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**VIEWPOINT**  
Shivaram P.D. Koirala, PhD



**ARTICLE**  
Hemang Dixit



**ENVIRONMENT**  
Batu Uprety

# NEW SPOTLIGHT

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Oct.- 29, 2021  
FORTNIGHTLY

FLOOD AND DISASTER

## Unprecedented Loss

INSIDE



**PM DEUBA'S HUNDRED DAYS**  
Mixed Rating



**SURPLUS ELECTRICITY**  
Bane Or Boon



**COP26**  
Last Chance

HBL

नारी  
बचत खाता



# अब हरेक नारी, दुई कदम अगाडी

विशेष सुविधायुक्त हिमालयन बैंकको 'नारी बचत खाता'

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पक्का डिस्काउन्ट सँगै  
थप नगद पुरस्कार पनि पाउँ ।

**बत्पर**  
**रु. १००,०००**

रु. ६.०००  
पञ्चका डिस्काउन्ट

१ लाख  
होके SCRATCH मा  
रु. १००,००० नकद वकाम

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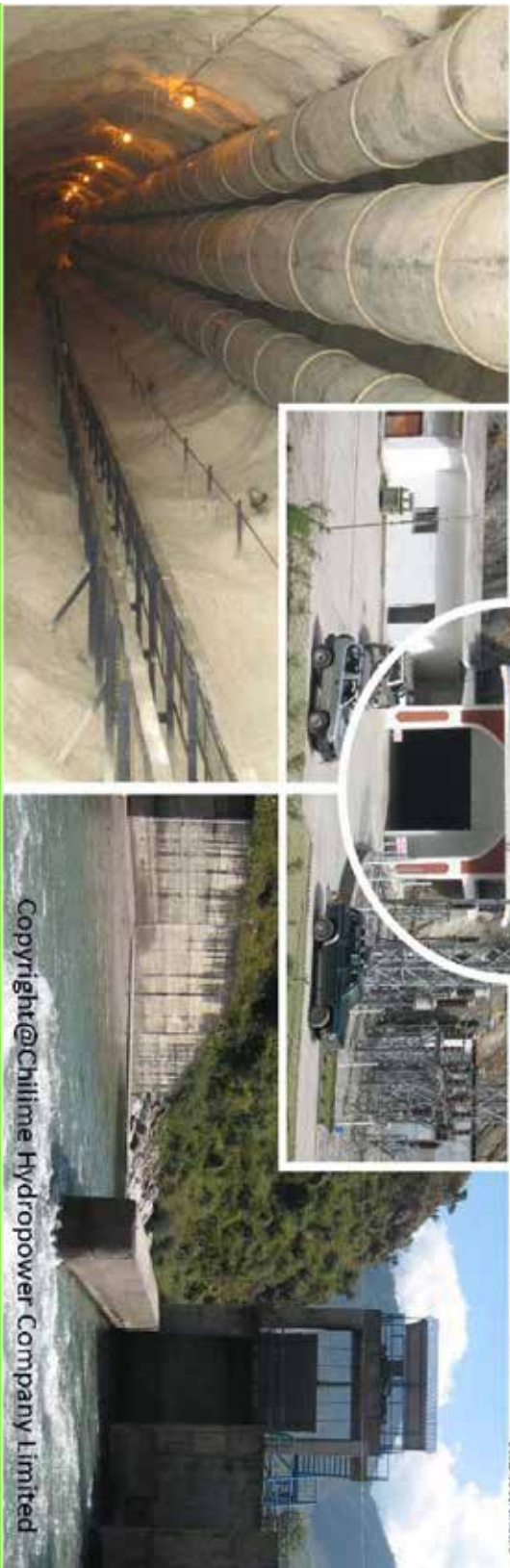
સો ધોતલા કાલપલીનો તોયોયો તોમજામજા કાલ ત્યારુ મુલેક



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Different countries of the world have seen a number of unexpected natural disasters this year caused by the changing weather patterns. From floods in New York, Germany and other European countries and high temperatures in Canada and Western parts of the United States, forest fires caused by drought in Europe and recent events in Himalayan region like Nepal and India have indicated that something is really going wrong in weather patterns. As the intensity of rain is changing, it is likely to bring more floods and landslides in countries like Nepal. Similarly, prolonged drought will cause more forest fires.

For the rich countries, they can manage the economic loss caused by the natural disasters by spending resources. However, the countries like Nepal do not have financial resources to refund the rebuilding and reconstruction. With the recent warning of climate scientists, Nepal will see more suffering. Just three days of mayhem following incessant rain have left over 100 people dead in Nepal. Hundreds of people have lost their means of livelihood. In a recent report of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), scientists have suggested the world leaders to take necessary decision to reduce the pollution. In the context of growing climate related disasters, the gathering of global leaders in Glasgow of United Kingdom will be a landmark event. At a time when countries around the world are recovering from COVID-19 pandemic, expressing the commitment to goal set by Paris agreement will be highly important. However, our cover this week will be looming energy crisis. We also have the recent disasters as a second lead story. With completion of Dashain festival, we are celebrating other festivals. New Spotlight would like to greet all well wishers, patrons and readers with a happy festive season, for Nepal Sambat, Tihar, Dipawali and Chhath festivals.

**Keshab Poudel**

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# Nepal First, Now



BY: HEMANG DIXIT

Former US President Donald Trump is now on the sidelines of the American political scene for over seven months. His slogans of 'America First' and 'Make America Great Again' are still reverberating in many U.S. state capitals. We in Nepal should copy his first slogan with the modification of an additional 'Now'. This is in response to the announcements by two Ministers in PM Deuba's cabinet when inducted into the cabinet. The Energy Minister has plans to reduce electricity tariffs to encourage its use for domestic purposes thereby reducing the import of gas from India. The Finance Minister encouraged local entrepreneurs to start small scale industries for production of goods for internal consumption and thus reducing imports. A high level trade mechanism proposal stated more stress has to be taken to reduce import of non essential items from elsewhere out of country. Kudos to both ministers. A first step could be reducing electric charges for domestic use.

A recent item in Setopati Online was about two Nepalis brothers with a family background in the production of clothes and a friend, all three of whom had studied in the US and wanted to start some enterprise in Nepal. Aware of the craze for hemp based clothing in New York they, in around 2015 started efforts of making clothing from hemp in Nepal. This hemp based product was marketed under a Trade Mark of 'Stemp' i.e. Stem & Hemp or 'Styled with hemp'. In the post earthquake period their efforts did not initially make much progress. Later, because of the limited demand in Nepal for such wear, they concentrated on making material, both rough and soft and exporting these to New York.

All very good for one has to keep in mind that one of our legislators has been attempting in the house to make it legal to grow ganja or hemp in Nepal and popularise the use of its various products for the country's benefit. However news in a National Daily in the third week of August reported that our police force was hell bent in catching and imprisoning of people involved in the movement of ganja. Isn't it time to revise the law, a proposal of which has been stagnating in our House. Will something be done now?

Some advocates for cannabis, ganja or hashish claim that it was during the Samundra Manthan that Lord Shiva discovered it. Many state that cannabis is a herb, in usage in our part of the world since ages past and not a drug. To give an idea of the heyday of cannabis usage in Nepal during the Hippie Era in Kathmandu I am quoting from my 'Reflections Down the Ages'. An Eden Hashish Centre, started by DD Sharma in the late 1960s at Jhochhen / Freak Street was the nucleus. This centre was spotted by no less a person than US Vice President Spiro Agnew in 1970 whilst visiting Basantapur.

Cannabis was in fact legal in Nepal till 1973 when US pressure made it illegal. The book *Far Out* states that it was on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1973 that HMG Nepal banned cannabis. The subsequent fire that broke out in Singha Durbar and almost completely destroyed the building is attribut-

ed by many to an angry Lord Shiva! Being part of culture, Nepalis who are Mithila Basi maintain that if one does not use bhang during Holi then you have desecrated the whole celebration!

If the ban of cannabis is to be reversed, then there must be a massive awareness campaign to make the public aware of its hazards too? The worrying point is the implementation and success for such campaigns. One notes that similar actions about the hazards of smoking and alcohol – two items which are hugely popular and in extensive use. The government, not only in Nepal but in many parts of the world, are loathe to totally ban the consumption of both items as this will result in a massive decrease in government revenue. The question for us Nepalis is simply *ke garne?*

As stated earlier a private member's bill, registered in Parliament in March 2020 for legalising commercial marijuana cultivation and sale of cannabis for medicinal purposes in Nepal has still to be fully discussed and action taken. The current reality is that as late as the fourth week of August 2021, our Nepali security personnel destroyed cannabis being grown at Khalanga, the district headquarters of Jumla.

A medical colleague of mine recently posted a suggestion in Facebook those sugarcane farmers, not being paid by the sugar mill owners for ages should now switch over to vegetable farming as these would give regular returns on time. A superb idea. If cannabis is legalised in Nepal then hemp farming would certainly be an even better alternative!

Besides the use of cannabis for linens and clothing industry, a major use is for building houses. The place where this is done is 'Down Under' in Australia. Concrete is replaced by hemp in Crete, Hemperate or Hemp blocks used for building many residential buildings. Parquet flooring from cannabis plants are as good as those from bamboos. The buildings so constructed are claimed to be economical to build and comfortable residences to spend ones days in!

Cannabis seeds are rich in essential fatty acids and have been used in our part of the world for centuries. Its use was limited until outsiders tried to increase its use in leaps and bounds to hazardous levels in lands far off for financial gains. This is the situation was created by colonisers in many parts of the world to subjugate those they termed natives!

The claim of the hemp / soybean car proposed by Henry Ford in 1941 is mythical. Our 21<sup>st</sup> Century option, for bio-fuel generation from hemp is realistic. The bottom line is that growing and use of cannabis should be legalised. A philosophical attitude of hemp expressed in Facebook is: "Where there is weed there is always solitude and quietude, where there is alcohol there is always noise and chaos!"

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

## NEWSNOTES

### Embassy Of India Kathmandu Celebrates Gandhi Jayanti

Charge d'affaires Namgya Khampa inaugurated an Art Exhibition on the theme "Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy for a better world" at Nepal Art Council, Kathmandu on the occasion of 152nd Gandhi Jayanti,



The exhibition, organized by Shivata Love Foundation with the support of B.P. Koirala India-Nepal Foundation (BPKF), Kathmandu, was open to the public from October 03-08, 2021.

A

'Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening and Awareness Program' and a 'Blood Donation Camp' were also organized by National Hospital and Cancer Research Centre and Indian Citizens Association of Nepal (ICAN) in association with Embassy of India at Agrawal Bhawan, Kamalpokhari, Kathmandu.

Noted actor Manisha Koirala graced the occasion and shared her experiences and perspectives about fighting cancer. Officials from the Embassy, members of Indian community and friends of India in Nepal participated in the camps. These two events were also part of Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) Day celebrations.

An interaction program on Life of Gandhiji was organized at Nepal-Bharat Library where scholars and students from various universities of Kathmandu participated. A movie titled 'India's Struggle for Freedom' on the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi was screened and a quiz competition on Mahatma Gandhi was also organized at the Nepal-Bharat Library.

Earlier in the day, officers of the Embassy paid floral tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at his statue within the Embassy premises.

### Ambassador Kikuta, Minister Dr. Khadka Discuss Deepening Ties

Ambassador of Japan to Nepal Kikuta Yutaka paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singha Durbar.

Ambassador Kikuta congratulated Foreign Minister Khadka in person for his appointment, and expressed his

best wishes for the success of Prime Minister Deuba and Foreign Minister Khadka. Ambassador handed the congratulatory letter from MOTEGI Toshimitsu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan to Foreign Minister Khadka on this occasion.

Foreign Minister Khadka expressed the appreciation for the congratulations, and congratulated Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio for the appointment. Ambassador Kikuta expressed the gratitude for the congratulatory message from Prime Minister Deuba to Prime Minister Kishida for the appointment and also the congratulatory letter from Foreign Minister Khadka to Foreign Minister Motegi for his reappointment.

Ambassador Kikuta and Foreign Minister Khadka shared the views to cooperate further to expand the bilateral relations between the two countries, as the year 2022 commemorates the 120th anniversary since the first Nepali students travelled to Japan in 1902. Furthermore, Ambassador Kikuta mentioned that Japan had been working with Nepal as a friendly development partner and will continue to assist the country's challenge to deal with the COVID-19 situation, moreover, they are for the socio-economic development and recovery of Nepal from the pandemic. As an example of the recent assistance, Ambassador Kikuta mentioned the Government of Japan's contribution to UNICEF for the cold-chain facility to ensure vaccines to reach all as "Last One Mile Support." Foreign Minister Khadka expressed his gratitude for Japan's cooperation and assistance in multiple ways to overcome the difficulties caused by COVID-19, including the provision of 1.6 million doses of vaccine and medical equipment. Ambassador Kikuta emphasized the long-term bilateral relationship between Japan and Nepal and expressed his wish to further deepen the close partnership by resuming the people-to-people exchange once the pandemic situation will ease soon.

