

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



VIEWPOINT
Dr. Tilak Rawal



OPINION
Dipak Gyawali



FORUM
Bharat Raj Paudyal

NEW SPOTLIGHT

www.spotlightnepal.com

Dec.- 10, 2021

FORTNIGHTLY

UPPER TAMAKOSI HYDROPOWER PROJECT

A Jewel In The Crown

INSIDE



PERSPECTIVES
Senior Advocate Prof. Dr. Gandhi Pandit



MD GHISING
Rushing On A Mission



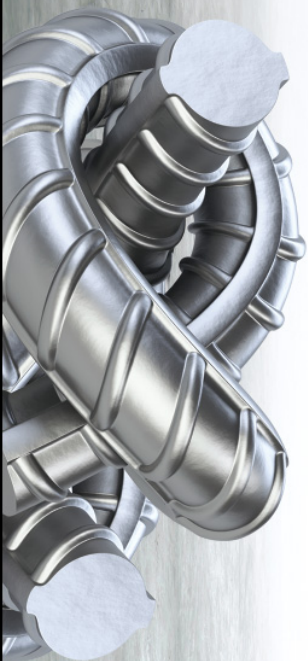
PRATIMA RANA PANDE
Honored For Cause

हिमाल स्टील

DUCTYL 500D

जमिनो जमि, बजिनो ब्याजि

बढी
हिमालले सुरक्षित घर बनाउँछ ।



१००% गुणस्तर परीक्षण । लोडशेडिंगमा पनि निरन्तर उत्पादन । ७६ डिग्री आफ्नै चाहिउको स्थानमा नेपालभरि तुरुन्तै डेलिभरी हुने । निर्माणकर्ताको पहुँचो योजनाई । पारदर्शी बजार र ग्राह्य



Editor and Publisher

Keshab Poudel

Contributor

Sabine Pretsch

Design/Layout

Sahil Mokthan, 9863022025

Marketing Manager

Madan Raj Poudel

Tel: 9841320517

Nabin Kumar Maharjan

Tel: 9841291404

Editorial Office

Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 977-1-4530250

E-mail

spotlightnepal@gmail.com

P.O.Box: 7256

Website

www.spotlightnepal.com

Kathmandu DAO Regd. No.

148/11/063/64

Central Region Postal Regd.

No. 36/067/068

US Library of Congress Catalogue

No. 91-905060, ISSN : 2091-0711

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

Printing

Megha Offset Printing Press P. Ltd.,

Dhapasi, Kathmandu

Tel. : 977-1-4363624

Nepal's major political parties are busy holding their general conventions to make them fit for the forthcoming elections. Main opposition party CPN-UML concluded its general convention electing former prime minister KP Sharma Oli as its chairman and Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), fifth largest party in the country, elected Rajendra Lingden as its new chairperson. Nepali Congress is holding its elections on 3rd week of December and Maoist Center has started convention from local level. Unfortunately, none of the political parties has raised the issues of national concern. Following the damage by flood, the government is yet to open its mouth on Melamchi Drinking Water Project, the largest drinking water project aimed to supply water to the valley. Although the project was inaugurated by CPN-UML leader Oli as prime minister, his party did not speak anything about the project. Similarly, Nepali Congress Party, which secured 8 parliamentary seats from Kathmandu, has not paid any attention to the people's concern. With a capacity to supply sufficient water to the population in Kathmandu, Melamchi does not have any immediate alternatives. Instead of taking any decision to revive the water supply, the government has announced to dig another 10 dip boring with temporary options. For people suffering from COVID-19 pandemic, the short supply of water has already made their living in Kathmandu worse. At a time when political parties are avoiding raising the life line issue of people, people are watching the drama of political parties helplessly. Given the present situation, we have decided to cover Melamchi as our short story and successful completion of Upper Tamakosi and its economic implications in nation as a main story.

Keshab Poudel

CONTENT

NEWSNOTES	3
BUSINESS BRIEF	6
VIEWPOINT Dr. Tilak Rawal	8
RPP Lingden In Leadership	11
OPINION Dipak Gyawali	12
NEPAL'S ISRAEL POLICY Confusion And Contradiction	14
FORUM Bharat Raj Paudyal	15
MD GHISING Rushing On A Mission	16
PERSPECTIVES Senior Advocate Prof. Dr. Gandhi Pandit	20
NEPAL- EU JOINT MEETING Enhancing Cooperation	28
PRATIMA RANA PANDE Honored For Cause	30
PRABHAKAR RANA MEMORIAL LIBRARY Worthy Contributions	33
CAMPAIGN AGAINST GBV Call To End Suffering	34



COVERSTORY: UPPER TAMAKOSI HYDROPOWER PROJECT: A Jewel In The Crown

24

Cover photo by Bimal Gurung



POLITICS: Month of Conventions

10



TANAHU HYDRO-POWER: Making Progress

19

Laxmi-Narayan Idol Restored In Patan

The stolen idol of Laxmi-Narayan of Patko tole of Lalitpur has been replaced in Narayan temple. In 1984, the idol of Laxmi-Narayan was stolen from the temple.

“Very proud, we were able to help bring the Laxmi-Narayan home. Diplomacy is about people & connection. One of the things that connect us most is respect for one another’s culture. We hope more idols return,” tweets US ambassador Randy Berry.



The idol was originally worshipped at a temple in Patko, Lalitpur and had been on display at the Dallas Museum of Art since 1990.

The statue was returned from the United States after 38 years and replaced at the former Narayan Temple. The theft of the statue is mentioned in the 1989 work of researcher Lainsing Wangdel, Stolen Images of Nepal.

The statue was stolen in 1984, according to Wangdel’s work. The Laxmi-Narayan idol, which was stolen from the Narayan Temple at Patko Tol in Patan and brought to the United States, was returned home on April 12 last year after a long search, investigation and diplomatic efforts.

After the statue was exhibited at the Dallas Museum in the United States, the museum returned the statue as the concern about the stolen Nepali heritage increased.

Korean Government Assists Cyber Bureau Of Nepal Police



The Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) on behalf of the Government of Nepal and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Korea signed the Record of Discussion (RoD) for the project “Establishment of Cyber Bureau with Capacity Building for Nepal Police” on 1st December, 2021 at MoHA.

The RoD was signed by Tek Narayan Pandey, Secretary of MoHA and Sunghoon Ko, Country Director of KOICA Nepal. The Korean Government through KOICA will spend USD 8 million for this project for 6 years. The project will be implemented by KOICA in close collaboration and coordination with MOHA and Nepal Police.

The main objective of the project is to Strengthen Anti-Cyber-crime Capabilities of Nepal Police wherein, the main component of the project is to construct state-of-art

Building of the Cyber Bureau, provide equipment related to Cyber-crime investigation and Digital Forensic Lab and capacity building of relevant human resources of Nepal Police.

Pandey, Secretary of MoHA stated the importance of well-equipped and well capacitated Cyber Bureau to control the increasing trend of cyber-crime. He further assured to fully cooperate for successful implementation of this project.

Similarly, Country Director of KOICA, Ko described the project as the joint collaborative approach between the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Government of Nepal. He stated that this project carries great importance for Korean Government since it will contribute to reduce cyber-crime and protect victims in Nepal with the expertise and resources based on Korean experience on Police Cyber Bureau. He expressed that KOICA and Nepal Police will work hard for the successful implementation of the project.

Nepal-U.S. Joint Military Training Concludes

A joint military training between Nepali and U.S. Army named Ex-Teak Nail 22 concluded amid a function at Kathmandu, Chhauni. According to a press release issued by Public Relations and Information Directorate of Nepal Army, Lieutenant General Saroj Pratap Rana concluded the program.



At the concluding ceremony attended by senior Generals of Nepal Army including Director of Training Division of Nepal Army Major General Niranjan Kumar Shrestha and other senior army officers of Nepal Army and U.S. Army, U.S. Ambassador to Nepal Randy W. Berry was the chief guest.

Attended by 45 personnel of Nepal Army’s Disaster Assessment and Response Team (DART) and 17 from the US Army, the training was conducted in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Annapurna Base Camp. During the training exercise, the participatings learned about varoius disaster rescue and serarch operations skills related to water and high altitude.

Indian Army Gifts TATA Workshop Trucks To Nepal

The Indian Army gifted TATA LPTA 1628 Workshop Trucks to Nepali Army in a ceremony organized at Nepali Army Headquarters, Tundikhel. The workshop trucks were handed over on behalf of the Indian Army by Col Amit Sharma, Defence Attaché of India to Brig Gen Krishna Dev Bhatta of Nepali Army.

These workshop trucks which act as a compact mobile workshop will be instrumental in ensuring smooth



and uninterrupted functionality of Nepali Army transport fleet.

The gifting of workshop trucks comes immediately after the arrival of Gen Prabhu Ram Sharma, COAS, and Nepali Army back in office after recent conferment of Honorary Rank of Gen of the

Indian Army by the President of India.

Nepal, India Sign MoU On Recognition Of COVID Vaccination Certificate

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the Government of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Health and Population of the Government of Nepal have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for reciprocal recognition of COVID vaccination certificate.

Ministry of Health & Population Virodh Khatri was also present during the function.

This Memorandum of Understanding is a significant step in easing travel for fully COVID-19 vaccinated travelers of both countries and marks another milestone in robust COVID-19 related cooperation and coordination between India and Nepal.

Japan To Install Cataract and Glaucoma Equipment In Koshi Hospital

The Charge d'Affaires a.i. of Japan to Nepal Yoshioka Yuzo signed a grant contract with Dr. Chuman Lal Das, Medical Superintendent of Koshi Hospital, for installing medical equipment for the treatment of patients with cataract and glaucoma at Koshi Hospital in Morang District.



The project is funded under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) of the Japanese Government and involves a

grant of USD 142,568 (approximately NPR 16.91 million). The project will support the installation of medical equipment including non-contact tonometer (NCT), auto ref keratometer, Bscan, microscope, phacoemulsification machine, static plus kinetic perimeter, and yag laser for investigation and treatment of cataract and glaucoma.

Koshi Hospital, established in 1890, has been offering medical services to more than two hundred thousand patients each year. However, because of the lack of medical equipment, it was difficult to identify diseases and provide

timely treatment for patients with cataract and glaucoma.

PM Deuba And US Asst. Secretary Lu Discuss Nepal-US Relations

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and visiting US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu discussed the matters related to the long standing Nepal-US relations.

The visiting Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs of the United States Department of State Ambassador Donald Lu had paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister Deuba.

Various matters concerning Nepal-US relations, cooperation in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, post-pandemic recovery and other matters of common interests featured during the call-on. The conversation also covered various areas of Nepal's development priorities as well as the United States' cooperation, including the MCC. Both sides expressed satisfaction on the overall state of Nepal-US relations.

The Prime Minister thanked the US Government for continued cooperation in the socio-economic development of Nepal. He expressed appreciation for the generous support of COVID-19 vaccines to Nepal. The Assistant Secretary assured the Prime Minister of continued US cooperation to Nepal.



India Assisted To Construct New School Building In Butwal

Foundation stone was laid for construction of a new building for Shree Naharpur Secondary School at Butwal under Government of India assistance.

Karun Bansal, Head of Development Partnership and Reconstruction Wing of the Embassy of India, Kathmandu and Shiv Raj Subedi, Mayor, laid the stone for construction of a new school building of Shree Naharpur Secondary School in Rupandehi.

The new school building at Butwal-11, Naharpur will be built at an estimated cost of NRs. 44.17 million as High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) under India-Nepal Development Partnership.

Shree Naharpur Secondary School is an old school in this area set up in 1971. Once completed, the school will shift to its new premises. Currently, 1127 students are enrolled in the school, about 50% of which are girl students.

Since 2003, India



has completed 454 projects in the areas of health, education, drinking water, connectivity, sanitation and creation of other public utilities across all 7 provinces of Nepal under grassroots level HICDPs. Out of this, 60 are in Province -5, including ten completed projects in Rupandehi District and 9 projects under various stages of completion in Province 5, including 2 in Rupandehi District.

JICA's New Project To Improve Water Supply

JICA and Ministry of Water Supply (MOWS), Nepal Water Supply Corporation (NWSC) signed an agreement on Technical Cooperation Project to improve water supply system in urban cities of the country.

The project will improve the accessibility of safe water and satisfaction of customer services. Activities will be primarily piloted in the Pokhara branch targeting the sizable water supply facilities of 45 MLD WTP under verge of completion.

Despite bearing responsibility as public utility to provide water supply service to 23 major cities of Nepal, NWSC continues to suffer a meager service delivery capacity. The project will improve operation and maintenance capacity, tariff collection capacity, human resource development capacity to name a major few components of the project.



Nepal has a target to meet national SDG goal to provide 90% household with access to piped water supply by 2030. Such technical assistance intends to increase service delivery of urban towns to materialize the set national target.

intends to increase service delivery of urban towns to materialize the set national target.

Japan Provides Assistance To Community Health Center

The Charge d'Affaires a.i. of Japan to Nepal, YOSHIOKA Yuzo, signed a grant contract with Ranju Napit, Chairperson of the Laborer Women and Child Welfare Council (LWCWC) for providing medical equipment to the Valley Health and Research Center that operates in Bhaktapur District.

The project is funded under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) of the Japanese Government and involves a grant of USD 74,860 (approximately NPR 8.9 million). This project will support the installation of medical equipment for breast cancer testing, thyroid testing, and diabetes testing at the Valley Health Center that has been providing medical services, mainly to women and children, free of charge since its establishment in 2000. The health center offers free diagnosis, free birth assistance and basic medicines in rural areas, and focuses on maternal and child health. The doctors and nurses of the center regularly visit the surrounding communities to pro-



vide counseling and to raise awareness on basic health. The medical equipment to be provided under the grant scheme can assist the center to offer a wider range of services, including regular check-ups for early detection of ailments.

