

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



**VIEWPOINT**  
Dr. Tilak Rawal



**OPINION**  
Dipak Gyawali



**PERSPECTIVE**  
Yutaka Kikuta

# NEW SPOTLIGHT

www.spotlightnepal.com

June.- 03, 2022

FORTNIGHTLY

**ECOOKING**

## Replacing LPG

### INSIDE



**BUDGET 2022/023**  
**POPULIST PACKAGE**



**LOCAL POLLS**  
**INDEPENDENT TEST**



**HIMALAYA SUMSHER RANA**  
**ORDER OF JAPAN**



# PHOTO FEATURE

## Patan Durbar Square Is Back To Its Former Glory



**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

**Notes From The Editor**



With the completion of the local polls, a fresh set of elected representatives has taken the leadership helm of Nepal's local bodies. From popular young independent leaders to party's hard core activists, diverse representatives were chosen by the people. As the Nepali Congress has made a big progress in the poll, main opposition CPN-UML has lost its position drastically. Taking note of that, however, we have decided to look into the budget as our cover story for this edition.

With the announcement of a populist budget, Finance Minister Janardan Sharma has shown that the government of five parties in alliance is more concerned about the forthcoming polls for province and center than anything else. Increasing the salary of the civil servants, cutting taxes in petroleum products and reducing the age of senior citizens, minister Sharma has presented a budget intending to woo the voters in favor the alliance. At a time when the country has been facing a growing balance of payment, and major economic crisis, looming large, the finance minister has announced construction of mega projects, including new fast track to link Kathmandu with Chitwan, new international airport and big storage hydropower projects. Shrinking to the lowest level, Nepal's foreign currency reserve is now just capable to purchase six months of import. The new budget has not shown much concern about this grim scenario. Despite so many lacunas and shortcomings, there are some good parts in the budget which will have long term positive impacts on Nepal's economy. The announcement to replace LPG by clean electricity is a bold step of the budget. This alone can save billions of rupees annually. However, the government also needs to invest money to improve quality of distribution system and transmission line. Along with the budget, we have covered clean cooking as our main story for this issue.

**Keshab Poudel**

Editor



# CONTENT

<b>NEWSNOTES</b>	3
<b>BUSINESS BRIEF</b>	8
<b>VIEWPOINT</b> Dr. Tilak Rawal	10
<b>LOCAL POLLS</b> Independent Test	12
<b>OPINION</b> Dipak Gyawali	16
<b>NEPAL-CHINA</b> Meeting With Purpose	20
<b>BUDGET 2022/023</b> Populist Package	21
<b>FORUM</b> Himalaya Sumsher Rana	24
<b>HIMALAYA SUMSHER RANA</b> Order Of Japan	25
<b>PERSPECTIVE</b> Yutaka Kikuta	26
<b>HUMAN RIGHTS</b> Something Wrong	27
<b>FORUM</b> Hanan Goder-Goldberg	29
<b>ARTICLE</b> Sreejan Shrestha	34



COVERSTORY: ECOOKING: Replacing LPG

30



NEPAL FOREIGN SERVICE DAY: Recognition For Contribution

18



UN PEACEKEEPER: Nepalis Honored

28



## Foreign Secretary Paudyal, EU Officials Discuss Relations

Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal held meetings with Secretary General of the European External Action Service (EEAS) Stefano Sannino; Managing Director for Asia and Pacific at the EEAS Gunnar Wiegand and other senior officials at the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) and the Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA) of the European Commission at the European

Union headquarters in Brussels.

During the meeting with the Secretary General of the EEAS, the Foreign Secretary discussed overall bilateral relations and cooperation between Nepal and the EU.

The Foreign Secretary participated in a lunch meeting hosted by the Managing Director for Asia and Pacific at the EEAS. During the meeting, they discussed all major areas of Nepal-EU relations and also reviewed the areas of cooperation since the 13th Joint Commission meeting held in Kathmandu in November last year.

The discussion focused on areas such as socio-economic impact of COVID-19, development cooperation, economic relations and EU market access to Nepali products in the context of the planned graduation of Nepal from the LDC status, cooperation in climate change and environmental issues, air safety and access of Nepal's airlines to the EU sky, among others. They expressed satisfaction over the ongoing cooperation between Nepal and the EU, and agreed to continue working towards further consolidating the cooperative relations.

The Foreign Secretary also held separate meetings with DG INTPA and DG CLIMA at the European Commission. During the meeting with Jean-Louis Ville, Acting Director for Middle East, Asia and Pacific at DG INTPA, they discussed various aspects of development cooperation between Nepal and the EU.

Similarly, the meeting with Dimitrios Zevgolis, Head of Unit for Multilateral Affairs at DG CLIMA, focused on the issue of climate change and environment protection, and the cooperation in the areas of adaptation, mitigation, climate finance and technology transfer.

Gahendra Rajbhandari, Ambassador of Nepal, and other official from the Embassy of Nepal in Brussels were present during the meetings.

## KOICA Signs RoD With MoLESS

KOICA and Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security signs RoD worth USD 8 million for the stable reintegration of Korea returnee migrants in Nepal

The ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security (MoLESS), 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 "Strengthening Stage-Wise Support System for the Stable Reintegration of Korea Returnee Migrants in Nepal"

The RoD was signed by MoLESS Joint Secretary Ramchandra Dhakal and KOICA Nepal Country Director Sunghoon Ko in the presence of MoLESS Secretary Ek Narayan Aryal. Korean government through KOICA will spend USD 8 million for the project. The project period is of 7 years (84 months) starting from 2022. The project will be implemented by KOICA and Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE)- Employment Permit System (EPS) Korea Section.

The main objective of the project is to contribute for socio-economic development of Nepal and increase employment through stable reintegration of Korea returnee migrants and enhancement of their entrepreneurship capacity.

The project also aims to create virtuous cycle and support systems for Korea returnee migrants in Nepal for their enhanced information accessibility, and increased access to financial support.

Currently, the trend of migrant workers returning back to Nepal is increasing significantly, along with growing interests of returnees to be established as an entrepreneur in their home land. The project in its initial phase will target Korea Returnee Migrants Workers only.

Through agreement with government bank (Agriculture Development Bank Limited), this project aims to create a fund and its management mechanism so that it could be easily accessible by the Korea Returnees. Additionally, a one stop mobile platform will be developed targeting Returnee Migrant Workers for providing comprehensive reintegration information.

Secretary Aryal expressed that the project will support the Korea Returnee Migrant Workers in meeting their requirement of information and financial access. He further expressed his gratitude to KOICA for initiating support in the sector of migrant workers in Nepal where thousands of Nepali people option to migrate to Korea annually.

Similarly, KOICA Country Director Sunghoon Ko shared the project will support in socio-economic development of Nepal and increase employment through stable reintegration of Korea Returnee Migrants.

The Government of The Republic of Korea has been supporting the Government of Nepal through KOICA in various areas of Health, Education, IT and Rural Development since 1991.

## India Has Greatly Contributed In Nepal's Development: Minister Karki



## NEWSNOTES

Minister for Communication and Technology Gyanendra Bahadur Karki said that Nepalese who studied in India have greatly contributed in overall development of Nepal.



He said that Nepal is always grateful to India for its contributions and support to Nepal's development and democratization. Addressing a felicitation Program-2079 organized by Neeti Anusandhan Pratisthan, Nepal (NeNAP), he thanked NeNAP for organizing the program. He said that Nepal and India as close neighbors shared common culture, religion and history.

During the program, minister Karki and governor of Nepal Rastra Bank Maha Prasad Adhikari conferred certificate, medal to those Nepalese from Indian Educated Gold Medalist in Engineering, Agriculture, Hindi, Social Work, Law, International Relations/South Asian Studies, Senior and Rank holders CA.

Those include Nepali Students, who graduated under self finance and different scholarship schemes of the Government of India. Addressing the program, governor of Nepal Rastra Bank Adhikari said that Nepal has immensely benefited from India returned students.

Executive director of NeNAP Dipak Adhikari said that the relations between Nepal and India have shared values and culture. He said that felicitated individuals have been contributing various sectors of Nepal.

### Charge'd Affaires Namgya C. Khampa Inaugurates School In Lomanthang

Inauguration of Upgraded Infrastructure of Shree Pal Ewam Namgyal Monastic School, Lomanthang Rural Municipality-3, Chhonhup, Mustang District, Nepal built under Government of India grant assistance.

Namgya C. Khampa, Charge'd Affaires, Embassy of India, Kathmandu inaugurated the upgraded Infrastructure of Shree Pal Ewam Namgyal Monastic School in Lomanthang, Chhonhup, Mustang District.



On the occasion, a school bus was gifted to the Shree Pal Ewam Namgyal Monastic School and an ambulance was gifted to the Gharapjhong Rural Municipality.

The project was undertaken by DCC Mustang with the grant assistance from Government of India at the cost of NRs.26.30 million.

It is a HICDP under India-Nepal Development Cooperation. This is one of the 75 projects being inaugurated this year in Nepal as part of "In-

dia@75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" which celebrates 75 years of India's independence.

### Nepal-India Poetry Recitation Program Organized

Swami Vivekananda Cultural Center, Kathmandu and Rashtriya Sahitya Pratisthan jointly organized Nepal-India poetry recitation program in Kathmandu on 24 May 2022.

Dr. Tulasi Prasad Bhattarai, senior writer of Nepal, was the chief guest of the program. Naveen Kumar, First Secretary of the Indian Embassy, Swetha Dipti, former HoD of Hindi Department at Tribhuvan University, among others, were present in the event.

On the occasion, Rashtriya Sahitya Pratisthan awarded 'National Literary Honour' to renowned India poet Naresh Shandilya. Pratisthan offered a shawl and a letter of appreciation to Shandilya in his honour. Pratisthan's Secretary General Madhu Pathak read out the letter of appreciation. Sakhi Pratisthan, a sister organization of Rashtriya Sahitya Pratisthan, also honored poet Shandilya.

Speaking at the event, chief guest Bhattarai said that

such honours would deepen literary and cultural ties between Nepal and India. Poems in Nepali, Hindi, Urdu, English and Bengali languages were recited. Rajendra Shalabh, Sneha Sayami, President of Urdu Foundation Imtiyaz Wafa, Dr. Mo-



min Khan, Kunjana Jha, Madhu Kumari, Dr. Gyan Nishtha Gyawali, Thakur Belvase, Pabitra Adhikari, UmeshAwasthi, RanjuDahal, PoonamJha, Priyamwada Kafle, Dr. Binod Kumar Bishwakarma, Dr. Basudev Kafle, Tribhuvan Chandra Wagle, Suman Barsha and Rashmi Bhatta recited their compositions.

### Save The Children-Nepal Organizes Workshop On RCCE

Organizations call upon a robust Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) mechanism to combat the threat of COVID-19 and promote vaccine uptake.

Save the Children in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Population, National Health Education Information Communication Center (NHEICC), and the Association of International NGOs organized a national level COVID-19 and vaccine uptake Risk Communications and Community Engagement (RCCE) workshop.

Speaking at the event, Director of National Health Education Information Communications Center (NHEICC), Sunil Raj Sharma stated: "The threat of COVID-19





is still there, and we call upon organizations to work in collaboration with the government and design more community focused Risk Communications and Community Engagement (RCCE) actions which are guided by evidence to deal with COVID-19 and promote vaccine uptake.”

During the workshop, participants discussed best practices utilizing media, community engagement and outreach, evidence generation and social norms research on COVID-19 and vaccine uptake to design Risk Communications and Community Engagement (RCCE) actions. As one of the recommendations, the participants agreed that there was a need for a community of practice to discuss challenges, gaps, and opportunities in RCCE, which in turn would also address duplication of work to effectively communicate life-saving messages on COVID-19 and vaccine to communities. Further promoting a system of evidence-generation and community informed actions to initiate meaningful RCCE on COVID-19.

Tara Chetty, the Acting Country Director of Save the Children in her remarks acknowledged the achievement made by development partners, and the government's leadership in leading the COVID-19 awareness and vaccination drive. “I have seen how the COVID-19 vaccines have sparked hope in people, and how vaccines work to protect the future - especially the future of our children.

### School Building In Pokhara Under Indian Grant Assistance

Namgya C. Khampa, Charge'd Affaires, Embassy of India, Kathmandu inaugurated the new School Building of Shree Arwa Bijaya Secondary School, Pokhara Metropolitan City-13, Dhand Bensi, Kaski District.



Shree Arwa Bijaya Secondary School is an old established school in Kaski District. The project was undertaken with the grant assistance from Government of India at the cost of NRs.36.30 million under India-Nepal Development Cooperation in Education Sector as a High Impact Community Development Project. This is one of the 75 projects being inaugurated this year in Nepal as part of “India@75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav” which celebrates 75 years of India's independence.

Since 2003, India has taken up over 527 High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) in Nepal and has completed 470 projects in the areas of health, education, drinking water, connectivity, sanitation and creation of other public utilities across all 7 provinces of Nepal at the grassroots level. Out of this, 57 HICDPs are in Gandaki Pradesh, including 11 completed projects in Kaski District.

### Nepal Army Collects Over 30,000 KG Of Wastes From Mountains

In coordination with Sherpas involved in the expedition of four major mountains and collecting the mountain wastes, Nepal Army has collected 30,344 kg of wastes recently.

According to Public Relations and Information Directorate of Nepal Army, a separate squad of the army deployed with the objectives of collecting the garbage of the mountains under the Clean Mountain Campaign has collected the wastes left by the mountaineers.



The squad has been deployed in the Mt. Everest, the highest peak of the world, Mt. Lhotse, Mt. Kanchanjunga and Mt. Manaslu with a purpose to collect the wastes left by the mountaineers.

