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VIEWPOINT
Bindu Sharma



FORUM
Dr. Prabin Manandhar



ENVIRONMENT
Batu Uprety

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FORTNIGHTLY

NATIONAL ELECTIONS Alliance Vs Alliance

INSIDE



NEPAL'S ISRAEL POLICY
RHETORIC AND REALITY



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Notes From The Editor



Nepali people are going to see a few more national festivals soon after the main festival of Dashain. Tihar or Dipawali and Chhath are coming closer. Rising inflation and slowing economy have worsened the situation for the middle class people. Amidst their anxiety, the elections, slated for November 18, are approaching. The focus now is on the election process. With so many problems in the country, Nepal's political parties are yet to come up with clear development agenda which can generate employment and build the confidence of young voters in the country. At a time when the global economy is facing new challenges and recession is looming large, Nepal's political leaders are yet to place this on their agenda. Declining the prominent candidates, Nepali Congress has shown that it is less concerned about the country's situation. This is the same with CPN-UML. Two alliances led by ruling Nepali Congress and CPN-UML are harping on the same agenda like in the past. Even new political parties and candidates do not have clearcut visions and agenda. Despite claiming themselves as champions of women rights, only a handful of women candidates have been given the tickets under FPTP. As the cost of election is going very high, few candidates are contesting the elections from minority and marginalized groups. We have a short story on this. As Nepalis are celebrating the festivals Tihar or Dipawali, Chhath and Nepal New Year, New Spotlight family extends warm wishes to all on the occasions. Happy Dipawali!

Keshab Poudel

Editor

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Chinese Ambassador Pays Farewell Call On CoAS General Sharma

Ambassador of China to Nepal, Hou Yanqi, paid a farewell call on Chief of the Army Staff (CoAS) Prabhu Ram Sharma at the Army Headquarters.



CoAS Sharma, on the occasion, congratulated the Chinese ambassador for successfully completing her tenure in Nepal and extended best wishes for her happy future, the Nepali Army Directorate of Public Re-

lations and Information stated.

Ambassador Hou is returning home upon completion of her term in Nepal.

Nepal And Italy Sign Bilateral Consultations Mechanism

Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal and Ambassador of Italy to Nepal Vincenzo De Luca signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Establishment of a Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between their Foreign



Ministries.

“The mechanism will be an important platform for dialogue on regular basis between the Ministries in further enhancing bilateral relations

and promoting areas of cooperation,” said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The mechanism aims to further strengthen collaboration between Nepal and Italy.

Nepal, Canada Discuss Range Of Bilateral Interests

Nepal and Canada discussed a range of matters of bilateral interest that included development cooperation, trade and investment, education, culture and tourism as well as environment and climate change, among others.

During the third meeting of Nepal-Canada Bilateral Consultation Mechanism (BCM) which was held in Ottawa, Bharat Raj Paudyal, Foreign Secretary, and. Paul Thoppil, Assistant Deputy Minister of Global Affairs Canada, led their respective delegations to the meeting.

The Foreign Secretary shared with the Canadian

side about Nepal’s development priorities, graduation from the LDC category and the efforts made towards meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals. He underscored the need of enhanced level of cooperation from Canada in terms of resources and technology for Nepal’s smooth and sustainable transition from the LDC status. The Canadian side expressed its readiness to support Nepal in its development pursuits and highlighted its international assistance policy.

Citing the contribution made by Canadian Climate Fund for the Private Sector in Asia II (CFPS II) in the financing of Upper Trishuli-1 Hydropower project, the Foreign Secretary called for more investment and technology from Canada in Nepal’s hydropower, a vital source of clean energy.

Views were exchanged on continuing collaboration in various multi-lateral forums, including the



United Nations, on matters of common interest such as climate change and UN peacekeeping. The two sides shared their perspectives on matters of global importance.

The Foreign Secretary highlighted the successful conduct of the recent local elections in Nepal as well as the forthcoming provincial and federal elections as important democratic exercises and steps towards further consolidating democracy in Nepal.

Foreign Secretary Paudyal thanked the Canadian side for their generous support of vaccines and essential medical equipment to Nepal during the difficult time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The two sides reviewed the progress made since the second meeting of the BCM held in December 2020. They agreed to work closely towards further deepening and widening cooperation and engagement in identified sectors for mutual benefit. The importance of the exchange of high level visits was emphasized as a means of providing momentum to these engagements.

In view of growing size of Nepali diaspora in Canada and increasing people to people contacts between the two countries, Foreign Secretary Paudyal requested Canadian side to consider establishing Canadian representation in Nepal and making arrangements for the issuance of visas in Kathmandu.

Other members of the Nepali delegation in the meeting included Bhriku Dhungana, Ambassador of Nepal to Canada as well as officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy of Nepal in Canada.

CESIF Organizes Talk On Geopolitics And Foreign Engagement In Nepal

Centre for Social Inclusion and Federalism (CESIF) organized a seminar on the topic ‘Geopolitics and Foreign Engagements in Nepal’. This seminar brought key stakeholders together to discuss the prospects and challenges of increasing geopolitical competition of global powers in Nepal. The seminar also discussed Nepal’s foreign policy and diplomatic practice to deal with the geopolitical actors in Nepal. This program aimed to build consensus on the strategies Nepal should adopt to maintain balanced relationships with its bilateral partners.

CESIF also launched its two-research series entitled ‘Nepal-India Cross Border Relation in the Contemporary Context,’ and ‘Foreign Engagements in Nepal and Cross-Border Relation with China’ based on a yearlong research study conducted by the organization, edited by Amb. Vijay Kant Karna and Arpan Gelal.

The program proceeded with the brief presentation on ‘Key trends in Geopolitics and Foreign Engagements in Nepal’ by CESIF’s Program & Research Officer Arpan Gelal and ‘Nepal-China Cross-Border Relation’ by Researcher Ms. Prashanti Poudyal.

The program hosted two panel discussions with distinguished individuals including diplomats, bureaucrats, researchers, academicians and foreign policy experts. The first panel discussion was entitled ‘Geopolitics and Foreign Engagements in Nepal’.



The panel brought together Dr. Swarnim Wagle, Dr. Achyut Wagle, Ajaya Bhadra Khanal and Ms. Apekshya Shah while the discussion was moderated by Amb. Vi-

jay Kant Karna.

The discussion revolved around bilateral trade relations with regional neighbors, development financing, impact of geopolitical competition in domestic and foreign relations of Nepal and India’s regional strategy, among others. Dr. Swarnim Wagle stated, ‘Our leaders should be prepared on Nepali perspective and should present in international forum with efficient bureaucracy. The state craft cannot be successful on extra ability of a few individual. Our leaders need to capitalize soft corner and goodwill of Nepal.’ Dr. Achyut Wagle mentioned, ‘Talking about US, India and China, we should understand more emerging equations including QUAD, European and other emerging powers and initiatives. We need to broaden perspectives.’

