

DAAG, Kathmandu, Regd. No. 148151063/064  
ISSN-2091-0711



**VIEWPOINT**  
Dr. Tilak Rawal



**OPINION**  
Dipak Gyawali



**ENVIRONMENT**  
Batu Uprety

NEW

# SPOTLIGHT

[www.spotlightnepal.com](http://www.spotlightnepal.com)

Oct.- 08, 2021

FORTNIGHTLY

KUL MAN GHISING

## A Long March

INSIDE



**GOVERNMENT**  
Shaky Coalition



**NEPAL'S ECONOMY**  
Confronting Crisis



**DEVELOPMENT**  
Chalfal Chautari Giving Voice to Voiceless





## Trishuli Jal Vidhyut Company Limited

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

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

##### Hydrology

Catchment Area: - 4577 km<sup>2</sup>

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

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

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

Lowest Bed Level: - 714.20 m

Intake: - Bell Mouth Type

**Approach Pressure Conduit**

Type: - Box Culvert

Length: - 243.47 m + 40 m

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

**Headrace Tunnel**

Shape: - Horseshoe

Length: - 3805.48 m

Diameter: - 5.1 m ~ 6.1 m

**Adit Tunnel**

Shape: - Inverted D

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

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

**Surge Tank**

Type: - Restricted Orifice

Diameter: - 15.0 m

Height: - 39.3 m

##### Penstock

Length: - 185.33m

Diameter: - 4.2

Thickness: - 18mm

**Powerhouse**

Type: - Surface

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

**Tailrace Conduit**

Type: - RCC

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

**Turbine**

Type: - Vertical axis Francis

Capacity: - 2 X 19.715 MW

**Generator**

Type: - 3 Phase Synchronous

Capacity: - 2 X 22.7047 MVA

**Transformer**

Type: - 3 Phase Oil Immersed Outdoor ONAN

Capacity: - 2 X 23 MVA

Voltage: - 11kV / 132kV

**Transmission Line**

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



### Editor and Publisher

Keshab Poudel

### Contributor

Sabine Pretsch

### Design/Layout

Sahil Mokthan, 9863022025

### Marketing Manager

Madan Raj Poudel

Tel: 9841320517

Nabin Kumar Maharjan

Tel: 9841291404

### Editorial Office

Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 977-1-4530250

### E-mail

spotlightnepal@gmail.com

P.O.Box: 7256

### Website

www.spotlightnepal.com

### Kathmandu DAO Regd. No.

148/11/063/64

### Central Region Postal Regd.

No. 36/067/068

### US Library of Congress Catalogue

No. 91-905060, ISSN : 2091-0711

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

### Printing

Megha Offset Printing Press P. Ltd.,

Dhapasi, Kathmandu

Tel. : 977-1-4363624

As Nepal is in a festive season, with Dashain and Tihar coming closer, people have been moving from one place to another to receive blessings from their elders. Unlike last year, this year there is a certain level of relief for the people as the COVID-19 pandemic is more or less under control. However, one cannot be sure that the pandemic is under control given the nature of the virus and its capability to infect hundreds in a moment. As the biggest festival, Dashain has its own meaning in Nepal. This festival is also regarded as a festival of reunion in the families. Suffering from the pandemic, most of the poor and vulnerable people have been facing severe hardship and difficult times. Nepal and United States have recently observed 75 years of establishment of diplomatic relationship. In all those years, many changes have happened at the global level. However, Nepal-US relations have remained cordial and friendly. As one of the largest supporters of modernization of Nepal, the U.S has immensely contributed to building institutions in the entire sector and provided much needed support to establish basic and advanced institutions in health, education, agriculture, transport, governance and other sectors. In this issue, we have, however, decided to cover NEA MD Kul Man Ghising's second tenure and his march to strengthen and improve the power supply as our cover story. We discuss the initiatives taken by MD Ghising in a short time. As all Nepalese are celebrating the Dashain, New Spotlight Family wishes its patrons and readers Happy Dashain!

**Keshab Poudel**



# CONTENT

<b>NEWSNOTES</b>	3
<b>BUSINESS BRIEF</b>	6
<b>VIEWPOINT</b> Dr. Tilak Rawal	8
<b>GOVERNMENT</b> Shaky Coalition	10
<b>OPINION</b> Dipak Gyawali	12
<b>ARTICLE</b> Hemang Dixit	15
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b> Batu Uprety	18
<b>NEPAL'S ECONOMY</b> Confronting Crisis	26
<b>ADB</b> Growth Forecast At 4.1%	28
<b>KATHMANDU DECLARATION</b> Resilient Development	29
<b>JAPAN'S SUPPORT</b> School Reconstruction	30
<b>DEVELOPMENT</b> Chalfal Chautari Giving Voice to Voiceless	32
<b>TRENDS</b> Reezan Poudel	35



COVERSTORY: KUL MAN GHISING: A Long March

20



CPN-UML: Preparing For Convention

14



SUMMIT COP26: Agenda 1.5 Degrees

16



## Newly Appointed German Ambassador Presented His Credentials

Newly appointed Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Nepal, Dr. Thomas Prinz, presented his credentials to Bidya Devi Bhandari at the presidential office on 30 September.

After presenting his credentials, Ambassador Prinz and President Bhandari discussed bilateral relations and the outcome of the German parliamentary elections.

“President Bhandari mentioned the important role of German Chancellor Angela Merkel in international politics and expressed her hope for the continued support of the German government in the development of Nepal” Ambassador Prinz said.



Germany and Nepal have maintained a friendly and particularly close relationship for more than six decades, not only for the two governments but also with regards to the German and Nepali

people. Germany has pledged EUR 34.4 million for Technical Cooperation and for Financial Cooperation until the year 2023 and 2025 respectively in the thematic areas of Health, Sustainable Economic Development and Energy Efficiency/Renewable Energy.

In times of COVID-19, Germany supported the people of Nepal in tackling the crisis. It provided medical supplies like ventilators, isolation tents, KN95 masks, pulse oximeters, surgical masks, disinfectants, and other items through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Also, additional funding of almost EUR 11 million has been provided from the Emergency COVID-19 Support Program of the German Government to increase and strengthen the resilience of the Nepali health sector in combating the pandemic and to mitigate social and economic impacts.

Ambassador Prinz and Mrs. Anuza Prinz expressed their heartfelt gratitude for the warm welcome and stated that it is a privilege to serve as the Ambassador of Germany to Nepal. Ambassador Prinz further expressed that he will remain committed to ensuring that the positive trajectory of bilateral relations between Nepal and Germany will remain intact and flourish further during his tenure.

## French Ambassador To Nepal Gilles Bourbao Presented His Letters Of Credence

The new French Ambassador to Nepal Gilles Bourbao presented his letters of credence to President of Nepal Bidya Devi Bhandari, earlier today at an official ceremony organized at the Office of the President.

On the occasion, Ambassador Bourbao said, “It was an honour for me to present my letters of credence to the

Right Honourable President of Nepal today. I look forward to engaging with the Government of Nepal and with our Nepali friends from various walks of life to further strengthen the relations between our two countries which are ancient and built on trust.”

Before arriving in Nepal, Ambassador Bourbao was the Deputy Director for Financial Affairs at the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

Ambassador Bourbao has earlier served in Fez (Morocco), in Delhi (India), in Islamabad (Pakistan), in Baghdad (Iraq) etc. to name a few in various capacities.

Ambassador Bourbao is a career diplomat who began his diplomatic career in 1990.

He has been decorated with a Knight of the Legion of Honour, Knight of the National Order of Merit and speaks English, Spanish, Maghrebi Arabic, and Oriental Arabi



## Nepal And India Review Progress Of Post-Earthquake Reconstruction Projects I

Nepal and India held the Joint Project Monitoring Committee (JPMC) meeting on post-earthquake reconstruction projects in Kathmandu. The meeting was co-chaired by Anurag Srivastava, Joint Secretary (North), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and Sushil Chandra Tiwari, Secretary, National Reconstruction Authority, Government of Nepal.

The JPMC Mechanism was set up in August 2017 to monitor the progress of the Government of India-assisted post-earthquake reconstruction projects in Nepal. The meeting was attended by representatives of concerned Ministries, Departments and Agencies of the Government of Nepal, Officers and officials of the Government of India, Consultants and other stakeholders engaged in the implementation of the projects. The last JPMC meeting was held on 8th March 2020 in Kathmandu.

The meeting carried out a comprehensive review of the progress of the Government of India assisted post-earthquake reconstruction projects in housing, education, health and cultural heritage sectors in Nepal.





## NEWSNOTES

### KOICA Organized A Workshop On Integrated Planning Capacity Building

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has organized an integrated planning capacity building workshop as a part of its project in Dhulikhel Hospital.

According to a press release issued by KOICA, it has been supporting the project Empowering Rural Communities in Nepal through an Integrated Approach to Health and Income Growth from 2020 till 2025 with the total budget of USD 4.7 million.

The project is committed to improve the living standard of community people through enhanced access to outreach



centers, participatory health and rural development programs, and income generation opportunities.

On behalf of Dhulikhel Hospital – Kathmandu University Hospital, the Korean Institute for Development Strategy (KDS) and Yonsei Global Health Center (YGHC) have organized an Integrated Planning Capacity Building” workshop in Kathmandu for the project “Empowering Rural Communities in Nepal through an Integrated Approach to Health and Income Growth” on 27 and 28 September.

This workshop aimed to establish a strategic and integrated plan for health and income growth components of the Project which will be a steppingstone for the master plans for 3 project sites (Manekharka in Sindupalchowk district, Salambu in Kavrepalanchowk district and Puttar in Tanahun district)

With the participation from Project Steering Committee (PSC) member for the Project including Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, representatives from project area Provinces, District Coordination Committee, Kathmandu University and Dhulikhel Hospital, on the first day, 17 participants have explored the successful cases of community development programs on health and income growth presented by Good Neighbors International Nepal and Beautiful Coffee Nepal. On the second day, strategic and integrated plans for the Project were developed and presented. The workshop will be further extended to 3 project site workshops where detailed action plans will be developed based on the result.

The Government of the Republic of Korea has been supporting the Government of Nepal through KOICA in various areas of health, education, IT and rural development since 1991.

### Nepal, India To Further Strengthen Cooperation

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Narayan Khadka had a bilateral meeting with Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India, on the sidelines of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The two ministers agreed to further strengthen the existing cooperation between Nepal and India.

During the meeting, the two ministers discussed various matters of bilateral and multilateral interest and exchanged views on further promoting cooperation between the two countries.

Foreign Minister Dr. Khadka also thanked the Government of India for continued cooperation in the socio-economic development of Nepal.

According to a press release issued by Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations, New York, the two sides also discussed the challenges posed by the COVID-19 on the lives and livelihoods of peoples of both the countries and agreed to work together in fighting the virus.



### Foreign Secretary Paudyal Addresses Ministerial Conference

Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal said that the inherent quality of democracy provides the space for organizing societies in the best possible manner by managing diversity, dissention and differences and promoting tolerance and respect for others.

In his pre-recorded video address to the 10th Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies, foreign Secretary Paudyal further said that the inclusive, participatory and equitable democratic governance can stand resilient to any shocks and turmoil including political radicalism, economic downturns, disasters, and the pandemics like COVID-19.

Only through strong institutions we can protect and promote democracy and freedom, he emphasized.

While highlighting the inclusive multiparty democratic governance principles enshrined in the constitution of Nepal, he stated that equality and non-discrimination constitute the bedrock of our Constitution. Currently, women occupy 41 percent of the elected offices of Federal, Provincial and Local Bodies combined, he added.

The Conference was held virtually under the leader-





ship of the Romanian Presidency on the margins of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly and concluded with the adoption of a Ministerial Declaration. Nepal is a member of the Community of Democracy.

Amrit Bahadur Rai, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations addressed the High-level Side-event on “How changing availability of water from ice and snow will impact our societies?” held virtually on the margins of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly.

### Japan Congratulates Dr. Khadka As Foreign Minister Of Nepal

Ambassador of Japan to Nepal Kikuta Yutaka has expressed his sincere congratulations to Dr. Narayan Khadka on the appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal and extended his best wishes for the successful tenure of the Minister.

“Ambassador is delighted to note that Nepal and Japan have been sharing the long and deep history of mutual friendship and cooperation since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1956.

He conveys his hope to the Minister to cooperate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to commemorate the 120th anniversary for next year 2022, since the first eight Nepali students travelled to Japan for study in 1902. Ambassador Kikuta also indicates that Japan and Nepal are moving forward to overcome

this pandemic together even though the COVID-19 situation continues over the world.”

The Government of Japan donated about 1.6 million doses of Japanese-made COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine for Nepal through COVAX facility, and they have been actively used for the vaccination campaign which may contribute to the recovery and progress of post-COVID society and economy of Nepal. Moreover, the Government of Japan announced its decision to allow the re-entry into Japan from Nepal on 17 September, which will encourage various people-to-people exchanges. “Ambassador is looking forward to working close with Minister Khadka to much develop our bilateral relationship and great friendship between our people further.”

### Swiss Government Approves Rs 1.88 Billion In Grants

The Swiss government has agreed to provide grant assistance of Rs 1.88 billion to the government of Nepal as part of continuation of the second phase of the Enhanced Skills for Sustainable and Rewarding Employment project in Nepal for the next four years.

The ENSURE-II project will continue to scale up apprenticeships, a formal programme within the duration of two years, which is also a sustainable model in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training sector.

It will also continue to offer short courses with on-the-job training, skill upgrading training for existing workers, Occupational Health and Safety at the workplace as well as

career guidance for youths. The project will further enhance collaboration between the education sector and employers and thereby contribute to sustainable and rewarding job prospects for Nepali youths. The project will benefit a total of 70,000 people.

### Chinese Ambassador Pays Courtesy Call On COAS General Sharma

Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Hou Yanqi has paid a courtesy call to Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Prabhu Ram Sharma amid a function at Nepal Army Headquarter.

During the meeting, they discussed bilateral relations and matters of mutual interest between the two countries. According to a press release issued by its Public Relations and Information Directorate, Nepal Army expressed the hope that this kind of meeting helps further strengthen the existing bilateral relations between two countries and mutual interest.