### China Announces Additional 2 Million COVID-19 Vaccines To Nepal

Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Wang Yi announced to provide additional grant of two million COVID-19 vaccines to Nepal.

This announcement was made during his an hour long telephone conversation with Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Narayan Khadka.

During the conversation, the two foreign ministers discussed the entire gamut of the bilateral relations between the two countries including COVID-19 vaccine cooperation, trade and commerce, development cooperation and border management.





According to a press release issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the two foreign ministers also talked about progress of different development projects, return of Nepali students to China for continuation of their studies, increasing the number of containers of fertilizers and other goods and their shipment through Tatopani/Zhangmu and Rasuwagadhi/Kerung border ports and resumption of regular air services between Nepal and China.

The two foreign ministers agreed to work closely on issues of common interest and to further promote friendly and long-standing bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries. Foreign Minister Dr. Khadka reiterated Nepal's One China policy and appreciated the Government of the People's Republic of China for continuous support for Nepal's economic development.

On the occasion, State Councilor Wang Yi announced to provide additional grant of two million COVID-19 vaccines to Nepal. Minister Dr. Khadka thanked the Chinese Government for consistently supporting Nepal in its fight against Covid-19.

The State Councilor extended an invitation to Minister Dr. Khadka to visit China at a mutually convenient date.

## Japan Hands Over Health Training Center And Emergency Shelter

Japan has handed over a newly-built Health Training Center and Emergency Shelter to the Nona Koirala Smriti Pratisthan in Biratnagar, Morang District.



The new building was built with grant assistance of USD 107,860 under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) of the Japanese Government.

On the occasion, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal KIKUTA Yutaka sent

a message congratulating everyone who was involved in the project. Ambassador Kikuta appreciated all who worked together with the Embassy to complete the project and hoped that the health training center and shelter would become a community asset and serve the local people which is all the more important in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Biratnagar lies in a flood prone area but lacks adequate emergency shelter facilities, causing many people to suffer from infectious diseases. The newly-built facility is also expected to contribute towards improving local knowledge of health and sanitation and serve as a shelter during floods and other calamities. The Embassy of Japan in Nepal is confident that the project will further strengthen the bilateral relations between Japan and Nepal, deepen the people-to-people friendship between the peoples of the two

countries.

According to a press release issued by the Embassy of Japan, GGP was established to implement projects directly benefiting the people at grassroots level for the socio-economic development of the country, and over 200 projects have been implemented in Nepal since 1991.

## Israel Selects 1000 Caregivers From Nepal

Israel has selected 1,000 individuals for auxiliary work from Nepal. They will be working in various places at home of Israel as a caregiver.

The Embassy of Israel informed that there were 9,000 applicants but 1,600 were selected through proper processing of written tests, interviews and medical tests. Following this process, 1000 individuals, 700 women and 300 men have been selected through a lottery session held in Jerusalem on October 11.

The selection process proceeded under the government to government based agreement (G2G) between the governments of Nepal and that of Israel. The process became successful with the series of contributions of the Department of Foreign Employment of Ministry of Labour, Employment, Nepal and Social Security and the Population and Immigration Authority (PIBA), a government agency of Israel.

The lottery session – aired through a virtual session in Nepal and Israel- was witnessed by Ambassador of Nepal to Israel, Dr Anjan Shakya, Ambassador of Israel to Nepal, Hanan Goder, Joint secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harishchandra Ghimire, and Dr Thaneshwor Bhusal, undersecretary, the foreign employment section of Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security along with other dignitaries and media personnel.

The Embassy of Israel has informed that the name list of selected individuals through a lottery has been sent to the Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE), Nepal.



## Nepalese Youth And Children Are Vulnerable To Climate Crisis: Report

A report prepared by Plan International Nepal, Save the Children, UNICEF and World Vision International shows that the climate crisis is here, and we must act now to protect children and young people from its impact

The new report highlights how the climate crisis is affecting children's learning and protection.

The climate crisis is already infringing on the human rights of children and young people in Nepal, according to a new research by the Child-centered Disaster Risk

## NEWSNOTES

Reduction and Climate Change (CDCC) Consortium.

The report “Impacts of Climate Crisis and Environmental Degradation on Children and Youth in Nepal” was prepared by Child-centred Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change (CDCC) Consortium.

The consortium which was established in 2016, consists of Plan International Nepal, Save the Children, UNICEF and World Vision International. CDCC Consortium works to secure children’s participation in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate resilience initiatives at every level, enabling them to be key change makers for building a more climate resilient and sustainable society.

The research “Impacts of Climate Crisis and Environmental Degradation on Children and Youth in Nepal” explores how climate crises and environmental degradation affect children and young people’s lives in ways that would prevent them from learning and being protected.

The report highlights that climate crisis has affected children and young people’s right to survive and growth. Half of those killed or injured by climate hazards in the last 5 years were children and youths. Among those who receive less food after a climate-induced disaster, nearly two-thirds are children, and a quarter of them are youths. These

impediments lead to stunted growth and prevents children from reaching their full potential, says the report.

Lack of appropriate climate change and environmental policies, practices, knowledge, capacity, technologies, and other resources to adapt and respond at the local

and household levels, particularly for children and youth is one of the reasons why children and young people are more vulnerable to climate crisis, the research highlights.



### Nepal-India Joint Military Training Exercise Concludes

The 15th edition of the Indo-Nepal joint battalion-level military training has concluded at Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand, India, according to the Nepal Army.

An infantry battalion each from the Indian Army and the Nepal Army participated in the 14-day exercise ‘Surya Kiran XV’, which commenced on September 20, the Public Relations and Information Directorate of Nepal Army said. It is said that 300 Nepal Army personnel and 400 Indian Army personnel



took part in the combined military training.

The exercise mainly focused on developing inter-operability and sharing the experience of counter-terrorism operations and disaster relief operations.

The high-ranking officials of the Indian Army and the Nepali Army among others were present at the closing ceremony of the joint training exercise.

In the training, Nepal Army’s Major General Binaya Bikram Rana, Brigadier General Kumar Babu Thapa, military attachés from Nepal and India, among others were present.

### China Agrees To Provide Additional 1 Million Vaccines to Nepal

China is providing an additional 1 million vaccines against COVID-19 as grant assistance to Nepal.

“As a part of its consistent support to Nepal, the Govt. of China will provide further medical assistance worth 5 million Renminbi to install preventive measures in our health system in a bid to save lives from (possible) the third wave of the pandemic,” State Minister for Health and Population Umesh Shrestha shared in his official Twitter account after his meeting with the Chinese ambassador to Nepal, Hou Yanqi.

The additional grant of anti-COVID vaccine that China will provide is SinoVac, according to the State Minister. Of the 1 million doses of Sinovac, 3 hundred thousand will be given to the Nepali Army.

The State Minister also informed that the “China-aided 1.6 million Verocell will arrive in Kathmandu on 20th, 22nd and 23rd of October.”



### Exim Bank Of India Hands Over First Package Of Koshi Corridor Transmission Line To NEA

Exim Bank of India handed over recently completed Package-1 of Koshi Corridor 220 KV Transmission Line Project to Nepal Electricity Authority amid a function in Hile. Representative of Exim Bank of India Bishwojit Garg handed over the project to joint secretary of Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Madhu Prasad Bhetuwal and Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority Kul Man Ghising.

During the program, Deputy Chief of Mission of Embassy of India Namgya Khampa was also present. Also present were administration representatives from Dhankuta and Hile, in addition to executives and personnel of KPTL and representatives from the local community.

In her remarks, DCM Namgya Khampa underscored India’s commitment to strengthen bilateral cooperation in power sector in all its dimensions, including development of power projects in Nepal, support for construction



of transmission lines (both within Nepal and cross-border) and trade of electricity with India. She also congratulated KPTL for the quality and timely

completion of the work and thanked Government of Nepal, Nepal Electricity Authority and the local administration and representatives for their support in its completion.

Managing Director of NEA Ghising said that this transmission line is a highly important project of eastern part of Nepal to evacuate the electricity generated in eastern parts of Nepal.

To mark the completion of construction of the 220 kV Double Circuit Koshi Corridor power transmission line (Inarwa-Basantpur-Baneshwar-Tumlingtar) and its hand-over to Nepal Electricity Authority, a ceremony was held on October 6, 2021 in Hile, Dhankuta, Nepal

The 106-km Koshi Corridor transmission line, costing a total of NRs 10.40 billion (USD 86.8 million) is being built under Government of India's Line of Credit of USD 550 million, extended by the EXIM Bank of India.

The Package 1 of this project, worth NRs 4.5 billion (USD 37.3 million), was executed by India's Kalpataru Power Transmission Ltd (KPTL) and handed over to Nepal Electricity Authority after successful completion and charging of the line. Once the remaining two packages are completed, the project will ensure smooth power evacuation from the generation projects coming up in the Arun and Tamor river basins, with power output totaling about 2000 MW.

### Japan Provides Six Ambulances To Nepal



The Government of Japan provided six ambulances to support the Government of Nepal in order to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. Ambassador KIKUTA Yutaka attended a hand-over ceremony

with State Minister of Health and Population Umesh Shrestha at the Nepal Ambulance Service in Kathmandu.

On the occasion of the hand-over ceremony, Ambassador KIKUTA stated that, "It is my great pleasure to be able to provide six ambulances from Japan to our dear Nepali friends."

The ambulances are 4WD type vehicles manufactured in Japan by a well-known Japanese automobile company "NISSAN".

These Japan-made ambulances, equipped with a stretcher, an oxygen cylinder and an emergency medical box, can serve as mobile hospitals to manage emergency care, and are capable of running on a rough road, transporting COVID19 and other patients to hospitals even in a mountainous area in Nepal.

Japan has donated medical equipment including high-concentration oxygen generators to hospitals throughout Nepal and the advanced medical care equipment such as MRI machines to eight public advanced hospitals to strengthen the health sector of the country.

1.6 million Doses of AstraZeneca vaccine were provided in August, and Cold Chain assistance for the last one-mile distribution of vaccine is coming. Japan has been implementing comprehensive support to the health sector of Nepal, and the donation of six ambulances is a part of such multi layered cooperation.

### Prime Minister Deuba To Lead Nepali Delegation In COP 26

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is scheduled to visit Scotland leading the Nepali delegation to participate in the 26th World Leaders Summit on Climate Change.

The Summit is going to be held in Glasgow, Scotland, from October 31 to November 12.

A meeting of the Council of Ministers took a decision to this effect. Minister for Communication and Information Technology Gyanendra Bahadur Karki, making the decisions public, informed about Prime Minister's schedule to visit Scotland.



The Cabinet meeting decided to form a Nepali delegation led by Prime Minister Deuba to participate in the Summit and the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26). COP-26 aims to address the global climate crisis. It is said that 20,000 to 25,000 high level dignitaries will participate in the conference.



## BUSINESS BRIEF

### Nepal, India Joint Cross-border Railway Links Meet Held

Nepal and India held the 5th Joint Working Group (JWG) and the 7th Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings from 6-7 October 2021 in New Delhi to review implementation of ongoing cross-border railway links and overall bilateral cooperation in the railway sector.

On the Indian side, JWG was led by Dr. Manoj Singh, Executive Director (Traffic Transportation-Freight), Ministry of Railways, and PSC by Anurag Bhushan, Joint Secretary, DPA-III Ministry of External Affairs; the Nepali side was led by Keshab Kumar Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, for both meetings.

Both sides signed the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for start of passenger train services on the Jaynagar-Kurtha section and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Final Location Survey (FLS) of the

proposed broad gauge railway line between Raxaul and Kathmandu. The SOPs provide the technical aspects of running passenger trains on the new section and will serve as a guiding document for early start of rail services in the upcoming cross-border

der railway links with Nepal. The proposed Raxaul-Kathmandu broad gauge railway line will further boost connectivity between India and Nepal.

Both sides discussed the ongoing works of Jaynagar-Bijalpura-Bardibas and Jogbani-Biratnagar broad gauge railway lines between India and Nepal being developed with grant assistance from Government of India. The technical preparedness of the completed 34 km long section of the railway line, from Jaynagar (India) to Kurtha (Nepal) for operationalization of passenger train services was also reviewed. Nepali side also informed that necessary regulatory framework will be put in place to facilitate early operationalization. For Kurtha to Bilajpura (17.25 km) section of the railway line, Nepal side assured to provide necessary facilitation for completion of the work at the earliest. Both sides also agreed to expedite the work on completion of the 18.6 km long Jogbani-Biratnagar rail link, and its early operationalization.

The progress on Raxaul-Kathmandu Broad Gauge Railway Link and Phase-II railway link projects were also discussed. Both sides agreed to enhance technical cooperation in the railway sector, including in the areas of capacity building, logistic support and training of Nepali railway personnel.

