

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



VIEWPOINT
Dr. Tilak Rawal



OPINION
Dipak Gyawali



ARTICLE
Hemang Dixit

NEW SPOTLIGHT

www.spotlightnepal.com
August.- 19, 2022
FORTNIGHTLY

MD GHISING'S SECOND YEAR

Highest Profit

INSIDE



ERASMUS + SCHOLARSHIPS
CAPACITATING YOUTH



NEPAL ENERGY OUTLOOK 2022
ALARMING SCENARIO



YOUTH SOUNDING BOARD
ENGAGING YOUTH IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE PROCESS

HBL

मुदती
खाता



अब आयो चाडपर्वको लहर, अधिकतम ब्याजको बहार

11.03% p.a.

Personal
Fixed Deposit

12.03% p.a.

Himal Remit
Fixed Deposit



मासिक ब्याज
भुक्तानी

Contact nearest branch or, call 4227749/4246218 for more details.

Offer valid for limited period only.

HBL



हिमालयन बैंक लिमिटेड
Himalayan Bank Ltd.

himal@himalayanbank.com | www.himalayanbank.com



himalayanbankltd



@himalayanbanknp



Himalayan Bank Ltd.



Himalayan Bank (Viber)

QR SCAN
FOR MORE
DETAILS.



*Conditions apply.



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

Just a year after returning to head Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), managing director Kul Man Ghising has shown how determination, dedication and commitment of one individual can change the fate of an institution. From ending country's decades old load shedding and turning virtually a bankrupt institution into a profit making entity, Ghising made his first four-year tenure remarkable. He joined for the second tenure after a lapse of a year. However, the institution had lost over Rs.6 billion with increasing leakages and disruptions of NEA's own power plants. As NEA has celebrated its annual day, MD Ghising has again brought NEA back on track, reducing leakage and running all NEA's powerhouses in full capacity. Besides, MD Ghising has started export of electricity to India in a big volume. In the last three months, NEA has already generated over Rs. 3 billion as revenue from exporting electricity to India. From construction of transmission line to improvement of distribution system, MD Ghising is moving with a vision to make NEA a reliable public utility institution, Although there are several issues to cover, we have decided to make MD Ghising's latest year in his tenure as our cover story of this week.

With over 40 percent of population between 15-39, Nepal is one of the youngest countries. However, their engagement in the local level government is very negligible. We have decided to look at the issue of youth and their engagement in the local government as another main story.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

CONTENT

NEWSNOTES 3

BUSINESS BRIEF 6

VIEWPOINT
Dr. Tilak Rawal 10

POLITICS
Democratic Autocrat 12

OPINION
Dipak Gyawali 14

ARTICLE
Hemang Dixit 21

NEPAL ENERGY OUTLOOK 2022
Alarming Scenario 22

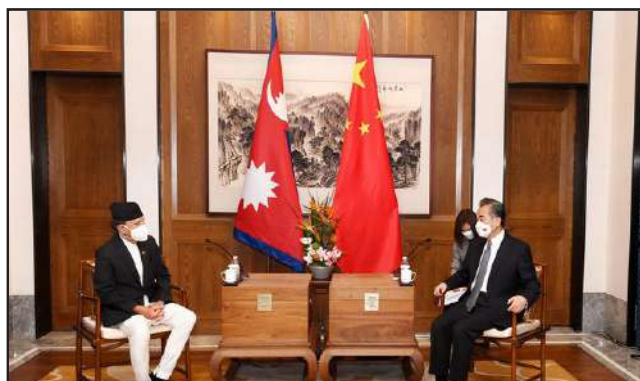
YOUTH SOUNDING BOARD
Engaging Youth In Local
Governance Process 24

ERASMUS+ SCHOLARSHIPS
Capacitating Youth 32



COVERSTORY: MD GHISING'S SECOND YEAR: Highest Profit

16



DR. KHADKA'S CHINA VISIT: Balancing Act

13



NITI DISCUSSION: Campaign Financing

29

Pritha Rajouria Awarded AAUW International Prestigious Award

Pritha Rajouria Awarded AAUW International Prestigious award, which aims to tackle barriers women face in education

WASHINGTON — The American Association of University Women (AAUW) awarded its 2022-23 International Fellowship to Pritha Rajouria. Rajouria will be a Graduate scholar in public policy at Georgetown University, Washington D.C.



“It was a very pleasant surprise when I received the award email, as I was aware that I was competing against extremely talented and inspiring women from around the globe. I am

honored,” said Rajouria. “In addition to helping me fund my education, I am now in a network of women around the globe whose common goal is to work towards creating an equitable atmosphere for women through research, education and advocacy.”

Rajouria started her career at Morgan Stanley, New York where she was a Credit Analyst for three years. She then returned home to Nepal and has been working at Standard Chartered for the last three years. She is transitioning to public policy as she wants to strengthen the environment of public – private – partnership after completing her Master’s of Public Policy and by leveraging her experience from the banking industry.

“Thanks to this award from AAUW, I’m getting a head start on my journey toward accomplishing my academic goals and career aspirations,” said Rajouria.

AAUW is one of the world’s leading supporters of graduate women’s education: Over the past 134 years, it has provided more than \$135 million in fellowships, grants and awards to 13,000 women from 150 countries. AAUW is proud to be one of the nation’s largest educational funders for women of color.

According to a prelease issued by the University AAUW, for the 2022-23 academic year, AAUW is awarding an unprecedented \$6 million through seven fellowships and grants programs to more than 320 scholars, research projects and programs promoting education and equity for women and girls.

“We are thrilled to be able to increase our support to so many deserving women,” said Gloria Blackwell, AAUW’s Chief Executive Officer. “Our fellows and grantees have changed the face of leadership nationally and globally for over a century, and we know that this year’s awardees will continue to make significant contributions to their fields and society.”

AAUW International Fellows are selected for their academic achievement, scholarly promise and demonstrated commitment to women and girls. Thousands of AAUW International Fellows have returned to their home countries to become leaders in government, academia, community activism, business and science.

Celebration Of 75 years of India’s Independence

Embassy of India In Kathmandu celebrates the 75th Anniversary of Indian Independence at the Embassy of India in Kathmandu on August 15, 2022.

The celebration was part of ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’ which is an initiative of the Government of India to celebrate 75 years of progressive India and remarkable achievements by Indians in all spheres of human endeavour.

The celebrations began with hoisting of the national flag by Ambassador of India Shri Naveen Srivastava, who then read out the message of the President of India on the occasion. The President’s message highlighted the progress in various fields in the past 75 years and paid tribute to freedom fighters who laid their lives for the independence of India.

The Ambassador felicitated widows and next of kin of deceased Gorkha soldiers of Indian Armed Forces by disbursing their dues worth NPR 2.65 Crore and a blanket to each family.

The celebrations witnessed rendition of patriotic songs and dance by teachers and students of Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre of the Embassy and Kendriya Vidyalaya school, Kathmandu.



Pakistani Embassy Hosted A Reception to Mark 75th Independence Day of Pakistan

Vice-President Nanda Bahadur Pun on Sunday attended a reception jointly organised by the Embassy of Pakistan in Kathmandu and Nepal-Pakistan Friendship and Cultural Association on the 75th Independence Day of Pakistan.

Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Sher Bahadur Kunwar also attended the reception. On the occasion, Minister Kunwar said Nepal and Pakistan enjoy very close relations and the bilateral ties have progressed further.

Likewise, Ambassador of Pakistan to Nepal Syed Haider Shah said he was active to further advance Nepal-Pakistan relations which have a history of more than 60 years.

Shah said regional peace was inevitable for the economic progress in South Asia adding that Pakistan and Nepal have been working for the common cause of regional issues as the SAARC members.

Association’s President Himalaya Shumsher JBR said the Association active for 61 years is working to further



NEWSNOTES

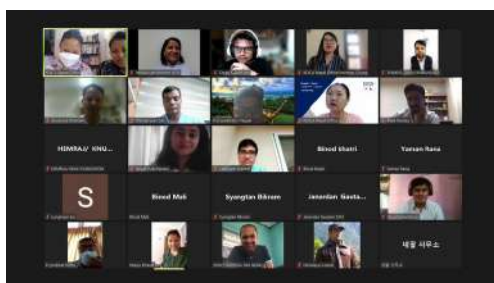
strengthen the bilateral ties.

Present on the occasion were chiefs and representatives of diplomatic missions, high-level officials of the government of Nepal, entrepreneurs, artistes, literary figures, media persons and others. (RSS)

KOICA, KAAN Organize Networking Meet

In order to facilitate the 2022 group of Master's Program, KOICA and KOICA Alumni Association of Nepal (KAAN) organized a Networking Meeting in a virtual platform with an objective of sharing of experiences and promoting networking between KOICA scholars of 2021 and 2022 as well as providing all the needed information about their program, life in Korea, information about University, departure process and etc. The recent graduates and KAAN members made a series of presentation to share the important information.

The program was attended by existing Masters Fellows of



2021, Masters Fellows of 2022, K A A N Members and Officers of KOICA Nepal Office. Sung-hoon Ko, K O I C A

Country Director, in his congratulatory remarks shared the experience of development of Korea and the important role of capacitated human resource and their role in nation building. He also hoped that after completion of the Master's course, the public officials will be able to contribute more in development of Nepal as well as support in facilitating Nepal and Korea relation.

Beside the long term program KOICA is also implementing short term fellowship programs as well, due to the outbreak of the Covid 19 since 2020 KOICA has opted to organize Capacity Building Programs via virtual platform.

Within October 2022 total of 121 government officials from 6 different Ministry / Government Institutions (Ministry of Women Children and Senior Citizen, Office of Attorney General, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration, Ministry of Finance, Department of hydrology) shall be capacitated in topics like Old age income security through Korea know how national pension scheme and Social security, Cyber Crime, Gender Sensitive Educational Environment, Sustainable and Rural Development, Macro Economic Development Strategy, Meteorological instrument and early warning System respectively. All of these programs have been officially requested by the Government of Nepal and shall be implemented under KOICA technical support.

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has been implementing a Capacity Improvement and Advancement for Tomorrow (CIAT) program as one of the important KOICA's development cooperation program since 1995.

This program aims in leading human resources development (HRD) through Short Term training and Master's Degree Scholarship Program for government officials and providing capacity building trainings focusing on sharing Korea's experience and technology for development. Till date we have more than 2007 government officials who have taken part in KOICA's Capacity Building Program.

Germany Agrees To Continue Its Support To Nepal

Barbara Schaefer, Head of Division Policy Issues of Cooperation with Asia, South Asia at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) was on a three-day visit to Nepal from 01 to 03 August 2022.

The visit aimed to discuss how to shape the future of bilateral development cooperation between Germany and Nepal. Earlier the German Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, and the Prime Minister of Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba, agreed by exchange of letters that they would continue the long-standing development cooperation between the two countries.

Barbara Schaefer, accompanied by officials from the German Embassy Kathmandu, GIZ and KfW Development Bank, had consultations with high level representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation, Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation and Ministry of Finance.

Schaefer highlighted the inspiring dialogue with the political partners, "These three days showed the trustful and longstanding relations between Germany and Nepal. The grant assistance by Germany will support

Nepal, inter alia, with its ambitious climate related National Determined Contributions (NDC) and facilitate the way to become a middle income country." In addition, Germany and Nepal had agreed to look into the areas of health, social protection, sustainable economic development and poverty alleviation as possible areas for future cooperation.

The chargé d'affaires Dr. Stephan Russek said, "after more than 2 years of COVID, I am glad that a German delegation could finally meet our partner ministries in Nepal in person and discuss the future of our cooperation. I hope this will be the starting point for more political exchange at government level between our two countries."

Nepal and Germany have a long-standing bilateral cooperation for over 60 years. German Development Cooperation has been supporting Nepal's efforts in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Immediate assistance was also provided for COVID-19 response, including more than four million vaccine doses.

Since September 2021, Germany supports Nepal's shift to a green, resilient, and inclusive development (GRID) pathway as signed on the Kathmandu Declaration on GRID, endorsed by the Government of Nepal and 17 Development Partners.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan has decided to award the Foreign Minister's Commendation for FY 2022 to the Japanese Universities Alumni Association, Nepal (JUAAN).

JUAAN Receives 2022 Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation

It is more than half a century since its predecessor organization was established in 1973. Since then JUAAN has been committed



to supporting Nepali students' study in Japan and building a network after their return. JUAAN has also contributed to deepening understanding of Japan in Nepal through regular seminars on Japanese studies. Furthermore, through regular study meetings (named Benkyokai) and participation in JICA projects, JUAAN has continued to share knowledge and skills among its members for the development of Nepal.

In recognition of these significant contributions over the years to the development of mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and Nepal, JUAAN has been selected to be the recipient of the Foreign Minister's Commendation for FY2022.

This year, 2022, marks the 120th anniversary of the year when the first eight Nepali students went to Japan for their study. We are pleased, particularly in this commemorative year, to be able to honor JUAAN, an alumni association of Nepali students who also studied in Japan, as testament to the friendship between the two countries.

The Embassy of Japan is confident that JUAAN and its members will continue to serve as a bridge between Japan and Nepal, further strengthening the relationship, friendship and cooperation between the two countries and their people.

The Foreign Minister's Commendations are awarded to individuals and groups with outstanding achievements in international fields in order to acknowledge their contributions to the promotion of friendship between Japan and other countries and areas. The Commendations also aim to promote understanding and support from the Japanese public regarding the activities of the recipients.

India Supports Construction Of School Building In Nepal

First Secretary at Indian Embassy in Kathmandu Dr. Sahil Kumar has inaugurated a school building located in Tanahun district in Nepal along with district Coordination Committee chief Shantiraman Wagle.

Built under the assistance of India, the school building of Shree Deepak Secondary School project was undertaken at the cost of 20.19 million Nepali rupees.

"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," Indian Embassy said in a statement.

Shree Deepak Secondary School was established in 1975 as a primary school and was upgraded to Secondary School in 2000. The school has over 180 students, about 60 per cent of whom are girls.



The new infrastructure will provide an improved environment for students to enhance their knowledge. "India and Nepal enjoy a multi-faceted and multi-sectoral development partnership that is

reflective of the closeness of the people of both countries."

The implementation of this school project reflects the continued support of the Government of India in complementing the efforts of the Government of Nepal to create infrastructure in priority

sectors like education," the statement said further. 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.

China Appreciates Nepal's Commitment To One China Principle

China has expressed the belief that Nepal continues to abide by the One-China Principle and that Taiwan affairs are purely internal affairs of China.