### France, IDEMIA Donate Spare Parts For French Oxygen Plants

In order to combat the Covid-19 crisis in Nepal, the French Government (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Crisis and Support Centre) and IDEMIA, global leader in Augmented Identity, have joined hands together to send to Nepal spare parts for oxygen plants built by a French company, NOVAIR.

“As many places in the world are still seeing a surge in the number of Covid-19 cases, preparation plays a key role in saving lives. In this regard, the French Government and IDEMIA have jointly sponsored to donate Euros 48,000 worth of spare parts for oxygen plants built by NOVAIR to 8 (eight) hospitals so that they would be able to ensure a continuous function of these life-saving machines,” said the French Ambassador François-Xavier Léger during the handover ceremony.

“IDEMIA is very honored to be part of this solidarity project, an important step towards the achievement of our CSR IMPACT pillars to uphold and step up our support for local communities, as it has a long-standing relation with the Nepali Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs. This is a great opportunity to thank the Nepali Government and to convey the message that we are all in this situation together,” said Tim Ferris, Senior Vice President, Asia Pacific, IDEMIA.

The hospitals benefiting from this operation are: Nepalgunj Medical College (Kohalpur), Surkhet Pradeshik Hospital (Surkhet), Fewa City Hospital (Pokhara), Okhaldhunga Community Hospital (Okhaldhunga), Fishtail Hospital (Pokhara), Lumbini Pradeshik Hospital (Butwal), Dadeldhura Pradeshik Hospital (Dadeldhura), and Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (Maharajgunj, Kathmandu).





## BUSINESS BRIEF

### Nepal Investment Bank Ltd Starts First Card-based Scan To Payout In Nepal

FOCUSONE Payment Solutions, a licensed Payment Service Provider with the NRB, has launched its Mobile Digital Wallet – MOCO today. Partnering with Visa, the global leader in digital payments, the MOCO digital wallet is a revolution in on-line payments where users can simply link their Visa card details to their phone and start paying for transactions by scanning a QR code displayed at a merchant. The app complies with the latest Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) protocols and has one of the most secure and sophisticated back-end systems of any Payment Service Providers in Nepal.

This QR solution addresses the need for an interoperable, secure and stable system where users can use a single mobile app to pay through QR at various merchant outlets. Visa cardholders

of Nepal Investment Bank Ltd. will now be able to add their debit or credit cards to the MOCO app and use it to pay for purchases, utility payments like telecom top ups, internet and electricity bill payments etc. without



having to load funds into their digital wallets each time. MOCO users have the power to choose between any of the Visa cards they have uploaded during the time of transaction. As an interoperable system, MOCO acts as a single digital wallet for multiple bank cards.

Soumya Basu, Country Manager, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan, Visa said “We are delighted to launch the Scan to Pay feature with MOCO. Visa has always aimed at enabling easier access for all and as a network working for everyone, we want to make digital payments more convenient, smoother and safer for cardholders and merchants. With this partnership, we are confident that users in Nepal can now use their Visa credentials on smartphones to make QR payments at merchants, which is a cost-effective way for merchants to accept digital payments as well.”

Jyoti Prakash Pandey, Chief Executive Officer of Nepal Investment Bank Ltd. mentioned that in line with Nepal Rastra Bank's vision to popularize standardized QR payment experience; we have tied up with FOCUSONE Payment Solutions, a PSP in Nepal to launch an international QR platform to our Visa cardholders.

Pranaya Rajbhandari, co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of FOCUSONE Payment Solutions highlighted that MOCO is an open loop non-store value digital wallet, the first of its kind in Nepal, where customers simply provision their cards and start using it immediately. The company will be adding more than 10 other banks within the next few months and looks forward to expanding to all banks and financial institutions in the very near future. MOCO app is available for download on Google Play and Apple app store.

### World Bank Vice President Reiterates Support For Nepal

World Bank Vice President Visits Nepal, Emphasizes Support to Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development

World Bank Vice President for South Asia, Hartwig Schafer, concluded his five-day visit to Nepal, reiterating the World Bank's commitment to support Nepal's resilient recovery from the pandemic.

In separate meetings with the Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and Finance Minister Janardan Sharma, Schafer commended the government's effective COVID-19 response, including the swift rollout of vaccines and strong focus on economic recovery. The meetings also stressed the importance of accelerating reform implementation and investment, and enhanced collaboration to support Nepal's sustainable development.

“Nepal is an example in resilience, emerging stronger from shocks such as the 2015 earthquake and working with a clear vision to build back better from the impacts of COVID-19,” said Hartwig Schafer. “The World Bank is proud to be Nepal's partner in development and is committed to work together with the government, development partners, private sector, civil society, and other key stakeholders for a recovery that is green, resilient, and inclusive.”

The World Bank joined the Government of Nepal and development partners for the endorsement of the Kathmandu Declaration at a high-level roundtable on Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID) on September 23. The declaration underscored the Government of Nepal's commitment to the GRID vision and aligning partners' support around potential priority investments, market incentives and policies, institutional actions, and information needed to support Nepal's GRID transition.

“I applaud Nepal for embarking on a new development paradigm—the green, resilient and inclusive development framework or GRID. The GRID approach is meant to deliver short-, medium-, and long-term benefits to people, the planet, and Nepal's economy,” said Schafer. “The World Bank is pleased to support the Kathmandu Declaration to strengthen Nepal's sustainable development.”



### HBL Donates Computers To Metropolitan Police Circle

Himalayan Bank Limited, under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, has extended its helping hand to Metropolitan Police Circle, at





Tinkune, New Baneshwor, Kathmandu.

As the organization was facing problem in their daily operation because of lack of well-equipped computer system, the Bank has donated two sets of computer worth Rupees One Lakh Ten Thousand to the organization so that it would be easier for them to run their daily operations smoothly and maintain the records for future references.

On behalf of the bank, Chief Manager Samir Acharya handed over the computer sets to Mim Bahadur Lama, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Metropolitan Police Circle, New Baneshwor, in presence other HBL staffs and police officials.

### **ADB Approves Power Project Loan In Nepal**

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$60 million loan as additional support for the ongoing Electricity Grid Modernization Project that is upgrading power transmission and distribution systems in Nepal.

The ongoing project, approved in November 2020, is automating 34 existing grid substations across Nepal, completing the installation of smart meters in the Kathmandu Valley, upgrading 144 kilometers (km) and constructing 113 km of transmission lines, and establishing an electricity distribution system command and control center.

“The additional financing will scale up ADB’s support to provide reliable, efficient, and sustainable electricity supply in Nepal,” said ADB Principal Energy Specialist for South Asia Jiwan Acharya. “This will provide additional investments to expand, strengthen, and modernize the transmission capacity and

distribution networks so the country can reach its electricity consumption target of 700 kilowatt hours per capita by 2026.”

To expand the original project’s scope, the increased funding will help construct 16 kilometers of 132-kilovolt transmission lines from Nepalgunj to Kohalpur and from Chovar to Lagankhel. It will introduce an additional 477 megavolt-amperes of substation capacity through the construction of substations in Dumkibas, Lagankhel, Mulpani, and Nepalgunj.

An enterprise resource planning and revenue management system will also be implemented to improve supply and system security and strengthen institutional capacity.

### **World Bank Additional Financing To School And Health Sectors**

Government of Nepal and World Bank Sign Additional Financing Agreements of \$50 Million Each to Strengthen Nepal’s School and Health Sectors

The Government of Nepal and the World Bank signed two separate additional financing agreements of \$50 million each to support the implementation of the govern-

ment’s flagship School Sector Development Program in the education sector and public management reforms in the health sector.

The agreements were signed

by Finance Secretary, Madhu Kumar Marasini on behalf of the Government of Nepal, and World Bank Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, Faris Hadad-Zervos.

“Strengthening Nepal’s education and health systems is an essential element of building back better from the pandemic,” said Finance Secretary Marasini. “The reform agenda championed by the Nepal Health Sector Program for Results is critical to Nepal’s vision of an efficient, effective, transparent and accountable health system, and together with the School Sector Development Program, provides a catalyst for improved human capital development enabling Nepal to compete strongly post-COVID.”

### **HBL Provides Printer To Didi Bahini Krishak Samuha**

Himalayan Bank Limited, under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative has extended its helping hand to “Didi Bahini Krishak Samuha” formed under Social Workers Group (SWG) located at Katarbote, Chaudandigadhi, Udayapur.

The organization has been actively involved in organizing various training related to agriculture since a decade. As the training location lies in the remote areas of Udayapur, they were facing difficulty in printing the material required to conduct various training sessions. Hence, the Bank purchased and handed over the Printer with Photocopier feature to the concern.

On behalf of the bank, General Manager, Mr. Anup Maskey handed over the printer to Ms. Nirmala Thapa, Secretary of SWOG, Lagankhel, Lalitpur in presence other HBL Executives.





# Politics And Economy Of Nepal



BY: DR. TILAK RAWAL

Expectedly, lawmakers representing opposition CPN UML stalled proceeding in both houses of the Parliament on the first day (September 8) of the new session, accusing Speaker Sapkota of being a part of the conspiracy to split their party. They are raising the issue of ordinance that amended the Political Party Act, which facilitated a split in UML and Janata Samajbadi Party-Nepal (JSP-N) by lowering the threshold for splitting parties from 40 percent support both in the central committee and parliamentary party to 20 percent support in any one of the two bodies of a party. They also blame Sapkota for engineering the split in their party by not confirming the expulsion of 14 lawmakers who, along with some others from both houses, ultimately created Unified CPN Samajbadi (CPN Samajbadi) under the leadership of Madhav Nepal. On the first day of the session, house meetings were fruitlessly postponed several times to diffuse the tense situation. Probably concluding that the House unrest would not recede soon, government in consultation with Speaker decided to push the important business ahead. Consequently, Political Party Act (Second Amendment) was tabled amid sloganeering by UML lawmakers. Likewise, Minister of Finance Janardan Sharma presented the Replacement Bill, in place of ordinance budget, in the noisy second meeting of the House on September 10. Ignoring the noise, majority members of the House passed on September 20 the Appropriation Bill tabled by Sharma. Despite the strong verbal and physical unrest shown in the House by the concerned, most observers find it a mere continuation of what parties in opposition have been doing in the House in the last couple of years. Even the slogans chanted against the ordinance put forth by Deuba-led government are more or less a repetition of what was expressed by Nepali Congress (NC) lawmakers against similar acts of Oli. Oli failed in splitting a Madesh-based party but Deuba succeeded in splitting Oli-led UML, paving way for Madhav Nepal to create and head a new party and also helped Mahanta, who was finding himself in an uncomfortable position with majority of lawmakers in the party eventually deciding to support his arch rival Upendra Yadav, who in the changed context became the le-

gitimate head of the parent party-JSP-N. This way, Deuba succeeded in appeasing both. He also got the Political Party Act (Second Amendment) Ordinance rescinded by the President on September 27, mainly to check the apprehended split, after cabinet expansion, in JSP-N. Call it use or misuse of ordinances, point to be noted is that while Oli made two separate attempts and succeeded only once, in getting his people appointed in various constitutional bodies, Deuba's very first attempt was successful.

Indeed, parties seem to be taking turn in sloganeering in the House, opposing different acts of those in power. It seemed UML lawmakers were just impatient to grab the first opportunity available to come down aggressively on the government and the Speaker, after being deprived of the opportunity to perform the opposition role for more than three years when NC and other opposition parties performed this House ritual, albeit less aggressively. Indeed, NC parliamentarians could be no match for UML lawmakers in turning the House situation fearful and chaotic. Equally interesting was to see complete absence of gender gap in the display of physical aggression in the House on September 10. While one female lawmaker was seen using a security personnel deployed there as a ladder to reach the stage, another regretted later to the press that she could not physically harm Speaker Sapkota and Finance Minister Sharma, despite attempt. Very pleasantly, however, the Appropriation Bill was passed by both houses of the Parliament and was authenticated on September 23 by President Bhandari. It is gratifying that the unexpectedly quick passage of the bill ended the budget holiday witnessed since September 15.

UML leadership seems to have charted a pragmatic course of letting the government proceed with sensitive and important businesses, while continuing with the protest in the House as well as outside. In fact, there is no much sense in opposing the new budget which, according to Finance Minister Sharma himself, is not different from the ordinance budget of UML presented earlier. Size of the budget has been reduced by a mere Rs. 15 billion to Rs. 1632 billion. No major change in other budgetary heads is

**For now, let us hope that Prime Minister Deuba, who has displayed tons of patience and shown flexibility of all kind in running difficult coalition governments in the past, does not let his patience wear thin this time around and gives adequate attention to our serious economic problems so that he could show to the people that he is also a better manager of the economy than most other prime ministers.**

seen as capital and recurrent expenditures have remained more or less unchanged. Revenue collection target has been hiked a bit and public debt, both external and internal, has been justifiably reduced. It may be noted that this budget has not only retained the increase in social security allowances provided earlier but has included some more measures such as provisions for the family of martyrs killed during political movements, for patients suffering from serious ailment and a one-time grant of Rs. 10000 to half a million poor households that have lost their sources of income on account of the pandemic. It seems Sharma has decided to concentrate more on the implementation side, which has been lacking so far. Growth target, however, has been hiked to 7 percent from 6.5 percent, which many think, including multilateral agencies, is difficult to achieve, given the state of the economy hard hit by Covid-19.

