



OPINION
Dipak Gyawali



ARTICLE
Hemang Dixit



GLOBAL VIEW
Abijit Sharma

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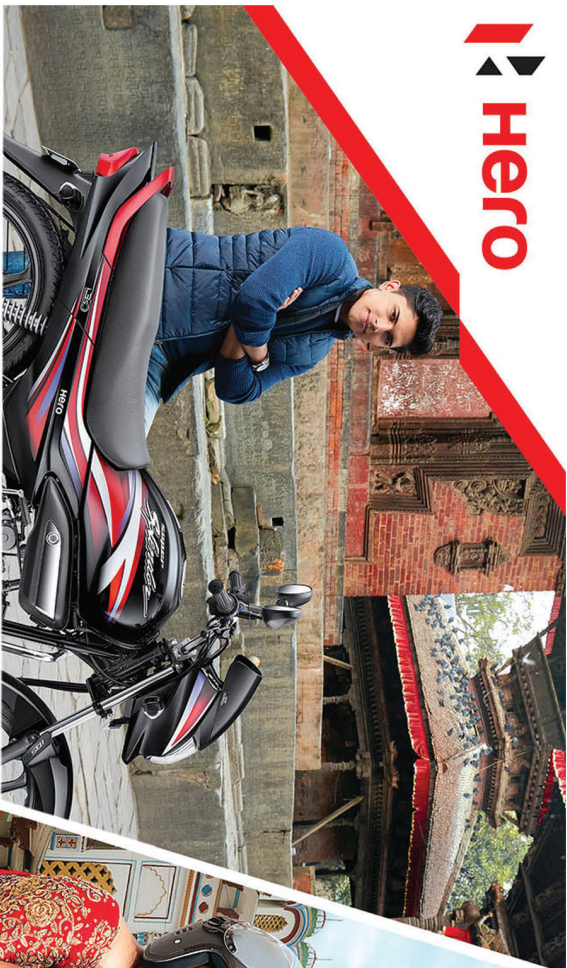
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Prolonged political instability and turmoil have been a permanent phenomenon for Nepal's seven decades of modern political history. Whether the governments had enjoyed a two thirds majority or a thumping majority, they have rarely survived over their full tenure. Following the fall of the government led by CPN-UML, which had nearly two thirds majority, a coalition government has been formed. However, the newly constituted coalition government led by prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, which has already secured majority in the revived House of Representative, is yet to sail smoothly across the political waves. It took almost a month for it to expand the cabinet. The delay in expansion of the cabinet indicates that there seem to be some unease among the key stakeholders of the government. Despite securing a two thirds' endorsement in the House of Representatives, the government's inability to expand the cabinet in time has already hinted at a coming political trouble. As per Nepal's own peculiar political character, such as unstable governments and frequent changes in the constitution, there is no sign of this chain breaking any time soon. The split of Janta Samajbadi Party and crisis in CPN-UML show that Nepal's political course is not going easy. We have decided to look at the coming political crisis as our cover story for this week.

Keshab Poudel
Editor

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President Appoints Lt General Sharma As Acting CoAS



President Bidya Devi Bhandari has approved the government's recommendation to appoint Lt Gen Prabhu Ram Sharma as acting Chief of Nepali Army.

With this decision, Sharma's appointment as the next chief of the army has been officially sealed.

General Sharma will assume office as the acting Chief from August 9 as outgoing Chief of Army Staff General Purna Chandra Thapa will stay on leave before retirement on August 8.

Thapa will retire on September 8 following which Sharma will be promoted to the post and overtake responsibilities officially.

Earlier, a cabinet meeting held on July 27 had made the decision to recommend Sharma's name as Acting Chief of the national army as the incumbent army chief to the office of the president.

Chinese Premier Li Congratulates Prime Minister Deuba



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang has extended a congratulatory message to Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba upon his election to Prime Minister.

In the message, the Chinese premier expressed his willingness to work together with Prime Minister Deuba and take the strategic partnership between the two countries to a new height, according to Hou Yanqi, ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Nepal.

Indian PM Modi Congratulates Nepal's Newly-Appointed PM Deuba

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has extended congratulations and best wishes to Sher Bahadur Deuba on being appointed the Prime Minister of Nepal.

The Indian PM took to the social media to extend best wishes to his Nepali counterpart for successful tenure immediately after PM Deuba gained vote of confidence in the reinstated House of Representatives.



Modi in his congratulatory message stated that he was looking forward to collaborating with Prime Minister Deuba to further consolidate

the unique partnerships of Nepal and India in all sectors and strengthen the deep-rooted people-to-people ties

Meanwhile, PM Deuba in a tweet extended his thanks to his Indian counterpart for the congratulations and best wishes. Deuba also expressed willingness to work in close relations with his Indian counterpart to strengthen the bilateral relations between Nepal and India.

Nepali Congress President Deuba received the vote of trust in the lower House on Sunday evening.

Ambassador Kikuta Shares Views With Prime Minister Deuba

Ambassador of Japan to Nepal KIKUTA Yutaka has paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba at the Official Residence of Prime Minister in Baluwatar.

Ambassador Kikuta congratulated Prime Minister Deuba in person for his appointment and the successful vote of confidence at the Parliament. Ambassador handed the congratulatory letter from SUGA Yoshihide, Prime Minister of Japan, to Prime Minister Deuba on this occasion.

Prime Minister Deuba expressed the gratitude to Prime Minister Suga for his congratulations. Ambassador Kikuta and Prime Minister Deuba shared the views on bilateral relations between the two countries, as the year 2022 commemorates the 120th anniversary of student-exchanges, moreover, the post-COVID social and economic development of Nepal.

Ambassador Kikuta mentioned that Japan has been working with Nepal as a friendly development partner to improve the daily lives of Nepali people, which will be also beneficial for the public health of the country in this COVID-19 situation. The recent donation of about 1.6 million AstraZeneca vaccines for Nepal by the COVAX facility is a reflection of the long-time friendship of Nepal toward Japan, followed by the medical equipment assistance for the Nepali hospitals to fight against the pandemic together.

Ambassador Kikuta highlighted the special intimacy between Japan and Nepal. Based on the long-term relationship, he hoped to continue the great partnership for more years to come by resuming the people-to-people exchange of two countries once the COVID-19 situation will ease.



Nepal Army Implements Command Headquarters Concept

The Nepali Army (NA) has brought into implementation its newly designed and approved command organizational structure concept.

With the new structure coming into implementation, eight previous Divisions Headquarters -- one in the Kathmandu Valley and seven in the provinces -- have been scrapped starting on the



NEWSNOTES

beginning of new fiscal year of 2021/22.

From now onwards, three central commands based on Koshi, Gandaki and Karnali River basins and one for the Kathmandu Valley will be implemented, according to Brigadier General and spokesperson for the Nepali Army Headquarters Shantosh Ballave Poudyal.

The army has called it a three-pronged central command. The army has also made it clear that the new structure will not increase the existing budget and posts.

With the new structure, NA now has Eastern Command (East of Koshi), Central Command (the area between Koshi and Gandaki), Valley Command (Kathmandu Valley) and Western Command (Karnali and Far West).

Even though the Cabinet approved the implementation of the new structure in March, it is taking effect only from now due to budget, said Poudyal.

Lalitpur Shrine Reconstruction Starts With “Chhema Puja”

“Chhema Puja” was performed at Hiranyavarna Mahavihar and Digi Chhen, Lalitpur by the Local community as ritual of



“asking forgiveness” before the start of restoration work. The puja was attended by officials from Embassy of India in Kathmandu, Central Level Project Implementation Unit, Govt of Nepal & INTACH

Kathmandu. The mahavihar is being reconstructed at a cost of NRs. 181 million.

Hiranyavarna Mahavihar, popularly known also as the Golden temple, is situated in the monument zone of Patan Darbar square, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Lalitpur. It is one of the most important Buddhist temple monasteries of Patan.

It is one of the 28 cultural heritage projects being undertaken under GoI grant assistance of USD 50 million for Post-Earthquake Reconstruction & Rehabilitation of cultural heritage sites in Nepal. Seven cultural heritage projects are being reconstructed in Lalitpur district of which work on five projects are ongoing.

Israeli Ambassador Pays Courtesy Call On PM Deuba

Ambassador of the State of Israel to Nepal Hanan Goder has paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba at the latter's office.



According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during the meeting, matters relating to Nepal-Israel relations & solidarity in the context of COVID-19 were discussed.

Indian Ambassador Kwatra Pays Courtesy Call On PM Deuba

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba received Ambassador of India to Nepal Vinay Mohan Kwatra at his Residence in Budhanilkantha.

According to a tweet of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister thanked the Ambassador for the congratulations and best wishes and recalled the age-old friendly relations between the two countries.

“Honoured to call on; extended congratulations and best wishes on becoming PM of Nepal. Looking forward to working with his team to deepen the multifaceted India-Nepal partnership and people-to-people ties for common progress and prosperity,” tweets Ambassador Kwatra.



German Ambassador Shafer Pays Farewell Call On Foreign Secretary Paudyal

Roland Schäfer, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Nepal, paid a farewell visit to Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In his tweet he said, “Ambassador Schäfer paying a farewell visit to Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal with whom he had a very close working relationship over the last 4 yrs of his tenure.”

“Our team in the Ministry enjoyed working with you and we sincerely appreciate your contributions towards cementing Nepal-Germany partnership and cooperation. Wish you all success and happiness in your future pursuits,” tweets Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He came to Nepal in October, 2017.



U.S. Ambassador Randy Berry Pays Courtesy Call On PM Deuba

U.S. Ambassador to Nepal Ambassador Randy Berry paid a courtesy call on newly appointed Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba at his residence in Budhanilkantha,

“Meeting with @USAmbNepal at my residence today as I look forward to advancing Nepal-U.S. friendship and partnership during my new tenure, and beyond,” tweets PM Deuba..

After the meeting, ambassador Berry also tweeted, “I appreciated the



opportunity to congratulate PM Sher Bahadur Deuba in person today. We reaffirmed the Biden Administration's commitment to continue building on our nearly 75 yrs of friendship!"

Nepal's National Anthem Translated Into Hebrew

Ambassador Of Israel to Nepal Hanan Goder-Goldberger read and handed over the translated national anthem in Hebrew to its writer Byakul Maila during a program organized at the Israeli Ambassador's Residence in Baluwatar.

Nepal's national anthem 'Sayau thunga fulka hami..' has been translated into the Hebrew language by the Israeli ambassador Hanan Goder.

Receiving the translated version of the national anthem writer Maila expressed happiness over the work of Ambassador Hanan Goder.



Former Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations Professor Dr Jaya Raj Acharya said that if the national anthem is translated into other languages the whole world will have a chance to understand Nepal's national anthem better.

The Hebrew language is written from left to right. Hebrew is the official national language of Israel. This ancient language is spoken by around 10 million people as their mother tongue worldwide. The Hebrew language belongs to the Afro-Asian language group.

India Hands Over 150 ICU Beds To Nepal As Part Of COVID-19 Cooperation

Ambassador of India to Nepal Vinay Mohan Kwatra handed over 150 ICU Beds to Minister for Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs Gyanendra Bahadur Karki at a ceremony organized at the Ministry of Health & Population on 18 July 2021.



This is part of India's commitment to COVID 19 cooperation with Nepal.

At the handing over ceremony, Indian Ambassador reiterated India's commitment to assist Nepal in comprehensively managing the pandemic, including through cooperation on the critical health infrastructure of the country.

Minister Karki appreciated the gesture from Government of India and added that it is an important milestone in our fight against Covid-19 and it shows the incredible goodwill enjoyed by both the countries.

Since the start of the pandemic, India has provided around US \$ 6.5 million worth of grant assistance to Nepal, through supply of essential medicines, RT-PCR tests, ventilators, and essential medicines etc. Nepal was one of the first countries to receive 1 million doses of Covishield vaccines from India in January 2021 as grant. Besides this, the Indian Army has also supplied 1 lakh

doses of vaccines to the Nepal Army as grant and medical supplies including BIPAP machines, antigen kits, PPE, Masks, Ambulances and ICU beds.

India and Nepal have a robust cooperation in the health sector, that includes supply of ambulances, regular training & capacity building programs in the health sector and development of health infrastructure including major hospitals, trauma & maternity centres, naturopathy centres, eye care centres etc.