### NIBL Opens New Branch In Simraungadh

Nepal Investment Bank Limited has expanded

its operation by opening its 88<sup>th</sup> branch at Bara, Simraungadh Municipality, Province No 2. The newly opened branch was inaugurated by the mayor of Simraungadh, Bijay Shankar Yadav, alongside

Province Manager Sushil Kumar Shrestha. The Simraungadh Branch will provide full-fledged banking services fully catering to local demand, with the aim to aid financial accessibility to customers and widen financial literacy throughout.

NIBL has been catering to its customers from 87 branches, 130 ATMs, 19 extension counters, 10 revenue collection counters and 56 branchless banking counters. The bank, being the recipient of five Bank of the Year awards for exemplary service and business, was accredited with Euromoney awards for "Best Bank 2018 and 2021" from the international publication - Euromoney. Further, ICRA Nepal (International Credit Rating Agency- Nepal) has given the bank a credit rating of A.



### MCC Is Necessary For Economic Recovery: FNCCI, CNI And NCC

Presidents of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) Shekhar Golchha, Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) Bishnu Kumar Agrawal and Nepal Chamber of Commerce (CNI) Rajendra Malla have urged Nepal Government and major political parties to approve the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) agreement from the House of Representatives and implement the projects under the agreement immediately.

In their joint statement, they argued that MCC agreement signed between Nepal and the United States of America in September 14, 2017 is highly important to develop Nepal's electricity sector and road sector to accelerate the economic growth in post-COVID-19 Pandemic.

As approval from the House of Representatives

is pre-condition for the implementation of MCC, they urged the government and concerned political parties to take immediate step to table the agreement in the parliament for approval paving the way for its implementation.



They said that the timely completion of construction of electric transmission line and road will immensely contribute to accelerate the economic growth. At a time when the country requires huge foreign investment to make big economic growth in post



COVID-19 pandemic, MCC's investment in the electric and road sector is highly significant. They have urged the government, political parties and concerned stake holders to support the MCC agreement protecting national interest.

They pointed out that MCC is important in filling the huge resources gap given the situation of shrinking internal sources and stagnation in foreign aid. They said that 500 million dollar aid is very important in the present context when foreign investment has drastically declined.

In their joint statement, the leaders of Nepal's leading associations said that delaying the approval of MCC by parliament is against the economic development of the country.

### **Radisson Hotel Kathmandu Holds 24<sup>th</sup> AGM**

Twenty-fourth Annual General Meeting AGM of Oriental Hotels Ltd or Radisson Hotel Kathmandu concluded. Held under the chairmanship of President Subhadra Shrestha, the virtual AGM also passed annual report of 2021/2022 presented by President Shrestha.



With total turnover of Rs.130.12 million and expenditure of Rs. 330.42 million, Oriental Hotels Ltd has made a net loss of Rs.220.57 in the last fiscal year and in this fiscal year. The Hotel, however, makes Rs.60.69 million profit in the last year.

The AGM said that COVID-19 has made such a huge loss in the last fiscal year. AGM also elected Shbhadra Shrestha chairman unopposed.

Earlier, AGM elected new members of board of directors. New Board members include Subhadra Shrestha, Anil Das Shreshtha, Misu Shrestha and Bidhata Shrestha from founding share holders and Sunil Lal Shrestha and Prakash Tiwari from general share holders and Rabindra Lal Shrestha as an independent shareholder. All of them were elected unopposed.

### **United States Gives 100,620 COVID-19 Pfizer Vaccines To Nepal, Adding To 1.5M Johnson & Johnson Doses Donated In July.**

Through the generosity of the American people, the United States government is donating 100,620 doses of the Pfizer vaccine to Nepal to fight COVID-19. These highly-effective vaccines add to the 1.53 million single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccines the United States donated to Nepal in July, and the more than \$122 million in aid given to Nepal in the form of life-saving medical supplies, training and technical support. The United States is donating vaccines free and clear of preconditions as part of the United

States' ongoing support to Nepal during the pandemic.

In addition, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and its partners have helped Nepal prepare for this tranche of Pfizer vaccines by providing ultra-low temperature freezers, walk-in freezers, walk-in cold rooms, freezer vans, cryogenic gloves and goggles, as



well as training to healthcare workers. This will enhance Nepal's options and capabilities to receive more vaccines.

USAID Nepal's Mission Director Sepideh Keyvanshad presented the donation to the Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), Dr. Roshan Pokharel, at an event at the Ministry earlier today. The vaccines will be stored in four ultra-low temperature freezers, procured through UNICEF, located at the Department of Health Services, Teku, until they are rolled out to the rest of the country at a later date.

"The United States is pleased to donate the 100,620 doses of the life-saving Pfizer vaccine to Nepal, continuing our support to Nepal during the COVID pandemic. We are proud to further support Nepal by making sure the proper infrastructure is in place to store and administer these vaccines, allowing Nepal to have more Pfizer vaccines in the future," said Mission Director Keyvanshad.

According to a press release issued by U.S. Embassy in Nepal Since the beginning of the pandemic, the United States government has worked with the Government of Nepal to directly address the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure the continuity of critical health services, and to support the country in mitigating the pandemic's secondary social and economic impacts - particularly on education and livelihoods.

Worldwide, the United States has delivered 200 million COVID-19 vaccines (out of a total of 1.1 billion pledged so far) to over 100 countries and millions more are on their way. The United States is also the largest donor to the global vaccine initiative, COVAX, which helped deliver this donation.

The United States is committed to leading the global COVID-19 response because it is the right thing to do and will make us all—Americans and Nepalis—safer. We are proud to work with Nepal to end this pandemic and build back a better world.

## PM DEUBA'S HUNDREED DAYS

# Mixed Rating

*As other governments, PM Deuba has spent most of his time to manage coalition partners and his own party. However, the government has made a good progress in vaccination drive*

By A CORRESPONENT

**N**C leader Sher Bahadur Deuba has found a very favorable time to lead the fourth coalition government in his long political career. Constituted following the order of Supreme Court, the Deuba government got an opportunity to lead the show without any opposition.

With a strong backing from all factions including Ram Chandra Poudel, he received unanimous support within his party. Similarly, Maoist Center leader Prachanda and newly formed Communist Party Nepal Unified Socialist led by Madhav Kumar Nepal and other Madheshi factions too lent their support to Deuba without any conditions attached.

Taking all important portfolios like Home, Defense, Foreign and Information and Communication and Law and Justice prime minister Deuba has shown his strength to the coalition partners. This gives prime minister Deuba enormous power to handle things in his favor.

However, like all his predecessors, prime minister Deuba has spent most of his time managing internal divisions and pressure in his own party and alliances of ruling party.

As Nepali Congress is holding its General Convention in November, his party colleagues have started criticism against him just a few days after Deuba secured the



support of over two thirds of majority in the House of Representatives.

His rival and colleague Ram Chandra Poudel vehemently attacked this government once he saw Deuba is receiving wider support in the party's internal elections. However, Prachanda, Nepal and Upendra Yadav continue to back him.

With no immediate options before the parties, PM Deuba has been receiving more strong support from Maoist leader Prachanda and new party leader Nepal than his party colleagues.

Although he expanded the cabinet almost two months after taking the oath of Prime Minister, PM Deuba was dragged into controversy through appointment of die-hard Congress leader Gajendra Hamal as

minister.

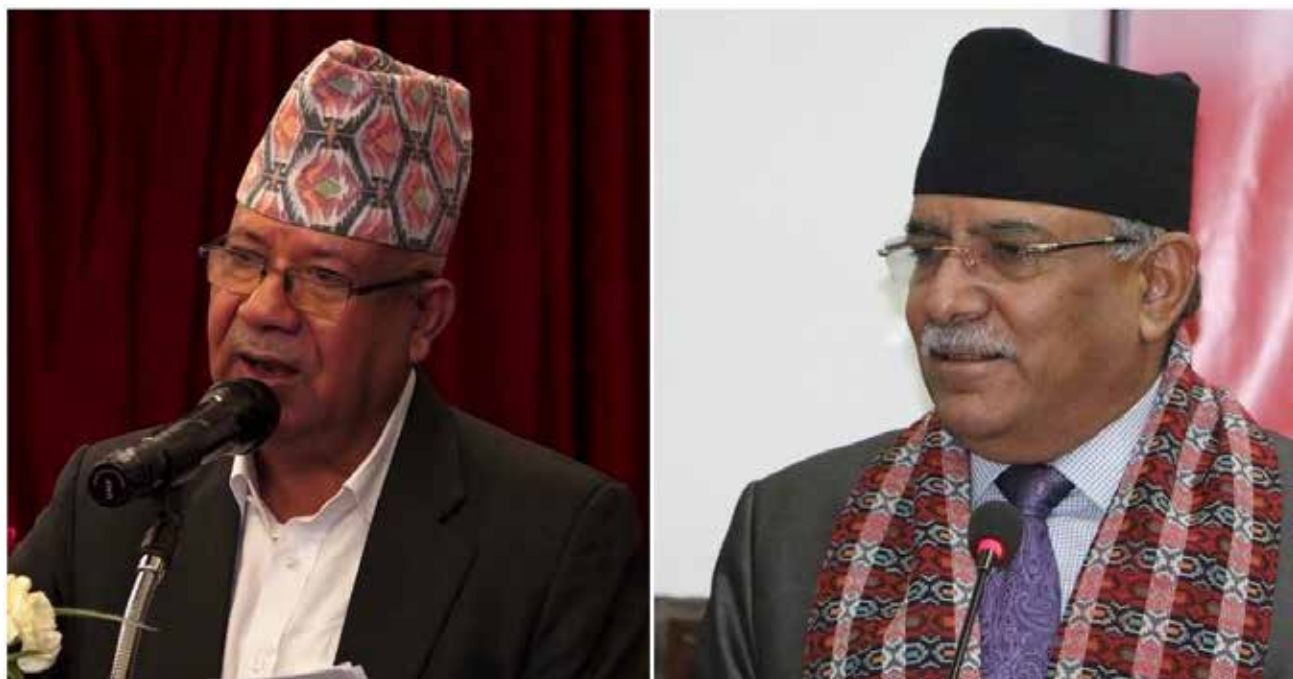
Media and his party colleagues linked Hamal's name with chief justice and compelled Deuba to seek resignation of his own loyalist Hamal from minister within five days.

Prime Minister Deuba's rival sees this was their major success to weaken Deuba in the party. Dragging Deuba in controversy and forcing resignation of Hamal, is one of strong points of his opponents of Koirala clan.

Despite all the efforts, Prime Minister Deuba's position in the party has further strengthened given the results coming from internal organizational elections of the party.

Experts argue that the performance of the government is not





satisfactory in last 100 days. Opposition leaders vehemently criticized its performance saying that the government has failed to address the national problems.

CPN-UML leader Sher Bahadur Tamang said that the government has completely failed in every sector and it has not taken any decision worthy to remember. As we have been saying from the beginning this government is just an alliance of opportunists, he said.

However, the ruling party leaders defended the government's performance as successful. CPN-Maoist Center leader Dinanath Sharma said that there is nothing to be discouraged. "There is a ray of hope to safeguard the constitution and democratic value under this government," said Sharma.

Nepali Congress leader Chandra Bhandari defended the government's performance of the last hundred days. He said that the main achievement of this government is to restore faith on the constitution and democracy. "The government has also brought the foreign policy right on the track," said Bhandari.

He said that the government is also able to provide COVID-19 vaccine to the large number of people in the country. Among those noticeable actions of the government during this period is its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The short term target of the COVID-19 inoculation campaign has already been met. The government had set a goal of vaccinating one-third of the target group (21,756,763 populations above 18 years) by the end of mid-October and the target is already met.

It was on July 13 that NC President Deuba took charge as the head of the government. He had replaced CPN (UML) Chairman KP Sharma Oli following the Supreme Court's order to appoint him as the Prime Minister of Nepal in accordance with Article 76 (5) of the Constitution.

It has been largely realized that the incumbent government has centered its focus on public health issues and has created a foundation for development efforts, and for the promotion of peace and good governance.

Prime Minister Deuba had

pledged to implement the vaccination drive against COVID-19 with top priority shortly after he won the vote of confidence in the House of Representatives.

Political analyst Dr. Sundar Mani Dixit said that all the political leaders have failed in Nepal. "Like all previous governments, PM Deuba also failed to take any fruitful decision," said Dr. Dixit.

It seems that the pandemic is in the phase of containment. The ability to administer 300 thousand doses of vaccine is itself an indicator to prove the government's priority to public health.

The government has announced that it is committed to bringing all the eligible population to the vaccination coverage by mid-April. It has also pledged to provide vaccines to people below 18 soon.

Professor Dr. Surendra KC has said that political leaders are unable to maintain the political code of conduct.

In a short span of time, the government has been successful in executing vaccine diplomacy and managing 15 million doses of vaccines

## POLITICS

for its people. Implementation of the balanced foreign policy, creation of investment-friendly atmosphere, encouragement to the private sector to achieve economic stability, announcement of relief packages to the business community hit by COVID-19 pandemic, good response to COVID-19 and its management is among those noticeable actions of the government.