Data made available for the two months of this fiscal year (2078/79) do not present an encouraging picture in that capital expenditure during the period has been less than 1 percent of the allocated amount and 0.46 percent less than what was expended during the same period a year earlier. Remittance inflow has turned negative in the first month of this fiscal year and so is the position of BOP, which has gone negative by more than Rs. 38 billion. Likewise, trade imbalance has further deteriorated during this period. Last fiscal year was also not a good period in that trade deficit (Rs. 1389 billion) registered an annual increase of more than 27 percent, which was about RS.200 billion more than the total budgetary expenditure (Rs. 1180 billion) incurred that year. Another disturbing factor in our economy has been the rising public debt over time, which many assert, has not been productively used and last fiscal year it reached Rs. 1729 billion, exceeding the budgetary outlay by more than Rs. 250 billion. It may be noted that public debt constituted less than 76 percent of the annual budget of Rs. 819 billion some five years ago. Many observers feel that increasing debt and trade deficit are the two serious problems of our economy, which have jointly contributed to a deterioration in the purchasing power of our currency. Very disturbing is also the recent sharp drop, by Rs.45 billion in one month, in foreign exchange reserve due basically to increase in imports and decrease in remittances. Last fiscal year was also not an encouraging year from several other angles such as decreased level of balance of payment (BOP) surplus, decreased level of foreign investment inflow and the left government failing one more time to collect the targeted revenue. Some solace, however, was provided by remittances from Nepalis outside, which registered an increase of 9.8 percent compared to a year earlier level when it had decreased by 0.5 percent. Exports in the first two months of the current fiscal year have gone up by 115 percent as against an increase of 76 percent in Nepal's import during the period. Our major export items such as soya bean oil and palm oil, however, solely depend on import of respected raw oils from outside and are exported without signifi-

cant value addition. It is interesting that these two edible oils and their crude forms appear as major items on export and import fronts respectively. Indeed, concerted efforts will have to be made to achieve a growth of more than 4.1 percent, lately predicted by the Asian Development Bank, this year. A lot is also contingent upon the state of political situation in the country and government's success in controlling the devastating pandemic. Nepal does not look politically stable with UML protesting to pave way for early polls and Deuba not being able to expand his Cabinet so far.

Despite a very strong majority in the Parliament, Nepal did not remain politically stable during Oli's rule of more than three years. It looked like he had to allocate more time to handle intra-party problems than nation building activities. The intra-party wrangling snowballed into serious political problems, creating a situation for other political parties to extend a helping hand to those agitating against Oli in the party. It's unfortunate, especially for Oli and his party that they are out of power not only at the center but have already lost power in Gandaki and Lumbini and two more governments (Province- 1 and Bagmati) are destined to collapse soon. It would also be equally interesting to watch how Oli handles leaders, who were with rival faction leader Madhav Nepal but sided with Oli when Nepal opened a new party. Initial indications are that Oli is in no mood to assign key responsibility to these leaders and some of the leaders have begun to accuse him of not being sincere in the implementation of the 10-point unity proposal that these leaders had given commendable inputs to. Probably to ease the pain of losing power, Oli and his followers blame Prachanda and Madhav Nepal for the debacle they have suffered, but it would be wise for them to spend some time introspecting before embarking upon another course of action. It is natural for Oli to wish early polls not only because he dissolved the House twice for the purpose but more so because he wants his party to get into it before it suffers further erosion over time. On the contrary, Madhav Nepal wants some time to consolidate his newly formed party's position before jumping into the polls and would definitely do everything possible to have an electoral adjustment/agreement with his partners in the current coalition government. With his relatively untarnished image and solid contribution in pushing ahead the left movement, Madhav Nepal represents a force to reckon with in Nepal and is expected to help Deuba discharge his responsibility properly till the end of the current tenure of the Parliament. For now, let us hope that Prime Minister Deuba, who has displayed tons of patience and shown flexibility of all kind in running difficult coalition governments in the past, does not let his patience wear thin this time around and gives adequate attention to our serious economic problems so that he could show to the people that he is also a better manager of the economy than most other prime ministers.

*Dr. rawal is a former governor of NRB.*



# Shaky Coalition

*Passing the budget from both the Houses, the two months old four party coalition government led by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has heaved a sigh of relief*

By A CORRESPONDENT

With the tacit understanding of the main opposition CPN-UML, the four party coalition government was about to pass the budget for fiscal year 2021/022. Despite this major breakthrough, the delay in the expansion of the cabinet showed how shaky the coalition governments are.

Although there are so many shortcomings and uncertainties among parties in the ruling coalition, that has taken such a long time to decide the name of ministers for the cabinet, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba looks very comfortable and assured

Kamal Dahal regarding the stability of the government has indicated otherwise. "I am observing many plots to create division in the five-party ruling alliance," said CPN (Maoist Center) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, in a program recently.

Addressing an assembly of the party's youth wing, YCL, the chairman of a major ruling party said that meeting of the top leaders in the ruling alliance also reviewed the ongoing conspiracy against the ruling coalition.

Prachanda said that ruling alliance and the ruling parties had re-

ister Deuba have been arguing for the need to pass the MCC from ongoing parliament with certain strictures.

However, Prachanda who has made the MCC hostage for last three years using speaker's office is yet to say anything clearly on the agenda. Main opposition party CPN-UML has made it clear that they don't have any opposition to the MCC.

Powerful UML leader Ram Bahadur Thapa Badal has already said that his party will support the MCC with certain stricture and amendment. Given this situation, Maoist leader Prachanda's worries regarding a possible split in the ruling alliance is understandable.

With several contradictions within partners of ruling alliance, no one can be sure when this government can collapse before completing its full tenure of another 12 months.

The recent suggestions by speaker of House of Representatives Agni Prasad Sapkota call for the constitution to be amended to remove the articles for dissolution of House of Representatives making it a full tenure house.

Whatever the reason and cause, speaker Sapkota issued the statement. However, his statement indicated the looming threat of dissolution of House prematurely given the growing inner tensions.

## Cabinet Expansion

Delayed for two months, the cabinet expansion efforts of the ruling alliance leaders have already shown their incapability of providing a stable government for the remaining period



about the future of the government.

"We don't have any differences over the stability of the government. The expansion was delayed due to certain internal issues of coalition partners," said PM Deuba recently.

However, the recent statement by Maoist Center Chair Pushpa

newed their commitment to keep united and go for the upcoming election as a unified force or an alliance.

Prachanda's public statement indicated that there is a difference among the coalition partners on certain issues. Overwhelming members of Nepali Congress and Prime Min-



of 12 months.

Blaming other factors for the delay, Maoist leader Dahal said that the work of expanding the cabinet was delayed due to the ordinance related to political parties.

However, the cabinet expansion was delayed due to the differences on the agenda of power sharing among the coalition partners. In trying to take the decision on cabinet expansion, top leaders of the ruling parties have spent several hours already.

Amid criticism over the inordinate delay in the expansion of cabinet, top leaders of the coalition partners gathered in Baluwatar to finalize the allocation of ministerial portfolios among the coalition partners. The meeting failed to make any concrete agreement as the party leaders remained adamant on their own stance on various issues including the ordinance related to political parties, expansion of the cabinet and sharing of the ministerial portfolios.

The meeting discussed the ordinance introduced by the government to ease the split of political parties and the agreement to table a substitution bill in parliament to replace it. Leaders of the Janata Samajbadi Party demanded that the ordinance be repealed altogether.

The leaders maintained that it would not be possible to expand the cabinet and they would not participate until the ordinance is repealed. CPN (Maoist Center) Spokesperson Krishna Bahadur Mahara, on the other hand, claimed that the cabinet would be expanded soon. He claimed that a substitution bill to replace the ordinance will be introduced in the House of Representatives and then JSP will also give names of leaders who will join the government from their party.

However, the meeting of the top leaders failed to agree on the sharing of the ministerial portfolios. Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba, who is also the Prime Minister, is preparing to keep at least seven min-

istries with the NC.

The Maoists have also demanded an almost equal number of ministries. Sources claim that the CPN (Unified Socialist) and the Janata Samajbadi Party (JSP) have also demanded the same number of ministries as the NC and the Maoists. The sources said that the Maoists have been offered seven ministries, the CPN (Unified Socialist) six and the JSP a maximum of five ministries.

Whatever the reason, the ruling parties give their coalition is losing its own credibility before the people and court. The ruling coalition is justifying the reason pursued by former Prime Minister Oli that this parliament will not give stability and stable government.

Following withdrawal of the ordinance related to the political parties, the government has also completed a cycle of party split giving legitimacy to all the factions in the parliament. This also paved the way for the expansion of the cabinet now.



# As Political Uncertainty Looms Ominously...



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

The impending Dussain festivities mark the end of one “political year” (akin to the fiscal calendar year from mid-July to mid-July) and the beginning of another. Government offices begin shutting down and Kathmandu sees a massive exodus of civil servants and employees of schools and businesses. Friends and relatives from far and near gather in home villages and – between gastronomic orgies – engage in sharing information and views that shape their political views and charge the politics of months following Tihar.

If governments and political parties manage to put out positive messages just before Dussain, they can expect those positive vibes to dominate Dussain conversations, reaping them windfall political benefits. Conversely, if they even unwittingly send out negative impression, undoing the damage later is near impossible even with all the modern propaganda machinery at their command. This Dussain, it is politically negative take-aways galore that Nepalis are carrying back home with them, not just of the political parties but also this Loktantrick dispensation.

Topping the list is the message that so-called mainstream communist parties – the UML or Prachanda’s Noida Maoists – are unfit to rule. They were given a clear, overwhelming two-thirds majority mandate by the Nepali voters but, unable to manage their internal politics and petty (quite frankly pecuniary) ambitions, they frittered it away irredeemably in three years. Even as Leninists the world over collapsed some three decades ago, intellectually backward Nepal saw their rise to prominence during this period – aided and abetted by failed Euro-American Lefties and their NGOs unable to prevent rightwing rise in their own Trumpistan, Boristan or the rest of Europe but quite happy to assuage their consciences by promoting revolutions in the Global South. Now the message Nepalis are finally taking back home is that, sweet rhetoric aside, commies can’t be trusted.

Deuba’s Nepali Kangress should have been able to reap a political windfall out of this communist disarray,

but on the contrary they fare perhaps even worse. Rather than opting for fresh elections when they should have campaigned among the voters highlighting communist failures, they instead opted for short term power in a coalition government where Prachanda’s Noida Maoists call the shots. This leaves Deuba and the Kangress to bear all the blame of incumbency every passing day. When firing him in 2002, King Gyanendra had called Deuba “incompetent”: it is now widely accepted that Deuba indeed is grossly incompetent.

He and his coalition partners have been unable to even form a government these last three months, and the people he has appointed do not inspire any hope. News also has just surfaced that the chief justice of this highly politicized judiciary – one that blatantly took part in bringing down Oli and specifying the appointment of Deuba – has extracted his pound of flesh to have his nominee appointed in Deuba’s cabinet!

Moreover, although Deuba, Prachanda and the breakaway Madhav faction of the UML as well as the Madhesi parties blamed Oli for overstepping constitutional norms and bounds, they themselves have proven even worse. Their ordinance scandal – passing one outside of parliament and the constitution to help Madhav Nepal and Mahanta Thakur break away from their parent parties but rescinding it when it was going to boomerang on the breakaway factions – proved that Kangressis are no democrats!

On top of it, passing an ordinance budget that promotes whitewashing of black money (or in the case of Noida Maoists, loot from banks and embezzled “peace process”) has tarred them with a terrible stain of corruption. This attempt at legalizing illegal gains was done even as Pandora Papers have implicated rich Nepalis. It has simultaneously allowed Oli and his UML to wash away their egregious scandals and financial shenanigans even as local elections approach in early spring.

While their duplicitous handling of the American MCC has eroded the credibility of all major Loktantrick

**The problem with secularism is not just that it is a product of European socio-political history with Popism: its “church as state” antiquity does not find resonance in Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism.**

parties and Nepal's diplomacy with it, it is their juvenile handling of the country's ambassadorship that has damaged this dispensation overall as well. The Deuba-Pra-chanda government recalled ambassadors from twelve countries (including countries such as US, UK, India, China and Japan that Nepal has very close relations with) and rescinded the appointment made for eleven other countries.

Nepal thus has no ambassador in 23 of the 33 countries it has missions in, and given that it does not even have a full-fledged cabinet nor an undisrupted parliament, it is not clear when it will have them in place. Moreover, even if appointed in the coming months, how long would they be able to serve, given that elections to a new parliament are due in a year's time if not earlier?

Besides the loss to state coffers in transferring and establishing families across continents and then transferring them back, this move has grievously damaged the Loktantrick parliament and its credibility. It must be remembered that the current rulers introduced the provision of parliamentary hearings for diplomatic appointments. It has not only turned into a show of "all form and no substance" but has damaged the credibility of both the parliament and the ruling party. Afterall, these appointments underwent parliamentary hearings where ALL the parties (then or now in power) had unanimously approved them. Now for the ruling parties to withdraw the ambassadors under the pretext that these were political appointments is to demean parliamentary hearing as well as their vote (and credibility) therein! Loktantra thus hammers nails in its own coffin.

This increasing loss of Loktantra's credibility is calling into question as well its supposed "major gains", i.e., republicanism, federalism and secularism. Federalism at the province level is not just not functioning at all but has become a haven of corruption as the bicycle purchase scandal in Province 2 indicates. The rows in Bagmati, Gandaki, Mechi and Lumbini Provinces prove, if proof was needed at all, that this layer of governance is redundant and merely serves to give jobs to political cadres at taxpayers' expense.

There is also growing realization at the mass level that the monarchy was sidelined by these incompetent and corrupt party neo-feudals at the behest of foreign powers. The attack on all symbols of national unity as well as distortion and misinterpretation of Nepal's history and traditions through externally funded campaigns have become blatantly obvious and highly irritating. It is beginning to invite a nationalist backlash, and post-Dussain one can expect even more intense counter campaigns.

**While their duplicitous handling of the American MCC has eroded the credibility of all major Loktantrick parties and Nepal's diplomacy with it, it is their juvenile handling of the country's ambassadorship that has damaged this dispensation overall as well.**

Among these imported ideologies, it is secularism that has faced the most scrutiny and now growing opposition, interestingly within the Kangress as well as the Oli faction of the UML. During the last Kangress party convention – and it has been grossly incompetent in holding the long overdue current one – more than half the delegates moved to bring back Nepal's Hindu identity but were ignored. Now it seems not anymore.

And if there is one damaging charge by the Oli-ites against the Madhav Nepal faction of the UML, it is that Madhav is a Holy Wineist, a reference to his role in the Evangelical Korean proselytization program as well as his promoting another evangelical pastor as his primary henchman within his UML (Socialist). Interestingly, this charge conveniently ignores the fact that Oli as prime minister spent three days in Soaltee Hotel attending that Holy Wine conference, although he and Bidya Bhandari have subsequently made efforts to recant by offering golden *jalahari* to Pashupati Nath and setting up Ram Mandir in Thori.