India Funded Reconstruction Of 50,000 Houses

Closing ceremony and Lessons Learnt workshop were held on reconstruction of 50,000 Government of India-funded houses in Gorkha and Nuwakot districts of Nepal.

Embassy of India in Nepal in association with National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), UNDP and UNOPS organized the event in Kathmandu to mark the successful completion of Government of India-funded reconstruction of 50,000 houses in Gorkha and Nuwakot districts of Nepal.

The event was attended by Namgya C. Khampa, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India Kathmandu, CEO NRA Sushil Gyawali, Mayor of Palungtar municipality in Gorkha, Deputy Mayor of Bidur municipality in Nuwakot as well as representatives of NDRRMA, several GoN agencies, UNDP and UNOPS, EU, USAID, World Bank, ADB, JICA, FNCDO as well as respective Nagarpalikas and Gaunpalikas.



During the event, Khampa announced that 50,000 private houses as committed by Government of India have been completed with Owner Driven Reconstruction Approach adopted by Government of Nepal. UNDP and UNOPS were engaged by Government of India in March 2018 to provide socio-technical facilitation and consultation (STFC) services to earthquake affected beneficiaries in 4 Urban Municipalities and 14 rural municipalities of Gorkha and Nuwakot districts. GoI committed USD 150 million as post-earthquake assistance package on housing sector to provide financial and technical support for reconstruction of 50,000 beneficiaries, including USD 100 million grants and USD 50 million under our Fourth Line of Credit.



NIBL Decides To Distribute 16 Percent Dividend

Nepal Investment Bank Limited (NIBL) has successfully held its 35th Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the fiscal year 2077-78 on 3rd December 2021 at its head office, Durbar Marg, Kathmandu.

The meeting was conducted through a virtual medium, on Zoom. The AGM highlighted the Bank's major achievements in the fiscal year 2077-78, future plans, performance targets and strategies. In the meeting chaired by the Bank chairman Prithvi Bahadur Pandé, the shareholders were informed of the Bank's decision to distribute 16.00 % in total dividend; 12.611 % bonus shares and 3.389 % cash dividend, on its total paid-up capital.

During the year, NIBL earned an operating profit of NPR 5.11 billion. The net profit of the Bank for FY 2077/78 stood at NPR 3.55 billion with the paid-up capital to reach NPR 18.30 billion (after Bonus Share of FY 2077/78). In the FY 2077/78, NIBL's deposits have increased to NPR 179 billion from the previous year's total NPR 168 billion. Similarly, the total lending has reached NPR 162 billion compared to NPR 140 billion from the previous year.

NIBL has been catering to its customers from 88 branches, 131 ATMs, 20 extension counters, 10 revenue collection counters and 58 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 "Best Bank 2021" from the international publication - Euromoney. Further, ICRA Nepal (International Credit Rating Agency- Nepal) has given the bank a credit rating of A.

UK Aid For New Humanitarian Staging Area In Birgunj

The Government of Nepal, the British Embassy, and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) have inaugurated a new Humanitarian Staging Area (HSA) in Birgunj, Province 2, as part of the continued effort in strengthening the country's emergency preparedness and response capacity. Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Tek Narayan Pandey, together with WFP Nepal Representative and Country Director, Robert Kasca, and spe-

cial representatives from the British Embassy attended the ceremony.

The humanitarian staging area in Birgunj, constructed targeting the country's major international land transit point, will help increase the capacity of emergency preparedness in a coordinated manner in this province and at local levels. "Given its role in procuring, storing and transporting the emergency materials coming from the land route to other disaster affected areas of the country, I am confident that it can make a significant contribution not only in Province 2 but also in other parts of the country," Home Secretary Tek Narayan Pandey said.

With a storage capacity of 2,032 square metric tons, the facility was constructed by WFP with UKaid contributions, in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs and Nepal Intermodal Transport Development Board. Already, there are 7 HSAs in other provinces, which have played an important role in the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and other emergencies.

WFP has been supporting the Government of Nepal since 2013 in building a national logistics network to strengthen emergency preparedness and response capacities for the country. The establishment of the HSA nationwide network follows the success of the UK-funded Kathmandu Humanitarian Staging Area at the Tribhuvan International Airport, which was completed one month before the devastating 2015 earthquake.



Need For Good Seeds For Rice Production!

JICA To support Strengthening of Seed Production, Supply and Quality Control System in Nepal through its Technical Cooperation Project

JICA signed Record of Discussions with the Government of Nepal for the technical cooperation project "Strengthening Seed Production, Supply and Quality Control System Project."

The implementation period of the project is 5 years (2022 March to 2027 March) and the Executing agency is Seed Quality Control Center (SQCC), Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MOALD), Nepal Agri-



cultural Research Council (NARC), and Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperatives (MoLMAC) of province No.1.

SEJON Honors Rajib Upadhyia For His Contribution



Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba honored Rajib Upadhyia and Dr. Achyut Wagle and for their contributions in establishing the Society of Economic Journalists, Nepal (SEJON) amid a function organized to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of SEJON.

PM Deuba also gave the SEJON Awards to Ramesh Kumar Neupane of Himal Khabar and Sunita Karki of Annapurna Post. On this occasion, Prime Minister Deuba unveiled SEJON's journal 'Artha Niti' which focuses on the second phase of economic reform.

"Happy Silver Jubilee SEJON (Society of Economic Journalists, Nepal)! Delighted that the small part I played during the formative years was recognized at an event where the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister was Chief Guest. 25 years on Nepal's economy and business climate still face formidable challenges. But SEJON continues to shine a bright spotlight on the risks and opportunities. Keep up the great work," writes Rajib on his Facebook wall.

NMB Bank Wins Bank Of The Year 2021

NMB Bank has added yet another prestigious award to its list of accolades with a win that is also a historical, first-of-its-kind event in Nepal. The Bank has been awarded "The Bank of The Year Asia 2021" by *The Banker* magazine, London UK.



NMB Bank has been adjudged the best bank in Asia beating out stiff competition from Asian giants such as China, India, Hongkong, South Korea and Japan.

The Chairman of the bank including its board of directors and the CEO accepted the award on behalf of all the banking fraternity from Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. Congratulating the bank for creating the history, the PM said that the bank has enhanced the prestige of the entire Nepali banking industry by being honored with the coveted award "The Bank of the Year Asia 2021".

Nepal, World Bank Launch Rural Enterprise Projects

The [Rural Enterprise and Economic Development](#) (REED) project was jointly launched by Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Development Mahindra Ray Yadav and World Bank Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka Faris Hadad-Zervos.

The project aims to boost Nepal's agriculture sector by strengthening rural market linkages and promoting entrepreneurship while creating jobs to support post-COVID-19 recovery. The project is financed with an \$80 million credit from the World Bank and is expected to leverage additional funding from producers, financial institutions and local governments in the next four years.

"In the context of Nepal's agriculture sector transformation and COVID-19, ensuring market linkages of produce of smallholder farmers, farmer groups, and co-operatives is critical to accelerate recovery of the sector and the economy from the pandemic's impacts," stated Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Development Mahindra Ray Yadav. "This project will help to increase the income of smallholder producers and farmers, promote agriculture entrepreneurship, and create jobs in rural Nepal."



The REED project will be implemented in selected municipalities in five economic corridors covering Provinces 1, 2, Bagmati, Gandaki, Lumbini and Sudurpashchim to foster sustainable linkages for rural entrepreneurs. The project is aligned with the government's Agriculture Development Strategy 2015-2035, and will work with provincial and local governments, intermediary organizations, and small and medium enterprises, especially those that are women-led to strengthen the agriculture sector and the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

The project will also help improve production through investments in municipal agriculture centers and value chain infrastructures to ensure the availability of inputs for farming as recovery actions from COVID-19. The project will use labor-intensive Cash for Work mechanism in infrastructure works and is expected to create short-term jobs for over 5,700 people including women to support economic recovery from COVID-19.

"The project supports Nepal's green, resilient, and inclusive development and provides an opportunity for the government and the private sector to work together to build the 'Nepal' brand in the agriculture sector," stated World Bank Country

Nepal Facing Headwinds



BY: DR. TILAK RAWAL

Untimely heavy rains that coincided with paddy harvesting period did extensive damage to the crop and also caused loss of lives and property and destruction of physical infrastructures. It is said that more than 325 thousand tons of paddy worth more than Rs. 8 billion have gone waste. It was indeed an unpleasant situation that confronted the newly- formed Deuba government, which had not inherited a healthy economy from the previous government. Prime Minister Deuba was quick in flying over the affected areas and announcing that compensation\relief will be provided to the affected, but, people are complaining that nothing meaningful has happened even weeks after the much publicized assurances by no less a person than the head of the government. Observers are undivided in their opinion that the damage caused could impact GDP of Nepal by 2 to 3 percent. It is being apprehended that the current dispensation, confronting problems in several areas, may not be able to arrest the continued deterioration in the economy and things could further worsen.

It may be wise to recollect what finance minister Sharma very deservedly, based on his good work of the past, had observed about speedy execution of the budget, which took weeks to replace the earlier ordinance budget. People saw no reason not to trust Sharma's positive words about budget execution. A retrospective look, however, shows a pathetic condition of capital expenditure. Little more than 5 percent of the money under this head (Rs.435.24billion) has been spent so far, which has disappointed well-wishers of Sharma who had claimed that in the first three months capital expenditure will be 10 percent and thereafter it will proceed at a rate of 10 percent per month. It may also be interesting to state that capital expenditure in the four months of the last fiscal year was more than Rs.29 billion, while in the corresponding period of this fiscal year it is less than Rs.20 billion. Available indicators abundantly manifest further weakening of our economy. Increasing imbalance between import and export, negative balance of payment (BOP), increasing current account deficit and declining foreign currency reserve and remittances could be cited as some examples. Trade balance and these indicators have continued to deteriorate, which is shown by a three

monthly comparison of these in the two fiscal years. Export in this period has gone up by more than 100 percent, but goods import has also increased by more than 63 percent as against a decline of more than 12 percent in the corresponding period of last fiscal year. Due to this increase, goods trade deficit has increased by 53 percent to hit more than Rs 413 billion. It had decreased by 15 percent during the period last fiscal year. Current account deficit during the period has crossed Rs.151 billion, which was in surplus by more than Rs.33 billion in the corresponding period of last fiscal year. Remittance has also declined by 7.06 percent and so is the decline (5.07 percent) suffered by foreign exchange reserve. It may also be noted that in the four months of this fiscal year, total trade deficit has reached Rs.568 billion, share of export in the total foreign trade being just 11.21 percent. Except in the area of revenue collection, which has ap-

The Unity General Convention of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party held in Kathmandu during first week of December, has elected Rajendra Lingden, a monarchist and a non-secularist, as its chairperson. He is likely to push with full force the much talked about two issues of giving space to monarchy in the system and declaring Nepal a Hindu state, which could be effected preferably through constitutional amendment. Even if put to referendum, the verdict will be in favour of the two, many independent observers feel. Prime Minister Deuba, currently working hard to get reelected as party president, may note that our nation is facing serious issues in a complicated environment and timely resolution of these issues could only save this country headed for a disastrous crash landing.

proximated 26 percent of the targeted sum, no other area looks positive to ease the growing discomfort of a seemingly worried finance minister. Non-tax revenue is said to have increased impressively, almost doubled in the four months. Net service income, which was in deficit last fiscal year, has further deteriorated to hit more than Rs. 23 billion in the initial months of this fiscal year. External sector, which has not been doing good since long, is likely to further deteriorate as import of basic necessity like rice is bound to increase as internal production of the staple has suffered a setback on account of untimely rain. Production of different items, mainly agricultural products to start with, has to be increased to meet domestic requirement and any surplus available could be exported to the vast Indian market. Enhancing production is, therefore, a must to correct the horrifying trade imbalance. In this context, the scribe is often tempted to cite the case of production and export of tea, which has gradually improved over time. Last fiscal year, tea worth Rs.3.69 billion was exported, mainly to India, while in the three months of this fiscal year, it has already crossed a billion. Annual export of tea has averaged Rs. 3.5 billion, while its import remains at about 3 percent of the exported total. Cross trade of a commodity should not be a worrying factor as long as we are

exporting much more than what we are importing. Instead of announcing time-bound self-sufficiency schemes covering different products and doing nothing substantial to actualize them, it would be wise to initiate implementable schemes to achieve self-sufficiency in products like meat, milk, fish, chicken, green vegetables, etc. Despite repeated claims over the years of different governments to achieve self-sufficiency in rice soon, looking at the growing import of it, about Rs. 35 billion each year, and lack of substantial programme to increase its production, Nepal is not likely to reach a stage of self-sufficiency in rice soon. On the contrary, a steady rise in the import of it is apprehended. Production of items like tea, cardamom, ginger, coffee, which command a market outside of Nepal, should be encouraged and efforts should be made to encourage their exports in processed form. Hope the setback suffered by cardamom export is temporary and government of Nepal succeeds in bilaterally resolving trade-related hurdles (both tariff and non-tariff) that surface occasionally between India and Nepal. The concerned may have by now realized that finding soybean oil and palm oil, the raw form of which is imported from outside, on top of the export list should not glorify us because they have not been contributing much to the economy and we have experienced setback in export of these items resulting from small changes in policy/regulation of importing countries. It is just a case of something is better than nothing at a time when this agricultural country is buying most agricultural products from outside.