Issuing a remark over US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the Chinese ambassador to Nepal, Hou Yanqi, said that 'China highly appreciates Nepal's longstanding commitment to the one-China principle and resolutely opposing "Taiwan Independence"'. It is also the political foundation of China-Nepal relations.'



Qatar To Help Nepal Build Houses To Migrant Workers: Ambassador

Ambassador of Qatar to Nepal Yousuf Bin Mohammad Al-Hail said that his country is ready to support returnee Nepali migrant workers to build their own houses.

For this, he proposed to create a labour bank in Qatar and deposit a certain amount – 10 to 20 per cent – from the monthly income of the workers.

"In some years, they will save enough money to build a house for their family. Since the size of a family is not that large in Nepal, a couple of million rupees will be enough to build a house," said Al-Hail.

"The Nepal Rastra Bank, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Labour Employment and Social Security should come together in this regard," he said.

Meanwhile, he expressed gratitude to Nepal and Nepali workers in Qatar for their support in the development of infrastructure for the World Cup 2022 and other construction. "We proudly admit it," said Al-Hail.

He also said that Qatar wanted to import food, water and

vegetables as well as herbs and spices from Nepal. However, according to him, Nepal lacks international standard processing factories and packaging.



BUSINESS BRIEF

Nepal, Bangladesh Discuss Energy Trade Modality

Secretary at the Ministry of Water Resources of Bangladesh Kabir Bin Anwar has paid a courtesy call on Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Pampha Bhusal.

During the meeting at the Ministry, Minister Bhusal expressed gratitude towards the interest shown by Bangladesh for investment in the energy sector of Nepal. She stressed the need of carrying out activities to reach the implementation level soon.

Sharing that Nepal was ready and willing to collaborate with Bangladesh, Minister Bhusal urged the Bangladeshi government through the Secretary to create the necessary environment for the same.

She also wished for the success of the water resource secretary level meeting.

Similarly, Bangladeshi Water Resource Secretary Kabir said they were ready to collaborate with Nepal in the energy sector.

The two-day secretary-level meeting of the water resources committee of Nepal and Bangladesh would hold a discussion on mutual relations between both countries and different dimensions of collaboration in the energy and water resources sector. (RSS)

71MW Nilgiri Hydro Tunnel Makes Breakthrough

The tunnel of Nilgiri Second Cascade Hydroelectricity Project under construction in Narchyang of Annapurna Rural Municipality-4 of Myagdi district has achieved a breakthrough.

According to the project, the breakthrough involved the 4275 meters tunnel.

With this, the 71-Megawatt project has achieved 75 percent progress of the overall construction. Nilgiri Khola Hydropower Company started the construction of the 38 MW Nilgiri First and 71 MW Nilgiri II projects simultaneously near the Annapurna Base Camp three years ago.

The project started building the tunnel in 2019 at the side of the Dobhan Power House and Chotepa dam in Narchyang.

The residential Engineer of the project, Ratna Bamjan Tamang, said that since the tunnels were dug simultaneously after five audits, they were able to finish the tunnel in time.

He said that with the completion of the tunnel construction, which is considered to be the most difficult part

of the project, the development of other structures has been accelerated. He said that despite the geographical difficulties, the construction of the project has gained momentum.

Finishing work has also been expedited with the connection of the tunnel. "We have speeded up the construction of the dam and powerhouse, as well as the electro-mechanical work. Both the projects will be completed in a year now," said Tamang.

He said that the construction of the tunnel of Nilgiri First Hydroelectricity Project has been accelerated with the aim of completing it before Dashain, that is, October, this year. About 90 percent of the construction at the dam site of the project has also been completed. Likewise, 80 percent of the civil work of the powerhouse has been completed, said another Engineer, Yogesh Subedi.

He said that the structure is being constructed to flow the water from the Nilgiri First to the tunnel of Nilgiri Cascade through a dam.

For Nilgiri First, the construction of a dam starts at Humkhola and a power plant at Chhotepa. A 14-km access road has been constructed from Cascade's power house to Humkhola, the dam of the Nilgiri First project. A 30-meter-long Bailey bridge has been constructed in Chotepa.

These two projects are located in remote areas of Narchyang. A road has been constructed to reach the construction site of the project by digging a difficult mountain area. It was very challenging to complete the project because of the complex geographical situation.

Tamang said, "Building the project at the foot of the Himalayas was a big challenge for us, but we have managed to reach the final stage of the project dealing with all the challenges."

Both the projects, with an estimated cost of Rs. 14 billion, are 'run-of-the-river' hydroelectricity projects. The electricity generated from Nilgiri Khola will be

connected to the central grid from the 220 VK Dana Substation.

According to the project, a 7.4 KM transmission line of 220 kV capacity is being constructed to connect Dana Substation via Chotepa and Dobilla.

After the completion of the project, it will be an example of hydropower projects built in remote and difficult places, said Subedi. Earlier, the construction of 42 MW capacity Mistrikhola and 5 MW capacity Ghalemndi hydropower projects have been completed in Narchyang.



Similarly, the construction of the 14 MW Gharkhola hydropower project has reached its final stage.

NUSACCI Delegation Calls On PM Deuba

A delegation of Nepal-USA Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NUSACCI) paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba at his residence Baluwatar recently.

Led by President Kiran P. Saakha, the delegation briefed PM Deuba about NUSACCI activities as well as various issues related to Nepal-USA trade and investment.



According to a press release

issued by the NUSACCI, Saakha extended sincere thanks and gratitude to the Prime Minister for giving his valuable time to meet the NUSACCI delegation.

Saakha briefed that NUSACCI was a bilateral chamber with over 28 years of existence and highlighted the role played by NUSACCI for strengthening bilateral ties between two countries in the areas of trade and investment and its stance on early ratification of MCC by parliament.

He said that the USA is one of the major trading partners of Nepal adding that Nepal's trade balance with the USA was in a deficit situation since the last two years.

In the FY 2021/22, in terms of export and import in trade in goods, USA was in second and fifth positions respectively. The major share of Nepal's export to USA comprises carpet followed by felt and cat and dog food. The delegation urged that there is an urgent need for the promotion of carpet, readymade garments and pashmina. "In the past, these were major items exported to the USA and regarded as a major source of foreign currency," said Saakha.

Nepal is enjoying duty free entry of Nepali goods to the USA in 77 items. In fact, 5 items categorically cover 77 different HS code items. Few major exportable items fall under this facility like carpet and pashmina. It is a great opportunity for Nepal to export these products in a significant way. Other topics discussed in courtesy visit are importance of compensation law, Intellectual Property Right (IPR), attracting American investment in the Hydropower Sector, export promotional activities in collaboration with GON for boosting export to USA.

General Secretary Prof. Dr. Gandhi Pandit informed that hydropower is one of potential areas for American investment. The legal regime and enabling environment plays a crucial role for attracting American investment in

Nepal.

The other delegates included in the courtesy call, along with Prof Dr. Gandhi Pandit, were board members Brindaban Man Pradhanang, Rajani Rana and Sunil Rajbhandari.

Lumbini Cable Car Will Start From Coming January: Chandra Dhakal

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, Chairman of Lumbini Cable Car Private Limited, said that the construction of the cable car will be completed within the month of December this year and it will be operational from January 15, 2023.

Presenting the progress report at the recently concluded special general meeting of the company, he said that the work of sub-structure at the upper station is in the final stage and the work of importing cable car equipment and parts has started.

"The construction work of about 400 metres of access road to the lower station of the cable car has been completed. The construction work of the sub-structure of the lower station is almost completed and the work of the super structure and the site development work are progressing. Out of the nine towers, the civil construction work of eight towers has been completed and the work of the remaining towers is going on," he said.

Dhakal also informed that discussions are being held with international consultants to connect the proposed hotel at the upper station with an international chain hotel.

Similarly, since the construction work of the temple area in the upper station has to be completed along with the cable car project, he said that currently working construction company has been instructed to start the work according to the existing conditions.



The under-construction Lumbini cable car, which will reach from Bamghat in Butwal Sub-metropolitan City of Rupandehi district to Basantapur Danda in Tinahu Rural Municipality of Palpa district, will be operational from mid-January 2023.

Basantapur Hill, which will be reached after a three-kilometre long cable car journey, will be installed with infrastructure, including well facilitated hotels, amusement parks and temples.

Thulo.Com Concludes Training

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are the key players that contribute largely to the economy

BUSINESS BRIEF

of the country. They are the ones to take a plunge into innovation and job creation. With pandemic looming over more than three years, it has disrupted the smooth operation of the business in the traditional way and has prompted a need



for the digital transformation of businesses. In order to address the same, Thulo.Com has initiated a project “MSMEs Growth Bazar: Digitization of MSMEs by providing mar-

ket access through Thulo.Com”.

Thulo.Com has aimed to onboard 1000 MSMEs and support them to digitize their businesses and it is collaborating with organizations that are constantly working on developing MSMEs. Thulo.Com has collaborated with Women Development Centre, Department of Lalitpur Metropolitan City Office to enroll MSMEs based in Lalitpur Metropolitan City in this project.

On 29th July and 2nd August 2022 Thulo.Com conducted training on Digital Literacy and Ecommerce for the MSMEs.

The second day of the training program was held in the presence of Ms. Manjali Shakya Bajracharya, Deputy Mayor, Lalitpur Metropolitan City (LMC) who encouraged participants to learn new skills that will enhance their entrepreneurial journey. She mentioned the benefits the LMC office introduced to support women entrepreneurs. She expressed happiness towards Thulo.Com for providing digital transformation opportunities to women entrepreneurs in LMC.

Surakchya Adhikari, Co-founder, and COO of Thulo.Com shared, “Thulo.Com is an impact commerce company which has been supporting MSMEs in digital transformation and we plan to continue to support MSMEs by providing access to Market, Technology, and Knowledge. In order to support enterprises led by women entrepreneurs based in Lalitpur Metropolitan City we collaborated with the Women Development Centre, Department of Lalitpur Metropolitan City Office. We look forward to continuing this collaboration to support MSMEs in the long run.”

IFC Invests \$45 M In Nepali Financial Institutions In Fiscal Year 2022

Small businesses and people in Nepal will have better access to financing, with IFC’s broader strategy for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) aiming to reach over 30,000 SMEs by 2023 while helping to improve inclusive-

ness, competitiveness, and sustainability of the financial sector in the country.

IFC is investing \$45 million in the nation’s recovering financial sector as part of a wider SME strategy, which aims to help spur a greater range of financial products and services such as psychometric scoring solutions and payment systems reforms. At the same time, IFC is also extending a trade finance facility as part of Global Trade Finance Program (GTFP), which includes a special provision for green trade financing. This is the first Green GTFP for IFC globally.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has had a massive impact on Nepal’s small and medium sized enterprises, a key pillar of the country’s economy. As these businesses need urgent attention, IFC’s investments will help show that SME lending is both viable and sustainable. We are optimistic it will lead to an increase in overall banking credit for these businesses, allowing SMEs to grow and accelerate recovery in Nepal,” said Allen Forlemu, IFC’s Regional Industry Director for Financial Institutions Group.

SMEs are the growth engine of Nepal’s economy, employing 1.8 million people and contributing around 22 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). Yet, access to finance is a major constraint for 44 percent of SMEs, especially small and women-owned firms in remote areas, with the finance gap estimated to be at \$2.9 billion. With limited financing facilities, small business owners in Nepal are forced to operate on a cash basis. As a result, they struggle to grow given the massive gap between the financing they need and the funds they can currently access.

In response, in this fiscal year, IFC provided a \$20 million loan to Sanima Bank—one of Nepal’s youngest and fastest-growing commercial bank—and \$25 million in NMB Bank Limited, a premier bank in the country. This is the third investment in NMB Bank in the last four years. These fundings will allow the banks to on-lend to hundreds of SMEs, expanding their outreach to these businesses in rural areas, and creating thousands of jobs.

Developing economies like Nepal also face a shortage of trade finance, which is why IFC is providing

support to Global IME Bank Limited—the second largest commercial bank in Nepal by total assets—under the GTFP.

“The current financing model of banks for SMEs still relies on lengthy credit processes and high collateral requirements. As a result, smaller businesses continue to be underserved, impacting their growth potential,” said Hector Gomez Ang, IFC’s Regional Director for South Asia.



“Given the scenario, IFC’s support to leading financial institutions in the country will contribute to strengthening the small business ecosystem, creating jobs and revving up the economy.”

Nepal is a priority country for IFC, with efforts focused on boosting inclusive and sustained growth—including energy and infrastructure development and helping deal with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. IFC has been investing in Nepal since 1975—creating opportunities where it is needed the most. As of June 2022, IFC’s outstanding committed portfolio in Nepal is about \$600 million.

IFC’s \$2B In South Asian Region For 2022

To help sustain and create jobs, improve services for people and protect small and medium sized enterprises, IFC committed about \$2 billion in the South Asian region in the past fiscal year, ending June 2022, with a key focus on helping countries recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

The release of the figures comes as Ruth Horowitz assumes the role of IFC’s Regional Vice President for Asia and the Pacific – covering both South and East Asia as well as the Pacific – taking over from Alfonso Garcia Mora, who is now IFC’s Regional Vice President for Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean.

“I am very excited to join the region and to work closely with its fantastic staff, clients and stakeholders, and look forward to building on the region’s strong history of impactful private sector engagements”, said Ruth Horowitz, IFC’s Vice President for Asia and the Pacific.

Horowitz is a global investment professional with over 30 years of experience. Most recently, she served as the Vice President of IFC’s Equity Mobilization Division – IFC Asset Management Company (AMC), which has raised over \$10 billion from investors across 13 funds. Prior to joining IFC as the Chief Operating Officer and Director of AMC, Horowitz worked for Lehman Brothers.

With the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to linger, IFC again stepped up with crucial financial support aimed at helping the region rebuild. IFC delivered \$237 million in FY22 in long-term finance in COVID-response deals on top of its short-term finance to help local exporters and importers, including contributing to increased food and commodities trade. Overall, from FY20 to FY22, IFC has committed over \$1 billion as part of its COVID-19 response in the region.

“With about \$2 billion committed in the South Asia region in the past year, IFC’s work has enabled the private sector to deliver solutions to help people and businesses weather multiple challenges,” said IFC’s Regional

Director for South Asia, Hector Gomez Ang. “The innovation and expertise of the private sector is needed now more than ever as countries build the pathways to a resilient, sustainable future.”

As with other regions, South Asia remains vulnerable to the impacts of a warming planet, conflict and geopolitical tensions, and rising global inflation. As Vice President for Asia and the Pacific, Horowitz signaled that helping countries achieve their climate goals, while meeting needs for renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure will be among key priorities going forward.

