitutional governance and his autocratic behaviour have also not added to his domestic popularity.

Furthermore, even though the dominant Communist alliance may have splintered in Nepal with China suffering a temporary setback, there is no guarantee that the situation will not be reversed given that China is a long term player. During the pandemic, even as India grapples with its own shortages, China's role has increased with supply of vaccines. China has held four meetings of a sub-group of SAARC countries that are all participants in the Belt and Road Initiative to discuss the Covid crisis but also to explore synergies and best practices emanating from the implementation of BRI projects. Nepal, under Oli is a key partner in this exercise.

India must reach out to all political forces in Nepal and dispel the widespread public perception that it is taking sides and backing an autocratic and increasingly unpopular regime. Our long term strategic interests lie in a peaceful, stable, prosperous and democratic Nepal and India must continue to support all efforts towards this end.

*Ray is the former Indian Ambassador to Nepal
Source: The Times of India*

Epochs Of History



BY: HEMANG DIXIT

Any enthusiast of important timelines in Nepal's past can do so by accessing 'historylessonsnepal.blogspot.com' online. Unification of the country, Asal Hindustan as termed by Prithivi Narayan Shah (1723-1775), started around the same time that thirteen British colonies in North America achieved independence. With such a similar time frame one wonders at the present standing of USA and Nepal in the present day world? Was Nepal's isolation during the Shah / Rana years the reason? Was it the quests for invasion and power of the foreigners vis-a-vis our struggle for survival, the cause? Was the subjugation of many parts of the world by European invaders and its results the cause of our present plight? Whilst such subjugation and cruelty to humans elsewhere was responsible for the invader's successes, the prevailing state in their own lands was however far from ideal.

The existing United Kingdom came into being after various conquests by Romans, Danes, Vikings, Angles and what not. Queen Elizabeth I's demise resulted in a union of two countries with a shared monarch, King James I of England and VI of Scotland. The subsequent Second England Civil War led to England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland becoming a Republic under Oliver Cromwell that lasted for twelve years till 1680 when the monarchy was restored. The present monarch Queen Elizabeth II has been on the throne since 6th February 1952. Though a long established monarchy, the United Kingdom with very close links with us Nepal since the Treaty of Sugauli of 1816, has no written constitution.

Portugal was an independent state from the 12th Century. It had its kings and queens under whose patronage ships were sent out around the world. Not only trade in materials but also humans became 'commodities' for the Portuguese and their neighbours, the Spaniards. This trade transported many Africans to far off lands in the Caribbean and the Americas to work as slaves. The Belgians, Dutch and the English also took to this inhuman activity to ensure labour for the cultivation of sugar and tobacco. Thankfully in this 21st Century both these items are branded as hazards to health.

Monarchy in France was overthrown by the French Revolution of 1789-93 and the First Republic established. The driving force may be said to be, 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity'. Then followed the Empire of Napoleon that lasted eleven years and was succeeded by a monarchy which held sway for thirty-four years. Then was established a Second Republic of 4 years, followed by a Second Empire of 18 years. After this, the Third Republic lasted 75 years to be followed by the Fourth Republic which lasted barely 12. The present Fifth Republic has been in existence since 1958. However politics in France has always been rather spontaneous and elastic if one recalls that it was from Paris that the 1968 student unrest started and triggered subsequent movements all over the world.

The British Colonies of North America became an independent democracy in 1776. France, perhaps because of its sat-

isfaction that the British had been displaced in America presented the statue of Liberty, in a piecemeal or part by part fashion to the US. This symbol of friendship between the French and American peoples now stands as permanent landmark on Liberty Island, New York. The new US, as it grew from the original 13 colonies, signified by the horizontal red and white lines of the American flag has now fifty stars on its top left hand corner to reflect its present status. The colour problem, originating from the exploitation of the slaves in the southern states, in spite of the Civil War during Abraham Lincoln's presidency, exists to this day. Stories of subjugation of the coloured population down South, the story of Ku Klux Klan and Jim Crow are indelible stains of the past. The actions of Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., John Lewis plus countless others are a living testimony that much difference in thinking still persists.

Ayn Rand, a Russian émigré to the USA, in her book 'We the Living' writes about the displacing of the Romanovs as rulers of Russia by Lenin, Stalin and others after 1918. She writes about the ups and downs that the country underwent. This vast country which had withstood the onslaught of Napoleon was reduced in stature following the glasnost and perestroika during Gorbachev's time. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the breakup of the USSR then occurred. The world changed too for the Big Four powers which during World War II had brought Germany to its knees had by the end of the 20th Century was reduced to just Two i.e. Russia & US.

The age of Trump (2016-2020), announced a policy of 'America First' with the prospect of US isolating itself. This being so, the question that arises to which is the superpower which is going to call the tune for the rest of the world to mark time to? As the saying goes it is 'The fiddler who calls the tune'. Is this still valid for the US? The treatment of the Negros, now Blacks over the centuries and the existing ill feeling towards Blacks, Asians and even Latinos is something that is not compatible for a country which claims to be a beacon of democracy. Surprisingly many citizens are gullible as per recent polls that show that one-third of the population still believe that Joe Biden won the Presidency by fraud! The recent official order of making 19th June as Juneteenth, a Federal holiday is an attempt to improve national relationships. Though the current President of the US has been trying to mend his fences worldwide, one is not sure at this stage as to what the future holds. Isn't it an appropriate time to rise and make amends?

Coming back to home ground one is certainly disheartened by the present political landscape and the shenanigans that have plagued this country for almost three hundred years. Recent trends have been musical chairs of a certain coterie and their cham-chas, dancing to various distant tunes whilst we ordinary Nepalis look on as spineless and sightless earthworms! It is about time that we started afresh.

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

TANAHU HYDROPOWER Project

Tractebel Engie GmbH, Germany in association with Manitoba Hydro International, Canada has been engaged as the Project Supervision Consultant of 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 was again issued 28 February, 2020. After evaluation of technical bids, the price bids of the bidders, whose technical bids had been determined to be substantially responsive, have been opened.



The main features of the Project are as follows :

Installed Capacity : 140 MW

Annual Energy : 585.7 GWh

Design Flow : 131.2 m³/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).

The project is being funded by the Asian Development Bank, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the European Investment Bank (EIB),



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