The second panel on ‘Recent Developments in Nepal-China Relations’ brought together Amb. Dinesh Bhattarai, Dr. Nischal Nath Pandey, Avasna Pandey and Anurag Acharya while it was moderated by Anil Giri.

SAWTEE Organizes Roundtable On Pathways To Enhance Export

South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) organized a roundtable dialogue on “Pathways to enhance exports through innovation” to identify and examine constraints to exporting faced by exporters and to discuss the types of innovation support available to exporters from government and private agencies.



Commencing the dialogue, Dr. Paras Kharel, Executive Director, SAWTEE, highlighted in his presentation that the low export earnings in Nepal is because of inability to scale up production and exports of existing products, inadequate diversification of products and inadequate diversification of markets. He stressed on Nepal losing its trade preferences in important markets with LDC graduation. He said, “With the loss, there will be the need of enhancing productivity and competitiveness. That’s why there is a need of innovation to achieve broad-based and sustained export growth.”

Sarad Bikram Rana, Executive Director, Trade and Export Promotion Center (TEPC) pointed out that despite the Nepal Trade Integration Strategy (NTIS), trade related infrastructure, customs modernization, export incentives, National Single Window System and other trade policies, export of Nepal is stagnant.

Govinda Ghimire, Immediate Past President, Nepal Herbs and Herbal Products Association (NEHHPA) said that Nepal’s performance in international expo and trade fair is very poor.

Urusha Chapagain, Marketing Director, Gorkha Tea Estate began her remarks by stating that political instability was a main problem that has restricted exporters to meet their expectations.

Nareesh Shrestha, Member, FNCCI executive committee, highlighted higher cost of production, long transit, higher cost of raw materials, lack of quick and quality access of products as major challenges in Nepal’s export.

Neelu Raimajhi Khatri, President, Federation of Woman’s Entrepreneurs’ Association of Nepal (FWEAN)

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made a point on the importance of capacity building of women entrepreneurs and women friendly technologies to promote export in Nepal.

Rajan Sharma, Former President, Nepal Freight's Forwarders' Association in his opening remarks said that we don't sell what we have but we sell the products that are demanded by buyers.

Sunil Chitrakar, Chairperson, Fair Trade Group Nepal said that government should focus on producing human resources who can design products according to market trends. Narayan Krishna Kharel, Federation of Export Entrepreneurs Nepal (FEEN) stated that people, cash, strategies and execution should be focused in order to increase export.

Dr. Posh Raj Pandey, Chairperson, SAWTEE moderated the dialogue. The roundtable dialogue brought together trade experts, logistics experts, academicians and exporters.

KOICA- KAN 2022 Knowledge Sharing Program Concludes

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and KOICA Alumni Association of Nepal (KAN)



had organized KOICA-KAN Knowledge Sharing Program in three sessions with the collaboration of Campion College, Sane pa, Quest Col-

lege, Gwarko and Bagmati College, Sukedhara. The main objective of the program was to share the experience and knowledge of the Master's Scholarship program. Recent Masters Scholars of KDI University and Ehwa University shared their research findings to the 253 students of Bachelors and Master's Degrees in Business Studies, Humanities & Social Sciences and Law.

The Knowledge Sharing program specifically focused on comparative study on financial policies and gender studies. Kiran Poudel, recent graduate from KDI University, shared the outcome of his thesis, experiences and knowledge gained during his stay in Korea which can be helpful for the comparative study of VAT system in the context of Nepal. Poudel shared his thesis finding which was done on Best Practice of Value Added Tax: Lesson to learn from South Korea.

The program was indeed beneficial for the students as study of VAT system is in their academic curriculum and knowledge sharing program gave them an oppor-

tunity for the comparative study of VAT system in Korea and Nepal. Poudel stressed on how digitization has made Korea one step ahead in eliminating flaws in the collection of government revenue.

Likewise, Srijana Poudel shared the major findings and recommendation of her study from personal learning and experience from the socio-economic development of Korea. She shared her thesis findings on "Labor migration and empowerment of left-behind wives". Poudel completed her Master's course under KOICA program in Capacity Development of Gender Equality Leadership from Ehwa University in 2019.

During the program, promotional video regarding the World Expo in Busan, Korea was also presented. As Korea is planning to host the World Expo in 2030, the expo will present a new transformative way of living and going forward tackling all the challenges. Busan, which led the way in Korea's transformation, strives to open a new era or understanding, co-existence and prosperity for all. Now it is welcoming the world to participate in the expo regardless of people's physical whereabouts.

Capacity Improvement and Advancement for Tomorrow (CIAT) is one of the KOICA's development cooperation program, which has been implemented since 1995. This program aims in leading human resources development (HRD) through Short Term training and Master's Degree Scholarship Program for government officials and providing capacity building trainings focusing on sharing Korea's experience and technology for development.

Members of European Parliamentarian Meet Foreign Minister Dr. Khadka

Foreign Minister Dr. Narayan Khadka received a delegation of the Members of the European Parliament (MEP) led by Ms. Evelyn REGNER, Vice President of the European Parliament.

According to a press release issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other MEPs in the delegation were Ulrike MÜLLER, Tomáš ZDECHOVSKÝ and Maximilian KRAH.

Both sides reiterated the need to work together for promoting multilateralism and a rule-based world order.

C P N UML leader

Pradeep Gyawali said that he is pleased to meet with visiting delegation of European Parliament.

"Had a substantive discussion ranging climate change, trade, food security, democracy, gender inclusion and lifting the ban for Nepali Airlines. Extended thanks for continued support by EU on Nepal's development drive," tweets former foreign minister Gyawali.



US, Nepal Business Is Growing: ADCM Templer

Acting Deputy Chief of Mission (ADCM) of US Embassy Mark Templer said that the business ties between US and Nepal is growing.



According to twitter page of U.S. Embassy Nepal, ADCM Templer joined the Cedar Gate Kathmandu opening event & highlighted increased Nepal-US business ties.

“We are excited to see the growing business ties

between the US & Nepal. We want to see more US companies doing business with Nepal,” said Templer.

Japan Hands Over Multi-Hazard Resilient School Building In Hetauda

The newly reconstructed building of Jyoti Secondary School was handed over to the school management committee. The school situated in Harnamadi, Hetauda-18, Makwanpur, was damaged during the 2015 Gorkha earthquake. Since then the school faced difficulties in managing classrooms and education for the students.

The school infrastructure were jointly inaugurated by Rajesh Baniya, Deputy Mayor, Hetauda Sub-metropolitan City and OKUBO Akimitsu, Chief Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Nepal amidst a function held in the school premises. Dilli Ram Luitel Project Director of Central Level Project Implementation Unit (CLPIU) was also present during the ceremony.