“Already soaring food, energy, and fertilizer prices, exacerbated by both the war in Ukraine and erratic weather events are threatening to reverse decades of development gains, making the task ahead even more urgent,” said Horowitz. “However, the right mix of private sector innovation, public sector policy, and availability of financing can not only boost South Asia’s resilience to future shocks but also help transform the region for the better.”

“The threat the region faces in terms of the climate crisis is profound but there are also immense opportunities, underscored by the trillions of dollars in capital that’s waiting to be deployed in green investments.

IFC is uniquely placed to work with the private sector to identify solutions that not only help decarbonize economies but also meet the pressing development challenges facing this region. I look forward to strengthening and developing new partnerships in taking on this exciting role across the Asia Pacific region.”

IFC’s investments in India focused on sustainability, green affordable housing, and health care while supporting smaller businesses for future resilience, underlining the synergy between climate and development. As an example of climate-focused support, IFC partnered with Tabreed, Abu Dhabi’s National Central Cooling Company to expand district cooling in India—to help the country meet its climate goals by significantly lowering energy consumption for space cooling. To help India cut its greenhouse gas emissions and meet its national targets, IFC also provided financing for a 300 MW solar power project in Rajasthan, worth a total of \$200 million. The project is being developed by a subsidiary of Enel Green Power S.p.A., one of the largest renewable energy developers in the world.

In Bangladesh, IFC made investments in the readymade garments sector and in infrastructure to bolster logistics and financial inclusion.

In Nepal, IFC prioritized better access to finance for micro, small and medium sized enterprises, and households via a planned multi-million-dollar strategy.



Paradoxical Scenario



BY: DR. TILAK RAWAL

It may sound little paradoxical but the reality is that Nepal's economy has registered unprecedented growth in both export of goods as well as trade deficit in the recently concluded fiscal year. For the first time in history of Nepal our exports in the fiscal year 2078\79 approximated Rs. 200 billion, registering an increase of 41.74 percent over the total export (Rs.141 billion) of previous fiscal year. Expectedly, our export to India was the highest, totaling Rs. 155 billion. Soya bean, palm and sunflower oils fall under the major export items category. Likewise, yarn, garments, tea, coffee, cardamom, jute goods, steel and iron items also occupy an important position in the export basket. These items jointly account for about Rs. 184 billion of the total export earning of Rs. 244 billion in the last fiscal year. Despite this remarkable growth in exports, however, trade deficit is on the rise, which exceeded downward adjusted total budgetary outlay of Rs. 1546 billion in just 11 months. It may be noted that Nepal Government in its half yearly review had slashed initial budgetary outlay of Rs. 1632 billion by Rs. 31 billion. Total trade deficit by the end of the fiscal year exceeded this figure, too. Trade deficit in the fiscal year 2077\78 had reached Rs. 1389 billion, which was more than actual budget expenditure of Rs. 1180 billion that year. Exports remained encouraging early on last fiscal year, which is also shown by cent percent increase in export of goods in the very fifth month of the year. Despite this enhancement in export of goods, however, trade deficit has continued to rise. This paradox can be easily unknotted if we delve a bit into the composition of our international trade and import and export base. With a very weak base year (2077\78), improvement in export of goods in 2078\79 looked relatively very impressive, while on the import front it was not so because it has remained very strong for years now, which is shown by its share in our total international trade and skyrocketing trade imbalance. We have not been able to check the speed at which import is increasing, despite different government's declaration to curb it. A look at the commodity composition of our trade may also help clarify the situation. Vegetable ghee and oil jointly explain about 50 percent of Nepal's export. Soya bean oil, palm oil and sunflower oil, account for 25.06, 20.41 and 2.4 percent,

respectively, of Nepal's total export. Another painful reality is that this agricultural country imports these items in raw form and exports them without much value addition. Small wonder

these oils appear as major items on both fronts- export and import. Increased export of these is somewhat nullified by increased import of them in crude form. Another serious matter to be noted is that any decrease in import tariff on these items in India is certain to curtail export of vegetable oil to India. There are reports that removal of import duty on these items and fixation of goods and services tax (GST) at 5 percent by India has led to a sharp decline in our export of these items. It is reported that soya bean oil export stood

If the contribution of these items in enhancing our import and the amount of hard currency that is expended on their purchase is looked into seriously at a time when the foreign exchange reserve is depleting, one could even go to the extent of branding sales of these oils as harmful exports.

at more than 180 million liters till the tenth month of the last fiscal year, which dropped to about 4 million liters in the eleventh month. Significant drop was noticed in case of palm and sunflower oil also. It is disappointing that these items with little value addition and whose export is influenced by tariff adjustment in India appear

as number one item on our export list. If the contribution of these items in enhancing our import and the amount of hard currency that is expended on their purchase is looked into seriously at a time when the foreign exchange reserve is depleting, one could even go to the extent of branding sales of these oils as harmful exports. The concerned may wish to give some thought to this bitter reality, noting that our import explained about 40 percent of the annual GDP last fiscal year. Cash incentive provided on export could play a significant role in arresting the ballooning trade imbalance if the value addition aspect is made a major factor to determine the level of cash incentive on export. Insignificant it could be monetarily at present, but the encouraging fact is that this country full of snow-fed rivers and pristine lakes has at last started exporting drinking water. Paradoxically, however, drinking water hardly flows from taps in the Valley, let alone rest of the country. Likewise, increasing export of tea and coffee (Rs.9.38 billion last fiscal year) and cardamom (Rs.4.81 billion) could help correct Nepal's trade imbalance over time, also giving the country the much needed foreign exchange. It is equally gratifying to note that Nepal has started exporting hydro power to India, which is likely to be a major source of export earning along with cement.

Nepal, facing serious problems on external front, has to be choosy in selecting items/commodities for production and export. Taking into account the government's declared policy of decreasing reliance on imported gas for heating and cooking purpose, use of internally generated power will have to be encouraged. Power generation will have to be carried out on a war footing scale and its judicious allocation will have to be done to meet internal as well as export demand. Indeed, pragmatic actions are needed to help the ailing economy of Nepal.

Balance of payment (BOP) and current account remained negative during the last two years (2077\78 and 2078\79), under Oli and Deuba, respectively. Dr. Yubraj, Oli's finance minister, however, may argue that deficit on the two fronts increased substantially after Janardan Sharma (Deuba's confidant now) became finance minister in the

five party coalition government. Sharma can also counter by citing higher economic growth (5.84 percent) during his period as against what was achieved (4.25 percent) earlier. The reinstated minister (Sharma) seems to be enjoying the full support of his party boss (Prachanda) and government head Deuba. It may be noted that Sharma had resigned after being accused of allowing unauthorized persons into the finance ministry on the eve of budget presentation. A parliamentary panel probe, however, found no evidence to prove he was involved in making illegal changes to the budget. Making changes in budgets by finance ministers to accommodate their own interest as well as those of power centres is nothing new in Nepal. Sharma was unlucky that whatever little he did on the night of May 28 leaked and lots of noise was created in the Parliament and on the streets of Kathmandu, leaving Sharma with no option but to resign. Sharma can also console himself by remembering that Yubraj was also accused of making surprising tariff changes in favour of a prominent business group and some opposition leaders had demanded his resignation in the Parliament but he continued to stay on, turning a deaf ear to their murmurs. What Oli wanted was more important for him than noises in the House by opposition leaders. It is difficult to believe that the minister in charge can make major budgetary alterations independent of wishes of powerful people who we have seen over time not only defending controversial actions of their finance ministers but privately patting their back for accommodating their interest. The patting received this time, however, will be of no help in budget execution as major attention of political leaders including Sharma will be diverted towards federal and provincial polls to be held on November 20. The current budget, Sharma may note, has stated that every citizen will have access to electricity with-

in 2 years, gas cylinders will be displaced and total import will be reduced by 20 percent each year so that trade could be balanced in 5 years. It has also mentioned that import of agricultural products such as maize will be reduced by at least 30 percent, which unfortunately has coincided with a 5 percent drop in rice area, compared with area under rice last season. It is reported that rice transplantation in the major rice growing area (Madhesh Pradesh) has gone down by 25 percent. It may be difficult to curtail import of agricultural products as stated in the budget. Nepal imports rice and paddy worth Rs. 50 billion annually. It is apprehended that food insecurity could increase in a country like Nepal because import from India may not be as easy as before, in the face of country's recent restriction on export of certain items, and the shaken global grain market on account of war between Russia

and Ukraine. Some solace, however, is drawn from the Turkey\UN -brokered grain deal signed in Istanbul on July 22, which allows export of Ukrainian grains through ports in Black Sea. The deal is likely to ease food inflation and save millions of people from starvation. Another encouraging factor for Nepal is that Nepal Rastra Bank in its monetary policy for this fiscal year has encouraged lending to productive areas even in the present difficult time when inflation is on the rise in Nepal and elsewhere and monetary authorities all over the world are continuously increasing interest rates. Indeed, it would be unfair to blame our central bank for tightening flow of credit to unproductive areas and initiating measures to hike rates and mop up liquidity from the market. Foodgrains, fish and livestock production, export oriented undertakings and industries using local raw materials, handicrafts, etc. are likely to benefit. Moreover, unlike unsatisfactory execution of budgets in Nepal, implementation of monetary policy has mostly remained up to the expectation of the concerned. However, efforts of the central bank could be stymied by never ending unhealthy activities of politicians currently focused on forging alliance, by hook or crook, to jointly contest and win election and thereafter do whatever needed to remain in power. The present situation in Nepal reminds one of politicians in some African countries who have been, since long, leaving no stone unturned to grab political power, which has become the most effective tool to loot these mineral-rich countries with rampant corruption and abject poverty. It may not be too difficult to draw parallels between what is happening there and here.

The present situation in Nepal reminds one of politicians in some African countries who have been, since long, leaving no stone unturned to grab political power, which has become the most effective tool to loot these mineral-rich countries with rampant corruption and abject poverty. It may not be too difficult to draw parallels between what is happening there and here.

Dr. Rawal is a former governor of NRB

POLITICS

Democratic Autocrat

Giving all authority of selecting candidates to Sher Bahadur Deuba, Nepali Congress has started a hybrid democratic-autocratic practice

By A CORRESPONDENT

Publicly claimed as a party of liberal democrats and the only plural Democratic Party, Nepali Congress has had leaders always trying to project themselves as true democrats. However, a recent decision of the party's executive committee to authorize PM Deuba as the sole leader to decide the party's nominees for the national and provincial elections has shown it to be an autocratic party.

Suspecting the possibility of misuse of power in distribution of party tickets, Nepali Congress leader and central committee member Arjun Narshing K.C has already warned PM Deuba not to take arbitrary decisions in selecting the candidates.

A meeting of the Central Performance Committee of the Nepali Congress (NC) held at the party office Sanepa on August 13 decided to give the responsibility to the party President Sher Bahadur Deuba to hand over 'formal letter of nomination' to candidates who will be nominated by the party in the upcoming election.

The meeting also decided to register NC at the Election Commission to participate in the upcoming Provincial Assembly and Federal Parliament elections to be held on November 20 and in the proportional elections for the same federal and provincial assemblies.

According to a press statement issued by the party, the meeting has given the responsibility to party president Sher Bahadur Deuba to hand over 'formal letter of nomination' to candidates who will be nominated by the party in the upcoming election.

The meeting also decided to register the party at the EC in accordance with Article 271 of the Consti-



tution of Nepal and Section 48 of the Political Parties Act, 2073 BS for the purpose of the election of members of the House of Representatives and members of the Provincial Assembly and assign the Chief Secretary of the Nepali Congress Central Office, Krishna Prasad Paudel the responsibility to complete the entire process related to it.

In order to complete the same process, the relevant body of the party will be instructed through the central office to propose and recommend the name of the candidate. The meeting also decided to conduct the nationwide election-centric campaign from August 26 to September 9.

The Central Work Execution Committee (CWEC) meeting of the ruling Nepali Congress has mandated party President and Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to formally send the candidate nomination letter to the candidates based on the criteria set by the party.

The CWEC meeting held at the party office Sanepa the same morning, that is, on Saturday, made five different decisions related to the general election.

NC to register party at EC for elections

The meeting of the Nepali Congress Central Work Execution Committee decided to register the party at the Election Commission (EC).

Although there are growing demands to hand over the leadership of party to new generation leaders, senior leaders like PM Deuba are still getting endorsement of young leaders.

Young general secretary Biswo Prakash Sharma proposed to entrust party President Deuba to provide an official letter of nomination to the candidates to be the fielded in elections on behalf of the party. Interestingly, the meeting attended by another young leader Gagan Thapa unanimously endorsed the proposal presented by party general-secretary.

Dr. KHADKA'S CHINA VISIT

Balancing Act

With grants and promises, Nepal minister Khadka returns from China

By A CORRESPONDENT

The timing of recent visit of Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka to China was highly sensitive and complex. With highly tense on China-US Relations over Taiwan, unsettled dispute between India and China and Nepal's own decision to endorse U.S backed MCC cooperation against wishes of China, managing the visit was a difficult one.

With the backing of foreign secretary Bharat Prasad Paudyal and team of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China Division Lok Bahadur Thapa, the visit went smoothly. Dr. Khadka led an 11-member delegation to China to pay the visit on the invitation of Chinese Foreign Minister and state councilor Wang Yi.

Foreign Minister Khadka has returned a happy man from China. Beijing has offered Nepal a huge grant in return for Kathmandu's assurances to stick to 'One China' policy, the Indian Express has learnt.

Upon Khadka's return, a press release issued by Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Khadka and Yi discussed enhancing, among other things, "bilateral trade, connectivity network, health, tourism, agriculture, education". China will also fund and provide equipment for Covid control mechanism in Nepal, it added.

Beijing also assured Nepal it would provide 800 million RMB (118 million USD) grant for the current financial year, for projects of Kathmandu's preference. This will be in addition to the RMB 3.5 billion promised by Xi Jinping during his visit to Nepal in October 2019.

According to a source, China also promised to stand by Nepal "in defence of its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity unconditionally," sources said.

In return, Dr. Khadka, the sources cited above added, convinced the Chinese side of Nepal's firm adherence to the 'One China policy' "irreversibly". Also, on Chi-

nese concern about West's disproportionate presence and about the US-Nepal ties, Khadka is believed to have assured Yi that Nepal's cooperation with Western countries, particularly the US, was for the sake of development and had no security or military component. To reassure China on this, the two countries also decide to extend their co-operation in the disaster management sector.

Nepal also assured China it will not allow any external forces to carry out activities against China on its territory, keeping the Tibet sensitivity in mind, the sources added.