According to the Directorate of Public Relations and Information, 9932 kg wastes were collected from the Everest and Lhotse, 15,373 kg from the Mt. Kunchanjunga, and 5,039 kg from the Manaslu.

The campaign is in operation since April 5, 2022. Medical officers of the Nepali Army stationed at the base camps of the mountains are providing counseling and health services to both Nepali and foreign climbers during the campaign.

### Shreejana Rana conferred Draupadi Samman Patra 2022

President of Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NICCI) Shreejana Rana has been honoured with Draupadi Samman Patra 2022 in New Delhi of India.



According to a press release issued by NICCI, the honour was conferred on her at a program in New Delhi by Ajit Doval, Chief Security Advisor to Indian Government on Friday, 20 May.

Draupadi Dream Trust has honoured Rana, as the President of NICCI, for her contribution in Nepal-India bilateral relation through development and promotion of religious and spiritual tourism in both the nations, the binational chamber said in a statement.

The Trust is the institution working in the area of ancient eastern civilization, art, culture, religion and history, and publication of such area for a long time.

Rana has also played an important role in publishing a book and dedicated website on Nepal-India religious/spiritual circuits which cover Buddhist Circuit, Mahabharat Circuit, Ramayan Circuit, Shiva-Shakti Circuit and Sikh Circuit aiming to promote pilgrimage tourism in both the countries.

### US Undersecretary Uzra Zeya Calls On PM Deuba



A delegation led by US Undersecretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights, Uzra Zeya, held a courtesy meeting with Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba.

“It was a pleasure receiving the US delegation led by

Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights @UnderSecStateJ. We exchanged views on Nepal-US relations and matters of mutual interests,” PM Deuba tweeted.

In the meeting held at the Ministry of Home Affairs at Singha Durbar, discussions were held on Nepal-US relations and various issues of mutual interest.

They also discussed issues of bilateral development cooperation and relations on the occasion of the 75th year of Nepal-US diplomatic ties.

U.S. Under Secretary also called on Home Minister Bal Krishna Khand at his office. During the meeting, Minister Khand thanked the US leader for the US assistance in the post-earthquake reconstruction, and COVID-19 control and prevention.

Stating that Nepal was committed to the security sensitivities of Nepal’s neighbouring countries, India and China, Khand praised the US role played for freedom, human rights and democracy.

Minister Khand also expressed gratitude to the US government for supporting the third-country resettlement of Bhutanese refugees from Nepal.

Likewise, US Undersecretary Zeya thanked Nepal government for ratifying the US grant assistance MCC from the parliament and moving towards development path and poverty alleviation.

### Excited To Be In Beautiful Nepal: Under Secretary Uzra Zeya

Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights of the United States of America and its Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, Uzra Zeya arrived in Kathmandu for a three-day visit.

“Celebrating Nepal’s commitment to human rights, I was honored to be joined by

@UnderSecStateJ and First Lady Arzu Deuba to hand over the International Women of Courage Award to

Bhumika Shrestha for her amazing achievements helping the #LGBTQI+ community,” tweets U.S. Ambassador to Nepal Randy Berry.

Under Secretary Uzra Zeya upon her arrival tweeted, “Excited

to be in beautiful Nepal with @USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator Anjali Kaur to discuss the strong partnership in advancing democracy and human rights for all.”

Protocol Officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Manahari Dangal welcomed the visiting guests at the Tribhuvan International Airport. Zeya is leading a four-member delegation.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the bilateral ties between the USA and Nepal.

Spokesperson for the MoFA Sewa Lamsal said that both the countries are intensifying bilateral exchanges at multiple fronts to mark the occasion and develop the relations to a newer height.

Speaking at a press briefing at the ministry, she added that some new bilateral activities are also likely to take off on the occasion.

The US Government said that Zeya’s visit to India and Nepal is to deepen cooperation on human rights and democratic governance goals, and to advance humanitarian priorities. “She will also discuss partnering with India and Nepal during this Year of Action for the Summit for Democracy,” it said in a statement on May 16.

According to Lamsal, Zeya was scheduled to meet Prime Minister Sher Bahadur, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Narayan Khadka, and Minister for Home Affairs, Bal Krishna Khand, on Sunday. She would also hold an interaction programme with the Tibetan refugees in Kathmandu.

After arriving in Kathmandu, Zeya said in a tweet that she was excited to be in Nepal to discuss the strong partnership between advancing democracy and human rights for all.

Likewise, Ambassador of the USA to Nepal, Randy Berry tweeted that he was thrilled to have Zeya here and show her beautiful Nepal.

### Korean Support For School Building Construction

Um Hong Gil Human Foundation (UHGIF), a Seoul-based international non-governmental organisation (INGO) of Korea, is to build a new building of Nepal Rastriya High School located at Dullu Municipality-7 in Dailekh.

According to the foundation, the new building will have 18 well-equipped classrooms and other modern facilities in the next two years. The Korean INGOs have been contributing to the education sector by building schools in different parts of Nepal since 2009.

A ground-breaking ceremony for the school infrastructure was organized recently with the presence of Captain Um, Member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea Seunghee, Chairman of Seyong Group Chung Chungbok, local government representatives, and teachers, students and social workers.





Addressing the function, Captain Um hoped that the new school infrastructure would be helpful for the school to upgrade the quality of education.

He also called on the students to remain focused on learning so as to become capable citizens.

In recognition of his immense contribution to the nation's education sector, the Government of Nepal has already granted honorary Nepali citizenship to Um.

Chairman of the school management committee Dinesh Kumar Hamal and headmaster Bhupal Bikram Shah thanked UHGHF for providing support to their school. They also expressed their gratitude to the Korean donors for their great support.

### U.S. Delivers Disaster Relief System To Nepal

U.S. Special Operations Command Pacific's Civil Affairs Team delivered the disaster relief system to Nepal in Chame, Manang.



"We are pleased to announce the final delivery of the last Disaster Relief Systems. Members of our defense team and Special Operations

Command Pacific's Civil Affairs Team delivered the system in Chame, Manang," writes U.S. Embassy, Nepal on its Facebook site.

"During times of crisis, the Disaster Relief System will provide access to shelter, heat, hygiene items, sleeping space, and clean drinking water for up to 200 citizens in the affected area. This final delivery completes a two-year, \$1.3 million project to alleviate human suffering in times of disaster. There are a total of 36 Disaster Relief Systems located in disaster-prone areas throughout Nepal to rapidly respond to emergencies," writes U.S. Embassy Nepal.

The Civil Affairs Team's strong relationship with allies and partners is a fundamental part of our bilateral relationship. We look forward to continuing our joint efforts to ensure Nepal has the necessary human resources during times of crisis.

### Sri Lanka's Role In Getting Recognition For Vesak Day Highlighted

Addressing the Vesak day celebration at the Embassy in Kathmandu Ambassador Himalee Arunatilaka highlighted the contribution made by Sri Lanka in making Vesak a public holiday in Nepal, as well as getting international recognition for Vesak Day within the UN system.

She further recalled that the decision to celebrate Vesak marking the Birth, Enlightenment and Passing of Gautam Buddha, as is done today, was formalized at the First Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists held in Sri Lanka in 1950, on an initiative by Sri Lankan scholar and diplomat G.P. Malalasekera.

According to a press release issued by Embassy of Sri Lanka in Kathmandu, the Vesak celebration was held with the participation of Buddhist monks representing main Theravada Monasteries in Kathmandu, Sri Lankan community and Nepali well-wishers. Religious observances and Buddha pooja were followed by Dhamma sermons delivered in Sinhala and Nepali languages by Ven. Pannasara Thero of Sri Sumangal Vihar and Sri Ashta Saddarmayathan Vihar in Patan, and Ven. Dilibhadra Thero of Anand Kuti Vihar in Kathmandu, respectively.

Ambassador Arunatilaka also used the opportunity to express gratitude to the All-Nepal Bhikku Association for coming forward to help the people of Sri Lanka with a donation of medicines, for which arrangements are being made to purchase and dispatch at the earliest possible. The event concluded with chanting of sethpirith, invoking the blessings of the triple gem.

On the day of Vesak in Nepal, on 16th May, the Embassy participated at religious observances at the Anand Kuti Vihar in Kathmandu. This historic Monastery has a long association with Sri Lanka and is the first Theravada Monastery in modern Nepal. Sacred Relics of the Buddha enshrined in the stupa of Anand Kuti Vihar are brought out for public exposition every Vesak Day after special religious observances.

The Sacred Relics are a gift from Sri Lanka and the Sri Lankan Ambassador is granted the special privilege of carrying the casket containing the sacred relics for veneration by the public, in a special procession, amidst the chanting of pirith by the resident monks. This is an annual event held every Vesak day and demonstrates the longstanding and special links Sri Lanka has with Ananda Kuti Vihar. The ceremony was followed by the offering of morning alms to the resident monks by the Ambassador and Embassy staff.

Ambassador Arunatilaka was the Chief Guest at the Vesak celebration at the United Nations Office in Nepal, organized by Buddha Anniversary Celebration Committee of Nepal in association with the UN Office. Addressing the gathering Ambassador Arunatilaka highlighted Sri Lanka's role in achieving international recognition for Vesak Day, when in 1999, Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister at the time, late Lakshman Kadirgamar tabled the proposal supported by ten countries at the UN General Assembly to acknowledge the contribution made by Buddhism to human spirituality.

Ambassador Arunatilaka was a special guest at the Vesak Day Celebration at Bouddhanath Stupa, a prominent Tibetan Monastery in Kathmandu, and a UNESCO world heritage site.

Vice President of Nepal Nanda Bahadur Pun was the Chief Guest at this event, hosted by Supreme Head of Bouddha and Melamchi Gyang Guthi, Dharma Guru Rinpoche Chiniya Lama Bhupati Bazra Lama.



## BUSINESS BRIEF

### Nepal Heritage Society, NMB Bank Ink Agreement



President of Nepal Heritage Society Ambica Shrestha and Chief Executive Officer of NMB Bank Sunil KC signed a bilateral agreement for the protection and promotion of heritage sites at Dwarika Hotel.

During the signing ceremony, officials of both Nepal Heritage Society and NMB were present. Nepal Heritage Society has been launching various programs to protect and promote heritage of Nepal since last 40 years. It also annually publishes a souvenir on World Heritage Day.

The society has also been organizing programs like heritage walks to generate awareness on importance of heritage sites in Nepal.

General secretary of the society Dharma Raj Shakya said that the society has been organizing various programs to promote and protect Nepal's heritage since its establishment.

Head of Marketing of NMB Bank Pranisha Shrestha said that the bank will work in close collaboration with the society to protect Nepal's historic heritage sites.

### 26 Educators Attend Educational MASHAV Training In Israel

A group of 26 educators from Nepal went to Israel to participate in the International Course on "Pedagogical Innovations," that was held from 9-19 May 2022.



The course was conducted by The Aharon Ofri MASHAV International Educational

Training Center- METC in Jerusalem, Israel in cooperation with MASHAV.

This training course aimed at providing new tools and knowledge on the implementation and development of innovation in the educational system and was aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. Except lectures and discussions, the participants were taken for study tours at schools, educational centers (science, art, etc.), teacher training institutions, and pedagogical resource centers of Israel. The seminar also included visit to touristic sites in Israel.

This is the first group of Nepalis to attend MASHAV training in Israel post COVID-19 pandemic. More than 3000 Nepalis have been to Israel so far to participate in different MASHAV courses related to education, agriculture, health, entrepreneurship among many others.

The Embassy appreciates the educators' commitment to excellence in education. We strongly believe that this workshop was a fruitful learning experience in Israel and deepened

on their professional expertise eventually leading to improved student outcomes.

### Omnika Dangol Of Himalaya Airlines Scales Mt. Everest

Himalaya Airlines Mount Everest Expedition Team, including its Senior Flight Attendant, Omnika Dangol made a historic ascent of Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain on May 16, 2022. Omnika Dangol of the Himalaya Airlines summited the 8848.86 meters high Mount Everest at 07:30 am local time with the expedition team of Thamserku Treks and Expeditions. Dangol returned to Kathmandu on May 20 and was warmly welcomed by Himalaya team at their Head Office, Gairidhara.



The airlines arranged a welcome program wherein the President of Himalaya Airlines, Zhou Enyong along with H9 team received Dangol and celebrated the glorious moment together.

Congratulating the team, he said, "This is a very significant project for us. We are glad that Ms. Omnika Dangol successfully scaled the highest peak with Himalaya's flag and has safely returned. This project involved a lot of risk and challenges, and I was worried for her safety every day. But as our team was thoroughly prepared and determined I was confident that this project will be a success. It is indeed a well-deserved achievement for Himalaya Airlines. It signifies the spirit of persistence that H9 always believes in."

With the objective to promote tourism in Nepal, Himalaya had initiated its historic project "Himalaya Airlines Everest Expedition by Flight Attendant". Since then, the airlines had been vigorously engaged in its preparation with their flight attendant Dangol to successfully scale the world's highest peak.

Dangol had previously climbed three peaks – Mera, Island and Lobuche.

This Everest expedition project is a symbolic representation of Himalaya's perseverance and courage despite the extreme conditions. Over the years, Himalaya had to face many challenges and hurdles which were overcome with strong will and determination.

Vijay Shrestha, Vice President, Himalaya Airlines expressed, "One of the key purposes of Himalaya Airlines is to promote Nepalese tourism and this project is a small step by H9 in promoting Nepalese tourism. We congratulate the team for the accomplishment of the project."

### NEA Signs Agreement Green Hydrogen

A memorandum of understanding has been signed between Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), Seoul, Korea, which has been working in the field of green hydrogen around the world, for cooperation in green hydrogen production.