The secondary school established back in 1967 AD (2024 BS) is now operating from Early Childhood Development (ECD) to grade 12 and has nearly 1,186 students. The reconstruction of the school structures started in January 2021 under the Emergency Reconstruction Project (ESRP) supported by JICA. The Project is being implemented by CLPIU - Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST).

The new buildings are reconstructed with multi-hazard resilient structures which are environment, child, gender and disabled friendly to provide improved learning environment for the students based on the concept of Build Back Better (BBB) which increases resilience not only physically but also socially. The reconstructed buildings are designed to be a “complete school” which provides all the necessary facilities for the education of the students. In the new school blocks, there are classrooms with furniture, electrification, solar backup, playground, footpath pavement, and repair along with maintenance of existing buildings, which are also part of the scope of work.

Speaking at the ceremony, Rajesh Baniya, Deputy Mayor of Hetauda Sub-metropolitan City highlighted on the in-

strumental role of Government of Japan and JICA Nepal for the reconstruction and completion of the school buildings. He further assured to provide full support from the municipality for any other development endeavors for the school as well as the region.

Similarly KIKUTA Yutaka, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal’s speech was delivered through a video where he thanked all the students for patiently waiting for seven years since the earthquake in 2015 for the completion of the new buildings. He further stated that this year Nepal is celebrating the 120th anniversary since the first Nepali students were dispatched to Japan and Japan marks this anniversary as one of “Japan-South Asia Exchange Year”. It was in the year 1902 when for the first time eight pioneer Nepali students went to Japan for higher studies and came back to Nepal contributing immensely towards the nation’s development through their work in various sectors. Likewise, he hopes to see all the students studying in this school to play a leading role in improving people to people relationship between Nepal and Japan as well as contributing to the development of Nepal.



Nepal, India Joint Commission Meeting On Water Resources Concludes

Nepal and India have concluded the 9th meeting of the Secretary-level Joint Commission on Water Resources (JCWR) in Kathmandu. However, no major breakthrough occurred on Pancheswor Project.

According to the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation (MoEWRI), the three-day JCWR meeting discussed the issues related to the long-awaited Pancheswar Multipurpose Project and other water related bilateral issues.

The first two days of the meeting of the Joint-secretary level Joint Steering Committee (JSC) discussed the various aspects of the Pancheswar Multipurpose Project. The meeting on the third endorsed the agendas approved by the JSC meetings.

According to Madhu Prasad Bhetuwal, Spokesperson at the MoEWRI, the bilateral talks looked for ways forward for the construction of the proposed project, high



BUSINESS BRIEF

Italian Ambassador To Nepal Presents Rome For Expo-2030

Italian ambassador to Nepal Vincenzo De Luca said that Italy and Nepal have many commonalities in culture and heritage. Addressing a press meet in Kathmandu, he said that Italy and Nepal are leading countries in terms of culture and heritage presentation.

In his interaction with media, ambassador presented the candidature of Rome for Expo 2030 Roma. The presentation of the candidature of Rome for Expo-2030 was held and concluded at the Sankalan Ballroom, Aloft Hotel, Thamel.

The event was hosted by the Italian Ambassador to India and Nepal, Vincenzo De Luca and Mrs. Pratima Pandé, MBE, the Honorary Consul General of Italy to Nepal.

An interactive press meet was held followed by video and photographic exhibition on Rome curated by the famous photographer Giancarlo Cammerini.

Rome has always shown the way by inventing state-of-the-art solutions to fulfil the needs of its communities (it already had one million inhabitants at the time of Emperor Augustus!). One such feat is the futuristic network of aqueducts that earned Rome the title of “Regina Aquarum” (queen of the waters), or the network of consular roads that connected the Eternal city with all the provinces of the peninsula and the Empire (all roads lead to Rome).

Ambassador presented Rome’s vision for the Expo stems from this capacity to harness its past heritage and accurately assess its current needs with a view to creating a sustainable future.

The site chosen to host the World Expo 2030 is located in an area on the outskirts of Rome connected to some of the city’s historic sights and adjacent to one of Rome’s university campuses which will act as a go-between with the Italian capital’s extensive scientific community. The event masterplan, drawn up by Architect Carlo Ratti, aims to set new sustainability standards by eliminating CO2 emissions and reuse of construction and other materials while safeguarding the vital water, air and energy cycles. In short, the site, in addition to being self-sufficient, will also produce clean energy for the benefit of its neighboring territories.

Italy is acknowledged by Nepali people as a welcoming country that promotes cultural integration. Many Nepali citizens have learnt the Italian language and now live and work in Italy. Their families find that their rights and proud traditions are fully respected there. Rome and Kathmandu share thousands of years of history and incredible culture and traditions.

The friendship between Italy and Nepal is getting stronger year by year: as a matter of fact, during Expo Milano 2015, where Nepal put up a very well designed pavilion, Italy launched a fundraiser to help the city of Kathmandu, hit by the terrible earthquake. Along this path of

productive friendship, shared cultures and joint commitments - the Eternal City is ready to welcome the citizens, institutions, companies and all representatives of Nepal that will attend the Expo in 2030.

The Ambassador also inaugurated Exhibition “Rome: the Elegance of Humankind” by Giancarlo Cammerini.

Ambassador Vincenzo De Luca also met the Minister for Tourism and Culture, Jeevan Ram Shrestha, and discussed possible

projects in the field of heritage restoration and conservation.

Nepal Set To Experience Moderate Growth: World Bank

Nepal’s economy is expected to grow at a rate of 5.1 percent in FY2022/23 and 4.9 percent in FY2023/24, reflecting monetary policy normalization, the end of pandemic-era monetary support measures, and still relatively high commodity prices, according to the World Bank. A rebound in tourism is projected to support Nepal’s services sector and industrial growth is expected to be strong due to increased hydroelectricity production, its latest macroeconomic update said.

While public debt levels are expected to stabilize and pressure on foreign exchange reserves is projected to ease, Nepal continues to face structural challenges relating to a modernization of the tax system, the attraction of new sources of foreign exchange (especially FDI) and full implementation of fiscal federalism that needs to be addressed to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth.

The latest South Asia Economic Focus, Coping with Shocks: Migration and the Road to Resilience, projects regional growth to average 5.8 percent this year - a downward revision of 1 percentage point from the forecast made in June. This follows growth of 7.8 percent in 2021, when most countries were rebounding from the pandemic slump.