China To Provide Additional 1.6M Doses Of COVID-19 Vaccines

Chinese Ambassador Hou Yanqi conveyed to Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba about the recent decision of the Government of the People's Republic of China to provide Nepal with 1.6 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines as additional grant assistance.

Ambassador Hou Yanqi conveyed the message while paying a courtesy call on Prime Minister Deuba at the Prime Minister's Residence, Baluwatar. During the call, various matters pertaining to Nepal-China relations were discussed.

On the occasion, the Ambassador assured that China will continue its support to Nepal in its fight against COVID-19 pandemic including through providing COVID vaccines.

"Meeting with @PRCAmbNepal at Baluwatar today. I look forward to building a stronger relationship with China," PM Deuba posted in a tweet.

According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister thanked the Chinese Government for the vaccine support and expressed hope that China will enhance its support to Nepal for both COVID-19 response and recovery.

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The Nepali Army (NA) has brought into implementation its newly designed and approved command organizational structure concept.

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Even though the Cabinet approved the implementation of the new structure in March, it is taking effect only from now due to budget, said Poudyal.



BUSINESS BRIEF

Madhu Kumar Marasini Appointed As Finance Secretary



Madhu Kumar Marasini has been appointed as the new Secretary of the Ministry of Finance.

The Friday meeting of Council of Ministers decided to transfer finance secretary Sishir Kumar Dhungana to the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, and appointing Marasini.

Earlier, Marasini served as the Financial Comptroller General for the Government of Nepal (GoN).

In over two decades of his service, he has served as a Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies including Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Planning Commission, World Bank headquarters in Washington DC, among others.

He was appointed Nepal's Consul General in New York, USA in 2017. However, the then government led by KP Sharma Oli had permanently rolled back position in 2018, recalling Marasini.

Marasini earned his bachelors degree in International law and legal studies and Masters degree in public administration, both, from Trivubhan University, and later from Harvard Kennedy School (executive education), Australian National University, Carle Duisburg College, Germany, respectively.

CNI Elects Seven Vice Presidents

The Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) has elected seven vice presidents.

The umbrella organization of the private sector elected Nirvana Chaudhary, Krishna Prasad Adhikari, Rajesh Kumar Agrawal, Birendra Raj Pandey, Raj Bahadur Shah, Hem Raj Dhakal and Rohit Gupta to the position.

The 18th Annual General Meeting of the CNI held on July 21 has already elected Vishnu Kumar Agrawal, the then senior vice president of the CNI, to lead the organization for the next two years.

Speaking at a program, President Emeritus of the CNI Binod Chaudhary urged

the newly elected committee of CNI to play an effective role in policy interventions at the government level with ample preparations.

HBL Customers Receive 15% Discounts On Daraz

Himalayan Bank Limited and Online e-commerce site Daraz have entered into an agreement to provide discounts to the customers of Himalayan Bank Limited. On a "Bank Day" offer of Daraz, customers of HBL will receive the discounts every Thursday while they purchase goods.

Customers of HBL will receive discount of 15% or Maximum Rs. 500 on Thursdays when they purchase any goods and prepay through their Credit or Prepaid Card.

The bank has been promoting its digital banking platform and initiated the discount offer to keep its customers safe from the COVID 19 Pandemic. HBL customers can enjoy dual benefit of discount while purchasing through Daraz and safe home delivery facility.

Customers can apply for Credit or Prepaid Card through the nearest branch of the bank.

Presently, HBL has 71 branches, more than 5000 POS terminals, more than 600 e-commerce merchants and 142 ATMs spread over the country.



Himalaya Airlines Addresses False Rumors On Airfare

Himalaya Airlines has refuted rumors and allegations in news reports about its airfare as baseless, misconstrued and published without proper facts and verification.

According to the Airlines, the Government of Nepal and Saudi Arabia had published mandatory regulatory guidelines which defined unavoidable fare inclusive of stay-in quarantine facilities and related COVID-19 health facilities.

"In compliance with the guidelines, our airline launched a bundled fare with all the essential facilities to operate flights in this sector.

"Our bundled fare includes: airline base fare, all regulatory taxes, airport to hotel transport charges, 7 nights hotel room charges, (breakfast, lunch, dinner included) and 2 PCR tests on arrival at Dammam," it said.

Himalaya Airlines, a Nepal-China joint venture airline, has been operating two weekly flights to Dammam, Saudi Arabia. Prior to lockdown 2.0, Himalaya Airlines had been offering 10 direct flights to Dammam in Saudi Arabia since September 01, 2017.



With the recent resumption of the flights, the flow of passengers flying to Dammam, Saudi Arabia surged for which the airlines increased the flights to four weekly flights effective from July 11, 2021.

With regards to the current situation, there have been misleading news reports and allegations across the digital news platforms, falsely accusing the airlines with airfare cartelization claiming the airline is charging high air fares for Kathmandu to Dammam flights and the stay-in quarantine facilities which was mandated by Saudi Arabia as well as Nepal government.

NIBL Receives Euromoney Award For Excellence 2021

Nepal Investment Bank Ltd (NIBL) has received the coveted “Euromoney Award for Excellence 2021”. This is NIBL’s second time receiving the prestigious banking industry award. Euromoney’s Awards for Excellence are the awards that matter to the banks and bankers who matter.

The awards were established in 1992 and were the first of their kind in the global banking industry. This year

Euromoney received a record number of submissions from banks globally in the regional and country awards category that covers more than 50 regional awards and best bank awards in 100 countries. NIBL is deservedly proud and vows to continue in providing exemplary

banking services to its ever-growing clientele.

NIBL has 86 branches, 131 ATMs, 20 extension counters, 10 revenue collection counters and 58 branchless banking counters spread across the country. With the capital base of NPR 30 Billion, the Bank has collected deposits of NPR 178 Billion and maintained a credit portfolio of NPR 167 Billion. The bank, being the recipient of five Bank of the Year awards for exemplary service and business, was accredited with Euromoney awards for “Best Bank 2018” from the international publication - Euromoney. Further, ICRA Nepal (International Credit Rating Agency- Nepal) has given the bank a credit rating of A.

UNFPA Provides 800 Units Of Oxygen Cylinders To Nepal Government

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) continues its humanitarian support to Nepal’s COVID-19 pandemic response by providing additional lifesaving supplies.

UNFPA Deputy Representative Dr Hashina Begum today handed over the oxygen cylinders worth Rs 11.9 million (equivalent to USD 100,000) to the Director of

Management Division under the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), Dr Bhim Singh Tinkari.

This support from UNFPA to the Government of Nepal was made possible under the existing South-South and Triangular Cooperation Project agreement between the Government of Nepal, the Government of China, and UNFPA.

As Nepal is battling the second wave of COVID-19, the country experienced a critical shortage of oxygen. The pandemic has put enormous pressure on health facilities across the country.

“We require oxygen supplies to respond to the current emergency as well as to prepare for a possible third wave. This support from the Government of China and UNFPA will help increase access to health facilities with functioning oxygen supplies,” said Dr Tinkari. “We appreciate our partnership with international development partners in our collective COVID-19 response efforts.”

The pandemic has taken a heavy toll on vulnerable populations including women of reproductive age who are facing greater barriers in accessing maternal health and family planning services, resulting in an increased number of home deliveries.

“While we are providing the critical support to the COVID-19 response efforts, we must ensure continuity of reproductive health services including consistent supply of contraceptives and essential reproductive health commodities to mitigate the impact of the unprecedented pandemic on women and girls,” said UNFPA Representative to Nepal Lubna Baqi.



UNFPA is working with federal, provincial, and local governments and partners to ensure that special and unique needs of women and girls of reproductive age are addressed. “Thanks to the Government of China for their timely support under the maternal health programme in providing the oxygen cylinders to save lives at this critical time,” Baqi noted.



Judicial Hyper Activism And Loktantra's Decay

The criticism of the Supreme Court for this political activism was not just for a blatant partisanship and arrogating unto itself the right of a parliament, but also for its declaring that party decisions and discipline are irrelevant.



BY DIPAK O

The current federal parliament, first elected under the new 2015 constitution, promised with much fanfare five years of stability but has delivered to the country since December last a roller-coaster ride of insufferable instability. To make the ride more tumultuous, the Supreme Court has stepped in with breath-taking judicial hyper activism that has effectively transferred sovereignty from the parliament to the Supreme Court.

This past July, Nepal experienced two major bombshells: first by the Supreme Court forcing Deuba's appointment onto the president and parliament, and the second just this week by Rabinendra Mishra, the chair of Sajha-Bibeksheel party that aims to be an alternative to the stale and incompetent Kangress-Communist combo of the last three decades. Let's take them up sequentially.

Through a street-smart but unprincipled and party procedure-violating alliance, the Marxist-Leninists and the Prachanda Maoists did manage to cobble together an unprecedented two-thirds majority in parliament. And the voters hoped to see a solid and undisturbed government focused on development for its full term. On the contrary, what they saw was fatal fratricidal infighting not just among the ruling party but also among the opposition groups.

The personalized warfare that was bereft of political principles among the ruling communists had paralyzed the government: Prachanda and Madhav Nepal from the same party were intent on taking down Oli who was as determined not to be overthrown. Oli then did what any prime minister in a Westminster model parliamentary democracy does and had done in Nepal in 1994, 1999 and 2002: he opted to go the voters.

In a normal functioning political system, when there is a political problem, it is solved in a political forum, be it the parliament, the various party committees or the inter- and intra-party discussion mechanisms, or the voters. In the politically dysfunctional Loktantra of Nepal, they failed to do that and instead appealed to the judiciary to solve it for them, thus proving that this political dispensation is unable to solve political problems within the framework of the constitution they themselves designed and promulgated.

The judiciary, feeling politically empowered, not only resurrected a dysfunctional parliament the second time but ordered an individual (Deuba who did not command enough members of his own party to even register a vote of no confidence and thus even to be actually called an opposition) to be appointed prime minister within 24 hours.

The criticism of the Supreme Court for this political activism was not just for a blatant partisanship and arrogating unto itself the right of a parliament, but also for its declaring that party decisions and discipline are irrelevant. Effectively, now MPs can ignore a party whip to vote for whatever they like. It thus makes this political dispensation partyless, but unlike the Panchayat with a strong referee, totally anarchic! MPs are horse-trading for personal benefits with gusto, the result being that neither PM Deuba nor Prachanda on whose legs Deuba's premiership rests can form a functioning cabinet three weeks after being sworn in!

And this is not the first time a court's decision has delegitimized an entire dispensation. In the mid-1990s, when UML's Man Mohan Adhikari dissolved the house and asked to go for a fresh mandate it opined favoring opposition Kangress, saying that the parliament could not be dissolved "as long as possibilities of forming any government remained". It blunted one of the few instruments available to a prime minister to keep his own and the opposition members under discipline. It also led to experimentation with every unsavory and principle-less permutations of government possible with shameful examples of corruption and horse-trading along the way.

Moreover, this judicial overkill contributed in no small measure to the Maoist insurgency that was fueled by public revulsion towards the system and its delegitimization. This July's Supreme Court decision has similarly opened up parallel possibilities for the upcoming future. Crony capitalist corruption, nepotism, partisanized civil service and police force, coupled with decision-making not by legitimate party committees but kitchen-cabinet family coteries of neo-feudal party bosses, are disgustingly blatant and there for all to see.

All this is happening even as very diverse groups of religious as well as pro-monarchy activists and frustrated

Maoists are coming out openly to call for an abolition of this dispensation. They range from Keshar Bahadur Bista's Rashtra Shakti Nepal on the allegedly traditional right ("alleged" because Nepal's Right espouses more socialism and its Left more crony capitalist liberalism than globally comprehensible!) to ex-Maoist Chandra Bahadur Thapa Sagar's Rashtrabadi Kendra Nepal and some eighty plus motley groups in between. None of them get along with each other or see eye-to-eye on many issues except to agree that this system does not work, that secularism and federalism must be scrapped, and (for many but not all) the monarchy should be brought back.