Nepal's plan last month to take part in the State Partnership Program, an exchange programme between Nepal Army and the US National Guard, was dropped at the last minute following protests at home, and reservation from China.

Also, although officials are silent about it, Nepal seems to have agreed to go ahead with China's Belt and Road Initiative, pledging to implement previous understand-

ing Minister Wang Yi said China would finance the feasibility study of a China-Nepal cross-border railway and send experts to Nepal to conduct surveys this year, Wang Wenbin, spokesperson at the foreign ministry, told a regular media briefing in Beijing on Thursday.

During their meeting earlier, Wang told his Nepalese counterpart Narayan Khadka that no matter how the international and regional situation changes, China and Nepal have always firmly supported each other on issues involving core interests.

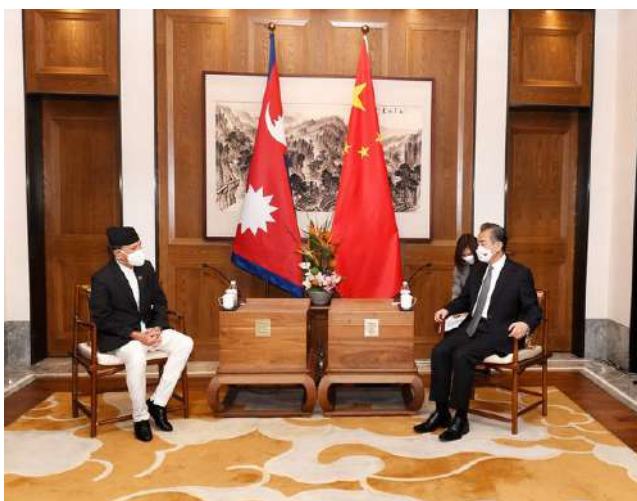
During the meeting, Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Khadka reiterated Nepal's unwavering commitment to One China Policy and assured that the Nepali territory will not be allowed to be used for any activity against China. On the other hand, State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi reiterated China's continued and unconditional support to Nepal's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and assured to support in Nepal's development endeavors as per the priority of the Government of Nepal.

Foreign secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal, Secretary of Commerce Dr. Toya Narayan Gyawali and ambassador of Nepal to China Bishnu Pukar and other high level officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

China also assured the Nepali delegation that the construction of the second phase of the Kathmandu Ring Road Improvement Project will start soon.

In addition, China has also pledged support to Nepal with more than 15 billion rupees in various topics including physical infrastructure, disaster management and health materials.

Foreign Ministry's officials have shown that they can handle the diplomacy given them opportunity to manage the bilateral relations.



ing and agreements on priority.

According to media report, China and Nepal have agreed to build the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network, the foreign ministry said, following a meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries.

As part of the agreement, For-

Will Nepali Kitchens Go Electric?



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

Nepali kitchen has again become the new development battleground with the campaign to promote electric cooking. Again, because the older socio-environmental battles of the 1970s and 80s had waned, sidelined by the seductive success of fossil fuel cooking, first with kerosene and now ubiquitously with liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). Indeed, in urban areas, women of my wife's generation had rarely used firewood for cooking except for the occasional picnic or during the Indian economic blockade of 1989 and 2015. Though that hardship and energy insecurity led to a revived interest in smoke-free, fuel-efficient briquettes, the romance did not last once the blockade was lifted (although rancour against India lives on deep in their psyche!)

Large-scale development interventions into the Nepali kitchen began in the early 1970s, first with environmental concerns about deforestation and then health hazard especially for women from indoor air pollution. Both these worries saw salvation in the smokeless chulo and biogas: they increased energy efficiency from some 10% for open hearth chulos to almost triple that requiring households to burn only half or even a third of the firewood they normally burned; and homes adopting them became smoke-free improving heart-lung health immensely.

Unfortunately, these technologies, unlike kerosene and LPG, were rural-friendly and not as appropriate for urban areas for reasons of architectural space, the obvious impossibility of keeping cows and buffaloes, and the cost of transporting firewood. Even in rural areas, they were also seduced out of the market by the less labour-consuming kerosene and LPG, since briquette making or even biogas plant upkeep required collecting and processing messy charcoal and cow dung. Furthermore, the energy efficiency of LPG cooking at 40% was higher than smokeless chulos by a third more!

The new cooking technology challenging this fossil fuel domination in Nepali kitchens is the electric cooker: infrared ones with energy efficiency of 70% and induction cookers at an astounding 84% (meaning that much of the energy goes into actual cooking and not in heating the air around it), double that of gas cookers and more than three times that of smokeless chulos. Furthermore, given that this energy is Nepali hydropower and not imported fossil fuel, climate activists and development agencies see this as the Holy Grail to counter global warming. Their electric cooking campaign is backed by other activist concerns as well, such as Nepal's unsustainable petroleum imports that constitute over 200% of its total goods export! And for average

Kathmandu households almost 70% of their total energy use is for cooking, bulk of it from LPG.

The other major driver behind this push for electric cooking is that, with Nepal heading for significant surplus in hydropower generation – some 4500 MW of new generation are expected to be added to the national grid by 2026/27 even as demand hovers around 1500 to 2000 MW (on a per capita basis, the lowest in South Asia!) – there is an urgent need to find new electricity absorption possibilities. While India has a large demand for electricity, it does not have an easily accessible open market: electricity in India is a tightly regulated strategic commodity with high transaction costs for market access. As a result, many in the activist community argue, as does an USAID report, that if Nepal exported electricity to India, it would earn only 4 to 6 cents only whereas, if it used it was used within Nepal, the benefit to Nepal would be 86 cents!

While these are wonderful reasons to champion electric cooking in Nepal, ground reality, however, indicates that the path ahead for this technological transition is going to be far from smooth. A consultative workshop organized on 9th August by the Alternative Energy Promotion Center with GiZ's Energizing Development (EnDev) program brought to the fore many of these difficulties, ranging from consumer risks to anomalies in government policy. (GiZ and its predecessor GTZ have been the only aid agency seriously pursuing and promoting alternative energy pathways, from small hydro to community electricity, biogas and many other possibilities.)

The world of technological artifacts is littered with clever relics that found no takers and were lucky if even preserved in a museum. Jung Bahadur, after visiting England in early 1850s, brought the first steam engine pump to irrigate the tars of Kaski and Lamjung but the country had no technician capable of operating it, and it rusted away in a Rana palace godown. A similar story lies behind the first trucks brought to Nepal when the Tribhuban highway was being constructed in the middle of the last century: Nepalis then did not know how to drive trucks and the need was met by Sikh refugees from Pakistani Punjab, forming the nucleus of Nepal's small Sikh community. That induction cookers could go the way of Jung's steam pump in many Nepali households (as did briquette burning chulos) is the reason serious attention should be paid, while prompting new artifacts like electric cookers, to the sociology and the social carriers behind the technology.

As described by two electronic repair technicians during the consultative workshop, the majority of repair

works they carry out are related to integrated circuits and other fine electronic components blowing out because of improper use of induction cookers. Even in educated households (including that of this electrical engineer!) cooks, once cooking is done, do not put off the cooker by pressing the correct button on the cooker panel but do so flipping off the main switch. It cuts off electricity completely, shuts down the cooling fan prematurely thus heating and damaging the sensitive circuits. In villages without the backup of even simple electronic repair facilities, families could thus quickly find their induction cooker investments becoming junk. What this proves is that behavioural changes – from dealing with the new technology to the type of food one can or should cook and for how long (try not to cook sel-roti or biriyani on an induction cooker say the repairmen) – are a prerequisite for the successful induction cooker adoption.

As the philosopher of technology Brian Arthur describes it, successful technologies are combinations of older technologies tweaked at one or two critical junctures that succeed in the market because they satisfy emerging social needs that their old predecessors could not. And they do it against great odds of technological lock-ins of old infrastructure that require expensive remodeling. No better example exists than the structural lock-in that the country's biggest electricity utility Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) is enmeshed in. Right from its earlier incarnations such as the Bijuli Adda of the Ranas to the Electricity Corporation till the 1980s, its primary mission was, and remains, electricity for lighting, not for powering productive machines. As a result, rural electrification and distribution network even in cities and peri-urban areas has been done with this objective for low Wattage light bulbs through household meters of only 5 Amperes. If a dozen households with that kind of electricity supply decide to cook their *daal-bhaat* at the same time in electric cookers, lunch and dinner time being the same for most, entire villages would have a blackout!

The problem gets more intractable as one moves higher up the policy chain. Nepal's finance ministry that regulates foreign aid, indeed the entire Nepal government machinery, is fixated on tax and other revenues emanating from sales and procurements, not on the larger economic benefits accruing from sensible economic policies such as replacing imported fossil fuel consumption with Nepali hydropower. Indeed, tax on fossil fuel forms a major chunk of Nepal government revenue income it is loathe to forego, which is why it imposes heavy tax on electric vehicles and relents only after widespread protests. This is a point

proved by the provision to “increase the sales of electric vehicles” in Nepal's Nationally Determined Contribution to climate mitigation. It should instead have been “so many passenger-kilometers of public travel by diesel/petrol vehicles replaced by electric ones” that should have been government policy.

The same story is repeating itself with electric cookers. The official target is to distribute over half a million electric cook stoves after central purchase that reeks of “the name of the game is procurement”. It has bedeviled many a development project in the past with expensive equipment rusting in hospitals, labs and government-run corporations!



Instead, procurement in small numbers should have been left to local outfits with strong governments monitoring of quality and performance. And the latter should have been done by measuring the actual number of LPG cylinders replaced in households with the introduction of electric cookers. Without this, the entire campaign runs the risk of a whimpering expiration.

The final question that should be asked is whether all Nepali kitchens should go massively electric. The answer is definitely NO. Electricity is too high quality an energy that must be used for higher end activities other than cooking: one can cook with wood or biogas but they cannot run the internet or factories which requires quality electricity. Fuelwood will remain aplenty in village Nepal that must be properly harvested via community forestry, its use improved via briquettes and smokeless chulos especially in tea shops and communal kitchens. Not using it so would not serve the battle against climate change as the biomass would rot and emit methane/CO² anyway. Some electricity cooking is needed to reduce fossil fuel usage, but that should be part of a larger package of food processing that should include refrigerators in kitchens to prevent food loss which is the third highest emitter of greenhouse gases!

Let us go for a sane national energy mix, not narrow misplaced missionary zeal!

MD GHISING's SECOND YEAR

Highest Profit

As he started his second year of second tenure, Kul Man Ghising, MD of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), has set many new records. Increasing profit margin by 164 percent or Rs. 16.089 billion and exporting electricity worth of Rs.3.88 billion and reducing the electricity leakage, MD Ghising has made many historical achievements. As NEA, a public utility, celebrated its anniversary, MD Ghising has a sigh of relief as he cleared piles of problems left over by his predecessor

By KESHAB POUDEL

Founder of Apple Steve Jobs said, “Don’t let the noise of others’ opinions drown out your inner voice and, most important, have a courage to follow your heart and intuition. The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.”

When the government appointed Ghising a year ago for his

second tenure as MD of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), NEA was in a bad shape financially and technically as people were fed up with unannounced load shedding

Assuming the office for his second tenure, MD Ghising expressed his inner commitments and determination to bring Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) back on the track. In a hostile environment

created by biased opinions of his critics, MD Ghising marched for a success.

Like Steve said, MD Ghising has changed the situation in one year increasing the profit of NEA by 164 percent and reducing the electricity leakage drastically.

Nepal Electricity Authority has increased its total profit of Rs.16 billion and electricity leakage



has declined to 15.38 percent.

Although MD Ghising does not have a magic stick, what he has is management capacity which he proved in his first four-year tenure ending decades of load shedding and making bankrupt NEA a profit-making public entity.

As Nepal Electricity Authority is celebrating its anniversary on August 17, NEA's recently released financial statement showed a miracle in profit.

During the year 2077/78 fiscal year, NEA made a net profit of Rs.6.1 billion rupees. However, the profit of this fiscal year 2078/79 is Rs. 16.09 billion.

According to MD Kul Man Ghising, NEA's annual transaction in 2078/79 reached over Rs.100 billion. Following this, NEA is now the highest earning and prof-

it-making public entity in Nepal. The consumption of electricity has increased by 27 percent, export increased, and 16 percent electricity generation increased from NEA's powerhouses and with declining leakage helping to swell annual income," said MD Ghising.

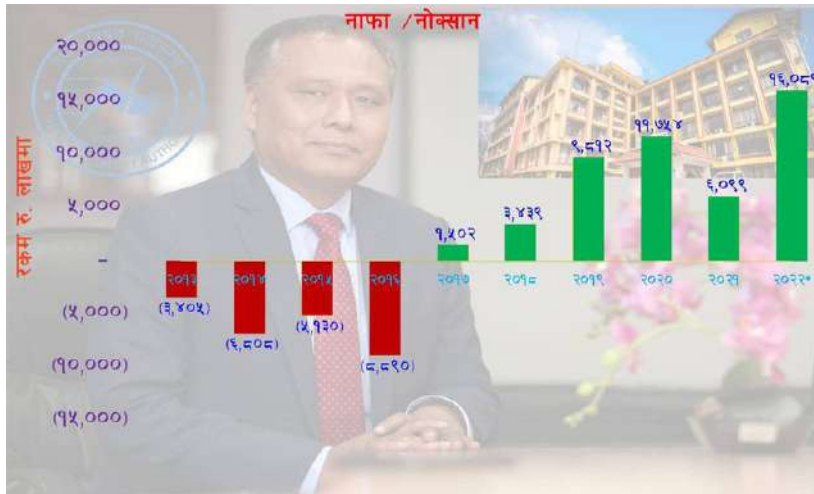
NEA had a net loss of Rs.8.89 billion in the fiscal year 2072/73. Since that NEA has been making a profit each year. In the fiscal year 073/74, NEA made a net profit of Rs1.50 billion. In the last year of the first four-year tenure in 076/077, NEA's profit was Rs. 11.75 billion. However, NEA's profit declined to Rs.6.1 billion in 2077/078.

Ghising said that the quality and dependable supply of electricity has now direct impacts on NEA's financial position. NEA has

also offered about Rs. 980 million discounts to the consumers who paid the tariff in time. NEA has made Rs.87 billion net income from selling electricity. This amount is 22 percent higher than the previous year.

MD Ghising also said that electricity leakage has also gone down to 15.38 percent from 17.18 percent in the previous year. When MD Ghising took the charge as an MD in 2072/73, the leakage was 25.78 percent. When he left completing four years in 2076/77 it declined to 15.25 percent.