While economic distress is weighing down all South Asian countries, some are coping better than others. Exports and the services sector in India, the region’s largest economy, have recovered more strongly than the world average while its ample foreign reserves served as a buffer to external shocks. The return of tourism is helping to drive growth in the Maldives, and to a lesser extent in Nepal—both of which have dynamic services sectors. The combined effects of COVID-19 and the record-high commodity prices due to the war in Ukraine took a heavier toll on Sri Lanka, exacerbating its debt woes and depleting foreign reserves. Plunged into its worst-ever economic crisis, Sri Lanka’s real GDP is expected to fall by 9.2 percent this year and a further 4.2 percent in 2023. High commodity prices also worsened Pakistan’s external imbalances, bringing down its reserves. After devastating climate-change-fueled floods submerged one-third of the country this year, its outlook remains subject to significant uncertainty.

Inflation in South Asia, caused by elevated global food and energy prices and trade restrictions that worsened food insecurity in the region, is expected to rise to 9.2 percent this year before gradually subsiding. The resulting squeeze on real income is severe, particularly for the region’s poor who spend a large share of their income on food.

South Asia’s migrant workers, many of whom are employed in the informal sector, were disproportionately affected when restrictions to movement were imposed during COVID-19. However, the later phase of the pandemic has highlighted the crucial role migration can play in facilitating recovery. Survey data from the South Asia Economic Focus suggest that in late 2021 and early 2022, migration flows are associated with movement from areas hit hard by the pandemic to those that were not, thus helping equilibrate demand and supply of labor in the aftermath of the COVID-19 shock.



“Labor mobility across and within countries enables economic development by allowing people to move to locations where they are more productive. It also helps adjust to shocks such as climate events to which South Asia’s rural poor are particularly vulnerable,” said Hans Timmer, World Bank Chief Economist for South Asia. “Removing restrictions to labor mobility is vital to the region’s resilience and its long-term development.”

To this end, the report offers two recommendations. Firstly, cutting the costs migrants face should be high on the policy agenda. Secondly, policymakers can de-risk migration through several means including more flexible visa policies, mechanisms to support migrant workers during shocks, and social protection programs.

Another report, the Nepal Development Update contains a special focus on the Macroeconomic Impacts of Climate Change. Nepal is highly vulnerable to climate change and must adapt to global warming, even though it is a negligible contributor to global greenhouse gases. New World Bank analysis presented in the Update finds that negative impacts are expected to accelerate sharply in the second half of the century, with GDP contracting 24 percent relative to the baseline projections by 2100. A list of 32 actionable steps that Nepal can take now to reduce these impacts and reinforce its Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID) pathway is provided in the recently released Nepal Country Climate and Development Report.

Tanahun Hydropower Construction Continues During Festival

The construction of 140MW Tanahun hydropower project at Rishing Rural Municipality-1 of Tanahun district continued even during public holidays of the Dashain festival. Construction works would halt only on Dashami, the main day of the festival, said the project chief Raj Bhai Silpakar. “Construction works have been accelerated to complete the project in time,” he said.

At present, Chinese workers and some other Nepali workers are at work, while other Nepali workers are on leave for the festival, he said. Under the first package, construction of a diversion tunnel is underway. Song Da-Kalika JV has been contracted for the package.

Under the second package, the construction of a power plant is also over. Under the second package, Sino Hydropower Limited won the contract to construct a tunnel, power plant, and supply hydro-mechanical and electromechanical equipment, their installation and operation, he said. The company completed the digging of a tunnel to construct a power plant. The tunnel is 89 meters long, 22 meters wide and 51 meters high.

Construction of a tunnel to supply water is underway. Out of 1,450 meters long of the tunnel, digging of 350 meters has been over. Similarly, under the third package, the construction of 25 towers for a transmission line has been over.

Laying 48 foundations for the project is over. The USD



500.5 million project aims at its completion within the Nepali month of Asar 2083 BS. Of the total costs for the project, the Asian Development Bank will bear USD 150 million, the Japa-

nese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) USD 184 million, the European Investment Bank USD 85 million and the Nepal Electricity Authority under the Government of Nepal USD 86 million.

Nepal, China Border Normalized

After closure for almost two years, Nepal-China border is completely normalized now. Following opening of the border, Nepali goods stranded in China started to come for Dashain festival.

“China side attaches great importance and makes every effort to ensure the smooth flow of land ports between China and Nepal. The central government of China and the government of the Xizang Autonomous Region have overcome the difficulties caused by the pandemic and made all efforts for the transportation and customs clearance of stranded Nepali goods,” wrote Chinese Embassy in its Facebook page.

“With the joint efforts between China and Nepal, as of September 25, 120 cars and more than 3,000 tons of stranded Nepali import goods have all entered Nepal through the ports of Zhangmu and Kerung, providing a large amount of supplies for the Nepali people during the Dashain Festival. At present, the China-Nepal land port for goods export to Nepal is normal.”



PATA Celebrates 47th Anniversary

The Nepal chapter of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) celebrated its 47th anniversary recently.

Amidst an event titled PATA ID organized to celebrate the anniversary as well as the World Tourism Day, PATA Nepal Chapter launched a video to promote the fourth Himalayan Travel Mart set to be held in Nepal next year.

The chapter has been organizing the Mart every year since 2017 except for the past two years when they had to be suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As per a press release issued by PATA Nepal, the Travel Mart is designed to be an international travel and tourism trade show for tourism marketing and promotion expected to bring together industry professionals and delegates, travel bloggers, influencers and national and international media.

On the occasion, PATA also awarded Joti Lal Khanna with its Lifetime Achievement Award. Khanna was awarded posthumously to honor his contribution to the Association as well as to the tourism sector of Nepal, PATA Nepal said in the statement.



NATIONAL ELECTIONS Alliance Vs Alliance

With no possibility to win the elections by contesting alone, political parties are contesting the forthcoming elections by making alliances. Four parties of the ruling alliance led by Nepali Congress, with Maoist Center, NCP-Unified Socialist and United Front, are fighting with the alliance led by CPN-UML. Given many advantages, the ruling party alliance might perform well in the FPTP. However, the rise of RPP will make some difference for the NC and UML in terms of total voting for the Proportional Representatives.

By A CORRESPONDENT

With the publication of the final list and distribution of the election symbols, the country's election tempo is picking up. As per the election schedule released by the Election Commission, the candidates contesting in the First-Past-The-Post system for HoR and Provincial Assembly constituencies, the election landscape is now more or less clear.

The final list of candidates has been published and the

election symbols provided. The EC has already established 165 election offices with 77 chief returning officers and 88 returning officers for the election to be held on November 20.

For the HoR, a total of 2,291 men and 235 women candidates are vying for 165 seats.

Likewise, altogether 3,476 candidates are contesting for 330 seats under the first-past-the-post electoral system of the provincial assembly.

57 parties taking part

57 political parties have filed nominations under the first-past-the-post system of elections to the House of Representatives (HoR) and the Province Assembly (PA).

