

# NEW SPOTLIGHT

September.- 09, 2022

NEPAL'S ENERGY

## Getting Green And Clean

### INSIDE



**UPPER TAMAKOSI**  
**SHARE TO INVESTORS**



**GENERAL ELECTIONS**  
**FREE AND FAIR PROSPECTS**



**INTERVIEW**  
**PAMPHA BHUSAL**





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## Notes From The Editor



As the day for general elections is coming closer, politics is heating up in Nepal. Political parties are busy making alliances and sharing seats among them. Nepali Congress-led five-party coalition is in the process of seat sharing. CPN-UML is also making efforts to forge some sort of alliance with smaller parties and secure maximum benefits from them. However, the situation is still fluid. Declining the suggestions of president Bidhya Devi Bhandari, House of Representatives and National Assembly have again passed the citizenship amendment bill without taking any note of her suggestions. This is increasing the tension between the ruling alliance and the president. How she will respond to the bill now remains to be seen.

Although there are several political and social issues to write about, we have decided to cover the energy transition as our cover story for this issue. With the surplus electricity on its grid, Nepal Electricity Authority has been exporting around 364MW of electricity to India. However, it is also making efforts to increase the consumption domestically. NEA has launched a campaign targeting to increase the internal consumption. We have decided to look at the campaign as our cover story. Similarly, we have also interviewed Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation minister Pampha Bhusal in this context. Along with this, we also feature other issues.

**Keshab Poudel**

Editor

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## Nepal, Australia Agree To Prioritize High-Level Visits

Nepal and Australia agreed to prioritize the exchange of high-level visits, promote people to people contacts, and facilitate trade, investment and transfer of technology. They also discussed cooperation in multi-lateral forums, including the exchange of experiences in



UN peacekeeping operations.

This decision is taken during the second meeting of the Bilateral Consultations Mechanism (BCM) between Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of Australia was held in Canberra.

Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal and Justin Hayhurst, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, led their respective delegations to the BCM meeting.

The two sides reviewed the bilateral relations between Nepal and Australia and exchanged views on further strengthening the bilateral relations and cooperation in different fields including education, energy, investment, trade, tourism, technology transfer, migration, cooperation in climate action, and disaster risk reduction, among others.

While appreciating Australian cooperation to Nepal, Foreign Secretary Paudyal requested the Australian side to place Nepal as a priority country for Australian aid, support for post-COVID economic recovery, graduation from the LDC status, and realize the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, and consider issuing visa services from the Australian Embassy in Kathmandu.

Earlier, Nepal and Australia signed MOU on Co-operation on Water Resource Management under which Australia will provide support on capacity development and training technical assistance in water resource management among others.

The Nepali delegation led by the Foreign Secretary comprised Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, Secretary, Water and Energy Commission, Kailash Raj Pokharel, Ambassador of Nepal to Australia, Lok Bahadur Thapa, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sita Basnet, Under Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Kul Bahadur Magar, Deputy Head of Mission of Embassy of Nepal.

## Japan Hands Over School Lunch Preparation Center In Kathmandu

A ceremony was held to hand over a School Lunch Preparation Center constructed with Japanese assistance at Budhanilkantha Municipality in Kathmandu District.

The new building has been built with the support of USD 87,499 under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) of the Japanese Government. On the occasion, Ambassador KIKUTA sent a congratulatory message to all those involved in the project.

He also appreciated the efforts of all who worked together with the Embassy to complete the project and hoped that the center will improve the educational environment for the students of public schools in Kathmandu district.

Food for Life Nepal was established in 2015 with the aim of providing 'mid-day meals' to children in public schools in Budhanilkantha Municipality, Kathmandu District.

Previously, Food for Life Nepal did not have sufficient kitchen space to prepare all the required school lunches. With the construction of this center, it is now a b l e

to provide school lunches to more than 7,000 students in public schools in Budhanilkantha Municipality and Tokha Municipality. The Embassy of Japan believes that the new center will provide nutritious school lunches to students and contribute to improving their educational environment.



## Korean Film Festival 2022 Concludes

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea organ-

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ized the 16th Korean Film Festival from September 2 to 3, 2022 at the QFX Cinemas, Labim Mall located at Pulchowk, Lalitpur.

The Embassy had held the Korean Film Festival every year from 2005 to 2019. However, due to covid-19, the festival was not held in 2020 and 2021. This year, the Embassy welcomes everyone to participate in 2022 Korean Film Festival.

With the increasing interest of Nepali people in Korea, the Embassy expressed that the films provided Nepali people with an opportunity to understand better and learn more about the Korean culture and society through movies.

The four movies, A Taxi Driver, Secretly Greatly, Luck Key, and Secret Zoo, will be shown during the Festival.

### India Constructs School Building In Sunsari

Minister for Communication and Information Technology Gyanendra Bahadur Karki and Indian Ambassador to Nepal Naveen Srivastava jointly inaugurated a school building in Sunsari.



The Indian government has been assisting in Nepal's education, health, road, tourism, physical infrastructure, and human resources

since time immemorial. Nepal-India friendship Building of Mahendra Secondary School, Barahakshetra-6, constructed some 14 years ago, was awaiting formal inauguration.

Constructed at Chakraghatti of Barahakshetra Municipality-6 of Sunsari district at a cost of Rs. 22.1 million, the building was jointly inaugurated by the Minister and Indian Ambassador to Nepal Naveen Srivastava.

It has a total of 16 rooms. The building received the assistance of the Indian government.

Indian Ambassador Srivastava said that the Indian government has given Nepal the highest priority as a good neighbouring country. He said that there will always be the support of the Indian government in Nepal's overall development, including the economic prosperity. For Sunsari alone, the Indian government has provided seven school buses, some ambulances and even helped in constructing a hospital.

### Israeli Embassy, METC And School Support Group Organize Workshop On Pedagogical Innovations

The educational workshops on “Pedagogical Innovation”, held on the 15 to 26 of August, for 78 educators in Nepal included directors, principals and teachers of various schools in Kathmandu valley and Dhading district.

The Embassy of Israel and METC – MASHAV Educational Training Center Israel together with School Support Group, organized the workshop in Kathmandu valley from 15 to 22 of August.

Similarly, Nalang Model Academy collaborated with the Embassy of Israel in Nepal and METC to conduct the workshop in Nalang, Dhading from 23 to 26 of August. Both workshops aimed to provide new tools and knowledge on the implementation and development of Innovation in educational organizations, according to the principles of innovation.

During the Closing Ceremony at Nalang, Salikram Jamkattel, Minister for Economic Affairs and Planning, Bagmati Province said, “Education plays a pivotal role in this modern world. Without development in education, there is not a possibility of development in other sectors. “I thank the Embassy of Israel for the cooperation in educational sector in the remote area of Nepal.”

Sunita Dangol, Deputy Mayor of Kathmandu said, “The one who works with children never gets old. We really appreciate all the teachers for their incredible work to make the children of today, better citizens of tomorrow. We are looking forward to collaborate with the teachers to bring uniformity in quality of education and development of children.”

Emphasizing on the importance of education in the development of a country, Hanan Goder, Ambassador of Israel to Nepal, said, “Education is the first step for Change. Investing in education will bring Nepal and any other country the best achievements.”

Yudith Rosenthal, the Director of METC and a



trainer in Education facilitated the workshop. Rosenthal has a rich experience of three decades in education development and in leading training activities. Expressing her contentment on the opportunity to share her knowledge, Ms. Rosenthal said, “Innovative education is the key for transformation in our world. It is our responsibility to do it through well-being of the educational ecosystem”.

The Embassy of Israel in Nepal appreciates the educators’ commitment for excellence in education. We strongly believe that the workshop was a fruitful learning experience and deepened the professional expertise of Nepal’s educators, leading to promote students success.

### KOICA And KAAN Donate Medical Equipment To Makwanpur

KOICA Alumni Association of Nepal (KAAN) with support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) donated medical equipment related



to COVID response program including maternal and child health to Raksirang Basic Hospital worth NPR 16, 05,750 (in words Sixteen Lakhs Five Thousands Seven Hundred and Fifty rupees only). The handover program was organized on August 18, 2022 in Raksirang Basic Hospital, Makwanpur.

The main objective of this program is to support in COVID response program via medical equipment to increase the health services/facility of the hospital. KOICA-KAAN believes that the support will contribute in strengthening the capacity of the hospital to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Simultaneously, KOICA-KAAN support is expected to upgrade the hospital performance and improve the institution delivery rate. The supported items are 15 Delivery sets, 5 Episiotomy sets, 1 Portable USG machine with printer, 2 delivery beds, 2 baby warmers and 2 resuscitation sets with oxygen hood box.

Raksirang Basic Hospital which is under Raksirang Rural Municipality has been continuously providing health care services to the residents of Raksirang and nearest rural municipalities since long time. Understanding the problems of the majority people “Chepangs” who

are residing in this rural municipality, KOICA-KAAN supported the above mentioned medical equipments to increase the better health service/facility through KOICA Alumni Association of Nepal (KAAN).

The handover ceremony was completed in the presence of Raj Kumar Malla, Chairperson and Baksingh Thing, Vice chairperson of Raksirang Rural Municipality together with hospital staffs.

### USAID To Provide \$15M To Protect People Facing Food Crisis

As part of the recently announced \$2.76 billion in U.S. government funding to address the global food crisis, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will provide \$15 million to Nepal to protect vulnerable populations from the escalating global crisis.

According to the U.S. embassy press release, President Joe Biden pledged these additional U.S. government food security resources during the G7 Leaders’ Summit in Germany, which represents more than half of the resources that G7 leaders committed to addressing global food security at the Summit.

In Nepal, the supplemental funding will help ensure that people affected by rising prices and food shortages have enough to eat. Activities include supporting small farms to produce more food locally and households in need of food assistance. These funds will also support nutrition-enhanced food for children under the age of five and pregnant women.

Acting USAID/Nepal Mission Director Beth Hogan noted that with yields for rice, maize, and other important crops potentially falling due to the impending fertilizer shortage, this support will have broad implications for Nepal’s agriculture sector and its farmers.

“This additional funding will primarily help Nepal produce more food to consume and sell, thereby increasing household food security and incomes. These impacts will be especially helpful among women, youth, and marginalized groups who have limited access to information, inputs, technology, and services,” she said.

USAID will be working closely with the Government of Nepal to invest these additional resources strategically so that they align with Nepal’s ongoing ef-





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fort to combat food insecurity and meet the goal of sustainably reducing poverty, hunger, and malnutrition. This continues 75 years of the Nepal-United States partnership and our ongoing health and food security assistance programs.

The United States has provided nearly \$7.6 billion in assistance to respond to the global food security crisis since the beginning of Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, read the press release.

### Nepal's First Human Milk Bank At Maternity Hospital

The centre gives premature, low birthweight and other at-risk infants access to the life-saving benefits of breast milk and a better start in life

Nepal's first-ever Human Milk Bank was



opened by President of Nepal Bidhya Devi Bhandari. Bhandari inaugurated 'Amrit Kosh' at the Paropakar Maternity and Women's

Hospital in Kathmandu. The milk bank is an important step towards ensuring baby-friendly health systems and gives premature, low birthweight and other at-risk infants access to the vast benefits of breastmilk when they need it the most.

Every year, around 15 million babies are born preterm around the globe. In lower-middle-income countries like Nepal, an estimated 81,000 babies are born preterm. Children face the highest risk of dying in their first month of life and preterm and low birth weight babies are at even higher risk. According to the Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (NMICS) 2019, the neonatal mortality rate (number of deaths per 1000 live births during the first 28 days of life) in Nepal is 16. Similarly, the infant mortality rate (number of deaths per 1000 live births, which are under 1 year of age) is 25 and the under-five mortality rate is 28 per 1000 live births.

"Human breast milk contains the best source of nutrition and ensures survival and healthy growth of babies. It bolsters brain development and has lifelong benefits for the baby and the mother," said Dr Bibek Kumar Lal, Director, Family Welfare Division, Ministry of

Health and Population. "The human breast milk contains antibodies which cannot be found in any other sources. The early initiation of breastfeeding (in the first hour of birth), exclusive breastfeeding from birth to 6 months of age and continued breastfeeding up to 2 years and beyond together with the complementary feeding offers a powerful line of defence against infection and malnutrition and helps towards preventing deaths of infants and young children.