The problem with secularism is not just that it is a product of European socio-political history with Popism: its "church as state" antiquity does not find resonance in Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism. Nor

does the Abrahamic injunctions of "One True God" or the command to proselytize find much resonance in non-Abrahamic religions. To quote Vivekananda, Hindus do not believe in tolerance since it is so patronizing: they believe in acceptance of all religions as true for their time and place, hence without the need for conversion. As Nepal's realize the inherent insult in that concept sneak-

ily inserted into the 2015 constitution, a growing backlash is emerging. That alienness in the concept is manifest even in its translation as "*dharma nirapekshyata*", with dharma being wrongly translated as "religion" instead of "ethical right conduct" as per one's stage in life, a householder, a *sannyasi*, a student and so on.

In that sense, Hinduism is a supermarket of religions and it took Atal Behari Vajpayee to point out that the word should have been translated (and implemented) as "*panth nirapekshyata*" (or path neutrality). The same is true of another imported concept where patriarchy is translated as "*pitrisatta*" (which means rule by the ghosts of departed ancestors) instead of translating it as "*purush-satta*" (or male-rule). One thus can expect a more robust discussion on this and other failed themes of Loktantra within thousands of households in Nepal this Dussain; and its impact on the coming political year's agenda can be expected to be anything but calm.



# Preparing For Convention

*As the differences among the ruling coalition are growing, main opposition CPN-UML is busy preparing for its convention*

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when the differences among the ruling parties are growing and internal differences within the ruling parties is also deepening, main opposition CPN-UML, which is also facing internal feuds, is preparing to host the generation convention.

As the CPN-UML Central Committee meeting has endorsed the report presented by Chairperson of the CPN (UML), KP Sharma Oli, it will be now tabled at the legislative general convention of the party. The central committee meeting also discussed organizational report and draft of statute amendment.

Scheduled for October 1-3, the legislative general convention of the CPN (UML) was likely to endorse the statute amendment and

vention should be conducted in a systematic, united and dignified manner. We have internal problems as well as national political problems. Discussion should be held on these matters,” said Oli, former PM and chairman of the party.

“It is necessary to engage in preparation of party’s 10th national general convention scheduled in the last week of November as well as local level election.” Oli urged UML members to unite for party’s upcoming statute convention.

Split recently, CPN-UML is facing major challenges for consolidation of its earlier position. With a vertical division of the party all over Nepal, CPN-UML has already lost three provincial governments.

Given the present situation,

1 and Bagmati Province at any time.

Despite returning to mother party, rebel members are still putting pressure on former PM Oli to accommodate all of them in the position agreed upon. However, it is not easy for Oli to accept all their demands.

“All of us need to adjust and accommodate with each other in the party burying the differences. Only our message of unity will give our party new life,” said chairman Oli.

Chairman Oli said that the management of the statute convention should be moved forward along with the report presented with the recommendation of the standing committee.

“The statute convention should be held in a managed, united and dignified manner. Discussions

need to be held to resolve the issues of the party with internal and national politics. We must all come together for the preparation of the local elections after the 10th National Convention of the party,” Oli said.

Although CPN-UML is showing aggressive positions with sign of strength and unity, it will take a long time for the party to fill the dent made



organizational report to pave way for the General Convention.

“Legislative general con-

main opposition party CPN-UML will be likely to lose two remaining provincial governments of Province

on it by its split under the leadership of Madhav Kumar Nepal.

# MCC, Its Encores & Nepal



BY: HEMANG DIXIT

A clip I recently received stated: *'If ever you feel you are useless, just remember USA took 4 Presidents, lives of thousands of US soldiers, trillions of dollars and 20 years to replace Taliban with Taliban.'*

We recollect from the Mahabharat that Dhritarastra's wife was brought from Kandahar. Even during the British rule, Afghanistan's national wealth and standard of living was said to be better than India's. In fact, following the Treaty of Sugauli of 1816 and later in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Nepal's who served in British Gurkhas aided the British in the Afghan wars. The background of Rudyard Kipling's Kim is the Great Game that Britain and Czarist Russia were playing then to take control of the mineral and also perhaps benefits of the opium trade. However, neither the British nor the Russians could ever subjugate the Afghans then. Our most recent contact with the Taliban took place when the Indian Airlines Airbus A300 Flight 814 was hijacked on 24 December 1999 and taken to Kandahar! The moral is that Afghanistan is a hard nut to crack!

The story goes that a cricket enthusiast who served in India named his son Michael Colin Cowdrey, or MCC for short, and made the child a member of the Marylebone Cricket Club, as he wanted his son to be a famous cricketer when he grew up. Happily this happened. To us in Nepal, MCC now stands for Millennium Challenge Corporation, a US foreign assistance agency that is poised to aid Nepal in the coming years. Following initial steps the agreement is in the doldrums for last four years. Many Nepali politicians have in the meantime opted for or against it. Some have even changed their stances on occasions! Many ordinary Nepalis are at a loss whilst hearing the pros and cons for this aid from the US. It will build transmission lines and improve roads within a decent time frame. Sale of electricity to Bangladesh and India will be facilitated. Generally, local contracts, mired in corruption have led to substandard work and massive delays. The Baudha and Godaveri roads in the capital are prime examples of locally undertaken work. The recent withdrawal of Americans from Afghanistan, the daily reportage of evacuations and the taking over by Taliban forces in a matter of days as the police and armed forces laid down their arms has created alarm worldwide. These visuals have reinforced a claim that is prevalent in Nepal that what is happening in Afghanistan is a preview of what is likely to occur in Nepal if the MCC agreement with a US agency is accepted by us? Whether this occurs or not depends on the action of our current PM who had in fact initiated the whole process. Yes, this will certainly bring Americans in the midst of our Northern and Southern neighbours and increase the likelihood of misunderstandings occurring from time to time.

It must be remembered that SAARC had been established in 1985 in the wake of the 1979 intervention by the USSR in Afghanistan, by the efforts of President Ziaur Rah-

man of Bangladesh and King Birendra of Nepal. A recent clip by a former minister Dipak Gyawali which went viral states that it was at the 2005 Dhaka Summit that India proposed the membership of Afghanistan. Then King Gyanendra had queried this on the ground that the US was the occupying the country then and it was at a stage of internal conflict. Another query was whether Afghanistan was a Central or South Asian country. With the insistence of India and the US, Afghanistan became a member in 2007 and subsequently attended SAARC conferences and the last four South Asian Games.

Right now SAARC seems to be in a state of hibernation because of the differences of two major players. The SAARC symbol which depicts six members has to be increased by one and the old flag of the country perhaps replaced by that of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, established on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2021. This government has not been recognised so far by Nepal. With all these actions in the offing one must keep in mind that it is BIMSTEC, currently in the background which may be preferred by some players to be given the lime-light as an alternative in the future.

The recent Tokyo Olympics must be appreciated by the fact Japan took it as an honour and obligation to hold it and did so very well. Though our participants bettered their and national records the fact was that more stress was given to send so called unconcerned officials under false pretences. Our standard will never improve unless stress is given to improve the lot of the sporting individuals instead of the officials. One hopes that encouragement so given will improve the performance of Nepali athletes in the Asian Games of 2022 and the South Asian Games of 2023.

The present government if it to do something for this dismal state of affairs of sports in this country must set about making rules and regulations and also providing facilities to the youth of this country. All universities, major colleges must have their grounds for outdoor sports and facilities for indoor ones. The seven pradesh or provinces must have stadiums and sports facilities too. The government for its part must also help in finishing the construction of the International cricket stadium being built at Bharatpur.

One must remember in the context of all this money – coin or paper money in Nepal are short supply commodities and it is usually the generosity of our foreign friends that has got us this far. The other side of this fact is that in spite of misuse we Nepalis never seem to be able to use the allotted budget. The glaring example is the haste in which allocations are used in the last quarter of the financial year for shoddy work because of the all prevalent kickbacks which must be paid to the masters in the chair.

*The author is a retired medical doctor and writes fiction under the pen name of Mani Dixit also. Website: [www.hdxit.org.np](http://www.hdxit.org.np). Twitter: @manidixitdh*



## SUMMIT COP26

# Agenda 1.5 Degrees

*Prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has expressed Nepal's commitment to implement the Paris Agreement*

By A CORRESPONDENT

For a country like Nepal, which is highly vulnerable to climate change, the only way out is urging the global community for implementation of the Paris Agreement and following it through.

This year COP26 is going to be a major event for the global community. Suffering from COVID-19 pandemic and many unusual natural disasters this year, nations around the world have a growing realization about the need to stick to the goal of maintaining temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has said that Nepal is committed to limit the global average temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius as per the Paris Agreement.

During a meeting with a delegation led by COP26 Regional Ambassador for Asia-Pacific and South Asia, Ken O'Flaherty, PM Deuba opined that there should be international commitment to limit the global average temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Deuba clarified that the immense potential of hydropower and forest areas, among others, would help Nepal implement the Paris Agreement to reduce carbon emission by 2050.

The PM mentioned that being a mountainous country, Nepal is at high risk of climate change and the damage caused due to climate change should be addressed internationally.

Joint-Secretary at the Foreign Ministry, Nirmal Raj Kafle, said that PM Deuba emphasized discussion over various issues including priorities of COP26, climate finance and adaptation as well as additional support for Nepal to strengthen its ability to respond and adapt to climate change.

Regarding COVID-19 and the 'Red List', Prime Minister Deuba requested COP26's regional ambassador to Asia-Pacific and South Asia Ken O'Flaherty to consider removing Nepal from the 'Red List'.

Regional Ambassador O'Flaherty responded that a separate British agency had

been analyzing various situations of Nepal from time to time and reviewing them to do the needful to remove Nepal from the Red List.

Expressing concerns about the current affairs of Nepal and the preparation for COP26, O'Flaherty said that he was hopeful of Nepal's active participation in the 'Global Leader Summit' to be organized by the British Prime Minister from November 1-2 this year.

COP26 will be held in Glasgow in the UK from October 31 to November 12. Leaders from 197 Conference of the Parties (COP) member-countries, including Nepal, will convene in the climate conference to advance global efforts to deal with the challenges of climate change.

The Ministry of Forests and Environment in Nepal has been preparing for the event in which Prime Minister Deuba-led high-level delegation will participate, said secretary at the Ministry of Forests and Environment Dr Pem Narayan Kandel.

PM Deuba will participate in the Global Leader Summit where he is scheduled to address the event.

### **Mountainous region's issues to be prioritized in COP26**

Nepal is preparing to raise the issues relating to the mountainous regions with high priority since the mountainous region in Nepal was mostly affected by climate change.

Nepal will shine a light on the issues relating to how climate change had affected the mountain economy and ecosystem and ecology of the mountainous regions and



the lowland areas.

There were cases wherein the temperature in the mountainous region in Nepal recorded 1.5 degrees Celsius while world temperature measured 1 degree Celsius, according to the latest study.

Preparations were underway to raise voices about issues of climate change impacts, carbon finance and searching resources for the implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) report in the convention, said the Ministry of Forests.

Nepal along with various member countries has in December 2020 submitted the NDCs report which mentions the implementation of its roadmap to reduce green gas emission to zero until 2050 as per the Paris Agreement struck in 2015. Issues of managing resources required for the implementation of the report would be a priority in the conference, said Chief of the Climate Change Management Division under the Ministry of Forests, Dr Radha Wagle.

Other commitments as per the Agreement are to limit the world's average temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius or below 2.0 degrees Celsius.

Although the conference is organized every year, it could not take place last year due to COVID-19.

लघुवित्तको कार्यक्रम मार्फत ग्रामीण समुदायको आम्दानी एवं रोजगारीका अवसरमा अभिवृद्धि गर्नका लागि गरिबी निवारण गर्ने कार्यमा सघाउ पुर्याउने उद्देश्य लिएको यस वित्तीय संस्थाले देश भरी एघार (११) वटा इलाका कार्यालय र केन्द्रीय कार्यालय मार्फत ७४ जिल्लाका १२३३ वटा साना किसान कृषि सहकारी संस्था लि. र समान प्रकृतिका अन्य सहकारी संस्थाहरु मार्फत लघुवित्तका लागि थोक कर्जाका साथै गैह्र वित्तीय सेवा समेत उपलब्ध गराउँदै आएको छ । नेपाल सरकार, अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय दातृ संघ/संस्थाहरुको सहकार्यमा समुदायमा आधारित सहकारी संस्थाहरु मार्फत सामाजिक तथा सामुदायिक कार्यक्रम संचालनमा समेत सहयोग पुर्याउँदै आएको छ ।

यस वित्तीय संस्थाको वेबसाईट [www.skbbbl.com.np](http://www.skbbbl.com.np) बाट थप जानकारी लिन सकिने छ ।



**साना किसान विकास लघुवित्त वित्तीय संस्था लि.**  
केन्द्रीय कार्यालय बबरमहल, काठमाडौं ।  
फोन. ०१-५३२०९१३÷५९०९६१२



# Environmental Assessment: Untold Realities



BY: BATU UPRETY

Nearly four decades of national efforts, in making development proposals environment-friendly through the use project-level Environmental Assessment (EA) [Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Initial Environmental Examination (IEE)] tool, did not produce expected outcomes in Nepal as visualised in early 1980s. It has sufficiently generated public awareness at different levels – people-bureaucrats-politicians – but its use terminated mostly in approving reports, with greater realisation of ‘once EA report is approved, environment is automatically managed’.

In 1980s, periodical policies focussed to conducting EIA of major physical infrastructure projects. In 1993, Government issued a procedural National EIA Guidelines to conduct IEE and/or EIA of the prescribed projects. Separate EIA Guidelines for Forestry and Industry sectors in 1995 streamlined EA process in forestry and industry projects.

Enforcement of the Environment Protection Act (EPA) and Environment Protection Rules (EPR) in June 1997 obliged the proponents to prepare and get approval of IEE or EIA reports before project implementation of all prescribed projects. Threshold, investment, sensitive area, and general criteria were used to prescribe projects requiring IEE or EIA. It worked for over two decades and proponents complied with legal provisions to get ‘environmental clearance’ to implement the projects.