The voting for the twin elections is taking place on coming November 20 in a single phase. Earlier 86 political parties registered at the Election Commission for election purposes.

The EC said towards PA



elections, the number of political parties contending in the voting varies: they are 30 in Province 1, thirty-seven in the Madhes, 32 in Bagmati, 23 in Gandaki, 25 in Lumbini, 16 in Karnali and 20 in the Sudur Paschim.

EC Assistant Spokesperson Surya Prasad Aryal said that not all political parties registered in the EC will take part in the elections. In the 2074 BS elections, 55 parties had contested the elections.

A Nepali citizen completing 18 years of age on coming November 20 and having the name incorporated in the voter's list is eligible to exercise the franchise in the elections of HoR and PA.

According to the EC, 17 million 988 thousand 570 people: 9,140,806 males, 8,847,579 females and 185 others will be eligible for voting on November 20.

Chief Election Commissioner Dinesh Kumar Thapaliya said it would not be acceptable for election observers to be siding with or going against any parties or candidates in the November 20 elections.

He referred to some past election incidents wherein some

election observers sided with parties or candidates. He was inaugurating a training session for election observers for the election to the House of Representatives and the Province Assembly.

He urged them to help the Election Commission to conclude the elections by following the election code of conduct, 2079 as election observers are important part of the polls.

All political parties, civil society, mass communications and all sectors have an important role in making election a success

as it reawakens citizens' rights and strengthens democracy.

Similarly, joint secretary and EC's spokesperson Shaligram Paudel urged election observer organizations to train the observers mobilized for the polls to abide by the poll code of conduct. Election observers from 43 organizations have taken the session, according to RSS.

Integrated Security Plan

As security manpower may be insufficient for the upcoming elections to the House of Representatives and the Provincial Assemblies, the Nepali Army (NA) will be deployed to guard the important infrastructure, including prisons and airports.

It is mentioned in the Integrated Security Strategy passed by the Council of Ministers that the Armed Police Force (APF) which has been currently providing security to the prisons will be deployed in elections.

As arrangements have also been made since this year to





allow the inmates to cast votes, Nepal Police and temporary policemen will be deployed to conduct elections in prisons as well.

However, the teams of the Armed Police Force deployed for the security of diplomatic missions will remain intact.

It is informed that only a minimum number of APF personnel will be deployed for the security of religious places and project sites.

According to the security plan, two provincial reserve security forces will be kept in each of the seven provinces and the valley. Likewise, additional teams will be stand by, with 15 policemen and 200 temporary policemen, under the command of a senior police officer.

It is said that four central reserve teams will also be kept at the Police Headquarters, Naxal. In each team, there will be not more than 50 policemen under the command of a senior police

officer. It is also mentioned that two reserve teams will be deployed in all 77 districts under the command of senior and junior police officers. Joint Election Cells and Command Posts have been established at the centre, provinces and districts for the elections, according to Nepal Police spokesperson and DIG Tek Prasad Rai.

It is mentioned in the security plan that security will be provided to the candidates according to the decision of the District Security Committee. DIG Rai said that Nepal Police as always will be on the first layer

or ring of the elections security across the country, along with temporary police.

In the elections, 71,693 personnel of Nepal Police, 74,000 of Nepali Army and 35,000 of APF and 115,000 temporary policemen will be deployed. In total, 295,693 security forces will be mobilized to provide security during the elections, including the mass meetings and rallies of the political parties.

No Alcohol

“During the election period, it will be prohibited to carry lethal weapons such as guns, khukuries, chains, and sticks,” the security plan stated.

Although the security plan has mentioned restriction of vehicular movements on the Election Day, the Election Commission has already decided to allow the operation of all types of vehicles during the election in an organized way.

“Vehicular movements will be prohibited from 6am until the voting is over, except for the vehicles that have obtained permission on the day of the election,” read the security plan.

It has also been said that people with hooligan tendencies



COVERSTORY

and those who can take over polling stations will be identified and taken under control as per necessity.

The security plan has also given authority to arrest unwanted elements indulging in misbehaving and manhandling the polling station staffers. In the case of the border area, coordination with the security authorities of the neighboring countries from their respective locations will be sought to prevent any unwanted activities from across the border.

Necessary arrangements have also been made to prevent misuse of explosives stored in various places for use in development projects. It is also said that drones will collect and monitor information as needed.

APF in second layer of security

According to the security plan, the APF men will be deployed in the second circle in coordination with other security agencies. For this purpose, the Armed Police has set up a central election cell at the Headquarters, Halchowk, a Provincial Election Cell in each Brigade and an election cell in each Battalion and Company under operational responsibility.

For election security, armed police will be mobilized in mobile, striking, QRT/reserve, polling area security, command post, district election office, office of the chief election officer, among others, according to Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Purushottam Thapa of APF.

“APF will mainly provide security of the District Election Offices, security of the Dis-

trict Election Officers, security of the winning candidates, transport of the ballot boxes and its security,” he said.

It is mentioned in the action plan that the National Investigation Department will be involved in the collection and analysis of information related to election security.

For this purpose, it is said that open and undercover employees, on permanent and temporary formula, will be mobilized from the provincial and district agencies within the centre for the information.



Army to Patrol

Integrated Security Planning has assigned the responsibility of the security of the printing of ballot papers to the army. Regular army patrolling on the streets will be conducted 30 days before the election to maintain peace and security.

Helicopters will also be used for rescue operations during emergencies based on manpower, rescue materials and availability.

Army will be on the outer or third ring of the security plan.

It is said that the army will also be mobilized to neutralize suspicious objects and explosives that may be seen during the election.

Troops will be stationed at a maximum distance of 30 minutes from each polling station on the day of voting. It is said that the army will be deployed on the basis of security sensitivity, while

it is said that the army will be deployed for the external security of every polling station.

With the publication of final list, political parties are now in real fray to woo the voters. However, there is little enthusiasm among the voters on the forthcoming elections as political parties do not have real agenda.

Health Birthright



BY: HEMANG DIXIT

Health is a birthright of the Nepali people. The government has grand designs for building major and minor hospitals all over the country and encouraging the training of human resources for health (HRH). But is there something amiss? The buildings have not been built; much of the equipment is in storage, some still unpacked and others non-functional - broken down! The much hyped insurance scheme is not working because of various setbacks! One suspects that all this intentional to benefit someone in the shadows.

Following the end of World War II many Jewish citizens of the then USSR wanted to immigrate to Israel. The authorities of USSR demanded payments for the education and training of these citizens wanting to go and leave their then Motherland as new citizens. Years later, when a large number of Indians left India for foreign shores then PM Indira Gandhi was upset. Seeing such numbers of intellectual work force leaving India for foreign shores, and as the home country had spent much on their training she felt it was very unjust. She suggested that the benefitting countries should compensate developing countries such as India for the manpower going there. I am not aware if this was done.