It is disappointing that banks and financial institutions are experiencing acute liquidity crunch at a time when these bodies were expected to lend more, without violating the prescribed norms, to stir the economy. This crunch could be attributed to some extent to low level of capital expenditure by government and mainly to aggressive lending of these institutions, which created a sharp imbalance between lending and deposit collection, creating a situation for most commercial banks to exceed the CVD ratio of 90 percent. This newly created situation in the financial sector has contributed to strengthening the headwind that our ailing economy has been facing since long. No better is the situation in other organs of the state.

Judiciary is in an unprecedented mess with sitting justices of the apex court and Nepal Bar rebelling against Chief Justice Rana, accusing him of lobbying the prime minister to get his people appointed in the cabinet, delaying the hearing of cases filed against appointments in the constitutional bodies, corruption, etc. Even passing of new regulations that curtail chief justice's role in assigning cases to justices on an ad hoc basis is not likely to pacify the agitating lawyers. Despite resumption of hearing of all types of cases after formalization of the lottery-based cause list, dissident justices have said they will neither share any bench with Rana nor will they let him draw case lotteries. It is very difficult to say when this agitation that has continued for weeks will come to an end as NBA has repeatedly declined Rana's requests for a dialogue and political leaders have not delivered anything so far despite repeated urging by the lawyers for meaningful intervention.

Except in the area of revenue collection, which has approximated 26 percent of the targeted sum, no other area looks positive to ease the growing discomfort of a seemingly worried finance minister.

While talking about irregularities in the judiciary, more specifically in the SC, one should not forget that they existed since long and kept on continuing, despite occasional constitution of committees and their recommendations. Therefore, while Rana can be blamed for not initiating or delaying execution of reformative measures, it would be unwise to entirely blame him for the mess that this organ, once revered, is in today. Reforming judiciary is a must but the concerned will have to make sure that their agitation seeking ouster of Rana does not lead to further denting/damaging the image of the SC/judiciary currently facing serious allegations of anomalies and corruption. Hope Prime Minister Deuba, who has been approached by lawyers, in consultation with leaders of other parties who have also been approached by NBA officials, plays a meaningful role in finding a solution, preferably without seeming to have intervened. Inordinate delay could seriously complicate matters for the entire nation encountering obstructions/headwind of different kinds.

The newest challenge our government is confronted with has got to do with Omicron, the highly transmittable new variant of Covid-19, which was detected for the first time in South Africa and has quickly spread to dozens of countries including India and Nepal. Nepal does not seem to be fully prepared to deal with the challenges posed by this

new variant, which has already begun to negatively impact the recovery of world economy. Further, faced with rising fuel cost, soaring food prices and shortage of fertilizer during wheat sowing period, Nepal government seems to be grappling with indecision. Somewhat tired of changing versions/positions of political leaders of Nepal on the Millennium Challenge Corporation agreement involving grant money from the US government for infrastructure development,

the US authorities have given a final date of December 14 for its approval by Nepal government, which seems difficult. On the political front, matters are likely to get further complicated as K.P. Oli, reelected to the top job of CPN-UML by the party's recent general convention, has begun to see serious anomalies in all three organs of the state and is not likely to let the Parliament conduct its business smoothly, determined as he is to dissolve it and go for early polls. The Unity General Convention of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party held in Kathmandu during first week of December, has elected Rajendra Lingden, a monarchist and a non-secularist, as its chairperson. He is likely to push with full force the much talked about two issues of giving space to monarchy in the system and declaring Nepal a Hindu state, which could be effected preferably through constitutional amendment. Even if put to referendum, the verdict will be in favour of the two, many independent observers feel. Prime Minister Deuba, currently working hard to get reelected as party president, may note that our nation is facing serious issues in a complicated environment and timely resolution of these issues could only save this country headed for a disastrous crash landing.

Dr. Rawal is a Former Governor of NRB

Month of Conventions

As the CPN-UML convention voted KP Sharma Oli as chairman of the party, RPP chose young leader Rajendra Lingden as its new chairperson, defeating the old bulwark

By A CORRESPONDENT

CPN-UML has concluded its convention giving continuity to its leader KP Sharma Oli for the third time. However, Nepal's fifth largest traditional party RPP chose the younger

leadership.

CPN-UML cadres' hope with former PM Oli is understandable as there are no other leaders in the party to have a greater appeal among the voters to match leader Oli. Since the party is just recently split with another leader Madhav Kumar Nepal leading the breakaway party, Oli's leadership was a pre-requisite for UML cadres,



generation leader Rajendra Lingden as is new chairman, who defeated old bulwark Kamal Thapa.

Although Nepali Congress and Maoist Center are also holding their general conventions this month, any change in the leadership of these two parties is unlikely.

Despite efforts of his rivals to weaken him, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is in a comfortable position in the general convention. Even if all its detractors join, Deuba's rival does not have his mass appeal. Similarly, Maoist Center leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal has no challenger either right now to dislodge him.

Two major political parties which have completed their general conventions have shown two different trends. During the CPN-UML convention several efforts were made to dislodge the current leadership. However, party workers gave overwhelming support to KP Sharma Oli rejecting the call of Bhim Rawal for the replacement of

Although Bhim Rawal has a strong personality and capacity to lead the party, what he lacks is mass appeal and credibility among the leadership. This is the reason party's cadres backed Oli to lead the party.

Actively involved in the party for over five decades, Oli needs no introduction in the mass as well. His language skill and speech in tune with the rural people is his asset. In the last two decades, Oli has played a crucial role to bring CPN-UML in back in track twice in the past. Split virtually in 1996 on the issue of Mahakali Integrated Treaty, CPN-UML returned to the politics in the elections of 1999 with second position.

During the elections of Constituent Assembly in 2008, CPN-UML was virtually wiped out, winning only 34 seats in 330 constituencies. However, UML revived again under Oli's leadership.

Oli, a shrewd political player, was able to bring back formidable position in the 2018 national elections giving

shock to Nepali Congress. Following the split with Maoist Center and within, CPN-UML is once again facing a critical time for its future and Oli is in the leadership.

As the elections for local, provincial and national levels are just around in a year, CPN-UML's followers have a very little option to choose other leaders to replace fire brand Oli.

"I will take rest only after strengthening our party base. If we stand together, CPN-UML will come back to power with majority," said Oli taking oath as a party president. "Holding convention successfully and in a democratic manner, we have proved that CPN-UML is a democratic party."

However, Oli's critics see the recent convention differently. They hold the view that CPN-UML chair Oli manipulated the elections allowing only those who favor him.

"Although party leadership has made every effort to bar us from contesting the elections, we were able to force the party to follow the internal democratic process," said Ghanshyam Bhusal, who lost the elections in the party.

As his nature, Oli successfully incorporated his like men in various positions even accommodating new comers from Maoist party in comfortable and respectable positions.

He backs his critics like Yোগेश Bhattarai, Gokarna Bista and Astalaxmi Shakya and other leaders. However, he sidelined those who tried to challenge his leadership even returning to party.

Whether one likes it or not, Oli has proven himself as the unchallenged leader in the party. Given the current situation, only his single leadership can give a fresh energy to revive the party.

Lingden In Leadership

By defeating his guru Kamal Thapa with a big margin, Rajender Lingden has emerged as a new leader of RPP

By A CORRESPONENT

As senior leaders continue to dominate the country's two major parties, including Nepali Congress and CPN-UML, Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), the fifth largest



party in the parliament chose a new leaders defeating the erstwhile old leader Kamal Thapa.

Member of parliament and young leader Rajendra Lingden was elected president of Rastriya Prajatantra Party. Lingden defeated his nearest rival and president Kamal Thapa by the margin of 200 votes. Lingden secured 1817 votes and his nearest contender Thapa secured 1617 votes.

Accepting defeat, RPP leader Kamal Thapa squarely blamed former King Gyanendra for the election results. In his tweet Thapa, in a point-blank manner, put a blame on former King Gyanendra.

Others see Thapa's defeat is natural given his opportunistic behavior and promotion of nepotism in the party. Instead of expressing any objections, he directed his party to vote in favor of the new constitution.

Elected in the Constituent Assembly on the stand of constitutional monarchy and Hindu state, Thapa later joined the government led by KP Sharma Oli and toured around the world defending the constitution. Discarding many die-hard party workers, he nominated his brother Ganesh Thapa, who

was reportedly involved in the financial scandal of FIFA, as a member of parliament.

Looking at all his performance, many of his detractors were waiting for opportune time to unseat him. This time they found the right candidate and right place to defeat him. Backed by Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani and others such by mayor of Nepalgunj sub-metro city Dhabal Sumsher Rana, who won the elections of General Secretary of the party defeating his nearest rival Bhaskar Bhadra, Lingden made his victory possible.

Although Thapa has lost the elections, he can still have a major influence in the party. Thapa has lost the elections but all other elected office bearers are from Thapa's panel.

Buddhiman Tamang, Dhruva Bahadur Pradhan and Roshan Karki



were elected vice chairmen. Similarly, Kunti Shah and Bhuwan Pathak were elected general secretary.

Newly elected office bearers of Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), who won election in the RPP Unity Convention recently, have taken the oath of the office amid a function. Coordinator of the party central election committee Hari Bahadur Basnet administered the oath to the elected party office bearers

including its chairperson Rajendra Prasad Lingden.

Similarly, vice-chairpersons Buddhi Man Tamang, Bikram Pandey, Dhurba Bahadur Pradhan, Roshan Karki, General Secretary Dhawal Shumsher Rana, Bhuban Pathak and Kunti Kumari Shahi were sworn in. A 149-member party central committee was elected from the election.

Although provisions had been made for the 199-member working committee, the election was held for 149 posts. The remaining 50 central committee members would now be nominated.

The new working committee will also nominate other office-bearers including four vice-presidents, three general secretaries, one treasurer, one joint treasurer and seven joint general secretaries.

The newly-elected RPP president Lingden said development and prosperity could not be achieved as adequate employment was not created in the country mainly due to the 'unsuccessful generation' of leaders leading the nation after the 1990 political change, stressing on handing over the leadership

to the new generation in all parties and in contemporary politics.

He asserted that the RPP under his leadership would promote the agendas of Hindu nation, constitutional monarchy and others by running a campaign throughout the country. The new RPP president also vowed to end the 'factions' in the party by running the party as per the due process and procedure.

Rethinking Water Cooperation



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

South Asia has been a graveyard of transboundary river collaboration efforts, whether they be the Harvard population studies center-led “Ganges Water Machine” effort in the 1960s or the Ford Foundations “Gift of the Greater Ganga” in the 1980s/90s or the eventually World Bank-hijacked Abu Dhabi Dialogue early this century. Why did they fail? Why did Indira Gandhi panic and shut down the Harvard Kosi program? Why did Ford give up and now takes little or no interest in water? Why is the World Bank’s SAWI struggling towards a sputtering end after Nepal government formally rejected its flagship strategic basin plan?

A major soul-searching is definitely required as is the manner in which collaborative efforts take place when it comes to finding solutions to our water problems. Getting together for polite talk shops to repeat platitudes won’t lead anywhere: dialogue has to be between contending views with the capacity to listen and respond constructively both conceptually and in practical terms. A modest beginning towards this end was begun last week in New Delhi by Council for Strategic and Defense Research (CSDR) and the Hans Seidel Stiftung to rethink transboundary collaboration via new regionalism in the Age of Climate Change.

While it is too much to expect a two-day meeting to “solve” long-endemic wicked problems of water tied with geopolitics and climate change, there were some unconventional questions asked, which, if pursued, would provide new and “uncomfortable” knowledge leading to “clumsy solutions”. If climate change is such an existential problem for humanity, why is it confined to just the UNFCCC’s IPCC and a week of COP in a year? Why isn’t there greater societal involvement? While climate change was created by the energy sector, its impact is felt by society through the water sector: why has the water sector been so slow to come up with their solutions to this challenge? When cooperation is confined to state-level bureaucratic mechanisms, it takes four to six weeks for flood data from upstream country to be transmitted by downstream country’s capital to the flood-affected villages: why, in this age of mobiles and internet, cannot things be speeded up? Should we still be harping on “data sharing” or should we

now move to “data democratization” and demystifying water science?

Why is South Asia’s biggest country India still talking carbon reduction when smaller neighbours have moved to pushing for loss and damage compensation? With SAARC near dead and its many useful chartered institutions comatose, with Mahakali Treaty practically dead these 25 years, with its contemporary Ganga (Farakka) Treaty coming up for negotiating auction in a couple of years, where is the forum where such regional issues can be confidently discussed? Given the centrality of water to the new climate concerns, why are South Asian laws and their universities’ water curriculum still largely colonial? Why is sedimentation in Himalayan rivers – and the mincemeat they have made of modern dam, barrage and embankment technologies – not properly addressed for their contribution to new flooding and waterlogging?

In what was called the Patna Initiative in the Himalaya-Ganga of 1992/93, dozens of research questions such as these and many more were asked that are still valid but have not been sufficiently pursued by construction-focused hydrocracies of South Asia. There is a need to decolonize and indigenize our views and perceptions of water in all South Asian countries with renewed focus on traditional technologies that are commensurate with our semi-arid hydro-ecology. In Nepal and its dealings with downstream India, right from pre-Panchayat days down to today’s Loktantra, Himalayan waters have been conceptualized only through the hydropower lens when the real issue is water storage and multiple benefits that accrue from it, which is where reconceptualization should start from.