Managing Director of the NEA Kul Man Ghising and Director General of GGGI Frank Rijsberman signed the MoU





in the presence of Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Pampha Bhushal. The two organizations will study the feasibility of setting up a fertilizer factory for the production of hydrogen, ammonia and urea manure through green energy.

Feasibility study will be done for the design and development of a model project to produce hydrogen, ammonia and establish a fertilizer factory using the green energy produced by the hydropower project of Nepal, according to a press statement of the NEA.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Minister Bhushal said that the production of hydrogen from Nepal's hydropower projects would be a new field and technology for increasing the consumption of locally generated electricity.

NEA Managing Director Ghising said that hydrogen, ammonia production and setting up of fertilizer factory is a good option for the consumption of electricity generated from hydropower projects.

### **Thulo.Com To Empower 1000 Micro Small And Medium Enterprises**

Thulo.Com, together with SDC and UNCDF, is to empower 1,000 micro, small and medium enterprises in Nepal with digital skills and access to e-commerce.

A new partnership between Thulo.Com, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) will help 1,000 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Nepal to digitize their operations, including at least 60 percent women-owned businesses. The partnership will help MSMEs digitize



payments, delivery, and post-sales services in rural areas in Nepal, boosting their sales and helping them recover from the effects of the pandemic.

"Switzerland is committed to supporting Nepali MSMEs to make them resilient towards external shocks. Through this partnership, SDC aims to leverage the digital solutions and support MSMEs to gain access to the markets and networks, digitize their transactions, and eventually make

way to access new sources of capital," said Elisabeth von Capeller, Ambassador of Switzerland to Nepal.

"UNCDF is proud to partner with SDC as well as Thulo to advance the inclusiveness of the country's digital ecosystem by fostering the digital transformation of MSMEs, which form the backbone of Nepal's economy. With this project, UNCDF hopes to help Nepal become more inclusive and resilient to external shocks by accelerating COVID-19 economic recovery," said Maria Perdomo, Regional Coordinator in Asia at UNCDF.

(SAARC) Business Association of Home-Based Workers (SABAH) Nepal.

### **Bangladesh Is Ready To Buy Electricity Generated In Nepal: Ambassador Chowdhury**

Nepal Chamber of Commerce (NCC) has proposed to Bangladesh to cooperate in the energy sector. The NCC has requested for electricity trade with Bangladesh in the context that Nepal is fast reaching the status of electricity exporter.

Speaking at a program organized at the Bangladesh Embassy in Kathmandu on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Bangladesh, NCC President Rajendra Malla stressed on the need for practical implementation of the tripartite agreement on electricity trade between Nepal, India and Bangladesh.

In the discussion with Ambassador of Bangladesh to Nepal, Salahuddin Noman Chowdhury, President Malla said, "Nepal, India and Bangladesh have reached a tripartite agreement for energy trade. For its effective implementation, immediate result-oriented talks are needed between the energy ministers of the three countries."

"We take the initiative from the private sector. Let the government of Bangladesh reciprocate the initiative. Nepal is preparing to sell electricity to Bangladesh."

According to Malla, Nepal will be able to export electricity in at least one year from now.

At least 50 megawatts of electricity can be generated for export from the existing transmission line in India and all the three countries have to do their homework for other terms and conditions for electricity trade, he said.

In view of the high demand for energy in Bangladesh, the two sides discussed various options for exporting from Nepal, said a press statement of NCC.

Despite the agreement on energy trade between Nepal, Bangladesh and India, it has not been implemented in practice.

Ambassador to Nepal Chowdhury said that Bangladesh is ready to buy electricity generated in Nepal.



# Peaceful House For Annual Rituals



BY: DR. TILAK RAWAL

Contrary to our expectation that the main opposition party will continue to disrupt the House proceedings until its final dissolution for general election some six months from now, UML leaders seem to have made up their mind to let the House remain peaceful during the budget session that commenced on May 17. As soon as the proceedings began that day, Speaker Sapkota allowed Pradeep Gyawali to speak, understanding signal of the opposition lawmakers who had risen from their chairs. Gyawali observed that their obstruction was aimed at protecting democratic values and as the situation had changed after local polls, UML decided to end House obstruction, adding they still believed in the issues they raised. He also believed that it was not nice to continue with this kind of programme at a time when the country was facing serious problems. Nothing can be said whether this pleasant decision was purely a unilateral act of UML or a result of inter-party meetings that are taking place in increasing number after the polls. Something could have transpired and tacit understanding reached between the two political manipulators of this country—Deuba and Oli. Prachanda definitely is a force to reckon with in this country and no major implementable decision can be taken independent of him and his party. Things look good at least for now, mainly with the long-disturbed House turning peaceful.

President Bhandari was allowed to present the government's policies and programmes peacefully last fiscal year also and this time also she struggled with government's lengthy policy and programme document in an undisturbed House. She stated that the government would launch policies to spur economic growth, strengthen federalism, pursue economic diplomacy, and expand the reach of high speed internet across the country. Vital issues such as increasing domestic production, import substitution, export promotion, employment generation, and high economic growth have been touched upon in the usual conventional fashion. Not many seem to be interested in what she read in the joint session of the Parliament that day because people, hard hit by swelling prices of food, fuel and other essentials, have to channelize their efforts and attention to more important task of organizing resources to meet increased household expenditure. Those failing to do so are forced into cutting household consumption. Indeed, level of inflation has long crossed the government-promised level of 6.5 percent and is likely to shoot further up with Europe and America im-

posing sanctions on Russia, which has invaded Ukraine. The sanctions imposed have begun to destabilize supply chains, rendering them too fragile to depend on. These Western sanctions worked in the past and are effective even now, in most cases hurting both sides. Inflation in UK and USA has hit the highest level (9 percent and 8.5 percent, respectively) in 40 years. In May 2018 America imposed sanctions on Iran with the aim of stopping its oil exports altogether. It succeeded to a large extent because by October 2019 it fell to an average of 260,000 barrels per day from 2.3 million before the sanctions. European Union is anxious about reducing its overdependence on Russian energy. Germany, relying heavily on Russian oil and gas, is contemplating doing away with import of Russian energy. The cost of phasing out Russian stuff is not going to be small but the Europeans sound determined to do so. Along with energy, supply of Russian grains on the global market is

threatened, while Ukraine's exports of grains and oilseeds have almost stopped. It may be noted that these two countries in war jointly account for 28 percent of globally traded wheat and 75 percent of the sunflower oil.

Food and fuel prices have risen globally pushing up inflation levels and interest hike is likely to be taken resort to confront it, which in turn could invite serious recession. In addition to the negative impact on Nepalese consumers of these mishaps taking place elsewhere, changes recently introduced by India in its export policy are likely to hurt Nepalese consumers the most. Nepalese authorities may have taken note of India's policy to restrict sugar export for the first time in six years to stop a surge in domestic prices. It may be noted that India is the world's biggest sugar producer and second biggest exporter behind Brazil. This is done to check local prices and ensure steady supplies in the domestic market so that consumers are well protected during this time of global uncertainties. Nepal consumes 250,000 tons of sugar annually and domestic production is around 140,000 tons and rest is imported. Government-owned Salt Trading Corporation has only 32,000 tons in stock. India has restricted wheat export, too, which is certain to jeopardize the operational viability of Nepalese flour mills that depend on wheat from India. Not many believe that the current dispensation would address the urging of Nepalese consumers to protect them from rising prices of essentials and provide fertilizers to farmers facing scarcity of it. Small wonder, ma-

**Not many believe that the current dispensation would address the urging of Nepalese consumers to protect them from rising prices of essentials and provide fertilizers to farmers facing scarcity of it. Small wonder, majority of hard-hit and somewhat ignored people have very little interest in what is read in the Parliament.**



jority of hard-hit and somewhat ignored people have very little interest in what is read in the Parliament.

In the current fiscal year, it is stated that our economy would grow by 5.84 percent at consumer price and at base prices it would be 5.49 percent. Economy would swell by Rs.574 billion to Rs.4851 billion. Actual for this fiscal year, however, would be available much later. Much has been written and spoken about the unsatisfactory state of our economy, citing growing imbalance in balance of payment, increasing deficiency in current account and ballooning trade gap. It may be noted that trade deficit reached Rs. 1389 billion last fiscal year, which was more than actual budgetary expenditure of Rs.1180 billion that year. Looking at the accelerating pace of deficit in the last couple of months, one should not be surprised if the imbalance exceeds total budgetary outlay of Rs. 1632 by the end of this fiscal. Budget implementation part has remained very unsatisfactory over the years. There has

always remained a sizeable gap between what is set aside as outlay and actual expenditures. Looking at data covering a period of six years, it is seen that the gap between the two was lowest (Rs.206 billion) in fiscal 2075\76 and highest (Rs.422 billion) in 2076\77). In the ten months of the current fiscal, Nepal

government has spent only Rs.878 billion of the allocated Rs.1632 billion. Situation on the capital expenditure front has remained all the more alarming, with less than 30 percent of the allocated Rs.378 billion spent in 10 months. In the meanwhile, the government made public a budget with a total outlay of Rs. 1793 billion in the joint session of the parliament on May 29. This budget for the fiscal year 2079\80 (2022\23) has exceeded the size of current budget by Rs.161 billion, which is not unusual because in certain years in the past its size has swollen by more than Rs. 200 billion. It seems Finance Minister Sharma has partially responded to size-related suggestions of common people by fixing capital expenditure at Rs.380 billion, which is just Rs.2 Billion more than the amount set aside under this head in the budget for the fiscal year 2078\79 (2021\22). Why should anyone be unhappy seeing the unchanged size of capital expenditure a major portion of which has remained unspent in most years? We can simply pray that the government-wished stability and sustainable economic growth through production enhancement is achieved. It would also be very interesting to see the programme, with an allocation of Rs. 3 billion, related to enhancement of production and consumption giving tangible results and the stated employment-related wish of the government does not end up like the much-criticized similar scheme initiated by Oli government. Production enhancement hope of government, if materialized, could help

achieve government's target of reducing imports by 20 percent each year so as to balance the trade in five years' time. In the backdrop of import-based revenue structure, it may, however, not be easy to collect the estimated Rs.1240 billion, a hike of more than Rs.200 billion over the current target.

Not many people would criticize government's efforts to bring more people under the coverage of social security measures by, for example, reducing the elderly allowance threshold from 70 years to 68, cost free distribution of 98 types of medicines by government owned hospitals and offering some relief to middle-class families by increasing the income tax ceiling. A 15 percent hike in the salary of government employees is expected to provide some relief to households facing high cost of living and providing eight percent cash subsidy on export of certain items like cement, footwear, refined water, etc. can be taken as a positive attempt directed at promoting

export and import substitution. Provision of Rs. 15 billion for chemical fertilizer, interest subsidy on agricultural loans and mechanism to procure certain agricultural produces at the announced support price are worthy of appreciation. Hope farmers do not have to complain about fertilizer scarcity next

year around this time and they are also not heard complaining about being pushed into a state of distress sailing of farm produces.

Nepalis will not make a hue and cry even if the wished 8 percent growth is not achieved and inflation crosses the stated level of 7 percent. People have witnessed governments failing on these fronts (growth and inflation) in the past and they are not expecting this government to be an exception. People are aware that Covid onslaught has eased a bit but externalities originating in distant places have begun to hurt our economy. Moreover, politics is likely to attract serious attention of ruling leaders basically to foil Oli's attempt to break the current alliance. Oli does not want the setback suffered by UML in local polls to repeat again in the forthcoming parliamentary polls and Deuba knows that keeping the alliance intact is a must, which can only ensure his sixth stint as head of government. Prachanda, with enhanced bargaining power in the new scenario after the local polls, is likely to remain a key figure in the alliance game. With our leaders heavily engaged in power game, Oli trying to break it and Deuba doing everything one could conceive of under the sun to keep it intact, we should not be unhappy to see our economy performing as usual, failing to achieve the stated goals. For now, let us be happy that annual rituals have begun peacefully and are likely to conclude in a peaceful environment.

*Dr. Rawal is a former governor of Nepal Rastra Bank*

## LOCAL POLLS

# Independent Test

*In a hegemony of six parties, which have been in the center of power as ruling and opposition since 2006, the rise of independent candidates, Balen Shah in Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Hark Sampang Rai in Dharan and Gopal Hamal in Dhangadhi, is a new phenomenon of the recent local elections. Defeating the candidates of established political parties, which have complete control over state structures, financial resources and bureaucracy, voters chose independent candidates, who have shown their courage, to lead the metropolitan governments. However, big challenges before them will be to show that they are different from their predecessors*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Newly elected mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City Balen Shah has promised that he can turn Kathmandu into a beautiful city of the world. Harka Sampang Rai declared that he will end the prolonged water crisis of Dharan. Hamal declared that better governance will be his priority.

Although he lost the elections with a thin margin of votes, Deepak Raj Joshi, an independent mayoral candidate of Vyas Municipality of Tanahu, has announced that he will continue to work for the betterment of people. Hospitalized after physical assaults by the goons of his rival Nepali Congress candidate, Joshi said that his life is dedicated to the people of Tanahu and he will continue to work whatever fate he has to face.

Along with them, there are many young candidates contesting the local elections who



hold similar views. Entering the fray after a long gap in politics, Nepali Congress candidate Sirjana Singh, who emerged second in the elections of Kathmandu Metropolitan City, conceded the defeat accepting the verdict of people. Congratulating her political rival Balen Shah, Sirjana Singh has also noted that she will be watchful.