Exclusive breastfeeding has the potential to prevent 13 per cent of under-five deaths globally each year. Early initiation of breastfeeding within the first hour of birth in addition to exclusive breastfeeding can cut down 22 per cent of all newborn deaths worldwide.

In Nepal, only 42 per cent of children under 2 years of age are breastfed within one hour of birth and 62 per cent of children under six months are exclusively breastfed, according to NMICS 2019.

"Premature, low birth weight and small for gestational age babies are vulnerable in terms of survival and cognitive development and usually have feeding problems due to their medical conditions. Often direct breastfeeding is not possible for these babies. The next best alternative is expressed breast milk, preferably from their biological mother," said Prof. Dr. Amir Babu Shrestha, Director, Paropakar Maternity and Women's Hospital.

When breast milk is not adequate or available, these newborns are usually given infant formula milk. However, feeding formula milk can often lead to a high risk of developing an infection (sepsis) as well as necrotizing enterocolitis, a serious disease that affects the intestines of premature infants. It typically happens within the first 2 weeks of life in babies who are fed formula instead of breast milk. Donor human milk, if made available to these babies, can save them from the adverse effects of formula milk.

'Amrit Kosh,' the human milk bank at the Paropakar Maternity and Women's Hospital has the facilities to collect, pasteurize, test and store safe donor human milk from lactating mothers and then provide it to infants in need. The centre has been established in partnership between the Government of Nepal, the European Union and UNICEF.

"The EU in Nepal has been a long-standing partner of the Government of Nepal along with UNICEF in implementing the Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Plan, under which, promotion of breastfeeding has been a key area of focus," said Nona Deprez, Ambassador and Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal. "And today, we are proud that this tripartite partnership has led to the establishment of 'Amrit Kosh,' the first human milk bank in Nepal. With this launch, we hope that more and more newborns unable to receive their mother's milk can bene-



fit from breastmilk in protecting their health and supporting their development.”

“UNICEF is pleased to be collaborating with the Government of Nepal and the European Union in setting up the first ever Human Milk Bank in Nepal. The ‘Amrit Kosh’ - Human Milk Bank initiative is critical to advancing our joint efforts under Nepal’s Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan to improve child nutrition and particularly to address acute malnutrition of children in Nepal,” said Ms Elke Wisch, UNICEF Representative to Nepal. “Our heartfelt thanks go to all the mothers who are generously donating their breastmilk to enable that children of mothers with breastfeeding difficulties-particularly preterm, low birthweight and other at-risk infants-will be able to receive the life-saving benefits of breastmilk.”

### Nepali And U.S. Army In Joint Training

The 39th edition of the month-long joint training called Ex-Balance Nail between the Nepali Army and the US Army involved the Ranger battalion under the Singh Mahavir Planning and Coordination Division of the Nepali Army



and the US Army contingent from August 16 to September 15, according to the Directorate of Military Public Relations and Information.

The training which has been conducted between the Nepali Army and the US Army since 2060 BS was to be conducted with the approval of the Ministry of Defense.

During the joint exercise involving 80 members of the Nepali Army and 16 members of the US Army, they would focus on law enforcement and military decision-making process in a conflict setting. The training would be held in Chauni and Nagarkot.

For the training, a contingent of the US army had arrived in Kathmandu under the leadership of Captain Black Ducatel, according to the Directorate. (RSS)

The Nepali Army and the US Army had also conducted a month-long joint training last year.

### Nepal And Finnish Govts Agree To Work On Climate And Disaster Risk Reduction

The Government of Nepal and Finnish Government have committed to working together in the areas of

water resources utilisation, climate change and risk reduction of monsoon-induced natural disasters.

During a meeting between Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Pampha Bhusal and Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade Ville Skinnari of Finland, the two sides expressed their solidarity to work with unity in issues of common concern.

On the occasion, Minister Bhusal stated that Nepal wants to establish partnership with the Finnish Government in the areas of climate change adding that Nepal has no contribution on climate change but its impacts were severe.

She also urged to further expand cooperation from the Finnish Government to Nepal on reduction of risks of disasters which are occurring due to the impact of climate change.

Likewise, Minister Bhusal also asked the Finnish Minister to expand cooperation between Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM) of Nepal and Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI).

Saying that Nepal has prioritized reservoir-based hydropower projects to make Nepal’s energy sector safe and credible, Minister Bhusal urged the Finnish Minister to further expand its assistance to Nepal’s hydropower development.

On the occasion, she expected Finnish Government’s financial assistance to build the reservoir-based mega hydropower projects including the Budhi Gandaki Hydropower Project.



Furthermore, she urged the Finnish Minister for technology transfer to develop hydrogen energy in Nepal adding that Nepal has accorded special priority for clean energy.

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### Nepal, World Bank Sign \$100M Financing Agreement

The Government of Nepal and the World Bank have signed a concessional financing agreement for \$100 million



(equivalent to Rs. 12.7 billion) for Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID). The proposed budget aims to support improvements in the enabling environment in Nepal toward a green, climate-resilient, and inclusive development.

This is the first in a programmatic series of three concessional loans on GRID.

The agreement was signed by Ishwori Prasad Aryal, Joint Secretary, International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division, Ministry of Finance, on behalf of the Government of Nepal, and Lada Strelkova, World Bank Operations Manager for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

“In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Nepal, World Bank and development partners signed the critical Kathmandu Declaration pivoting our programs in Nepal to support the country’s goals of a greener, more inclusive, and more resilient development,” said Lada Strelkova, World Bank Acting Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. “This operation is a key part of this commitment. Through this operation, we are supporting the Government’s key policy actions across sectors including water, land use, climate-smart agriculture, sustainable forest management, urban, waste, and pollution.”

This first operation supports policy actions for strategic GRID transitions such as the sustainable and productive use of natural capital; resilience of urban and rural infrastructure, human capital, and livelihoods to climate and environmental risks; and more efficient and cleaner production, consumption, and mobility. It also supports policy actions of Government of Nepal for strategic GRID transitions that help build and maintain prosperity for all.

The operation encourages private sector investment in greening Nepal’s economy and creating jobs and livelihoods related to areas such as community forestry, agriculture, clean air, and solid waste management. It also supports reforms for strengthening inclusion in development decision-making and access to assets and services.

“Nepal’s shift to the GRID approach is a strategic move during a challenging time that is full of opportunities for the country. This shift will help Nepal continue to make progress in expanding and protecting prosperity while reducing poverty in the face of compounding challenges that affect Nepal’s development prospects, including the economic recovery from COVID and the on-going disaster, climate and environmental risks,” said Joint Secretary, Ishwori Prasad Aryal.

### Bangladesh To Import 50MW Electricity From Nepal

Bangladesh has agreed to purchase about 50MW of electricity from Nepal immediately. The Indian transmission

system will be used to wheel the energy to Bangladesh. The transmission line can flow about 50MW energy now.

A meeting of the NEA, the Indian electricity trading company, that is, National Vidut Vyapar Nigam, and Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) will finalize the modality of transmission.

The BPDB has promised to buy and sell electricity within a month for the purchase of 500MW of electricity of the GMR Upper Karnali Hydroelectricity Project.

Last month, the Investment Board of Nepal gave a deadline to GMR to complete the PPA within six months and complete the financial management within a year and a half. GMR had been saying that the electricity purchase and sales agreement with the Power Development Board has reached the final stage. GMR Upper Karnali Hydropower Company is advancing the process to sell electricity at 7.7 cents per unit.

This decision was taken during the recently-concluded fourth meeting of Energy Secretary Level Joint Steering Committee of Nepal and Bangladesh, which some achievements. The meeting of the committee was held in Kathmandu between the Energy Secretary of the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation (MoEWRI), Sushil Chandra Tiwari, and the Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (MoEMR) of Bangladesh, Mohammad Habibur Rahman.

However, Nepal and Bangladesh have decided to sign Agreement on Nepa-Bangladesh electricity trade only after finalizing the deal with India. Both the countries say that they could not sign it considering the role of India.

The best option for now is to use the Indian transmission line to take Nepal’s electricity to Bangladesh. Apart from this, the construction of another transmission line is also being discussed as an alternative. But both options require positive cooperation from India so the meeting has decided to move forward involving India.

MD of Nepal Electricity Authority Kul Man Ghising informed that the meeting has decided that both the countries will continue dialogue with India through their respective mechanisms and expand cooperation by holding tripartite meetings to realize the electricity trade between Nepal and Bangladesh.



### Health Right International Rings Opening Bell®

The New York Stock Exchange welcomes executives and guests of Health Right International, a global health organization that provides access to quality health-





care for those most in need, including in Ukraine.

To honor the occasion, Peter Navario, Executive Director rang The Opening Bell®. Natasha Pande Ceka, chief Staff of the T-Rex Group was also present.

### FAO Concludes Workshop On Global Food Security Situation

FAO Nepal has concluded a workshop on impacts of global 5F crisis on agriculture and food systems in Lumbini.

In collaboration with the Provincial Planning Commission and the Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperatives in Lumbini, FAO Nepal conducted a consultation workshop on the impacts of the global crisis (Russia-Ukraine conflict) on the agriculture and food security situation in Lumbini province, particularly from the perspective of the 5F (food, feed, fertilizer, fuel and finance)



aspects.

The objective of the consultation was to assess and identify impacts of price hikes, food shortages and other challenges affecting food security and agricultural production in Lumbini Province. The workshop was the first in a series of seven provincial level consultations planned throughout the country.

Bamdev Chhetri, Vice Chairperson of the Provincial Planning Commission, highlighted problems faced by farmers due to lack of irrigation, fertilizer and pesticides, which has been affecting agricultural productivity, production and food supply chain management in the province. Furthermore, he added that innovation, promotion of technology and youth engagement are fundamental for increased agricultural production. Moreover, the import ratio of food items is increasing dramatically, posing potential threat to food security in the future.

Ken Shimizu, FAO Representative for Nepal, recommended Nepal address the impacts from the global 5F crisis through strengthened monitoring of the food security situation, identification of both short and long-term risks, and implementation of effective response and mitigation measures. He mentioned that active engagement of government counterparts and other stakeholders in the consultation workshops in all 7 provinces will facilitate a common understanding and guide the way forward for addressing the recent challenges.

Yam Narayan Devkota, Secretary of the Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperatives of Lumbini Province, emphasized that the provincial government is committed to promoting agriculture through addressing the farmers' needs in seeds, fertilizers, irrigation, technology, harvesting and processing units. Local farmers and producers highlighted the changing trend of agriculture, where the cost of production is increasing, resulting in a gradual loss of interest in farming as livelihood.

The officials and representatives from government agencies, private sector, financial institutions, producers, dis-

tributors, civil societies and farmers' groups provided their respective suggestions for addressing the crisis in agriculture and the food system, based on their key roles and responsibilities.

The findings and recommendations from the workshops, combined with analysis of primary and secondary data, will be consolidated in an assessment report outlining major risks and potential policy responses and mitigation measures.

### Prachi Agarwal Selected CNIYEF President

Prachi Agarwal has been selected as the President of Confederation of Nepalese Industries Youth Entrepreneurs Forum (CNIYEF). This is a new board of CNIYEF for 2022-2023.

The newly elected president Agarwal is a successful entrepreneur associated with Kunal Furnishing and various businesses. She holds a Masters in Finance and Marketing from the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow and a Masters in Interior Designing from the United Arab Emirates.

Amun Thapa was the president of the year 2021-2022 for the CNIYEF. Thapa, who is also the founder and chief executive officer of Sastodeal, has now joined the governing council of CNIYEF. Former presidents Rohit Gupta and Chang Agarwal are also a part of the governing council along with Thapa.

The newly elected board of CNIYEF constituent Anurag Goyal (Learning Chair), Ashish Agarwal (Assistant Learning Chair), Manish Shrestha (Membership and Engagement Chair), Chirag Saravagi (Communication Chair), Ankush Agarwal (Finance Chair) and Sugam Ghimire (Startup Chair). Newly elected president of CNIYEF Prachi Agarwal said that the platform will focus on inculcating the spirit of entrepreneurship among the youth by starting an incubation center for startups this year.