Common to all of South Asia is its semi-arid hydro-ecology: it consists of four monsoon months comprising of over 80% of its total annual precipitation (of which some 50% falls in only 50 hours) and eight months of drought broken in the north by winter westerlies and in the south by the north-east trade winds. This is very different from north-west Europe from where most of our water management tools and technologies are imported and where (as in Britain) three weeks without precipitation is

considered a drought! All rivers and all life – human to wildlife, forests and grasslands – survive on the monsoon precipitation stored in soil moisture (called Green water) and in groundwater (i.e. Brown water). Despite snow and ice in the High Himalaya, glacial and snow melt contribute no more than nine to 12 percent of the flow of the Ganga and the Brahmaputra, the bulk of the almost 90 percent coming from groundwater backflow.

This basic hydro-ecological fact forces us to rethink our water management strategies, especially our transboundary engagements. No longer should Blue waters (surface water in rivers), important though they are, hegemonize the discourse to the exclusion of White (atmospheric

moisture that flows across all boundaries and are now also known as sky rivers) as well as Grey (organically polluted and used water unlike Black or heavily polluted industrial wastewaters) waters in addition to Green and Brown waters. Cooperation on Blue river waters has been at an impasse, primarily because river water allocation is inherently a win-lose proposition requiring moving beyond volumetric sharing to many different trade-offs across sectors to make it a win-win one.

Moreover, transboundary discourse on river waters has been confined to large rivers such as the Ganga, Kosi or the Brahmaputra and has practically forgotten what we call “marginalized rivers”. Between India and Bangladesh there are some 54 such rivers other than the big three that have not seen much attention. Between Nepal and India there are hundreds besides the big Kosi, Gandak, Karnali and Mahakali whose collective contribution to both flood damages and agriculture well-being are at par with, if not more than those of big rivers. But they have seen little policy attention and even less attempts at better management.

White waters, however much they might have been ignored in the past, can now no longer be so: not only are they the main source of all other waters but, with massive variability in both time and space with climate change, no longer as predictable as they were in the past. That is where regional cooperation is imperative and urgent: without better understanding of White waters, uncer-

tainties in the availability of Blue and Brown waters cannot be reduced.

The main reason we need to pluralize the perception of water into these six types is because tomorrow’s environmental and economic policy battleground is going to be the footprint of embedded water and energy in our products – from food to industrial products. Not only efficiency (less of water and energy used in their production) but also the type of water so embedded is going to be important.

Meat from free grazing livestock is going to be mostly Green water; but that from factory-grown animals Blue or pumped Brown water with higher investment and energy costs. Dryland cereal crop such as millet and maize are mostly constituted of Green water with low environmental footprint while sugarcane and irrigated crops will have much higher

Blue or Brown waters. These differences will mean much while implementing carbon and other taxes to ameliorate climate concerns.

These interlinkages of water, energy and food are also best addressed through the new nexus approach. Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) was and continues to be an interesting holistic approach. However, it is only water focused. Water-Energy-Food Nexus approach goes wider and accepts that these three sectors are intertwined with stress in one reverberating through to other sectors as well. Recent research have also shown that sub-sectors including health, cities, climate and other interstices too provide much fruitful opportunities for innovative problem solving. This includes the area of transboundary waters where the nexus approach clarifies a wider swathe of areas and options where tradeoffs can occur.

Such a widening of the spectrum allows much more fruitful research and dialogue among partners, not just governments but also business communities as well as academic and activist groups. All these three management styles of state, market and civic bodies have very different definitions of “what the problems is” and they differ even more on what acceptable solutions might be like. It is only by bringing together all of them on the same policy table, giving them not only voice but also responding to them constructively even if critically that a new reimagining of water in South Asia can occur.



Confusion And Contradiction

Establishing diplomatic ties with Israel, Nepal took a daring step. However, its policy towards Israel in UN voting is contradictory and inconsistent

By KESHAB POUDEL

Establishing diplomatic relations with the state of Israel in 1960, NC leader BP Koirala took a daring step. His argument was that every small state like Israel has right to exist as an independent nation.

However, no political leader, including those from BP's own party, has ever backed the fundamental ethos of BP Koirala's decision to establish diplomatic relations and recognizing state of Israel.

His party was in power several times in the last 60 years, with governments led by those including his own brother GP Koirala, but no one dared to back BP Koirala's stand in United Nations voting.

Nepal has been blankly voting on the resolution against Israel. Whether the issue of terrorists Hamas or anything else, Nepal seems to have a policy to discard rights of state of Israel.

Although there are three options in voting in UN including absent, abstentions and against, Nepal has been siding on almost all resolutions against Israel. Although Nepali Congress leader Dr. Narayan Khadka is now foreign minister and Sher Bahadur Deuba is prime minister, Nepal voted in a resolution which excludes the rights of Jews in a religious site.

Even though Nepal's neighbor India did not support the resolution, Nepal backed the resolution taking sides of Muslims. 64 Nations including India did not support a UN Resolution to ignore Jews ties to Temple Mount, call it solely a Muslims. However Nepal supported the resolution giving up Nepal's longstanding diplomatic relations with Israel.

Just forget about other countries including Muslims around the world. Nepal, which claims as one of the most inclusive and multi-cultural and multi-religious country, also stood with 129 nations endorsing the resolution which excluded and declined the rights of Jews people and Israel state on common religious shrine.

The UN General Assembly ap-

proved a resolution 129-11 that disavowed Jewish ties to the Temple Mount and called it solely by its Muslim name of al-Haram al-Sharif.

The text, referred to as the "Jerusalem resolution," is part of a push by the Palestinian Authority and the Arab states across the UN system to rebrand Judaism's most holy site and as an exclusively Islamic one.

The United States, which opposed the text, said that the omission of inclusive terminology for the site sacred to



three faiths was of "real and serious concern."

"It is morally, historically and politically wrong for members of this body to support language that denies" both the Jewish and Christian connections to the Temple Mount and al-Haram al-Sharif.

The US has not been the only country to voice concern over the lack of inclusive language. In an attempt to ensure support for the resolution, its authors had made some small amendments since the UNGA last approved the resolution in 2018 by 148-11. That text referenced al-Haram al-Sharif twice, one in the action portion of the resolution and once in the introduction.

This time, the phrase al-Haram al-Sharif was mentioned only once in the introduction. Despite this shift, support for the resolution dropped, with the number of countries that abstained growing from 14 to 31.

Three years ago, all the Europe-

an countries supported the text, this year a number of them changed their votes.

Hungary and the Czech Republic opposed the resolution, while Albania, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

A British envoy said the "the resolution adopted today refers to the holy sites in Jerusalem in purely Islamic terms without recognizing the Jewish terminology of Temple Mount.

"The UK has made clear for many years that we disagree with this approach and while we welcome the removal of the majority of these references, we are disappointed that we were unable to find a solution to the final reference.

"The UK has therefore moved our vote today from a 'yes' to an 'abstention.' If the unbalanced reference had been removed, the UK would have been ready and willing to vote 'yes,'" the British envoy said.

"This should not be misunderstood as a reflection of a change in UK policy toward Jerusalem. Instead, it is an important signal of our commitment to recognizing the history of Jerusalem to the three monotheistic religions," he said.

Despite other options including absent and abstention, voting in favor of resolution, Nepal has, in principal, supported exclusive policy ignoring the rights of other community and religion.

Interestingly, Nepal voted in a proposal ignoring the existence of Jews at a time when the government is led by Nepali Congress Party whose leader B.P. Koirala established the diplomatic relations with Israel. Given the new changing scenario when Gulf countries and Arabic countries have been changing their policy, is not it a time to review our foreign policy on Middle East making it realistic?

Indian Ocean: “Ecology, Economy, Epidemic”



Let me begin by extending our warm congratulations to the Government and friendly people of UAE on the Golden Jubilee celebration of their independence and wish for continued peace, progress and prosperity of this friendly nation.

As we grapple with the challenges of COVID-19, climate change and economic disruptions, I cannot over-emphasize the theme: “Indian Ocean: Ecology, Economy, Epidemic”, which is equally relevant for coastal as well as landlocked countries. Gravity of these challenges demands our collective actions more urgently than ever.

We all have been talking about interconnectedness. The problems today, transcending our borders, have accentuated the rationale of the dictum that we live in one world.

Take for example the question of ecology. Though miles away, the existence of oceans and mountains is inseparably linked. The ecosystems depend on each other.

The Indian Ocean for long has been a source of nourishment and remained at the centre of hydrological cycles. The weather pattern in this ocean has direct bearing on the mountains, stretching across the Hindu-Kush Himalayas.

The Himalayas instead feed the perennial rivers, serve as a heat sink in summer and sustain the civilizations downstream.

The looming climate crisis has not spared either of them. The sea levels rise and ocean water gets more acidic on the one hand; and on the other, the high mountains are losing their snow covers.

This is jeopardizing the lives and livelihoods of many. Marine as well as terrestrial biodiversity is fast deteriorating. Climate induced disasters have engulfed coastal states and small islands as well as the mountains.

This intrinsic linkage should be well considered while pursuing the goal for healthy oceans – as embodied by UN SDG 14.

For any meaningful agenda on the ocean must, therefore, take on board the land-locked countries and mountainous ones.

With its vast spread, the Indian Ocean is rich in resources. It provides important sea lanes that serve as arteries of international economy. Routes for more than three fourth of the world’s sea-borne oil, and one third of the global trade, the Indian Ocean’s significance is doubly attested – in economic dimension as well as in its strategic value.

Even for landlocked country like Nepal, the Indian Ocean is a lifeline for majority of its external trade. Peace and stability in the Indian Ocean are, therefore, important for all of us.

Issues such as piracy, marine terrorism, drugs trafficking and interruption in freedom of navigation can erode economic vitality. Addressing these challenges should be an important pillar of the agenda to properly harness the potentials of the ‘blue economy’.

An enlightened approach for economic cooperation in the region can enhance intra-regional trade and investments. Such a move

will have multiplier effects and make this region a substantial powerhouse of the world economy.

Landlocked developing countries are in need of international and regional support to enhance their capacity for reaping the benefits of the ocean, including in the utilization of the marine resources under the high seas. Realizing the already made commitments in an effective manner is crucial for enabling them in this regard.

Epidemics trigger a heavy toll not just on the economy but also on our lives as a whole. In the interconnected world, epidemics are seldom local in nature and can quickly spiral into a global pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has come as an epochal phenomenon. It has revealed that we may be facing the same tempest, but the countries are in different rafts. Some are better equipped to fend off the crisis, while the poorer ones struggle to remain afloat.

With lives lost and livelihoods disrupted, the pandemic has further entrenched poverty, strained public health systems, and exacerbated inequality. Fallouts have been felt in international trade and tourism, the lifelines of many countries in the region. Besides, we are entering the third year of the pandemic with new variants of concern circulating from nowhere.

With therapeutics innovation and capacity to produce vaccine, the Indian Ocean region has the potentials to help save lives in the region and beyond. Impressive advancement of India and the UAE as pharmaceutical and technological hubs has hugely contributed to this end.

A more robust cooperation in vaccination will be a significant deliverable, proving the real prospect of our collective endeavour.

Also, sharing of technical knowhow and capacity enhancement in healthcare should be at the forefront of regional cooperation in the context of the pandemic.

Nepal attaches great importance to the Indian ocean: its security, sustainability and economic potentials. Linking our highlands with the Indian Ocean with seamless ‘hardware’ and ‘software’ of connectivity is our priority and these include roads, railways, waterways and power grid interconnection.

Nepal is committed to increasing the share of clean energy and achieving net-zero carbon emission by 2045, contributing to the region’s ecology. Nepal has vast potentials in generating hydroelectricity to drive economic growth not only in the country but also in South Asia. Nepal stands ready to work with all countries in the Indian Ocean region to address the challenges pertaining to ecology, economy and epidemic.

Paudyal is a foreign secretary of Nepal. Excerpts of statement delivered as the Head of Nepali Delegation to the Fifth Indian Ocean Conference – IOC 2021. Abu Dhabi, UAE, 5 December 2021





MD GHISING

Rushing On A Mission

Since his appointment as the Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority in August, Kul Man Ghising has been taking a nationwide tour to take stock of the project activities. In his mission to supply uninterrupted electricity to consumers, Ghising has been focusing his attention to complete the construction of on-going transmission line and hydropower projects

By A CORRESPONDENT

It was mid-day on November 27, Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority Kul Man Ghising reached the Haku of Amachhodin Rural Municipality ward 1 to discuss the issues of local people and end their obstruction created in the construction of Chilime-Trishuli 3 B hub 220 kV transmission line..

As soon as he got out from the vehicle, along with his senior colleagues, MD Ghising found himself surrounded by dozens of local youths demanding a bar on outsiders in the construction work of transmission line. Chanting slogans against NEA

and contractors, insisting to obstruct the construction work till NEA issued a written commitment to bar workers from outside; the youth were in the confrontational mood.

With skills and courage to woo the locals, MD Ghising quietly listened to their slogans, walking to a side of the road to take part in the interactions. As the transmission line project is highly important to evacuate electricity generated in the region, prolonged obstruction created by the local youth could be financially disastrous.

Knowing the cost of prolonged obstruction in erecting the tow-

ers, MD Ghising approached the angry youth with a voice of compromise and conciliation.

Addressing the meeting attended by Chairman of VDC Buchung Tamang, ward chair Nima Dindu Tamang and other community members, MD Ghising explained how financially damaging for the local community of Rasuwa it is going to be in case of delay in the construction work. He said that local community will also have to bear the financial loss from delay in the projects.

MD Ghising proposed local youths as an alternative arrangement

and urged to end the obstruction created for the construction of 12 towers in the areas. With his statement, the angry youth had softened their stand and agreed on his compromise formula.