In a political atmosphere where political morality is vir-

tually non-existent, Bibekshil Sajha Party president Rabindra Mishra has immediately tendered his resignation taking the responsibility for the debacle as chairperson of the party.

In contradiction to Mishra, Kamal Thapa, president of newly formed RPP-Nepal, blamed CPN-UML for the bad performance of his party's debacle in the local elections.

All these trends indi-



cated that something new in the political setup is knocking the door of Nepali politics. At the age of social media as major influencer and declining traditional media, the recently concluded elections have generated interesting hints.

### Local Polls

After a long uncertainty and dispute, Nepal has finally completed the local elections, second under the present Constitution. Despite losing some important local levels, the five-party alliance led by Nepali Congress made a sweeping victory. The elections also cut the size of main opposition CPN-UML compared to the last elections.

Although the voice of independent candidates is small compared to the big parties, they symbolize the growing disenchantment against political parties and their failure to deliver the goods and services to the people.

"I will promise you our all-out efforts to make Kathmandu clean by clearing all the garbage of the city," announced Shah, after visiting the land-fill sites in Banchare Danda. Although she is elected from CPN-UML ticket, deputy mayor Sunita Dangol has also made it clear that she will work for the people of Kathmandu.

Whatever Balen Shah, Rai and Hamal promise to make change, they need complete sup-

port from Ward Chairs and ward members, who have been elected as candidates of political parties.

Given the first day scenario of oath taking when representatives of political parties virtually did not back the first decision of mayor to make city council live, there will be more clashes in coming days.

Elected on the basis of popular votes by symbolizing the disenchantment of people, Nanai Maiya Dahal, Puhatu Chaudhari,

address the problems of people," said Mayor of KMC Balen Shah. "I need support from all the representatives to bring the desired change."

Having completed his first tenure successfully and re-elected with thumping majority, Chiribabu Maharjan, Mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan City, can play a balancing role. With experiences of running the Metropolitan City, Maharjan can help bury the likely division in the Kath-

mandu Metropolitan City.

### NC In

### lead

After the publication of final elections results by Election Commission, Nepal's 10<sup>th</sup> local polls have been concluded. The five-party ruling alliance led by Nepali Congress swept the elections, pushing main opposition CPN-UML at the

brink. Out of 753 municipalities, which include 293 Metropolitans and 460 Rural Municipalities, Nepali Congress won 328 heads, including 140 Mayors and 188 Chairpersons.

### Elections Results

Out of 293, NC won 140 Mayor and 110 deputy mayors followed by 188 chairs of rural municipalities and 190 deputies. Similarly, NC won 2663 ward members out of 6730 and 2604 out of 6728. UML won 2129 ward chairs and 2343 women members followed by Maoist 1053 and 963. Similarly, CPN-Unified Socialist won 12 mayors and Janta



Govinda Nath Uprety, Rup Chandra Bishta and Umesh Jung Thapa had rebelled in the Panchayat. As they were unable to work with the aspiration of people, growing frustration and disenchantment gave fall of Panchayat regime.

This time too failure of Balen Shah, Rai, Hamal and other popular independent elected representatives will be regarded as a failure of political parties and system will generate more confusions. If political parties consider the failure of these independent representatives as their success, this will have reverse results.

"I am here to work and

## ELECTION

Samajbadi Party won 21 chair persons. Others won 32 mayors and 31 chairpersons.

Janata Samajbadi party won 12 deputy mayors and 19 vice chairpersons. Others won 23 deputy and 30 vice chairpersons. Janata Samajbadi party won 295 ward chairs and 299 women members followed by others with 590 and 519.

The tallies are for 744 out of 753 local units that had already been announced. Vote counting was going on for the remaining few units, Election Commission stated.

### Boon For RPP

Under the new leader Rajendra Lingden, the recently concluded local elections turned as a boon for RPP. Under new leadership, RPP elected over 300 representatives including two mayor of major municipality including Shankharapur of Sankhu and Damak of Jhapa.

RPP elected over 30 representatives in the local elections held in 2017. In terms of ballots,



the party reportedly secured over 400,000 votes. For the newly emerging party, Bibekshil Sajha, the local election was a major debacle.

In the first elections, its candidates secured big votes in the big municipalities including Kathmandu and other major cities. This time they were nowhere. However, RPP came back securing third position in many municipalities and rural municipalities.

Although it contested the elections under the symbol of CPN-UML, RPP-Nepal led by Kamal Thapa was virtually wiped out in the local elections.

### 385 independent candidates elected

Altogether 385 independent candidates sealed victory in the May 13 local election so far, according to the Election Commission of Nepal. A total of 24 political parties had participated in the poll and of the 385 elected independent candidates, 266 were male and 119 female. Also, seven of them were elected mayors and six chairpersons of rural municipalities.

Independent candidates won mayor in Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City, Dhangadi Sub-Metropolitan City and Janakpur

Sub-Metropolitan City.

Similarly, two were elected deputy mayors and two vice-chairpersons. Also, 136 emerged victorious as ward chairpersons.

### 14,402 women elected at local levels

As many as 14,402 women have been elected to different positions at the local level across the country, according to the Election Commission.

Women candidates have been elected both the mayor and deputy mayor in three municipalities across the country. In province 1 and 2, 455 women candidates have been elected out of 8,196 women candidates in total.

In Madhesh province, 2,770 women candidates have been elected out of 15,780 women candidates in total. Similarly, in Bagmati, 2,347 women candidates got elected out of 4,649 while in Lumbini 2,124 got elected out of 8,767 women candidates.

According to the EC data, 1,524 women candidates got elected out of 4,878 women candidates in Karnali province while in Sudurpashchim 1560 women candidates were elected out of 5,085 women candidates.





Women have been elected Chiefs at 25 local levels across the country. However, 123 member seats of Dalit women have remained vacant out of the total reserved for them while a seat out of total seats reserved for women has also remained vacant.

### History of Local Elections

Sixth elections since 1990 including a short lived municipal poll of 2005 and 10<sup>th</sup> since the first elections of 1948, the recently concluded local polls gave birth to new trends.

In 1949, the first elections of Kathmandu city were held and second were held in on September 9, 1953. Candidates nominated by then illegal Communist Party of Nepal got 50% of the total votes cast. Out of a total of 19 seats, six were won by communists, four by Nepali Congress, four by Praja Parishad, one by Gorkha Parishad and four by independents.

For the first time, in February 1947, Padma Shumsher Rana declared the establishment of a municipality in Kathmandu. Marketed as a democratic institution, Padma Shumsher even conducted elections for chairman of the 18 wards then for vice chairman of the municipality. However, the chairman of the entire municipality was



nominated by the State, which led other elected representatives to resign in protest.

After the establishment of democracy in 1951, a Municipality Act was drafted, according to which the first election for Kathmandu municipality was held on August 25, 1952.

Since the first elections of 1949, local elections remain popular among the people. Overwhelming numbers of people take part in the local elections. This time was no exception.

Due to the complications in the voting, voter turnout and cancellation were much higher this time than any local elections in the history of Nepal. In Kathmandu over 40000 votes were invalid. Pokhara Metropolitan City

too had a similar story. Newly elected mayor of Pokhara Metropolitan City even demanded the resignation of chief elections commissioner for printing the complicated ballot paper resulting in widespread invalid votes.

This year's local elections have shown that the advent of social media has started to weaken the political bases of political parties among the younger voters. Easy to communicate and widely circulated, social media is playing a major part in the elections results.

Unlike in the past, voters have shown that they can defy the political parties in selecting the candidates. The election of Sunita Dangol, an independent minded candidate, as a deputy mayor of Kathmandu Municipality from CPN-UML has shown that voters want the candidate of their choices not the choices of political parties.



# Lessons From The Local Elections 2022



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

A few days back, while taking my evening constitutional around Patan, I ran into Omkar Shrestha near Kupondole's Hanumanthan. For those who many not remember, he was Nepali Kangress stalwart of Patan, a follower of KP Bhattarai and a former minister. I asked him what he thought of the just completed local elections, and he replied without hesitation:

"I am very happy. This is the start of the rejuvenation of decayed democracy in Nepal."

He was referring to the amazing win of independents and party rebels in Kathmandu, Dharan, Janakpur, Kailali and many other places. On the way back home via Bakhundole, I ran into Kishore Thapa in front of his Sajha-Bibeksheel party headquarters. In the last elections, he had garnered significant Kathmandu votes and lost with a small margin. Despite Sajha-Bibeksheel putting up educated, competent and clean candidates, he was surprised why even the voters who had previously voted for him chose to cast their ballots *en masse* for Balen Shah. My explanation was that the ideological rift in his party with the rebel faction showing slavish kowtowing to Maoist political agenda which gave the message that this party was no different from Kangress and EhMaLaise!

Local elections this past month have brought about an unexpected seismic upheaval in stagnant Nepali politics. It has inspired and galvanized the youth to think that change is possible. A tweet shown to me from a young college student to his friend and the friend's reply is an excellent indicator of that fundamental shift in mood from hopeless despondency to buoyant optimism:

"You were talking of migrating abroad. Do you still think so?"

"No, now I think I can do something here!"

The results of these local elections will be analyzed and parsed to great detail in the days and months ahead, especially since country-wide elections to the national parliament will have to be held in the coming six to eight months. Media houses such as [Himal Khabarpatrika](#) and [Setopati](#) have already begun trying to figure out

the mass psychology of Nepali voters and this kind of reflections will be media staples in the days ahead. One can, however, appreciate the broad contours of such reflections and already highlight key conclusions that have begun to emerge.

The first lesson is that which has to be drawn from the amazing victory of independent candidates. The victory of Balen Shah in capital city Kathmandu and Harka Sampang in Gorkha Lahurey town Dharan are particularly significant. Balen, although born and raised in core Kathmandu area, is barely thirty years old and is of Madheshi origin. His defeating Newar candidates from Kangress (daughter-in-law of Ganeshman Singh and wife of major power broker Prakash Man Singh) and UML (former mayor Keshab Shapit) was most unexpected by the political cognoscenti right up to the start of counting of votes. It implies two significant trends that will only grow in the days ahead.

First, educated voters of the capital city have rejected communal politics that has been the bane of 2005 Delhi Deal-inspired Loktrantra by electing a Madheshi-origin mayor in Kathmandu and a Newar mayor in Birganj. In general, Nepali voters never bought communalism because they never gave Madhesi and other ethnic parties much support, preferring to elect more ecumenical Kangress and communists. The message this time around to the communal parties is simple: your time is up; give up this politics of victimhood; and better think of becoming a pan-Nepal party or else you will be swept into the dustbin of history.

Second, young generation (and given our demographics, they are the bulk of the voters that would swing elections) have politically come of age and are stepping out from their comfort/escape zone into politics to shape their own future. The Balens, Deepak Joshis of Tanahu and many others in lower offices have given a powerful message that the time of failed leaders and parties is over, that they are not willing to give a pass to decades of failure and stagnation any more. Even the independents who lost have done so with very small margins that point to a growth of self-confidence among many other



reticent ones and the urge to come out with their candidacies in the future.

The win of Harka Sampang in Dharan as well as the candidacy of other independents even when they lost by small margins has been without the use of money and muscle power. Sampang had no large rallies; instead, he was a lone house-to-house, streetcorner-to-streetcorner one-man campaign. In the local elections five years back, he had managed to garner only a few hundred votes. This time he defeated a sure-win coalition Kangress candidate by a wide margin. What Dharan voters seem to have appreciated are his simple, corruption-free campaign and single-point message of improving Dharan's water supply and allied municipal services.

The second lesson that emerges is that Nepali voters are beginning to see themselves as increasingly independent, that they are not tied serfs to any political party, that they consider a candidate's integrity more important than party affiliation. While reporting in partisan Sahuji media has been of Nepali Kangress winning the largest number mayoral seats with the UML second and Maoists third, a deconstruction of the numbers indicates something else. Given that this is a flawed "first past the post" system where one does not need 50% or more of votes to win (indeed ALL winners currently have won with minority votes, with often more than two-thirds of those who actually voted having voted for other candidates), winning in most cases does not mean mass support. In terms of actual total votes won, UML with its strong local base seems to have come out first with some 36% votes with Kangress second at 29%. This will have serious implications for parties going for national elections in half a year's time.

The other facts to consider are that in many places where Kangress has won, it has done so by demolishing (for example Kavre or Jhapa) decades old UML stronghold. Similarly, UML has won by capturing Kangress and especially Maoist bastions, of the latter in the Tarai. Examples include Itahari or Madi in Chitwan, and Kaski where UML won 23 of 29 wards. Also, where UML lost (as in Bharatpur or Pokhara mayorship) it did so by putting up a disliked Oli loyalist over a genuinely popular local leader. Significant also is the fact that national stature leaders lost local elections in their own home wards to the opposition, Oli in Jhapa, Sher Bahadur Deuba in Dandeldhura, Gagan Thapa in Kathmandu, Madhav Nepal in Bara and so on. Moreover, wherever the big parties repeated their candidates, almost 60% lost

their elections.

The incompetence of the National Election Commission has also come to light. Nominated by party honchos, the commissioners have unwittingly demonstrated partisanship and lack of foresight, waiting for signals from party bosses rather than taking independent decisions in the conduct of elections. The fact that almost 25% of the votes were invalid is telling! In some cases it was as high as 34%, mainly because the ballot paper was cumbersome and of the size of an unfolded daily newspaper, and that symbols of parties were included who did not even have candidates for that particular post.

**First, educated voters of the capital city have rejected communal politics that has been the bane of 2005 Delhi Deal-inspired Lok-trantra by electing a Madheshi-origin mayor in Kathmandu and a Newar mayor in Birganj. In general, Nepali voters never bought communalism because they never gave Madhesi and other ethnic parties much support, preferring to elect more ecumenical Kangress and communists.**

It confused even educated voters. Why could they not have had simpler separate ballot papers for different contested posts and different coloured ballot boxes to cast them in as was done even in Panchayat days?