I remember a WHO nursing section head at Geneva remarking to me that the Philippino nurses were welcome in the US because of their command of the English language. There was at that time a current saying, 'The cheapest medical school of the USA is in the Philippines!' In this context I also remember a Saudi Arabian doctor remarking to me about forty years ago that it was far more economical for Saudi Arabia to hire doctors and other technicians from foreign lands than to train them within the country. This policy however was changed later as this individual became the first Dean of the medical school set up in the country!

The Institute of Medicine (IoM) has just celebrated the 50th Anniversary of its establishment. When the MBBS course was started there, many of its detractors stated that the products of this institution's Community Oriented Course would be substandard and graduates would not be welcome elsewhere. During the course of fifty years IoM has gone from strength to strength and currently runs 57 courses in various disciplines. Large numbers of doctors, dental surgeons, pharmacists, nurses and other technical personnel produced by IoM and its affiliated campuses are scattered across the country and serving the nation. The students who study on government scholarships or grants have to serve the country for specific periods of time before they can depart for good from Nepal, to work in foreign lands. Nepali nurses too have been going to different lands to serve. Understandably, those who have studied at their own expenses, prepare at the earliest for USMLE, PLAB and various other tests to go abroad. Such individuals consider that it is their right as they have financed themselves from primary school to university level with their own resources.

Initially, Britain gave Nepal funds for building the Tri-Chandra Hospital in appreciation for services rendered by the

military. Whether money is paid for recruitment of Gurkhas, I do not know. However Gurkha soldiers are still asking for similar service terms for Nepali citizens serving in the British Army. The recruitment of Gurkhas has had some changes over the years but still more needs to be done. Those serving in the British or Indian Army get a pension at the end of their services plus also health facilities for themselves and their families.

The British Government has recently signed an agreement to enable Nepali nurses to go and work in the U.K. Other categories of HRH may also be able to do so in later years. Taking it however on a broader perspective one can state that the developed countries, to which our doctors, dental surgeons, nurses and technicians head to, should pay to Nepal a certain designated sum for each individual going to these foreign shores. If this is not done the vast amount of aid given to Nepal, now on the verge of becoming a 'Developing country', has no meaning.

We in Nepal, once termed a 'Least Developed Country' have been helped by foreign support. But giving by one hand and taking away by another our trained manpower is not correct and so some method of compensation should be worked out to correct this anomaly. Taking away trained technical workforce, albeit at financial benefit to them though a likely outcome also demands that some form of compensation be done by the country benefitting. Justice demands that such medical hypocrisy be corrected!

America has aided Nepal by giving refugee status to about a lakh of Bhutanese citizens of Nepali origin who were languishing for almost ten years and allowing them to start a new life in the US. After the earthquake of 2015 a number went on temporary visas and gained some support. Finally there are also a number of Nepalis who have struck lucky in the DVA program and have gone there. To really help Nepal, I suggest therefore that for every doctor, dental surgeon, nurse or other technical persons who take up American or other country citizenship, the concerned country should pay a certain levy to us in Nepal. After all, these countries are going to benefit from the services of people who were formerly Nepalis. This certainly is a more rational form of compensation to a developing country such as Nepal for our citizens who they have been attracted to their land!

As stated in our Parliament, it is nice to know that the Education Ministry is seriously considering the application of the proposed Khopna Medical College with proposed ceiling of 15 lakhs for its medical course. We could be producing human resources for health (HRH), not only for ourselves but for the world. However the world should also compensate us for our expenditure on producing HRH so that we can continue to serve humanity as a whole.

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

Export Boom

Nepal Exports Electricity worth Rs. 8 Billion to India in Four Months

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although India is yet to import all the surplus electricity Nepal had during the last four months, Nepal Electricity Authority has exported over one billion units of electricity worth of Rs.8 billion equivalent Nepalese Rupees.

According to a press release, NEA has exported over one billion units of electricity worth around Rs. 8 billion to India in the last four months. NEA has been exporting surplus electricity to India since last June under Indian Energy Exchange Limited (IEX). By October 11, Nepal exported 1.3 billion units of electricity to India.

According to NEA, it has generated Rs. 7.93 billion from selling electricity to India. Managing director of NEA Kul Man Ghising said that exporting over 1 billion units of electricity to India is another milestone. He said that Nepal has been exporting electricity on an average Rs.7.91 per unit. Nepal has been exporting 364 MW of electricity to India.

As Nepal is exporting electricity in Indian currency, it is helping to increase Nepal's foreign currency reserve as NEA has already collected Indian currency worth Rs. 4.95 billion.

MD Ghising's Wish

From the day one of joining NEA as MD, Ghising's concern was how to create export market for surplus electricity. With the efforts of Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation and NEA's technical preparation, Indian government has agreed to open its electricity market for Nepal.

The political level meeting held between Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and Prime Minister of India has finalized the deal making it possible to export Nepal's electricity to India.

Following opening of Indian market for Nepal's electricity, Nepal has already exported electricity worth over Rs.7 billion in the last four months. For MD Ghising, this is a milestone in his career to open Indian market for export of electricity.

In a span of just over a year, MD Ghising has already made a major break-

through in the electricity sector. The announcement of construction of 1061MW Upper Arun is a historically important decision. With this announcement, NEA moved to four-digit projects. Starting from two-digit Chilime and completion of three-digit Tamakoshi, Upper Arun placed itself as the main project.

According to Nepal Electricity Authority, in the second month of the current fiscal year 2022/23, electricity worth Rs. 2.42 billion has been exported to India.

N e p a l Electricity Authority (NEA) exported 246.5 million units of surplus electricity in the Nepali month of Bhadra and earned Rs. 2.42 billion.

T h e Authority started selling the surplus electricity during the rainy season through competition in the day-ahead market of the Indian Energy Exchange Limited (IEX) from June 2, 2022.

In the beginning, 39 megawatts of electricity produced by two power plants was considered as a source and was sold to IEX on a daily basis. Since then, from June 10, 2022, 364 megawatts of electricity produced by six hydropower plants has been sold daily in the Indian market at a competitive rate.

The Authority has earned Rs. 7.19 billion by selling 787.8 million units of electricity in the Indian market in four months (Jestha, Asar, Shrawa and Bhadra).

Since the electricity trade with India is done in Indian rupees, during the period of four months, around IRs 4. 49 billion has entered into Nepal from the sale of electricity. In the month of Bhadra alone, IRs 1.51 billion has been earned from the sale of electricity.

MD Ghising said that the amount received from the increase in electricity export every month is contributing to the foreign exchange reserves of Nepal and reducing the trade deficit between the two countries.