Along with the re-enactment of EPA in 2019 and enforcement of both EPA (2019) and EPR (2020), several legal provisions on EAs have been elaborated, hopefully, to benefit from this ‘predictive tool’. Previous ‘flexibilities’ and making project-specific ToR-based EA report might face difficulties due to complexities and inconsistencies in EPR (2020) Schedules. This EPR prescribes over 350 categories of projects, using mostly threshold criteria, of 12 sectors (forests, health, education, tourism, transport, energy-water resource and irrigation, drinking water, housing-building-settlements and urban development, waste management, industry, mining, and agriculture) for Brief Environment Study (BES), IEE and EIA. Nearly 115 types of projects of industry sector require BES, IEE and EIA, followed by of forestry sector (57), and energy, water resources and irrigation sectors (33 types of projects). Health

and education sectors have very few projects (3) requiring assessments.

EAs have been carried out in Nepal through ‘learning-by-doing’ approach. National and sector-specific EIA Guidelines were drafted in early 1990s through this approach. The Environmental Impact Study Project organised a workshop on EIA in 1984 - first workshop recorded in Nepal – and advanced understanding on benefits of this tool.

As a part of developing human resources, workshops and training were organised on EIA since mid-1980s. Officials from government organisations and academe were trained and/or exposed to EA process in 1990s. Since early 2000s, academic institutions provided 3 credit hours EIA courses in Master level, particularly in engineering and natural resource management streams. Campuses and schools of, particularly, the three universities – Tribhuvan, Kathmandu and Pokhara universities – offer courses on EIA. Considering this academic offer and possibility of passing masters level by, say, 50 students annually with conservative estimates, over three thousand students might have passed 3 cr. hrs. EIA course. Let us assume that only one-twentieth (150 knowledge-based students) are engaged in conducting EAs, reviewing, implementing enhancement and mitigation measures, monitoring, and auditing activities. Consultants, reviewers and/or implementors are also involved in this process through ‘learning-by-doing’ approaches. Some might have academic degrees, with courses on EIA, from universities abroad. This ‘core’ human resource can be considered a ‘good number’ to make project-specific implementable EA reports with clarity on evaluated impacts and corresponding measures along with environment management plan.

In spite of knowledge-based human resources, ‘cut-and-paste’ syndrome prevails in Nepal. Most proponents do not know this problem as s/he might have a single project. For example, if same person or organisation prepares EIA report of, say, hospital and medical college of two separate proponents, ‘cut-and-paste’ is greatly noticed. In general, both proponents do not know ‘copied portions’ in its report and submit for approval in the competent authority through two government ministries, in this case Ministry of Health and Population, and Ministry of Educa-

tion, Science and Technology. Both Ministries send to the Ministry of Forests and Environment. Such copying is also sufficiently noticed in other sector projects and ‘unethical’ report preparer mostly copies from the approved EIA and its associated reports (Scoping document and Terms of Reference). If two officers review these two reports they might not notice ‘copied information’. The Section Chief, mandated for EA, would know it if s/he thoroughly reviews both reports. It is most likely that decision-makers do not have time to go through the ‘technical reports’.

If nature, location, and sensitivity of the projects are closer, it is most likely that environmental impacts and measures might be of similar nature. For example, hydro-power generation projects of, say, Modi Khola basin or Marsyangdi River basin or Trishuli River basin. Still, EIA reports would differ due to location, resource, or object to be impacted by the project activities, value of resource, and priority of conservation needs etc.

Questions arise in ‘derailing’ the EA process, preparing and approving ‘cut-and-paste’ reports, and undermining EA benefits in Nepal. EPR (2020) has provisioned subject specialists to prepare EA reports. Reviewers are selected by the competent authorities. ‘Knowledge-based’ manpower (having academic knowledge on EIA) might

measures, and conclusion before submission. In such case also, consultant may be ‘blacklisted’ for up to five years.

In Nepal, proponents and politicians mostly consider EA tool a ‘barrier’ for infrastructure and socio-economic developments. Approval of ‘copied and under quality’ reports or issuance of ‘environmental clearance’ has sufficiently undermined its contribution while other countries use it to make development environment-friendly and sustainable.

EA report preparers who prepare complex and under-quality report are equally responsible for ‘spoiling’ the benefits of this tool. Trainers, resource persons and/or academic institutions are also responsible for making EA process ‘confusing’ and complex. What is required to maximise the benefits of EA tool is shared little as compared to what resource person knows or considers relevant to share. In many cases, ‘conceptual departure’ prevails during sharing and learning events. Whatever may be the case, proponents are encouraged to benefit from this tool as it helps to make your investment ‘green’, environment-friendly, and sustainable. Competent authorities should not see the ‘face’ of report preparers but need to see the ‘quality’ of the report while providing environmental clearance. Authorities should ensure environmental monitoring and auditing.

EA, being a predictive tool, informs what will or may happen before approval, what happened during project implementation, and which mitigation measure worked well to bring the adverse impacts to an ‘acceptable’ level. Implementation of EA recommendations would improve not only the environmental condition of the project area but also would contribute to make the project benefits long-lasting. Such impacts and measures may also guide EA reports preparation in future.

Nearly two and half decades of internalising EA process legally in Nepal urge multi-stakeholders – proponent, consultant, organisations issuing recommendations, reviewers, approving agencies, and organisations or individuals implementing benefit enhancement and adverse impacts mitigation measures, conducting monitor-

ing and auditing – to collaborate to make the EA reports project-specific, trusted, and easy to implement. Proponents are urged to implement measures with agreed budget (as contained in the approved EIA report) and competent authorities to ensure environmental monitoring and auditing to start a new era of environmental management through EA process in Nepal.

*Uprety is former Joint-Secretary (Technical), then Ministry of Environment, E-mail: upretybk@gmail.com*



have been engaged in preparing EA reports. EPA (2019) has provisioned for ‘blacklisting’ those who prepare under-quality report without complying with the government standards. The competent authority may disqualify or disapprove the submitted EA reports rather than blacklisting the consultant(s). It questions who ‘owns’ EIA report and its findings. Proponent may engage the consultant to prepare report. It is likely that proponent may change key impacts,



KUL MAN GHISING

# A Long March

*With so many challenges, including lack of transmission lines, lack of new hydropower projects, poor distribution systems and seasonal surplus energy, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) is at a critical period. Having earned public trust and confidence in the first 4-year tenure in fixing the decade-long load shedding, Kul Man Ghising has started his second tenure, setting a long march to overcome the challenges. Visiting transmission and distribution centers, persuading India's power authority to purchase surplus energy and proposing the construction of new storage hydropower projects, MD Ghising has laid down his priorities*

BY KESHAB POUDEL

In a matter of just four weeks, MD Ghising visited Hetauda, Bharatpur, Bhairahawa, Butwal, Simara and Sankhuwasabha taking stock of electricity situation of Nepal. His visit to Butwal, Bharatpur and Hetauda aimed to break down the deadlock in the obstruction of Nepal's strategically important transmission line projects. Similarly, he also spared time with

industrialists to increase the consumption of electricity.

MD Ghising's recent visit with a high level delegation in Sankhuwasabha was another important task in NEA's menu to start the largest hydropower project with four digits capacity, that is, 1061 MW Upper Arun. Enthused by the completion of 456 MW Upper Tamakosi project, confidence of

NEA's technical and managerial people has gone up.

MD Ghising, who took much critical and risky decisions in his first tenure to facilitate the successful completion of 456 MW Upper Tamakosi, is now pushing four digit projects. The recent visit by high level delegation there gives a good gesture to start the project.



### Visit to Upper Arun

Visiting Sankhuwasabha with a high level delegation led by Minister Pampha Bhusal, NEA official efforts have received positive support and enthusiasms from the local people, who are demanding the initiation of the construction of 1061 MW Upper Arun Hydropower Project.

Local people have requested the high level delegation led by Minister of Energy Water Resources and Irrigation Pampha Bhusal that the government should take the necessary decision for construction of the project.

They held the view that the project can bring economic prosperity to the region. They also expressed the commitment to provide all necessary support at the local level to complete the project smoothly.

Chairman of Upper Arun Affected Concerned Group Ladar Bhote said that the local community is eagerly waiting to see the money being minted from the wasted water of Up-

per Arun.

“We are happy to know that the construction of the road for the project will start soon. The road will link the remote region with the rest of Nepal and could end our hardship,” said Bhote. He urged the delegation to materialize the project instead of paying only inspection visits.

Minister Bhusal said that the ongoing DPR will be completed as soon as possible and NEA will decide the modality of the project. She said that the government is working to start the construction of the project aiming to share the economic benefits. “We need to end the tradition of talking about the project without implementation. This practice must end.”

She also said that project requires full support from local people to complete it in scheduled time.

NEA looks at the project as a game changer giving high priority for its implementation. Proposed to construct under the People’s Hydropower

Program, 1061 MW, the four digit Upper Arun, is the biggest project to be constructed by NEA.

As per the proposed modality, the government will issue 49 percent share to common people. Remaining investment will be procured through concessional loans from multi-lateral agencies like the World Bank and European Investment Bank, domestic financial agencies like Employment Provident Fund, Citizenship Investment Trust and other institutions. There will be investment from the Federal, Provincial and local governments as well.

Operated six hours a day during the six months of dry season in full capacity, the estimated cost of the project is 1.36 billion US dollar (Rs. 161 billion). NEA is expecting to mobilize 70 percent loans with 30 percent equity.

Following the completion of the project, Upper Arun will generate 4.53 billion units of electricity.





NEA has already forwarded 30 MW Ikhuwa Hydropower Project as a part of Upper Arun under People's Hydro-power program. NEA will start land acquisition and construction of 24 kilometer road from this year.

Out of 180 hectares of land required for the project, 120 hectares of land need to be acquisitioned and the project will displace 25 households. DPR of the project will be completed by 2022. NEA is expected to start selection of contactors and their mobilization by 2023.

The World Bank has provided 10.31 million dollar concessional loans for the DPR which is currently going on. This project will likely complete by 2030.

The delegation led by minister Bhusal also visited main structures of the project including the construction site of power house.

The delegation members included Hartwig Schafer, Vice President of the World Bank for South Asia, the Executive Director of the Bank Mohd Hassan Ahmad, Energy Secretary Devendra Karki, Finance secretary Madhu Kumar Marasini, Director Department of

Electricity Development Sandip Kumar Dip and MD Kulman Ghising.

### Transmission Line

As per his public announcement after assuming his second tenure to provide quality electricity to consumers, MD Ghising has already taken initiatives to work on priority to improve transmission and distribution systems.

With the surplus energy in summer, increasing the consumption of electricity is the pre-requisite to increase the profit and decrease the loss. Visiting Butwal, Bharatpur and Hetauda, MD Ghising has taken an initiative to improve and strengthen the transmission line and distribution system.

With the increase in the electricity generation from NEA's own plants and the plants of Independent Power Producers (IPPs), there is a serious crisis to utilize the huge quantity of electricity.

However, a number of industries are importing the expensive petroleum products to produce electricity. This is where NEA MD Ghising finds a way out. In his recent busy

tour of Lumbini, Bagmati and Province 2, MD Ghising has extensively discussed with industrialists about the agenda of win-win for both NEA and industrialists.

While NEA MD agrees to supply undisturbed and quality electricity linking its transmission line grid, industrialists agree to use electricity abandoning the generators.

For improving the reliability of electricity supply and providing access of NEA's transmission line to the industries, MD Ghising has assured the industrialists that NEA would take all necessary steps to complete on-going construction of substations, distribution networks and transmission lines.

Following the meeting with various stakeholders, MD Ghising has directed officials to accelerate the construction of infrastructure projects like substation, transmission line and distribution line.

At a time when industrialists have been demanding electricity in huge volume, NEA, which is wasting its surplus electricity, is unable to fulfill their demand due to lack of distribution systems.

This move to complete the ongoing transmission line projects and improve distribution system pushed by MD Ghising is the first step to overcome the crisis.

In his field visit, NEA's MD unveiled his short term planning aiming to improve the capacity of the distribution system to supply electricity immediately as much as demanded by industries. NEA is thus focusing its effort to complete the ongoing projects as soon as possible.

With its long term planning, NEA will identify the possible areas increasing the consumption and ex-



pand and strengthen the distribution system constructing the substations.

After receiving several complaints from industrialists, MD Ghising paid a two day visit to industrial corridor of Hetauda, Simara, Birgunj, Bharatpur, Parasi and Bhairawa. During his visit, he took information from the ground about the projects.

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has taken initiative to ensure early completion of the ongoing transmission and distribution lines and substation projects in order to ensure availability of the required amount of electricity to the big industries as a part of its plan to increase power consumption.

“On the one hand, millions of rupees are being wasted on a daily basis as we are not able to consume the electricity produced in the country, while on the other hand, we are not able to supply the required amount of electricity to the industries due to lack of infrastructure. We want to end this problem,” said Ghising.

“After the completion of the projects that are under construction, the industries can be supplied with electricity as per their demand. The

general consumers will get quality and reliable electricity. Similarly, leakage will be reduced and transmission capacity will be strengthened,” he added.

A 132-33 KV substation is under construction to supply electricity to industries operating in Nawalparasi. The construction of the substation is expected to be completed within the next four months. However, due to COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese technicians have not been able to arrive in Nepal to test the substations. Once the substation comes into operation, an additional 90MW power will be supplied to these industries.

To supply reliable and quality electricity to the industries in Simara-Birgunj, adding new owners and removing of the old conductor in 66 kV Double circuits Hetauda-Parwanipur Transmission line is undergoing. Following the completion of this work, NEA will be able to provide more electricity to the region.

#### **400 kV Hetauda-Dhalkebar Obstruction**

Started a decade ago, the work in the construction of 400 kV Hetauda-Dhalkebar Transmission line and construction of 400 kV substa-

tions in Piluwa saw a delay that is creating a lot of problems for NEA.

In his first four year tenure, MD Ghising had settled many issues regarding the line and poles. However, apathy of one year in his absence pushed the project to a standstill again.