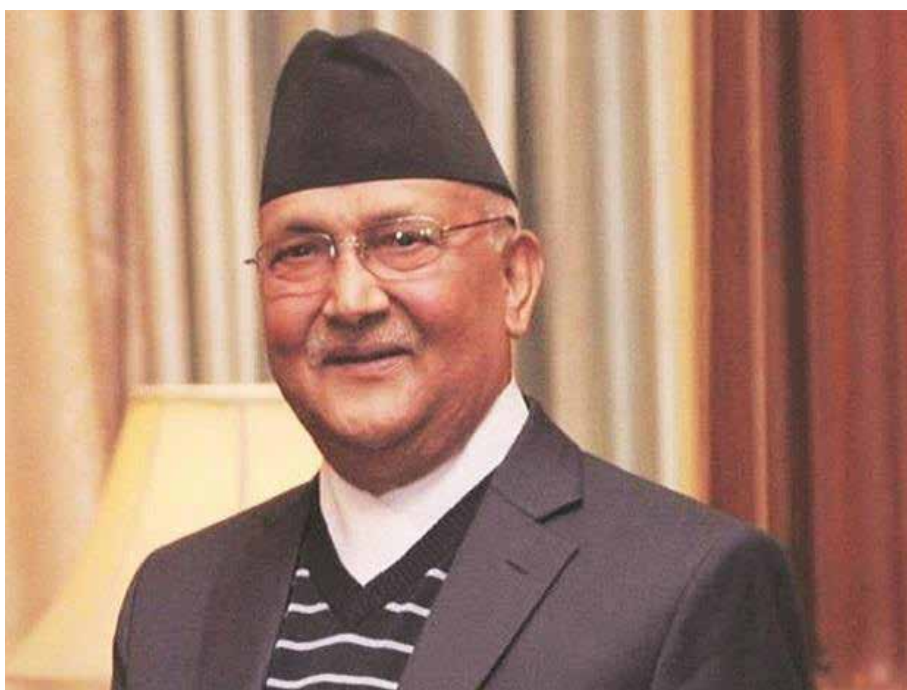
All local levels have been connected with internet network, an arrangement has been made to check one's tax details and pay tax electronically, digital archiving of government documents has been started and a process of digital learning for quality education in remote areas has been initiated in a short period of formation of the government.

Similarly, a decision to provide Rs 5,000 monthly allowance to cancer and kidney patients as well as patients of spinal injury, an announcement to provide Rs 10,000 to each family from poor economic background, to provide Rs 500,000 each to players of National Football Team that became first runner-up in the SAFF Championship, the announcement of 'Earning while Studying' program targeting young students could be taken as the positive initiative of the incumbent government.

An initiative to provide risk allowance immediately to health workers deputed in the frontline during coronavirus pandemic could also be taken positively.

The government through common minimum program has already unveiled a special package for the revival of the economy affected by coronavirus.

The activities carried out by the government with limited resources and human resources in the rescue of the people affected by landslides,



floods and inundations, providing relief to them and reconstruction, execution of foreign policy based on national interest are its important programs.

A process to appoint capable and qualified persons at important bodies has been started, which has disseminated a positive message among the people for development and good governance.

The plan has been forwarded for making arrangements for providing medical treatment to people injured in course of the movement but who have not received appropriate treatment, proper compensation to those rendered handicapped in course of the movement and for providing employment to one member of their families.

Programs providing for a special economic package for the revival of hard-hit sectors as industry, tourism business, communication and transport and for the support of laborers, economically poor and unemployed vulnerable groups have created an environment of relief in the economy which is weakened by the COVID-19 pandemic. The budget has already been allocated as

per the programs meant for the COVID-19 affected sectors and the general public.

Programs like 'Earning while Studying' and 'Women First' have also been announced targeting the youth students and the women respectively. It is hoped that once these programs are implemented, these will open the door to the youth students and women for entrepreneurship opportunities, thereby promoting self-reliance.

The government has become successful in safely rescuing the Nepali citizens who were in trouble after the Taliban's rise to power in Afghanistan.

Determining the basis for development and nation's prosperity while bringing on the right track the constitution, parliament and democracy that were derailed due to the activities of the previous government can be taken as the major achievements of the present government.

The government has not only brought vaccines by means of economic diplomacy but has also adopted the policy of creating an environment conducive for investment, including foreign direct investment.

In a country like Nepal, 100 days is too short to evaluate the performance of the government. However, the decision taken in the 100 days and cabinet members chosen in the 100 days give some impression about the government.

Whatever the progress the government has made in other sectors, Prime Minister Deuba's success in vaccinating against COVID-19 is remarkable which will be likely to help bring Nepal back on the track.

## CABINET EXPANSION

### Big Cabinet

PM Deuba's Cabinet Takes Full Shape

Three months after becoming

Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba has given his government a full shape. Deuba's cabinet included 3 ministers of state and 22 ministers. His party retained the major ministries like Home, Defense, Foreign and Information.

Top four leaders Gyanendra Bahadur Karki, Bal Krishna Khand, Dr. Minendra Rijal and Dr. Narayan Khadka retained information and communication, Home, Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Nepali Congress also retained Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs under Dilendra Prasad Badu as minister.

President Bidyadevi Bhandari reshuffled the Council of

Ministers which was formed on July 13 under the leadership of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on the recommendation of the Prime Minister as per Article 76, Clause 9 and Article 78, Clause 1 of the constitution of Nepal.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari administered the oath of office and secrecy to the newly appointed ministers at Shital Niwas, the Office of the President.

The President reformed the Council of Ministers by adding some new ministers in the Cabinet on the recommendation of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba as per Article 76 (9) and 78 (1).

### Council of Ministers

S.N.	Names	Portfolios
1	Sher Bahadur Deuba	Prime Minister
2	Bal Krishna Khand	Minister, Home Affairs
3	Gyanendra Bahadur Karki	Minister, Communication and Information Technology
4	Pampha Bhusal	Minister, Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation
5	Rajendra Prasad Shrestha	Minister, Federal Affairs and General Administration
6	Birodh Khatiwada	Minister, Health and Population
7	Janardan Sharma	Minister, Finance
8	Minendra Prasad Rijal	Minister, Defence
9	Uma Kanta Chaudhary	Minister, Water Supply
10	Narayan Khadka	Minister, Foreign Affairs
11	Renu Kumari Yadav	Minister, Physical Infrastructure and Transport
12	Prem Bahadur Ale	Minister, Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
13	Dilendra Prasad Badu	Minister, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs
14	Devendra Paudel	Minister, Education, Science and Technology
15	Mahendra Raya Yadav	Minister, Agriculture and Livestock Development
16	Uma Regmi	Minister, Women, Children and Senior Citizens
17	Shashi Shrestha	Minister, Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation
18	Ram Kumari Jhankri	Minister, Urban Development
19	Gajendra Bahadur Hamal	Minister, Industry, Commerce and Supplies
20	Ram Sahay Prasad Yadav	Minister, Forest and Environment
21	Krishna Kumar Shrestha	Minister, Labour, Employment and Social Security
22	Maheshwa Jung Gahatraj	Minister, Youth and Sports
23	Umesh Shrestha	Minister of State, Office of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers
24	Bhawani Prasad Khapung	Minister of State, Health and Population
25	Bodh Maya Kumari Yadav	Minister of State, Education, Science and Technology



# Emergence Of Small Farmer Agricultural Cooperatives: A Key To Structural Change Of Rural Economy



Traditionally, agriculture is the prime sector of rural economy and rural employment. Smallholders and marginal farmers predominate Nepalese agriculture as they constitute a majority of the population and play a crucial role in the food supply of the country. Nevertheless, those

small-scale farmers are stricken by poverty because farm technology tends to be primitive and of low yield. Since rural regions face an aging and shrinking workforce, focus on boosting productivity is imperative. To this end, there is a need to support small-scale farmers at all levels of the value chain. There will be a key role for federal, provincial and local governments in supporting this bottom-up development effort since the rural economy is an untapped source of jobs, growth and development.

Rural areas are characterized by a great diversity of economic activities, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, tourism, mining and services. Given the rise in global demand for food in general and the increasing food deficiency scenario of Nepal in particular, the agriculture sector needs greater modernization, to increase its lucrativeness and dynamism and to raise its status as a source of decent jobs. Investing in the education and skills of rural youth is key for triggering productive transformation and promoting economic diversification in rural areas. Improving the quality of agricultural jobs is essential to attract rural youths. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) mainly 1,2 and 10, no poverty, zero hunger and reduced inequality respectively by 2030, will thus require increased policy focus on rural infrastructure development and creation of alternative job opportunities in rural remote areas especially for the people living in desperate poverty.

Since agriculture remains the largest employer, future rural structural transformation must take into account agricultural transformation. To expedite transformation, there is a need to promote long-term productivity growth in agriculture and facilitate the upgrading of farms and agro enterprises within the global value chain. The most successful Asian economies and the industrialized economies in East Asia (Japan; the Republic of Korea; and Taiwan, China), have pursued an agriculture development-led industrialization pathway. The fast-growing transition economies (China and Vietnam), seem to be traversing a similar one. Agricultural growth has also been a prominent feature in

the rest of developing Asia, particularly Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. Transforming a country's agriculture sector can create jobs, raise incomes,

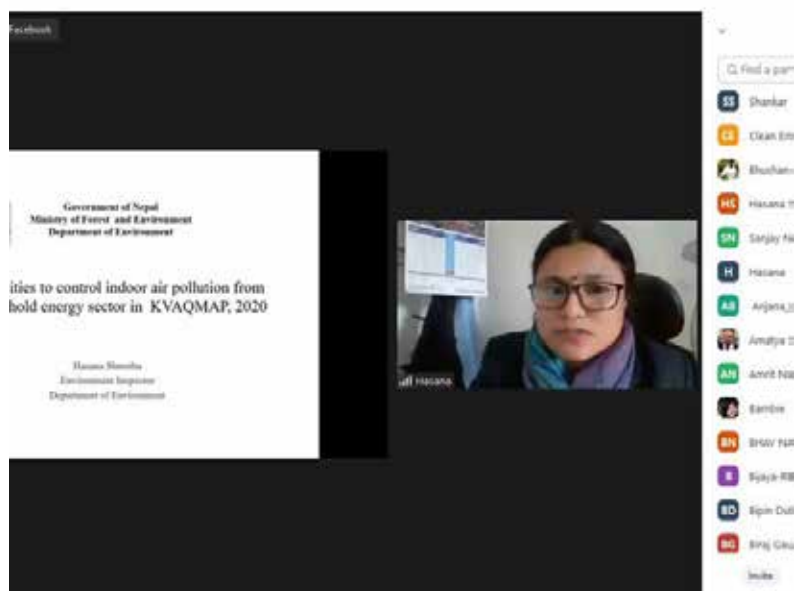
reduce malnutrition, and kick-start the economy on a path to high-income growth. In fact, almost every industrialized nation began its economic ascent with an agricultural transformation. Recent examples include Brazil, China, and Vietnam, each of which at least doubled the value of its agriculture sector within 20 years of starting its transformation. Therefore, in order to end hunger and undernutrition while accelerating economic growth, agricultural transformation must become a reality. As Nobel Laureate Theodore W. Schultz said in his *Transforming Traditional Agriculture*, once you make modern technologies available to farmers, farmers will turn sand into gold.

As a majority of the population in Nepal depends on agriculture for livelihood, there is high demand for agriculture resources like seeds and fertilizers and access to the market. In such a context, agricultural cooperatives become a crucial means to ensure that the needs of small farmers are addressed, thus transforming the agriculture industry.

An interesting feature of the community-based cooperatives is that they benefit only the poor and not those who are better off and have access to mainstream credit and markets. Certainly, there have been cooperative success stories, the dairy sector in Kenya, coffee in Ethiopia, and cotton in Mali, for example. Cooperatives provide an opportunity for small-scale farmers to improve their productivity, add value to their products, increase their access to national and international markets, provide access to credit and information, link to better markets, strengthen their bargaining power and break the unfair and exploitative relationship that connects them with the local money lenders and village traders.