He said, "In the current fiscal year, we have set a target of earning about Rs. 16 billion from the export of electricity.



We estimate that electricity can be exported until the first week of Mangsir and when the export starts again after Jestha, the target will be met," he said.

"Now that the festivals are about to start, the domestic consumption of electricity will decrease a bit when the factories are closed, but since our production will be at full capacity, we have sent a proposal for approval for the export of about 200 megawatts of electricity. We are confident that the Indian side will give approval for the export of more electricity soon."

In IEX, 24 hours are divided into 96 blocks of 15 minutes each and electricity is traded at a competitive rate set by the market.

Therefore, the price of each block is different. The average rate of electricity exported by the Authority in Bhadra is Rs. 9.80 per unit. The average rate for four months is Rs. 9.23 per unit.

Rhetoric And Reality

In the recent times, Nepal has chosen realistic approaches to multilateral issues, keeping Nepal's core national interests in mind. However, Nepal's foreign policy mandarins are yet to reform the multilateral policy towards Israel with whom Nepal has had cordial and warm relations at the bilateral level

By KESHAB POUDEL

With the beginning of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and addresses by heads of the delegations, the session will not enter debates and votes on resolutions on multilateral issues.

Backing India's bid for a permanent membership of the security council, voting in favor of China in Geneva and standing with Ukraine, criticizing Russia for its invasion, Nepal has shown a realistic approach to external affairs.

Foreign affairs experts are watching keenly on how Nepal will follow the voting in the UN this year on Israel with whom Nepal has maintained the best, cordial and warm, bilateral relations in the last sixty-three years.

Given Nepal's position on the UN voting on Israel last several years, there is not much hope to see any drastic change in Nepal's existing stand on multilateral areas.

All Nepali politicians, irrespective of their parties and ideologies, and bureaucrats, and intelligentsia feel proud to be the first country in South Asia to have established diplomatic relations with the state of Israel supporting the independence and sovereignty of a small nation. However, Nepal's multilateral policy remains contradictory and ambiguous in terms of her bilateral relations.

"We express our unwavering commitment to working together to further strengthen and consolidate these ties between our two countries," said Gyanendra Bahadur Karki, Minister for Communication and Information Technology.

Spokesperson of the cabi-

net, minister Karki said that Nepal is inspired and wants to benefit from the cutting-edge technology of Israel. He said that Nepal does not have any hesitation to side with Israel on its multilateral issues.

Similarly, Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, former foreign minister and powerful leader of CPN UML, agreed that Nepal should tune its multilateral relations with Israel as per the bilateral level. He said that Nepal will always support Israel's freedom and sover-

establishment of diplomatic relations between the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Bahrain with Israel and Saudi's decision to open its air space to Israel. Likewise, a delegation from Pakistan also visited Israel recently. However, Nepal has been backing the same resolutions as it did in the 1970s.

Absenting from many resolutions with no big political impacts, India and Bhutan have been showing a change in their stand on Israel and the Middle East. After the establishment



eignty. He said that Nepal will positively consider sensitive matters of Israel and will be further supportive, positive and collaborative on those matters of concern that Israel is expecting to get support from Nepal.

Despite maintaining excellent bilateral relations with Israel, Nepal's stand on Israel in UN voting has been disappointing. Nepal has been voting against Israel on the resolutions tabled in the international forum even after the drastic shift in the Middle East geo-political landscape since the

of diplomatic relations, Gulf countries have been shifting their stand against UN voting as well.

Having established diplomatic relations on 01 June 1960 and opening of Embassy of Israel in Kathmandu in March 1961, the two countries are giving the bilateral relations significant importance. However, Nepal has been following Iran and Afghanistan, the two most hostile nations of the state of Israel, in UN voting.

Foreign Ministry Under NC
Led by well-known scholar

on foreign affairs and leader of Nepali Congress Dr. Narayan Khadka and well-read and experienced foreign secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal and his team, Nepal's Foreign Ministry, which has recently shown some realistic stand on international issues including neighbors and voting against Russian invasion of Ukraine, is indicating some shift.

A policy statement delivered by foreign secretary Paudyal at UNGA as head of the Nepali delegation has indicated a shift in Nepal's stand on the Middle East and Nepal's neighborhood. But, the outcome of the voting will show Nepal's stand on Israel and the Middle East.

Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai, a former career Nepali ambassador to the UN and Foreign Policy advisor to former prime minister Sushil Koirala (2015-2018), said that Nepal also needs to tune its policy-changing the voting pattern in the UN on Israel and the Middle East.

He said that there are several diplomatic ways to show Nepal's position not harming its core interests, delivering the statement by absents during voting in resolutions. "In many resolutions, Nepal can be absent in voting, issuing its statement on resolutions. Why should we be shy to take such a diplomatic stand?" asked Dr. Bhattarai.

"Establishing diplomatic relations with Israel over two decades ago, India is taking all benefits, with a certain shift. Having been in cordial relations for almost 63 years, Nepal is unable to get maximum benefits by showing goodwill at the multilateral

level," said Dr. Bhattarai.

Nepal's Voting Card

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Israel 63 years ago, the two countries have maintained their bilateral relations to be cordial and warm all the



Establishment of NWFZ in the Middle East, Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory over natural resources, Oil slick on Lebanese shores, The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, Assistance to Palestine refugees, Persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities, Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues.

Similarly, the resolutions tabled in the UNGA included Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of Palestinian People of the Occupied Territories, Israeli settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Occupied Syrian Golan, Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, The occupied Syrian Golan, Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hamas condemning resolution (American), Entrepreneurship for development (every two years) and Agricultural technology for development (every two years).

According to UN voting card, the issues that are annually tabled in UN General Assembly start from September till November. Countries and groups have tabled agenda in UNGA since 2012 including Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, Special information program on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, Jerusalem, The Syrian Golan, Assistance to the Palestinian people, The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East,

Nepal Choose Yes
Despite having three options for member countries, Yes, Against and Absent, Nepal had Yes voting in 23 resolutions out of 24 in the UNGA between 2012 to 2015.

Nepal has been absent in the only resolution: The situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of

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Iran. Since 2018, Nepal has also started to vote Yes in the resolution of the Establishment of NWFZ in the Middle East. Nepal is also absent in Hamas condemning resolution in 2018 tabled by America.

Nepal was the first country in South Asia to recognize Israel as a State. Two men with extraordinary visions and respect for their countries and their peoples, the late BP Koirala and the late David Ben-Gurion, both the then Prime Ministers of their respective countries, were able to see this friendship standing strong to this present time.

Taking a courageous and pragmatic decision by the leaders of the 1960's, NC leader Koirala showed solidarity with a small country for its right to live. However, Nepal's multilateral policy towards Israel has not matched the spirit of leader Koirala.