After visiting hilly areas, MD Ghising immediately landed at Parawanipur industrial corridor and discussed with industrialists regarding increase in the power consumption. Ghising directed concerned authorities to improve the transmission line, including 33 kV transmission line, to maintain the constant supply of electricity.

This is neither the first incident nor the last. MD Ghising has never shown any hesitance to interact with groups, individuals and community to end the obstruction in the transmission line and hydropower project. He has already settled the local obstruction in half a dozen places following direct interaction with the people.

Last month, he pursued lo-

cals in Udayapur to lift the obstruction created in the constructions of two towers of 132 kV Solu-corridor. He also visited Hetauda, Naglebhari, Nawalpur, Palpa and other parts of Nepal to convince local community to lift the obstruction in the transmission line construction.

In his earlier, four-year, tenure as MD and current second tenure, MD Ghising has been always sacrificing his personal safety issue while taking initiative to end the deadlock and obstructions created by the people.

From increased consumption of electricity to supply of uninterrupted quality electricity, MD Ghising has several challenges before him. For this he has been taking multiple approaches.

NEA has been facing several obstructions in the construction of transmission lines. Apart from community, transmission line projects have often faced obstruction from the

Ministry of Forest and Department of Roads.

Started in 2019, 220 kV Chilime Trishuli Transmission line project has just completed 60 percent of the work. Currently, the work is taking pace expecting to complete the transmission line by July 2022. Under this project, 220-132-33 kV substations, 220 kV Chilime Trishuli double circuit transmission line is under construction. The civil works of two substations is in final stage and over 60 percent of equipment including power transfer and GIS has already reached in the site.

Out of 79 towers, the contractor has already completed the basement with partial completion of 17 towers. Six towers have already been erected. Under this project, 19 kilometer parts of Chilime Mailung consist of double circuit and 8 KM Mailung Trishuli 3 B hub with four circuits.

Situated in geographically





remote and very difficult terrain, the project has not made progress due to weak working performance of contractor and consultant, COVID-19, local level obstruction, dealing in foreign clearance. The project is constructed under the financial support of Nepal Government, Nepal Electricity Authority and concessional loan from German Development Bank KfW and German Investment Bank.

After site visit and interactions with local community, the MD Ghising-led team also discussed the issue with Chinese contractor and Indian Consultant company. Directing the contractor, MD Ghising said that the project is highly important for NEA to evacuate the electricity urging the contractor not to delay work. He requested the contractor to complete the project as per their commitment.

He has made it clear that NEA will take all efforts to address the issue of local obstructions and shortage of running capital. This transmission line will evacuate the electricity of 111 MW Rasuwagadhi, 42.5 MW Sanjen and 14.5 upper Sanjen Project. The MD-led team visited the project after the possibility of wasting energy generated by those projects due to delay in the construction.

During his inspection visit to

transmission line project, MD Ghising also visited Sanjen, Upper Sanjen and Rasuwagadhi directing the concerned authorities to expedite the construction works and complete the project at the earliest.

Under the lead of NEA and Chilime Hydropower Company, 42.5 MW Sanjen, 14.8 MW Upper Sanjen and 111 MW Rasuwagadhi projects are now undergoing construction.

Built through People's Hydropower Programs with the investment of common people, the construc-

tion of the projects is getting late. The progress of the project has been badly hampered by earthquake, obstruction in the Indian Border, geographical conditions, and complication in the implementation of contract, floods and COVID-19.

During the visit, MD Ghising has directed the concerned parties to complete the project in the time without any excuse. The financial closure of these three projects was made during Ghising's tenure as a head of Chilime Hydropower Company.

Although the civil works including tunnel and dam of all these projects have already completed, the delaying in the installation of the electro-mechanical equipment has delayed the completion.

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, Chinese technicians left the country. However, they returned now in the project sites and are installing the equipment. With MD Ghising giving high priority to the project, it is likely to complete by early next year.

MD Ghising's site inspection and visit of project site with high level officials of NEA will help to accelerate the projects. MD Ghising knows that his mission of quality and uninterrupted supply of the electricity is possible only by completion of the hydropower projects and transmission lines.



Making Progress

Almost two years behind schedule due to disruptions caused by issues in the selection of contractor, Tanahu Hydro Power Project is making progress now

By A CORRESPONENT

Despite having a huge surplus of electricity during the rainy season, Nepal does face huge deficiency of electricity supply during the winter. As almost all hydropower projects constructed during the last decade are based on run-off-the river type, the disparity in the pattern of production is natural.

Although the size is not much big, the completion of 144 MW Tanahu Hydropower Project, which is the first semi-storage type project, will give some relief.

Knowing the importance of the project in Nepal's electricity sector, Minister of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Pampha Bhusal recently paid an inspection visit to Tanahu Hydropower Project Site.

Delayed for almost two years due to terminations of contractor of lot 1 and selection of new one and COVID-19, the timely construction of project now will have significant impacts in load management.

During her visit, Minister of Energy, Water Resource and Irrigation Bhusal directed project officials to complete the construction of Tanahu Hydro-power Project in scheduled time without making any further delay.

Addressing the officials following the site visit, energy minister Bhusal said that the project is highly important for the country to end the import of electricity.

Minister Bhusal visited the dam sites and the ongoing construction work including underground power house, Tailrace Tunnel and other infrastructures.

Giving direction to the officials and workers, Minister Bhusal said that early completion can help to ease load shedding during the winter as this is the second storage project after Kulekhani.

Although he took the charge as managing director just a few months back, Kiran Kumar Shrestha has been visiting the site from time to time to accelerate the construction work.

During the visit of minister Bhusal, Managing Director Shrestha briefed her about the physical and financial progress of the project.

Currently Song Da Corporation, Vietnam-Kalika Construction (P) Ltd, Nepal (JV), awarded the construction of package one of Headwork of Tanahu Hydro-power Project, has started the construc-

re-bidding, being substantially non-responsive to the requirements of bidding documents.

After the re-invitation of Re-bid II on 28 February 2020 and the opening of bids on 06 July 2020, the evaluation of technical bids is underway with the support from the Project Supervision Consultant (PSC).

With his experience of working in a number of hydropower projects, the current MD Shrestha will likely to push the contractor to make the progress as directed by minister Bhusal.

The Tanahu Hydropower Project, one of the biggest reservoir-type projects in the country, is projected to generate massive 587.7-gigawatt-hours in the first 10 years of operation. The project can generate energy for six hours daily during the dry season.

As per the Project Administration Manual (PAM), the total financial cost of the project was estimated to be 505 MUSD as of January 2013 for which

the funding arrangements have been made after signing the respective loan agreements with ADB, JICA and EIB. THL has also concluded the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with NEA on 29 June 2018 as a maiden PPA for storage type hydropower projects.

THL and KEC International Limited, India signed the Contract Agreement for Package 3 (220 kV Transmission Line) on 25 December 2018. The Contractor completed the detail and check survey along the TL alignment and the geological investigation at the tower locations.

The project aims to complete the construction of the storage type project and generate electricity by June 2024. New MD Shrestha can make it possible given his experiences.



tion work including the diversion of river.

Under the second package, Chinese contractor Syno Hydro has made good progress in the construction of tunnel, power house and supply of hydro-mechanical and electro-mechanical. Due to hard efforts of outgoing MD Pradeep Kumar Thike, the contractor of second package has made a good progress ahead of schedule.

The project was at the right time one time. However, following scrapping the contract with CMC di Ravenna, Italy in April 2019, the project had to start the contract bidding process from scratch.

The procurement of Package 1(Head works) has been significantly delayed due to unavoidable termination of the Contract with CMC di Ravenna, Italy and the rejection of all bids received for the

MCC Agreement In Nepal's Interest, Don't Run After Rumor

SENIOR ADVOCATE PROFESSOR DR. GANDHI PANDIT highlights why Nepal needs to ratify the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) agreement.



About MCC

I would like to start from here. In September 2017, the U.S. Government's Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) signed a \$500 million compact with the Government of Nepal. The compact aims to maintain road quality, increase the availability and reliability of electricity transmission, and facilitate cross-border electricity trade between Nepal and India—helping to spur investments, accelerate economic growth, and reduce poverty.

As a Nepali citizen, I have been closely and enthusiastically watching the issue of receiving the MCC grant from the USA. First of all, the MCC is an agreement under which the United States of America provides grant assistance in the amount of US\$ 500 million to Nepal. This is a complete grant given to Nepalese people. Unlike loan agreements that the Government of Nepal had signed with other bilateral agencies, there are few terms and conditions that are incorporated in this agreement. We need to refund neither the grant amount received nor interest on it. Under the MCC, the government of the United States has been providing a grant to the least developed and developing countries around the world to build infrastructure projects like road and electricity. By providing grants in this sector, the MCC aims to support the poverty alleviation programs of countries like Nepal many of which have

been implementing MCC.

On Nepal's Request

Nepal government had submitted a proposal in 2008 to the US government claiming to qualify for the MCC grant. After evaluating Nepal's claim, the US government agreed to provide \$ 500 million in grants for improving electric transmission lines and for enhancing road sector connectivity around the country. This grant under the MCC agreement was granted to Nepal at the sole request of Nepal and it is not a decision imposed by the US.

MCC will support the expansion of 400 kV high-voltage transmission lines and road networks in Nepal. The transmission line proposed by the MCC will help to increase the internal consumption and export of electricity to the third country. Had Nepal ratified the MCC and started the construction on time, the project

would have completed now and would help us to export to India the excess electricity that we would produce domestically. However, the succeeding governments in the past did not take the serious initiative to receive these grants and ratify from the parliament, rather they seemed to be giving more space to confusion and contradictions. Looking at present debate, the government has failed to disseminate the right and correct information to the people regarding the benefits Nepal may be able to receive from this grant.

On Distortion

A section of individuals and political parties have been knowingly and unknowingly disseminating distorted facts and opinions against the MCC's \$ 500 million grant stating that the treaty has provision for military component and the terms that degrade the national sovereignty and constitution of Nepal. It is unfortunate that even highly academic individuals have been disseminating misguided information about the MCC. However, there is no such provision or statement, or reference in the treaty. The treaty is transparent and open to read. As a lawyer, I have not found any clauses which have anything to do with current rumors and discourse. All false and wrong

information is disseminated to the people. The agreement is open to all. However, false and distortion of terms and conditions of the treaty are currently being spread in the market.

As a student of international and commercial law, there is no such provision in the treaty which limits Nepal's sovereignty or force Nepal to join military alliance, or any such issue. In fact, if we read the whole agreement, we find that status of the USA giving grants and the status of Nepal receiving the grant is equal. The provision of the treaty fully and irrevocably recognized the sovereignty, integrity and independence of Nepal.

People Should Know

Instead of taking a stand on, for and against, people should know what is written in the agreement. I have been making several efforts through media about the provision of the agreement. Before taking any decision, people should know what is written in the agreement. In fact, the people of Nepal are given only, distorted and wrong information. If people reject the agreement after knowing actual facts, everyone needs to accept that. However, they are on the dark side.

As this is an international agreement signed between the two sovereign nations on an equal footing, the agreement follows certain universal norms and criteria. When two countries, be they Nepal-US, Africa-China or Russia-India, agree on such agreements, there is the need to incorporate certain universal clauses as per international standards. For instance, there are certain provisions including giving tax rebates, guarantees for security, law-related matters for foreign experts coming to work for the project. Whether you sign an agreement with bilateral agencies or multi-lateral agencies, all the agreements consist of certain similar clauses. That does not mean that the concerned parties want to violate Nepal's law. The lender wants legal protection regarding the project and its implementation as per the terms.

As per the agreement, international law will be applicable in case disputes arise between the two countries regarding the projects. Since Nepal does not want to im-

plement the agreement accepting the US law nor does the US want to provide grant money to use for other purposes than stipulated in the agreement, both the parties agree that international law be applicable in case of a dispute under the agreement.

On Agreement Clauses

Nepal has signed many hydropower development-related and other infrastructure development agreements with China, India and other companies in Nepal, in which we agreed to accept the laws of Singapore, Switzerland and Britain to settle the dispute on arbitration. In every agreement, we write that the issues of arbitration deal under the law of foreign countries, not Nepal. If you

want a foreign grant or loan for development, you need to accept certain terms and conditions. For their investment guarantee, we have to accept conditions for the dispute resolution mechanism. If we do not abide by this, no investor could come to Nepal for investment. When someone is investing a huge amount of money, the receiving countries need



to provide security and confidence to granting countries for their protection and proper use of their grant and investment. To every country whether China, India, or the US, Nepal must give this kind of guarantee to facilitate investment. This is a well-accepted international practice and tradition. For the layman, it looks somehow strange. Thus, the MCC agreement is based on international spirit and practice. What is circulated in media is, in some way, distorted and false.

If you read the agreement literally, there are no such provisions or clauses to limit Nepal's law and sovereignty by implementing American laws. You may like this or I may not like this, what I am saying is the written document where the words are in black and white. What I am trying is to show people what is written in the document. If people decide to reject the agreement after reading it, I accept their verdict. But, people should not be put on the dark side.

PERSPECTIVES

On Grant

According to the MCC agreement, Nepal can use the grant only in two areas. One is road/highway up-gradation and another one is Electricity Transmission line expansion. The agreement also talks about the transfer of technology in the road sector. Due to lack of adequate transmission line, Nepal is currently unable to evacuate the electricity from one place to another and is unable to export excess electricity power to neighboring country India. At a time when Nepal does not have adequate resources to build such infrastructure, Nepal has been relying on multilateral donors for a loan as Nepal needs to pay interest and refund such loan amount in due time. This is for the first time Nepal is close to receiving US\$ 500 million or Rs.60 billion grants for such large infrastructure projects. This is the first time in the history of Nepal that such a huge grant amount is being received for infrastructure development.