In his one-year absence in 2077/78, leakage had increased to 17.18 percent. After taking several effective steps, NEA is able to reduce 1.80 percentage points in leakage fixing it to 15.38. MD Ghising said that NEA has made about Rs.



2 billion from controlling the leakage. He said that NEA will launch more effective steps to reduce electricity theft and improve the quality of supply by installing transforms and distribution lines in the coming years. This will further reduce the leakage.

Export and Import Status

During the fiscal year 2078/79, the export of electricity to India has increased. NEA has been exporting electricity from 364 MW to 400 MW daily.

During 2077/078, Nepal exported merely 44 million units or (44 Gwh) of electricity. In 2078/79, NEA exported 493 million (493 Gwh) of electricity to India. NEA has already earned Rs.3.88 billion from export.

Despite increasing the domestic consumption of electricity by 21.28, NEA was able to reduce the import. NEA has imported 2806 Gwh of electricity worth Rs.21.50 billion in the fiscal year 2077/78 to meet the domestic demand. This fiscal year, Nepal imported 1543 Gwh worth Rs.11.54 billion.

Since 2015, this is the first time Nepal imported electricity around Rs.11 billion. Nepal imported electricity worth of Rs.14.02 billion in 2016, Rs.16.6 billion in

2017, Rs.19.83 in 2018, Rs.22.54 billion in 2019, Rs.12.44 billion in 2020 and Rs.21.50 billion in 2021.

Similarly, Nepal exported electricity worth up to Rs.33 million from 2013 to 2017. Nepal exported electricity worth of Rs.413 million in 2019, Rs.983 million in 2020 and Rs.316 million in 2021 and Rs.3.88 billion in 2022.

MD Ghising said that Nepal's net import of electricity will come to an end from the coming fiscal year and will become a net exporter. Peak demand for electricity was 1747 in the 2078/79 fiscal year and electricity consumers reached 5.3 million.

With support from all his

staff and backing from Minister Pampha Bhusal and other officials from the Ministry, MD Ghising has taken several reforms and effective programs to make the highest profit in the first year of his second tenure.

As he promised on his first day of the second tenure, MD Ghising has proved in a span of 12 months that he means business and tells the truth. Despite criticism by his critics terming his announcement as populist, MD Ghising has shown what he means.

Completing Transmission Lines

In his one year tenure, he has already completed numbers of stalled transmission line projects. Completion of 220 kV Marsyangdi corridor is one of the major one. Similarly, the connection of Bharatpur-Bardghat new 220 kV transmission line after vacating by court is a major success. The Supreme Court's decision to vacate the interim order on Hetauda-Inarua 400 kV double circuit transmission line paved NEA to complete the strategically important transmission line project which has been facing a number of problems.

Recently completed 220 kV transmission line and substation in Kosi corridor is a major mile-



stone. Constructed with funding from Indian Exim Bank, this project will be game changer for province 1.

MD Ghising said that after the completion of 220 kV transmission line and substation electricity supply in the Province 1 will drastically improve.

He said that the infrastructure has been prepared as a backbone for the electricity produced in the hilly districts of Province-1 to connect and distribute to the national transmission system. Ghising said that after the transmission lines and substations are operational, the availability of resources for power supply in that area will make the system reliable.

He mentioned that after the 220 kV transmission line and substation came into operation, the voltage in that area has improved and the power supply is reliable with quality.

“In the Morang-Sunsari industrial corridor, when the supply was only from Duhabi substation of Sunsari, there was a problem of voltage tripping, now the load of Duhabi substation can be shifted to Inaruwa substation, so more electricity can be provided to the industries and the problems of voltage tripping will be solved,” Ghising said.

Similarly, the completion of New Butwal-Lumbini and Marchawar 132 kV Transmission line is another breakthrough. Similarly, the completion of 132 kV Solu-corridor transmission line is also a breakthrough.

Big Loss In His One Year Absence

With an abrupt decision of then Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, Ghising discontinued for a year. However, the year under a new management cost billions of rupees of loss to NEA.



As he left NEA in 2020 and Hitendra Dev Shakya took charge as new MD, the process of NEA's decline started. The audit period between July 2020-July 2021 showed how NEA was heading to a financial collapse.

The Auditor General's Annual Report 2022 showed that NEA suffered from high leakage, low profits and high remnant in the fiscal year of 2020-2021 (2077/078).

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has taken initiative to connect the completed private sector hydropower projects to the national transmission line as soon as possible.

The work of transmission line under construction will be completed immediately to prevent wastage of electricity generated by private sector hydropower projects due to lack of transmission line, said NEA.

After it became public that the projects completed in Lamjung could not be connected due to lack of transmission line, the top management of NEA visited under construction hydropower projects in the Dordi and Ngadi rivers and inspect-

ed the transmission line under construction to get information about the construction progress.

A team led by NEA Managing Director Kul Man Ghising inspected the projects recently. The team visited Dordi Corridor 132 kV transmission line being constructed by NEA in Lamjung, 30 MW Ngadi Hydropower, 27 MW Dordikhola of Himalayan Power Partner, 25 MW Upper Dordi 'A' of Liberty Energy and 12 MW Dordi-1 of Dordikhola Hydropower Company.

MD Ghising called for completion of the projects as soon as possible as the situation would not be created to waste electricity due to lack of electricity in the transmission line.

The NEA had completed construction of the 11 km Kirtipur-Udipur 132 kV Double Circuit Transmission Line (Dordi Corridor) and substation in Kirtipur to connect Dordi Khola Hydropower Project to the national grid.

However, four out of 33 towers of the project were washed away by the flood in the Dordi River on 15 June 2021. The floods also caused severe damage to private

COVERSTORY

sector hydropower projects, which are in the final stages of construction.

New Cross Border Transmission Line

Stalled for long, Nepal and India agreed to start the construction of Butwal-Gorakhpur 2nd Transnational Transmission Line. This is another milestone in his second tenure.

The process to construct the proposed 400 kV new Butwal-Gorakhpur second transnational transmission line between Nepal and India has moved forward. The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has got approval for foreign investment in the project.

Under the joint venture project between the NEA and the Indian Power Grid Corporation, a company will be established in India to do the construction work in the Indian side.

For it, the NEA has to manage Rs 736 million, which is 50 percent share. But, the NEA itself will bear the cost to construct the project in the Nepali side.

The double circuit transmission line is around 120 kilometers



eters between New Butwal substation at Sunawal Municipality-13 in Nawalparasi district and Gorakhpur substation in India. Of the area covered by the project, around 20 kilometers falls in the Nepali side and the remaining in the Indian side.

NEA MD Ghising said that with the permission to NEA for foreign investment has paved a way for establishing a company in India on joint venture of NEA and Power Grid for the development of a project.

“An article of association and regulation are ready for the company establishment and with the obtainment of a permit for an

investment from India, the establishment of the company will be moved ahead,” he said.

It may be noted that the seventh meet-

ing of a mechanism of Nepal-India energy secretaries and joint-secretaries on October 14, 2019 finalized the investment model for the development of the transmission line.

Hydropower Projects

Exchanging agreement with India’s Satlaj Power Company to develop Upper Arun, NEA has already started the construction of bigger project. Similarly, MD Ghising is also working to develop 600 MW Dudhkosi storage project and the negotiations with Asian Development Bank are currently going on.

In his second tenure, NEA is working to start at least four projects with over 1200 MW of power. MD Ghising, a man of action, is now working to fulfill his promises to make NEA a strong institution.

As Steve Jobs said: Your time is limited, don’t waste it living someone else’s life. Don’t be trapped by dogma- which is living with the results of other people’s thinking.



About-Turn?



BY: HEMANG DIXIT

The Covid-19 pandemic manifested that the US policy of importing goods from elsewhere, where the cost of production is cheaper, is not of benefit at the time of an emergency. Many areas of the country, at the start of the epidemic had to wait for simple essentials such as drinking straws and masks.

It has periodically been claimed by the 'Big Wigs' of the Nepali Congress that the concept of self sufficiency in simple essential goods e.g. matches, soap, biscuits, sugar, agricultural tools, paper, leather shoes etc as conceived during PM Joodha's or King Mahendra's or BP's time was outmoded. It was BP's brother GP, with his economic advisors, who initiated the dismantling and disposing off the machinery of national Nepal enterprises at rock bottom prices.

Shri Dilendra Prasad Badu, Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supply in the current government was reported by The Rising Nepal of 28th July 2022 to have stated that the Janakpur Cigarette Factory, Biratnagar Jute Mill, Hetauda Textile Factory, Butwal Thread Industry and the Gorakhkali Rubber Industry would be restarted. Minister Badu even announced on Twitter that the Janakpur Cigarette Factory will be restarted soon with the functional machines that are still there. Weren't they sold off like the machines of the various other industries on the grounds of the government's 'Free Market' Policy? Is this just a simple case of 'One hand does not know what the other doeth'? Is this just an election tactic to get the voters of Madesh to support the 'Gathbandan'? Is this a re-enactment of the 'Back to Village' Panchayat policy to attract and fool prospective farmers of Madesh to the prospect of growing jute and tobacco? Is this a pre-election ploy to hoodwink the masses? One wonders at the truthfulness of such a statement by a politician in office, even though it is in line with the thought that our country should be self sustainable for ones needs.

A subsequent announcement a week later that the next decade would be an 'Industrial' one with stress on the advertising and using of goods 'Made in Nepal'. There had also been previously news of a 'Sangralaya' to a political leader being constructed in Biratnagar. Is part of the land where the Pradesh government now stands being given free for the purpose?

It was in the time of PM Girija that machineries of the Bansbari Jutta Karkhani, the Brikuti Kagaz Karkhana, like the Yeti plane of the then RNAC, were sold off - dirt cheap. Whilst non leather shoes are now more popular, the fact remains that essential text-books for children are in severe shortage because of lack of paper to print them on. What a situation with the future of so many Nepali children at stake! If Nepal is said to be a 'Krishi Pradhan Desh' then why the closure of the Agriculture Equipment Factory, built with the aid of then USSR? The shortage of fertilisers has been going on for ages and though plans have been announced yearly, the implementation of these schemes never takes place. Is it due, perhaps the commissions from the import

of fertilisers from outside of Nepal? Was the Birgunj Sugar Factory shut down to increase the importation of sugar from elsewhere? As a result of this, even the manufacture of the import substitution local side-products – whiskey and brandy within the country has been hampered!

Another shortcoming of Minister Badu's announcement is the news of re-starting the cigarette factory at Janakpur. Ironically the government has been telling people that 'Smoking is injurious to health' and not allowing it in various public places such as restaurants, cinema halls and even within planes. Chances of getting lung cancer are reduced by not smoking. Lip and mouth cancers are reduced by not chewing tobacco. Even the fumes of cigarette smoke is said to be harmful to pregnant mothers sitting nearby. This effect, termed 'Passive smoking', also affects non smoking family members too. The government has spent much in publicity about not smoking. Now it wants to restart the factory because there are a few machines which might function. Why were these not sold off with the bonanza sale of machines from Nepal in those hectic days? Was it because of lack of offers as the prospective buyers were aware of the hazards of smoking?

This sort of news appears periodically. It was flashed at one time that the Hetauda Textile Factory was going to be taken over and run by the Nepali army with the objective that the cloth produced would be utilised for the uniforms of the army and police forces. A market for the products would always be there. This brings to mind that the People's Liberation Army (PLO) of China runs many factories for the day to day requirements of the armed services of the land. The setback of such a system is that it does away with the practice of 'Commission Tantra' for goods required by the armed forces!

The modalities of re-starting all these industries are said to be in the process of being worked out. Why at such a time when the 'Gathbandan' government is about to go for elections? Is this all a 'Bhulbhullaya' that they are creating for there is no guarantee that these same people will be back in power? Is the jyotishi who has chosen the auspicious date of 4th Mungsir, for holding elections a sure forecaster of good days to come? Can, the now 'Caretaker' government, make such decisions?

It would be very wise for the new the government formed, post elections to take up the offer made by Qatar through its representative in Nepal. There is a need in that country for food, water, vegetables, herbs and spices produced as per international standards. The representative advised that Nepal should develop a food value chain and ensure quality of the final products which can compete with similar items from surrounding countries. Such steps will also reduce the widespread use of spraying insecticides that is sadly prevalent in Nepal.

The author is a retired medical doctor and writes fiction under the pen name of Mani Dixit also. Website: www.hdixit.org.np. Twitter: @manidixitdh

Alarming Scenario

At a time when efforts are being made to reduce the import of fossil fuels encouraging the use of electricity, Nepal Energy Outlook 2022 has come out with important recommendations

By A CORRESPONDENT

With the increase in the import of fossil fuels, Nepal's foreign currency reserve is facing a severe pressure. Thus, the government is pushing for the use of electricity as a substitute to reduce the import of fossil fuels. In the process of energy transition, Nepal's four prominent organizations including two major universities and two major research foundations have published Ne-

ri, Professor of Kathmandu University and Sher Singh Bhat, Vice-president of Nepal Energy Foundation, jointly launched the National Energy Outlook 2022 amid a program.

Contributed by Dr. Nawaraj Sanjel, School of Engineering Kathmandu University, Dr. Anzoo Sharma, and Center for Energy Studies (CES), Institute of Engineering and Mohan Das Manandhar, Niti Foundation, the

ity. Looking at the present global and national contexts, the outlook presented the energy security threat such as important dependence on commercial fuel with only four to five days of storage capacity.

At a time when concerned ministries of the Nepal Government have been announcing various steps to reduce the use of LPG by encouraging e-cooking, the outlook has spelled out the transition of cooking fuel from kerosene to LPG.

Moderated by Dilli Ghimire, Managing Director of Nepal Energy Foundation, government officials, energy experts and university professors have also contributed to raising the various issues pointed out by the report.

"One of the important issues discussed in the outlook is energy transition. From the perspective of our document does Nepal have options on the way to 2030 for the energy transition? This is an outlook and we use most of the data till 2021 and some data of 2022," said Mohan Das Manandhar, executive director of Niti Foundation.

"We are in the process of detailing it and we will present Nepal's energy transition by December. There are many important issues. However, I deal with only two major issues. By 2026, Nepal will graduate from the LDC. After graduation, Nepal will follow different economic modalities According to Nepal Vision Policy 2016; Nepal is expected to have an economy of 90 trillion. Our current economy is around 400 billion. However, the situation is different now with the effect of Covid-19. We are weakening. Our projection is 2500 dollars per capita and 900 billion economies projected. This needs 9 to 10 percent growth."

"The growth is possible due to local government. 90 percent of local levels have invested huge money in local infrastructure and access to houses. Local levels will invest huge money in eco-



pal Energy Outlook 2022.