Constructed under concessional loan of the World Bank, MD Ghising has visited the sites in Hetauda and discussed the matter with affected population in the presence of local level leaders.

MD Ghising urged local people to support NEA to lift the obstruction and allow NEA to complete this strategic national project necessary to supply electricity from east to west.

He assured local people that he will strive to fulfill their demands and directed the project officials to facilitate with local stakeholders and him to complete the project.

Constructed for the strengthening internal electricity transmission system and for the Nepal-India bilateral electricity trade 400 kV Hetauda-Dhalkebar Transmission line, which is highly important, has been facing several obstructions for its completion.







Due to the obstructions, the project remains incomplete. Started from Thanavryang of Hetauda sub-metropolitan-11, the 400 kV transmission line connects to Bhokraha Narshing Rural Municipality of Sunsari of eastern Nepal passing 10 districts and three provinces.

With demand of local people to change sites, use of forest land, tree cutting procedures, weak working performance of contractors, the project has been delayed for such a long period.

Although several efforts have been made to end the stalemate with local population and start the construction work, the project is yet to move ahead.

Due to failure to complete the construction of this strategically important project, NEA is unable to send electricity of 456 MW Upper Tamakosi to western Nepal from Dhalkebar. Currently, Nepal's western sector has connected through 132 kV Transmission line from Dhalkebar to west.

Within a length of 288 kilometers, 792 towers need to be erected in various geographical zones of hill, Shivalik and Terai. Out of this, ground work of 659 towers has completed and 633 towers are already erected.

The work to complete the remaining will complete once forest clearance and local obstruction will end. Only after the erection of all towers, contractors will start to place the conductor.

Obstructed by local residents of 15, 16 and 17 wards of Hetauda, the project is unable to erect 14 towers. NEA has been discussing the matter with affected population with support from provincial and local levels. However, settlement is yet to be found.

Local people are demanding to realign the transmission line to avoid acquisition of private land. Due to this, they are now allowing erection of the tower even in community forest areas. However, the project has been insisting that change in the alignment at present is impossible because of its design.

In his recent visit with head of Transmission line Directorate Dirghayu Kumar Shrestha, project head Shyam Yadav, MD Ghising requested the local community to allow the project to complete the work. MD Ghising urged the affected population to settle the issue of land acquisition amicably with due compensation and contribute for the national cause.

"If you continue obstruction,

Nepal will be unable to supply 456 MW electricity generated by 456 Upper Tamakosi to west Nepal causing huge loss to the country. Let's decide on compensation and settle the issue among us," urged MD Ghising. He said that the World Bank has already appointed arbitrator to end the stalemate to settle our differences.

Chairman of ward 16 Ram Krishna Koirala said that the project was designed from the human settlement despite the possibility to avoid it.

"We are not against development but the transmission line should be moved to forest areas, not going through the human settlement. We are ready to find out amicable solutions," said Koirala. 440 kV Hetauda-Dhalkebar-Inaruwa Transmission Line is passing parallel to east-west high way.

The project needs to clear forest of 518 hectares and agriculture land of 30 hectares. The project affected 475 hectares of private land and 171 houses and other infrastructures.

Nepal, India Sign Investment Agreement

MD Ghising's work has not lasted only visiting Nepal. He also has made a breakthrough agreement with India.

Nepal and India have agreed to collaborate for the development of the second transnational transmission line with the capacity of supplying around 20,000 megawatts of electricity.

According to the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), an investment agreement was signed between the two sides for the construction of the Butwal -Gorakhpur second transnational transmission line. The proposal to this regard was floated for long, but no substantial progress was achieved.

It may be noted that the Energy Secretary-level meeting of Nepal and India some three years back had agreed to construct the transmission line with a total capacity of 400 KV.

As per the agreement, the transmission line will be constructed on the joint venture of NEA and Power Grid Corporation of India.

NEA executive director Kulman Ghising confirmed the signing of a bilateral investment agreement in regard to the Butwal-Gorakhpur 400 KV transmission line. He was speaking to the RSS from New Delhi, India.

The transmission line is related to the US aid project Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) as well. The line to be originated from Nanglebhare of Kathmandu will reach Butwal to get connected with a substation to be built there. It will reach Gorakhpur via the same substation.

NEA executive director Ghising and Power Grid's executive director Y K Dixit signed on the agreement from their respective sides amidst a program in New Delhi, India.

The August 3 meeting of the Council of Ministers had granted permission to the NEA to invest for 50 per cent share for establishing a company for the construction of the section of the transmission line to be developed towards India.

Executive director Ghising said the signing of the agreement has opened the way for the establishment of a joint company with 50-50 per cent



share of NEA and Power Grid of India for the construction of the transmission line towards India.

The Butwal-Gorakhpur inter-country transmission line is 120 kilometers long. Of this distance, 20 kilometers lies towards Nepal while 100 kilometers is towards India. Nepal itself will construct the section of the transmission line on its side while the section towards India would be built by the company to be set up through 50-50 share ownership of NEA and Power Grid.

The transmission line can transmit about 2,000 megawatts of electricity, NEA's Power Trade Department Director Prabal Adhikari said. According to him, the Butwal-Gora-

khpur transmission line can transmit nearly double power than the existing first inter-country 400 KV Dhalkebar-Mujaffarpur transmission line.

The Butwal-Gorakhpur transmission line will prove to be the lifeline for power trade between the two countries, he added.

#### **Court's verdict**

After a hearing, the Supreme Court single bench headed by chief justice Cholendra Shumsher JB Rana has rejected issuing an interim order against the appointment of Kulman Ghising to the post of Executive Director of the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA).

Former executive director Hitendra Dev Shakya had filed a writ petition in the SC on August 16 against the Office of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, Ministry of Energy, Board of Directors of NEA, and Ghising, demanding to void Ghising's appointment. In his petition, Shakya has claimed that he was removed from the position unlawfully and has demanded re-appointment.

Conducting a hearing on the petition filed by former executive director Shakya, Chief Justice Rana announced the verdict that there is no need to issue the interim order against the appointment of Ghising.

At a time when MD Ghising has been taking different initiatives to strengthen power distribution systems and transmission line to provide quality and regular electricity, the decision of court will likely boost the energy of MD Ghising.





# Confronting Crisis

*As the flow of remittance has started to decline slowly with the COVID-19 pandemic, Nepal's relatively healthy Balance of Payment (BOP) is under a strain for the first time in the last two decades*

By A CORRESPONDENT

While the Dashain festival is knocking on the door of the people, they are less enthusiastic about it than they would be before the COVID-19 situation. Nepalese economy has been suffering from the pandemic's very harsh blows.

Although Nepal's BoP has not worsened, Nepal has to learn a lesson from the recent events of Sri Lanka. Due to depletion in foreign currency reserve, Sri Lanka is facing problems in the import of goods.

Like Sri Lanka, Nepal is also a net importer of foods and other commodities including petroleum products. As Nepal needs foreign currency reserves to pay for those imports, any imbalance in its reserve is likely to impact the economy.

The tourism sector is a major contributor to the Nepalese economy. In 2019, the contribution of travel and tourism to GDP for Nepal was 7.9 percent. Given such a situation, the reduction of number of tourist arrival will likely create a bad economic situation.

Tourist arrivals in the country plummeted in 2020 due to the health crisis and the worldwide restrictions on travel, causing the Nepali economy to shrink by as much as 3.6%.

Nepal's balance of payments (BoP) surplus dwindled to Rs 1.23 billion in fiscal year 2020-21 (mid July 2020 to mid-July 2021) compared to a surplus of Rs 282.41 billion recorded in the previous fiscal year, the latest macroeconomic update of Nepal Rastra Bank

(NRB) shows.

The central bank report reveals that the current account deficit ballooned to Rs 333.67 billion in the review year compared to a deficit of Rs 33.76 billion in the fiscal 2019-20.

Similarly, in the review year, capital transfer increased 7.4 per cent to Rs 15.26 billion and net foreign direct investment (FDI) increased 0.2 per cent to Rs 19.51 billion. In the previous year, capital transfer and net FDI amounted to Rs 14.21 billion and Rs 19.48 billion, respectively.

Meanwhile, remittance inflows increased 9.8 per cent to Rs

(institutional and individual-new and legalized) taking approval for foreign employment slumped 62.8 per cent in the review year. It had decreased 20.5 per cent in the previous year.

The number of Nepali workers (renew entry) taking approval for foreign employment decreased 46.8 per cent in the review year against a drop of 34.7 per cent in fiscal 2019-20.

## Export Situation

During 2020-21, Nepal's merchandise exports surged 44.4 per cent to Rs 141.12 billion compared to an increase of 0.6 per cent in the previous year.



961.05 billion in the review year against a decrease of 0.5 per cent in the previous year. This was despite the fact that the number of Nepali workers

Destination-wise, exports to India and other countries increased 51.7 per cent and 27.7 per cent respectively whereas exports to China

decreased 14.7 per cent.

At the same time, Nepal's merchandise imports jumped 28.7 per cent to Rs 1,539.83 billion in fiscal 2020-21 against a decrease of 15.6 per cent a year ago. Destination-wise, imports from India, China and other countries increased 32.1 per cent, 28.6 per cent and 19.6 per cent, respectively.

The huge imbalance in the country's exports and imports resulted in the total trade deficit of staggering Rs 1,398.71 billion during 2020-21. Consequently, the trade deficit that had narrowed 16.8 per cent in the fiscal 2019-20 widened by 27.3 per cent last fiscal. The export-import ratio increased to 9.2 per cent in the review period from 8.2 per cent in the year 2019-20.

Releasing the whitepaper in the Parliament earlier this month, Finance Minister Janardan Sharma had also flagged the mounting government debt while fund mobilization in the production sector remains tepid.

"This won't just result in shortage of financial resources for development projects but a large portion of government revenue will be spent to offload interest and loan repayment,"

Meanwhile, Nepalese rupee has lost its value so far this year. The decline in foreign currency reserves, coupled with the depreciation of the national currency, will likely put Nepal in difficulty to pay for imports and meet its debt payments.

Given the depletion of foreign currency, Nepalese received just a minimum of foreign currency they need. From \$ 2500 hundred for each traveler, Nepal has already reduced it to \$1500.

### **How the government is tackling the problem**

Although the situation is getting worse, Nepal government has not taken any concrete action to retain

the current level of foreign currency reserve. With the pressure from vehicle dealers, there is no restriction on imports of vehicles. Similarly, the government is unable to increase the petroleum products due to the pressure from populist political parties.

The statistics related to trade in the first month of the current fiscal year 2021/22 released by the Department of Customs shows that the country imported foreign goods worth Rs 150 billion 731 million 719 thousand in the first month of this fiscal.

This is an increase of 75.66 per cent compared to the import in the first month of the last fiscal year. The import in the first month of the last fiscal year, 2020/21, stood at Rs 85 billion 807 million 900 thousand.

Similarly, goods worth Rs 20 billion 765 million 100 thousand were

ported by Nepal. Petroleum products worth Rs 18.13 billion were imported in one month.

Oil products worth over Rs 11.93 billion were exported from Nepal in one month. Similarly, Nepal imported foreign goods worth Rs 150.73 billion from 102 different countries during one month.

As per the statistics, Nepal imported the highest amount of different types of goods worth Rs 89.48 billion from India in one month. Nepal imported a large amount of goods worth Rs 20.97 billion from China after India during the same period.

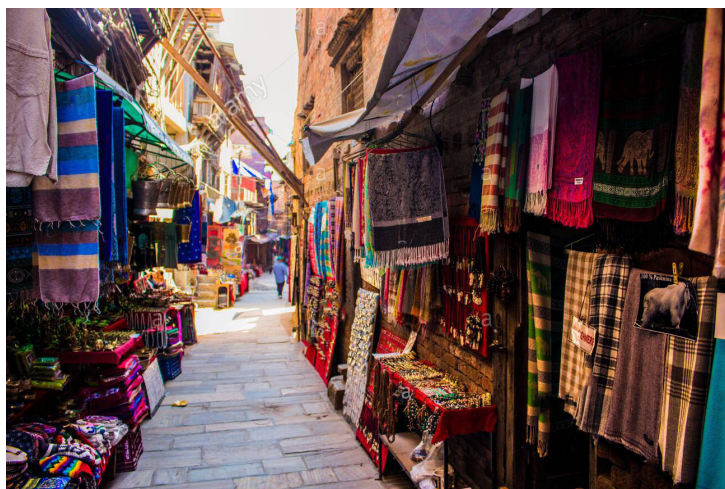
Similarly, Nepal exported goods worth Rs 16.83 billion in India while Rs 80 million in China in one month.

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread in spring 2020, many feared a major economic catastrophe. But it has so far failed to materialize. At that time, investors withdrew their capital from emerging markets at record speed, threatening to bleed the countries dry financially. But after the initial shock, the situation returned to normal.

Global financial institutions

like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have provided a lot of money and played an important role in stabilizing the markets. In this way, they allayed investors' fears that sovereign bankruptcies could occur as a result of the crisis.

Given the current global economic uncertainty caused by pandemic, Nepal's challenges are multiple and it needs to maintain economy in years to come. With the frequent changes in the government due to political instability, Nepal may face major economic challenges.



exported in the first month of the current fiscal year. A high rise has been witnessed in the export in the first month of the current fiscal year compared to the rest of the fiscal years. Goods worth Rs 9 billion 620 million were exported in the corresponding period of the last fiscal year.

Compared to the last fiscal year, export increased by 115.85 per cent in the first month of the current fiscal year.

As per one month's statistics released by the Department, petroleum products top the commodities im-



# Growth Forecast At 4.1%

*ADB projects Nepal's economy to grow by 4.1 percent in FY2022*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Nepal's economy is anticipated to grow by 4.1% (at market prices) in fiscal year (FY) 2022, up from an estimated growth of 2.3% in FY2021, says the latest *Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2021 Update*, a flagship publication of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

"Growth will largely be supported by the ongoing vaccination campaign against COVID-19 as the national immunization plan remains key to Ne-

Growth in services will accelerate because of increased economic activities in the wholesale and retail trade, transport, and financial services along with the vaccine rollout nationwide.