In this situation when the US government agrees to provide the grant to Nepal as such grant amount is being collected from its taxpayers in the US, it is natural for the country to secure a guarantee from the recipient country that the money would be used properly, in a timely manner, in the sector that is stipulated in the agreement.

As per the agreement, the USA wants assurance from Nepal that the money should not be used against the environment, for military or paramilitary purposes and for abortion. They want to audit reports from the government to see whether the money given as a grant is being used properly and according to the terms of the agreement or not. They will accept our audit report but want it verified.

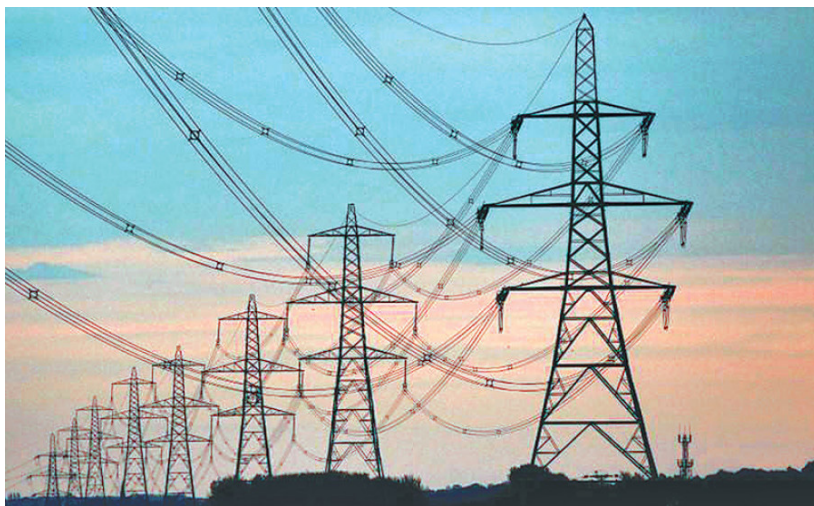
There are two agreements under this. One is MCC Agreement, the main agreement, and the other one is MCC Project Implementation Agreement. Under an implementation agreement, there is a committee formed to look after the implementation issue. If you sign an agreement taking a national interest as the topmost priority, one has to follow and respect the spirit of agreement during the implementation of the project. Both the parties need to abide by the terms and conditions of the agreement.

There is also a provision for the termination of the agreement. As per the agreement, in case any party feels that the implementation is not going on as per the agreement, both the countries can terminate the agree-

ment giving one month's prior notice to each other. If Nepal sees that the money is implemented in other sectors or against Nepal's interest, Nepal can terminate the agreement by giving one month's notice. Not only this, no country has to pay any compensation while terminating the agreement. However, the US can terminate the agreement only on the conditions mentioned in the agreement. However, there is no such mention for Nepal if it wishes to terminate the agreement.

I may or may not have a different opinion about the MCC. But what I'm saying about MCC now is not my personal opinion; rather I am expressing here my words based on the words and language written in the agreement itself. Going through and reading the agreement, I have not seen any terms and condition that violates the sovereignty, integrity and independence of Nepal. One needs to interpret the spirit of the agreement on the basis of what is written in the agreement, not on the basis of personal whim or partisan interest.

This agreement is based on equality between the two sovereign countries. The provisions to seek ratifica-



tion from the house also recognize the sovereign rights of the parliament of Nepal and the Nepali people. Normally, this kind of agreement does not require ratification by the parliament as per the constitution of Nepal. According to the provision of the Constitution of Nepal, this is not an agreement of sharing water and natural resources. Thus, it does not require parliamentary ratification and the ratification by the cabinet has already given legitimacy to the agreement. However, the ratification by the House Representatives gives 275 members of parliament to scrutinize the provisions of the agreement to see whether it is in the national interest of Nepal. In this way, Nepali people will have an opportunity to know whether the provisions in-

cluded in the agreement is against national interest, sovereignty or any provision of the agreement to allow US military presence in Nepal. Nepalese people will have an opportunity to know all these issues once it is tabled in the parliament for discussion and ratification. The agreement must be tabled in the parliament and the government and political parties have every right to say no to it after thorough discussion in the parliament.

I am also against any agreements which devalue and undermine Nepal's sovereignty, integrity and respect. If MPs see this is against national interest, they have every right to say no and ask the government to terminate the agreement. This is a great opportunity for the House of Representatives to evaluate and analyze whether the money coming as a grant to Nepal benefits Nepalese or not.

The current discourse and discussion on the agreement is going on the basis of personal whim, individual interest, party interest and other hidden interests. I have seen most of the discourse or media discussion by reading the black and white letter and spirit of the agreement. The current debates on the MCC are based only on individual interpretation, personal likes, or dislikes, not on the basis of the technical part of the agreement. Politically, one has its own interest but one has to see this agreement technically. If parliament ratifies the agreement, Nepal will receive a substantial amount for development in its national budget as a grant.

At a time when the COVID-19 has badly shaken the national economy, is it not good money received as a grant for national development? In terms of conditions stipulated in this agreement, the provision included in the MCC agreement is much softer than the agreements Nepal sign with India, China, World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. If we decline the MCC agreement, Nepal will not be in a position to sign any agreements with multilateral and bilateral agencies in the future as the terms and conditions of these agreements are stronger than those stipulated in the MCC agreement.

Nepal needs development and it requires a huge budget for its developmental work. Rejecting the MCC agreement will bring a major financial set-back for Nepal. Given the current revenue scenario, Nepal's revenue is not even enough to fulfill concurrent expenditure. Rejecting the fund without knowing will be a disaster.

According to the MCC agreement, Nepal can use the grant only in two areas. One is road/highway up-gradation and another one is Electricity Transmission line expansion. The agreement also talks about the transfer of technology in the road sector.

Since there are provisions to change or amend the clauses in the MCC agreement, we can do it through discussions between the parties. Nepal government needs to point out which clause it wants to amend and for what purpose. As per the provision, the agreement can be amended with the consent of both parties. You cannot just demand amendment on the basis of politics and personal whim. So far as Indian consent for the agreement is concerned, there is no such provision in the MCC agreement that Nepal requires the consent of India for building the transmission line. It just notes there is the need to provide the proposed construction of Gorakhpur-New Butwal 400 kV cross border transmission line. The agreement just seeks the Nepal government to provide a note of memorization that Nepal and India are building cross-border transmission line and both countries have agreed to that. The agreement needs no more than that. Since the transmission line is constructed with the purpose of increasing the capacity of internal consumption and exporting surplus electricity to India, it is natural to want to see notes to that effect. Before the construction of the project, MCC wants confirmation from the government of Nepal that the cross-border transmission line is being constructed so as to prevent wastes of money that are being spent on constructing cross-border transmission.

First of all, we all need to convince the people that there are no such negative clauses and provisions that are against Nepal's interest. We need to clarify the false information or disinformation that is being disseminated to the people in the media and public. Government, political parties and civil society have to take an initiative as to what is there in the MCC agreement and what real benefits Nepal gets after its implementation. This is a very crucial time now as MCC Board is reportedly taking a final decision on it. Before any decision by the MCC board, Nepal's parliament must table it and ratify the agreement to send it for implementation. If we are unable to take timely decisions, Nepal will lose over Rs. 60 billion grant money and it will be a great setback for Nepal. Time is running out. Although it is situated between China and Russia, both hostile parties of the US, Mongolia has been able to use the MCC grant for the benefit of the people of Mongolia. Nepal also needs to learn the same lesson from Mongolia.

UPPER TAMAKOSI HYDROPOWER PROJECT

A Jewel In The Crown

Facing so many unavoidable natural crises, great earthquakes, coronavirus and other obstructions in supply, 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi Hydroelectric Project, Nepal's largest hydropower project, has started the generation of electricity and revenue turning Nepal into a self-reliant in electricity generation. With these, the project has not only saved over Rs.9billion annually importing electricity from foreign countries but also opened a way to offer benefits to shareholders and confidence among Nepali technicians.

BY KESHAB POUDEL

For the first time in the last ten years, Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited (UTKHPL) has shown revenue collections of Rs. 1,727,751,940.08 till 31 Awasin 2078 (17 October, 2021) first quarterly financial disclosures.

As the project has started commercial production from all units on September 10, the revenue generated by the project has shown that it will generate around Rs.9 billion annually from this year. The increase in the

share prices of the UTKHPL shows that the faith of the people has increased in the project. The share is trailing from 507 to 904. This indicates that there is growing confidence in the public regarding the future of the project. People are expecting more dividends in the process.

Involved in the project from inception, Chief Executive Officer of UTKHPL Bigyan Shrestha, who has led the team of technicians to complete

the mammoth project, is now working to optimize the benefit to public shareholders.

“We are now working on how to provide more benefits from the project to beneficiaries including the public shareholders,” said Shrestha. “We have completed the mammoth task of completing the project. We have also considered now to start another project like this.”

As the private sector cannot



invest in projects like semi-reservoir or reservoir projects like Tamakoshi, the government of Nepal needs to take initiative to construct this kind of project, said Shrestha who spent a long time with the project.

“My sincere thanks go to all helping hands to serve consecutive 33+ years in Nepal Electricity Authority with the accomplishment of 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi Hydroelectric Project in this tenure.”

Inaugurated in July, UTKHPL started the commercial operation date(COD) from 20 August with 4 units and full-fledged production with all 6 units from September 10, 2021. With this Nepal’s electricity production has reached around 2,000 MW.

After the completion of the project, the country is now self-reliant on electricity.

Despite having adequate production, lack of infrastructure including the transmission lines has led to the wastage of the produced energy.

Paying huge amounts of its revenue to import electricity from India, NEA has proposed to export 456-MW of the UTKHPL and 45-MW of BhoteKoshi Hydropower Project to India, which is yet to be materialized.

Although there are 108 private hydropower projects that have been supplying 815MW of electricity to

the national grid, no project is matching to the capacity of Upper Tamakoshi.

With its daily peaking reservoir, UTKHPL can generate the energy in full capacity of 456 MW at peak time even during the dry season when the electricity production from the run of the river projects declined drastically.

The plant, the largest hydroelectric project in the country, is located in a remote region of the upper Himalayas on the Tamakoshi River, about 6 km from the border with China’s Tibet. With a natural head of 822 m and six underground units, it produces up to 2,281 GWh of electricity annually. This renewable energy will improve living conditions and promote economic development in the country.

The major components of this project are the intake, a 22-m-high concrete dam, and twin desanding basins, a 7.86-km-long headrace tunnel, a 360-m-high surge shaft, and a 495-m-long penstock pipe, an underground powerhouse with six Pelton turbines, a 2.9-km-long tailrace tunnel, and a 47-km-long 220-kV transmission line to New-Khimti substation.

All six turbines and generators have been in full operation since September 2021. During the rainy season, the total electricity generation of Nepal will exceed what the population and the economy are consuming. The

country can benefit in several ways from the surplus of electricity: Electricity costs will decrease, there are plans to supply consumers in need with electricity free of charge, and Nepal could export electricity.

The Nepal Electricity Author-



ity, Nepal Telecom, Citizens Investment Trust and RashtriyaBeemaSansthan are the promoters of Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited (UTKHPL).

The general public has also made a huge investment through the company’s initial public offering (IPO).

COVERSTORY

UTKHPL, executing agency of the akoshi Hydropower Project, Nepal's



largest so far, reached a milestone on July 16 with one of its six 76-megawatt units starting power generation. For the run-of-river hydropower project, which will have little or no storage capacity, the winter [December-February] is the dry season

plant, is considering a second expansion stage, the 20-MW RolwalingKhola Hydroelectric Project (RKHEP), which would contribute another 105 GWh.

Hydroelectric energy is one of the sustainable renewable energies with low-carbon emissions. The use of hydropower as the main source of energy for everyday activities will help to noticeably reduce fossil fuel carbon emissions in Nepal.

The 456 MW Upper Tam-

when Nepal's Himalayan peaks do not melt and the low water flows lead to lower energy availability.

The Upper Tamakoshi plant, however, can generate electricity at full capacity for minimum four hours during the dry season, according to the project. This is a historic achievement. This makes Nepal a power surplus country capable of exporting electricity.

As a major project in Nepal, this is the largest and most technically

difficult, with an underground powerhouse, which is an engineering marvel.

Given its production capacity, the Upper Tamakoshi Hydroelectric Project is of high economic importance to Nepal as it has not only made Nepal an energy surplus country. But it also contributes to the national gross domestic product. Besides those imports, it also cut the import of electricity from India in the dry season-saving billions.

According to the study, the project is expected to contribute around 1 percent to the GDP also help boost industrial production. The completion of the project has shown that Nepal can collect the fragmented capital within the country and invest in projects like Upper Tamakoshi.

The majority share (51 percent) of the Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited is held by four public entities, namely, Nepal Electricity Authority, Nepal Telecom, Citizen Investment Trust and RastriyaBeemaSansthan.

With the completion of the project and the beginning of the generation, it has boosted the morale and confidence of the Nepalese people. The project has shown that Nepali can now develop these types of projects through





their own resources and manpower.

In May 2018, the Nepal Electricity Authority had officially announced the elimination of load-shedding for the industrial sector, a year after relieving residential customers who had suffered never-ending power cuts for decades.

Various reports have pointed out that Nepal has a severe infrastructure investment gap, which is slowing its economic growth. Between 2007 and 2017, the country went through a massive electricity supply shortage that caused up to 18 hours of daily load-shedding.