Jointly prepared by Kathmandu University, Tribhuvan University Institute of Engineering, Niti Foundation and Nepal Energy Foundation, Nepal Energy Outlook 2022 was released amid a function at the Center for Energy Studies, Institute of Engineering, and Pulchowok.

Gokarna Panthi, Joint secretary of Electricity Regulatory Commission, Mohan Das Manandhar, executive director of Niti Foundation, Professor Dr. Tri Ratna Bajracharya, director of Center for Energy Studies (CES) IOM Tribhuvan University, Brajesh Adhika-

National Energy Outlook (NEO22) has analyzed the Nepali energy settings in three major contexts on sectoral status assessment, context and issue, strategies and prominent recommendation and the way forward.

The document has highlighted the shift of energy use patterns from traditional to modern energy with the significant increase in consumption of commercial fuel. According to the study, the consumption pattern of energy is shifting towards being unsustainable.

The outlook also highlights the current deficiency and possibilities of the future surplus of hydroelectric-

conomic infrastructure. The road is a major sector for inclusive economic growth. Our social and political gains are much higher compared to other countries. However, our economic gain is weaker,” said Manandhar.

“Nepal needs to have roads. The local governments are investing money in irrigation and water. The newly elected representatives have an interest in production. Volume-wise, the production is high. Local levels are supporting various production-related activities for high economic growth,” said Manandhar.

If the production sector grows, it will help increase the demand for electricity. Local levels and other agencies will go to increase consumption. As the country focuses on high production and economic growth, the consumption of energy will definitely increase. This is where we all need to look. This is a transition period for the energy market. With the rise in global prices, Nepal needs to shift its energy pattern from fossil fuel to clean energy. So far, there is a change this year in the budget.

Given the current state of economic growth, the demand side will increase and hydropower is meeting it. The current situation showed that Nepal will generate 10,000 MW by 2030. Our issue is how to use it.

“We need to explore other sources as well. We have been talking about hydropower. However, this is the time for transition. The first transition will be from fossil fuels to renewable types of energy, hydropower, solar and wind,” said Manandhar.

By increasing the annual

budget in the distribution and transmission sector, the country is right now in the energy transition. “With the announcement to replace LPG with electricity, the government has allocated around Rs.35 billion for the improvement of the distribution system. This is the high point of the budget. This is for the first time the government has increased the budget for transmission lines as well. Similarly, the government is allocating money to replace the current 5 umpire meter with 15. If this happens, cooking will move. This will start shifting the energy pattern. Local levels are also encouraging solar,” said Manandhar.

As Nepal has been importing a big volume of electricity, the outlook also looks at the Nepal-India electricity trade. The documents discuss the issues with a trade deficit, foreign exchange reserves and balance of payments situation with marginal surplus through export to India. “The current electricity trade with India is quite inspirational and can be expanded to minimize the existing balance of payments,” according to the outlook.

“The outlook 2022 aims to show how alarming the overall energy scenario of the country with rising import of fossil fuel is. We come out with recommendations to minimize the dependency on commercial fuel with available clean energy back home,” said Sher Singh Bhat, vice president of Nepal Energy Foundation.

As Nepal’s fossil fuel import is rising, Nepal Oil Corporation is also searching for a way to reduce them. “The current rate of fossil fuel is unsustainable. I don’t think the country is in a position to pay foreign currency. We must think of an alternative to the current energy,” said Bharat Raj Regmi, Deputy Managing Director of NOC.

Dr. Nawaraj Sanjel, School

of Engineering, Kathmandu University, contributor of the outlook, said that this shows a glimpse of the state of use of energy in Nepal and how the alarming increase of commercial fuel is threatening the energy security of Nepal. He also highlighted the positive side of the beginning of the high volume of export of electricity to India.

Taking part in the discussion, former joint secretary of National Planning Commission Purushottam Ghimire said that the government has already revised the target of the use of LPG in its SDG goals.

Dr. Ram Prasad Dhital, energy expert and former executive director of Alternative Energy Promotion Center, said the outlook rightly highlighted Nepal’s energy security scenario by analyzing various phenomena including the increased import of fossil fuels. These involve high risks in the current energy scenario.

Giving some models of replacing LPG by e-cooking, Karuna Bajracharya, Clean Cooking Alliance, highlighted the successful model of replacing LPG with electric cooking in Kavre. “Our experiment has shown that replacing LPG with electric cooking is possible. Professor Jagnath Shrestha suggested the need to further explore energy options and add another phenomenon in the outlook. This needs to be widely distributed to the public so that they can understand Nepal’s overall situation.

Gokarna Panthi, secretary of the Electricity Regulatory Commission, said that there is the need to encourage more storage-type projects so that electricity supply can be made sustainable. “This outlook gives a way to move forward in the current energy transition.”

Closing the program, Professor Dr. Trirantna Bajracharya said that this is just an initial report. He said that it will be enlarged after consultations.



Engaging Youth In Local Governance Process

At a time when forty-one percent of youth are elected at local level elections this year, Nepalese youth celebrated international youth day on 12 August. However, electing youth at the local level alone cannot ensure the engagement of youth in the local governance process. Funded by European Union and Implemented by Helvetas in collaboration with local partners, Youth Sounding Board (YSB) can be a game changer to increase the engagement of youth at the local level governance process.

By KESHAB POUDEL

“Happy week of Youth! For the EU in Nepal, it started with the launch of our EU Youth Sounding Board, and there’s no better way to start a collaboration than moving together! Looking forward to working with this talented group of young Nepalis!” tweeted European in Nepal on August 8.

As Nepal is celebrating International Youth Day, a three-day workshop of the Youth Sounding Board recently concluded in Kathmandu exercising various methods to show the way to increase the engagement of youth. Thus, it was a happy week for Nepalese youth who joined a program to start a new journey with a mission to empower and engage youth in Nepal’s local government process.

Around 21 members of the Youth Sounding Board from different parts of Nepal attended a three-day program of learning, sharing and networking exercises.

“It was a wonderful workshop that equipped my knowledge, skills and ideas to engage youth at local government level. We acquired much-needed skills for networking, grouping and the entire process of governance,” said Aagya Shrestha, a member of YSB.

“One of the objectives of the interaction among Youth Sounding Board Members was for the promotion of Youth Engagement in Local Governance Process,” said Aagya Pokharel, Project Coordinator Helvetas Nepal.

“Its key activities will be the formation of youth panels, capac-

ity development constitutional rights, federalism, Electoral literacy, RTI compliances, Local Media Mobilization, Social Accountability Practices, Technical Support in digitalization, Youth Sounding Board Financial Support to third parties and Palika Internship opportunities,” said Pokharel.

“The board provides opportunities like learning platform and gain-

Helvetas is implementing the Promotion of Youth Engagement in Local Governance Process (PROYEL). Funded by the European Union and implemented by Helvetas, PROYEL is supporting youth programs in Madhesh and Karnali provinces.

According to Helvetas, promoting youth engagement and leadership will help achieve its development



ing experiences, Engagement in the local government process and familiar about the procedures, aware about constitutional rights, Acts, Youth Policies nationally and globally, governance acts, electoral rights, e-governance tools, social accountability Practices and participation in influencing policy and advocacy initiatives.”

Helvetas Program

Like other organizations,

goal of decent lives for all. To overcome all sectoral issues, Helvetas encourages the engagement of young people in local government affairs strengthening federalization in Nepal. For this, Youth Sounding Board is a key.

“Helvetas has implemented an action to promote youth engagement in local government processes in support of the European Union. It seeks to address the very gaps in youth en-

agement and leadership by working at 3 levels; creating inclusive spaces for meaningful dialogue between government and youths, capacity engagement of youths and supporting local government to develop institutional mechanisms to address intersectional exclusion and other issues. For meaningful dialogue between government and youths, youth structures such as youth panel at the local level and Youth Sounding Board at the National level have been formed. While youth panels engage with local government, YSB engages at the national level, also contributing to the design of youth-related strategies of the EU,” writes Bindu Sharma, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Officer, from Helvetas Nepal.

In collaboration with Women Empowerment Action Forum (WEAF): A women-led NGO from Karnali Province, Sahayogi Samaj Nepal (SSN) and a Youth-led NGO from Madhesh Province, Helvetas is launching the programs in two provinces.

Under the PROYEL, 80 youth will work in groups, circles, networks, and organizations around 85 ward communities in 8 Palinkas. The board members at the local level include executives of employment Service Centers, Migrant Resource centers. Similarly, 30 youth will be selected from schools and local media.

The project will cover Gurans Gaunpalika and Dungeshor Gaunpalika (Dailekh), Lekbeshi Nagarpalika



and Simta Gaunpalika (Surkhet) and Bheri Nagarpalika (Jajarkot) of Karnali Province and Hariwon Nagarpalika and Barahthawa Nagarpalika (Sarlahi) and Chhireshornath Nagarpalika (Dhanusha) of Madhesh Province and Kanchanpur, Doti and Baitadi of Sudurpashchim provinces.

“The program will focus on the promotion of an enabling environment for the institutionalization of young Nepali citizens’ through engagement in the local governance process thereby contributing to COVID recovery and development in Nepal,” said Pokharel.

Workshop In Kathmandu

Attending three days of close and open door programs, 21 young

ing, and so on.

Ashmita Raut, 22, a resident of Gamtha Rural Municipality Mugu district of Karnali Province, is a member of the Youth Sounding Board. She said that the training helped her learn a lot about youth engagement.

Studying forestry courses at Kathmandu Forestry College, Raut, who is selected for YSB holds the view that electing few at a local level cannot change the current state of youth.

“Large numbers of youth are leaving the country due to lack of employment back home. In the mountain region, there has been a perception that youth should not stay home because they are bread earners. Villages are empty of youth. Their engagement at the local level is very essential to change the state of youths in the country,” said Raut.

Pooja Chaudhary, 21, a resident of Malangawa Municipality is pursuing a bachelor of public health in the Institute of Medicine.

“I was happy to see that a large number of youth this time made it to local level including in Madhesh Province. In Madhesh Pradesh, even young women are elected. Our families rarely promote youth to join politics. Youth are always discouraged by their families to join politics,” said Pooja, who also attended the three days of YSB workshop.

Against all odds, youth are





now in a position to make a difference. The issue now is to engage other youths in the process of governance and accountability.

Although Chakra Oli, 19, a resident of Musikot Municipality west Rukum, a law student in Nepal Law College, did not take part in the course due to Covid-19 infection at the last minute. He thinks working in a group can make things different.

"I am happy that the participation of youth in the local level has drastically increased in the last elections. Over 40 percent of elected representatives are youth. However it is not enough," said Oli, who missed the first meeting.

Constituted as a part of the Promotion of Youth Engagement in Local Governance Program (PROYEL), these are the voices of Youth Sounding Board Members who have started the work for the promotion of youth engagement at a local level.

Nepalese youth have shown that they can be a creative force, and a dynamic source of innovation, and they have undoubtedly, throughout history, participated, contributed, and even catalyzed important changes in political systems, power-sharing dynamics and economic opportunities.

However, youth also face poverty, barriers to education, multi-

ple forms of discrimination and limited employment prospects and opportunities.

Despite such huge participation, youth, governance and participation is a major issue. Despite elections of 40 percent of youths at the local level and many youths have remained politically active through "political movements," their engagement at the local level governance process is negligible.

Young men and women are traditionally active politically in universities but very often disillusioned with political leadership and political institutions and excluded from policy development. As a result, the political activism of youth is not organized according to formal groupings.

"I preferred to join civil service after completion of my university degree. My parents and other family members dislike joining politics," said Oli.

Opportunities for youth to engage in governance and participate in political and decision-making processes depend largely on the political, socioeconomic, and cultural contexts where social norms in many parts of Nepal result in multiple forms of discrimination against young women.

"Both formal and informal engagement can be understood as political participation, and both are benefi-

cial for a vivid and resilient democracy and should be supported," said Oli

"Despite their involvement in the political revolution, the focus on youth, in terms of their engagement in the political arena, is a relatively new priority but extremely timely, particularly in light of recent events and democratic transitions," said Badri Manandhar, Programme Manager of Helvetas Nepal.

People under the age of 30 are rarely found in formal political leadership positions.

With limited opportunities and exposure to meaningfully participate in inclusive decision-making processes, young men and women feel excluded and marginalized in their societies and communities. The need for participatory structures and greater trust between youth and institutions and greater capacity development were also stressed.

"Efforts should also be made to focus on the most vulnerable of young people, including via specific actions targeting young women. In countries emerging from conflicts, Helvetas recognizes that young people can engage in local governance using new technologies to mobilize societies to bring about change," said Manandhar.

Youth represent the largest segment in society; they are the most influential and influenced segment among their local communities and they interact either negatively or positively with policies and strategies enforced by the various local government institutions.

Manandhar said it was imperative to foster youth aspirations as well as utilize their vast energies in serving and advancing their local communities. He reflected upon his experience in the programs launched by Helvetas stressing the great impact the program had on youth in terms of defining their personalities. He concluded his speech engagement of youth in local governance empowering youth to ensure their active participation in sustaining local development.

Helvetas has been supporting various programs: employment gen-

eration, safe migration and others in those Palikas. Although our program is related to governance, the youth also require employment and enterprise development.

Bipana Thapa, 22, holds the view that youths need more training. More young people need to be involved in climate change issue. As it will mostly affect the coming generation like me, climate change and green development need to be a priority of all youths. Even through the engagement at the local level, newly elected young leaders can make a change in the perception in the coming five years. We have to work to generate awareness of climate change and its implications in our life. As a youth, we are the future. We have to focus on green development and sharing knowledge and so on. Local level governments can make changes in the lifestyle.

To Namuna Giri, 22, an LLB student of Nepal Law Campus, a resident of Bakipur Municipality of west Rukum: The tendency to claim legal and constitutional rights by youth has been increasing. Unlike in the past, large numbers of youth are elected to run the local governments. People are very much aware of the situations. Youths are taking part in different activities. However, the participation of youth at the local level is very nominal compared to urban areas like Kathmandu.

“The old generation still dominates the political platform. There is discrimination between men and women. Compared to boys, girls are more discriminated against than boys. The level of awareness is very low regarding the rights. As long as people are aware of their rights, there are very low chances of their involvement.”

“Our topic is governance which is very much relevant. We have local government ward offices and provinces. We have to look at how much outreach is extended from



the local level, it is very important. We also talked about the need to provide internships at Palika level. It is a good idea. However, we have to see whether there is a legal framework. We have a focus on issues.”