The country faces local elections in less than a year, and national polls in a year and a half if not earlier. Kangress, UML as well as Prachanda Maoists face a crisis of legitimacy as they have been unable to hold their party conference and chose a new leadership well past the constitutionally mandated five years. The rising public discontent, when added to big parties' sheer incompetence, amazing acrobatics of unprincipled alliances, horse-trading and conflict-of-interest decisions, points to highly unpredictable times ahead.

Into this volatility, Sajha-Bibeksheel party's Rabindra Mishra had submitted a discussion paper for consideration of the party asking for the scrapping of federalism and calling for a referendum on secularism. He describes how provinces have become not only useless parasites feeding on the public budget with little service to show for it but also being a hotbed of corruption. And he argues that the way federalism is heading is quickly becoming a grave security threat to the unity of the country. He also argues that the public dissatisfaction imposing secularism (which was not even an agenda of the 2006 political agitations) under foreign tutelage without any meaningful discussion is leading to the emergence of Hindu fundamentalism, that it can be stymied only by putting this matter to a public referendum.

On the republicanism, he is basically silent and only mentions that it was not home-grown but subsequently imposed by outside forces with main political parties functioning as puppets. He does not call for a restoration of monarchy but argues that, if corruption and mal-governance is to increase as is happening now, and if the office of the president fails to be a dispassionate referee and instead functions in the interests of the party from where the president's career began, the popularity of King Gyanendra and a popular clamour for a return to monarchy is bound to increase. The threat to republicanism is thus not from monarchists but from republicans themselves. Hence the need for an alternative politics to the one that has been practiced by the main big parties these last fifteen years.

The swift and explosive reaction to Mishra's discussion paper is of two kinds. One group (a majority it seems judging from comments in the social media) of mainly

non-partisan public has been very supportive of Mishra's thesis. They especially find resonance in his marshalling of historical facts that cannot be disputed but which had been airbrushed away from public discourse through a Nepali-style "political correctness" of 2005 Loktantricksters.

The other, mainly partisan journalists and self-styled civil society leaders associated with the Maoist, Kangress, Madheshi groups and the UML, have resorted primarily to *ad hominem* attacks against Mishra. And the reasons are not difficult to discern: these have been the cheer-leaders of the 2005/06 regime change, mostly at the behest of foreign forces, and have been stung by his institutionally exposing what they had comfortably chosen to sweep under the carpet. It has also exposed their slavish worship of the leadership in big parties that has failed multiple times but continues to rule the roost for the last quarter of a century!

Quite instructive is one of the few rather polite criticism of Mishra from Pranaya Rana of The Record. Given that he is one of the brighter and effective of journalists to emerge from the younger generation, it is surprising how uncritically even he has absorbed the untenable narratives of 2005/2006. As an example, unlike what he says with Nepal

having no local-level representations between 1997-2017, Nepal had local government during the Panchayat (I remember holding the first mayoral debate between Harbol Bhattarai of the Kangress and Roop Jyoti at the GAA Forum way back in 1981!) and more so under the 1990 multiparty dispensation.

It was Kangress that failed to either extend the term of local bodies or hold elections for them in 2002 (and for the national parliament!). And it was Loktantra that chose loot over governance with their "all party confabulation" between 2006-2017, ameliorated only by the donor-civil service alliance that put a small check on it with the more accountable Ward Citizen Forum – which the parties abolished in 2017! There are similar problems with his being unable to distinguish between corruption and blatant loot, of asking for more time for failed leaders to clean up the mess they are benefitting from, brushing aside criticism of secularism's imposition as "conspiracy theory" despite then speakers of parliament confessing to it, and many more.

Opening up a debate on these swept-under-the-carpet issues will be a good thing for democracy. If, as a result of this, we could see the departure of the failed leaders of the last quarter century in all these big parties; if a new and younger leadership could rise to the challenge of seeing and advocating for not party but larger national interests; if they could bring together diverse forces from Monarchists to Biplavites and others in between rather than have more polarization, democracy might have a fighting chance in Nepal.

POLITICS

Unstable All The Time

After almost two weeks of internal discussion, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has finally decided to expand the cabinet inducting ministers from Maoist Center and Janata Samajbadi Party. However, with a proposal of forming high-level mechanism to advise and guide the government, Maoist Center leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal has tried to enter the center of executive power. As Prachanda has played a key role to dislodge K.P. Oli government and to form new government, Prime Minister Deuba is not in a position to rebuff it. Proposed to coordinate in major decision making process of between parties and the government, this unconstitutional mechanism will likely create more frictions and conflicts between executive and party

By KESHAB POUDEL

In trying to prove himself as a good political game changer, Maoist Center leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal has instead placed himself to be a source of political instability

in the current political course.

His recent proposal to set up High Level Political Mechanism to advise and guide the government is likely to create more troubles and

frictions for Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba.

While the government is accountable to the parliament and will remain in the office till it holds the



majority, people have already started to question the setting up of an inter-party political mechanism.

In recent meetings of coalition partners, Dahal proposed a high level mechanism to guide the government in the major policy issues including political appointments.

Dahal's proposal for the mechanism comes at a time when new government has started to revamp political appointees of the previous government.

Although many of ruling constituencies have also supported Dahal's idea, political analysts have termed it as just another attempt by Dahal to hold sway over PM Deuba and his executive power.

As Maoist Center leader is the key figure to dislodge Oli led communist government, it is very difficult for Prime Minister Deuba to reject the proposal of Prachanda right away.

As a weak Prime Minister

Deuba does not have a free hand in the party and coalition group. His decision to induct Umesh Shrestha as a minister of state at the Ministry of Health and Population has sparked a wider criticism within his party and outside compelling him to publicly acknowledge his mistake. This has shown the vulnerability of the government.

"I have realized that appointing the minister of state without consultation and consent of party and coalition partners is my mistake," PM Deuba reportedly confessed in a meeting of coalition partners.

Dahal in his remarks defended his proposal of High-Level Mechanism to oversee the government's activities and coordinate with it in naming political appointees.

"For the better coordination among the coalition partners on the issue of day to day matters and

policy issue of the government, high-level coordination mechanism is relevant," Dahal reportedly told in the meeting. "Such mechanism will prevent mistakes in the future."

As the proposal of high-level mechanism is likely to create more frictions, the ongoing power struggle within major parties is likely to intensify instability.

Expanding the cabinet, Prime Minister Deuba has overcome major hurdles to give a sense of stability in the country. However, the road ahead for him will be more difficult given his bitter experiences with Prachanda in earlier power sharing agreement.

Challenges for Stability

The continual power struggle within CPN-UML, recent splitting of Samajbadi Janta Party Nepal and simmering disenchantment within Maoist Center and Nepali Congress have indicated that Nepal's politics



is heading towards a future on a course of instability and turmoil.

Constituted under a verdict of the Supreme Court annulling President Bidhya Devi Bhandari's decisions to dissolve the House of Representatives, the government led by Deuba is likely to last for about a year and half.

Despite receiving almost two thirds of majority support in the House of Representatives, two weeks old Deuba government is yet to prove that this government will bring political stability.

Inducting the members from the front, PM Deuba has completed the task of forming the government. However, the coming challenges are

to make the coalition government efficient and stable.

As Nepal has very bitter experiences of coalition politics, the early indications have shown that this coa-

lition will also end in bitter results. However, this is a last government under the constitutional provision. Coalition partners have no option other than to try to live together for coming months.



POLITICS

Party Split

Splitting into two Samajbadi Janta Party Nepal, has also shown CPN-UML rebels that there is a way to live with a separate identity

BY A CORRESPONDENT

With the decision of Election Commission, Janta Samajbadi Party Nepal has legally split into two different political parties. The split of fourth largest party in the House of Representatives will make a significant political difference in the national politics.

For almost one year, Janta Samajbadi Party led by Uprendra Yadav and Baburam Bhattarai factions was in struggle with Mahantha Thakur-Rajendra Mahato faction. Following the dissolution of HoR, Thakur-Mahato faction even joined the government led by K.P. Sharma Oli.

They fought tooth and nail to claim the authentic party, the two factions fought several rounds of legal fight including at the Supreme Court. However, the Election Commission recognized the Uprendra Yadav-Baburam Bhattarai faction of the Janata Samajbadi Party-Nepal as the authentic party after 34 members of the party's 51-member executive



committee supported the faction during the support verification process.

Only 16 members of the executive committee supported the other side. JSP-N lawmaker Resham Chaudhary, who has been a convict in Kailali carnage, was allowed to come to the EC from prison to express his support.

Chaudhary, who stayed neutral during the trust vote, told media persons that he had immense respect for Mahantha Thakur. The leader's status was that of Bhishmapitamaha of Mahabharata epic who supported Duryodhan. Chaudhary said he was an honest and committed cadre of the JSP-N and could not side with a faction.

EC Spokesperson Raj Kumar Shrestha said the EC bench that had conducted hearing before decided to give legitimacy to the Yadav-Bhattarai faction's claim of authenticity as majority members were with the faction.

The EC said the Thakur-Mahato faction could open a new party if they wanted to, but if lawmakers supporting their faction chose to stay with the faction and the Yadav-led JSP-N took action against them, then they could lose their seats.

The EC source said that JSP-N lawmakers of the Thakur-Mahato faction could give up their seats and join a new party that the duo could open.

The Yadav-Bhattarai faction's counsel Senior Advocate Raman Kumar Shrestha said lawmakers of the



COVERSTORY

Thakur-Mahato faction and other representatives in all tiers of the government were bound to follow the faction if they didn't want to lose their elected posts. He said the Thakur-Mahato faction did not have 40 per cent sup-

port in the executive committee and parliamentary party to split the party. the people of the country are the main deciders of a political party," said Mahato.

Mahato said his faction would decide on the next course after the end of July when the Supreme Court would

The EC said in its verdict that if the Thakur-Mahato faction sought to register a new party under Section 44 (6) of the Political Party Act, it would register it deeming it to be a separate political party.

As many as 34 executive committee members of Janata Samajbadi Party-Nepal have submitted their signatures in favor of the faction led by Upendra Yadav and Baburam Bhattarai, at the Election Commission.

The EC on July 23 had asked members of the party's executive committee to appear before it with original copies of their citizenship certificates or voter identity cards, in a bid to ascertain which faction of the party holds majority in the party.

The Mahanta Thakur- Rajendra Mahato faction had moved the Supreme Court the same day demanding the EC's decision on the headcount be stayed. However, the apex court refused to issue an interim order against the EC.

The feud between two JSP-N

port in the executive committee and parliamentary party to split the party.

The Yadav-Bhattarai faction lawyer Senior Advocate Mithilesh Kumar Singh said only eight of the 34 lawmakers of the party were with the Thakur-Mahato faction, and some of them could switch to the Yadav-Bhattarai faction.

The feud between the two JSP-N factions had intensified with the Thakur-Mahato faction's decision to support KP Sharma Oli's bid for prime ministership under Article 76 (5), and the Yadav-Bhattarai faction's decision to support Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba's bid for premiership under the same article.

The EC refused to recognize Thakur's claim of reshuffling the executive committee on grounds that the details of the reshuffle were not updated at the EC.

Mahato said they had rescued Yadav last year by agreeing to unify his Rastriya Janata Party-Nepal with the Yadav-led Samajbadi Party-Nepal when Yadav's party was on the verge of split.

Mahato said his faction's bid to form an alternative force to champion the cause of marginalized communities would continue. "This is a technical split of the JSP-N and I believe that

decide whether to issue an interim order in the case.

He said all three parties - CPN-UML, Nepali Congress, and the CPN-Maoist Centre - were the same for Madhesi because they had promulgated the new constitution suppressing the Madhes agitation against the constitution.

JSP-N lawmaker Laxman Lal Karna, who is close to Mahato, said his faction wanted unity but Upendra Yadav was against it.

Ram Sahay Yadav, who is close to Upendra Yadav, said the EC's decision had cleared the decks for the party to carry out its policies across the country. He said the EC's decision would help the SC take a decision on the dispute.

The Thakur-Mahato faction has challenged the EC's decision not to give legitimacy to Thakur's decision reshuffling the party's executive committee.



factions intensified with Thakur-Mahato faction's decision to support Oli's bid for prime ministership under Article 76 (5), and the Yadav-Bhattarai faction's decision to support Nepali Congress President Sher

Bahadur Deuba's bid for premiership under the same article.