Pokhara's case is most interesting on this count. UML put up a mayoral candidate who was quickly exposed in social media as a jewelry thief! UML replaced him by Krishna Bahadur Thapa who had an unsavoury record as being anti-Dalit with a case on the issue of caste discrimination pending in the court, something strange and ironic for a so-called "progressive Marxist communist" party! A massive and unprecedented mobilization of Dalits occurred that led to a sure win for the UML going to another communist leader from the breakaway UML faction.

The one big message to emerge from all these results – win of independents and party rebel candidates, pariah-treated parties like RPP doubling and tripling their vote count, big parties demolishing the other's stronghold etc. – is the total disgust of Nepali voters for established big parties and their leadership that have ruled the roost for much of last three decades. This reality is already beginning to haunt top big party leadership as the country heads for national elections in half-a-year's time. The debate is, and should be, intense in questioning the lack of policy and vision among established parties, of the entrenched neo-feudalism therein, of their erstwhile pandering to communal forces, as well as their refusal to implement electoral reforms including the Supreme Court's decision to ensure "none of the above" vote box in the ballots. Question should also be asked: why should local elections be held in ALL local bodies in one day instead of staggering it throughout the year? And why should more sensible ballot papers not be printed locally once the actual contending list of candidates and parties emerge?

## NATIONAL

### NEPAL FOREIGN SERVICE DAY

# Recognition For Contribution

*Nepal Foreign Service Day recognized the persons who served in Nepalese foreign service to defend and promote Nepal's national interest*

By KESHAB POUDEL

George Santayana, an eminent western writer, once said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." The statement shows the importance of remembering the past not to repeat the mistake and for the betterment of the future.

Different organizations observe their annual day to remember their glorious past to be better prepared for the future. This practice prevails all over. Army observes Army Day to remember its past, Police Day is for police, Nursing Day is for nurses and Civil Service Day is for civil servants.

Foreign Ministry of Nepal has also chosen to establish foreign service as a separate service in Civil Service. On Jestha 2018, Nepal Government set up a specialized foreign

service.

Although Nepal's Foreign Service has also made immense and important contributions in nation building by taking part in bilateral negotiations, meetings and state level engagements, there was no practice to observe such a day till now.

Thanks to foreign minister Dr. Narayan Khadka, foreign secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal and senior joint secretary Prakash Subedi and the team with them, Ministry of Foreign Affairs has started to observe Nepal Foreign Service Day from this year.

Despite being a highly important service in any independent and sovereign country, Nepal started observing its Foreign Service Day by felicitating those who served in different missions abroad to serve

Nepal.

As one of the oldest country of the world having a long history of independence and sovereignty, Nepal's foreign service has also developed with it hand in hand.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted the program to mark the first Nepal Foreign Service Day. Foreign minister Dr. Narayan Khadka conferred a dozen retired officials, including career diplomats of Nepal's Foreign Ministry, for their contribution to the nation serving as foreign ministry cadres.

On the occasion, Minister Dr. Khadka also felicitated 11 living retired civil servants who served in Nepal's Foreign Service after 2018 and before 2018. Those civil servants felicitated by minister include Hari Prasad Pokharel, Yogendra Nath







Ojha, Narayan Prasad Rajbhandary and Narsingh Man Singh Pradhan.

Out of 36 persons who started the foreign service in its inception, five individuals were felicitated. Those include Narayan Prasad Arjyal, Bishwo Pradhan, Yadab Kanta Silwal, Bhinda S. Shah and Gobhardhan Bikram Shah, Ganesh Man Shrestha and Shiva Ram Shrestha.

Addressing the program, foreign minister Dr. Khadka described the day as an important day for the nation. He said that Nepal's foreign ministry officials have been doing their best serving the nation.

Foreign secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal described that there are practices all over the world to celebrate National Foreign Service Day. He said that Nepal has also started this. He said that former secretary and colleague Madan Kumar Bhattarai helped them to find the history of foreign service of Nepal.

Attended by a large number of retired employees of Foreign Ministry, retired career diplomats and current employees, joint secretary Prakash Subedi introduced those senior retired career diplomats who were honored.

"Foreign service has a long history in Nepal. Since the launching of national unification move by Prithvi Narayan Shah, Nepal's for-

eign service came side by side with it. Foreign service carried different names in different times but it has been there all the time. As all state institutions, the service was professionalized and modernized following establishment of democracy in Nepal," said Minister Khadka. "It is a great occasion to see all senior civil servants who had served in foreign service before me."

"Different countries have been observing foreign service day recognizing its importance. I am

happy to say that we have also started observing the day from this year," said secretary Paudyal.

Although they served different missions around the world representing Nepal and retired a long time back from the service, retired civil servants, who served in foreign service during the tenure, found sudden happiness and pleasure when they received the letter for felicitation sent by the ministry.

"Whoever may have come up with the idea, what I can say is that this is a good beginning. I have retired long time back. I felt pride to receive the letter for felicitation," said historian Narayan Prasad Rajbhandari (Chittarajna Nepali) who was retired from the civil service serving up to the commissioner of Election Commission.

"From the days of Prithvi Narayan Shah the great, Nepal's foreign service evolved in different names in different times. Institutionalizations of Nepal's foreign service began in 2018," said Rajbhandary who served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2013-2018.

Although many Nepalese civil servants served in Nepal's Foreign Service since 1962 and before, Ministry of Foreign Affairs felicitated 11 living retired employees to mark the first Nepal Foreign Service Day.



# Meeting With Purpose

*Foreign Secretary Paudyal Thanked China For The Preparation Of The Return Of Nepali Students To China*

By A CORRESPONDENT

As two neighbors, Nepal and China are two important partners as well. Since the last two years, contact at the people to people level has drastically reduced due to restrictions

of the Nepal-China Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism held virtually on May 25, Foreign Secretary Paudyal thanked the Chinese Government for the generous support of life-saving vaccines and

Both sides agreed to promote cooperation in various sectors including trade, transit, connectivity, investment, health, tourism, poverty alleviation, disaster management, education, culture, and people-to-people exchanges, among others, read the press release.

The two sides also agreed to activate bilateral mechanisms to enhance cooperation and partnership in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. They also emphasized the need for timely completion of China-assisted projects.

Both sides underlined the need to enhance the level of support for improving the livelihood of people residing in bordering districts in the Northern Himalayan region of Nepal, according to the press release.

They also exchanged views on continuing cooperation in various regional and multilateral forums on matters of mutual interest.

“Glad to participate in the 14th meeting of China-Nepal Diplomatic Consultation Mechanism via video link during which both sides agreed to promote cooperation in various sectors,” tweeted Chinese ambassador to Nepal Hou Yanqi.

The Nepali delegation was composed of senior officials of various Ministries of the Government of Nepal and the Chargé d'affaires at the Embassy of Nepal in Beijing. Likewise, the Chinese delegation comprised the high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China and the Ambassador of China to Nepal, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



imposed by China to avert the COVID-19 crisis. Large numbers of Nepalese students, who are admitted to Chinese Universities, are unable to return to pursue their education and suspension of flights has stopped the movement of people.

In the recent high-level meeting, China has announced two important decisions: Resumption of regular flights and allowing Nepalese students to return to China for study. This is a major breakthrough for Nepal.

Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal thanked the Chinese side for their decision to resume the regular passenger flights between the two countries in Kathmandu-Kunming and Kathmandu-Chengdu sectors. He also thanked the Chinese side for the preparation of the return of Nepali students to China and requested to facilitate the return of Nepali business people and their families to China.

Addressing the 14th meeting

medical supplies to Nepal during the difficult time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal and Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Wu Jianghao led their respective delegations to the meeting.

On the occasion, the two sides took stock of Nepal-China relations and exchanged views on further promoting bilateral relations and cooperation for mutual benefit, according to the press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Assistant Minister Wu assured the Foreign Secretary of China's support for the improvement of health infrastructure as well as for the capacity building of medical personnel of Nepal.

During the meeting, the two sides underscored the importance of exchange of high-level visits and stressed the need for timely implementation of the agreements and understandings reached between the two countries.



## BUDGET 2022/023

# Populist Package

*At a time when the country's economic indicators are in a bad shape due to the global conflict and COVID-19 pandemic, no one needed to analyze what Nepal's annual budget for fiscal year 2022/023 would look like. Increasing salary, minister Janardan Sharma tried to woo the civil servants. Reducing the age limit for social welfare, the minister has made another effort to make political gains. Announcing dream projects like fast track, construction of mega airport and hydropower, the minister unknowingly is pushing Nepal to go to a financial debacle. Looking for the coming two elections, Minister Sharma presented a budget full of populist packages rather than saving the economy*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**D**rawing severe criticism from his own party colleagues and economists, the finance minister of Nepal's coalition government has claimed that the goals set in the budget estimates for the financial year 2022/23 will be implemented as intended.

Minister Janardan Sharma presented the annual budget worth a total of Rs. 1793.83 billion for the upcoming fiscal year of 2022/023 at the joint session of the federal parliament on 29 May, Sunday. Compared to the last year, this year's budget is up by 8.87 per cent.

#### Expenses:

-Total budget Rs. 1793.83 billion

-Current expenditure Rs. 753.40 billion  
-Capital expenditure Rs. 380.38 billion  
-Fiscal management Rs. 230.22 billion  
-Fiscal transfer to province and local level Rs. 429.83 billion

#### Resources:

Revenue Rs. 1240.11 billion  
Foreign grant Rs. 55.46 billion

Fiscal deficit of current budget Rs. 498.26 billion will be financed through a foreign debt of Rs. 242.26 billion and domestic debt of Rs. 256 billion.

#### Defending Budget

To convince his critics and defending his move, Finance Minister

Janardan Sharma urged all sides not to worry about the implementation of the programs presented in the budget for the coming fiscal year.

Stating that the budget is a multi-faceted issue, Finance Minister Sharma said that the issues of increasing employment, developing infrastructure and import substitution have been given priority in the budget by making maximum use of the resources available. He expressed confidence that the forthcoming budget would make the country prosperous and address the development aspirations of the Nepali people.

Although he defended his budget for entire two hours of his press conference, finance minister Sharma also conceded that there was the need of commitment and support from all. He said the budget demands commitment from all walks of life for its implementation.

#### Reducing Trade Deficit

The Finance Minister said that the government intends to reduce the trade deficit by exporting cement. "We have decided to give cash subsidy and exemption in electricity tariff to the industries to promote export," he said.

He also claimed that the economic growth would be eight percent as the budget was prepared to set the target for the first time in every sector. Everyone has a sense of belonging to this budget as the suggestions of all have been taken into consideration in the budget formulation.



## ECONOMY

Finance Minister Sharma clarified that the budget has come with the idea of developing a self-reliant economy, with special attention to the agricultural sector.

“The goal is to reduce imports, increase exports and expand employment. We have specified all the areas. The challenge is to implement it. The main focus of the budget is to work by making the government machinery and employees enthusiastic,” he said. The budget aims to lift eight million people a year out of poverty.

Considering the fact that the private sector contributes more than 70 percent to the economy, the budget has been prepared to encourage it for production, said the Finance Minister. He shared that attention has been paid to the development of the economy based on internal revenue and the budget intends to gradually reduce the customs revenue.

### Reduce Taxes In Fuel

With the increase of fuel prices, the government is facing all out criticisms. The finance minister said that the government was planning to reduce the price of fuel by reducing the tax levied as infrastructure tax.

The Finance Minister informed that the foreign aid received in the current fiscal year has decreased from 35.64 percent to 30.87 percent.

Nepal's economy is expected to expand by 5.8% in the current financial year ending mid-July, helped by a pick-up in economic activity following a fall in COVID-19 cases, the finance minister said.

The growth estimates were higher than 4.3% year-on-year growth in the previous year, but lower than

earlier projection of 7% growth for the current fiscal year, as the rising energy and food prices have hit consumer spending and firms' investments.

Nepal has ended almost all pandemic-related restrictions, imposed to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus and took several steps to revive the economy hit by the pandemic. “As the impact of COVID-19 is minimal, the economic and social life is becoming normal,” Finance Minister Janardan Sharma said, presenting the annual budget in the parliament for the new financial year beginning mid-Ju-

from economists, politicians and businessmen.

Former Finance Minister Barsaman Pun said that the budget estimate for the next year was positive as it targets production sector. “Budget target of promoting agro production which leads the economy towards self-reliance is positive,” he said.

CPN UML leader and former Finance Minister Surendra Pandey, however, said that the government brought a baseless and distributory budget targeting the election.

“Except for promoting the use of electric stoves in households there is nothing exciting in the budget,” he said, adding that policy and priority was somewhere and the budget was directed elsewhere. He also said the budget neither can maintain fiscal discipline nor can it meet the targets.

Similarly, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai,

former Prime Minister, said that the budget excluded plans for transformation, rather it preferred improvements with gradual progress. “Ambitious targets cannot be met, it could be a better spice for the election to lure voters,” he said.

Likewise, economist Dr. Chandra Mani Adhikari said that the priorities and thoughts carried by the budget are comparatively good, but it has not maintained concrete policy for addressing the present challenges of the economy such as liquidity crunch and foreign currency reserves.

The budget is large in size and it is difficult to manage resources for the budget such as revenue mobilization and foreign grants and loans, he said.

“Proper implementation of



ly. He said economic indicators except those relating to external sector, were “satisfactory”.