In this context, it is worth mentioning the role of Small Farmer Agricultural Cooperatives (SFACL) in the structural transformation of the rural economy of Nepal. SFACL, a coop of distinct structure and operational modality amongst more than twenty-nine thousand coops in Nepal, is a community-based coop each having at least 375 members with a three-tiered structure, groups in the neighborhood level, inter groups in cluster (ward) level and main committee in municipality level, unlike other coops formed by a group of a few elites or affluent peo-

ple. Guided by the philosophy of promoting social equity, equality and justice in society, these coops have been undertaking various social and community development activities apart from savings mobilization and credit support to the poor small scale farmers. Dalit, so-called untouchables, Indigenous people, and women constitute a major portion of total members (Dalit, Janjati and women constitute 14,39 and 79 percent respectively of the total about nine hundred thousand members in 552 municipalities of 74 districts). Responsible financing, social inclusion, human capital development and social capital formation are some of the major dimensions that differentiate these SFACLs from other coops in Nepal. These coops, in accordance with their naming and legal mandate, have been educating their member farmers to adopt modern farming practices in order to increase the production and productivity of both land and labor. Accordingly, in collaboration with the Israeli government, SFACLs have been sending small holder youths to Israel's agriculture training colleges to learn farming practices and agriculture technology which has been a milestone for the transformation of the agriculture sector in Nepal. Cooperative/collective farming practices by the smallholder farmers and the Israel returnee youths using Israeli technology is of course a major departure from subsistence to commercial farming resulting in high yields with low production cost. The use of farm equipment and machines has substantially reduced manual labor in agriculture giving opportunity, especially for women members to undertake off-farm activities. Buying in the bulk of agricultural inputs and arranging sales of farmers' produce in the market has to a large extent lessened the role of intermediaries indulged in profiteering business. Lately, with a view to integrating small farmer members into the value chain, SFACLs have implemented Rural Enterprise Financing Project (REFP). This project aims to motivate the small farmer groups to scale up their production through bigger investment, store the product until the market responds fair price, process the primary products to add their value and market finished products in Sana Kisan brands. SFACLs have now become able to provide both financial and technical support to their members to set up and operate small and medium agriculture industries (SMAs), like the seed, lentils, Rice, oil, dairy, tea, etc. among others along with the support for upgrading agro-business/enterprises. A large number of SMAs have emerged in rural areas creating off-farm employment for rural farmers. Awarded consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP/World Bank) as the best model of rural development and poverty reduction, SFACLs have been expanding their coverage steadily even in inaccessible areas either through the adoption of business expansion or replication modality, in both cases obtaining



support from the government or development partners. Lately, the support of DFID for skill-oriented training for the foreign job aspirants and migrant returnees in addition to loan support for small enterprise operations has added one more dimension of employment generation at the local level. Operating homestay and serving organic local foods in rural parts by the members of SFACLs have contributed to the promotion of rural tourism thereby supplementing the income of farmer members.

To conclude, SFACLs have unique characteristics of uniting mostly excluded populace in groups, developing the capacity to undertake income-generating productive activities through skills for employment training, providing low-cost credit support to agricultural or animal husbandry activities, developing entrepreneurship skills among members, creating opportunities for educated youth to engage in agriculture, promoting agricultural value chain for rural employment creation, harnessing the synergies between agriculture and the non-farm economy, shifting resources from lower to higher-value crops in agriculture, etc. All these activities of SFACLs adequately prove that they are in fact the innovative model of rural development and a key instrument for structural change of the rural economy. It is heartening that these coops have their own financial institution (SKBBL) which not only provides wholesale credit but also guides and supports them to carry out various innovative activities that could be instrumental for socio-economic change in society. It is not a denying fact that agricultural transformation is a prerequisite for the structural transformation of the rural economy. The government, therefore, needs to substantially increase investment in the agriculture sector and extend all sorts of support to the coops like SFACLs to expedite structural change of the rural economy which eventually results in strengthening the national economy of the country.

*Koirala is a CEO of SKBBL*

# Service-led Growth

*The World Bank says: Services-led Growth Is Key To Nepal's Green, Resilient, And Inclusive Development*

By A CORRESPONDENT

As Nepal opens its economic activities taking all precautionary measures to prevent spread of COVID-19, revival of generating employment and reviving Nepal's economy is a very difficult task.

However, the World Bank's recent report showed that revival of service sector could bring a lot of change in Nepalese economy. Thus, the way out for the long run economy would depend on the service led sector. A gradual recovery is underway in Nepal, boosted by the lifting of containment measures as vaccination picks up and tourism and migrant worker flow recover. The economy is expected to grow by 3.9 percent in FY22, an improvement over 1.8 percent growth in FY21, but still below pre-pandemic growth averages, according to World Bank's latest South Asia Economic Focus.

In South Asia, recovery continues as global demand rebounded and targeted containment measures helped minimize the economic impacts of the recent waves of COVID-19. But the recovery remains fragile and uneven, and most countries are far from pre-pandemic trend levels, states the World Bank's twice-yearly regional update. In Nepal, recovery is vulnerable to risks, and will rely on the continued gradual resumption of economic activities alongside social distancing and an effective vaccination rollout this year.

The latest South Asia Economic Focus titled *Shifting Gears: Digitization and Services-Led Development* projects the region to grow by 7.1 percent in 2021 and 2022. While the year-on-year growth remains strong in the region, albeit from a very low base in 2020, the recovery has been uneven across countries and sectors. South Asia's average annual growth is forecast to be 3.4 percent over 2020-23, which is 3 percentage points less than it was in the four years preceding the pandemic.

"The pandemic provides the opportunity for countries to craft a recovery path that draws lessons from the crisis," stated Faris Hadad-Zervos, World Bank Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

"Nepal recently adopted the Kathmandu Declaration as a joint commitment of the government and development partners towards the country's Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID). Mobilizing the private sector through green investment and support for small and medium enterprises with job growth potential in the services sector is a key part of Nepal's GRID strategy."

COVID-19 has left long-term scars on the region's economy, the impacts of which can last well into the recovery. Many countries experienced lower investment flows, disruptions in supply chains, and setbacks to human capital accumulation, as well as substantial increases in debt levels. The pandemic is estimated to have caused 48 to 59 million people to become or remain poor in 2021 in South Asia.

As countries build back, they have a chance to rethink their long-term development models. With the emergence of new digital technologies, South Asia has an opportunity to shift gears from a traditional manufacturing-led growth model and capitalize on the potential of its services sector.

The role of services in the region's economy has been increasing amid rapid technological change and the accelerated structural transformation of glob-

al economic activity in response to the pandemic. The adoption of digital technologies makes services more tradable, enables services to increase productivity of other sectors—including manufacturing—and creates new markets. Some South Asian countries are increasingly providing business and professional services that add value to manufacturing and play a key role in global value chains.

In Nepal, the pandemic has accelerated the growth of digital services, with the use of electronic payment transactions increasing by double digits. Growth in the services sector as a whole is expected to drive Nepal's recovery, despite structural constraints such as slow domestic job creation, the country's high vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change, and large infrastructure gaps.

"Countries in South Asia have a strong comparative advantage in exporting services, particularly business processes and tourism, whereas they have struggled to break into manufacturing export markets," said Hans Timmer, World Bank Chief Economist for the South Asia Region. "To realize the potential of the services-led development, the region needs to rethink regulations and establish new institutions to support innovation and competitiveness."





# CoP26: Turning Point For GHGs Emissions Reduction



BY: BATU UPRETY

The Governments of the United Kingdom and Scotland have committed to making the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (CoP26) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 11th session of the CoP serving as the Meeting of the Parties (MoP) to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP11), and 3rd session of the CoP/MoP to the Paris Agreement (CMA3) COVID-19 safe and inclusive. These sessions will take place from 31 October to 12 November 2021 after informal sessions of the LDC group, regional groups and G77 and China. The Glasgow Climate Change Conference (CCC) will likely deliver the desires and concerns of millions of people effectively to address 'climate emergency'. Consultations and meetings of the CoP26 President-designate and UK Government spark hope to base climate negotiations on concerns, needs, ideas, issues and commitments of the world leaders, countries, and climate activists in the last several months.

Organizers have set four goals. They are to: (i) secure global net-zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach by urging Parties to phase-out coal, limit deforestation, switch to e-vehicles, and invest in renewable energies; (ii) adapt to protect communities and natural habitats; (iii) mobilize finance (US \$100bn per year by 2020); and (iv) work together to finalize the Paris Rulebook and accelerate climate actions through collaborative efforts.

Two High-Level Segments (HLS) are planned. Heads of State and Government will likely provide 'political guidance' for negotiations through their statements on 1-2 November 2021, like in Paris in 2015. On 9-10 November 2021, participants will hear from Parties who did not deliver statements in its first part.

After the adoption of the agenda, as in previous sessions, Subsidiary Bodies for Implementation, and for Scientific and Technological Advice will focus discussions and negotiations, *inter alia*, on mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, finance, technologies, capacity-building, LDC matters, response measures, gender, and so on. CMA3 will further focus on methodological issues to enhance transparency framework for action and support, and public registries.

Bolivia has proposed an agenda on (i) 'all matters of adaptation' which looks to provide coherence on adaptation; and (ii) stock take on financial support and means of implementation for alternative policy approaches. Within the set agenda items, Parties will find 'compromise solutions' for the effective implementation of legally binding instruments (UNFCCC, KP, and PA). As previous CCCs, Parties will likely announce a new initiative in Glasgow for PA implementation.

Each CoP is recalled for making 'decisions' on important initiatives to guide the future course of actions on climate. For exam-

ple, CoP3 adopted the Kyoto Protocol (KP) which includes a legal provision for industrialized countries and economies in transition to reduce GHGs emissions with agreed individual targets. Overall, country targets would reduce an average of 5 percent GHG emission reduction as compared to 1990 level during the first commitment period (2008-2012). KP introduced market-based mechanisms including clean Development Mechanism (CDM) which has benefitted Nepal as well.

CoP7 in Marrakech (2011) established an LDC work program, LDC Fund and LDC Expert Group to support LDCs on adaptation and decided NAPA preparation guidelines. It helped to implement Article 4.9 of the Convention which urges Parties to take full account of the specific needs and special situations of LDCs and provide funding and technologies.

The 2005 Montreal CCC (CMP1) decided to 'initiate a process to consider further commitments for Parties included in Annex I for the period beyond 2012 ...' to avoid the gap between the first and second commitment periods. USA signed but did not ratify the KP.

In 2007 (CoP13/CMP3), Parties adopted the Bali Action Plan (BAP) to engage all Parties to UNFCCC in reducing GHGs emissions and to complete negotiations by 2009 in Copenhagen. Heads of State and Government in the Copenhagen CCC (CoP15) provided political guidance a few days to the closing session which resulted to a political outcome ('accord') that was taken note of by Parties. Nepal is associated with this 'accord'.

The 2010 Cancun CCC made several decisions to implement UNFCCC and KP, including the establishment of the Green Climate Fund. In 2011, Parties decided to 'launch a process to develop a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties ...' and established an Ad Hoc Working Group (AWG) on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action ... to complete its work no later than 2015 to adopt a protocol, legal instrument or agreed outcome with legal force' at CoP 21 and '... 'come into effect and be implemented from 2020'.

After 4 years of 'intense' negotiations, Parties adopted the Paris Agreement (PA) which entered into force in November 2016 unlike agreed at Durban in 2011 and looks like a 'pre-mature birth'. Climate change communities talk much about PA as a 'panacea' for climate change impacts than its 'mother' (Convention) and 'target-based reduction' in KP. PA provisions for 'voluntary pledges' for GHGs emission reduction through NDCs. Many countries have shared 'conditional' NDCs, and implementation is subject to the



availability of funding and technologies.

The Glasgow CCC is happening at a time when the sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has informed that GHGs ‘concentrations have continued to increase in the atmosphere with a global surface temperature increase of about 1.07°C. AR6 informs ‘human being’ the main driver of temperature rise. In addition, effective implementation of all national pledges through NDCs would reduce only 1 percent of global emissions by 2030, compared with 2010 levels (<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/feb/26/co2-emissions-nations-pledges-far-away-from-paris-target-says-un>). It would require reducing 45 percent in the next 10 years to keep temperature rise at 1.50°C above pre-industrial levels. China, the USA, and India have yet to share their updated NDCs. Most of the Parties have ‘pledged’ for net-zero emission by the mid-century as well.

During the adoption of UNFCCC in 1992, about ¼ of the total global GHGs emission was from the USA. In 2018, major CO<sub>2</sub>emitters are China (10.06 billion metric tons), the USA (5.41b mt), India (2.65b mt), Russian Federation (1.71b mt) and Japan (1.16b mt)(<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/092915/5-countries-produce-most-carbon-dioxide-co2.asp#1-china>). The UNEP emissions gap report (2020) informs temperature rise over 30C in this century and with the possibility of reaching 1.50C through net-zero emissions by 2050 and by prioritizing green recovery.

Nepal’s participation in climate change negotiations dates to three decades. Nepal attended 1st to 25thCoP at different levels. CoP 15 and CoP 24, which were held at Copenhagen and Katowice, were attended at the level of Heads of Government and State respectively. 2001, 2004 and from 2008 onwards, CoPs were mostly attended by the environment ministers. Nepal led the LDC Coordination Group in 2013 and 2014. The 2013 CoP in Warsaw was led by the ‘carrier diplomat’ and coordinated LDCs to make decisions on Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) on Loss and Damage. In Lima (2014), the LDC Coordination Group was successfully led by the secretary of the then Ministry of Environment.

National news informs Nepal’s priority focus is on ‘loss and damage’ in Glasgow. CMA may decide on its authority over and guidance to the WIM for loss and damage associated with climate change impacts. On LDC matters, CoP 26 will hopefully make decisions on the continuation and terms of reference of the LDC Expert

Group (LEG) that also supports LDCs to formulate and implement the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and adaptation actions.