"We will start developing and building Nepal's economy by advocating favorable policies for all," she said. The first president of the CNIYEF when it was established in 2017 was Vishnu Kumar Agarwal. Agarwal is currently serving as President of Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI). The CNIYEF recently conducted a successful program of CNIYEF Nepal Startup Fest.



In that fest, 7 startups signed an initial investment agreement of 245 million rupees.

### Nepal, United Kingdom Sign MoU To Send Nepali Nurses To UK

A bilateral memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been signed on sending medical human resources from Nepal to the United Kingdom.

"Our healthcare professionals' MoU marks the start of a pilot phase. We expect a competitive application process to launch by first half of 2023. Successful candidates will enjoy the same benefits as UK nurses," tweets U.K. in Nepal.

"Nepal's health care professionals are among most dedicated, often working in very challenging settings. We hope

## BUSINESS BRIEF

this offer increases interest in nursing as a profession, strengthening the health care labor force in both countries,” states a Joint Press Statement.



Secretary at the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security, Ek Narayan Aryal and British Ambassador to Nepal, Nicola Pollitt signed the MoU amidst a program held at the Ministry.

As per the MoU, the medical human resources of Nepal will get employment opportunities in the UK.

The nurses going to the UK for employment need not pay any fees. They can work there for five years.

This MoU sets out the framework under which healthcare workers will be recruited to the UK.

The MoU is signed on the basis that the active recruitment of health and care workers from Nepal to the UK will begin with an initial pilot phase lasting approximately 15 months. During the pilot recruitment activities will be limited to Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and its partners.

Following the pilot, further government-to-government discussions will be held on widening recruitment to other UK employers, and agencies, and include other types of health workers.

### Agriculture Export Should Solve Forex Reserve Crisis: Senior VP Dhakal

Senior Vice President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), Chandra Prasad Dhakal, has said that the export of agricultural products should be increased to solve the problem of foreign exchange reserves.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19, amidst growing imports, the country is facing external sector pressure and a hard time saving depleting foreign exchange reserves.

Addressing the first Annual General Meeting of Nepal Broom Association (NBA), Dhakal said that the production and export of agricultural produce should be increased to boost the foreign currency accumulation in the country.

He said that he will take initiative as senior vice president of the FNCCI to develop agriculture and solve the problem it has been facing.

“I have heard that goods worth about Rs. 4 billion

were exported from this sector formally and informally last year. It needs to be increased,” he said.

He requested the NBA to prepare a list of the problems they have been facing and pledged to take up the



issues with the private sector and government stakeholders to solve them.

He said that since Nepal is a landlocked country, there is a problem when importing and exporting any item so emphasis should be given to the development of agriculture, tourism, and hydropower.

“If we can focus on only three things like exporting agricultural produce, promoting tourism, and exporting hydropower, Nepal won’t have to rely on the remittance sector for foreign exchange as it is now,” Dhakal said.

### SAWTEE And FWEAN To Promote Women-Led Enterprises

During the Sixth International Women’s Trade Expo and Symposium 2022, Federation of Woman Entrepreneurs’ Association of Nepal (FWEAN) and South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), jointly organized a Panel Discussion on “Role of Trade Facilitation- Promoting Women-Led Enterprises Access to International Markets.”

Opening the program, Dikshya Singh, Program Coordinator, SAWTEE highlighted women-led that empirical studies have shown that women owned businesses are small in size, are less profitable, borne out of necessity and limited to local markets. Moreover, only 17 percent of the women-led enterprises are actually involved in export in Nepal. Since economy is a gendered structure, challenges and obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs are not the same as the ones faced by men that are why policies need to be gender-responsive.

Lack of access to information about foreign trade procedures and schemes, and limited access to trade fairs, limited access to finance and high trade and transaction cost are some of the barriers women face while trading. Similarly, lack of female presence in trading places and policy making gives a somewhat not welcoming environment for women to be involved in trade. Policies need to address all these issues.

Shyam Prasad Dahal, trade facilitation expert, provided his remarks from a customs perspective on how access to international market can be ensured for women in trade.

Nepal Customs has not been able to adopt electronic submission of customs documents, which is posing as burden for trade. Customs has already implemented electronic payment for export and import procedures, which makes it easier for entrepreneurs to trade. Paperless trade can ensure seamless movement of cargo for trade and reduce the burdensome processes, hence making trading more accessible to small entrepreneurs.

### Nepal Accelerates Preparation Of Trade Integration Strategy 2022

Participants at the sixth provincial consultations discussed the framework of ‘Nepal Trade Integration Strategy 2022 in Gandaki province on 14 August, 2022.

The Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies (MoICS) organized the sixth provincial consultation on the frame-







work of Nepal Trade Integration Strategy (NTIS) in Gandaki Province. The NTIS is Nepal's blueprint on the way to achieving trade-led economic growth, while maturing from an LDC to a Middle Income Country.

The provincial consultations on the draft vision, mission, purpose, the three strategic pillars and strategies will culminate with a consultation in Bagmati Province leading to the preparation of the final draft.

"We're in a golden stage as a country where we can achieve much with the young population, we have to take steps to quicken growth," said Mani Bhadra Sharma Kandel, minister of Tourism, Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Gandaki Province. We need supportive policies to assist industry to adopt competitive technologies, and also clarity on the role of all levels of government to support businesses, the minister added.

According to Gobinda Bahadur Karki, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies (MoICS), the document now under preparation by a team of highly experienced trade experts led by Rameshwor Khanal, former finance secretary, will be finalized by the government by the end of the year. NTIS2022 will guide our policies in trade integration leading to Nepal's graduation from LDC status in 2026 and therefore the strategy is important to ensure that we can continue to benefit from trade as a middle-income country," said Karki.

Mim Hamal, EU Program Manager, said our Aid for Trade is about helping Nepal to address its constraints to trade, and we support to better benefit from the global rules-based trading system, implement domestic reform, and make a real economic impact on the lives of the citizens. In this regard, as an aid for trade coordinator in Nepal, it is our pleasure to join hands with government for timely formulation of important blueprint for the promotion of exportable goods and services. The NTIS 2022 will also include LDC graduation and possible action for accession to GSP+, climate action and climate change resilience through green and circular economy, gender and social inclusion in trade, youth entrepreneurship, fair and green trade for economic growth.

#### **NMB Bank Collaborates With IFC On SME financing In Nepal**

NMB Bank Limited has obtained a repeat loan of USD 25 Million from IFC, a member of the World Bank Group. With this agreement, NMB Bank becomes the only Bank in Nepal to sign three debt investment deals with IFC – worth \$65 million in total – within a span of four years. The MOU has been exchanged between Sunil KC, Chief Executive Officer, NMB Bank Limited and Hector Gomez Ang, Regional Director South Asia, International Finance Corporation.

The funding will help promote market competitiveness while accelerating economic recovery from the impacts of

the COVID-19 pandemic. IFC's investment is expected to help expand NMB Bank's SME portfolio substantially by 2025 – creating significant number of jobs over the next five years. This loan amount shall be utilized to support the Government of Nepal's growth plans and shall be invested in strengthening the priority sector industries, especially SME/MSMEs. 'The Banker Magazine' of The Financial Times, London, has awarded NMB Bank with the prestigious Bank of the Year Asia 2021. The bank has also been awarded with Bank of the Year in 2017, 2018, 2020 & 2021. NMB Bank is currently providing its services through 201 branches, 138 ATMs and 11 extension counters.



#### **Foreign Reserve Drops To 6.9 Months' Import**

Foreign exchange reserve has dropped below the warning benchmark as it is now sufficient merely for the import of goods and services for 6.9 months.

According to the annual data 2021/22 released by Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) on August 16, the foreign exchange reserve declined by 15 per cent to Rs 1056.39 billion as of mid-July 2022 in comparison to Rs 1244.63 billion recorded in mid-July 2021.

According to the monetary policy for this fiscal year, 2022/023, the warning benchmark for the foreign reserve is stipulated as the reserve of foreign currency needed for the import of goods and services for 7 months.

The amount of foreign reserve at present has declined by 18 per cent in terms of the benchmark measured in the US dollar term. The data showed that the foreign exchange reserve declined to USD 9.54 billion in mid-July 2022 which was recorded as USD 11.75 billion in mid-July 2021.

Remittance inflow has increased by 4.8 per cent in the fiscal year (FY) 2021/22 in comparison to the previous FY.

According to the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) report, the total remittance inflow amounted to Rs. 1007.3 billion in FY 2021/22, up from Rs. 961 billion recorded in FY 2020/21.

In terms of US dollar, remittance inflow increased by 2.2 per cent to USD 8.33 billion in comparison to previous FY.

The data showed encouraging figure of remittance amount as the number of Nepali workers taking approval for foreign employment has increased significantly to 354,600 in the review year. In addition to it, the number of Nepali workers taking approval for renewed entry for foreign employment increased by 198.5 per cent to 282,453 in the review year.





## GENERAL ELECTIONS

# Free And Fair Prospects

*Civil Society Leaders Call For Free and Fair Elections Urging Elections Commission To Take Necessary Steps*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Age does not make a difference to a person who wants to make a difference in the society and is active in social life. This is what Himalaya Sumsher Rana, Nepal's renowned economist, first governor and finance secretary shows.

Although Rana is now ninety-four, he is actively taking part in civil movements organized to strengthen a democratic system to make the country economically prosperous.

At a time when the fourth wave of COVID-19 is infecting

the people in large scale, 94-year Rana attended one of the most relevant and important programs organized to improve the fairness and accountability in the forthcoming general elections.

Taking certain health precautions, Rana addressed an interaction program on Implementation of the Constitution: Setting the agenda for the new parliamentary elections.

Organized by Constitutional Watch Group and Nepal Law Society and chaired by former chief justice of Supreme

Court Kalyan Man Shrestha, Rana, who is chairperson of General Elections Observer Committee (GEOC), narrated his long experiences of observing the elections since 1951.

In a program attended by people from various walks of life including leaders from leading political parties, constitutional lawyers, political scientists and members from civil society, Rana said that the forthcoming elections are highly important for Nepal as the country has been facing several problems includ-



ing diminishing foreign currency reserves, economic slowdown, inflation and corruption and that there are problems between the government and parliament

He said that all civil society members, political parties and elections authorities have responsibility to work to make the forthcoming elections free and fair preventing the use of money and muscle power.

Rana, a highly respected person of Nepal, said that democracy and republic are necessary to overcome all the crises. He said that periodical free and fair elections are pre-requirements for the strengthening of Nepal's democratic and governance system.

Rana observed that the situation is getting more expensive since he started the observation of the elections in 1991.

"It is unfortunate that the political parties have been power centric and candidates are con-

testing the elections to win for the power," said Rana. Rana underlined the need to make elections free, fair and accountable.

"I have been reading the news about political coalitions and counter coalitions. Parties are focusing to grab more seats as far as possible to form the government," said Rana. "I am missing how political parties implement their elections manifestoes and commitments to make the country prosperous and rich," said Rana.

At the event opened by Krishna Man Pradhan, executive director of Nepal Law Society, former chief justice and chairperson of Constitution Watch Group Kalayan Man Shrestha highlighted the issue and agenda for the forthcoming federal and provincial parliaments.

He strongly objected the formation of alliance to contest the elections accusing political

parties and leaders as being more interested in the political power rather than delivery of service and goods to the people.

Former chief justice Shrestha stressed the need to put pressure on the political parties and leaders so that they cannot muddle the elections process much. "We all need to be watchful to uphold the essence of the elections," said Shrestha.

In her opening statement, Shilu Manandhar Bajracharya, vice chancellor of Nepal Open University, said that election observation is a key ingredient to ensure free and fair elections.

Professor Krishna Khanal presented achievements and failures of the parliament and searched for the way forward for the new parliament.

Jayapuri Gharti, leader of Maoist Center, defended political alliances in the elections. "There is nothing wrong to make

political coalitions to contest the elections," said Gharti, expressing dissatisfaction over the comment on making coalition.