Sharma said the government would soon reduce fuel prices which were increased by up to 12.5% last week saying global prices had spiked in the wake of Russia's invasion on Ukraine but gave no details. The government has banned luxury goods imports until mid-July amid dwindling forex reserves, which fell 18.2% to \$9.61 billion on mid-April from mid-July, according to the central Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) data. Officials said the pandemic would not have much impact on economic activities by mid-July when the current financial year ends.

### Mixed Response

The budget for the next fiscal year 2022/23 received mixed reactions





the budget within the existing implementation mechanism and institutional setup is almost impossible,” he said.

The revenue target of the government for the next fiscal year is difficult to meet while it is also not easy to achieve the target of economic growth and control inflation at 7 per cent, he added.

Senior vice-president of Nepal Chamber of Commerce Kamlesh Agrawal said that the programs included in the budget are positive and industry-friendly.

“Most of the priorities of the budget are good but implementation of the budget looks challenging. It will be challenging to collect revenue of Rs. 1,240 billion while the government has tightened the import,” he said.

The target of fulfilling the deficit of the budget from domestic borrowing is also challenging, he said.

He said that the budget has failed to focus on export promotion.

Senior vice president of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) Chandra Prasad Dhakal said that the government has introduced the budget by incorporating suggestions made by the FNCCI which has encouraged the private sector in the field of investment.

The budget has given priority to give discounts on tax while investing

in Karnali and Sudurpashchim provinces for a certain period which is also positive, he said.

“The government plans to open Sports University with the participation of the private sector and open medical colleges outside the Kathmandu Valley which are encouraging for the private sector,” he said.

He, however, said that the implementation part of the budget is more challenging in the coming year.

### **Salary Increased By 15 Percent**

The government has increased the monthly salary of its employees by 15 per cent. Presenting the budget for the fiscal year 2022/023 finance minister Janardan Sharma said that the increased salary of government employees and civil servants including the police and army will come into effect from July 17.

Existing inflation allowances are also continued for the next fiscal year.

### **High Hope**

Minister for Finance Janardan Sharma has said the budget for the upcoming fiscal year

2079-80 BS (2022-23) is a take-off point towards production economy from an import one and towards inclusion from exclusion.

While announcing the budget in the joint session of the Federal Parliament, the Finance Minister said the nation’s economy was on the path of recovery after the COVID-19 crisis and the revenue collection in the current fiscal year was satisfactory.

Poverty alleviation and maximum utilization of available natural assets and capital mobilization to create jobs are the priorities of the budget that focused on promoting a production-based economy, according to the Minister who said, “Agriculture, tourism, industry and energy are the special priorities of the budget.”

Through the budget, the government targets to minimize the imports of grains: rice, maize and wheat by 30 per cent. In addition to this, it plans to establish 100 food warehouses across the country and implement the ‘farmers’ pension program. For the seed capital of this program, it has decided to allocate a budget of Rs one billion.

Enhancement of fiscal discipline, a transformation of agricultural sectors, innovation-based economic development, recovery of tourism sector, promotion of hydropower sector and effective administrative service are other commitments of the budget.



# Conferment Of The Order of Japan' Decoration As Very Special To Me



I offer my sincerest thanks to you Ambassador Yutaka Kikuta for ceremonially conferring upon me 'The Order of Japan' (The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star) in recognition of my contribution to strengthening the economic relation between Japan and Nepal. I accept it as a great honour.

I have gathered that the 'The Order of Japan' was established during the Meiji era. My great Grand-Father Prime Minister Dev Shumsher Rana was an admirer of the political structure of the Meiji regime and wished to emulate it. As his direct descendant, I regard conferment of this decoration as very special to me.

In July 1954, on my way to New York to participate in a UN Fellowship Program, I visited Tokyo for three days as a tourist. I experienced great difficulty in communicating with the hotel staff, taxi drivers and shop stewards as they did not understand English. The economy of the country was in dire straits as the infrastructure and numerous factories had been destroyed during the War.

I visited Tokyo again for three days in September 1960 as the guest of the Governor of the Bank of Japan, Mr. Yamagoto. We became friends in Washington DC while attending the Annual General Meeting of the World Bank and IMF. I was there to follow up on Nepal's application for membership of the two organizations. In my interaction with him, I had conveyed my impressions of my Tokyo visit in 1954. His response was to invite me to spend a few days in Japan to observe the reconstruction and economic recovery that had been accomplished.

Arrangements had been made for me to visit Osaka and Tokyo to view the reconstruction. Also appointments had been made for me to visit a few factories and corporation offices for briefing by their CEO's about the new products that they were planning to market. The Sony products like the transistor radio were selling like hot cakes. I was received by the internationally acclaimed entrepreneur Mr. Akio Morita when I visited the Sony factory.

At the end of my visit I was amazed by the incredibly fast economic recovery made in the span of six years. I noted that Japanese people were endowed with a legendary resilience to tackle adversity. They were meticulous and perfectionists in whatever they set out to do. Their captains of industry had creative energy to conceive, design, manufacture and market new products. The Japanese government had a long term vision of expanding

trade. Thus the economic prospects of Japan in the coming years were enviable.

In the first meeting of the Board of Directors of Nepal Rastra Bank, held after my return to Kathmandu, I proposed that we deposit a certain portion of the Bank's reserve in Yen. My assessment was that the international market

price of Yen would go up and it did. With BODs approval, the deposit in Yen in the Bank of Japan was made in the Spring of 1961. Coincidentally this happened to be the first deposit in Yen made by a Foreign Central Bank in the Bank of Japan. The opening of the account in the Bank of Japan by the Nepal Rastra Bank triggered similar action by other Central Banks.

The opening of the Yen account forged a bond between the Central Banks of Japan and Nepal. And, secondly, it facilitated trade and economic relation between our two countries. Nepal Rastra Bank has confirmed to me that Nepal Rastra Bank's Yen account in the Bank of Japan still exists.

"The Order of Japan" has been conferred upon me for the action that I took as Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB). As such I dedicate this award to NRB.

I visited Japan in 1970 and 1980 as the Representative of the UN Development Program to participate in the aid meetings organized by the World Bank. Interaction with the officials of the Government of Japan kept me abreast of the latest developments in the country. In one of these visits I had the pleasure of dining with Kenzo Ogura, one of the top officials in the Foreign Ministry. He was the room-mate in Cambridge of my brother-in-law Mr. Chiran Shumsher Thapa, Principal Secretary to his Majesty King Birendra.

I visited Japan again in 1990 as a member of the team of Nepalese businessman on a mission to procure machinery for yarn industry. In all these meetings I urged my Japanese counterparts to further strengthen the economic relation between our two countries.

I gather that my intellectual friend, Japan's Ambassador to Nepal Zenzo Kaminaga supported the conferment of the Award to me. He had presented to me a book 'Wealth of Asia' authored by him. I also presented to him a book authored by me. I offer my heartiest thanks to him for his support.

I would like to end my remarks by thanking Honorable Motegi Toshimitsu, Minister for Foreign Af-



fairs of Japan Your Excellency Yutaka Kikuta Ambassador of Japan, and Officials of Embassy of Japan for their preparatory work for this award. Also, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Prime Minister of Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba, and the Chief of protocol in the Foreign Ministry of Nepal for approving the award to me.

**HIMALAYA SUMSHER RANA**

## Order Of Japan

*Japanese Government Honors Former Governor Himalaya Sumsher Rana*

By A CORRESPONDENT

In the history of any two countries, incidents such as these are rare to see when two individuals from the same family have immensely contributed to fostering the relations of two countries.

Great Grandfather of Himalaya Sumsher Rana, prime minister Deb Sumsher Rana sent the first batch of Nepalese students to Japan to learn technical education 120 years ago, opening doors to Japan.

In a similar way, Himalaya Sumsher Rana, as a first governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, took a decision to open the Nepal's foreign currency account in Bank of Japan in 1960. With over hundreds of Japanese trained Nepalese been contributing to various sectors of Nepal now, what prime minister Deb Sumsher Rana visualized was that Japa-

Ambassador KIKUTA conveyed the decoration of the Order of Japan (The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star) to Rana, the founding governor of the Nepal Rastra Bank and former Finance Secretary, who opened the first foreign central bank account in the Bank of Japan in the 1960s.

The Ambassador of Japan to Nepal Yutaka Kikuta handed over Order of Japan (The Order of The Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star) to former governor and secretary Himalaya Sumsher Rana amid a function at ambassador's residence.

Following Rana's speech, Dr. Prabin Shrestha, the president of JUAAN (Japanese Universities Alumni Association in Nepal) and SAKAMOTO Hiroyuki, the Mayor of Miharu-town, Fukushima Prefecture, which is the hometown of Tabei, delivered speeches.

In this special year, 2022, with the 120th anniversary of International Student Exchanges between Japan and Nepal, Ambassador Kikuta celebrated the long history of people-to-people exchange between Japan and Nepal. He referred to the achievement of Rana's great-grandfather, Dev Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana, the Prime Minister of Nepal who decided the dispatch of the first eight Nepali students to Japan, implemented in 1902. He shared the fact that the students brought back the knowledge they gained in Japan and contributed to the development of Nepal.

In his speech, Ambassador Kikuta also cited the accomplishment of Tabei and her honorable acceptance of the Gurkha Dakshina Bahu Award from the Kingdom of Nepal in 1975, and the Tenzing Hillary Award from Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal in 2010.

Participants enjoyed, among others, Japanese food and sake from Fukushima Prefecture.

Rana, who is now 93 years old, and served as former secretary and former governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, contributed to the promotion of friendly relations between Japan and Nepal by strengthening economic cooperation.

Japanese Decorations are conferred upon foreigners twice a year, on 29th April and 3rd November concurrently with the conferment of decorations and medals to Japanese nationals. The Order of the Rising Sun are bestowed upon individuals of merit, in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the nation or public, they are also conferred upon foreign nationals who have made notable contributions to promotion of relations between Japan and other countries in such areas as politics and diplomacy, research and education, medicine and social welfare, economy and industry, and culture and sports.

"I offer my sincerest thanks to you ambassador Yutaka Kikuta for ceremonially conferring upon me The Order of Japan (The Order of The Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star) in recognition of my contribution to strengthening the economic relations between Japan and Nepal. I accept it as a great honor," said Rana.



**L O N G  
LIVE NEPAL-JA-  
PAN FRIENDSHIP**

***Himalaya Sumsher Rana is a former governor of Nepal Rastra Bank. Excerpts of his Remarks by Himalaya S. Rana at the Investiture held at residence of Japanese Ambassador to Nepal on which held on 24th May, 2022***

nese technical education would help Nepal industrialize and modernize.

Similarly, the vision of Himalaya Sumsher Rana to diversify Nepal's foreign currency reserve, opening a bank account in Japanese currency in bank of Japan, proved wise to enhance Nepal's foreign trade. As Japan is a major development partner of Nepal, supporting Nepal's overall development and providing the financial and technical support, Himalaya Sumsher Rana will always be remembered as his great grandfather prime minister Deb Sumsher.

The Embassy of Japan in Nepal held an official commemorative event celebrating the 2021 Autumn Conferment honoring Himalaya Rana, the 120th Anniversary of International Student Exchanges, and the achievement of Ms. Tabei Junko, the first female mountaineer to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

# Long History Of People-To-People Exchange Between Japan And Nepal



BY: YUTAKA KIKUTA

Last two years, we sadly had to suspend almost any kinds of gatherings due to Covid-19 pandemic, so this is the first time for me to invite this number of guests to my residence. Welcome, and thank you all for coming here this evening.

This year 2022 is the 120th anniversary since the Government of Nepal sent eight young Nepalis to Japan for study. They landed on the port of Yokohama on June 17, 1902.

Today, I would like to celebrate the long history of people-to-people exchange between Japan and Nepal.

The first representative of our close relationship is Mr. Himalaya Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana, the founding Governor of the Nepal Rastra Bank and former Finance Secretary. It was Mr. Rana's great grandfather, Right Honourable Mr. Dev Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana, Prime Minister of Nepal, who decided to send the first Nepali students to Japan.

Himalaya Rana himself also made a historic achievement in the economic relation with Japan. In 1960, he successfully persuaded the Board of NRB to open a bank account in the Bank of Japan. Thus, the NRB became the first foreign central bank in the world to open an account in the Bank of Japan. The account is still maintained and, as a result, it is now the symbol of our close economic relations.

Recognizing his numerous contributions to promoting economic relations and mutual understanding between Japan and Nepal, the Government of Japan decided to award the Imperial Decoration to Mr. Rana last year. Later today, I would like to convey the decoration to Mr. Rana and ask him to share a few words with us.

The second person I would like to introduce today is Dr. Prabin Shrestha, recently elected President of JUAAN, Japanese Universities Alumni Association, Nepal. Following the eight pioneers, the number of Nepali students studying in Japan has risen to the third largest, after China and Vietnam. It is astonishing considering the population of Nepal compared to that of the two countries. JUAAN is the living proof of successful educational cooperation between Nepal and Japan. The students returned from Japan have contributed to the development of Nepal in various fields to date.

The third speaker today is Mr. Sakamoto, Mayor of

Miharu Town in Fukushima, Japan. He kindly sent a special video message for us.

How come Miharu Town? Well, Japan and Nepal are both blessed with nature including mountains.

Sagarmatha, or Everest, is one of famous and important tourism resources Nepali people are proud of.

The first men who climbed to the summit of Sagarmatha were, as all of you know, Mr. Tenzing Norgay and Sir Edmund Percival Hillary.

Then, who was the first woman reached the summit?