Last week few events occurred in Nepal to advance GHGs emission reductions. GCF approved Nepal’s US\$ 21.1m projects named ‘mitigating GHG emission through modern, efficient and climate-friendly clean cooking solutions (CCS)’ which will be implemented by the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPCC). This project aims to promote clean cooking solutions such as improved cooking stoves (ICS), biogas, and electric cookstoves (ECS) in 1 million households of 22 districts of the Terai region and has been estimated to reduce 6.51 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>eq.

Dhulikhel became the first city in South Asia to endorse Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty on 7 October 2021. This endorsement shows ‘commitment to make Dhulikhel an environment-friendly city by limiting net GHG emissions to zero ...’ (<https://fossilfuel treaty.org/dhulikhel>). In addition, Nepal and India have signed to conduct a study to join Indian city by railway with Kathmandu. Twenty e-buses are also planned to purchase for Kathmandu. These GHGs mitigation initiatives will likely contribute to compliance with Nepal’s commitments on the second NDC.

AEPCC is engaged in developing and implementing CDM projects as it first registered two biogas CDM projects immediately after being a Party to the KP in 2005. A number of projects related to biogas, improved cooking stoves, and small micro-hydro projects have been developed as a project- or programme-CDM to benefit from Article 12 of the KP. CDM projects, if implemented as planned, might have substantially reduced GHGs emissions in Nepal.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Narayan Khadka at the 76th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2021 has reiterated Nepal’s commitment to delivering climate-resilient development pathways by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050 and stated that Glasgow CCC ‘must be a gateway to greener, cleaner, and smarter energy transition’. For net-zero emission, Nepal is also preparing a ‘long-term strategy’.

Nepal has lots to say in Glasgow CoP26, at least of its two years of works. It may range from reiterating her commitment on net-zero emissions by 2050 and initiatives in reducing GHGs emissions by promoting e-vehicles, CDM projects, and recently GCF-approved clean-cooking solutions project and long-term strategy (on net-zero emission). It may likely focus on climate vulnerability, accelerated glaciers melting and climate-induced disasters, loss and damage, and state of National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and building resilience. The need for additional financial supports for adaptation, resilience, mitigation, technologies and capacity building may be highlighted. Hope, Nepal’s initiatives will be recognized at the international level by knowing how an LDC emitting only 0.056 percent of total global GHGs emissions (as per Third National Communication Report, 2021), has committed for NDC mitigation targets, requiring nearly US\$ 25 billion in addition to unconditional targets of US\$ 3.4 billion (estimated cost for NDC implementation till 2030 is US\$ 28.4 billion)

‘Ownership’ over the national initiatives counts a lot to translate them into action and mobilization of financial resources, knowledge-based and skilled human resources, and technologies. Most importantly strong ‘will power’ of the multi-stakeholders and leadership at national, provincial, and local levels will likely determine the state of implementation of NDC and other initiatives unlike of previous commitments such as on pollution control.

## SURPLUS ELECTRICITY

# Bane Or Boon

*In almost two decades, Nepal's electricity generation status has drastically changed from a electricity-starved country to a self-reliant one. At a time India is facing severe electricity crisis due to high demand, a good opportunity could be close by. Yet, as several rounds of official meetings were held, Nepal is yet to break the barrier for export. The recent meeting shows that the situation could change only through a settlement at the political level. The time is ripe for Nepal to take the initiative*

By KESHAB POUDEL

As policies are influenced by sentimental issues, Nepalese leaders have rarely noticed the economically beneficial issues Nepal can discuss with the Indian leadership.

At a time when Nepal's officials at energy ministry and NEA have been negotiating with Indian officials to open the market worth billions of rupees of electricity, Nepalese leaders and government have indulged in issues such as the death or killing of Nepali in Darchula in the Nepal-India border.

Instead of taking realistic and beneficial issues for discussion by both the countries, Nepal's move

to raise the irritants, like in the border event, undermines other important issues like electricity market. Political leaders and government officials seem to prefer harping on minor sentimental issues as always.

With surplus electricity in hand, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) officials have spent a lot of time and effort requesting the Indian authorities to purchase Nepal's surplus electricity of over 800 MW in wet season.

Although India has been passing through a severe shortage of electricity, Nepal is yet to convince Indian authorities to purchase the electricity generated in Nepal. Given

the state of relations at the top, Indian reluctance is understandable.

Taking many other sensational issues, this summer has gone without making any progress for export of surplus electricity. Given the current electricity crisis in India, Nepal may go for power cut in coming winter season if India imposes restriction on export.

## Nepal Surplus Electricity

There has been an electricity exchange between Nepal and India since 1971. Following the completion of the Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project and its power getting connected to the national grid, Nepal has around 400 MW surplus electricity which has





remained unconsumed in the night.

In day time only, the reserve electricity is 200 MW. As more projects are completing, NEA has been facing the problem of more power surplus since the last two months.

Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) Kulman Ghising said that Nepal is self-sufficient on electricity following the completion of the 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi. At a time when such a big volume of power gets wasted, the NEA is incurring a daily loss equivalent to Rs 40 million.

With the growing energy crisis, India could be the best market for surplus power. In his recent visit to India, MD Ghising urged Indian officials for facilitating finding an accessible market for the surplus power from Nepal. The NEA delegation discussed with the Indian side about exporting surplus power from Nepal to India and importing power from India during the lean period.

#### **Nepal-Bihar Initiative**

NEA has proposed Bihar State for mutual seasonal power exchange arrangement between the

two countries. As per the proposal, NEA will export electricity to Bihar during rainy season and import electricity from Bihar during winter.

“We submitted the proposed to supply the surplus electricity to Bihar during monsoon and to import it from Bihar during winter. We have also proposed what to do with unequal electricity exchange between Nepal and Bihar.”

NEA has proposed Bihar State Power Holding Company Ltd for mutual electricity exchange to avoid the wastes of electricity in Nepal and fill the shortfall in Bihar’s grid.

NEA MD Ghising said that Nepal can supply 200 MW electricity to Bihar round the clock during the rainy season. Nepal can supply additional electricity from 11 PM to 6 AM. He said that arrangement for the payment will be made on the basis of volume of sharing of electricity through mutually accepted appropriate mechanism.

“We have received positive response from Indian side. If this kind of mutual power exchange ar-

range is made, it will be a major milestone between the two countries in the history of power exchange.”

According to MD Ghising, Nepal has 700 units of surplus energy in remaining three months and there will be 3.79 billion units of surplus electricity during summer.

During winter, Nepal needs to import the same volume of electricity.

Currently, Nepal and Bihar’s grid is connected through 33 kV and 132 kV transmission lines.

These infrastructures can exchange up to 371 MW of power. NEA has informed North Bihar Power Distribution Company to supply electricity through Raxaul, Dhalkebar-Mujjafarpur grid.

#### **From Power Starved To Self-Reliant**

Until 2017, Nepal was power-starved, facing outages up to 18 hours a day. The country now has surplus energy, but it does not have a concrete plan to export power.

NEA has reached the power purchase agreement with 346 hy-

dropower projects to purchase 6,176 megawatts of electricity. Of them, 111 projects with 1,300 megawatts have been into operation. Likewise, 136 with 3,034 megawatts are under construction.

And other 99 with 1,841 megawatts are under the financial closing process, said the NEA.

“We have sent a request to India’s Power Ministry for exporting electricity from Nepal detailing how much energy from which hydro-power projects we can export,” said Suresh Bahadur Bhattarai, spokesperson for the NEA.

With no avenue to export, some power plants have been cutting down electricity generation, which experts say is a paradox in a country like Nepal that was suffering from outages just until a few years ago.

MD Ghising said that the wastage of electricity in monetary terms is around Rs1.8 billion in the last month and a half if calculated at an average selling price per unit of

Rs.9.5.

### Indian Response

**NEA’s officials are hopeful that Nepalese electricity will find entry in India.**

India has opened its power exchange market for Nepal only for buying electricity in April. The agreement does not have provision to import Nepalese electricity through the 400kV Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur Cross Border Transmission Line.

Allowing Nepal as a first country to participate in the Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) among all other neighbors, India has shown good gesture.

The charging of 400kV Cross Border transmission line between Nepal and India, from Dhalkebar to Muzaffarpur paved the way for power import/export from/to India through the IEX.

Under the two separate electricity trading arrangements, Nepal is trading electricity with India. Under a power exchange mecha-

nism, Nepal is selling electricity to Bihar and Uttar Pradesh states of India. Under second mechanism, two countries can buy power from each other when the power is needed.

Even though the Indian Power Ministry is yet to open its door for Nepal’s electricity in the Indian power market and allow Nepal to participate in the daily bidding process to sell electricity, Nepal’s power utility body had participated in a bid to sell 40MW electricity to the Indian state of Punjab in May.

### Internal Consumption

Although Nepal’s market has been expanding, it is too small to consume all the electricity generated within the country. According to NEA’s annual report 2021, the number of electricity consumers of NEA has been increasing gradually over the years. The number of consumers has increased by 7.37 % in the year gone by from 4.22 million to 4.53 million last year with 0.55 million consumers. In rural areas the con-







sumers have reached 5.08 million.

The total population with access to electricity based on the number of consumers has reached 85% of total household in FY 2020/21. This is going up this year. NEA's hydropower plants including small power stations generated a total of 2,810.74 GWh of electricity in FY 2020/21, a slight decrease by 6.96 % over the generation of 3021.04 GWh in FY 2019/20.

The total power purchased from Independent Power Producers (IPPs) within Nepal was 3,241 GWh, an increase by 8.36 % from the figure of 2,991 GWh in the FY 2019/20.

The total energy imported from India was 2,826.21 GWh in FY 2020/21 as compared to 1,729 GWh in FY 2019/20, an increase by 63.45 %. The total energy in the system increased by 14.68 % to 8,877.95 GWh over the corresponding figure of 7,741 GWh in FY 2019/20.

### India's Power Crisis

Rising global energy prices are causing a huge spike in heating bills. India's thermal power plants are currently facing a severe coal shortage, with a majority of the

thermal stations having an average of four days of coal stock against a normative requirement to hold 15-30 days of coal stock based on the distance of the plant from the source of coal.

This also comes in the wake of several states, including Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Bihar, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh raising concerns about possible blackouts.

Indian distribution compa-

nies have in many cases not scheduled power under certain legacy PPAs, as power sourced under these PPAs has become unviable. The norms free them up to sell on exchanges.

The Centre noted that any unrequisioned power needs to be dispatched "in public interest" where there is a requirement in the grid by other users or consumers.

The key challenge for ther-





mal power plants has been diminishing levels of coal stock as they supply a greater share of India's power demand.

On October 7, 16 thermal power plants with power generation capacity of 16,680 MW (megawatt) had zero days of coal stock, according to official government data. An additional 48 thermal power plants with generation capacity of 60,795 MW had coal stock only sufficient for up to two days of production.

Coal fired thermal power plants account for 208.8 GW, or 54 per cent, of the country's total 388 GW installed generation capacity, and have seen an increase in their share in the country's power mix to 66.4 per cent from 61.9 per cent in 2019.

The government has noted that increasing coal supply from state-owned Coal India Ltd, the key supplier of coal to thermal power plants, was set to help in a gradual build up of coal stocks in the near future.

The crisis facing states has been in the making for months. As India's economy picked up after a deadly second wave of COVID-19, demand for power rose sharply. Electricity consumption has jumped almost 17 per cent in the last two months alone when compared to the same period in 2019.

As winter approaches, the skyrocketing prices of oil, gas and coal have left governments across Asia scrambling to contain a huge energy crisis. Suppliers have been unable to keep up with surging electricity demand from the reopening of economies after closures for the corona virus pandemic.

US oil prices crossed \$80 (€69.38) a barrel for the first time since late 2014. Natural gas futures settled at their highest level since December 2008 this week, while the price of coal in China has hit a record high, rising by over 11% in one



season.

"The sharp increase in the price of thermal coal has created significant problems for Asian economies," Rajiv Biswas, Asia-Pacific chief economist at research house IHS Markit, told DW. He said some power stations in China and India were "more reliant on imported coal for logistical reasons, and are more vulnerable to sharp rises in prices."

By comparison, over the last four years, the average coal inventory that power plants had was around 18 days worth of supply, according to Hetal Gandhi, director of research at ratings firm CRISIL, a subsidiary of S&P Global.

Since power is subsidized for most farmers and many households in India, the burden of higher coal prices will mainly fall on industrial consumers who account for only

25% to 30% of power consumption, according to Gandhi.

"If demand goes up substantially, I don't know what could be the steps, but you could look at steps like they may bring about curb on exports in sectors which are power-intensive in nature," said Gandhi.

As India is in need of electricity, the initiative should be taken at top political level from Nepal with India to prevent waste of electricity worth billion of rupees.



## FLOOD AND DISASTER

# Unprecedented Loss

*The incessant rain has badly affected life of people in Sudurpaschim province killing people, destroying houses and crops*

By A CORRESPONDENT

After incessant rain that battered Nepal since 16 to 20 October, leading to floods, landslides, and massive destruction of property, especially in the hills of Province 1 and Sudurpaschim, the situation in areas, especially Ilam, Panchthar, Taplejung and Dhankuta of Province 1 and Bajhang, Doti, Baitadi and Kailali in Sudurpaschim have seen tragic incidents caused by landslides and floods.