Nepali Congress leader Meen Bishwokarma and Surendra Pandey of CPN-UML also highlighted challenges relating to implementation of party manifesto and complex situation of elections and governance process.



# For Pro-Nepal Pride

*Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba says Nepal enjoys cordial relations with both neighbors and big partners*

By A CORRESPONDENT

At a time when there is a growing debate over what should be Nepal's position in the global world order, the statements by two diplomats in a recent seminar on Nepal's future role in new global world order are highly significant.

established diplomatic relations 62 years ago in the darkest days of cold war and Nepal is the first country to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, Nepal's policy rarely followed the spirit at the United Nations voting.

At a time when a section of people are criticizing U.S for its activities terming them anti-China, Acting Deputy Chief of Mission of U.S Embassy Mark Templer has made it clear saying United States wants to see Nepalis as pro-Nepal but not as pro-Chinese, Pro-Indian or pro-American.

"Nepal is not only known for its amazing people and beautiful scenery, but also because of its strong commitment to democracy, human rights, and global peace," said Acting Deputy Chief of Mission of U.S Embassy Mark Templer.

Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Mark Templer delivered his remarks in Nepali for an event at the Neeti Anusandhan Pratishthan. He described how Nepal and the United States have been working together for 75 years to build meaningful people-to-people ties between our two democracies.

## PM's Statement

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba said that Nepal has enjoyed cordial and good relations with neighbors, big partners and other countries. He said that Nepal firmly favors multilateralism in the world order that should benefit Nepal.

Prime Minister Deuba said that Nepal favors order which protects and guarantees sovereignty, equality and independence of all the countries. "As a peace loving country, Nepal also wants peace all over world," said PM Deuba

Inaugurating International Seminar on International Relations: Nepal and the World Order, prime minister Deuba said that Nepalese foreign policy is guided by the letter and spirit enshrined in the Constitution of Nepal like non-alignment, UN Charter



At a program hosted by Neeti Anusandhan Pratisthan in the presence of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and foreign minister Dr. Narayan Khadka, the statements expressed by two diplomats received wide appreciations from the crowd.

Addressing the program, ambassador of Israel to Nepal Hanan Goder said that Nepal's support in the international issue is valuable. He said that small countries like Nepal do not have a big interest and their support matters in international issues.

Although Nepal and Israel

Despite the change in the global order with normalization of relations between Israel and Gulf and Arab countries, Nepal is yet to change its policy on Israel. Nepali political leaders in 1960s won the heart and mind of small countries like Israel taking a daring decision establishing the diplomatic relations.

According to UN voting records, Nepal seems to have blank policy to vote against state of Israel standing with Iran. However, Israeli ambassador to Nepal Hanan Goder admired Nepal's daring decision publicly.



and non-interference and sovereign equality.

At the three day conference organized by Neeti Anusandhan Paritishthan, Nepal (NeNAP), over 70 young scholars below 40 years participated.

Prime Minister Deuba said that Nepal is in the process of graduating from LDC to developing country and seeks the support from Nepal's neighbors and big development partners.

Prime Minister Deuba also thanked international community and Nepal's neighbors for supporting Nepal by providing vaccines against COVID-19.

Addressing the program as a guest, Ambassador of Israel to Nepal Hanan Goder said that the world has changed a lot particularly in Middle East and Nepal. The Ambassador said that Israel has already established diplomatic relations with the countries in Gulf and Nepal has transformed from monarchial to republican.

He said that Israel and Nepal are celebrating 62 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Ambassador Goder said that Nepal was the first country to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and it was only country for over 30 years. He said that Israel will always remember it.

The Ambassador said Nepal's support and favor was bigger.

He said that all 193 UN Member countries, whether big or small, are equal.

Addressing the gathering in half Nepali and half English, Templer said that Nepal's have proved that they are committed and dedicated people to go for everything given an opportunity. He named a few Nepali Americans like renowned designer Prabal Gurung and others. He said that many Nepali Americans have been doing good jobs in the United States and all over the world.

He said that United States wants to see Nepal as prosperous, democratic and peaceful country. He said that the younger generations of Nepali people have to play much bigger role to make the future better.

At the program attended by foreign minister Dr. Narayan Khadka as a guest of honor, people from various walks of life were present during the inauguration ceremony.

Dr. Deepak Kumar Adhikari, in his key note, said that the role of countries like Nepal is very important in the new world order.

In his address, Adhikari said



Adhikari said that Nepal is chosen as the venue for the conference because Nepal and India had unique kind of relations where citizens of both the countries not only shared culture and civilization but also shared common open border with free movement of people. He said that all younger people in the two days' gathering will come out with future direction for Nepal's foreign policy in new order.

Delivering welcome remarks Dr. Binaya Kumar Mishra, convener of the seminar, said that that objective of the workshop is to find out how shared culture and civilization can play role in new world order. He expressed the hope that the new generation scholars and leading youth will come out with good guidance for future of Nepal's foreign policy.

Sandeep Rana, member of the seminar organizing committee, said that the international workshop will find out the importance of shared culture and civilization in fostering world peace. He also said that this will also support further strengthening Nepal-India relations on the basis of shared culture and civilization.

Though they are foreign diplomats, the statements delivered by ambassador Godar and acting DCM of U.S. Embassy Mark Templer have clear messages for Nepal's to be Pro-Nepal.





## UPPER TAMAKOSHI

# Share To Investors

*Taking a decision to issue 1:1 ratio right shares, Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited (UTHL) has shown that the project cares about its shareholder's interest along with contributing to the National economy. Starting generation just a year ago, Upper Tamakoshi has shown that it is a game-changer project. Generating huge electricity, the project has turned Nepal from energy deficient to an energy surplus country paving the way for the export of Nepal's electricity to India. As the global energy crisis pushed many countries into a financially difficult position, Nepal finds a bit more comfortable position with surplus electricity thanks to Upper Tamakoshi*

By A CORRESPONDENT

As it was projected a long time back, the Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project has proved that it could benefit the country and its shareholders in the short term and long term.

Just a year after the beginning of generation, the 14th AGM of the UTHL has approved issuing 1:1 (100 percent) on its current paid-up capital. As per the 257th meeting of the board of directors held on Ashad 30, 2079 which decided to submit a proposal for the issuance of right shares in the ratio of 1:1 (100%) on its current paid-up capital, the 14th AGM of the company approved it.

Located east of Kathmandu, the Upper Tamakoshi Project is being built using domestic financial resources. The national pride project was originally scheduled to be completed in mid-July 2016, but the earthquakes, Indian trade blockade and various technical and social issues pushed back the completion date.

As the 14th Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in Kathmandu last month, which passed the proposal to issue 100 percent rights shares of the company.

The AGM approved a special proposal for capital increase through rights shares based on the report received from the sub-committee after analyzing the overall financials of the company.

The company plans to issue the right shares as the ratio of debt and capital could not be maintained due to various circumstances beyond control including the extension of the construction period.

After the issue of the right share, the paid-up capital will reach 21.18 billion rupees. At present, the share price of Upper Tamakoshi is less than Rs 500. UPPER's 105.9 million shares have been listed in NEPSE.

### **Financing and organization**

Established in March 2007,

Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited is an executing agency for the implementation of the Project, the majority share (51%) of the Company is held by four public entities, namely, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), Nepal Telecom (NTC), Citizen Investment Trust (CIT) and Rashtriya Beema Sansthan (RBS). NEA has a 41% stake, NTC has 6% and CIT & RBS each have a 2% stake in the Company.

Similarly, the general public and residents of Dolakha District will have 15% and 10% share respectively. The remaining 24% share is taken by contributors to Employees Provident Fund (EPF), NEA & Companies staff and staff of financial institutions providing loans.

Construction began in February 2011, and the project was originally slated for completion in July 2016. However, it has completed on August 2021 after several pushes back in its completion



schedule. On 5 July 2021, the project was inaugurated by prime minister KP Sharma Oli.

Although it has faced several natural and man-made obstructions like earthquakes, COVID-19, and Nepal-India border disruptions, the delay from Lot 2 Hydro-mechanical Contractor, Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project (UTKHPL), which has started a commercial generation of electricity last August, has proved as a game-changer project in Nepal's electricity generation.

After the sustained production from the project, Nepal's energy status has changed from net importer to exporter. Generating cheaper electricity, the project also helped to reduce electricity tariffs and increase the profit of NEA. However, the main challenges before the project, which has been providing many benefits to promoters and lenders and consumers, how to offer benefits to public shareholders and turn the project into a profit-making venture

For the fourth consecutive quarterly financial disclosure, Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Limited (UTKHPL) has generated income. According to the unaudited 4th quarter Statement of Financial Position, the company has submitted Rs.7 billion bills.

Despite its high potential to generate revenue, the company is yet to increase its income. To turn the company into a profit, the company is taking several initiatives including negotiations with financial institutions to revise the interest rates and reforms in other financial management, and equity adjustments in assets. The company is also working to capitalize on various structures of its asset.

To expand income, UTKHPL has decided on a second expansion stage, the 20-MW Rolwaling Khola Hydroelectric Project (RKHEP), which would contribute another 105 GWh of energy and enhance 210 GWh dry season energy from existing UTKHEP. After the completion of the process, the financial position will change in a better way.

#### Share Of Company

Although the project is one of the best projects so far in terms of energy generation, the share prices of the compa-

ny are yet to reflect it. In the one-year period, the price of the share has fluctuated from Rs.781 to Rs. 535 now.

Inaugurated in July by then PM KP Sharma Oli, UTKHPL started the commercial operation date (COD) on 20 August with 4 units and full-fledged production with all 6 units from September 10, 2021.

Along with the construction of Rolwaling HEP to increase capacity and income, the company has also been working to tighten internal expenditures aiming to reduce unnecessary spending; it will give more benefits to the public shareholders in the coming days. "The management is seriously working on how to provide more benefits to the public shareholders," said Bigyan Shrestha, CEO of UTKHPL.

As the project started commercial production from all units on September 10, the revenue generated by the project has shown that it will be expected to generate more than Rs.9 billion annually from this year.

The current share price of the UTKHPL indicates that there is growing confidence in the public regarding the future of the project. People are expecting more dividends in the process.

#### A Game Changer

After the completion of Upper Tamakosi, Nepal's status in producing electricity changed. With a surplus of energy at hand, Nepal's policymakers have started to talk about replacing the LPG gas with electric cooking, electric vehicles and finally export of electricity.

Although the project has been delayed for a few years, it started generat-

ing and supplying electricity to the country when a major global energy crisis hit the world skyrocketing the prices of Petroleum Products including LPG.

With these, the project has not only saved over 9 billion annually importing electricity from foreign countries but also opened a way to offer benefits to shareholders and confidence among Nepali technicians.

Involved in the project from inception in different positions along with first CEO Mr. Mrigendra Bahadur Shrestha, who had completed all the preliminary works to commence constructions, Chief Executive Officer of UTKHPL Bigyan Shrestha, who has led the competent team of NEA to complete the mammoth project, is now working to optimize the benefit to public shareholders and keep their faith on the project.

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

For CEO Shrestha who spends his long carrier with the project, the decision to issue 1:1 ratio right shares at the last leg of his carrier with the project was the happiest decision.

As the private sector cannot invest comfortably in projects like semi-reservoir or reservoir projects like Upper Tamakosi, the government of Nepal needs to take initiative to construct this kind of project, said Shrestha who spent a long time with the project.



## ENERGY

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

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

With a natural head of 822 m and six underground units, it produces up to 2,281 GWh of electricity annually. After Rolwaling HEP commissioning approximately 315 GWh will be added at all to Upper. This renewable energy will improve living conditions and promote economic development in the country.

All six turbines and generators have been in full operation since September 2021. During the rainy season, the total electricity generation of Nepal will exceed what the population and the economy are consuming. The country can benefit in several ways from the surplus of electricity: Electricity costs will decrease, there are plans to supply consumers in need with electricity free of charge, and Nepal could export electricity.

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

After the commissioning of Rolwaling HEP, the Company UPPER will be in a position to enhance its income by 2 billion annually. This means, a 2 bil-



lion annual income added by investing another 8.5 billion for its construction. Moreover, Rolwaling will rescue the financial health of UPPER Tamakoshi.