Sharma Oli, claiming that they had not violated party discipline.

hav Kumar Nepal's remarks that he would not stay in the party if sub-



CPN-UML at Verge of Split

The split of JSPN has shown a way for the political parties to divorce if they wish. At a time when two factions of CPN-UML have been leaving separately holding parallel meetings, the EC's decision has also given them a way out.

Despite several efforts, the two warring factions of CPN-UML are yet to patch up their difference. Since a faction led by CPN-UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal is one of the coalition partners, the unity with outgoing Prime Minister K.P. Sharma

looks unlikely now. However one cannot rule out the possibility of unification between the two given past history of communist parties. With disputes growing, twenty-two lawmakers of the Madhav Kumar Nepal-Jhalanath Khanal faction of the CPN-UML furnished their explanation to party Chair KP

Lawmaker Birodh Khatiwada, who is close to Nepal, said the 22 lawmakers wrote that they had opposed Oli's undemocratic moves and the Supreme Court had vindicated their position in both the cases challenging the dissolution of the House of Representatives.

Oli had asked the 22 lawmakers to explain why they should not be expelled from the party for anti-party activities.

As rebels have been coming more vocal, UML's establishment faction decided to continue attempts to forge unity between the two factions.

UML Spokesperson Pradeep Kumar Gyawali said that after the central committee meeting, Oli said he would pardon leaders for their past mistakes if they wanted to come back and strengthen the party.

Gyawali said the party would make efforts till the last minute to keep party unity intact.

Asked to comment on Mad-

jected to humiliation, Gyawali said Nepal should realize that he brought the party's government down and helped the Nepali Congress attain power.

Gyawali said the party's general convention could take a call on the age bar for party leaders and limiting the number of times a leader could contest the top party post.

Nepal said he would not remain in the party if he was humiliated. He said the name and election symbol of a party did not mean much if the party was not committed to people's cause.

Nepal said screaming from one's balcony and taking out rallies wearing monkey masks would not help the cause of unity. Oli had recently said from the balcony of his house that Nepal had no place in the party. Supporters of the Oli faction also took out a rally in Kathmandu wearing monkey masks to mock the Nepal faction.

Major Trilok Singh ThapaChhetri—An Unsung Hero



Recently at the age of 98 years, Major Trilok Singh Thapa Chhetri, a Second World

War veteran, has unfortunately left us for his heavenly abode. Born on 8 August 1924 at Chhetritola in Ainjal

in the State of Mizoram, Major Chhetri was brought up in his maternal uncle's house at Shillong, capital of Meghalaya State, due to the negligent behaviour of his father. Because of economic hardship, he suffered in his childhood and in his schooling as well. So at a very young age of 15, he went to the recruiting depot at Mahadevkhola (Shillong) and joined the British Indian army as a Boy on 26 January 1941. As the Second World War was raging, Gurkhas of whatever age were much sought after for the Indian army. He was later assigned to the 8th Gurkha Rifles that fought against the Japanese on the Burma front and was also in Java/Indonesia to oversee the surrender of the Japanese there.

After the war ended in 1945, Major Trilok Singh was witness to the horrors of the birth of the two nations India and Pakistan. It is best to quote him from his own book *Jiwanko Goretoma*, BS 2061, *Atmabrittant Abhilekh Sewa*, Kathmandu:

The Bihar Regiment used to provide security to the trains carrying refugees, Hindus/Sikhs and Muslims, between India and Pakistan in Punjab. One day the train carrying Hindu/Sikhs refugees from Pakistan was ambushed by Muslims at Lyalpur, killing the entire train-load of refugees including the Bihar Regiment soldiers. This infuriated the Sikhs who resorted to the similar rampant killing of Muslims in Amritsar. A detachment of our 1/8th Gurkha Rifles was then sent to bring the train from Lyalpur filled with dead Hindus/Sikhs. At the Lyalpur railway station, the Pakistani army with sten-guns was guarding the corpse-filled train. When our commander Khadga Singh hesitated on what to do, I, despite being a Havildar, marched to the Pakistani Captain and gave him a smart salute. He returned the salute, smiled and said "Ap, Gorkha log aya hai?" He then, seeing my 8th Gurkha Rifles insignia and the military ribbons on my chest depicting the Burma campaign, added that his Regiment and the 8th Gurkhas fought together against the Japanese on the Burma front. The Pakistani Captain and his soldiers then treated

us warmly with tea and biscuits. After a warm send-off, we brought the train filled with dead bodies to Amritsar.

BY DWARIKA NATH DHUNGEL, SANTA BAHADUR PUN AND SHYAM PRASAD ADHIKARI

Our 1/8th Gurkha Rifles was used to transport the Muslims from Amritsar to Lahore's DAV College and the

Hindus/Sikhs from Lahore to Amritsar's Khalsa College or hand them over to the Pakistan army at Wagah on the Indo-Pakistan.

And in his *Bhivatsav Jatiya Danga Dekhenin Lahureka Katha* Collection Bharat Pokharel, Edited Basanta Thapa and Mohan Mainali, 2002, Himal Kitab Pvt. Ltd., Kathmandu, Major Trilok Singh continues:

"While India did get independence on 15th August 1947, communal riots broke out between Hindus and Muslims. This was far more dreadful than what I had experienced during World War! Piles and piles of dead bodies: all killings were done in the most hideous manner. Oh! females with breasts cut-off and killed by bayoneting their private parts and males with their genitals cut-off and shoved into their mouths! And Baba, dogs chewing these corpses! Seeing such dreadful sights, I nearly became a Sadhu.

After India's independence, the 8th Gurkha Rifles became a part of the Indian Army and hence in July 1948 he left his Regiment and joined the British Gurkhas in November 1948. During this service, he was an observer of the Malaysian independence movement and the independence of both Malaysia and Singapore.

Young Lieutenant Trilok Singh ThapaChhetri

Trilok Singh Chhetri as an officer in the British Gorkhali regiment based in Singapore, was on the front line when the communal riot known as the Maria Hertogh riot took place between the Malays and whites to place in Singapore in December 1950. To quell this riot the Britishers had to use the Gorkhali regiment. Trilok Singh Thapa Chhetri (late major) was one of the Gorkhalis who was taken to the front by the Britishers. It may be reminded that 'The Maria Hertogh riots began on the 11 December 1950 after a court ruled and decided that a child who had been raised by a set of Muslim parents was to be returned to her biological Catholic parents. That sparked a protest



from enraged Muslims which soon escalated into a riot. The Muslims were angry because the government threw out and rejected the appeal for the case, indicating to the large crowd who gathered outside the court that the legal system was biased against the Muslims. This was how the riot started and continued for 3 days whereby the mob attacked any Eurasians and Europeans in sight' (<https://thesmartlocal.com/read/5-riots-that-rocked-singapore/>).

For being in different fronts, Major Chhetri was awarded a number of medals including the star of Burma. He served the British Gurkhas till 1972 rising to the rank of Major.

Major Trilok Singh Chhetri with his Medals



Medals



From L to R: The 1939- 1945 Star, (2)The Burma Star, (3) G.B.R.OMN.REX ET INDIA IMP1939- 1945 (4) G.B.R. MOM REXET INDIA IMP 1939-1945, (5) MALAYA S.E. 1945-46, (6) MALAYA PENINSULA (For Campaign Service),(7) REGULAR ARMY Long Service and Good Conduct,(8) INDIAN INDEPENDENCE, 5th August 1947 and (9)JASA MALAYSIA P.J.M.

After retirement from the military service, he moved to Kathmandu from Hongkong to spend the rest of his life. But fate had something to offer him at the UN in Kathmandu. He first joined UN-WFP for some time, then UNDP through which he worked at the Department of National Park and Wildlife for some years(1972-1980). As he was attached to the two integrated Development Projects: Rasuwa–Nuwakot Integrated Rural Development Project and Mahakali Integrated Rural Development Project, both funded by the World Bank/UNDP and implemented by the then Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development Ministry. His last civilian job, before going into permanent retirement, was with the consulting firm, East Consult, which was managing the USAID-supported irrigation management project(1981- 1992).

Major Trilok Singh Chhetri as UNDP Administrator

Unlike his other Lahure colleagues, Major Chhetri's long involvement with various projects in

various remote districts of Nepal funded by the World Bank, UNDP, USAID has given him an innate hu-

mane insight. He had established himself as a wise guardian to the members of the Mahadevsthancommunity at Baneshwor area, a pleasant and motivating force to the

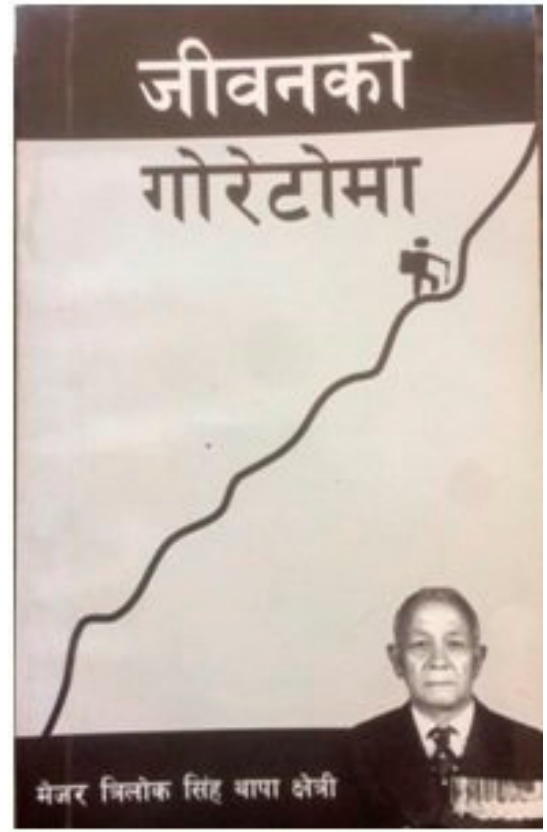


VIEWPOINT

younger generation, a philanthropist, a concerned citizen and above all a true nationalist who worried much about the direction the country was going politically. Though a tough but caring head of the family, he was a very social and admired person among the Kathmandu gentries. A nature lover, the electronic media liked him because of not being a World War II veteran only but an officer who saw and helped thousands of Hindus and Muslims in their terrible plights during the partition of India in 1947.

Major Chhetri was a wrestler, gymnast, rugby player, boxer and football and hockey player and football umpire during his time. He would always be in our mind: as a jolly person, an avid reader especially books on history, a kind and large-hearted person who was always willing to help the needy persons because he himself knew what economic hardship was as he had faced serious economic hardship during his childhood. But he was a tough person in terms of maintaining discipline and always remained tiptop from the point of view of the dress. He is an unsung hero, whose contributions in different fields were recognised by all who knew him and had worked with or under him. Before his departure to his final destination, 'fellow soldiers bidding farewell at Pashupati Aryaghat draped with his 10th Gurkha Rifles Regimental Flag.

Fellow soldiers bidding final farewell at Aryaghat



We, on behalf of all his colleagues and well-wishers, would like to pray to the Almighty to bless his Major Chhetri's Soul with eternal peace and provided a calm and serene atmosphere wherever he might have been taken.

Major Chhetri, you have left us forever, but we would remember you and your deeds through the pages of JEEVAN Ko GORETOMA published in the year 2061 BS.

ADB approves \$165m loan for COVID-19

ADB approves \$165m loan for COVID-19 vaccines in the country

BY A CORRESPONDENT

In his first address to the House of Representatives, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba announced that the government's first priority is to provide vaccine to all eligible Nepali citizens.

Although Nepal has already received over 10 million vaccines including purchasing of 5 million doses, it is hardly enough to cover one third of the population. Nepal has received vaccines from United States, China, India and Japan in the last five months under bilateral support and COVAX facility.

However, to provide vaccines to all Nepalese citizens, there is also a need huge investment. Given that circumstance, the decision of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to approve loan is highly significant.

ADB approved a loan of \$165 million for the Nepal government to purchase safe and effective vaccines against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

The project will support the National Deployment and Vaccination Plan in Nepal by procuring an estimated 15.9 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines, which will benefit about 6.8 million Nepalis.