According to Ministry of

Home Affairs, 101 people lost their lives in the period due to landslides, floods and inundation following heavy rainfall at different places of the country.

Similarly, 41 persons have gone missing in the incidents of natural disasters in various districts. According to the Home Ministry, Ilam recorded the highest number of death cases that stand at 11 followed by Doti which is nine. Ministry of Home Affairs said 60 persons were killed in Province 1 and 31 in Sudurpaschim province. Similar-

ly, 7 were killed in Karnali and Bagmati 1. Nineteen people were injured in Province 1 and 17 in Sudurpaschim.

The landslide has resulted in human casualties in both districts. Spokesperson of the Home Ministry, Phanindra Mani Pokharel told RSS that six persons each in Humla, Dhankuta and Panchthar died due to landslides.

According to the Home Ministry, four persons lost their lives in Baitadi, one each in Kalikot, Dadeldhura, Pyuthan and Udaipur and two in



Sunsari.

A total of 23 people have gone missing in Bajhang while one in Doti, two in Pyuthan and five in Ilam. Twenty-three people of different districts were injured in the natural disasters so far.

Rain causing system was active in different areas of the country from October 17. Chief of Disaster Management Division of the Home Ministry, Humkala Pandey, shared that search for the missing and rescue for those trapped in natural disaster incidents is underway.

The government has decided to provide Rs. 200,000 each to families of those who lost their lives due to the rain-induced disasters.

Also, the government has decided to provide health treatment free of cost to those who were injured in various disasters that took place across the nation due to torrential rainfall.

As per the government data, a total of 55 deaths and loss of property caused by heavy rains and landslide have been reported. Seventeen persons are injured and five are

still missing in the region. Dadeldhura district was the most affected with 10 deaths reported on a day.

In Doti, Dadeldhura and Bajura the rain and mudslides damaged homes and roads. Dhangadhi-Dadeldhura (Bhim Dutta Highway) was badly damaged.

The time around Dashain is the peak season in Sudurpaschim for returning home from India. The Bhimdutta Highway, which is the most used, is yet to be opened and people are stranded in the villages.

Local people informed that there was no shortage of food, but power and water supply was affected. It will take a week to resume these services. Some of the houses were flooded and the water is now leaving.

In the meantime, multiple teams of the national and provincial level disaster response forces were carrying out rescue operations. Earlier, the Meteorological Department said weather stations in Sudurpaschim had received the heaviest rainfall for any 24-hour period on that

day since records began to be kept.

#### Unusual Rainfall

According to data provided by Meteorological Division, Dipayal recorded 198.2 mm rainfall, Dhangadhi 211, Dhankuta 156.2 mm, Biratnagar 133.6, Kathmandu 3.9, Pokhara 30.5 mm and Lumle 104 mm in the 24 hours on that Tuesday. Following a week of sunny day, the country had experienced the first post-monsoon rains from Saturday night.

Meteorologists said that a combination of the low atmospheric pressure system developed around the coastal area of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha in India and the westerly wind led to generally to partly cloudy and rainy situation in many parts of the country since Saturday night.

“This particular type of phenomena during the post-monsoon season is considered normal as it sometimes becomes a fully sunny day and sometimes the weather immediately gets cloudy in some places of the country,” meteorologist Ganga Nagarkoti at the Meteorological Forecasting Division (MFD) under the Department.





An urgent meeting of Council of Ministers made the decision to provide Rs. 200,000 to those who lost a family member to the disaster, informed Home Minister Bal Krishna Khand.

### Government Response

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba announced to provide appropriate relief to the families of the deceased and affected by the floods and landslides.

At a meeting of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) in Singha Durbar, Prime Minister Deuba decided to provide rescue, relief and compensation to the flood and landslide victims in different parts of the country due to incessant rains.

The meeting also decided to effectively carry out relief and rescue work in the affected areas.

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba directed concerned officials to provide necessary relief to the people affected by heavy rainfall. In Baitadi, Dhangadhi, Doti and Dadelhura regions of the Sudu-

rpaschim Province large numbers of people have been lost.

The death toll due to rain-related incidents in Sudurpaschim has now risen to over two dozen including the landslides and floods.

Sudurpaschim Chief Min-

ister met people affected by heavy rainfall in the regions of the province and announced a compensation of Rs 4 lakh each to the next of kin of those who have lost their lives.

Minister Khand said, “TFamilies who lost more than one family



members will receive Rs. 100,000 relief per fatality.”

According to Home Minister Khand, all the health treatment costs of those who were injured in landslides and floods that occurred across the nation in that period would be borne by the government.

“The government has also decided to intensify the relief distribution and rescue works,” said the Home Minister.

Moreover, the decision has been made to provide Rs. 50,000 each to those whose houses were destroyed by the rain-induced disasters in order to make temporary tents. “Later, the residents of the Himalayan region will be given Rs. 500,000, those of Hilly region will receive Rs. 400,000 and those of the Terai region will receive Rs. 300,000 to rebuild their houses,” said Minister Khand.

He added that families who do not own any land or property would be provided with Rs. 300,000 each to procure land and the government would manage to provide community homes



to them.

The meeting also decided to use private helicopters for rescue works.

#### Rescue Mission

With the support from Nepal Army, Armed Police, Nepal Police and local people, the rescue mission has been launched in the affected areas.

District Police Office Doti's joint-spokesperson and police

inspector Rabindra Chand said the incident happened when the landslide hit the house of local Bir Bahadur Kunjeda and a team has been mobilized to recover the bodies. The Office said the continuous rain has disrupted the communications system in the district and it is struggling to gather information about losses caused by the rain in different parts of the district.







Meantime, in Dadeldhura, a person was buried by a landslide that occurred from above the house at Bhatkada of Ganyapdhura rural municipality-1.

The District Police Office has been unable to gather information about the losses from the disaster in other parts of the district due to the disrupted telecommunications network and the power supply system.

Similarly, two people were injured in a landslide at Amargadhi municipality-1 and they are being treated at the Dadeldhura Hospital. The District Administration has appealed to all to remain alert to the possible disasters when waters level in the rivers have increased, causing floods in the nearby settlement.

Different areas in Dhangadhi have been waterlogged due to the incessant rainfall. Normal life has been affected as Bishalnagar, Milanchowk, Shibanagar, Krishnanagar, Malita tole, Uttarbehadi, Campus road, among others have been inundated.

Information Officer at the District Administration Office, Kailali, Shiva Raj Joshi, said that different areas surrounding Dhangadhi have been waterlogged and water has entered dozens of houses.

Different settlements have become waterlogged due to blacktopping of roads without making arrangements for sewerage. Similarly, the rain has also damaged the paddy crops.

Meanwhile, a report from Dang said that the incessant rain damaged the paddy ready for harvest. "The paddy crop was ripe, we were expecting a good harvest. But

the heavy rain since Sunday night has damaged the crop," said one Dhaniram Chaudhary of Dangisaran rural municipality.

Farmers said besides paddy crops, the rain has also damaged mustard and vegetable crops. The paddy fields have become waterlogged due to the rain in Ghorahi, Lamahi, Bhalubang and west Dang.

Although the rain used to occur in this period of time, the intensity of rainfall this time has set a record. As the temperature is rising globally, countries like Nepal are highly susceptible to the flood and landslides caused by incessant rains.

Starting from major floods in Melamchi caused by burst of the lake in Melamchi and the region, the current rain has badly damaged different parts of Nepal, mostly the far-west and eastern region.

As natural water induced disasters like floods, landslide and inundation have been making heavy damage, the government should invest more money to develop a strong and reliable meteorological forecasting system, along with rescue and rehabilitation.





# Last Chance

*The decision taken by the world leaders will determine the future of earth*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Global scientists have already asked what the world will look like if we miss our climate targets?

With the plans currently on the table, the globe is gearing up for an increase of 2.7 degrees Celsius. That would be much worse for the planet than adhering to the agreed-upon Paris goal of 1.5 C.

Time is running out. The scale of action we need to protect the climate is huge, it has to happen fast, and the plans on the table are falling short.

In 2015, almost all of the world's nations agreed to limit the temperature increase to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 F) above preindustrial levels, and to aim for a limit of 1.5 C under the Paris Agreement.

So far, the actual commitments made to cut fossil fuel use and other measures to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere — if carried through — will only get us down to 2.7 C of warming, the UN has warned.

At the end of this month, world leaders will meet in Glasgow for the 26th edition of the UN Climate Change Conference. And the pressure is on to come up with much more radical measures to meet the Paris target.

But what difference does a fraction of a degree make? Well, a lot, according to the vast body of scientific research being done globally to assess the impacts of climate change.

With climate induced disasters already happening across the globe, the scale of the problem can seem unmanageable. Yet while science does paint a bleak picture, it also shows that limiting warming by what seems like

a tiny amount can save many millions of lives, protect vast areas of land from degradation and give other species a chance of survival.

According to the IPCC latest report, released in August, the global temperature has already risen by 1.07



C since the industrial revolution. And we can already see that just 1 degree of warming has had a massive impact.

Every centimeter of sea-level rise could put millions at risk

Take sea-level rise. So far, we've pushed the average global sea level up by about 20 centimeters (7.9 inches) since 1901, according to IPCC.

That might not sound like much, but it's already forcing people from their homes all over the world. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, hundreds of thousands of people are being displaced every year by floods in low-lying areas of Bangladesh.

According to data-driven climate website Carbon Brief, which analysed 70 peer-reviewed scientific studies in 2018, with 1.5 C of warming, we're looking at a global sea-level rise of 48 centimeters by the end of this cen-

tury, compared to 56 centimeters if we hit 2 degrees.

And just 8 centimeters means all the difference for millions of people. According to the IPCC, every 10 centimeters of sea-level rise affects up to another 10 million people around the world.

A little bit of warming means a lot of rain

The latest IPCC report says the kind of "extreme rainfall event" that, before the industrial revolution would occur once every 10 years, is now happening about 30% more often. At 1.5 degrees of warming, the risk goes up by 50% — and the severity of the event increases too, becoming 10.5% wetter. At 2 degrees, such an event becomes 70% more likely, and 14% wetter.

For a country like India, this means a very different future. According to insurance firm Munich Re, floods and landslides caused over 700 deaths and \$11 billion (€9.5 billion) in damage over 2018 and 2019.

According to Carbon Brief, with 1.5 C of warming, the economic damage from flooding in the country would increase more than three and a half times, and at 2 degrees, nearly five and a half times.

Longer, drier droughts

While some regions of the planet will get wetter, others will get drier, with equally catastrophic results. In 2018, the IPCC said limiting global warming to 1.5 C compared to 2 C could mean half as many people exposed to water stress.

In its latest report, the IPCC says what would have been once-a-decade droughts before the Industrial Revolution are now 70% more likely. At 1.5

C they become twice as frequent, and at 2 degrees, they will happen 2.4 times as often.

According to Carbon Brief, globally, the average length of a drought goes up by two months with 1.5 degrees of warming, by four months at 2 degrees, and a whopping 10 months at 3 degrees of warming.

In 2019, the World Food Programme said that 2.2 million people in Central America's "dry corridor" had suffered crop losses due to drought and five consecutive years of erratic weather. In February this year, that figure has gone up to nearly 8 million, partly as a result of the economic impact of the pandemic, which compounded "years of extreme climate events," but also as a result of Hurricanes Eta and Iota, which hit Central America in November 2020.

How much worse things get in the region will depend on the climate action we take. According to Carbon Brief, at 1.5 degrees of warming, the average length of droughts in Central America will extend by five months, at 2 degrees of warming by eight months, and at 3 degrees by 19 months.

Small numbers, big risks

And alongside drought come heat waves and the perfect conditions for the kind of fires that have roared everywhere, from California to Southern Europe and Indonesia to Australia, over recent years. The IPCC says limiting warming to 1.5 C compared to 2 C could reduce the number of people frequently exposed to extreme heat waves by about 420 million.

If these figures are mind-boggling, the human cost of these apparently small increments in warming is almost impossible to comprehend. The lives destroyed, hunger, homelessness and poverty, mean unquantifiable suffering. And they will exacerbate or precipitate political tensions in ways we can't predict, leading to conflicts we can still only guess at.

What we do know for sure, is that when it comes to climate change, apparently small numbers can make all the difference.

## YOUNG CHILDREN

# On Poor Diet

*UNICEF Says: Young Children's Diets Show No Improvement Over Last Decade*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**A**lthough Nepal has been launching several programs to improve the food status of children offering various schemes including school nutrition programs in the remote areas, a large number of young children are facing the challenges of nutrition.

A report titled 'Fed to Fail?' shows the crisis of children's diets in early life. Released ahead of the UN Food System Summit, it warns that

ability and accessibility of such type of nutritious and healthy food is associated with its prices. Most often, nutritious, and healthy choice of food is expensive.