Society is not taking those who join politics positively and there is a widely circulated perception that politics is a bad thing. However, a country’s power and the government are with politicians and political parties. Political parties are responsible to run the government, formulating the policies and implementing them. If politics is so important, shall we ignore politics and political parties? In the

er, it is a foundation of society. In one survey conducted after the last parliamentary elections, politicians see politics as a profession that means making money. They have not seen politics as a medium of transformation of economic and social agenda. Our understanding of politics is poor. What should be the role of the youth to change this negative perception about politics?

Perception of youth in politics

Politics is important but it is a long-run goal. We need to generate awareness. For this, there should be certain role models. We need to focus on the program to provide skills for employment. Youth should be given skills to sustain their livelihood. They should be given basic rights.

Politicians are responsible for destroying the ideals of politics. There is no room in politics for the honest and neutral. Instead of going to politics, I find it is safe and comfortable to do a government job. There is instability in the country. Politics needs to change by engaging youth. However, it is



context of Nepal, we might have bitter experiences regarding politics. However,

not easy. We are unable to distinguish good and bad. There is discrimination

NATIONAL

among rural and urban youth. Large numbers of youth are excluded. There is the need of accountability.

The solution will be to use a digital platform to launch political literacy and awareness. There are inclusion issues: inclusion of women, marginalized and so on. This year the number of women declined at the Palinkas level due to political alliances. Large numbers of youth are excluded. They don't have an idea and they don't have consciousness. There is a need to form a political academy at the local level utilizing the current federal structures.

"There is a very little understanding about politics among the youth in rural areas compared to the urban center in Kathmandu," said Pooja Chaudhary. There is the need to encourage the youth in politics meaningfully. The number of youth in politics increases but most of them don't know why are they there. Mostly contesting the elections and winning it means money for many. Youth must change this mindset to make politics as a vehicle of effective service delivery. We need to tell people that politics is the main center of development.

In Sudurpaschim, youth involvement in local government is viewed as critical to the continuity and development of local government process and strengthening of our democracy. "Youth involvement in local government is the avenue through which they are engaged and their investment, influence and commitment as leaders of the future are assured," Pragya Panta said.

"Building relationships is key in making local government and youth engagement successful. An effort needs

to be made to design youth engagement mechanisms within local authorities. There is also the need for massive sensitization of the youth on the function of local government [so as] to restore their interest in the work of the local government," said Aagya Shrestha.

The roundtable was held at Helvetas Nepal Office. The interaction aimed to explore the reality of youth participation in local governance process and develop recommendations that promote their representation, participation, and active role as agents for positive change in the local govern-



ment sector.

Moreover, the groups discussed practical steps that aimed to broaden youth engagement in their local communities, with clear and straightforward roles and responsibilities for the key stakeholders in the sector.

"In Nepal, different agencies are working to ensure every adolescent and youth, in particular adolescent girls, is empowered to have access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, in all contexts. The specific needs of young people in the country, particularly adolescents, tend to be neglected as they transition from childhood to young adults. Moreover, discriminatory gender and socio-cultural norms existing across Nepal are inclined to under-value girls and do not recognize the positive contributions they can make to society and economic growth if provided with the same opportunities as boys. Significant and targeted investments in youth are required for Nepal to reap the benefit of the demographic dividend," said Thapa.

"Even though the government has brought many programs with the youth as a top priority, the youth have not been able to benefit due to the lack of effective implementation of those programs," said Oli

August 12: International Youth Day (IYD)

August 12 was designated as International Youth Day by the UN General Assembly in 1999. It is an annual celebration of the role of young women and men play as essential partners in promoting human rights and development.

The theme of International Youth Day 2022, "Intergenerational Solidarity: Creating a World for All

Ages" seeks to highlight the ways in which the engagement of young people and others people at the local, national and global levels.

The National Youth Council (NYC) is celebrating this year's International Youth Day for a week. The IYD is being celebrated on August 12 around the theme – "Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health."

Holding the first interaction with members of Youth Sounding Board and hearing the views expressed by the members, Helvetas Nepal believes that the board will play catalytic role to increase meaningful youth engagement at local level governance process.

NITI DISCUSSION

Campaign Financing

As the government has announced November 20 as the election date for provincial and national elections, election financing is a much talked about issue now in Nepal. Published by Niti Foundation, Niti Note, which discusses how to handle the financing of the elections to make elections free and fair and affordable, proves as a most relevant document in the present context

By A CORRESPONDENT

As the election for provincial and federal parliament is coming close, the debates on campaign financing appears as a major issue. From Elections Commission to leaders of the political party and civil society leaders, all are worried about the rising cost of elections campaigns and their implications for the entire election process.

Based on its study made by imminent constitutional lawyer Dr. Bipin Adhikari and published by Niti Foundation, a Nepali not-for-profit public interest organization, the study suggest highlights many issues of campaign finance. "If campaign finance is not effectively regulated and monitored, it will continue to undermine the integrity of political process and institution and jeopardize the quality of democracy," says the report title placing the strength of democracy at the heart of the Election Commission's Agenda.

As the report pointed out, the leaders of political parties, officials from the elections Commission, members of Civil Society Organizations and experts expressed their concerns on how rising election costs threaten democracy.

Organized by Foundation, an interaction program on Election Financing and Frugality concluded with a consensus opinion that the trust of the people in the entire democratic process is fading because of rampant misuse of money during the elections campaign. All the speakers expressed the view that only Election Commission can bring certain changes.

"With its constitutional authority, only Election Commission can bring tangible change in the current state of elections financing and reforms. Election Commission has both legal and constitutional power to fix the election financing issue," said imminent constitutional lawyer Dr. Adhikari wrapping up the interactions.

Discussion On Issue



Moderated by Purushottam Ghimire, the program started with the remarks by Mohan Das Manandhar, Executive Director of Niti Foundation. In his opening remarks, Manandhar highlighted the policies and current state of campaign financing.

"Although it was undermined for a long, Elections Commission is taking the campaign financing and frugality as an important issues to ensure free and fair elections. Along with Commission, this issue is now taken by different stakeholders. Niti Foundation is a Nepali not-for-profit public interest organization. We have been

closely working in the policy reforms in elections accountability to ensure fairness in elections," said Manandhar. "There are also issues of accountability and impunity. Campaign financing is a critical issue related to the regulation of political parties by the Election Commission. He said that recently concluded elections have shown how money is influencing elections. "EC needs to enforce campaign finance laws and there is also growing demanding from political parties to reform in the laws to manage campaign finance affordable to all," said Manandhar. "Our studies have shown the necessity of independent electoral management bodies, and the operation and monitoring roles of the EC, in the protection of democracy," said Manandhar.

He said that Election Commission had done a fairly well job in the last local elections to reduce the campaign cost. "The Commission's decision to reduce its cost for the elections is very important to press political parties to follow it," said Manandhar. As an organization working in policy reform areas, my experience is that there need to have a reform in the election laws as well to limit the campaign cost."

"A recent election study confirms that Nepal has seen increasing influence of money in the elections. Our study has shown that financiers' increased influence in the elections, unequal access of funds among candidates and accountability issues during the elections cycle. This is due to proper enforcement of campaign financing law, "

Manandhar said that proper



enforcement of the laws is a prerequisite stressing the need to have a monitoring mechanism in place. “Election Commission is taking the issue seriously and it will likely bring change in coming days,” said Manandhar.

Presenting the paper on Campaign Financing with a comparative analysis of regional and global elections costs, former secretary and constitutional lawyer Madhav Paudel highlighted the overall campaign financing of Nepal compared with south Asia and the global level.

In his intensive presentation, former secretary Paudel said that Nepal’s cost of the election is much higher and unaffordable to the common candidate. “Due to elections financing, many genuine political actors are unable to contest the elections,” said Paudel. He said that efforts taken by the commission is commendable but there still require more to bring the campaign financing on the right track.

Paudel presented comparative charts of campaign financing in Nepal from the elections of 1998 to till now and compare the figure with other South Asian countries. “The elections campaigning are getting more expensive in every time. It looks that contesting the elections is impossible for common people.”

He also compared the election expenditure trends of EC and other agencies showing the rising trends in each periodic election.

Spokesperson of Election Commission Saligram Paudyal said that Election Commission has drastically reduced the elections expenditure this local election. He said that the elections commission spent just Rs. 5 billion to

Rs.284 against Rs.509 in the last election,” said Paudyal. “We also want to see a reduction from the political parties.”

The protection and consolidation of democracy in Nepal will require more than what the Elections Commission Nepal (ECN) has been doing since its establishment.

“Apart from attending to the technical management (during the election period) of elections according to the prevailing Constitution, the ECN should also fulfill its normative role and support the electoral system and accountable government. This will create space for the ECN to, directly and indirectly, work on the issues of better representation of public interest, fairer and more equitable policies, and increased accountability of the government — matters that deeply affect citizens’ commitment to democracy and contribute to Nepal’s democratic consolidation,” said Dr. Adhikari.

Other stakeholders including political party leaders also raised the issue of election financing as a crucial issue to make elections free and fair. “Given the current state of Campaign finance, it is impossible for poor and dedicated political leaders to contest the elec-

hold the local elections this time against Rs.7 billion in 2017.

“Despite the escalation of process in all materials, the cost spent per voter in this current election was

tions. The elections now is rich man’s game,” said Urmila Aryal, member of the National Assembly and leader of the Maoist Center.

Nepali Congress leader and member of National Assembly Kamala Panta said that election financing is affecting the freedom and fairness of elections. “Although the cost of contesting an election was not cheap in the past as well, it was much cheaper than the present one,” said Panta. “It is impossible for politicians like me to contest the election now.”

Nepal has been holding elections since the establishment of democracy in 1951. However, every election is drawn into the controversy over its need to be free and fair in conduct. Every political party prefers to contest the elections while being in power because it can enjoy the certain privileges to use public resources.

The recently concluded elections were generally free and fair. However, CPN—UML termed the elections partially fair and blamed the election commission for taking the side of the candidates of the ruling alliance.

Central Committee member of CPN-UML Usha Kiran Timilshina demanded to levy income tax on political parties. Timilshina said that Commission also needs to reform the present election campaign model to reduce the cost. She said that stopping programs like motorcycle rallies and limiting the number of people in door-to-door campaigns can drastically reduce the campaign cost.



After successfully conducting the local elections, Elections Commission (EC) is now in the process of reviewing the entire elections process including its role, functions, and shortcomings. Its aim is to overcome the shortcomings to be better prepared for the financial issues.

Joint secretary of Election Commission Yagya Bhattarai said that the commission is making every effort to make the elections expenditure of the candidate transparent. He said that the elections commission will ask detailed of the expenditure after the elections.

“The success of the Elections Commission is remarkable amidst Nepal’s ongoing democratic challenges. These challenges come from a feeble democratic commitment from political parties, extremism, a declining standard of the rule of law and public accountability, slow social transformation, and corruption. While the election period that occurs every five years constitutes a key aspect of the commission’s role, the intervening non-election period is also critical for the Commission to expand on its normative role of democratic consolidation. The Commission cannot be expected to only perform mere technical administration of elections. It also has to see itself as playing a wider instrumental role in the continued consolidation of Nepali democracy.

“Learning from past experiences, EC is taking all necessary steps including new elections law with sweeping power related to the election process,” said spokesperson Poudel.

Political leaders hold the view that holding a periodical election alone is not enough to strengthen democracy but it must ensure that the elections will be free, fair, participatory and credible.

“Given the present state of cost of the election campaign, it is impossible for a person like me to contest the elections. It is the duty of the commission to create a favorable environment for all taking policy and legal reform,” said Durga Sob, central committee member of the Nepal Samajbadi Party.

Elections Review

Although it held the local elections in a free and fair manner, the

EC, the election management constitutional body, had many challenges before it. In any democracy holding periodical elections for all the tiers of governments in a free and fair basis is highly important and Nepal is not an exception. However, EC needs to be institutionally, legally capable and credible in all that it does.

Equipped with constitutional powers, laws, regulations, and the support of civil society organizations, EC has shown that reforms are possible with the dedicated and strong leadership head of the institution. “Our one and only job are to ensure free and fair elections periodically and work to create a conducive environment to vote for sovereign people. We now need to focus on voter list updates and make necessary arrangements to provide opportunities for eligible candidates to vote,” said Joint secretary,” said spokesperson Paudel.

Given the current situation, the leaders of political parties are putting all their trust on the commission. Leaders like Panta, Aryal, Sob and Timilshina hold the view that the commission can promote and further strengthen the exercise of a free and fair electoral process.

“We have been doing periodical reviews on the elections process and laws, shortcomings and corrections and we are holding a number of programs aimed to seek suggestions to reform its system,” said spokesperson Poudel.

“Independent electoral management bodies like Commission has increasingly been understood to be important institutions. The body can help guarantee and strengthen democratic consolidation, and act as bulwarks against democratic decay,” said Dr. Adhikari.

Although the commission remains institutionally independent from the executive branch of government, it is yet to fully exercise its own autonomy. As the officials of the commission are outside the purview of the execu-

tive, they can enforce the law and regulate the political party to fix the campaign financing,” said Dr. Adhikari.

At a time when everyone is talking about the need to make political parties accountable and transparent, the discussion is highly important to manage election financing.

The participants of the discussion also hold the view that educating voters is a key aspect of the elections process and Nepal has also been conducting regular voter education courses which is regarded as too technical.

Despite the inclusive and representative constitutional and legal provisions in the constitution, Nepal’s electoral process is yet to accept it.

“Our approach contributes to the larger discourse on the improvement of the election process. This discussion



is a part of our effort to strengthen the elections commission,” said Paudel.

As the elections is the backbone of democracy and give people to use their sovereign rights to choose their own candidates. Thus, the election is not a one-time agenda or it is just an event of voting, counting and electing representatives. There need to maintain sanctify of elections through holding free and fair. For this, there need to be strict control, on elections financing.

As it says the election is not a one-time agenda or it is just an event of voting, counting and electing representatives, elections are a regular process that require persistent effort and reform. Election Commission Nepal needs regular technical and non-technical support.

EDUCATION

Erasmus + Scholarships

Capacitating Youth

European Union awards Erasmus + Scholarships To 60 Nepali young Students

By A CORRESPONDENT

Scores of young and enthusiastic men and women were gathered at the backyard garden of the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal in Lazimpat on August 4 to attend a Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO).

Organized by the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal

prestigious European Universities to pursue their Master's Degrees in various fields. Some of the fields of studies for which the students have been awarded are soils and global change, flood risk management, urban climate and sustainability, forestry and natural resources management, media and communication and vaccinology edu-

cover all expenses, including tuition fees, a living allowance, and travel and installation costs.