This load-shedding had drastic costs for Nepal's economy. According to a World Bank report, the reliable power supply would have increased the country's annual gross domestic product by almost 7 percent, and annual investment would have been 48 percent higher.

The six years project began in 2011 to end the power shortage. But like other projects of national importance, this too suffered, resulting in massive cost and time overruns.

According to him, initially, the interest to be paid was estimated at Rs14 billion. "Now, the bank interest alone stands at Rs32 billion. So, the overall cost is around Rs 86 billion." The annual interest rate has been set at 11 percent in early loan agreement, however, it raised up to 12% for some years during construction.

On the one hand, the project

is a milestone for a country like Nepal facing an infrastructure gap but it is also a reminder of how cost and time overruns impact the development aspirations

The national pride project was originally scheduled to be completed in mid-July 2016, but the 2015 earthquakes hit the project very hard. The access road leading to the project site was totally destroyed when the project had completed 79 percent of the civil works. The installation of the penstock pipes was slated for 2015. But that too saw a setback.

The construction work stopped for months when the hydro-mechanical contractor, Texamo Railway Engineering of India lacked the expertise to execute the difficult task of installing the penstock pipes including hydro-mechanical works.

Subsequently, the project developer, the Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited, appointed Andritz Hydro to fit the high-pressure steel penstock pipes when the contractor Texmaco abandoned the project after completing more than 95 percent of the construction work.

In January 2019, Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited, Texmaco and Andritz signed a tripartite agree-

ment under which the Texmaco assigned the task of installing the penstock pipes to the Austrian company. With this agreement, the plant was then expected to come into operation by mid-June 2020, but the Covid-19 pandemic pushed back its operation deadline again.

While the officials at the power utility are happy to begin the electricity trade, former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli had said that efforts should be made to minimize the cost of electricity for general consumers and industries after adequate electricity was available.

With the average power purchase agreement (PPA) rate of Rs 4.06 per unit, it is the cheapest price of electricity for the Nepal Electricity Authority. It is beneficial for the power utility for use of peaking run-off-river (PRoR) synergy. Even after paying back the



loans within a reasonable extended time, it can generate a good amount of income in future and more power projects can be developed with it.

Enhancing Cooperation

The recently concluded Nepal-EU Joint Commission meeting underlined the importance of effective multilateral cooperation

By A CORRESPONDENT

Providing support to various development sectors including education, health, climate change and emergency medical support to fight against COVID-19 and disasters, European Union has been a major development partner of Nepal.

Apart from the development sector, Nepal and European Union also share common stand on many international issues including the need to have effective multilateral cooperation strengthening the World Health Organization.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the 13th joint meeting between the EU and Nepal discussed a wide range of matters of mutual interest. Both the parties renewed their firm commitment to cooperation and partnership.

Nepali delegation leader Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal co-chaired the meeting with Deputy Managing Director of the EU External Affairs for Asia and the Pacific, Paola Pampaloni.

The Nepali delegation comprised senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies; Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Ministry of Forest and Environment, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation and the National Planning Commission.

Similarly, the EU delegation incorporates Pampaloni and two other senior officials from Brussels, Belgium and EU Ambassador to Nepal Nona Deprez and her aides.

Due to risk of coronavirus, the 12th meeting was held virtually last year due to the COVID-19 crisis. Earlier, it was agreed to organize the meeting biannually in Kathmandu and Brussels on the basis of rotation, and it has been taking place each year for the past five years.

Following discussion on various issues, EU and Nepal issued a joint press release in which the EU and Nepal under-



lined the importance of effective multilateral cooperation, strengthening the World Health Organization and strengthening global capacity to respond to future pandemics. The two sides also underlined that vaccines are public goods, hence the need of ensuring equitable access.

Issued after the 13th meeting of the Joint Commission between Nepal and the European Union (EU), which was held in Kathmandu on 24 November 2021, the press release said they discussed a broad range of issues of mutual interest featured on the agenda.

Set up in 1996, the Nepal-EU Joint Commission has proved to be a useful platform of engagement and providing momentum to further deepen the partnership between Nepal and the EU.

The EU and Nepal discussed the COVID-19 pandemic and cooperation in post-pandemic recovery. Nepal conveyed its gratitude to the European Union for promptly extending the support of life-saving medical items and equipment when Nepal was struggling through the devastating second wave of the pandemic in the summer this year. Thanking the EU for its important contribution to the COVAX Facility, Nepal shared the plan of vaccinating all eligible population by April 2022 and briefed on efforts being made by the Government to contain COVID-19.

The EU welcomed Nepal's plan to graduate from LDC status by 2026. In this respect the EU expressed its com-

mitment to the Green Resilient Inclusive Development of Nepal and its readiness to extend all possible support to Nepal in achieving its development aspirations.

Nepal reiterated its appreciation for the EU's strong support for the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) as well as for the extension of the Initiative. Nepal and the EU agreed that the swift and full implementation of the DSSI by all official bilateral creditors should be a key priority in order to ensure predictability given the continuing financing pressures on the beneficiary countries owing to the pandemic.

The EU informed also about the finalization the development programming documents under the new Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI Global Europe). In the Sub-Commission on Development Cooperation held on 23 November, Nepal and the EU took stock of the progress achieved and lessons learned in the implementation of ongoing cooperation. The meeting expressed satisfaction over the successful implementation of the projects and programs envisaged under the Multiannual Indicative Program (MIP) for Nepal for 2014-2020 in priority areas of sustainable rural development, education, and strengthening democracy and decentralization. The EU stated that the new MIP 2021-27, to be finalized soon, will be aligned with the priorities of the current 15th Periodic Plan and support inclusive and green growth, human capital

development and good governance. Nepal thanked Finland, France, Germany and the EU for the announced Team Europe Initiative on green recovery for a total amount of EUR 240 million.

The EU appreciated the achievements made by Nepal in its socio-political transformation. It stressed the important role of civil society and media for strengthening democracy and good governance. The EU encouraged Nepal to further increase the participation of women in political life and the decision making process in Nepal. The EU also welcomed the commitment to transitional justice expressed by the Foreign Minister Hon. Dr. Narayan Khadka at the 76th session of the UN General Assembly in September this year.

Nepal presented its climate friendly development initiative, which aims at fostering the country's economic recovery in an ecologically sustainable manner focusing primarily on sustainable tourism, clean energy, sustainable forest management, climate-resilient agriculture, biodiversity conservation, eco-friendly transport and sustainable urbanization. The initiative will also focus on social inclusion to empower women and disadvantaged communities through skills training and education. Nepal thanked the EU for its support to the initiative.

The EU complimented Nepal for the strong commitments expressed during the COP26 and also for the ambitious Long-Term Strategy for Net-zero Emission with the announcement to move Nepal to net zero carbon status by 2045 and offered to provide support to its implementation.

Nepal acknowledged the EU's generous support to post-earthquake resilient reconstruction and recovery and appreciated the partnership in disaster risk reduction and green development.

The two sides exchanged views on bilateral trade relations. The EU reiterated its longstanding commitment to support Nepal's development also in view of the LDC graduation process and emphasized the need for Nepal to implement necessary requirements in view of qualifying for preferential market access under the EU's GSP+ scheme.

The Joint Commission welcomed the lending activity of the European Investment Bank (EIB) in Nepal, which will focus on climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as improved connectivity and renewable energy in the coming years.

Regarding people-to-people contacts, Nepal and the EU discussed ongoing higher education cooperation, whereby a growing number of Nepali students are studying in European universities. Nepal ranks among the top 20 countries worldwide in terms of students being awarded scholarships for Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree programs. Since the launch of the cooperation about 800 students from Nepal benefited from the possibility to study on European universities.

Nepal briefed on its efforts made to improve air safety, notably regarding the proposed new aviation legislation. Nepal appreciated the technical support received in its endeavor to improve air safety. In view of the necessary measures taken by



Nepal and its need to reviving tourism sector for economic recovery, Nepal requested the EU to lift the ban on its airlines. The EU acknowledged the positive developments and effort made by the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal and assured that a positive step will be taken in this direction once the necessary legislation is implemented.

The EU and Nepal exchanged views on the importance of regional cooperation in South Asia (SAARC, BIMSTEC).

Nepal and the EU underlined the need of further strengthening cooperation and collaboration on global and regional issues, notably on climate change, human rights, multilateralism and connectivity. They reiterated their commitments to democratic values, the rule of law, good governance and fundamental freedoms as well as promoting and protecting human rights. Nepal thanked the EU for its support in the process of Nepal's re-election in the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) last year. The EU congratulated Nepal for successfully concluding its Universal Periodic Review earlier this year and praised Nepal for accepting a significant number of recommendations received during the proceeding. Both sides agreed to continue a regular conversation on promoting and protecting Human Rights.

Nepal and the EU reiterated their commitment to work together in the United Nations, World Trade Organization and other international fora supporting effective multilateralism and rules-based world order. They agreed on the importance of sincerely implementing the outcome of the COP26 held in Glasgow earlier this month and taking robust measures for climate action as well as meeting the financial commitments made to support the less resourceful countries in fighting the adverse impacts of climate change.



PRATIMA RANA PANDE

Honored For Cause

For her dedication, commitment and hard work, Pratima Rana Pande received an honor from Italy, the highest media Order of the Star of Italy

By A CORRESPONDENT

When there was a lockdown with large numbers of Italian citizens stranded in Nepal, it was a very difficult to operate the repatriation flights. However, Pratima Pande made it possible by making the repatriation flights happen.

Visiting from office to office in the lockdown, Pande was able to send over 300 Italian and Europeans stranded in Nepal. Similarly, Pande, a devoted lover of heritage, art and culture, has also been providing much needed assistance to Italians in Nepal and providing information to Nepalis regarding the business opportunities in Italy.

Apart

from this, Pande has also been organizing various programs to promote and strengthen the people to people relations through musical concerts, cultural and food programs.

Whether it was the time of



major global crisis to evacuate the stranded Italian citizens from Nepal or organizing cultural and musical concert to promote people to people ties between Italy and Nepal, prominent heritage lover and preserver Pratima Pande has always been in the forefront as honorary consulate of Italy to Nepal.

Having worked in the most difficult time to evacuate Italian Citizens from Nepal and working to strengthen Nepal-Italy relations and providing all kinds of support to Italian citizens and business groups in Nepal, Pande, wife of chairman of Nepal Investment Bank Prithvi Bahadur Pande, has been working with complete dedication of her time to fulfill her responsibility.

Recognizing her contributions and dedication, the government of Italy has honored Pratima Rana Pande with Order of the Star of Italy.

Italian Ambassador Vincenzo de Luca conferred the honor

on Pratima Rana Pande, the Honorary Consul General of Italy for Nepal, amidst an event held in the Capital on October 22.

The Order of the Star of Italy is a distinction that qualifies as a second civilian honor of the State. It represents a particular honor on behalf of all those, Italians abroad or foreigners, who have acquired special merit in the promotion of friendly relations and cooperation between Italy and other countries and the promotion of ties with Italy.

In an earlier interview with an English daily, ambassador de Luca had expressed his happiness to honor Pande.



“We have a very important asset here. It is our Honorary Consul General of Italy Pratima Rana Pande. I am honored and happy today to deliver the honor of Cavaliere dell’Ordine della Stella d’Italia (the

Knight of the Order of the Star of Italy) recognized by the President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella (to Pratima Rana Pande),” he had said.



At a ceremony, attended by Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal, Dr. Durga Bahadur Subedi, Gianluca Rubagotti, Consul General of Italy in Kolkata, honorary consuls based in Nepal and other high level dignitaries, Vincenzo de Luca, Ambassador to India & Nepal, honored Pande with the medal.

The recent honor to Pande, who has a high reputation for working in the country for preservation and conservation of Nepalese heritage and culture, for her dedication and commitment.

Italy And Nepal: Ties Going To Over Sixty-two Years



BY: PRATIMA PANDE

Italy and Nepal have a relationship which dates back to over sixty-two years. The Italian Embassy was very much in Nepal till 1990, and now the Italian Embassy in Delhi and Consul General in Kolkata help and guide us here.

An Honorary Consul has many responsibilities and our work at the Consulate Office entails promoting Nepal-Italy relations, working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nepal by seeking their advice, and aiding and solving many issues for Italian and Nepali citizens with the help of my Senior Officer Sabina Shrestha, who is traveling and therefore not here this evening. We miss her very much tonight. I would like to thank Fabrizia who is helping me out in the consulate in her place.

There is a strong Italian community of expats residing and working here, and many Nepali students apply to study different subjects such as Engineering, Sciences and Computer Software Studies etc. in Italy's top universities.

Italy is the country where the Renaissance took place in the great city of Florence, Firenze. The whole of Europe and the world at large have been influenced in the arts, sciences, architecture, and culture coming out of this rich heritage. Italian cuisine, of course is perhaps Italy's most famous export, and is very much loved by people around the world, and most definitely here in Nepal, as you can see from the great success of Fire and Ice pizzeria, which is an institution in itself.

Many of you gathered here today have visited the great cities of Rome, Milan, Florence, Naples, and Venice, and countless other beautiful and charming places throughout Italy.

In October 2017, the Nepali, Italian, and Expat community were treated to an exceptional concert by "The Quartetto di Cremona" - four musicians who played the cello and violins, delivering an evening of outstanding western classical music at the Hyatt Hotel. To celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the bilateral relations between Nepal and Italy in May 2019, we were honored and privileged to listen to a violin concert by the renowned Italian musician, Maestro Domenico Nordio, at the Yak & Yeti Hotel. It was a magical evening.