Farmers engaged in farming of nutritious and healthy foods are not well supported by farmer-friendly policies, supplies (seed, manure, insecticide, pesticide) and skills (production and marketing) resulting in these nutritious and healthy food choices to be expensive in the big and small markets.

Global warming, lack of resources, poor quality seeds, genetically modified seeds, biological disease, climate change and excessive use of undegradable plastic materials are contributing to an unsustainable food system.

"Children cannot survive or thrive on calories alone," said Fore. "Only by joining forces with governments, the private sector, civil society, development and humanitarian partners, and families can we transform food systems and unlock nutritious, safe and affordable diets for every child. The upcoming UN Food Systems Summit is an important opportunity to set the

stage for global food systems that meet the needs of all children."

"The report's findings are clear: When the stakes are highest, millions of young children are being fed to fail," said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. "Poor nutritional intake in the first two years of life can irreversibly harm children's rapidly growing bodies and brains, impacting their schooling, job prospects and futures. While we have known this for years, there has been little progress on providing the right kind of nutritious and safe foods for the young. In fact, the ongoing COVID-19 disruptions could make the situation much worse."



rising poverty, inequality, conflict, climate-related disasters, and health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, are contributing to an ongoing nutrition crisis among the world's youngest that has shown little sign of improvement in the last ten years.

Nepalese children and young people share a similar situation as at the global level. According to the report, Nepalese adolescents' choices of nutritious and healthy food like fruits and vegetables depend on the season. These foods are not always easily available and accessible to them.

Key vulnerability for avail-

In an analysis of 91 countries, the report finds that only half of children aged 6-23 months are being fed the minimum recommended number of meals a day, while just a third consume the minimum number of food groups they need to thrive. Further analysis of 50 countries with available trend data reveals these poor feeding patterns have persisted throughout the last decade.

As COVID-19 continues to disrupt essential services and drives more families into poverty, the report finds that the pandemic is affecting how families feed their children.

Data from Indonesia, Nepal, Malawi, Lesotho and Kenya illustrate that the quality of children's diets has deteriorated due to income loss and impact of the pandemic. In Nepal, where the UNICEF Child and Family Tracker (CFT) Survey has been tracking the socio-economic impact of the pandemic including family income loss and young children's dietary intake, the CFT recorded significant income loss throughout the pandemic period with 1 out of 3 (34 per cent) of families struggling to meet daily food needs and children's dietary diversity remaining the most pressing concern for families across the country.

Children carry the scars of poor diets and feeding practices for life. An insufficient intake of nutrients found in vegetables, fruits, eggs, fish and meat needed to support growth at an early age puts children at risk of poor brain development, weak learning, low immunity, increased infections and, potentially, death.

Children under the age of two are most vulnerable to all forms of malnutrition – stunting, wasting, micronutrient deficiencies, and overweight and obesity – as a result of poor diets, due to their greater need for essential nutrients per kilogram of body weight than at any other time in life, as well as lack of health seeking behaviors such as prevention and treatment of the illnesses, from their parents.

Globally, UNICEF estimates that more than half of children under the age of 5 with wasting – around 23 million children – are younger than 2 years of age, while the prevalence of stunting increases rapidly between 6 months and two years, as children's diets fail to keep

pace with their growing nutritional needs.

According to the report, children aged 6-23 months living in rural areas or from poorer households are significantly more likely to be fed poor diets compared to their urban or wealthier peers. In 2020, for example, the proportion of children fed the minimum number of recommended food groups was twice as high in urban areas (39 per cent) than in rural areas (23 per cent). In South Asia (19 per cent), less than one in four young children, are being fed a minimally diverse diet.

But change is possible with the right commitment and investments. Ten countries – Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Kyrgyzstan, the Maldives, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste – have increased the proportion of children consuming foods from the recommended minimum number of food groups by at least 10 percentage points in the last decade.

In all regions, investments are needed to ensure that all children benefit from the diverse diets they need to prevent all forms of malnutrition, and grow, develop and learn to their full potential.

To deliver nutritious, safe, and affordable diets to every child, the report calls for governments, donors, civil society organizations and development actors to work hand-in-hand to transform food, health and social protection systems by leading key actions, including:

Increasing the availability and affordability of nutritious foods – including fruits, vegetables, eggs, fish meat and fortified foods – by incentivizing their production, distribution and retailing.

Implementing national standards and legislation to protect young children from unhealthy processed and ultra-processed foods and beverages, and



to end harmful marketing practices targeting children and families.

Increasing the desirability of nutritious and safe foods through multiple communication channels including digital media to reach parents and children with easy to understand, coherent information.

Ahead of the UN Food Systems Summit, 18 UNICEF offices including Nepal, in collaboration with Young and Resilient Research Centre at Western Sydney University, consulted in depth with children and young people about food, food environments, and food practices. Additionally, a U-Report poll also gathered responses from more than 22,000 children and young people across various countries.

Fix My Food: Children's Views On Transforming Food Systems report encompasses the analysis of the insights shared by children around the world about their lived experiences and perspectives on food systems, and their ideas and recommendations about what they want families, communities, organizations, governments and young people themselves to do to rethink and rework food systems for the 21st century.

Young children's diets show no improvement in last decade, 'could get much worse' under COVID-19 -UNICEF

Children under the age of 2 are not getting the food or nutrients they need to thrive and grow well, leading to irreversible developmental harm, according to new report released by UNICEF.



## HUNGER AND FOOD

# Nepal's Position

*Out of 116 nations, Nepal stands on a position below 100 in Global Hunger Index. However, Nepal's position is poor in Global Food Supply Index*

By A CORRESPONDENT

In Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021, Nepal has improved its position. However, India slipped to 101st position in the GHI out of 116 countries, from its 2020 position of 94th, and is behind its neighbors Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Global Hunger Report 2021 has lowered the rank of India on the basis of FAO estimate on proportion of undernourished population, which is found to be “devoid of ground reality and facts and suffers from serious methodological issues.”

Oxfam India said the GHI data which states that India dropped to the hunger-level ranks by seven spots to the 101st spot “unfortunately reflects the reality of the country where hunger accentuated since the Covid-19 pandemic.”

However, Nepal secured lower mark than India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in Global Food Supply Index.

According to the report, India held 71st position with an overall score of 57.2 points on the GFS Index 2021 of 113 countries, fared better than Pakistan (75th position), Sri Lanka (77th Position), Nepal (79th position) and Bangladesh (84th position). But the country was way behind China (34th position).

In the food affordability category, Pakistan (with 52.6 points) scored better than India (50.2 points). Sri Lanka was also better at 62.9 points on the GFS Index 2021.

In case of availability of food, quality and safety as well as protecting natural resources for food production, India scored better than Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka on the GFS Index 2021, the report added.

However, over the past 10 years, India's incremental gains in overall food security score were lagging behind that of Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh.

India's score improved only by 2.7 points to 57.2 in 2021 from 54.5 in 2012 when compared with Pakistan by 9 points (to 54.7 in 2021 from 45.7 in 2012) while that of Nepal by 7 points (to 53.7 points in 2021

from 46.7 points in 2012) and Bangladesh by 4.7 points (to 49.1 in 2021 from 44.4 points in 2012).

However, the POSHAN Abhiyaan launched in 2017 to improve nutrition among children, pregnant women and lactating mothers, has languished due to poor funding resulting from clever clubbing with other schemes within the health-budget and even worse implementation.

Only 0.57 per cent of the current budget has been allocated towards funding the actual POSHAN scheme and the amount



for child nutrition dropped by a whopping 18.5 per cent compared to 2020-21, Oxfam India said in a statement.

“There are massive negative consequences to not arresting high levels of malnutrition. In India, both our adult population and children are at risk. For instance, the BMI of a quarter of our (teenage and middle aged) women is below the standard global norm, more than half of our women suffer from anaemia.

A quarter of our (teenage and middle-aged) men also show signs of iron and calcium deficiencies as per the latest round of NHFS data, said Varna Sri Raman, Lead, Research and Knowledge Building at Oxfam India.

The GHI report, prepared jointly by Irish aid agency Concern Worldwide and German organization Welt Hunger Hilfe, termed the level of hunger in India

Ireland, Australia, the UK, Fin-

land, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Canada, Japan, France and the US shared the top rank with the overall GFS score in the range of 77.8 and 80 points on the index.

The GFS Index was designed and constructed by London-based Economist Impact and is sponsored by Corteva Agriscience.

The GFS Index measures the underlying drivers of food security in 113 countries, based on the factors of affordability, availability, quality and safety, and natural resources and resilience. It considers 58 unique food security indicators including income and economic inequality – calling attention to systemic gaps and actions needed to accelerate progress toward United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger by 2030.

China's score improved by 9.6 points to 71.3 in 2021 from 61.7 in 2012, the report said. “The GFSI looks beyond hunger to identify the underlying factors affecting food insecurity around the world,” said Tim Glenn, Executive Vice-President and Chief Commercial Officer, Corteva Agriscience.

The findings of GFS Index 2021 also showed that global food security has decreased for the second year in a row after seven years of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal of achieving zero hunger by 2030.

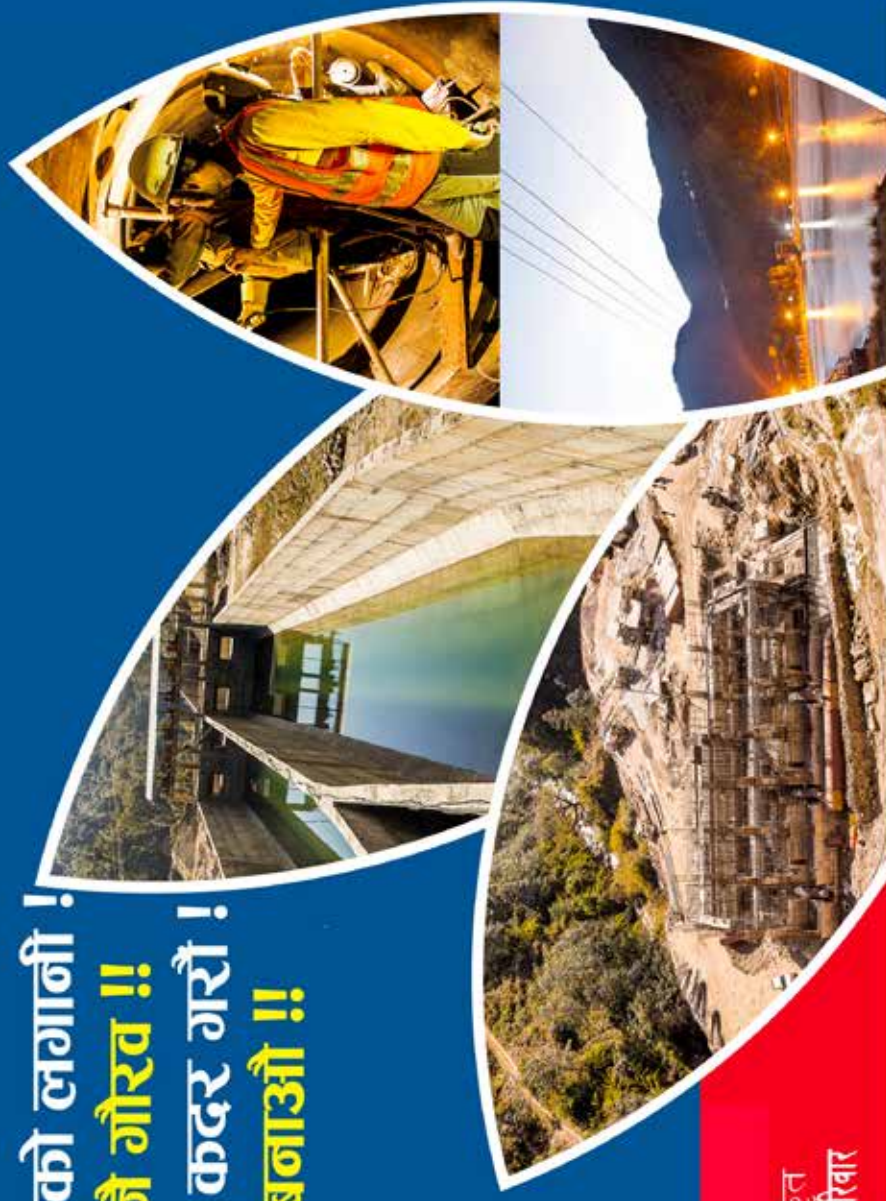
According to Pratima Singh, Head of the Global Food Security Index at Economist Impact, “The index shows that, while countries have made significant strides toward addressing food insecurity in the past ten years, food systems remain vulnerable to economic, climatic, and geopolitical shocks. Action is imperative at all levels—local, national, and global—to end hunger and malnourishment and ensure food security for all.”

In its global report, Economist Impact stated that the Index shows that to meet these present and emerging future challenges requires that investments in food security are sustained – from innovation in climate-resilient crop yields to investing in programs to assist the most vulnerable.

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