Orientation Programs

Mingling with the young Nepali students, talking about various aspects of the courses, life and society of Europe, Nona Deprez, ambassador of European Union to Nepal, was helping the youth to prepare for their two years in European Universities.

This was not the first time ambassador Nona Deprez was inspiring and encouraging young Nepalese. The ambassador has been giving high priority to the youth of Nepal.

For 60 Nepalese young Erasmus + scholarships awardees, interacting with Nona Deprez, ambassador of European Union to Nepal, was highly inspirational. In her half an hour orientation lecture, Deprez explained many things about of the courses.

As over 40 percent population of Nepal are in the age between 15-39, educating and supporting youth is the best way to invest in the prosperous future as education is the first major investment for many young adults to improve their ability to secure access in different sector.

European Union has been a major development partner of Nepal in providing much needed support to Nepal government's priority sector to educate Nepal's youth and enhance their capacity and capability.

"I am so inspired by their words and their enthusiasm. They are the future leaders of Nepal. It is great to see them here with courage to go and study abroad. The journey they are going will be an adventure to learn and meet many new people, food and other experiences. I told them how to come out of their journey and come back with those skills and knowledge and memories for the sustainable develop-



together with the Erasmus Mundus Association Nepal, the best among the Nepali youth, they had been selected from various fields in an open competition, joined a Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO) for the new scholarship recipients of Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree (EMJMD) batch 2022-2024.

This year 60 Nepali students have received the scholarship, which is higher compared to last year when 49 students were awarded. The students have been awarded full scholarships for the period 2022-2024 and they will spend two years fulltime in

cation.

All the subjects go well with Nepal's needs for trained human resources. The fresh awardees got useful tips and advice for living and studying in Europe during the pre-departure orientation organized at the EU Delegation to Nepal office.

Countries in South Asia rank high in terms of number of scholarships received every year. When comparing the number of Erasmus scholarships awarded to the region, Nepal ranks fourth in South Asia and is among top 20 among all regions.

The Erasmus Scholarships



and skill to help Nepal. “I worked in Udayapur in Plantation division and my next job was in Plantation related organization. A graduate of Forest Institute of Hetauda under Agriculture and Forest University, going to Europe for master’s study is a great achievement of my life,” said Bhusal.

“The statement given by ambassador touched me and inspired me to do hard work and come back with the knowledge that will support Nepal. I agree with ambassador that we are among a few Nepalese young to get this kind opportunity to pursue study in world’s renowned universities in Europe. As I am leaving for the study, I have to utilize coming two years to enhance my knowledge to improve the situation in natural resource management back home.”

A resident of Rupandehi district of Lumbini province, Bhusal considers this is a great scholarship allowing fresh young graduate from Nepal to have exposure to world class students.

Biswas Chepang, who completed a course in 2016-018 batches, said the courses will be rigorous. Having completed his master’s degree in social work, Chepang is currently working in WWF-Nepal. Chepang said that higher education in Europe and degree has changed his overall performance.

Not only the fresh graduates, some awardees had a long experience of working in the sector as well. Man-

ment of Nepal. We are very proud to say that this year we have 60 students from Nepal which is really a lot in terms of size. There are 120 students from India. It is wonderful and I would like to have even more next year.”

The average age of the students is 25. Once they come back, these students will work in different sectors -- some of them will work in hospitals, agriculture, climate change, education and so on.

EU The Largest Global Donor In Education

The European Union is the largest global donor in education with its Erasmus+ program (2021-2027) budgeted at EUR 26.2 billion. This is nearly double the funding compared to its predecessor program (2014-2020).

The year 2022 marks the 35th year of existence of Erasmus+, the EU’s flagship program for education, training, youth and sport. The 2021-2027 program places a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital transitions, and promoting young people’s participation in democratic life.

For 35 years, the EU has funded the Erasmus program, which has enabled students, staff, trainees, teachers, volunteers and more to spend part of their studies at another higher

education institution or with an organization in Europe and beyond.

In addition to individual opportunity, Erasmus+ provides the opportunity for organizations from eligible Partner Countries, mainly higher education institutions (HEIs). It supports the modernization, accessibility, and internationalization of higher education in Partner Countries.

Capacity-building projects in the field of higher education are transnational cooperation projects, based on multilateral partnerships, primarily between higher education institutions from EU Member states or countries associated to the Program and third countries not associated to the Program.

Voices of Awardees

Namrata Bhusal, 24, who is pursuing course in natural forest and forest resources management in Europe’s top university, expressed the hope that she will come back with the knowledge



EDUCATION

isha Pantha, 33, born in Butwal of Rupandehi district of Lumbini Province is one of them. Having completed her graduation in nursing and currently working in National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET), Panthi feels very enthusiastic now to pursue higher education. “I am going to pursue my master in Public health and disaster. My background is blended in public health and disaster; I think this will be a great course for me. I am very happy to be selected in a course I have been trying to pursue. I am going to Spain, Sweden and Cyprus.

“I have been working in NSET for the last 10 years. I am still an NSET employee. The ambassador gave us a good guidance boosting our confidence when we all were nervous how to cope with the new situation. Nepal has a very few persons to have specialized in public health and disaster. I have been providing training to Nepal Police and armed police force on disaster and public health. I have been regularly taking class for security officials from Nepal, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan on importance of public health in rescue and rehabilitation.

S a b i n a Poudel, 25, a resident of Gaidakot of Gandaki Province. Having completed BSc agriculture from Lamjung Agriculture College in 2019, I worked for two years in KOICA as agriculture officer and I worked in sustainable agriculture. I am happy to have got the departure orientation.

B i d h y a Bhandari, 24, is a resident of Kathmandu and graduate of agriculture from Rampur. After graduation, I joined an NGO as research assistant. Sustainable agriculture, new technology and food production is my area. I want to work in full commit-

ment in the field. This is a new program.

“There is need to have a right set of mind. It is a process. I was selected. I was very happy. I would like to thank EU from the bottom of my heart and mind. I want to work.”

Yuri Shakya, 25, a resident of Patan, is a graduate of centenary sciences. Shakya is pursuing her master's in veterinary. She is not going for genetic science.

For some Alumnae of the course, the master's degree from Europe has brought everything. Sumeera Shrestha, who pursued the course in 2010/012, is one of them. She just left the job as chief executive officer at Women for Human Rights, an NGO working in the issues related to single women. Shameera had learned how to vigorously work.

“I worked there for almost 10 years. What I am today is the higher education that I took in the Poland Warsaw. It was an intensive course that provided wide exposure to Nepalese students. Resident of Kathmandu

UK and Portugal on sustainable transportation and power system, said that this is the course which helped him to have a new vision of the world.

Shristi KC, 26, a visually impaired person, pursued the course two years ago in Europe. “I am proud as the fellow of the course. This helped me a lot to enhance my skills and knowledge. This is an inclusive program which accommodates all the people, including people with disability, LGBT and others,” said KC.

Nepalese in Erasmus + scholarships

Nepalese Higher Education Institutions, in partnership with European Universities, are implementing 14 capacity-building projects in the field of higher education. Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu University, Pokhara University, Mid-Western University are some of the Nepalese partners working in the area of engineering, sustainable tourism, smart agriculture and more.

Welcoming the awardees, EU Ambassador to Nepal, Nona Deprez, said: “I am indeed more than happy to see that the number of Nepali students winning the Erasmus Scholarship is growing every year. Last year, 49 students received the scholarship, and this year sixty students have proved their excellence and have won this scholarship. Erasmus is a generous but competitive worldwide scholarship programme, the best ones win. I would like to see the number of Nepali awardees grow every year.”

Ambassador Deprez highlighted that the people to people exchange between the EU and Nepal will go a long way in building common understanding on issues of common



ment in the field. This is a new program. Shameera is now working as researcher and consultant.”

Having returned just a few months back, Pranayan Kumar Dhakal, 26, who was selected in 2020/022 to pursue courses in Italy,

concern.

“We hope that these scholarships will help these students to further excel and that they will return to Nepal with enhanced skills and knowledge useful for the country and themselves, as well as with fond memories of Europe,” Ambassador Deprez said.

More than 800 Nepalese students have benefited from the EU’s Erasmus+ Scholarship Programme so far. The Erasmus+ scholarships also provide opportunities for Europeans to undertake short-term studies and teaching in various universities across Nepal.

One Erasmus+ Nepal awardee, Sunu Lama, who will undertake her Master’s level studies in Estonia, said, “Erasmus Mundus tag itself is a big yes to an incredible experience for me and signing up for it is like a dream come true. It is truly a stepping stone for one’s professional and personal growth.”

Another Erasmus+ Nepal awardee Abhushan Gautam Shakya who will be going to Denmark for his first year studies on ‘Media and Globalization said, “The Erasmus Mundus scholarship has provided an excellent opportunity for media and communications professionals like me to explore innovative partnerships related to media programming with journalists from around the world. The insights gained during my study will enable me to take a research based approach on media programming and produce effective and actionable content on emerging issues that are close to my heart including disaster preparedness

and climate change adaptation.” Shakya will be taking up his second year studies in UK.

through the provision of sector budget support. The EU along with other donors supported the Government of



Nepal to complete the School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP-2009-2016) and currently it has been supporting the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP), which aims at guiding the reform efforts of the government until 2023 in line with Nepal’s vision to graduate from least developed country status. Education is one of the major pillars of development cooperation

Niranjan Khadka, Country Representative of Erasmus Mundus Association-Nepal, who completed his Master’s from Denmark and Italy (2013-2015) said, “Erasmus Nepal family is growing each year, many congratulations to this year’s awardees. The EMA Nepal is working to share scholarship information and support prospective students to prepare so that they can participate in the program from every corner of the country”.

Representatives of the EU Member State Embassies based in Kathmandu and New Delhi also participated in the programme and answered the queries of the students who are looking forward to begin their studies in different countries in Europe.

In addition to the Erasmus+ scholarships, the EU Delegation in Nepal has been providing ongoing support to the Government of Nepal/ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology on Quality Education and Technical and Vocational Training.

Education has been a key component of the EU’s financial assistance to Nepal since the late 1990s

for EU’s ongoing multiannual indicative programme (2021-2027) for Nepal.

Similarly, the EU support in TVET reform entails strengthening and more effectively implementing a TVET policy responsive to labour market needs, as well as piloting and integrating the Public Private Partnership (PPP) approach in three key economic sectors: agriculture, construction, and hospitality and tourism, in order to offer opportunities for promoting the transition to a greener, climate-resilient and low-emission economy. The TVET-PP is going forward to help reduce youth unemployment by improving access to relevant and high-quality TVET, which will increase their employability and provide them with better economic opportunities in the future.

As Greek political thinker Plato says the direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life. In this sense, investment in young’s education always pays the best interest of society and the country. EU’s support to Nepal in education has already started to give results.

कोभिड-१९ को जोखिम कम गर्ने उपायहरू

- सही तरिकाले मास्क लगाऔं।
 - कम्तिमा २ मिटरको दुरी कायम गरौं।
 - साबुनपानीले नियमित हात धुने वा स्यानिटाइजर प्रयोग गरौं।
 - हावा ओहोरदोहोर हुने स्थानमा बसौं।
 - अरुको व्यक्तिगत प्रयोगका सामग्री प्रयोग नगरौं।
 - कोभिड-१९ विरुद्धको खोप तथा बुष्टर डोज लगाऔं।
- संक्रमण हुनबाट आफू पनि बचाउँ अरुलाई पनि बचाऔं।



नेपाल सरकार
विज्ञापन बोर्ड

सर्वोत्कृष्ट स्वास्थ्य परीक्षणको लागि
जम्मा रु. १७,९५०/- मा होल बडी प्रिमियम प्याकेज

अत्याधुनिक विश्वस्तरीय स्वास्थ्य उपकरण दक्ष तथा अनुभवी चिकित्सक अन्य अस्पतालभन्दा सुपथ



Vitamin Test:

- Vitamin D, Vitamin B12

Lungs Function Test:

- Spirometry on Body Plethysmograph (PFT)

Liver Function Test:

- SGOT, SGPT

Cancer Marker:

- CEA & PSA (Male)
- CEA & PAP Smear (Female)

Infection marker:

- CBC - (Haemoglobin, Packed cell volume, R.B.C. count, MCHC/MCV/MCH, Platelet Count, Total W.B.C./Differential Count, Platelet Count), ALP, ESR

Osteoporosis Test:

- Bone Mineral Density (Dexa Scan)

Eye:

- Vision Test

Ear & Nose:

- ENT Consultation, Audiogram (Optional, at 30% discount)

Thyroid Test:

- TSH

Heart Function Test:

- ECG (GE Marque Resting ECG)
- Heart Scan (Calcium Scoring on 500 slice CT Scanner)
- ECHO Cardiogram (GE VIVID S6 Echocardiography)

Diabetic Test:

- HBA1C
- Fasting Sugar

Kidney Test:

- Urea
- Creatinine
- Sodium
- Potassium

Other Test:

- LIPID (Fat) Profile (Cholesterol, HDL Cholesterol, LDL Cholesterol, Triglycerides)
- Urine Routine Examination
- Calcium, Albumin, Phosphorous, Gamma G.T
- Uric Acid
- Digital Chest X ray
- USG (GE Voluson E6 4D Live Ultrasound) - Abdomen & Pelvis
- Body Composition Analysis (Tanita Body Composition Analyzer)
- Doctor Consultation

Rs.17,950

Whole Body PREMIUM PACKAGE

Sun - Fri (7am to 2pm)
Advance Booking Recommended

Price valid till applicable

Also available

Whole Body HEALTH CHECKUP

Sun - Fri (7am to 2pm)

Whole Body Basic

Vision Test | ECG | Spirometry (PFT) on Plethysmograph | Body Composition Analysis | Urea, Creatinine | Blood Sugar Random | SGOT, SGPT | Lipid Profile | Complete Blood Count (CBC) | Urine Routine Examination | USG | Chest X-ray | Doctor Consultation

Package Price

Rs. 4,950

Whole Body Special

Whole Body Basic +

Bone Mineral Density (BMD)
Heart Test (Calcium Scoring on 500 Slice CT Scan)
Diabetic Test (HBA1C)

Package Price

Rs. 8,950



GRANDE CITY HOSPITAL
ग्राण्डी सिटी हस्पिटल
Providing best of care with compassion

Next to Election Commission Opposite Hotel Yellow Pagoda, Jyoti Bhawan, Kantipath, Kathmandu
Tel: +977-1-416-3500, 416-3700, E-mail: info@grandecityhospital.com, www.grandecityhospital.com
For further information: 9851237493

*Terms & conditions apply

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



Download and experience
features and special offers



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

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