"ADB's support will help the government of Nepal procure much-needed COVID-19 vaccines

to protect its citizens from the further spread of this disease," said ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa. "It is essential that COVID-19 vaccines are quickly purchased and administered to help get the economy back on track by enabling the restoration of livelihoods and economic activities, as well as the resumption of educational and human development pursuits."

The project is financed by ADB's \$9 billion Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility launched in December 2020 to offer rapid and equitable vaccine-related support to ADB developing member countries.

the vaccine has received regular or emergency licensure or authorization by a stringent regulatory authority.

In addition to this project, ADB's ongoing technical assistance grants will support the strengthening of the vaccine delivery system, communication, and community engagement to raise awareness on the risks of COVID-19 and the benefits of vaccination. The government is mobilizing female community health volunteers to disseminate information among marginalized communities to raise awareness.

At least one female health worker or volunteer will support the effort in every vaccination site or outreach centre.

ADB is closely collaborating with other partners, like World Bank, COVAX, WHO, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in supporting the government in its efforts to vaccinate its people as soon as possible.

The project will complement the government's broader response through its \$1.2 billion National Relief Programme, which consists of social protection, health care, and economic relief measures.

In May last year, ADB provided support to the programme through a \$250 million concessional loan.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty.

Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members - 49 from the region.



Vaccines eligible for financing must meet at least one of the APVAX eligibility criteria: The vaccine has been selected for procurement through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) mechanism; the vaccine has been prequalified by the World Health Organization (WHO) or WHO emergency use listing; or

Foreign Aid

On The Fence!

As the pandemic increases the need for aid around the world, donors are facing tough choices over whether to continue helping vulnerable populations abroad or focus their attention at home.



BY ABIJIT SHARMA

In November last year, the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak announced that the UK government would no longer be spending 0.7% of its Gross National Income (GNI) from 2021 on official development assistance as it had been doing since 2015. The controversial decision came amid the economic fallout of the pandemic with Prime Minister Boris Johnson saying that the step was ‘needed during the economic hurricane caused by Covid-19 pandemic’. With the spending reduced to 0.5% of the GNI, the UK government would be saving around £4bn annually.

The move saw criticism from many aid agencies, development actors and MPs from the PM’s own Conservative party. Many argued that at a time when the government should have increased its spending on foreign aid, the decision to reduce it would be counter-productive. But quite frankly, the move is something that many other governments across the world have been pondering over ever since the Covid-19 pandemic broke out. It is a known fact that loss of revenue, paired with the need to increase expenditures, has caused large government budget deficits around the world. In this context, as the pandemic increases the need for aid around the world, donors are facing tough choices over whether to continue helping vulnerable populations abroad or focus their attention at home.

According to the OECD, 2020 was a record year for foreign aid, which reached an all-time high of USD 161.2 billion. This was a 3.5% increase in real terms from 2019. While this is definitely encouraging, what needs to be understood

is that the record high foreign aid came mostly to help developing countries tackle the coronavirus pandemic. The economic and social fallout caused by the pandemic

remains largely unaddressed in many ways and with countries like UK cutting their assistance amount from 2021 onwards and other countries hinting that they would slowly focus on their own economy, the way forward looks bleak.

The onset of the pandemic has meant that many other sector are already seeing cuts in assistance. According to Development Initiatives (DI), a data focused international development organization, international humanitarian assistance plateaued at USD 30.9 billion in 2020 and support for non-Covid humanitarian needs fell despite unprecedented needs. This decrease could slowly invite multitude of problems in countries requiring humanitarian assistance like Syria and Yemen. The consequence could range from extreme poverty to instigation of civil war. The WFP has already warned that in addition to the threat posed by the pandemic, the world faces ‘multiple famines of biblical proportions’

that could result in up to 300,000 deaths per day — a ‘hunger pandemic’ especially in countries requiring humanitarian assistance.

The focus on tackling the pandemic and lesser stress on development assistance will also bring a halt to the progress developing countries have making in areas like education, gov-

ernance, climate change and gender issues. Take for instance Nepal. International non-governmental organizations pledged aid worth NRs 21.62 billion for 2020-



21, around 13% less than their pledge for 2019-2020, which stood at Rs 24.79 billion. This could put many long running projects in jeopardy. It is quite natural for development partners to implement projects which run for an average of 2 – 3 years. As per their logical framework, interventions are planned for throughout the duration of the project. With lesser funds, these projects will either be forced to terminate or cut down on their activities. This will have a grave impact on the beneficiaries and result in incomplete and unsustainable outcomes.

In the past few years, development partners' focus on sectors like education, gender and governance in Nepal has brought about major changes, especially in light of the new administrative structure of the country. But with large amount of fund either re-directed to Covid-19 management or being cut-off entirely, progress made in these sectors stand on shaky grounds. With new local government to be elected next year, development partners would be expected to assist in their capacity building. Development partners would also be expected to help implementation of policies as well as major projects such as President Educational Reform Program when it comes to the education sector. However, all these remain uncertain now. The DI has said that the pandemic has reinforced the need for long-term resilience building to help countries withstand future shocks, such as the impacts of climate change but with redirection of funds, this looks increasingly difficult.

WOMEN AND PEACE SECURITY (WPS)

The Way Forward

BY A CORRESPONDENT

Women, Peace and Security (WPS) is a policy framework that recognizes that women must be critical actors in all efforts to achieve sustainable international peace and security. The Government of Nepal (GON) adopted the National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 in 2011 to improve the participation of women in decision making and in the peace process, protect and promote the rights of women and girls, and mobilize resources to ensure that these UNSCRs translates into concrete changes in Nepal. Although this has brought about some changes, the status of women in the country especially in regards to decision making is far from satisfactory. Women's participation in peace negotiations held in 2005 and in the ongoing talks since was negligible. With the introduction of federalism in the country, things were expected to change for the better. Women's involvement in decision making took a step forward with provision of 33 percent of mandatory representation of women in all structures as a remarkable outcome. However, the pace of change has not been satisfactory.

Keeping this context in mind, Outline Media organized an event last month to discuss the poor state of affairs pertaining to WPS in Nepal. The event, organized as a part of Outline Media's assignment entitled 'Engaging Media for Advancing WPS Agenda' for UNDP focused on why the issue of WPS in Nepal has not been addressed as much as it should. Speaking in the event, the then Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Lilanath Shrestha accepted that successive governments including theirs had not been able to ensure women's rights and stressed on the need to do more. Parbati Rawal, Chair of National Concern and Coordination Committee, National Assembly stressed on the need for policy and implementation to go hand in hand and pointed out that only making policies might not be enough. Another participant, Shanta Chaudhary, a mem-

ber of the House of Representatives stated that education, property right and personal freedom were key to women empowerment and until and unless these were ensured, it would difficult to ensure WPS. The event, which also saw leaders from provinces discussed issues that affected WPS in myriad of ways. Shova Lama of Province 2 stated that lack of accountability was one of the major reasons for violation of women's right whereas Manju Yadav of Province 1 stated that political interference and traditional justice mechanism had also been a hindrance to WPS. Pre Bahadur Pulami of Bagmati Province stated that women's participation in public domain should be increased and their participation needs to be more meaningful to ensure better WPS.

In view of the opinions put by honorable participants and members, Nepal does have a long way to go. The NAP II aims to ensure proportional and meaningful participation of women at all levels of conflict transformation and peacebuilding processes; protection of women and girls' rights and to guarantee the direct and meaningful participation of conflict-affected women in the formulation and implementation of relief, recovery and rehabilitation programs; and address the specific needs of women and girls. However, it needs to move much beyond that. Firstly, Nepal has entered a new administrative structure with a promising future. The NAP II needs to ensure that in this new administrative structure, the issue of WPS is considered in all the fields. It can also be noticed that the NAP II is fraught with some gaps which need to be considered by policy makers. Despite being a comprehensive document, the second phase of NAP, having been formulated in the context of federalism, does not touch upon the issue of WPS in the changed administrative context. With provincial and local governments in place, the NAP II should talk about how it plans to utilize this new federal structure to advance the issues of women.

Nepal's Unsteady Progress Towards Fiscal Federalism

BY BISHNU ADHIKARI, PARSHURAM UPADHYAYA, AMOL ACHARYA, AND ABHAS GHIMIRE

Amid swirling uncertainties created by internal party wrangling and a second wave of Covid-19, all seven of Nepal's provincial governments, newly created by the 2015 constitution, introduced their budgets for FY 2021/22 on June 15, meeting the statutory deadline. But Nepal's halting progress towards fiscal federalism, in place only since the elections of 2017, still has some serious kinks to work out.

As expected, and in line with federal priorities, the new provincial budgets make health security and economic recovery from the pandemic their top priorities. Like last year, all the provincial budgets are focused on fighting Covid-19, through infectious-disease control, expanded healthcare services, and the development of health-related infrastructure and human resources. This penultimate round of budgets before next year's provincial elections also emphasizes rapid economic development, poverty reduction, advancement for backward areas and communities, expansion of social security, and improvements in living standards.

Despite limited capacity and resources, compounded by federal neglect, the provinces have made considerable progress in the step-by-step, year-by-year process of building a functional system of public financial management (PFM). The new federal system merged and sometimes split districts to create the provincial governments, and there was no comprehensive documentation of their demographic, administrative, and economic profiles—what are the public services and utilities; where are the factories and banks; what are the administrative boundaries. The provinces have since worked hard to create these provincial profiles, pass essential legisla-

tion, and assemble the building blocks of effective PFM: periodic development plans, medium-term expenditure frameworks, and guidelines and procedures for the regular work of planning and budgeting.

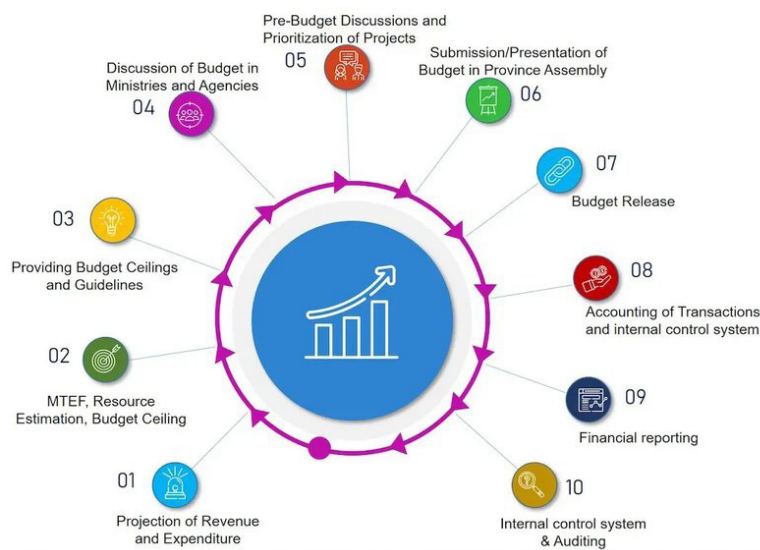
While these are positive steps in the consolidation of the new federal system, a closer look at these budgets and their development reveals some significant shortcomings. A study of provincial PFM published early this year by The Asia Foundation, *Planning and Budgeting in the Provinces of Federal Nepal*, found that many weaknesses of the previous system of government appear to have persisted under the current budget regime.

Major shortcomings of provincial PFM identified by the study include weak participatory practices in planning and budgeting, failure to publish programs and budgets in a timely manner, allocation of resources for poorly specified

small projects, assignment of large proportions of the budget to the “miscellaneous” category, allocation of funds to the discretionary “constituency development” fund, inadequate and poorly managed capital investment, and inadequate public disclosure of government spending.

There are several formal bodies established to promote intergovernmental consultation and coordination,

including the Provincial Coordination Council, the Interprovincial Council, the National Coordination Council, and the Intergovernmental Fiscal Council, but these forums have been largely ignored by the federal government and the provinces alike, with the inevitable result that budgets and other major policies sometimes leave gaps and other times overlap between the different levels of the federal system. And while the provinces



make plenty of noise about their exclusion from federal policymaking, their own outreach to local governments to participate in provincial budgeting and policymaking has been equally inadequate.