Both concerts were sponsored with the generosity of the Italian Government, the Italian Cultural Centre New Delhi, and the Consulate General of Italy in Kolkata and with local support from Nepal Investment Bank limited.

After Covid, we look forward to more cultural exchanges with Italy. The pandemic has brought our world to a standstill, but now with vaccinations and social distancing norms and measures, life has to go on, otherwise we will lose our sanity. Trade, Commerce, Tourism all has been slowly revived across the globe, and we all hope that normal life can

resume, with all the pleasures of travel and cultural exchange.

Before I conclude, during the first lockdown in April 2020, when Italian citizens and tourists around the world were stranded, Italy sent a Boeing Dreamliner 787 to Nepal to help evacuate Italian and European citizens with the help of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Civil Aviation, the Italian Embassy in Delhi, and the Consul General of Kolkata. It was a difficult and challenging task, but satisfying when the passengers finally flew away on Neos Air to Milano. I must thank the Consul General of Kolkata, Alfonso Tagliaferri who played a vital role in making this happen. Rescuing the tourists of Italian nationality and others involved surmounting some challenging hurdles, but all of us Honorary Consuls worked very hard for the repatriation, and it was immensely satisfying to see everyone return safely home.

During the second lockdown, the hospitals were inundated with Covid victims, and Italy was very generous after an appeal for help from our Consulate, and the government of Nepal, and sent the Nepali people very valuable and much needed medical supplies which consisted of 20 ventilators, 6000 isolation gowns, and 10,000 protective overalls.

I would also like to thank H.E. Ms. Nona Deprez, the EU Ambassador who did such a marvelous work in coordinating the relief efforts at the airport of Italy and the other EU countries. It was a pleasure to work with you dear Nona. Thank you very much!

I would also like to express my sincere respect and gratitude to the Honorary Consul General of Italy to Kolkata Mr. Damiano Francovich and Ms. Vincenza Bufalo who Sabina Shrestha and I worked with from 2015 to 2019. We had a very good working relationship, and we learnt a lot from them. Thank you for your goodwill and friendship.

I would also like to thank Pietro Sferra Carini, the Deputy Chief of Mission in New Delhi for helping us in difficult times. He was always so patient, understanding, and gentle during his trips to Kathmandu.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for gracing this evening and once again, welcome, and congratulations to your Excellency Vincenzo de Luca. We look forward to your future visits with great anticipation. Gianluca Rubagotti, Marcella, and Alessandro we are so happy that all of you are here too, and look forward to seeing you often!



Worthy Contributions

Two Libraries Built in Durbar School In Memory Of Late Prabhakar SJB Rana

By A CORRESPONDENT

For his entire life, late Prabhakar SJB Rana was known as a man of generosity supporting the needy people, social organizations and preservation of historical and cultural sites.

After his death a few years ago, Prabhakar Rana's efforts came to a halt. However, Maya Rana Tufo, daughter of late Prabhakar SJB Rana, has come to give continuity to his father's incomplete mission. Contributing to the construction of two libraries in Durbar School, oldest school of Kathmandu, Maya Rana Tufo has revived her father's memory.

She said that her father laid emphasis on educational and training programs so she wanted to give the funds to an organization that would take the responsibility to set up a library for the community.

Zonta Club Kathmandu is part of this legacy to set up the libraries. The mission is to ensure student access to high quality school library service. The vision is that every student has access to a dynamic, well-resourced school library run by qualified library staff.

Late Rana was a great admirer of Nepalese heritage, culture and nature and it was natural for her to choose to fund the Durbar School, first and historical school of Nepal. The school was rebuilt by the Chinese Government after the earthquake of 2015.

Zonta Club Kathmandu and Durbar School, Bhanu Mabi and Sanskrit Mabi recognize the valuable contribution of Rana Tufo for the library in her late father's name, Prabhakar SJB Rana.

Zonta stands for women's rights. They advocate for equality, education and an end to child marriage and gender-based violence. Zonta Club of Kathmandu has been proactive in supporting Durbar School during Covid with online education by providing laptop for teachers and Smart phones to the students. Zonta also gave intensive training for online education to the teachers.



The school library provides information and develops wider knowledge to face the challenges of these uncertain times.

There are two historical schools under Durbar School Roof. One is Sanskrit Madhyamik Bidhyalaya from 6 -12th grades. Second one is Bhanu Madhyamik Bidhyalaya from Pre-school to 10th grade at the moment. Zonta has set up two libraries "Panini" and "Durbar Pustakalaya". Bhanu Mabi will also have book corners in their own classrooms from pre-school to 3rd grade.

A library provides stimulation and inspiration to both students and teachers, develops interest in subjects and widens the horizon of students. With the library at Durbar School, we aim to encourage a Reading Culture and life-long learning habit in students.

The library will expose students to one's culture as well as make them aware of other cultures and provides him/her with latest knowledge. A library also plays an important role in enhancing a teacher's effectiveness and classroom performance with research books and other media. It promotes individual and group learning, helps in developing students' vocabulary, enhancing comprehension, developing the habit of silent reading and developing problem-solving attitude among students.

The school will adopt Drop Everything and Read (DEAR Time) Policy every day for 20 minutes. Students and teachers can introduce Book Clubs as well as visits of authors to promote interest in reading and writing. There are also devices in the

library to read online books and do research for students to be updated with the online learning trends.

Zonta has hired a full time librarian and library assistant to both the libraries. Librarian will be an instructional leader for the mental, emotional, and social growth of the students (recommend choice of books).

Mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City Bidhya Sunder Shakya inaugurated the two libraries in Durbar School, Bhanu Mabi and Sanskrit Mabi aimed a function.

The two libraries in the Durbar School show Maya Rana Tufo wants to follow her father's legacy to support preservation of important public spaces.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST GBV

Call To End Suffering

Despite undertaking several efforts to empower women, the number of cases related to Gender Based Violence (GBV) continues to increase

By A CORRESPONDENT

On the day when survivors of gender-based violence and gender rights activists in Nepal were sharing their own experiences calling for inclusive approaches and comprehensive reforms to eliminate gender-based violence prioritizing the most marginalized women and girls, police arrested three persons involved in rape against a minor in Raitahat.

Although almost every day newspapers report the cases related to GBV, the particular case has meaning as it occurred on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and start of 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence.

With adequate legal tools, Nepal Police has been effectively taking action against GBV. However, survivors, gender equality activists and representatives from the UN, development partners, and the government came together to commit to taking action to end gender-based violence now!

The event, streamed live from Patan Museum Courtyard, gave a center stage to the stories of GBV survivors as well as to gender equality activists to present a joint statement calling for inclusive and comprehensive reforms to eliminate gender-based violence.

Jenny Khadka, an acid-attack survivor, emphasized everyone's role in preventing gender-based violence. Ashmita Badi, a poet from Surkhet reiterated how patriarchy stands in the way of a world free of violence. Sharmila Thapa, a Nurse and a Member of the Trade Union questioned the normalization of

GBV at the workplace. Similarly, Babita Rai, Feminist Writer, shared about sexual harassment and urged for a world free of violence. Lastly, Kathak dancer Subima Shrestha portrayed the grief and perseverance of Gauri Bista, a survivor of domestic violence and women's rights activist from Doti, through her dance in the song written by Bista herself. Through their stories, the advocates

Those that are functioning to a degree – such as the GBV Elimination Fund and the Rehabilitation Fund – exist at the federal level and not at the provincial or local level, which restricts women's access to these funds. In this context, there is an urgent need to make funds available and ensure that women have access to essential services, including gender-based violence services. There is an urgent need for gender responsive budgeting and tracking allocations for gender equality and for achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5 – Gender Equality. A coordinated, multi-level and multi-sectoral approach is recommended to prevent and respond to the potential increase in gender-based violence in Nepal.

Reported incidents of child marriage, witchcraft

allegations and untouchability have increased annually, according to Nepal Police data on FIRs registered between FY 2016/2017 and September 2020. A list of other documents highlight the problem -- National Women Commission (NWC): A Study on the Implementation Status of Concluding Observations of United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) on the Sixth Periodic Report of Nepal, June 2021. Forum For Women Legal Development (FWLD) and Himal Innovative Development Research Pvt Ltd (HIDR), Policy Brief: Nepal's Gender-Based Violence and Gender Equality Funds: The Path to Effective Implementation, 2021, available at [National Women Commission](#)



called for urgent action to change discriminatory social norms, policies and laws to prevent gender-based violence.

The cases of gender-based violence's have been increasing annually as per the reports from Nepal Police. According to the three years study done by Nepal Police from 2018- 2021 total 8571 cases of sexual violence (mainly rape, attempt to rape, child sexual abuse), 209 cases of child marriage, 38737 cases of domestic violence have been registered across Nepal. Review the status of limitations of sexual abuse of children to ensure cases can be brought against offenders.

A study highlighted that gender-based violence and gender equality funds are not currently operational.

(NWC), A Study on the Implementation Status of Concluding Observations of United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) on the Sixth Periodic Report of Nepal

They seek to amplify efforts to end violence against women and girls with intersectional identities (such as caste/ethnicity, religion, geography, disability, gender and sexual minority) through interventions and policy reform tailored to their specific needs and strengthen and intensify response services to GBV through the establishment of fast track courts, well-functioning multi-sectoral support system (e.g., health, legal aid, shelter homes, psychosocial support, and interpretation services) and increase access to these services for service-seekers focusing on needs of women and girls from marginalized communities.

“Across the globe, gender-based violence continues with impunity, survivors’ stories silenced while perpetrators evade justice. Today we say, enough with the silence. Stop the Violence Now.” said Sara Beysolow Nyanti, UN Resident Coordinator, International Development Partner’s Group Co-chair and representing multilateral develop-



ment partners.

Speaking at the event, Excellency Nona Deprez, European Union Ambassador, Development Partner’s Group Co-chair and representing bilateral development partners expressed, “Ending gender-based violence is non-negotiable. Nepal has worked really hard to have a strong legal framework to combat GBV, which is a real achievement but there is still so much work to be done. It is important to break the cycle of violence”.

During the program, Under-Secretary Ram Hari Sharma from the Ministry of Home Affairs shared that the Ministry has initiated discussions to formulate law related to acid attack as the previous ordinances related to acid attack issued has become ineffective. Dipti Karki, Deputy Superintendent of Police, also shared her commitments to end violence against women and girls.

Wrapping up the commemoration event, the UN Country Team lit up Patan Durbar Square Museum and Dhara-hara in orange, the official color of the UNiTE campaign that symbolizes hope and a country free of violence.

16 Days of Activism

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign which takes place each year. It commences on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day.

It was originated by activists at the first Women’s Global Leadership Institute in 1991 and is coordinated each year by the Centre for Women’s Global Leadership. It is used as an organizing

strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

As a unifying theme running global activities, the UNiTE campaign has utilized the color orange to represent a brighter future, free from violence against women and girls. The UN Country Team (UNCT) in Nepal has marked 16 days campaign with awareness building and advocacy campaigns across Nepal.

Some of the key activities undertaken were ‘oranging’ monuments and provincial buildings, engaging audience across Nepal through films, social media, and radio campaigns. In Nepal, the UN Country Team (UNCT) has marked the campaign during the past years, including ‘oranging’ of Patan Darbar Square (2016), Lumbini (2017), Provincial Parliament Buildings (2018), Women’s March in Janakpur (2019), and an online dialogue on ‘The Role of Media in Changing Mindsets: One story of gender-based violence is one story too many’ (2020).

In the joint statement, Shova Maya BK, Disabled Women’s Rights Activist, Kala Swarnakar, General Secretary, Feminist Dalit Organization, Nagma Khan, Queer Rights Activist, Prakriti Bhattarai, Chairperson, Political Literacy for Women, and Dorje Gurung, Educator and Activist, called for action from the government, multilateral and bilateral organizations to: Repeal constitutional and legal provisions on legal identity and citizenship to address existing gender-discriminatory provisions.



**छोरीलाई दाइजो
होइन शिक्षा दिऔ,
सबल, सक्षम र
आत्मनिर्भरताको दीक्षा दिऔ ।**



**नेपाल सरकार
विज्ञापन बोर्ड**

For News, Views, Comments & Perspectives

LOG IN

spotlightnepal.com

Latest Magazine



VOL. 14 No. 16, April 16, 2021 (Baisakh 03, 2078) Publisher: Keshab Prasad Poudel Online Register Number: DOI 584/074-75



VOL. 14 No. 15, April 02, 2021 (Chaitra 20, 2077) Publisher: Keshab Prasad Poudel Online Register Number: DOI 584/074-75



VOL. 14 No. 14, March 12, 2021 (Falgun 28, 2077) Publisher: Keshab Prasad Poudel Online Register Number: DOI 584/074-75



VOL. 14 No. 13, February 26, 2021 (Falgun 14, 2077) Publisher: Keshab Prasad Poudel Online Register Number: DOI 584/074-75

NEW SPOTLIGHT
NEWS MAGAZINE

Kathmandu, Ph.: +97 1 4530250
Email: spotlightnepal@gmail.com

Why pay a fee? Get it done for FREE.

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



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

For anything and everything

#थैली छ नी!



(available soon for iOS users)

DOWNLOAD the App now

Here you go Sisi Your
BIRTHDAY SURPRISE!

Rs. 5000 transferred to sister's account.

Rs. 5000 deposited in account.

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



Features and services
updated regularly



Available for
Android users



iOS users get started on:
www.nibl.com.np/thaili



Download and experience
features and special offers



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

Customer SUPPORT
☎ 01-4545481
☎ 01-4512044
☎ 01-4514561
email us at: thaili@nibl.com.np