International tourism arrivals, which declined by 80.8% in 2020, may gradually recover, as trekking routes and expeditions resume. Hotels and restaurants, travel, and tourism will likely take more time to recover to pre-pandemic level until the sustained containment of COVID-19.

The report says the country's inflation will rise modestly to 5.2% in FY2022, up from the projected 3.6% in FY2021, due to higher global oil prices and a gradual recovery in domestic demand.

Growth in non-oil imports will likely remain high in FY2022, as investments rise on the gradual revival of the economy. On the other hand, growth in oil imports may be slow, because an increase in hydroelectricity generation may partially offset a rise in fossil fuel consumption. Even with continued strong growth in exports and remittances, the current account deficit will remain high, at an estimated 5.0% of GDP, though down from 8.0% a year earlier.

Other downside risks include natural hazards such as erratic monsoons and floods, which could reduce farm output and damage infrastructure. Heavy rainfall since mid-June 2021 has triggered landslides and floods and led to the loss of lives and livelihoods in some mountainous districts of Nepal.

The report says fiscal spending by provincial and local governments can be improved if they address the persistent capacity deficiencies in investment planning, financial management, project readiness, procurement, and contract management.

This report forecasts growth in developing Asia of 7.1% in 2021 and 5.4% in 2022 in an uneven recovery caused by divergent growth paths. Its theme chapter explores sustainable agriculture.

Growth forecasts are revised up for East Asia and Central Asia from the projections made in April, but down for South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific. This reflects differences in vaccination progress and control of domestic COVID-19 outbreaks but also other factors, including rising commodity prices and depressed tourism. Inflation is expected to remain under control. The main risks to the economic outlook come from the COVID-19 pandemic, including the emergence of new variants, slower-than-expected vaccine rollouts, and waning vaccine effectiveness.

Sustainable food production and agricultural systems that are resilient to climate change will be crucial for developing Asia. To transform agriculture in the region, its economies must tackle challenges from changing consumer demand, changing demographics, and a changing and more fragile environment.

Developing Asia's economic growth forecast is trimmed to 7.1% this year amid COVID-19 concerns; outlook for 2022 is 5.4% - ADB Report

2021 growth outlook is upgraded for East Asia and Central Asia, but downgraded for Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Pacific - ADB Report

Inflation in developing Asia is projected at 2.2% this year and 2.7% in 2022 - ADB Report

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.



pal's economic recovery," said ADB Country Director for Nepal Arnaud Cauchois. "Downside risks include the uncertain trajectory of COVID-19, a possible surge in COVID-19 cases, and subsequent strict containment measures, which could reverse the gradual economic recovery in FY2021."

According to the report, growth in Nepal's agriculture will likely be boosted by increased paddy plantation amid abundant rainfall this monsoon season. Industry output is expected to grow, thanks to a large increase in export volume and stronger domestic demand, as rollout of the national vaccination plan will reduce infection rates over time.

The government's fiscal policy for 2022 largely focuses on strengthening the nation's health care system. Monetary policy will remain accommodative through a dedicated refinancing facility, concessional lending for priority projects and for affected businesses.

## KATHMANDU DECLARATION

# Resilient Development

*Nepal Government and Development Partners Join Forces on Nepal's Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although Nepal and development partners have been promoting green, resilient and inclusive development for long, they have agreed to work together as per a landmark Kathmandu Declaration.

Following intensive discussions, Nepal government and development partners endorsed the landmark 'Kathmandu Declaration' recently to develop a strategic action plan for Nepal towards Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID).

Endorsed by the Ministry of Finance on behalf of the Government of Nepal, Asian Development Bank, Australia, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, International Monetary Fund, Norway, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United Nations, United States, and the World Bank at a high-level roundtable event titled Nepal's Transition to Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID) for Sustainable Recovery, Growth, and Jobs, the Declaration is the first of its kind document to direct Nepal's development.

Under the Kathmandu Declaration, Nepal's development partners have identified up to \$4.2 billion in potential future support, in addition to the \$3.2 billion in previously committed resources to support GRID.

The GRID Strategic Action Plan will coordinate international and domestic financing for priority investments in Nepal's recovery from the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The Government of Nepal is committed to the Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development vision that will support Nepal's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and help address the challenges of climate change and rising inequality," said Finance Minister, Janardan Sharma. "We look forward to working together with development partners, private sector, and key stakeholders to build back Nepal better and stronger."

Investments will support Nepal's 15th development plan, Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Climate Accords, and the Sustainable Development Goals in promoting green growth, jobs, and infrastructure, and building resilience to climate change and shocks from disasters, as well as equitable access to services for Nepalis.

The government and development partners intend to scale up support for such areas as sustainable tourism, renewable energy, cleaner transport and resilient roads, integrated solid waste management, sustainable forest management, wa-

tershed protection and water supply, biodiversity conservation, adaptive social protection, climate-smart agriculture, and sustainable cities. Partnerships and opportunities will be sought with the private sector to increase green investment and support job-creating small and medium enterprises and businesses in these and other areas.

Nepal's GRID vision also emphasizes inclusion to enable women, indigenous groups, and vulnerable and marginalized communities to realize the benefits of a green, resilient recovery. This includes skills training and education opportunities to help citizens prepare for an evolving job market in a new green economy with greater opportunities for all Nepalis.

The roundtable, organized in the lead up to COP26, included representatives from the federal and local government, development partners, private sector, and climate experts.

Endorsing the declaration, Nepal's development partners have announced that they will back the guidance and commitment laid down in the declaration while supporting Nepal's development efforts. What they said follows.

Hartwig Schafer, World Bank Vice President for South Asia: "The World Bank has committed globally to align all its financing to the objectives of the Paris Agreement on climate change by July 1, 2023. We are honored to support Nepal's GRID agenda to guide investment and policy directions in line with its Nationally Determined Contribution and Sustainable Development Goals targets."

Ken O'Flaherty, UK Regional Ambassador for Asia Pacific and South Asia at COP26 Climate Summit: "The GRID approach being adopted in Nepal is a world class example of how countries can mobilize resources for sustainable development and ambitious climate action. I hope that Nepal can showcase this approach at COP26 and encourage others to do likewise."

Shixin Chen, Vice-President, South Asia Department and Central and West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank: "ADB is committed to ensuring 75% of the total number of ADB's operations and \$80 billion investments will support climate change adaptation and mitigation by 2030. We welcome Nepal's GRID agenda and affirm our strong commitment to work with all



stakeholders to advance the integration of climate and development to achieve a resilient, inclusive and sustainable economy."

Jean-Louis Ville, Acting Director for Asia, Central Asia, Middle East/Gulf and the Pacific, European Commission: "Globally, Team Europe contributes 25 billion dollars per year for climate finance. As Team Europe, together with our Member States Finland, France and Germany and the European Investment Bank, the EU is also committed to achieve a Green Recovery in Nepal."

Dr. Anne-Marie Gulde-Wolf, IMF Deputy Director, Asia and Pacific Department: "The IMF welcomes the launch of the GRID agenda. We will continue to support Nepal's recovery from the pandemic and their focus on macroeconomic stability, building resilience, promoting sustainable and inclusive growth, and addressing the challenges of climate change."

Neil Buhne, Regional Director, United Nations Development Coordination Office, Asia-Pacific: "Because of the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and socially vulnerable groups, Nepal's NDC prioritized developing a gender and social inclusion and climate action strategy and action plan. We can accelerate climate action, sustainable development and green recovery by helping to unlock the economic potential of women, indigenous and disadvantaged groups. Inclusion, equity and the environment go together."

Accepting 'Kathmandu Declaration, which aims to develop a strategic action plan for Nepal towards Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID), Nepal government and development partners have charted out a future direction for the development.



## JAPAN'S SUPPORT

# School Reconstruction

*Handing over newly reconstructed buildings of Namuna Machhindra Secondary School, Japan has shown its commitment to building modern and resilient school buildings*

By A CORRESPONDENT

The earthquake of 2015 had destroyed the building of Namuna Machhindra Secondary School, one of the oldest public schools in Lalitpur. Pledging to provide necessary support to construct an earthquake resilient modern school there, JICA extended a supportive hand.

Severely damaged by the 2015 Gorkha Earthquake, such school buildings are reconstructed under the Emergency School Reconstruction Project (ESRP), a Japan assisted project. It will reconstruct 274 schools by November 2022.

In the presence of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, Japan handed over the newly reconstructed building of Namuna Machhindra Secondary School to the school management committee.

The handover ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Deuba; Pampha Bhusal, Minister for Energy and Water Resource; Shankar Das Bairagi, Chief Secretary of Nepal; Chiri Babu Maharjan, Mayor, Lalitpur Metropolitan City; Sushil Gyewali, CEO, National Reconstruction Authority, and Yumiko Asakuma, Chief Representative of JICA (TBC). The ceremony was grand.

On behalf of the Government of Japan and JICA, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, KIKUTA Yutaka sent his congratulatory message to the Government of Nepal and all the people who have made contributions under the ESRP, in particular, the team of Namuna Machhindra Secondary School.

The Ambassador pointed out that this school has a facility for visually impaired students, thus reconstructed with a "Child, Gender and Disabled (CGD) friendly" concept called "Omoi-yari" (Japanese spirit of caring others), being equipped with such facilities as reduced steps, braille blocks and handrails.

Ambassador Kikuta continued by expressing his hopes that all students

can enjoy their school lives in a healthy and safe environment. The Embassy of Japan in Nepal hopes the ESRP schools further strengthen the relationship between Japan and Nepal, and the friendship between the peoples of the two countries for future generations.

### Multi-Hazard Resilient School Buildings

Built under a grant assistance of the Government of Japan, the newly reconstructed buildings of Namuna Machhindra Secondary School—also a Resource Class based Integrated School for Children with Visual Impairments in Nepal, was handed over to the school management committee on September 15.

The school situated in Lalitpur



was damaged by 2015 Gorkha earthquake. Since then the school faced difficulties in managing classrooms and education for the students.

Established in 2008 BS (1952AD), the school now has nearly 500 students, at levels from ECD to grade 10, including 37 students with Visual Impairment. The reconstruction of the facilities initiated in November 2019 under the Emergency School Reconstruction Project (ESRP) was supported by JICA.

The Project is being implemented by Central Level Project Implementation Unit of NRA. The new buildings were reconstructed with multi-hazard resilient structures which are environment,

child, and gender and disabled friendly to provide improved learning environment for the students based on the concept of Build Back Better (BBB).

According to JICA, in the new school, there are classrooms with furniture for Early Childhood Development (ECD) to grade 10, science laboratories, a resource classroom, separate hostel rooms for boys and girls, kitchen and dining hall for the students with visual impairment. Also included are office rooms for head teacher and teachers, separate toilets for girls and boys with water supply in each floor of the academic and hostel block, hand washing facilities, tactile pavement, and handrails in the hostel block.

Speaking at the handover and inauguration ceremony Prime Minister Deuba appreciated the generous and valuable support of the Government of Japan not only in Education sector but also in different sectors in Nepal including education since a long time. He thanked all stakeholders for close collaboration and efforts for completion of the really inclusive school reconstruction.

Chief Representative of JICA Nepal Yumiko Asakuma also expressed pleasure to hand over such multi-hazard resilient school facilities with universal design, and expectation for JICA's contribution to quality education. She also hoped for periodic maintenance and effective utilization of the provided facilities.

Emergency School Reconstruction Project (ESRP): Total 236 schools are being built and reconstruction of 38 additional schools started in January 2021 at a total cost of JPY 14 billion (about NPR 12.7billion) to support the reconstruction of disaster resilient schools in Gorkha, Dhading, Nuwakot, Makwanpur, Rasuwa and Lalitpur Districts, based on the earthquake-resistant type design guidelines formulated by JICA under the principle of "BBB".



EUROPE BUSINESS ASSEMBLY  
"BEST ENTERPRISE AWARD 2016"  
LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM



"THE BIZZ 2016"  
BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD  
WASHINGTON DC, USA



THE GOLDEN EUROPE AWARD FOR  
QUALITY AND COMMERCIAL PRESTIGE  
FRANCE



## १५ औं वर्षमा प्रवेश

### उपलब्धि

चुक्ता पुँजी  
१६.०८ अर्ब

निक्षेप  
१६० अर्ब

कर्जा  
१४२.९८ अर्ब

सञ्चालन मुनाफा  
४.६९ अर्ब



शाखा सञ्जाल  
१८९

ग्राहक संख्या  
९३३,५२७

सरकारलाई राजस्व  
वार्षिक करिव  
सवा २ अर्ब

Ever Permeating and Pervading to New Scale of Height of Prosperity

शुरुमा १००० कित्ता सेयर खरिद गर्ने लगानीकर्ता —  
हाल ११४०० कित्ताको शेयरधनी (आ.व. ०७७/७८ को थपिने बाहेक) ।

उपरोक्त गौरवमय प्रगति, प्रतिष्ठा र उपलब्धिका लागि योग्य तुल्याउन यस संस्थालाई हरदम सहयोग गर्ने, सद्भावना र सदाशयता राख्ने आदरणीय ग्राहकवर्ग, विभिन्न संघ संस्थाहरू, नियामक निकाय, सञ्चार जगत्, कर्मचारी वर्ग लगायत शुभेच्छुक सबैमा हार्दिक आभार प्रकट गर्दछौं ।

१४औं वर्ष पूरा गरी १५औं वर्ष प्रवेशको सुखद अवसरमा जस्तोसुकै प्रतिकूलताका बीच पनि बैंक परिवार यहाँहरूको सेवामा सदा भैं कटिबद्ध रहने सविनय अनुरोध गर्न चाहन्छौं ।



**PRIME** COMMERCIAL  
BANK LTD.  
प्राइम कमर्सियल बैंक लिमिटेड



# Chalfal Chautari Giving Voice to Voiceless

*With this program, DCA and its local partners have been helping women to gather in a public place to discuss a wide range of issues and agendas and to join and discuss their common issues and identify solutions by themselves.*

By A CORRESPONDENT

For years, Sakuram Bagwan, 35, a resident of Khajura Rural Municipality of Banke district, did not know the importance of a citizenship certificate. Neither did she know the process to acquire it. A citizenship certificate is a legal document essential to receive all state benefits. Yet dozens of women in Sakuram's community were living without it.