Continuing a practice that gives excessive discretion to the executive branch to make ad hoc expenditures, often under the influence of political interests, five of the seven provinces have allocated an average of 8.4% of their budgets to the “miscellaneous” line item this fiscal year. This does, admittedly, represent some improvement. Last year the average was 10.7%, and in FY 2019/20, the miscellaneous line item averaged around 17.3% of provincial budgets—with a high of 29.5% in Province 2.

Undermining the limits set by the National Planning Commission (NPC), an apex federal body meant to guide development planning, the provinces have again allocated funds to small-budget programs that overlap with functions of local governments. Per the NPC, development projects worth less than roughly USD 85,000 should be delegated to local governments. In FY 2019/20, Province 1 had 675 projects below this threshold, and in FY 2020/21 Bagmati Province alone had 858 programs below USD 85,000, mostly small infrastructure projects.

On the one hand, this practice undermines the functional autonomy and responsibility of local governments. On the other, it leads to duplication of effort at the local and provincial level that creates conflict and wastes scarce resources.

Although the federal budget has discontinued the practice this fiscal year, Province 2 has allocated around 7% of its budget for a “constituency development” fund, which gives members of the provincial assembly discretionary funds to invest in projects of their own choice.

The own-source revenue (OSR) base is bleak for the provinces, and revenue collection is poor. The average proportion of OSR in provincial budgets in FY 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22 was estimated at 11.24%, 14.47%, and 13.58%, respectively. In the current fiscal year, projected OSR ranges from a tiny 1.6 % of the budget in Karnali Province to a more robust but still troubling 41.2% in Bagmati Province. However, it is unclear whether these projections were met in the previous fiscal years, nor is

there reliable data for all provinces or consistency in how these values are calculated.

Provincial sources of OSR are limited to vehicle taxes, house and land registration fees, and a tax on entertainment and advertising of which 40–60% is earmarked for local governments. Though provincial OSR has been rising nominally, there have been no major policy changes to reduce dependency on federal fiscal transfers, which are expected to fall due to the pandemic economy.

Despite an early focus on developing institutions, procedures, and management capacity for their new fiscal responsibilities, the provinces have still been unable to spend more than 70% of their annual budgets, on average, and most of this spending is done in a rush in the last fiscal quarter. Given the lack of progress on procurement-system reforms at all levels of government, this situation is unlikely to change in the latest budget cycle.

Inconsistency and incoherence in planning and budgeting are not limited to the provinces, however. All three levels of government have encroached on the jurisdictions of others in key areas such as revenue, healthcare, education, and infrastructure development. Local governments have an exclusive mandate to manage secondary education, yet federal funding of the Education Development and Coordination Unit locks in federal control over the hiring and transfer of teachers and the development of local education materials. Similarly, the federal government, through its budgeting practices, maintains control over the Department of Local Infrastructure, the National Rural Transportation Improvement Program, the Suspension Bridge Division, and small irrigation projects around the country, which by their nature would be better managed at the local level.

Following years of conflict and unrest, Nepal broke with its long history of rule from the center and established a federal system to better serve its diverse population. But without effective fiscal management at the subnational level, federalism cannot ultimately deliver on its promises. As the fate of the country’s federal restructuring hangs in the balance, swift changes are needed, or the functional autonomy of the provinces will remain a distant dream.

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Ideology Vs Cult

Not renewing membership, 50000 active members of NC have expressed their frustration about the 14th General Convention

BY A CORRESPONDENT

As its founding member and ideologue late B.P. Koirala said Nepali Congress will be irrelevant as a political party once it gives up its ideological liberal democracy, patriotism and socialism.

During his lifetime, Nepali Congress maintained its space as a centrist party, not embracing the Communists and Rightist forces. Thus, Koirala used to face a harsh criticism from both.

The unbundling of Nepali Congress has started following his death. From its centrist role, Nepali Congress aligned with communist forces to overthrow Panchayat system.

Despite aligning with communists, Nepali Congress somehow retained its ideological base. After signing the 12-points in 2006 with Maoist rebels, Nepali Congress gave up all its ideals including constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy.

Under the leadership of late GP Koirala, Nepali Congress has completely sided with communist forces even proclaiming the new constitution directing to socialism. As NC continues to deviate from its stand, it has gradually turned into a small partner of communist parties.

Nepali Congress leader Sher Bahadur Deuba is leading the current

government. However, it is surviving under the mercy of Maoist Center. As NC is holding its 14th General Convention, Nepal's political spectrum is under a complete control of communist ideologies.

As opposition front is controlled by K.P. Sharma Oli led CPN-UML, the reins of the government is in the hands of Maoist Center, Radical Communist Front and CPN-UML faction led by Madhav Kumar Nepal.

As Nepali Congress party is in power under its leader Sher Bahadur Deuba, the number of people seeking membership in the party has increased. However, the old trained ideologues and workers are deserting the party making it merely a bunch of crowd.

Ideology Vs Personality

As Nepali Congress General Convention is coming closer, many



As the date for 14th General Convention is approaching, Nepali Congress workers are facing tough choices regarding ideology vs individual personality cult. Frustrated by policies adopted by Nepali Congress, many old members, who have a long association with the party, have already quit the party.

new comers including from B.P. Koirala's family members have announced to contest the post of party president against Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba.

Along with Deuba, Dr Shekhar Koirala, Dr. Shashanka Koirala, Ram Chandra Poudel and Gopal Man Shrestha have announced the candi-



dacy for the president.

However, none of them have shown their difference in terms of ideology. On the ideological front, all the candidates have the same agenda calling to strengthen the relations with current change.

The party suspended die-hard NC leaders like Govinda Raj Joshi welcoming many leaders from communist front and RPP. Ideologically, all the candidates do not stand for the vision and ideology of the party. However, all of them stand for personality cult.

NC Membership

As a large number of party workers have already deserted the party, there is a rush of people acquiring the membership. Distributing 852,711 active membership, Central Active Membership Probe Committee of the Nepali Congress submitted its report to party president Sher Bahadur Deuba, who is also the Prime Minister. The party granted the active membership in view of the party's upcoming 14th general convention scheduled for September 1 to 4.

Committee coordinator Ramesh Lekhak submitted the report to the party President during a meeting of the office-bearers of the party's central committee held at Prime Minister Deuba's private residence in Budhanilkantha.

The seven-member probe committee accomplished the task and

handed over the report to party President and Prime Minister Deuba, one and a half months after its formation. However, Kalyan Gurung, one of the members of the probe committee wrote a note

of dissent on the report. The largest number of active members is in the age group between 41 and 60 years. According to the report submitted by the probe panel, the number of active members aged between 41 and 60 stands at 328,234 (37.3%).

Similarly, 249,774 (28.38%) of those who received active membership are from the age group of 26-40 years and 40,427 (4.59%) are aged between 16 and 25 years.

Likewise, the number of active members aged between 60 and 75 years stand at 83,010 (9.43%) and those aged above 75 years are 11,783 (1.33%). According to the Committee, the party has renewed the active mem-

As many as 5,000 complaints were lodged at the Committee that had it not looked into the files of active membership of Bara and Saptari districts. There are still disputes over active membership in 125 wards.

Lekhak said some disputes were forwarded to the Central Working Committee as the committee could not resolve the issue.

Meanwhile, the office bearers' meeting also discussed the calendar of 14th general convention. Its ward convention slated for July 27 has already been postponed.

NC joint general secretary Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat informed that that meeting would fix the schedule for local level general convention of the party. He said remaining disputes over active membership would be resolved by the party's top leaders.

In its over 70 year's long history, Nepali Congress Party is now facing a challenge to retain its ideological stand. The party can survive and even thrive under the leadership of any leader including prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. However, as its founder leader B.P. Koirala said the party will be no more than a bunch of crowd rather than a party of ideology having the backing of a large segment of population.



bership of 409,003 and distributed new active membership to 443,678 persons.

Student Assessment

Time To Put On A Thinking Cap!

With more than one year of living with the COVID-19 pandemic, lingering confusion as to how the exams should be held shows lag in preparation and negligence from the concerned authority.

“As much as I am prepared to appear for the exam, I am equally stressed as I have to sit for a 3-hour long exam surrounded by so many students in a class” said Sandesh Shahi, a science student in Herald College, Basundhara. This is a concern for many other students like Sandesh who are appearing for the upcoming grade 12 board examinations.

The new corona virus infections have started surging in recent days with more than thousand new cases a day. The United Nations alerted that Delta variant is more dangerous and transmissible which may even break through protections afforded by the vaccines. Medical experts also have already warned that children may be more prone to the infection. In such unprecedented times, the National Examination Board announced that it would conduct grade 12 exams physically from the 15th of August. On one hand it is absolutely crucial to maintain education quality, and to follow physical exam mechanism to measure students’ actual performance, but on the other hand, given the present situation, it is also imperative to shield students from potential risk. Although the government has stated that it would follow a strict COVID -19 safety guidelines in the examination centers, it is yet to think of ways to ensure the examination centers are hundred percent safe.

At the time of this writing, the cancellation of the exam is uncertain, however, if new COVID-19 cases rise in the next few days, the probability of exams being called off is high. In such case, the government might hand over the responsibility of performance evaluation to the respective schools like it did last year. According to experts, such practice increased questions over its fairness and authenticity as some schools inflated the obtained grades. For instance, students scoring 4 GPA in SEE examination drastically increased by 88 percent last year as compared to the year before that when examination was evaluated externally. Schools inflated grading not only raised eyebrows over deflated education practice, but it also raised questions on students’ true potential.

Both the options – conducting the exams in-person or allowing the educational institutes to self-evaluate - are fraught with challenges. With more than one year of living with the COVID-19 pandemic, lingering confusion as to how the exams should be held shows lag in preparation and negligence from the concerned authority. The government by now should have already

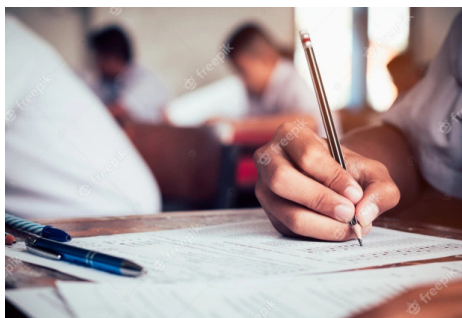


BY ASHIKA SHARMA

come up with a concrete and sustainable plan to conduct a safe exam environment for students or should have thought about other alternative ways to measure students’ performance based on last years’ learning.

Irrespective of the government’s decision regarding the grade 12 examination, it is high time for the government to come up with a COVID-19 examination strategy and policy to make it more sustainable. Upon the first option, if in-person examinations are to be held, the government could opt for the approach adopted by Bangladesh and India. As a mechanism to lessen the transmission virus and ensure effective grading mechanism, Bangladesh and India modified their examination style. In Bangladesh, students were taught shortened syllabus and questions were built based only on the rationalized syllabus to reduce exam duration. Similarly, in few states of India like Jharkhand, Haryana, and Delhi the education board planned to conduct board exams in two phases, question paper were modified to Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) to limit the duration of the test to just 90 minutes, and increased the number of exam centers to control the crowd.

Upon the second option, if schools are to be given the responsibility to grade students based on the class performance, and also to put an end to the issue of biased marking, the education board and the government should come up with



a standard guideline to grade students’ performance like in India where class 10 students would be graded on the basis of their performance in internal exams, pre-boards and practical exams. For grade 12, students marks will be given not only on the basis of internal/pre board, but also on their performance in the final exams of class 10 and 11 with the weightage of 40:30:30 respectively. In addition to assessing performance internally by schools, there should also be a proper documentation of student’s homework, attendance, and class participation.

With the anticipated third wave of COVID-19 pandemic around the corner, there is an urgency to immediately resolve the issue of examining students’ performance with a focused sustainable solution.

Here's How Governments Can Reduce The Impacts Of Asia's Devastating Flash Floods

Flash floods have increased and become more unpredictable, and their toll on lives and livelihoods is growing as well. There is much we still don't know about how to manage floods, but there are key policy actions we can take now.

In Asia and the Pacific, we have entered the season – June through August – for flash floods and landslides. The number of flash floods is increasing, breaking historical records, and bringing with them the associated human, economic, and infrastructure losses and damage, according to the global disaster database EM-DAT.