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

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

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

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

Faced with all kinds of disasters and pandemics, the national pride project was originally scheduled to be completed in mid-July 2016, but the 2015 earthquakes hit the project very hard. The access road leading to the project site was totally destroyed when the project completed 79 percent of the civil works.

The delay in the completion of the project in time has increased the total cost of the project due to increased interest and dollar exchange

rate. However, the contribution made by the project in the last year to the country's overall economy is unmatched its cost. Generating over Rs. 7 billion in the period of ten months of commercial operation, the project has shown that the project has something to offer to its public shareholders.

By issuing 1:1 ratio right shares, the company has shown that it cares about its public shareholders and their interest. The decision also boosted the confidence of the public shareholders.

### **National Pride Project but Ordinary Treatment**

Although the UPPER Tamakoshi has been declared a national pride project, it has been treated as an ordinary project not getting any kind of incentives. Unlike other projects which have 30 years license period, this meg project's license period is just 25 years. Increasing the five years additional will enhance the profits of the project

As the project passed through many unavoidable major natural disasters like an earthquake of 2015, border disruptions and COVID-19, which contributed to delaying the completion of the project, it does not get any time Extension for this loss period.

According to the company, it is making efforts to extend the license period by five years. This will enhance the overall profit of the company.

This is a national pride project but it does not get any privilege or incentive. The period of the license is short as it is unable to provide adequate profit to investors. With the extension of five years license period, the financial health of UPPER will improve making.





## NEPAL'S ENERGY

# Getting Green And Clean

*Unprecedented global energy crisis created by Russian invasion of Ukraine is pushing some countries in South Asia to the brink of collapse. With surplus hydro-electricity in the grid, Nepal is taking this crisis to transform from fossil fuel to green and clean hydro-electricity. With the backing and support of Minister of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Pampha Bhusal, Nepal Electricity Authority, under the leadership of Managing Director Kul Man Ghising, has pushed Nepal's energy sector to a new era. After exporting over 365 MW surplus electricity to India daily, NEA has launched a nation-wide campaign to increase the domestic consumption targeting the kitchen for e-cooking and street for e-vehicles*

By KESHAB POUDEL

Almost a century after the entry of hydro-electricity, Nepal has reached a stage of reducing the dependency on dirty traditional and fossil fuel energy to domestically generated green and clean electricity.

Suffering decades of painful power cuts, of up to 16 hours daily, Nepal is now a country with a net surplus of hydro-electricity. For this, credit goes largely to MD Ghising, who has used all his managerial skills, in his first four-year tenure and the first year of this second tenure. Making such big a progress, MD Ghising, on the other side, has made some people jealous as an overwhelming Ne-

pali population is happy and country is getting cash from electricity export.

Amid a function, Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Minister Pampha Bhusal launched a campaign to increase the consumption of electricity at the kitchen replacing LPG and electric transport replacing the petrol.

Directed and played by Madan Krishna, Hari Bansha Acharya, Raja Ram Poudel and their team, the advertisement campaign will be aired from different national television channels. With technology driving the business, NEA has also launched a new app making it easier for customers to pay their bill.

“Nepal has made some significant progress in generation of electricity. This is the reason we are here. Despite a big export market next to our door where we have been exporting 364 MW of electricity since last April, our priority is to increase the domestic consumption as well to replace LPG and petrol,” said Minister Bhusal addressing the program.

She said that the government is planning to expand supply of electricity all over the country and provide the electricity in cheaper and reduced rate for irrigation and electric cooking of poor and vulnerable population. “We have already started to distribute free electricity to those who

## COVERSTORY



use up to 20 units and 75 tariff reduction for the irrigation,” said minister Bhusal.

Although Nepal’s electricity consumption per individual reaches 299 kWh in 2022 compared to 250 kWh in 2021, this is still too low in comparison to our neighbors and other countries.

She said that the plan of providing electricity facility to every house of Nepal is in the phase of completion gradually. “NEA has been working to connect electricity to the remaining houses of the citizens. All Nepali citizens would have access to clean energy within two years as per the plan forwarded by NEA,” said Bhusal.

As out of 753 local levels, 476 local levels have been fully electrified and 242 local levels have been partly electrified. Nepal Electricity Authority has been involved with a plan to provide full service at the partly electrified local-levels.

Likewise, 35 local levels have not yet got electricity service. The NEA has been taking initiatives in a planned manner keeping these local levels in the centre. Specially, some local levels of Karnali have not got electricity service.

The NEA has already an-

nounced a tender by making arrangement of sources of Rs 28 billion to take electricity service in these areas. The NEA has made preparation to provide electricity access in all local levels within next two years.

“Five years ago when the country had been passing through 16 hours long power cuts, we used to visit households calling people to use less electricity and use the electric bulb which consumed less electricity. However, we are now calling people to consume more electricity in kitch-

en and use electric vehicles,” said MD Ghising.

NEA managing director Ghising said works are in progress in a planned way in line with the government’s announcement to ensure reliable and quality electricity service to the entire Nepali people by 2024.

In the fiscal year 2072-73 BS, only 62.16 percent households in Nepal were electrified and now this figure rose to 92.51 percent. Four provinces, out of seven, are almost completely electrified.

Electrification in the districts of Karnali Province has been slightly delayed due to their geographical challenges and remoteness; but works are going on with the target of providing electricity to the entire population by the next two years, according to the NEA.

The NEA is implementing the electrification projects in hilly districts of Lumbini, Karnali and Sudur Paschim Province with around Rs 28 billion soft loan from the Asian Infrastructure Bank and the European Investment Bank.

### Consumption Drive

The process of energy transition has already begun in Nepal. Skyrocketing global oil prices have made it virtually impossible for a country







like Nepal to import petroleum products. Here is where cheap, clean and green energy is in high demand.

NEA has started the drive to promote electricity consumption from months back signing agreements with Nepal Police and Armed Police. Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Pampha Bhusal has taken the initiative of discussing the possibility of use of electricity with Nepal Army Chief General Prabhu Ram Sharma.

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and Armed Police signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish charging stations and use of electric cooking.

Under this agreement, NEA will construct charging stations and install necessary transformer and improve distribution system to encourage electric cooking in the kitchens for Armed Police Force.

NEA Managing Director Kul Man Ghising and chief of Armed Police Raju Aryal signed an MoU amid a function recently at Armed Police headquarter.

With an aim to displace LPG for cooking, Armed Police is gradu-

ally using the induction stoves. NEA will add electric poles and transmission lines and improve the distribution system so that all kitchens can use induction without any interruption.

Addressing the program, Chief of Armed Police Aryal said that replacing LPG by using electricity from Nepal is a big opportunity for us to contribute to Nepal's economy. "We are taking this as a big opportunity to push the national agenda to replace LPG with electricity."

He said that using electricity in mess Armed Police can contribute to increase the internal consumption of electricity reducing the import of LPG. IGP Aryal said that using induction we can save the foreign currency used to import LPG. Use of electricity in the kitchen can benefit the country.

MD Ghising said that use of electricity in cooking for Armed Police can contribute immensely to increase internal consumption of electricity. He said that by using green energy generated in Nepal, the country can

save over 400 billion spent to import the petroleum products. He said that there is the need to increase the use of electric vehicles and in-

duction in the kitchen.

He said that using electricity is much cheaper than petrol and diesel. MD Ghising said that NEA has been launching programs for improvement of distribution infrastructure as a campaign to make a reliable and quality supply of electricity.

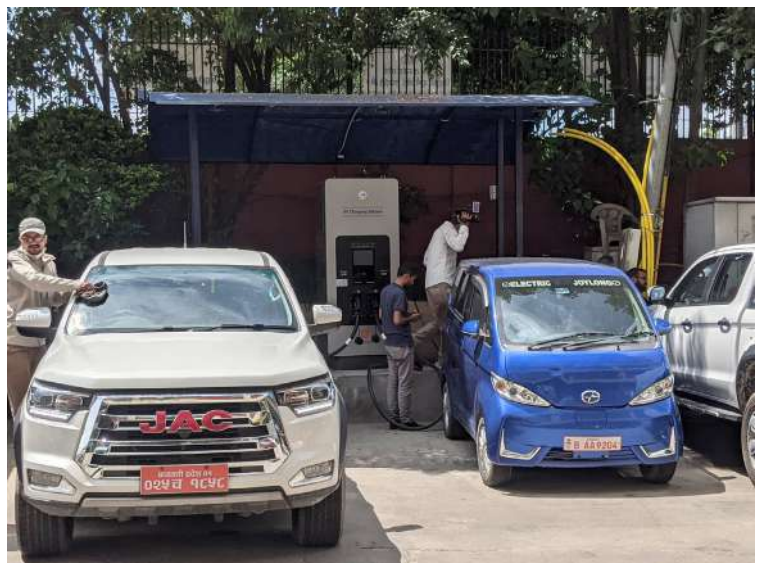
Armed Police has 8 Areas, 44 Battalions, 44 Gulmas, 222 BOPs and 14 training centers. Each of those offices have two messes, armed police has been spending Rs.400 million just for purchasing LPG.

Under the MoU, NEA will support to establish 17 stations in different parts of the country. As per the MoU, the stations will be established in the 17 places including two petrol pumps operated by Armed Police Welfare Service Centers.

Armed Police will provide 15 appropriate lands for NEA to construct the charging stations. The charging stations will be operated and managed by Welfare Fund.

NEA will provide all necessary fund to construct and purchase the equipment required for charging stations. NEA will provide the support for regular maintenance of service center. Armed policy will operate and provide security to charging stations.

Armed police will make necessary arrangements to use the stations by public under the charge fixed by NEA.



## COVERSTORY

As per the provision of electricity distribution regulations, fifty percent of profit generated by the charging stations will be handed over to Armed police Welfare Fund.

NEA has been constructing 51 charging stations all over Nepal to encourage the use of electric vehicles. The modern charging stations consist of 142 kilowatt chargers with 50 kVA transformer and online billing system.

There will be 60-60 kilowatt DC and 22 kW AC charging. This will provide charging facility to big buses and small cars.

Each charging stations will provide service to 300 vehicles a day. Kathmandu will control all 50 stations. The customer can use QR code and mobile apps to pay bill.

Similarly, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) is to provide necessary support to Nepal Police to set up charging stations at 25 locations, including five petrol pumps, one currently being operated by the Police Welfare Fund. However, four are proposed petrol pumps in other suitable locations of the remaining police offices.

For this, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Nepal Police and the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) for the construction and operation of electric vehicle charging stations.

Inspector General of Nepal Police Dhiraj Pratap Singh and Managing Director of NEA Kul Man Ghising signed the memorandum of understanding on behalf of their respective institutions at a program held at Police Headquarters, Naxal.

The charging stations will be operated under the Police Welfare Fund in the long run. According to the

MoU, the NEA will purchase all the equipment and infrastructure of the charging stations at its own expense, said a press statement issued by the NEA.

The NEA will also be responsible for the maintenance and regular servicing of the equipment. The police will provide a suitable location for the construction of the infrastructure and after their construction by the NEA; police will operate

and establish smart charging stations at 25 locations to encourage the use of electric vehicles and reduce the consumption of petroleum products.

“About Rs. 10 million will be required for the construction of infrastructure of the charging stations and necessary equipment. In order to encourage the use of electric vehicles, a special subsidized rate has been set at an average of about Rs. 5 per unit in the electricity tariff,” he said.

“The cost of a vehicle running on petroleum is Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 per kilometer, while the cost of an electric vehicle is very cheap, around Rs. 0.60 to Rs. 1 per kilometer.”

To encourage the use of electric vehicles, the NEA is constructing modern charging stations that can charge quickly at 51 locations across the country.

Every charging station being constructed by the Author-

ity will be equipped with a 142 KW charger, a 50 kVA transformer for power supply and an online billing system.

Fast charging 60-60 kilowatt DC and 22 kilowatt AC chargers will be installed at each charging station, said the NEA. With this, three vehicles, including big buses, can be charged simultaneously.

The software of the charging station will be kept in the Authority's data centre so that more than 300 chargers can be served.