In the backward Madheshi Dalit community of Nepal, where Sakuram belonged, public forums, group meetings and gatherings were non-existent, let alone discussions on the promotion of women's rights, voting rights, local-level service delivery, violence against women, gender-based violence (GBV), polygamy and other social agendas.

However, a social mobilizer from Himat Dalit Women's Group, a local women's rights group, helped Sakuram and other women of her community to come together to discuss their problems. "As we realized her situation and her desperate desire to come out of the poverty trap, we encouraged her to participate in entrepreneurship development training and public discussion platforms. Being in a group also helped her to become aware of various issues related to caste and gender-based discrimination, child rights, the importance of health and sanitation as well as education," said the social mobilizer.

Funded by DCA and implemented by local partner Female Dalit Organization (FEDO) Chalfal Chautari, a public platform for discussion, have been transforming the lives of women like Sakuram, informing them about their rights, structures of local level and

different administrative procedures, including acquiring citizenship certificate in backward areas of Banke and Kailali districts.

Set up with guidance from

learned acts, regulations and procedures of getting services in Palikas and to have access to the programs."

After taking part in various discussions and listening to presenta-



FEDO, representatives of community-level groups like Himat have been visiting villages and encouraging women from Dalit and marginalized communities to organize orientations and training programs and participate in the Chalfal Chautari.

Laxmi Dalit, a resident of Baijanath Palika of Banke District is another beneficiary of the program. After participating in Chalfal Chautari, she came to know about income-generating programs and literacy classes available in her own Palika.

"Although it was only half a day of open discussion, Chalfal Chautari helped me to get the information on how to move forward," said Laxmi. "I

tions including from the ward chair, she took a month's tailoring training and started to work in a tailoring shop.

Focusing not only on the individual problems, Chalfal Chautari has also worked to rescue missing children in the communities. Ujyalo Women's Group, a Dalit women's group of Ram-pur in Kailali Rural Municipality of Kailali District, has shown how a platform like Chalfal Chautari can effectively work to solve a variety of problems, bringing all stakeholders together.

In 2019, the group became successful to bring the police and local-level communities together in rescuing four children, who migrated to India following the death of their parents.

They rescued Ganesh BK (15), Bibek BK (10), Bishal BK (14); and Anjali BK (12) from India. Bishal and Ganesh are now studying in class 7 and Bibek and Anjali are studying in class 4 with full scholarships.

Lajuram Chaudhary, Chairman of Kailari Rural Municipality, opined that Chalfal Chautari has played an important role to bring those children.

“Earlier Ujyalo Women’s Group brought the issue of missing orphans and invited police, our representatives, local civil society members and school headmasters to Chalfal Chautari to discuss the possible way out. Nepal Police, along with the Local Government, provided support to search for the migrated children. After rescuing them, the group coordinated with the public school for their enrollment and they are now studying,” said Chaudhary.

This shows that the platform also extends support in mitigating the gaps between citizens, local administration and Local Government and building their confidence to take support from other relevant stakeholders as and when needed. It has also enhanced the capacity of the women’s groups to negotiate with Local Government and stakeholders and claim for justice and rights when needed.

Local-level community groups constituted through facilitation by FEDO have been organizing the open discussion forum in various Wards of Kailari Rural Municipality and Gauriganga Municipality to increase the level of awareness and access of women, Dalit and marginalized communities at the local levels.

Focused on the issues and agenda related to the local community,

this program has been immensely contributing to increase the level of awareness and number of informed citizenry. This is helping to transform the society in Kailari and Gauriganga Municipality.

With funding from DCA, DWRF and local women’s groups have also been implementing advocacy programs in Gauriganga Municipality Wards 10 and 11 and few wards (5, 6, 7 and 8) in Kailari Rural Municipality.

The programs include reduction of child marriage, GBV and caste-based discrimination, informing local groups on the existing laws like Act against caste-based discrimination, child marriage, dowry and Chaupadi. As the COVID-19 pandemic has badly affected the society in Kailari and Gauriganga, the platform is also helping generate awareness against COVID-19 and providing financial support for post-pandemic recovery.

Padam Bahadur Air, Chairperson of Ward 10, and Binod Kumar Chaudhary, Chairperson of Ward 11 sees the platform as an important channel to disseminate the information and interact with the people to understand their own concerns.

“Chalfal Chautari is the right forum to address the issue because of the presence of a large number of people from the community,” concluded Binita Devi BK, executive member of Gauriganga Municipality.

“The overall objective of the project is to make Dalit women and men – especially from Madheshi and excluded groups, able to combat discrimination and exclusion and claim their rights and entitlements,” said Durga Sob, Founder President of FEDO. “Chalfal Chautari



is an open platform to share the experiences and learn the legal and other issues related to them. Focused on the issues and agenda related to the local community, this program has been immensely contributing to increase awareness and informed citizenry. This is very much contributing to transform society.”

Following the promulgation of the Constitution of Nepal 2015, many laws were also brought in the new context ensuring the rights of women, Dalit and marginalized communities. But, in the absence of civic education programs, large numbers of people are still unaware of them.

In this context, Chalfal Chautari has come to be a game-changer in informing the people and empowering the vulnerable and marginalized.

Civic education can be broadly defined as the provision of information and learning experiences aimed to equip and empower citizens to participate in democratic processes.

Civic education is taken as a lifelong learning process that each individual has opportunities to learn, unlearn and relearn throughout their life. There is no target group for civic education as each member of a family, community and society can be a member of the platform.

Some of the common uses of civic education outside of schools include voter education, vital registration,







and education in rights to information, awareness-raising programs for women and disadvantaged groups including Dalits and their social and political rights and leadership training for local civil society activists.

Civic education has also been used in the public sector to improve the democratic functioning of local government, public service providers, community leaders and political parties.

For this, different forms of delivery include classroom-based learning, informal learning, experiential learning, mass media campaigns and awareness activities are required.

DCA has been adopting this approach as part of community mobilization in its programmatic goal through Chalfal Chautari. In Nepali parlance, Chautari stands for a public place where people can gather and discuss their personal, social and professional issues or any other matters.

With this program, DCA and its local partners have been helping women to gather in a public place to discuss a wide range of issues and agendas and to join and discuss their common issues and identify solutions by themselves. Sometimes, local partners also provide advice and suggestion by sending experts from government institutions and other service providers as required by the local community.

Yek Maya BK, Vice-chairperson of Khajura Rural Municipality holds the view that this kind of interaction is really effective to create informed citizens. “My own experience is that this program has increased the visit of the

number of marginalized and Dalits to the rural municipal offices. Compared to three years ago, I see a lot of women visiting the municipality inquiring about the services provided by it.”

Chalfal Chautari aims to promote civic engagement and support democratic and participatory governance. The idea behind Chalfal Chautari is to promote the demand for good governance (i.e. an informed and engaged public), as a necessary complement to improve the practice of good governance.



Chalfal Chautari now plays a key role to address a wide variety of political, economic and governance issues. Ongoing experiences have shown that only aware and active citizens can hold the government accountable and ensure their rights. If citizens understand and are aware of the governance system,

they can go there to claim services. At a time when Nepal’s government system is being transformed from a central to a federal structure, it is important to empower local communities. This is only possible from formal and informal education systems.

“Programs such as Chalfal Chautari are essential to increase the awareness level of community members. Without increasing awareness at the level of citizens, nothing can change,” said Sarada Regmi Bishwokarma, Vice-chairperson of Khajura Rural Municipality. “Previously we had more men coming for vital registration or any other work, but women are also coming to the ward offices seeking services these days. There is a vast change.”

With many Chalfal Chautari running in different areas, DCA, in coordination with its partners, has developed Chalfal Chautari Operation Guidelines to ensure uniformity. This facilitates to bring everyone on the same page and deliver the best, serving as a platform to give voice to the voiceless people.

Chalfal Chautari has already established itself as a citizen platform for people who are left behind in their

access to information or are deprived and neglected. Moreover, this platform could also build the skill and knowledge of the community to identify their issues and find solutions through self-reflection and sharing of experiences so that they don’t have to wait for others to support them.

# Dashain: Mother Of All Festivals



BY: REEZAN POUDEL

For young people like me, Dashain used to be a festival of long holiday, meeting relatives of far and near locations and taking their blessings with Tika, playing swings and visiting temples. This also used to be a festival of purchasing new clothes for a new look.

People also eat a lot of meat during the festival. Nepal government has already announced sale of 20000 goats with subsidies in the valley. During the festival, Nepalese also import mountain goats from Tibetan Autonomous Region of China.

However, the color and essence of the festival has almost died following the upsurge of COVID-19 last year. With the declining of cases of COVID-19, the jubilation of festival seems to be returning. As the bus and airlines operators have already opened the advance ticket booking, there is a rush of the people to secure the tickets. Given the present situation more than half a million people are expected to leave the Kathmandu valley.

The Dashain is the biggest Hindu festival of the world and it is celebrated by Hindus living in Nepal and India. In Nepal, Dashain is celebrated by all the different communities as a festival of meeting acquaintances, relatives and friends. A home to 123 distinct ethnic groups, ethnic sub-castes, and several religions, Nepal shows an example of how each of the groups celebrates the Dashain in diversity. As per the Hindu traditions, the Dashain is the celebration of the victory of good over evil. This festival, which symbolizes that the good always prevails over the bad, signifies unity, the victory of truth, and the inception of happiness. Large numbers of Nepalese from the Diaspora return to their homes to celebrate the festival.

Dashain is the longest and the most auspicious festival in the Bikram Sambat and Nepal Sambat annual calendars, celebrated by Nepali along with their Diaspora throughout the globe. It is the most anticipated festival in Nepal, Bhutan, Burma and North Indian hills. People return from all parts of the world, as well as different parts of the country, to celebrate together. Government offices, educational institutions, and other offices remain closed during the festival period.

Among the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley, the Dashain is popularly celebrated as Mohani and is celebrated as the most important festival of Nepal Sambat calendar year. Among Hindu and Buddhist Newars, it is celebrated with variations where each of the nine days of Navaratri leading up to the 10th day called 'Dashami', carries special importance, with the most important days being the Ghatasthapana, Maha Ashtami (8th-day), Maha Nawami (9th-day) and Maha Dashami.

The goddess Durga and her various manifestations

are especially worshiped by Newars throughout the Shaktripith of Kathmandu Valley. Among Newars, Dashain is also important for its emphasis on family gatherings as well as on a renewal of community ties, highlighted by special family dinners called Na-khtyā and various communal processions of deities called Jātrā throughout the three royal cities.

Not just withstanding its small size but also in cultural tradition and heritage, Nepal is a bit interesting. The nine day festival begins on October 7 this year and ends on 19 of October. The main focus of the Dashain festival of Nepal is the offering of Jamara, meat, and Red Tika to the Goddess Durga Mata.

Among the fifteen days on which it is celebrated, the most important days are the first, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, and fifteenth. The first nine days of the Dashain symbolize the battle which took place between them while on the tenth day, Goddess Durga finally killed the demon.

The first day of Dashain is called Ghatasthapana and

the last day is known as Purnima. On the first day of Dashain, Ghatasthapana, priests worship and pray to Goddess Durga to bless her presence in a pot (Kalash) which is filled with holy water.

The seventh day of Dashain is known as Phulpati. It is one of the major celebrations occurring in Dashain. The eighth day of Dashain is

known as Maha Ashtami. On this day, people start to sacrifice goats and other animals throughout the nation.

The ninth day of Dashain is called Mahanavami. So on this special day, vehicles and other pieces of equipment are offered fowl blood and prayers are done in hopes of having a safe time wherever. The tenth day of Dashain, Bijaya Dashami is the most awaited day for all.

People bring their Jamara and other treats to offer it to the Goddess Durga. According to the Nepali calendar, this festival occurs especially during the month of Ashoj or Kartik. This festival is the most awaited festival for all the Nepalese people living all over the world. The most excited for this festival are kids. Some get new clothes and eat delicious foods and they enjoy playing PING, or the swing.

As people are flocking to their homes for a well-deserved break, there will be joy all over Nepal. The color of joy reaches the villages of far flung Nepal. Then the busy cities of Kathmandu valley and other cities come back to life again.





# चाडपर्व हाम्रा साँस्कृतिक पहिचान, मध्यपान र जुवातास विकृतिका मुहान ।



नेपाल सरकार  
विज्ञापन बोर्ड

# दर्शैको बेला हिरोको मेला

यसपालीको दर्शैमा आफूलाई मनपर्ने  
HERO खरिद गरि खुसीयाली मनाऔं ।  
पक्का डिस्काउन्ट सँगै  
थप नगद पुरस्कार पनि पाउँ ।

बम्पर  
रु. १००,०००

रु. ६,०००  
पक्का डिस्काउन्ट

१ लाख  
हरेक SCRATCH मा  
रु. १००,००० सम्म क्यास



साथै, सबै HERO MOTORCYCLE र SCOOTER मा  
0% ब्याजमा ५०% फाइनेन्स उपलब्ध छ ।

यो योजना कम्पनीले तोकेको शुरुमहरुमा मात्र लागू हुनेछ ।



५ मिनेटमा EXCHANGE\*  
त्यो पनि उचारैन्दीको साथ





## Why pay a fee? Get it done for FREE.

Introducing NIBL's Thaili, a zero transaction fee digital wallet.



Transfer money, pay bills and do much more  
at zero transaction fees.

For anything and everything



DOWNLOAD the App now



(available soon for iOS users)

Here you go Sisi Your  
BIRTHDAY SURPRISE! 🎂

Rs. 5000 transferred to sister's account.

Rs. 5000 deposited in account.

Oh Dai! You're the best.  
ABA TA PARTY! 🥳



Features and services  
updated regularly



Available for  
Android users



iOS users get started on:  
[www.nibl.com.np/thaili](http://www.nibl.com.np/thaili)



Download and experience  
features and special offers



GET 4% AND 2% DISCOUNT  
ON NTC AND NCELL TOPUP

Customer SUPPORT  
☎ 01-4545481  
☎ 01-4512044  
☎ 01-4514561  
email us at: [thaili@nibl.com.np](mailto:thaili@nibl.com.np)