It is estimated that in 2018 alone, the region incurred flash flood damage of about \$3 trillion. Many floods are small and spread across remote locations worldwide, making estimates of their impact difficult, so this might just represent a fraction of the actual figure. Mountainous countries like Afghanistan, the People's Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, and Sri Lanka tend to top the list of countries highly impacted by flash floods.

Tracking the impact of floods is complex because they come in many forms and for myriad reasons. Flash floods are often triggered by excessive rain on mountain slopes, sudden release of water from reservoirs or other reasons. They can occur in small watersheds at any time of the day and are dangerous because they combine incredible velocity with destructive power.

In mountain regions, communities living in lower areas might not even notice heavy rain but could still suffer from flash floods. Changing rainfall patterns cause landslides and flash floods in communities that might have never before experienced such disasters.

Flash floods frequently cause landslides in hilly and



BY RABINDRA P. OSTI

mountainous areas and vice versa. For settlements in a coastal area near a mountainous region, a typhoon or torrential rainfall coinciding with a tidal surge will also trigger high magnitude flash floods. Triggers for flash floods include other natural causes (e.g., glacial lakes outbursts), and artificial dam breaches.

There are few studies conducted to understand the cause and effect of the increasing trend of flash floods. One of the most widely blamed factors is the increased frequency of typhoons and torrential rains. Human encroachment within river corridors or flood plains and dumping of construction debris and other waste in rivers are other factors reducing the flow of rivers, resulting in frequent and high magnitude flash floods.

Flash floods are not only the result of the rainfall-runoff relationship but also the consequence of other geophysical and human-induced processes within the watershed, including land-use changes, urbanization and population growth.

Millions of people continue to live in informal settlements on the banks of rivers, which are geologically very fragile. In general, many of these small watersheds and rivers have lost their natural characteristics over time due to rapid land-cover/land-use changes, which ultimately increase the rainfall-runoff and sediment flow from the watershed while diminishing natural protection.

Unless the right policies are formulated, laws enforced and actions are taken, flash floods will be a major obstacle to maintaining social stability and economic progress in the region.

Interpretation of cause and effects of flash flood disasters are often politically, technically, and strategically biased, which confuses the process of making timely invest-

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ment decisions. But there are approaches that can be taken, such as the following:

Harmonize principles such as integrated watershed and water resources management, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk management. Risk management should be an essential part of policies and plans. This is easier to achieve at the local level.

A flood footprint and accountability mechanism should be promoted within small watersheds. This helps promote upstream-downstream coordination and enforce disaster laws and regulations.

Local governments urgently need greater expertise on flood management, both on the technical and non-

all levels.

Hazard zone identification should not only be done based on historical hydrological records and observations. It should capture other phenomena in the watershed as well, if possible.

Spatial planning (including land use, urban, transport, and environmental planning) plays a key role. Some conventional activities such as slope farming requiring frequent land preparation therefore yielding more sediment production can be replaced by high-value and long-term fruit and orchid production with proper food security planning.

“Green-gray” infrastructure like retention basins, wetlands, vegetation shields, sediment traps, floodwalls,



technical aspects, and in each and every stage of the risk management cycle, which is greatly lacking in the region.

Preparedness and response capacity at local communities should equally be promoted through a community-based approach. This includes building community-to-community coordination. For example, if there is heavy rainfall and a flash flood is likely in an upstream community, that community can inform the downstream community and activate an alert system—which should be installed.

Rainfall forecasts, flood forecasts, and early warning systems give different meanings at different times. Therefore, clear boundaries are needed. With the increased use of high-level technologies, regular watershed monitoring and flash flood early warning systems can be enhanced at

diversion channels, retaining walls, and other measures can improve the geo-morphology of the mountain rivers including slope stabilization and overall flash flood risk management.

Unless the right policies are formulated, laws enforced and actions are taken, flash floods will be a major obstacle to maintaining social stability and economic progress in the region.

Flash floods are increasing. Our understanding and actions to address them need to increase as well.

Source: ADB Blog

Rabindra P. Osti is Senior Water Resources Specialist, East Asia Department, ADB

TAMAKOSI V HYDROPOWER PROJECT

Managing Finance

With an agreement with EPF to invest Rs.12 Billion, 99.8 MW Tamakosi Fifth Hydropower Project has secured a major loan

BY A CORRESPONDENT

As a cascade project of 456 MW Upper Tamakosi Project, Tamakosi V is a financially attractive project. Thus, a number of financial institutions have shown interest to invest on it.

With huge deposit capital in its hand, Employees Provident Fund (EPF) has been investing money in the hydropower sector in collaboration with Nepal Electricity Authority.

As a major investor of Upper Tamakosi Project, it is natural for EPF to invest in the cascade project with higher and early return.

Employees Provident Fund (EPF), Nepal Electricity Authority and Tamakosi Hydropower Company have jointly signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding to invest loan for the construction of 99.8 MW Tamakosi Fifth Hydropower Project.

In presence of Minister of Energy Pampha Bhusal, NEA's managing director Hitendra Dev Shakya, CEO of company Nasibman Pradhan and Provident Fund's administrator Tulsi Prasad Gautam signed MoU.

Tamakosi fifth is a cascade project of Upper Tamakosi and the project will be constructed under People's Hydropower Program.

With an estimated cost of over 16 billion rupees, the Fund

will provide loan of over 70 percent Rs.11.33 billion. Remaining fund will be managed through equity and public share.

As a cascade project, the project will not construct dam and other

DPR and EIA of the project have already approved and the project has already received the generation license in 2016.



infrastructure. The water coming from 456 MW Upper Tamakosi Project will be diverted to generation house through 8 KM tunnel.

The power generated by the project will be connected to central grid through 2 kilometer long 220 kV transmission lines.

Under the financial support from Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), additional EIA has been currently undergoing. The pre-construction work is now undergoing with aim to complete the project in 2024.

The Inspiring Story Of Booker T. Washington: From Slave To Advisor To US Presidents



BY PURNA B. NEPALI, PHD.

Introduction

Booker T. Washington was born a slave but became an advisor to presidents. He was born in 1856, on a small farm Virginia, USA. He advised President Theodore Roosevelt in 1905, and President William Howard Taft in 1909. Washington was an educator, civil rights leader, and promoter of black entrepreneurship and business.

Washington had a famous dispute with renowned black scholar W.E.B. DuBois. DuBois heavily criticized Washington for political accommodations with whites and pursuing his own interest. DuBois challenged Washington's leadership, and instead emphasized protest politics for larger integration and restructuring of American society.

In my opinion, both Washington's and DuBois's strategies had strengths. DuBois pursued political rights to dismantle structural racism. Washington emphasized self-help and economic prosperity for socio-economic progress. His multi-dimensional contributions can be an appropriate strategy for empowering people from marginalized communities in Nepal.

Background

After the U.S. Civil War in the 1860s, freed Black slaves faced marginalization from slavery, genocidal dispossession, and capitalist exploitation. In the late 1800s, lynching, brutal, and inhumane attacks against black people and dispossession of their land and property pervaded the

southern states in the US.

The situation of blacks in Alabama, Washington's home state, was worse than in other states. It was miserable because of industrial-scale cotton plantation slavery.

Alabama was one of the first seven states to withdraw from the Union at the beginning of the American Civil War. Slaves accounted for 48% of Alabama's population, and free Blacks only 3%.

Washington faced many ups and downs during his life. In his famous autobiography, *Up from Slavery*, he wrote that he did not want to recall even a single instance of his childhood from the miserable slavery period.

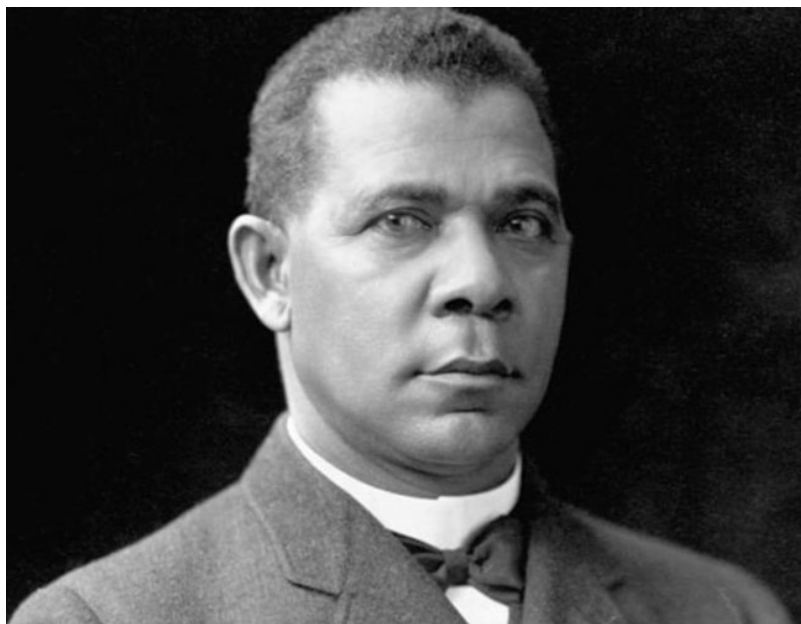
Washington's unique journey was full of struggles. He traces his journey from slave to an educator. He credits his success to education. Washington details his development as an educator and founder of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

In 1901, there was a remarkable White House dinner President Theodore Roosevelt invited Washington to dine at the executive mansion with his family.

It was the big news in the media -- 'the former slave black man and the sitting US President' Some media covered it as a scandal.

The Missouri Sedalia Sentinel published on its front page a poem entitled *Niggers* in

the White House, which ended suggesting that either the president's daughter should marry Washington or his son with one of Washington's relatives. Senator Benjamin Till-



man of South Carolina said "we shall have to kill a thousand niggers to get them back in their places." All this evidence depicted the prevailing racial prejudice and stereotypes during that day.

But the ordinary dinner became an inspiring sign of big hopes in the post-Civil War American history and politics. The dinner cultivated an island of hope for all freed African Americans. The Northern white newspapers presses remarked upon Washington's accomplishments. The dinner conveyed the message that Roosevelt was everybody's president. The black community responded positively -- Washington became a hero of the Negro race.

Washington pioneered three strategies for African American emancipation: i) pragmatic education, ii) black entrepreneurship, and iii) non-violent campaign for civil rights.

Educational Philosophy

Washington articulated a unique philosophy of education: he emphasized not only classical teaching and learning, but also practical life and work.

In 1881, he established a technical institute to educate and empower recently freed African Americans with vocational education and entrepreneurship. Later it became the renowned Historically Black University called Tuskegee University.

Tuskegee provided education in technical fields. For instance, students worked on a self-supporting farm, rearing animals, and cultivating needed products. All of Washington's works were guided by his educational approach. "Education is not a thing apart from life—not a 'system,' nor a philosophy; it is direct teaching how to live and how to work," he wrote.

Tuskegee often faced huge funding crises. It was underfunded by state and local governments. Hence, Washington found creative ways to fund Tuskegee, such as by developing a relationship with a wealthy department store owner Julius Rosenwald.

Entrepreneurship

Washington also emphasized the transformative power of Black entrepreneurship. He pioneered the establishment of the National Negro Business League and mobilized a nationwide coalition of progressive middle-class whites and leaders of philanthropic institutions. He stressed that black people improve themselves through education, industrial training, and business ownership. Washington argued that political activity alone cannot make a man free, and people must have property, industry, skill, economy, intelligence, and character.

Washington's strategies about Black entrepreneurship can be an asset for thinking about Dalit entrepreneurship and economic upliftment in Nepal. Indeed, Dalit and indigenous

Nepalis have great and hidden future potentials.

Strategy

Washington led the civil rights movement in the southern US for the emancipation of black people.

Washington adopted strategies such as developing allies with progressive elites, convincing power centers for rights of black people. These multi-pronged strategies created tangible public policy influence.

Crucially, he believed that African Americans should concentrate all energies on industrial education, accumulation of wealth, and social upliftment. Washington's strategy was for making African Americans economically prosperous and self-reliant by self-help and entrepreneurship.

Washington's emphasis on self-help for economic prosperity was not fundamentally incompatible with DuBois's emphasis on the fight for political rights and reform. Hence, balanced, and mixed approaches and strategies are needed for the overall empowerment of the marginalized communities.

Conclusion

Washington devoted his life to African American people and is still considered as one of the most successful African Americans. He effectively translated the words from his autobiography into his life: "We all should rise, above the clouds of ignorance, narrowness, and selfishness."