All the stations will be controlled from Kathmandu. After charging the vehicles, the customer can pay the bill through the QR code and mobile app, it said.

### Electricity Is Cheaper

According to energy expert Amrit Lal Nakarmi, cooking with electricity is much cheaper compared



and guard the charging stations.

While operating the charging stations, it is necessary to arrange that the public can easily use them at a rate fixed by the NEA. The utility will collect the fee paid by the consumers while charging the vehicles.

According to the provisions of the Electricity Distribution Regulations, 50 per cent of the total profit from the electricity tariff will be received by the Welfare Division of the Police as operating and management expenses of the charging station.

In the program, Inspector General of Police Singh said that it was a historic opportunity to sign the MoU for the establishment of charging stations for the consumption of electricity generated within the country using electric vehicles.

Ghising said that the MoU was an important milestone to es-



to LPG, Kerosene and LPG. Similarly, the cost in driving electric car is very cheap.

According to his study, the prices of electric cooking come down heavily. The cost of cooking in kerosene in 2000 was Rs.270, LPG Rs.430 and electricity Rs.680. However, the current data reverse the situation. Cooking in kerosene will cost Rs.2980, LPG Rs.1872 and the price in electric cooking is Rs. 1000. According to Nakarmi, this is Rs. 900 cheaper than, or by 60 percent cheaper, in cooking on LPG.

Similarly, the prices of per kilometer driving in the electric vehicles cost Rs.1.39 against Rs.16.90 in petroleum. For a car one liter petrol drives 11 kilometer whereas 7.3 kilometer per kilowatt hour. Electric car is 78 percent fuel efficient than petrol engine vehicles.

According to expert Amrit Lal Nakarmi, Nepal's energy mix in 2021 was 4 percent electricity followed by 18 percent petroleum, 10 percent coal, 2 percent renewable and 66 percent traditional biomass.

He projected that by 2030, Nepal's energy mix will be 35 percent electricity followed by 6 percent coal, 23 percent petrol, 2 percent renewable and 34 biomass. However, by 2050, the energy scenario will be reversed, with 76 percent electricity, 5 percent modern renewable, petroleum will be 1 percent, coal 2 percent and 16 percent biomass.

### Opening Charging Sta-



### tions

To promote the electric vehicle providing fast charging stations, minister for energy, water resources and irrigation Pampha Bhusal inaugurated fast charging stations at NEA's head office.

Installed under the support of Asian Development Bank, the modern fast charging station aims to encourage the people to use electric vehicles. Inaugurating the station, she said that this is a revolution in electric transition. Nepal's internal consumption has increased by 22 percent compared to last year; this kind of station will further increase the consumption pattern.

She said that the increased use of hydro-electricity can save Nepal's foreign currency and help to reduce the trade deficit.

She also said that this kind of charging stations will be established all over Nepal. According to NEA, high charging stations will be installed in 51 different places in the country.

MD Ghising said that the operation of this kind of charging station will help increase the internal consumption of electricity. The modern and high voltage charging stations will charge the vehicles in a shorter time.

He said that NEA is providing the electricity in reduced rate to the private owner of charging stations. They are



charging the customer higher prices. With a total cost of Rs. 337.7 million, the charging stations are supplied by Wanbang Digital Energy Co.Ltd., China.

The cost of charge is 80 paisa per unit for car, 90 paisa for micro-bus and Rs.1.20 for bigger bus. "The concept of charging stations was out of thinking during the load shedding but it is now reality," said MD Ghising.

Out of 51 charging stations, 26 charging stations have capacity to charge bigger bus and 25 are for micro-bus and cars.

With this campaign, we are now in the phase of energy transition and transition is always a painful and difficult process. Switching from traditional biomass and petroleum to clean and green electricity will be game changer.

As Nepal has been generating around Rs.2 billion a month exporting the electricity to India and saving huge money by providing uninterrupted supply of electricity and reducing the import of Diesel and LPG, this is contributing immensely to Nepal's economy and reducing the trade deficit.

# "Nepal's Hydropower To Alleviate Poverty And Reduce Trade Deficit"

*Soon after being appointed Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation 14 months ago, PAMPHA BHUSAL got down to reducing the use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and petroleum products. Minister Bhusal encouraged use of electricity in kitchens and vehicles. She also announced free electricity to poor and marginal people. With the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the prices of petroleum products went up by almost 100 percent, and her agenda of electric cooking and electric vehicles picked pace. With a big surplus of electricity at hand, electric vehicles and electric cooking stoves have received a high priority and Nepal has even started to export huge surplus electricity to India, which some Nepalīs always described as a myth and an impossible agenda. Minister Bhusal, who has an engineering background, spoke to KESHAB POUDEL at the Minister's Quarter, her residence, on the energy transition of Nepal. Excerpts of the interview:*

**Since you took the portfolio of energy ministry, you have been stressing the need to replace LPG by electric cooking and petrol-based vehicles by electric vehicles. Do you think Nepal is in a time of energy transition?**

With the Russian invasion of Ukraine, there is a global energy crisis that is putting pressure on countries like Nepal to search for other sources of energy like hydropower. At a time when there is no sign of petroleum prices coming down, we don't have any option other than to use our hydropower.

**How do you see your 14th months of performance as the minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation?**

Well, I am the sixth minister from the Maoist Center, in a continuity, to take up the portfolio of Energy Ministry. Since I was appointed the minister, I've used my tenure in fixing and implementing a few agenda for the ministry. Although I am not an energy expert, I kept a few things in mind. Firstly, my vision is to use Nepal's electricity to alleviate poverty. With still over 18 percent of people below the poverty line, energy can help us end poverty in the country. Despite completing the political revolution, we are yet to bring about changes in social and economic life. This is the reason a segment of people are critical of political leaders, bureaucrats, entrepreneurs and the business community. Thus, I have decided to make certain contributions to address the issues of people below the poverty line. I have directed NEA to study how much poor people consume electricity in a month. Studies have shown that a family below the poverty line consumes 20 units of electricity in a month. I took a decision immediately to provide free electricity to those who use 20 units a month. This decision benefited almost 2.5 million populations, in the one-year period the consumption of electricity has gone up. Now only 1.8 million populations consume 20 units.

**What decision have you made in directing**

**work for poverty alleviation?**

For poverty alleviation, I have decided to give a subsidy to the electricity used in irrigation. Nepal is basically an agro-based country and large numbers of people are involved in it. Only through increasing the productivity of agriculture, we can uplift the lives of people living below the poverty line. Increasing production requires irrigation. Electricity is a key component of irrigation. Our experiences with earthquakes and Covid-19 have shown that agriculture is a major sector that requires constant support from the government. What we have learned is that providing irrigation to the land can change the poverty scenario. By providing irrigation, we can double the current productivity and production. Of course, fertilizers and high-value seeds are also required but there are other ministries looking at them.

**What is your slogan in irrigation sector?**

Our slogan is irrigation to arable land. The ministry has been formulating the policies accordingly. Currently all national priority irrigation projects are confined to Terai because it contributes immensely to Nepal's food production. However, mid hills and valleys have also large chunks of fertile land. If we provide irrigation to those areas, we can double the current level of production there. Increasing production will reduce the import of food products saving millions of foreign currency and also supporting poverty alleviation. Only through increasing productivity of agriculture we can stop migration and generate employment back home.

**How about the use of hydro-electricity?**

My second priority is to use hydroelectricity as energy to reduce the use of petroleum products. This energy should be consumed internally first. As there are several layers of consumers and tariffs, the pricing was based on the consumption patterns. Those who consumed more electricity paid more. Less consumption, less charge. According to the economy, the





more you produce the less you pay, the less you produce, the higher price you pay.

#### **How do you fix the prices?**

We have eight layers of pricing based on the consumers. I have reduced the prices from Rs.1 to 70 and fifty paisa per unit at the different levels of consumers. For that middle level that used LPG and firewood, I also reduced the prices. In rural parts of Nepal, women have been suffering severe crises caused by the smoke generated from firewood in the kitchen. My other target was to replace LPG using electric cooking. We are importing Rs.60 billion equivalent of LPG annually. If we reduce the import of LPG, we can save huge foreign currency. I have reduced the prices of domestic electricity keeping all these issues in mind.

#### **What plans do you have to increase internal consumption?**

To increase the internal consumption, I have decided to provide the electricity to the industries as per their demand. I have also looked at the charges and prices of electricity used by the farmers to run storage, dairy, cold storage and drinking water. In the irrigation, I have reduced the 75 percent tariff. Big surface

irrigation projects are alone enough to irrigate large areas of land and we also need groundwater in terai and lift irrigation in mid hills. Cheaper electricity can bring a drastic change in irrigation helping to increase production. This is the reason I reduced the price. It also contributed to displacing the diesel and petroleum pump sets.

#### **What about converting petrol-based transport to electricity?**

One of my major targets is to convert the petrol based transport. We have now 3.2 million vehicles which have been consuming petroleum products worth of Rs.3000 billion annually. Converting the vehicles into electricity can save foreign currency and reduce Nepal's trade deficit as well. We are encouraging electric vehicles establishing charging stations and providing meters at home. Similarly, we are giving consent to the private parties which want to establish charging stations. We have been providing transformer and electric lines. When I joined the ministry, NEA used to provide free transformers with capacity of 25 kV. I have changed the regulations and now NEA is supplying free transformers up to 100 kV for domestic

## INTERVIEW

consumption, industry, cold storage, dairy, irrigation and cooperatives. We have also decided to provide up to 200 kV. My aim is to promote the use of electricity. It makes me happy to know that the use of electricity has increased up to 22 percent at household level. The per-capita of electricity increased from 325 to 351 units.

### What about export of electricity?

Another important work is to start the export of surplus electricity to India. Due to RoR projects, we have a huge surplus of energy in rainy season. Last year, large volume of surplus energy was wasted. However, we have started export of surplus electricity from this year to neighboring India. With the efforts from political, diplomatic and other channels, we were able to convince India to purchase our electricity. This is a major breakthrough. We have started the export from 39 MW last year and 364 MW this year. We have requested India to provide us additional quota for export. This breakthrough was possible during the visit of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to India and his talks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

### How do you see foreign investment?

In terms of the foreign investment, Nepal has made a big jump. Following the visit of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur to India, a number of Indian companies have started to invest in Nepal in joint ventures. Satlaj and NEA have already signed agreement to develop Arun IV projects and India's government company NHRPC has signed agreement to develop West Seti and other projects. We have already exported close to Rs.4 billion equivalent electricity to India. This is a major breakthrough.

### How do you see the use of induction now at household level?

Although it is not our area to distribute induction, what I can say is that the number of households using induction has drastically increased. As NEA has been supplying quality and uninterrupted electricity enhancing the distribution system, the number of such households has increased. Although some people still demand free induction, it is not NEA to provide it. What our ministry can do is to improve the capacity of distributions centers, establishing infrastructure and supply quality and uninterrupted electricity. Our Ministry has been doing that. The work to provide free

induction is the job of Ministry of Supply. In collaboration with different agencies, I have been working to distribute free induction to small marginalized and poor graduate students living in urban areas through the Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPIC). In other areas, we have been working to distribute free induction collaborating with local governments. We also have received certain fund from Green Energy Program to freely distribute 500,000 inductions. We have been working to distribute the inductions in this fiscal year.

### How easy is it to transform use of energy?

It is not easy to transform from one system to another. Despite paying high prices for LPG and LPG stoves, it is a bit difficult to convince the people to switch to electric cooking. People easily pay high prices for LPG. However, they expect free induction to use cheaper electricity. From firewood, kerosene and LPG, now we are heading for clean electric cooking.

This is a major revolutionary shift and there is the need to break the mindset.

### What is the significance of electricity export to India?

First of all the beginning of export of big volume of electricity to India has proved the old mindset of those who have been saying that Nepal cannot export its electricity wrong. This is a big achievement.

For instance, Nepal has already exported over Rs.4 billion equivalent of surplus electricity to India in just a matter of three months. This is a fact. This will also assure Nepali investors that their investment in the hydropower sector is safe. We will expect to export up to Rs.8 billion worth of electricity. After this, two major India's state-owned companies Satlaj for Arun and Indian government-owned company NHPC Limited developed the 750 MW West Seti and 450 MW Seti River-6 hydroelectricity projects.