It was a Japanese female climber, Ms. Junko Tabei, and she was from Miharu Town. Ms. Tabei conquered Sagarmatha on May 16, 1975, and in this regard, she was awarded Gurkha Dakshina Bahu Award from then Kingdom of Nepal, and Tenzing Hillary Award from Ministry of Culture of Nepal.

Today, May 24, is fortunately between the anniversary of her successful climbing to Sagarmatha in May and the anniversary of the first Nepali students arriving Japan in June.

More than a century ago, those first eight students brought back their knowledge gained in Japan and contributed to the development of this country.

In addition, they also took back wisteria, persimmon, chestnuts and chrysanthemums and planted them in Kathmandu.

These plants rooted themselves in Nepal and still give enjoyment to us timelessly.

Like these flowers and fruits, I believe that our friendship also will continue to bloom beautifully and bear fruits indefinitely.

I hope today's gathering be a good reminder for you about our time-tested people-to-people interaction.

तपाईंहरूको ध्यानार्कषणकालागधिन्यवाद ।

*Yutaka Kikuta is the Ambassador of Japan to Nepal. Excerpt of the statement delivered at a ceremony.*





## HUMAN RIGHTS

# Something Wrong

*Home Minister Bal Krishna Khand said that the government is committed to implement NHRC's recommendations*

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when there are growing concerns over not implementing the recommendations of National Human Rights Commission, Home Minister Bal Krishna Khand has expressed his commitment to implementing the NHRC's recommendations.

Right activists are demanding more stern actions against those individuals involved in heinous crime of human rights violations and are complaining that the government does not implement the NHRC's recommendations.

In his address to the 22nd anniversary of the NHRC, the Home Minister shared that a task force had been already formed to proceed towards that end.

He pledged to keep the NHRC's independence and sovereignty intact.

He went on to say that the bill to amend the NHRC act had been presented to the House with priority and the presence of NHRC would be further effective once the document got endorsed. The bill is centered on enhancing the freedom and sovereignty of the NHRC, according to him.

As he said, the government is committed to ensuring accessibility of survivors of war-time incidents to justice and it will be carried out through a transitional justice mechanism soon. "Government security bodies and law-implementing bodies are committed to protecting and respecting the people's civic and political rights," he said, claiming that there was a fall in incidences of human rights violation.

"The government adopts a policy of ending impunity and a zero-tolerance against the violation of human rights," he said, adding that he pledged to build a human rights-friendly atmosphere to promote the economic, social and cultural

rights of the people.

According to the Home Minister, coordination and co-operation among the three-tier government are going on for implementing the fifth human rights national work plan.

"The government is serious towards the implementation of international and regional commitments to addressing issues of migrant workers subjugated to torture, abuse and labor exploitation by strengthening the capacity of diplomatic missions abroad in cooperation with the international organizations and the NRNA," he said.

As the Minister explained, the climate change issue and its impact in countries like Nepal are not just the concern of the state, but it is the responsibility of the international community as well and the government was committed to abiding by its responsibilities as per international commitments regarding climate change.

The Home Minister went on to say that a security mechanism had been further strengthened to deal with the cases of violence against women such as rape, domestic violence and acid attack efficiently and ensure justice to survivors. "I want to share here that the government is doing homework to formulate required laws to prevent such incidences."

The government bodies are working actively and with much concern to protect women and girls from being subjugated to violence and criminal offences, according to the Minister.

As he said, the government expects support and cooperation from civil society, social entities, political parties and human rights defenders to build a society free from a crime. He vowed to pay spe-



cial heed to accelerate the rebuilding of the NHRC building damaged by the 2015 earthquake.

Also speaking on the occasion, NHRC chair Top Bahadur Magar expressed his concern over what he said was lack of full implementation of its recommendations.

"The NHRC is in regular discussions with bodies concerned including the government to ensure the full executions of its recommendations. We hope for justice to survivors."

He took time to insist on an equal role of a three-tier government for the protection and promotion of human rights.

He was worried over what he said was lack of priorities for the people's rights to education, health, housing, food sovereignty and consumers' rights. "The incidences of women violence, sexual assault, rape and caste-based discriminations have not been minimized. As he said, the NHRC reached all the 77 districts for the monitoring of local level elections in view of human rights reports.

In his opening speech, member of commission Dr. Surya Dhungel said that implementing the recommendations given by commission enhances the image of the government at international and national levels and help to end impunity.

# Nepalis Honored

*Four Nepali Peacekeeper To Be Honored Posthumously At United Nations Ceremony*

By A CORRESPONDENT

UN Headquarters observes the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers on Thursday, 26 May 2022. Secretary-General António Guterres will lay a wreath to honor the nearly 4,200 UN peacekeepers that have lost their lives since 1948 and preside over a ceremony at which the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal is to be awarded posthumously to 117 military, police, and civilian peacekeepers, which lost their life serving under the UN flag last year.

Among the peacekeepers to be honored posthumously are four from Nepal: NCE Pitambar Thapa of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL); Pri-

During a special ceremony, the Secretary-General will award the “Captain Mbaye Diagne Medal for Exceptional Courage” posthumously to Captain Abdelrazakh Hamit Bahar of Chad, who served with the United Nations Integrated Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The medal is named for a Senegalese peacekeeper who was killed in Rwanda in 1994 after saving countless civilian lives. This is the second time the medal has been awarded since the inaugural medal was presented to Captain Diagne’s family in his honour in 2016.

The Secretary-General will also award the ‘2021 Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award’ to Major Winner Zharare, a Zimbabwean military observer, who served with the UN Mission in South Sudan. Created in 2016, the Award “recognizes the dedication and effort of an individual peacekeeper in promoting the principles of UN Security Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.”

In his message, the Secretary-General said: “Today, we honour the more than one million women and men who have served as UN peacekeepers since 1948. We pay tribute to the nearly 4,200 heroes and heroines who sacrificed their lives in the cause of peace. And we are reminded an age-old truth: peace can never be taken for granted. Peace is the prize. We are deeply grateful to the 87,000 civilian, police and military personnel now serving under the UN flag who are helping to realize the prize of peace worldwide.”

The theme for this year’s ob-

servance is “People. Peace. Progress. The Power of Partnerships.” According to the Secretary-General, “Around the globe, UN peacekeepers work with Member States, civil society, humanitarians, the media, the communities they serve and many others, to foster peace, protect civilians, promote human rights and the rule of law and improve the lives of millions of people.”

Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, said: “Every day, UN peacekeepers work to protect vulnerable people in the world’s most fragile political and security situations. The dangers they face are greater than ever, with increasing global tensions, ever-more complex threats from terrorist attacks to organized crime and the use of Improvised Explosive Devices as well as a surge in mis and disinformation targeting our missions and the communities we serve. Despite these challenges, peacekeepers persevere alongside our many partners in the collective pursuit of peace. Today, we thank them for their tremendous contribution and remember with great sorrow our colleagues who have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving the cause of peace.”

The International Day of UN Peacekeepers was established by the General Assembly in 2002, to pay tribute to all men and women serving in peacekeeping, and to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace. The General Assembly designated 29 May as the International Day of UN Peacekeepers in commemoration of the day in 1948 when the UN’s first peacekeeping mission, the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), began operations in Palestine. Since then, more than 1 million women and men have served in 72 UN peacekeeping operations.



vate Dipendra Osti, who served with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS); Police POA Umesh Kumar Mehatar; who served with the UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID); and Mr. Jhank Nath Regmi who served in a civilian capacity in the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA).

Nepal is the 2nd largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN Peacekeeping. It currently deploys more than 5,700 military and police personnel to the UN operations in Abyei, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, the Middle East, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, and the Western Sahara.



# Nepal Was And Will Always Be A Country That We Will Be Proud To Continue Our Cooperation



It is my honor and pleasure to congratulate you on this event marking the establishment of Diplomatic relations between Nepal and Israel. Due to Covid restrictions, we had to change the date of this jubilee ceremony but the importance of it never faded away.

Let me remind us about the year: In 1960 both our countries were young: Israel as a young nation that just got its independence 12 years earlier and Nepal, a young democracy that just voted a year earlier for its first democratically elected Prime Minister.

Our two leaders, BP Koirala and David Ben Gurion, jointly declared this event and established the relations. Nepal was the first, and for thirty years, the only country from South Asia to have full diplomatic relations with the State of Israel.

Israel will never forget this and will always remember its good friends and the long history of good bilateral relations.

Israel and Nepal share the same values of tolerance and democracy. We also share the pride of our homeland and cherish the diversity in our communities. At the same time, we, Nepalese and Israelis, share the desire of our nationals to work or to visit in the other country. Yes, there is one case where we perform the two extremes apart: While you have the highest point on our planet, we have the lowest place on Earth. Mount Ever-

est – Sagarmatha in Nepali, and the Dead Sea – Yam Hamelach in Hebrew, represent two extremes but for many years, they are linked together and represent the close relations that we have.

During these 62 years of relations, we saw excellent cooperation on different fields: From agriculture to health and from tourism to care givers.

Israel was also the first to respond during the devastating earthquake in 2015 and sent planes full with medical cargo and 300 Doctors and medical teams to establish a field hospital in Kathmandu. This friendship between our nations will always continue!

The world is facing now days dramatic changes. Israel will continue to extend a hand to all its neighbors as well as

to far nations and share our knowledge and Israeli advanced technological innovations. Nepal was and will always be a country that we will be proud to continue our cooperation and close links of all levels.

Let me wish you again a happy anniversary and a joyful event.

*Goder is the ambassador of Israel to Nepal. Excerpts of the statement delivered on the occasion of 62nd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Israel on May 10, 2022.*



# ECOOKING Replacing LPG

*After the announcement by Minister for Finance Janardan Sharma in his recent budget to provide subsidy to electric cooking, removing subsidy from LPG, Nepal's clean cooking movement has entered a new phase. With the rising global oil prices and growing electricity production inside home, minister Sharma has found the right time to save millions of dollars given as subsidy to import the LPG. With the announcement of the new energy policy by federal government, the response of local and provincial governments will determine how quickly the clean e-cooking campaign will move. As provincial and local level governments are key to make the transition of energy a success, how the new budgets of provincial and local governments address issue will determine the future of the campaign*

By KESHAB POUDEL

With the announcement by Finance Minister Janardan Sharma to launch a campaign to replace Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and connect electricity for cooking all over the country, Nepal has entered into a new phase of energy transition from LPG to clean cooking and petroleum products to electricity.

At the start, Minister Sharma declared that the Singh Durbar will be free of gas cylinders to promote electric stove. He also said that metropolitan and sub metropolitan cities will also apply this.

Finance minister Sharma has announced a big decision on energy transition, the success of the campaign will finally depend on how provincial and local governments will take the decision.

Like central government, the decision by provincial govern-

ments to replace all LPG from their provincial secretariats will make a lot of difference. If local level government follows the decision, Nepal's energy transition will see drastic change.

Given the rise of global oil prices and continual pressure on Nepal's foreign currency reserves, province and local levels do not have much option other than to follow federal policy.

From the federal level, Minister Sharma has pushed the agenda of clean cooking campaign at the local levels. However, it is yet to see how local levels respond to his mission. The provincial governments also need to make such commitments. The replacement of LPG will have immense impact on Nepal's energy sector and industry.

Although Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Minister

Pampha Bhusal has been campaigning to replace the LPG by electricity since her appointment as minister of energy, her drive did not go much further. Minister Bhusal retracted her move reportedly after a threat of LPG producers.

With over 100 LPG filling industry all over Nepal, LPG producers have a very strong political lobby in all political parties. As things are out of control of the government, they are helpless this time. Given the





option to go for clean cooking, they will likely shift their industry.

With the Ukraine crisis and rising global oil price, Nepal has faced a huge trade deficit in importing the petroleum products. When Minister Sharma announced that gas stoves will be removed and replaced by electric stoves from Singh Durbar, there is no voice of opposition. Minister Sharma has further announced that all government offices and metropolises and sub-metropolises will remove LPG stoves within three months.

Minister Sharma's announcement to provide more subsidies to electric vehicles will likely to reduce the use of petroleum products. This indicates Nepal is in an energy transition stage.

#### **Response At Province And Local Levels**

Alliance of federal ruling parties has a majority government in seven provinces. Similarly, ruling alliances have secured victory in two thirds of local levels – that means, finance minister Sharma will have big support.

Province 1, 2, Gandaki, Lumbini, Karnali and Sudurpaschim Provinces have already backed minister Sharma's call to replace the LPG by renewable energy. Although Bagmati Province did not specifically say anything on replacing LPG by electricity and renewable energy, the government will announce subsidy to promote electric cooking.

Mayors of five Metropolitan cities like Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Pokhara, Birgunj and Biratnagar responded positively to finance minister. "This is the right time to make our city clean from pollution. We are ready to support the government not only converting kitchen into electric but also converting the petrol vehicles to electric," said Chiribabu Maharjan, mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan City.

#### **New eCooking Technology**



gy

Even for replacing LPG in Singh Durbar and metropolitan and sub-metropolitan cities, the government will require import of over 200,000 stoves and Nepal needs to spend dollars to purchase them.

At a time when the finance minister also announced support for domestic industry, this is the right time to start the production of the electric stoves back home. To save foreign currency further, Nepal needs to promote private sector to invest in producing the e-cooking devices in home.

Minister also said that the electric stoves will be provided nationwide by displacing gas stoves within the next seven months.

Unlike in the past, the government has allocated budget to provide subsidy in purchasing electric stoves. This means the campaign to replace the LPG start from the coming fiscal year.

Finance Minister Sharma has announced that the government will provide subsidy in induction stove. Minister Sharma also said that he has allocated the budget to distribute electric stoves in subsidized prices to each household in collaboration with province and local gov-

ernment.