Washington's multi-dimensional and powerful contributions to the emancipation of African Americans are relevant for marginalized people of Nepal. These contributions include equity in higher education, entrepreneurship of marginalized communities through technical and vocational education and training. The multi-pronged strategies and interventions by developing with progressive allies would be instrumental for strategic influence on public policy and the legal system in Nepal.

Through tactful and great efforts of mobilizing privileged whites, developing allies and alliances, and exploiting their networks, Washington was able to make benefits for disadvantaged communities. Washington demonstrated exemplary ways of empowering his people despite adverse conditions. He proved his statement that "Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way."

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Partnership Summit 2021

PHDCCI's India-Nepal Centre Hosted India-Nepal Investment And Development Partnership Summit 2021

BY A CORRESPONDENT

As the economic rebounding is the need of the hour to brave a new world in post-pandemic times, under the aegis of its India-Nepal Centre (INC) and in association with the Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI), Investment Board Nepal (IBN) and State Bank of India (SBI), PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) has hosted India-Nepal Investment & Development Partnership Summit 2021.

The Summit was organized with an aim to bring the important stakeholders of bilateral economic cooperation on a common idea platform from both India and Nepal to discuss some of the most crucial aspects concerning investment and development partnership between two countries.

The session was attended by the key policymakers from both the government and industry to ideate the way forward for an ever closer cooperation between India and Nepal on the key issues including: Indian Investment and Development Partnership in Nepal: Are they game changers in the long run?; Covid-19 & changing scenario of Investment and Development Partnership in Nepal; Strategizing Nepal's economic development with Investment and Development Partnership from India; Re-prioritising production, employment and inclusive development; Finding an alternative development paradigm for Nepal

"Nepal is on the path of generating economic prosperity by creating robust legal and policy framework aimed at providing a conducive business environment for the private sector as one of the main pillars of economic

development," said Sushil Bhatta, CEO, Investment Board Nepal and Chief Guest/Keynote Speaker of the Summit. He added that the pandemic has changed the fundamentals of investment priorities; however, the cooperation between India and Nepal is still robust and promising. He laid stress on the energy and infrastructure as two main areas where Indian investment in Nepal has created a very positive developmental momentum in Nepal, and for making South Asia a "Growth Hub", the unique investment and development partnership between two countries should stay on the path of progression.

K V Rajan, Chair, India-Nepal Centre, PHDCCI & India's Former Ambassador to Nepal reflected on the needs for closer cooperation with India and Nepal, so the youth of the region should get fair career opportunities at their homeland. For making it happen, he cited the critically important role of liberal trade regime and active interface between the government and industry. Nirvana Chaudhary, Chair, India-Nepal Centre (Nepal), PHDCCI-CNI has said that India continues to be the most important trade and development partner of Nepal. Such economy of scale is hard to find in any other bilateral economic relations with Nepal, he said that startup ecosystems, fintech and remittance are the areas where the India-Nepal Centre will work with the partners like industry chambers, IBN and other government institutions.

Ram Prasad Subedi, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Nepal in India has counted stakeholder's role as decisive in both investment

and development partnership. He said that India has been and will be a formidable investment and development partner of Nepal, and together, both countries should explore tapping the low-hanging fruits in Nepal. This will be a win-win situation for both countries.

Abhishek Upadhyay, First Secretary & Commercial Representative, Embassy of India in Nepal lauded the theme of the Summit and reassured about India's unwavering commitment for the development of Nepal through investment and development partnership assistance.

He said that India continues to be the largest trading partner of Nepal, despite the unprecedented disruption with Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, trade flow has gone up between India and Nepal. He appreciated the pioneering works of SBI in Nepal and now opening of its "Nepal Help Desk" that should help the businesses on both sides, he acknowledged a vital role of PHDCCI's India-Nepal Centre, CNI and IBN in fostering such business initiatives.

Anukool Bhatnagar, CGM, SBI & Former MD & CEO, Nepal SBI Bank Ltd (NSBL) has shared about the recently-launched "SBI Nepal Desk" and with a mission to support businesses to expand in both countries. He said, "We greatly value our ties with the institution like PHDCCI's India-Nepal Centre and the industry chambers in Nepal and I am inviting them to engage with us and avail our services in Nepal. In a bid to strengthen the universe of bilateral business partnership, we have started

the SBI Nepal Desk that should cater the businesses as well as the Nepali Diaspora living in different parts of the country including in India's northern states. He said that despite the major disruption with Covid-19, the development works have been in full swing and this will help the economy to bounce back."

"Indeed, in the wake of Covid-19 outbreak, lives and livelihoods have been adversely impacted in an

"For making a robust startup ecosystem, Nepal should work closely with the industry counterparts in India where the startups are playing a major role in the economic development of the country. He said that PHDCCI can be a partner for making positive entrepreneurial changes and welcomes collaborations with counterparts like CNI," Anil Khaitan, Former President, PHDCCI.

"Even when the emerging scenario is full of uncertainties, it is sure-

Sanyal, Secretary General, PHDCCI while summing up the proceedings.

In partnership with the Embassies on both sides, industry associations like CNI and other industry stakeholders, PHDCCI's Bilateral Economic Think Tank "India-Nepal Centre" has been working as an Apex Industry Chamber of India with a very deep presence in Nepal. Both at policy and grassroots levels, India-Nepal Centre have been working for



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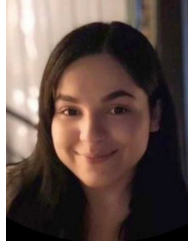
unprecedented manner. As the crisis has global nature, India and Nepal are severely impacted as well with the crisis created by global pandemic. To mitigate the economic losses and ensure rebounding, PHDCCI's India-Nepal Centre has been relentlessly working and making positive outcomes for the greater common goods," said Pradeep Multani, Senior Vice President, PHDCCI.

ly a matter of great satisfaction how people are helping each other and the government and industry playing their roles in mitigating the unprecedented risk and challenges. Moving forward, we are trying our level best to keep India's inclusive growth momentum on. In the process, we are very much open to engage with the industry fraternity in Nepal to carry forward the mission of creating "Shared Prosperity" in the South Asian region," said Saurabh

fostering economic cooperation and development partnership between India and Nepal.

The Summit was curated and coordinated by Atul K Thakur, Nodal Coordinator, India-Nepal Centre, PHDCCI, and attended by among others, Praveena Kala, Director, Paramount Cables Ltd; O P Choudhary, DGM (SME), SBI; Vivek Gupta, Chief Manager, SBI; Aditya Tripathi, Joint Secretary, PHDCCI.

Foreign Aid And Politics: A 21st Century Partnership



BY MARYAM SRYOKA

International politics is a persistent struggle for power, not necessarily to create constant open warfare, but to maintain a state of anarchy, and accumulate as much power as possible, using it to defend and pursue their national interest. Donors are usually driven by this mindset, whether on purpose or not (Whelan, 2004).

The wealthiest nations who have vast interest in the poorer nations they assist, to further reach national, economic and ideological intentions where they regularly forget the main aim, development. Good intentions might have damaging effects from time to time. Foreign aid has always had geopolitical ramifications (Sugema, 2005), and now more than ever it is perceptible. While employing aid to address a variety of different goals, including military assistance.

According to aid architects, foreign aid has never represented a significant expenditure for donor countries as a percent of their total government budget; it is often a substantial share of the government budget and even the GDP of some recipients. Most donor countries have not reached the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) goal of allocating 0.7% of their GDP for economic development aid (Tingley, 2012).

National security consideration always remained at the heart of foreign aid. However, after 9/11, the relation between national security and foreign aid changed to take a greater proportion in the US foreign aid. This has also impacted on other bilateral aid flows to developing countries.

In the case of Iraq, we have received a large volume of foreign aid that played a crucial role in the recovery of the economy and reestablishing the infrastructure. Still, the deeply rooted problems, before, during and after the American invasion have no end in sight. Reminding each and every Iraqi, that the dream of comfortable living is far from coming true.

Despite a great deal of talk about ending the suffering of minorities to remain in their ancestral homelands, they are still facing unfulfilled promises and an unprecedented impact of foreign governments' refusal to provide aid directly to those in need, survivors of genocide, leaving them trapped facing deep frustration, to a point where the world seemed to be already witnessing their disappearance.

The extinction of a nation could not be averted once their numbers had declined below the critical level and that level was reached when ISIS swept through the region, following severe political and economic consequences before the potentially catastrophic end that we all are expecting. The situation is bleak and has deteriorated significantly in the past six years. A genocide following a complete civil collapse and eventually a pandemic.

We need a new approach to foreign aid strengthening the citizen-state compact by helping to improve public accountability. Aid must promote enabling policy and legal environment for civic space where citizen groups can advance businesses and growth. Foreign aid should also play an important role in strengthening the voice and participation of citizens in developing countries to demand transparency and accountability from their governments and make best use of limited resources responsibly.

Beyond North-South collaboration, South-South collaboration should be explored to promote knowledge, technology transfer, trade and investments for development by Global South for advancing SDGs. Regional integration will help mutual learning and growth without depending heavily on Global North for foreign aid.

Beyond North-South collaboration, South-South collaboration should be explored to promote knowledge, technology transfer, trade and investments for development by Global South for advancing SDGs. Regional integration will help mutual learning and growth without depending heavily on Global North for foreign aid.

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Tourism Attraction

More private-sector investment in the Annapurna Conservation Area can attract high-spending tourists to support post-COVID economic recovery

BY A CORRESPONDENT

As Nepal's tourism sector is one of hardest hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, there are greater concerns over how to revive the industry.

However, a recent report published by IFC has shown that there is a way for an early recovery. Although the report is based on small pocket areas, it has shown that the project can be used for broader purposes.

With increased private sector investment, Annapurna Conservation area is a great attraction for internal and external tourists in Nepal.

Increased private-sector investment in the Annapurna Conservation Area could bring in more high-spending tourists to help boost the local economy in a post-COVID market, according to a new IFC report.

The report—Architectural and Cultural Heritage Tourism Products in Nepal: An Assessment of New Private Sector Investment Opportunities in the Annapurna Conservation Area—examines the opportunities for investors to capitalize on the area's triple offering of landscape, architecture, and culture.

The Annapurna Conservation Area now caters to two main visitor groups: Hindu and Buddhist pilgrims visiting Muktinath, an important site for both religions, and adventure tourists—hikers, trekkers, and mountaineers. The Annapurna Area has long been the most popular trekking destination in the country,

accounting for roughly 60 percent of all trekking holidays.

The report says the area could attract higher value tourists who could spend about 20 percent more if there was a greater action to boost accommodation. While there are over 1000 hotels, lodges, and tea shops, these cater to low-budget travelers. In order to appeal to higher-value tourists, the report lays out four potential investment concepts: convert-

comfortable accommodation in the Himalayan region, as has been the case in Bhutan,” said IFC’s Resident Representative in Nepal Babacar S. Faye. “In view of the gigantic losses that Nepal’s tourism industry has suffered due to the pandemic, it should create a new roadmap to align with the new market reality. It has the opportunity to attract more high-end tourists, a move that will impact the

supply chain, and have positive ripple effects on the country’s economy.”

To attract higher spending tourists and sustain local communities engaged in tourism, the report makes it clear that more private sector investment is crucial. Tourism in Nepal has been the hardest hit sector by

COVID-19 impacts. An estimated 230,000 jobs are at risk, 20,000 tour and trekking guides unemployed, and 2,600 trekking agencies closed, amounting to a loss of around \$460 million to the country’s GDP.

The study is part of IFC’s continued support to Nepal’s tourism sector as it struggles to recover from the pandemic.



ing old, abandoned houses in a street in Tukuche village into boutique hotels; redeveloping an abandoned, heritage house in Jharkot into a boutique luxury hotel; establishing a network of lodges along the Seven-Passes trail in Manang; and setting up a coffee shop franchise in Lower Mustang and Manang.

“High spending tourists are willing to pay premium prices for

Epochs Of History

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-vie 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 satisfaction that the British had been displaced in America presented



BY HEMANG DIXIT

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 Negroes, 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 chamchas, dancing to various distant tunes whilst we ordinary Nepal 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

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