### How about the supply of electricity in the country and what is the priority, export or domestic consumption?

Our first priority is electricity for domestic use. We have been taking all kinds of effort to increase the domestic consumption. However, we cannot waste or dump the surplus electricity. We are exporting only surplus electricity. We have been making efforts to provide electricity to all Nepalis within two years. NEA has already planned for this. If Nepal consumes all the electricity generated in Nepal, there is no ques-





tion to export. In case of high demand, we may also require to import additional electricity as well. We are selling surplus electricity bringing foreign currency and helping to reduce our trade deficit. This is a positive decision.

**How private sector investment contributed to state and local level? For instance, Nepal receives free energy from West Seti, Arun and Arun IV and Upper Karnali, what is the state receiving from IPP investments except for nominal license fees?**

I always admire Nepal's private sector for their investment in hydropower sector. Independent Power Producers (IPPs) have contributed immensely to turn Nepal from net importer to net exporter. They have also contributed to ending decade-old load-shedding. Except public equity of small amount, people have also invested in large scale hydropower sector. Banks have invested a large sum of money. This way all the IPP's projects are also people's projects. We need to thank private sector for all these works. However, all IPP projects are run-of-the river projects generating huge electricity in wet season and very nominal in winter. I think the time has come for them to invest in storage and peaking projects as well. This is the reason NEA has surplus in rainy season and huge deficit in winter.

**Given a situation when Indian investors like Satlaj are providing 200MW of free electricity from Arun III and and NHPC also agreed to provide 21.9 percent of free electricity from West Seti, what are IPPs providing except the license charge?**

IPPs are Nepali investors and they will hand over their entire ownership to Nepal after 30 years. Besides they have helped us save Nepali money that would go for importing electricity. Similarly, IPPs are also paying other royalties to the local governments and issuing shares to local people. All these are good signs. I would like to thank them for the initiatives.

**There are growing concerns over the bad practices of trading Hydropower license. Don't you think there is the need to contain this kind of bad practice of trading hydropower project license?**

I would like to thank those who have been



generating electricity and constructing the projects. However, there is a bad practice to get the license and trade it to others. The past practice like Jhola Ma Khola (River in the Bag) continues to exist. Out of 6500 MW PPA signed, the companies with the capacity of 1600 MW are yet to start the construction. Had they constructed the projects,

Nepal would have exported more electricity to India. I don't have any complaints with private sector investors. However, they should fulfill their obligations completing the projects in time and not indulge in practices of license trading. There is no such a sector as hydropower to provide hundred percent safe investment. As per the Power Purchasing Agreement, NEA pays money once they start generation. Under the take and pay agreement, NEA will pay revenue for the electricity generated by them. IPPs will receive the money for 30 years connecting their power to NEA's transmission. Whether there is an earthquake, covid-19 and anything else, a hydropower project is like a milking cow. It is very safe and secure.

#### **How do you see the role of IPPs?**

Along with their contributions, they are also benefiting a lot from the projects. As per present day calculations, a project returns the investment in 10 years. It will provide benefits for another 20 years. As this may be the reason, frequency of transfer of the project is very high. The license is issued to one company, PPA is signed with other and finally construction of company and generation start by third or fourth. You cannot find an investor of more than a decade and their movement is fast. This is attractive sector. This is the resource of the state and it should be returned to the state in 30 years as it was. The projects reportedly have over 100 years' life. My concern now is investors should hand over the projects to the state in running conditions in 30 years.

**What is the state of negotiations with Asian Development Bank on Dudh Koshi storage and with The World Bank for the upper Arun Project?**

Our negotiation with the World Bank on Upper Arun Project is almost at final stage. Under the leg of the World Bank, many other international finan-

## INTERVIEW

cial institutions will join it. On Nepal's part, we have to contribute Rs. 60 to 65 billion. We had already organized a meeting of different local investors to generate the investment. Under the lead of the Citizen's Investment Board, we had a meeting with all major investors of Nepal including banks and Employment Provident Fund. I am hopeful that the financial closure of Upper Arun will complete within this fiscal year. It will start within two years. So far as Dudhkoshi is concerned, we have been negotiating with ADB for financial aspects and the project is now in the process of land acquisition. Dudhkoshi is a storage project and it is highly important for us. Despite PROR in nature, Upper Arun is also going to be a game changer. Upper Tamakoshi has shown how important contributions PROR can make to the country.

**As Nepal is pushing for electric cooking and electric vehicles, how is the ministry working on legislation, including regulations and guidelines and local governments?**

As a federal structure, we always prefer to work in close collaboration with local governments. Whether it is in the electric cooking or electric vehicles, the ministry will involve provincial and local governments in this move. We are now in the process of developing regulations and guidelines. We have already developed some guidelines for charging stations and reduction of the prices to promote electric cooking.

**What is the state of Budhigandaki Hydropower project?**

One of the major achievements of my tenure is to finally push the Budhigandaki project to the construction phase. Stalled for 20 years over the investment issues, finally the government of Nepal has decided to form a Budhi Gandaki Company under Ministry of Energy to construct the project. With the registration of the company, it will start soon. Similarly, the process of bringing all the resources collected for the project will be transferred to the company. Close to the load center, this multi-purpose project will cost around Rs.200 billion and it will require annually Rs.35 billion. It will complete in 8 years. As the 400 kV transmission line constructed under MCA Nepal is also close to the project, evacuation of electricity from this project will not be a major issue. The pond of the project is said to be 15 times larger than Phewa Lake.

**Since you have been talking about the issue of hydropower projects, the delay in the completion of transmission lines like 400 kV Hetauda-Dhalkebar and Inaruwa projects have already been delayed for 8 years. How can you solve the problems related to transmission lines?**

The problem lies on the nature of land ownership. In Nepal, land is owned by individuals. Due to this they always knock the door of court whenever issue of contributing the land is concerned. The recent verdict delivered by the court on transmission lines like 200 kV Bharatpur-New Butwal and 400 kV Dhalkebar-Inaruwa has paved the way to complete both the projects. 200 kV Bharatpur-Butwal transmission line has already charged and the erection of tower in Siraha has already started. Due to delay in the court, the country has suffered a huge loss of revenue. We are now also pushing the construction of 132 kV transmission line to connect Kohalpur with Surkhet, Butwal Lamahi, Lamahi Chinju. We are also planning cross border points.

**What about energy transition?**

We have been talking about concepts like zero-emission, clean energy and green energy. Although there are other sources like solar and wind, hydropower is a major and viable green energy source of Nepal. I would like to request all international community to support us to develop hydropower projects. Our hydroelectricity is green and clean. For the zero-emission level to reach by 2045, we need to promote hydropower. As Nepal has been paying prices for climate disasters without doing any harm, global community should compensate Nepal by investing in hydropower sector.

**How do plan for small landholders?**

Our policy has clearly identified problems faced by small landholders. In collaboration with local level and international organizations, we are planning to invest resources to build small irrigation projects. As I have already told you that the NEA has already announced up to 75 percent of rebate in the electricity consumed by farmers to lift the water.





NIBL

# Heritage Conservation

*NIBL Support for Reconstruction of Pashupati Museum*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Having contributed immensely to restore and preserve Nepal's heritage sites, Nepal Investment Bank has once again provided over Rs. 90 million to reconstruct Pashupati Museum and Pashupati Area protection under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Headed by renowned heritage lover Prithvi Bahadur Pande, Nepal Investment Bank Ltd has been providing generous support to Nepal's heritage

Museum is golden printed religious sculptures, bronze and metal sculptures, stone sculptures and other culturally valuable dress and ornament and archeologically important wooden crafts of sixth century and Lichhivi King Mandev period's sculptures and coins.

NIBL provided all necessary financial support to collect and document religiously, culturally and archeologically important artifacts and placed them in Muse-

protection of Nepal's heritage sites and historically important sites and in related activities. For this, NIBL chairman Pande has always been generous.

Since last one decade, NIBL has been supporting restoration and reconstruction of various religiously important sites of Pashupati Area under its CSR programs. In a close collaboration with Pashupati Area Development Trust, NIBL has been doing restoration and reconstruction work.

Pashupati is not the first religious and heritage site NIBL has been supporting. It has been immensely contributing to heritage site conservation of Patan Durbar square as well.

NIBL has donated a big chunk of money to the reconstruction of Bhimsen Temple in Patan along with restoration of some parts of Patan Durbar Square with Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust.

Under the leadership of Pande, NIBL has been supporting conservation and preservation of Nepal's ancient heritage sites. Reconstructing Pashupati Museum and Mahasnan Home in Pashupati, NIBL under the leadership of Pande has shown its commitment to preserve Nepal's heritage.



conservation and preservation work.

Amid a function Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation and chairperson of Pashupati Development Trust Jeevan Ram Shrestha inaugurated newly reconstructed Museum and Mahasnan Home. During the inaugural ceremony, NIBL chair Pande along with other high officials of the trust were present.

Main attraction of the

um following the damage by the 2015 earthquake. NIBL has played a key role to develop this museum. NIBL provided over Rs. 51 million (5, 1400, 000) to reconstruct the museum building and organized all important artifacts there. Similarly, NIBL also provided around Rs. 40 million for the protection of Pashupati area.

Under its CSR program, NIBL has been actively involved in the restoration, reconstruction and

QUEEN ELIZABETH II

# Nepal's Admirer

*During her 70 years as a monarch of the United Kingdom, Queen Elizabeth II paid state visits to Nepal twice. However, her love and affection towards Nepal remain immense. The frequent visit by royal family members of the UK at the time of difficulty was a testimony of her love for Nepal and the Nepali people. As Nepal had gone through a devastating earthquake with big suffering, Prince Harry visited Nepal to draw the attention of the global community. Connected through Gurkha over two centuries, Queen Elizabeth II takes the relations between the two independent countries to a new height. As Queen Elizabeth died at the age of 96, Nepalese also lost a guardian and good friend*

By KESHAB POUDEL

“It is with great sadness I have received the news of her passing away. Queen Elizabeth II distinguished herself with duty, honor and service. The Queen is fondly remembered in Nepal for her two important state visits in 1961 and 1986,” tweets Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba expressing his deep condolence on the demise of Queen Elizabeth II.

“The grace, simplicity and respect for other cultures and humanity are the qualities for which the Nepalese people fondly remember the Queen. In her death, Nepal also lost a great admirer of the country and its people. I express deepest condolences to the Royal Family,” tweeted PM Deuba.

“We are deeply saddened by the death of British Queen Elizabeth. In this hour of mourning, we wish the entire royal family, including the British people, the strength to endure from me myself and from the citizen of Nepal,” said former King Gyanendra in a message of condolence.

Nepali Congress Youth

leader Udaya Shumsher Rana tweets,” deeply saddened to learn of the demise of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of the UK. She was an icon of leadership & duty for the entire globe. The Queen is fondly remembered in Nepal for her two important state visits in 1961 & 1986.”

During all her two visits, Queen Elizabeth II firmly backed

Nepal's independence and sovereignty.

Along with Prime Minister Deuba and former King Gyanendra and political leaders, people from different walks of life have posted their deep condolence and love to the Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II using social media like Facebook and Twitter.







Tens of thousands of posts and comments are on the wall of social media used by Nepalese. Whether senior journalists Kanak Dixit, Yubaraj Ghimire, Dhruba Adhikari, young journalist Parshuram Kafle, communicator Binita Shah and others, the tribute paid to Queen Elizabeth II is a testimony of how Nepalese loved her.

Former senior civil servants, entrepreneurs and other common people also posted a condolence messages paying tribute to Queen on their walls.

“In tribute to Queen Elizabeth II: During her state visit to Nepal in 1961, she stayed at Sheetal Niwas, then a royal guest house. The bedroom she stayed in was later converted into an office, from where I worked as Foreign Secretary. That was the office of Nepal’s first President,” tweets former foreign secretary Madhu Raman Acharya.