According to CBS Data, Nepal has currently 6.6 million households and Nepal will require at least 2 to 3 million electric stoves in the next two to three years. At a time when CG, Samsung and other few industries have been producing Nepal made stoves, there is the need to provide production subsidy so that such stoves can be produced within the country.

He also said that the electricity consumption will be increased from 400 units to 400 kilowatt hours per person. He said that improved stoves will be distributed to those who do not have access to electricity. Minister Sharma has announced the allocation of budget to make cooking clean.

Minister Sharma also said that the electricity will be provided to all citizens within two years. He also said that the transmission lines, distribution lines and substations will be completed to supply the quality of electricity.

#### **Transfer Subsidy From LPG To eCooking**

Finance Minister Sharma has announced to review subsidy given to LPG by the government. Announcing review of the subsidy

## COVERSTORY



given in the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), Minister Sharma in his annual budget for 2079/080 said that the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supply are doing homework to promote electric stoves instead of providing subsidy to LPG.

Despite increasing the price to Rs.1800, Nepal Oil Corporation is currently giving per cylinder Rs. 1050 subsidy in LPG. NOC has already given green signal to transfer present subsidy given to LPG to electric cooking.

Finance Minister Janardan Sharma said that a campaign will be launched to replace LP gas and connect electricity.

What a coincidence, a few days before the presentation of budget, Ben Jeffreys, CEO of ATEC, visited Nepal demonstrating and sharing the use of new clean cooking technology and shared the experiences how the new clean cooking technology are transforming the use of bio-gas and electricity in kitchen.

ATEC, a startup company which has experience in e-Cooking and Biogas in Cambodia, Vietnam and Bangladesh, shared its experiences with Nepalese entrepreneurs, activists and representatives of the organizations working in this sector.

### Policy Level

Nepal has started the clean cooking campaign for long. To promote e-cooking the government imported induction from China in

2015. However, it did not last long. Over 20 organizations including national, provincial and local governments, semi government like Alternative Energy Promotion Center, Nepal Electricity Authority, UN Agencies INGOs, development partners have been working in the clean cooking campaign.

At a time when Nepal's energy policy supports expanding access to reliable, affordable, and clean energy, minister Sharma's recent decision will certainly take a shape.

Nepal's climate change policy and Social Development Goals have already set a goal to increase clean cooking through promoting electric cooking and bio-gas for long. However, it did not materialize. The current global energy crisis and growing prices of LPG at international market has changed the situation dramatically.

With surplus electricity in its hand, Nepal has best option to replace LPG within the city areas by promoting e-cooking. However, improved distribution and supply systems are required.

### Talks On Technology

Renewable Energy Confederation of Nepal (RECON) organized a talk program attended by various persons working in renewable energy, clean cooking and financial institutions.

Addressing the program, CEO Ben Jeffreys shared ATEC expertise in support of clean cooking movement in Nepal and business

development on clean cooking devices, especially electric induction cooktops and small biogas plants.

"ATEC's patented products deliver Tier-5 modern cooking solutions to households that are affordable through paygo technology. IoT functionality enhance user experience, improve service and support impact measurement and converting farm waste into safe and clean biogas for daily cooking needs," said Ben.

ATEC now serves over 25,000 people with modern cooking and has over 50 staff across Cambodia, Bangladesh and Australia. With a lean start-up model, ATEC is using disruptive technology, best practice eCommerce methods and data to drive decisions at every level.

"Our analysis shows that electric cooking is best placed to become the number one cooking solution globally given the average 50% running cost of LPG, user safety and production scalability," says Ben Jeffreys. "10 years ago electric cooking wouldn't be feasible for many emerging markets given the lack of access to electricity. However this has impressively changed across Asia and Africa, with Bangladesh earlier this year announcing that 100% of households now have access to electricity. This is a dramatic improvement from a connec-







cooking for 4 billion people by 2030 is a realistic goal with ATEC leading this charge globally.”

Wrapping up the interactions, Karuna Bajracharya from Clean Cooking Alliance said that the devices produced by ATEC are reasonably good in terms of price and it is better in terms of technology.

She said that Nepal’s electric cooking and bio-gas both need more appliances and devices to change the current state of use of energy.

As Nepal Electricity MD Kul Man Ghising said that Nepal would reach the position of importing less electricity and exporting more electricity in the fiscal year 2023/24, the launching of e-cooking campaign is the right step. He said that Nepal aims to become self-reliant in hydropower generation by the end of the fiscal year 2024/25. Ghising said that around 50 to 60 per cent electricity would be surplus in the rainy season after becoming self-reliant in electricity from 2024/25.

As federal government has announced a policy for energy transition, the policies of provincial and local level governments will determine how quickly Nepal reduces the use of fossil fuel.

tivity rate of just 47%, 13 years ago and we see similar electrification trends in other emerging markets in Asia and Africa.”

“ATEC plans to be the global leader in offering a hardware + carbon credit + paygo solution to distributors across Asia and Africa at scale - driving accessibility to modern cooking solutions while simultaneously generating high-quality carbon credits. It’s this ‘flywheel effect’ of utilizing carbon revenues to drive down household cooking costs that will bring modern cooking to every person on the planet.”

Presenting Nepal’s situation Subarna Kapali from Ajumery Bikas Foundation presented Nepal’s scenario focusing on the overall use of Bio-gas plant to generate the clean energy for cooking. Kapali said that Nepal is in the process of transformation in cooking energy.

Moderated by president Guna Raj Dhakal, Chairperson of RECON, Bhuwan Khanal from Nepal Biogas Promotion Association said that Nepal has currently 450,000 bio-gas plants in the coun-

try. He said that Nepal can welcome any technology which can enhance the present model.

Kushal Gurung, a bio-gas entrepreneur, highlighted the challenges faced by private sectors in Nepal in selling the bio-gas generated in the country.

“Solving clean cooking is not just a social impact problem for 4 billion people, but also a \$40bn total addressable market and a gigaton carbon credit market opportunity as well,” says ATEC CEO, Ben Jeffreys. “By synchronising the commercial, carbon credit and social impact opportunities together, we are firm in our belief that solving clean



# Youths In Forefront Of Nature, Heritage Conservation

With over 40 percent of the population below 30, Nepal is one of the youngest nations in terms of demography in South Asia. Recently, the Nepalese youths are getting involved in various programs organized by several organizations. Involved in a range of activities from social work, environmental protection, human rights, violence against women, awareness raising, entrepreneurship development, and preservation of culture and heritage campaigns, youths are getting in the forefront.

The youth participation in the recently concluded Shivapuri National Park Cleanup Campaign was highly impressive in that context. European Union, UN Habitat and Cleanup Nepal had organized the event



BY: SREEJAN SHRESTHA

Nona Deprez, the European Union Ambassador to Nepal, also joined the Shivapuri Cleanup Campaign, actively collecting plastic bottles, wrappers, papers and other wastes. One hundred and thirty individuals from different organizations participated in the Shivapuri Clean-up Campaign on 14 May 2022.

We can see young faces all over the country taking part in different campaigns and functions. Similar participation of the youth was also observed this year on International Women's Day. According to UNESCO, International Women's Day is a time to celebrate progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as to critically reflect on those achievements and aspire

for a larger global momentum toward gender equality.

Many organizations commemorated International Women's Day by hosting a variety of activities and events on March 8. This was also an occasion for youth to join the campaign and mission. Trave-Yeller organized a Cycling and Storytelling event with the theme: 'Imagine a gender-equal world. A world is free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination. A world that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. #BreakTheBias'.

The event was co-organized by the European Union, UN-Habitat, the Blue Diamond Society Nepal, Women Cycling Nepal, Yuwa, Cycle

City Network Nepal, and a number of other organizations. H.E. Nona Deprez, the European Union's Ambassador to Nepal, also attended the cycle rally early morning to support and motivate the bikers, as well as to reiterate the message that "Travel Can Make A Difference" to abolish gender prejudice."I am extremely glad to join all of the vibrant ladies and men who are riding today under the banner of trave-yeller," H.E. Deprez



jointly in the framework of Europe Week 2022. Youths collected a large quantity of litter and waste from three hiking routes in the Shivapuri National Park. It is reported that all together, the total amount of waste collected was approximately 153 kg, comprising of 15 kg of paper boxes, 23 kg of glass bottles, 40 kg of PET bottles and 75 kg of plastic wrappers. In the campaign, the participants carried eight sacks of trash along the trails.



stated. It is critical to empower girls and women, and one way to do so is via travel. #BreakTheBias”

The event began in Jawalakhel and ended at Bungamati on the Sustainable Tourism and Green Growth for Heritage Settlements of Kathmandu Valley (Parya Sampada) path, which was established by the European Union’s SWITCH-Asia funded and implemented by UN-Habitat. At Bungamati, which is rich in both tangible and intangible heritages, the bikers were greeted in the traditional Newar style (tika, kokha, and dhime baaja). The riders were treated to beautiful views of hills, rivers, rice fields, and mustard fields.

A part from riding, the event provided an opportunity for people to connect and get to know and support one other, even if they were strangers. Cyclists assisted each other by mending bikes, sharing water, giving company to slow bikers, and encouraging each other to keep moving on the steep hills and rough terrain.

The cyclists arrived at the rally’s destination, Prathampur Mahavihar, in the medieval city of Bungamati, with a triumphant smile on their faces, celebrating International Women’s Day. The photoshoot was another exciting event for the young bikers, as they all gathered to provide their best postures for the photographs, commemorating and celebrating Women’s Day in 2022.

The most engaging aspect was the storytelling session, during which the riders shared their bike voyage experiences as well as their talents—some sang, danced, and offered jokes and poems. Many of the young people were visiting Bungamati for the first time. They stated that they were unfamiliar with Bungamati. They mistook Bungamati for a jungle with a river or some type of Natural Park. Some have stated that they have not been beyond the valley’s ring road.

Surprisingly, the idea of Bungamati as an ancient Newar settlement never occurred to them.

It reminded me of my earlier article (Ref. : Spotlight, Vol. 15, No. 12) on the engagement of youth to promote tourism in Bungamati, in which I discussed the tastes that excite today’s youth such as traveling, trying new things, visiting beautiful and adventurous places, and gaining as much experience as possible in a short period of time. The article emphasizes that Bungamati has the ability to appeal to youth, who can help promote Bungamati as a key tourist destination, attracting more youths in the Kathmandu Valley, because youth are very

active on social media, sharing pictures among peers, online reviews, online galleries, and any other type of presence regarding Bungamati.

These kinds of events are crucial to promoting Bungamati. The cycling event gave the youngsters the chance

to see the beautiful and significant physical and intangible heritages of Bungamati while cycling. As a result, they may return to Bungamati to witness people’s everyday lives, enjoy traditional Newari food, culture, and arts, and meet members of the Newar community. While cycling outside of the village, the youngsters do need to learn about the surroundings outside of the valley.

The overall impact of this event was beneficial. Cycling on International Women’s Day helped to propagate Trave Yeller’s message of using travel to transform people’s lives. The event encouraged the young to mingle and encouraged them to help and care for one another despite the fact that they were strangers, as well as the prospect of using the youth as change agents to promote Bungamati to many more adolescents who had never been to Bungamati before. This was a great move for Bungamati, which will conduct many more such activities in the future to encourage more women to take up cycling and attract more adolescents to visit Bungamati.



## चट्याडबाट बचौ र बचाऔं।

चट्याडबाट बच्न,

घरबाहिर हुनुहुन्छ भने,

- अग्लो र एकलो रुखमुनि नबस्ने,
- पौडिने, माछा मार्ने तथा च्याफिटडजस्ता क्रियाकलाप नगर्ने,
- खुल्ला मैदानमा नबस्ने,
- धातुबाट बनेका तारबार नजिक नबस्ने,

घरभित्र हुनुहुन्छ भने,

- विद्युतीय सामग्रीहरू जस्तै टीभी, कम्प्यूटर, फ्रिज, वासिङ मेसिन नजिक नबस्ने र प्रयोग नगर्ने,
- तारसहितको टेलिफोन (ल्याण्डलाईन) प्रयोग नगर्ने,
- घरबाट बाहिर ननिस्कने,
- धारामा नुहाउने, लुगा धुने र भाँडा माइने काम नगर्ने।



नेपाल सरकार  
विज्ञापन बोर्ड



# For News, Views, Comments & Perspectives

## LOG IN

# spotlightnepal.com

### Latest Magazine



VOL. 15, No. 10, Dec. 24, 2021 (Poush 09, 2078) Publisher and Editor: Keshab Prasad Poudel Online Register Number: DOI 584/074-75



VOL. 15, No. 09, Dec. 10, 2021 (Mangshir 24, 2078) Publisher and Editor: Keshab Prasad Poudel Online Register Number: DOI 584/074-75



VOL. 15, No. 08, Nov. 19, 2021 (Mangshir 03, 2078) Publisher and Editor: Keshab Prasad Poudel Online Register Number: DOI 584/074-75



VOL. 15, No. 07, Oct. 29, 2021 (Kartik 12, 2078) Publisher and Editor: Keshab Prasad Poudel Online Register Number: DOI 584/074-75

**NEW SPOTLIGHT**  
NEWS MAGAZINE

**Kathmandu, Ph.: +97 1 4530250**  
**Email: [spotlightnepal@gmail.com](mailto:spotlightnepal@gmail.com)**

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

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



Here you go Sis! Your  
**BIRTHDAY SURPRISE!**

Rs. 5000 transferred to sister's account.



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



For anything and everything



DOWNLOAD the App now



(available soon for iOS users)



Rs. 5000 deposited in account.

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



Features and services  
updated regularly



Available for  
Android users



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



Download and experience  
features and special offers



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

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