Tim I GURUNG, a writer,

tweets, “RIP - Her Majesty, the most beloved monarch of the modern era.” Recalling Queen Elizabeth II, Chanda Rana, an environmentalist tweeted, “duty first.”

Portrayed as Aviation & Foreign relations Hemanta Arjyal in Tweets..... र त्यो खरीको रुख, १९६१ (..... And That Khariko Rukh, 1961) recalling her visit. Twitter

“She ruled for seven decades, unshakably committed to the rituals of her role amid epic social and economic change and family scandal.” @NYTimes’ Tweeted Binita Shah, Mom, wife, communications professional, with a picture #QueenElizabeth # Nepalvisit1986. Twitter

Journalist Girish Giri expressed deep condolence in tweets. Journalist Amrita Lamsal tweets expressing deepest condolences.

“She was an embodiment of a modern monarch & a portrait of humility With her passing an era

comes to an end for the entire world May her departed soul rest in eternal peace Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is Dead-Long Live His Majesty King Charles III,” tweets Anil Shah, former CEO of NABIL.

“Rest in Peace, The Queen who loves Nepal,” tweets Ananda Raj BATAS, Social Entrepreneur.

“Rest In Peace your Majesty #Queen Elizabeth II. An end of an era. Long lives Britain - Nepal’s Friendship,” tweets a young Bardan Shumsher Thapa, Historian / Entrepreneur.

Nepal-based foreign diplomats also tweeted expressing deep condolences.

“Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II’s influence in the world was immeasurable and her legacy will loom large in the pages of history. Our deepest condolences to the Royal family and the people of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. Our thoughts are with them

## OBITUARY

in their grief,” US Ambassador to Nepal Randy Barry.

“It is my hope, when judged by future generations, our sincerity, our willingness to take lead, will stand the test of time. In tomorrow’s world, we must all work together as hard as ever if we are truly to be #UnitedNations” HM The Queen Elizabeth II @UN,” tweets Aysh-

“This is a year when we celebrate not just 206 years of partnership, but a partnership cemented by a monarch, who since her Majesty’s first visit in 1961 has shared with us a love of this country. The Queen has passed on that love of Nepal to her children and grandchildren. We are proud that the Prince of Wales has twice visited Nepal and

bassador of the United Kingdom to Nepal in her recent statement.

Nepalese also see her as a source of inspiration. “Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has been an inspiration and a guiding light to the UK, Commonwealth and the whole world. She was voted the most influential person in the world this year and she has led her life with wisdom,



anie, UNDP Resident Representative for Nepal.

### Nepal’s Connection

Although Queen Elizabeth II paid state visits to Nepal twice in 1961 February and 1986 during the period of King Mahendra and Birendra, Nepal, her love for Nepal was deep. Gorkha’s factors connected her to Nepal. In a recent program, the statement delivered by the British Ambassador to Nepal showed this.

explored widely, embracing the opportunities for trekking and enjoying the wonderfully diverse nature. Princess Anne visited in 2000 and went across the country visiting many of the charities and NGOs with British links, and of course, Prince Harry’s 2016 visit is still fresh in many of your memories. – I know the Nepal Britain Society played an important part in the 200-anniversary celebrations and the success of Prince Harry’s visit,” writes Nicola Pollitt, Am-

courage, dignity, compassion and by setting a world of complicated geopolitics across the nations,” writes Pratima Pande, President of Nepal Britain Society

Queen Elizabeth died but she will be remembered here forever. The Queen herself planted a tree at the Botanical Gardens at Godavari and British Embassy planted another close by in Her Majesty’s name, as part of the Jubilee Queen’s Green Canopy project is growing as



a symbol of relations between Nepal and Britain. As people around the world, Nepalese have nothing but deep admiration for her.

**Profile:**  
Queen Elizabeth II

Britain's Queen Elizabeth II was born on April 21, 1926. She was the first child of the Duke of York, who later became King George VI. She ascended the throne at the age of 25 after the King died in 1952.

The Queen gave a speech on her 21st birthday when she was a princess. She pledged to devote her whole life to the service of the British and Commonwealth public.

She became the longest-reigning British monarch in 2015, surpassing Queen Victoria, who served for over 60 years until 1901. In June, Platinum Jubilee events marked Queen Elizabeth's 70 years on the throne.

The Queen was beloved as a symbol of the unity of the United Kingdom. She married Philip Mountbatten in 1947. The couple had four children, including their eldest son Prince Charles.

The Queen frequently visited Commonwealth realms to bolster relations at a time when Britain's influence on international politics was in decline after World War Two.

One after another, its colonies became independent. The Queen had close ties to Japan's Imperial family. Emperor Showa visited Britain in 1971, followed by the Queen's official trip to Japan in 1975.



The Queen actively sought to communicate with the public through Twitter and other social media as part of her efforts to make the royal family more open.

She expressed her gratitude to healthcare professionals and other workers online amid growing concerns about the coronavirus pandemic. She also called in a televised speech for the unity of people to overcome the virus.

The Queen dealt with various challenges. Popular opinion viewed her reaction as cold when former Princess Diana died in a car crash in 1997 after her divorce from Prince Charles the previous year.

The Queen also faced the announcement in 2020 by her grandson Prince Harry and his wife Meghan that they wanted to stop being senior members of the royal family.

Once against tonight, we are here to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to mark the 70th Anniversa-

ry of the occasion of Her Majesty's accession to the throne on February 6th, 1952.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has been an inspiration and a guiding light to the UK, Commonwealth and the whole world. She has been voted the most influential person in the world this year and she has led her life with wisdom, courage, dignity, and compassion and by setting a world of complicated geopolitics across the nations. The world has nothing but deep admiration for her as she celebrated her 96th Birthday, in April.

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the Queen's "empathy and ability to connect with every passing generation, while remaining rooted in the tradition that truly mattered to her, was an example of true leadership".

MCA-Nepal

# Starting Implementation

*Almost five months after the ratification, MCA Nepal is preparing to implement the project from August 2023*

By KESHAB POUDEL

Delayed for five years due to uncertainty over the issue of ratification in the House of Representatives, MCC is now at the final stage for its implementation.

Mired in domestic and international fake news campaigns and lackluster response of MCA-Nepal and MCC to counter the fake information, the project suffered badly, delaying its implementation and completion.

As the House of Representatives ratified the MCC agreement, the situation is now back on the track with work going on to implement it. Similarly, the disinformation campaign is clearing up and media outlets

also seem to have come to good terms with MCC project.

Attending with loaded and misconceived notions, the press meets organized by MCA-Nepal used to conclude in bitter taste in the past. However, the situation of the press meet on (August 18) completed in a sober and most fruitful manner.

Called almost five months after its ratification, the first press

meeting about MCC had apparently increased.

Except a few irritating questions like why MCA Nepal rented apartment building of five star hotels and paid high salary, high cost and taxing MCC, all the questions raised during the press meet were genuine.

Although some politicians are still making hue and cry to push the project into controversy, the shift of the media trends will bring favorable situation to the project diminishing the negative implications on it.

**MCC project**

The Millennium Challenge Account Nepal (MCA-N)

meeting organized in the process of implementation, showed the un-

informed that the transmission line and road upgradation projects





funded by the Millennium Challenge Corporation of the United States of America will begin in August 2023.

The project was supposed to enter into force on 30 June 2020 as planned a year earlier but the deadline couldn't be met as the parliament couldn't ratify the program as mentioned in the bilateral agreement signed between the governments of Nepal and the USA in 2017.

The project was mired in controversy before it got ratified by the federal parliament as some groups blamed it for its association with the Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) – a US military program in the region.

However, with the ratification of the project in February of this year, the MCA Nepal Development Committee has expedited the process to implement the program.

"The tentative date of commencement will be a day in August 2023 and it will be completed in 2028," said Executive Director of the MCA Nepal Khadga Bahadur Bisht, at an interaction with journalists.

MCC is a US government agency with whom the Government of Nepal has signed an agreement to implement a US\$ 630 million program to construct large transmission lines, including the

Butwal-Gorakhpur cross-border transmission facility, and rehabilitation of strategic roads. Of the total cost of the project, \$500 million will be funded by the MCC and \$130 million contributed by Nepal.

Titled the New Butwal-Gorakhpur Transmission Line, the project is the second cross-border

the Environment Impact Assessment report, and the process has begun to cut the trees on the way to construct the transmission line. Meanwhile, of the 315-km transmission line, a 30-km stretch is being re-surveyed to find if re-alignment is needed at certain locations.

"Tender document for the

transmission line is ready; it will be opened on the basis of international competition and MCC procurement guidelines," he said. There will be 854 towers in 315km length of the transmission line. Earlier, the number of towers was set at 1,315 but to

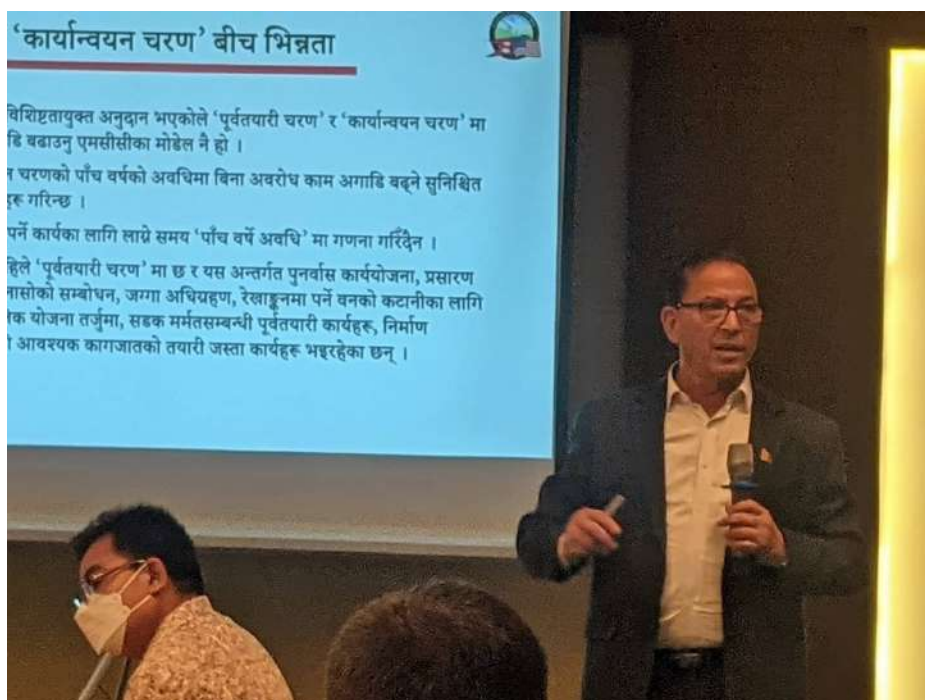
der line after Dhalkebar-Mujaffarpur that will help in energy exchange and trade. The project was envisioned in 1996.

The delay is likely to cost additional administration and management costs of US\$ 6.45 million.

According to Bisht, the MCC model has a robust preparedness plan and allocates sufficient time and resources for it so that the implementation could move forward smoothly. About 12.5 per cent of the total budget would be spent on pre-Entry Into Force (EIF) preparations while implementation phase investment would be 87.5 per cent of the budget. Bisht said that the government has approved

reduce the environmental and social impacts of the project, height of the towers is increased and the number reduced. Likewise, about 77km road from Dhankohla to Shiva Khola in Dang district will be rehabilitated. To support this development, MCA-N has established a laboratory at the Department of Roads to find better solutions.

The project is supposed to create 7,300 full-time employees during the project period. According to the MCA-N, other benefits to the country will also include using local construction materials and services, technology transfer and social inclusion.



# हातधुने बानी बसालौं, संक्रमणबाट जोगिऔं

साबुनपानीले मिचिमिचि हात धोऔं।

- हत्केला पछाडि, औंलाको बीच, नङभिन्न लगायत हातका सबै भागमा कम्तिमा २० सेकेण्डसम्म राम्रोसँग साबुन लगाएर सफा पानीले हात धोऔं।
- सफा कपडा वा तौलियाले हात पुछौं।

जीवाणुलगायतको संक्रमणबाट आफू पनि बचौं अरुलाई पनि बचाऔं।



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