Showing a strong bond and warmth towards Nepal, Israeli President late Zalman Shazar even translated the late King Mahendra's poem into the Hebrew language. "This kind of intimate personal relations between the leaders of any two heads of the state is rare when a president translated the poem of another head of the state in his own language," said former foreign minister Ramesh Nath Pandey. "Nepal needs to tune its multilateral stand with Israel as per its intimate bilateral relations."

New Look

By voting against the Russian war against Ukraine, Nepal has shown indications of certain shifts in its foreign policy. Although Nepal's two neighbors were absent in the voting, Nepal sided with Ukraine.

Despite slightly toning down

after voting, Nepal continues to express its stand against the Russian war against Ukraine. "We are deeply concerned about the deaths and suffering of civilians in the war in Ukraine. We call for an urgent cessation of hostilities and violence and urge all concerned parties to exercise maximum restraint and return to the path of dialogue," said foreign secretary Paudyal in his statement at UNGA.

He said that Nepal opposes any threat or use of force against the territorial integrity, political independence, and sovereignty of a country under any pretext and circumstance.

Foreign secretary Paudyal said that Nepal condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and calls for an early conclusion of a comprehensive convention against terrorism.



However, Nepal maintained silence when Hamas terrorist groups attacked Israeli civilians and killed them. Nepal responds immediately in case Israel retaliates.

Even maintaining cordial relations, Nepal's stand on Israel at the multilateral forums creates more irritation regarding the relations with Israel.

In a recent program, Hanan Goder, Ambassador of Israel, said,

"Relations between the two countries have two dimensions: the bilateral one and the multilateral one. I gladly note that on bilateral issues, the relations are excellent."

He is indicating the need for Nepal's support in multilateral issues as well. He said that the support of small countries is highly valuable because they don't have big interests. He said that Israel, thus, values Nepal's support.

Nepal Benefits From Israel's Development

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the two countries have been enjoying deep friendship, which is being demonstrated by many high-level visits and undertaking of numerous mutually beneficial cooperation.

From the modernization of the Nepal Army to providing valuable support during the earthquake, and the modernization of Nepal's agriculture sector and construction industry, Israel, though invisible, has been supporting Nepal in key areas of Nepal's development.

Apart from government-level visits, both countries have seen business groups traveling for potential economic collaborations. Nepal is one

of the most loved travel destinations for young Israelis and around 10,000 travel enthusiasts come to Nepal every year to enjoy the beauty of Nepal.

Known as a start-up nation, Israel is one of the pioneers in the development of technology. It shares its expertise learned in the course of its development with friendly nations in many fields through MASHAV (Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation).

In the program, Yair Lapid, Alternate Prime Minister and Minister

Given the global geo-political shift, Nepal also needs to follow the reality-based flexible policy on Is-

Having cordial and warm relations sharing so many common interests, Nepal's support to Israel at the multilateral forum and UN voting will make the situation much more favorable to Nepal. This will also show Nepal follows the same principle, not different than reality.

A Lesson of the UN Human Rights Council

In the first voting this year at UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Nepal has voted against holding a debate on alleged widespread abuses in China's Xinjiang region.

The 74-member council in Geneva voted 19-17 against holding a debate on human rights in Xinjiang, with 11 nations abstaining. Along with Nepal, Bolivia, Cameroon, China, Cuba, Eritrea, Gabon, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Kazakh-

stan, Mauritania, Namibia, Pakistan, Qatar, Senegal, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Venezuela voted against.

Argentina, Armenia, Benin, Brazil, Gambia, India, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico and Ukraine abstained. The draft decision was put forward by the United States, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Turkey, among others.

The voting pattern showed the countries' priorities on their national interests. Ukraine, which has been receiving wider western support to fight Russia, decided to be absent along with India. Similarly, Muslim countries like Indonesia, Pakistan, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates stood with China and Nepal as a neighbor too voted on the Chinese side. This indicates the country sees its national interests rather than the groups first.



rael at multilateral voting.

“The time has come for Nepal to reform its policy looking at the current tectonic shift in the regional and global balance of power,” writes Dev Raj Dahal, Former Reader at the Department of Political Science, TU.

At a time when Nepal is gradually shifting its old policies at multilateral level, one can expect that Nepal will follow its close and cordial bilateral relations at the multilateral level while voting on Israel and the Middle East issues at this time. If Nepal cannot say No, it can simply be absent with a statement respecting cordial relations with Israel.

Voting in favor of China in the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Backing India's bid for permanent membership and calling for security council reform and opposing the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Nepal has indicated it values its core national in-

Search For Visible Role

At a time when some constitutional commissions are struggling to demonstrate their visible presence by exercising their enormous constitutional powers, Chief Elections Commissioner Dinesh Kumar Thapaliya has revealed how studies conducted by Niti Foundation helped them to make the commission's function effective and strong

By KESHAB POUDEL

Despite enormous constitutional power provided by the Constitution of Nepal to defend democratic rights and inclusion of minorities, and marginalized communities, some Constitutional Commissions are unable to show effective presence in their own constituencies.

CEC Thapaliya

However, Chief Election Commissioner Thapaliya said that two studies conducted by Niti Foundations, a Nepali non-profit organization engaged in strengthening Nepal's policy process through collaborative research, innovative policy adoption, and enhanced policy choice, focusing on various aspects of The Elections Commission have supported immensely to bring a big change in its role in the last local elections. He said that more policy implementation at hand for the



forthcoming Federal Parliamentary and Provincial Legislature elections.

Addressing an interaction Program recently on The Role of Constitutional Commissions in Constitutionalism and Democracy, chief election commissioner Thapaliya said that the two studies were the first of their kind showing us several policy-related issues of election management.

Addressing the workshop organized by the Niti Foundation, he mentioned

that a study entitled Placing the strengthening of democracy at the heart of the Election Commission's agenda helped them a lot to modify the key components of the elections like the implementation of Code of Conduct, voter list collections and management of boots and candidate expenditure. All of these elements are vital to ensure free and fair elections.

"The study conducted by Niti Foundation focusing on the Commission's capacity, capability and functions related to the elections management helped us to bring some major changes in the election process. In the last local elections, we changed some of the modalities and procedures



as per the recommendations. With realization of constitutional and legal rights, we strongly enforced the Code of Conduct to make the elections process free and fair,” said Chief Elections Commissioner Thapaliya. “We can share such practices with other commissions as well.”

“The studies and research conducted by the Foundation guided us to strengthening our capacity and exercise our constitutional rights and interpret the laws. On the basis of the research studies, we have taken some reform measures in the last local elections and it will continue in coming elections,” said Chief Elections Commissioner Thapaliya. “Foundation’s study helped the elections commission to function as the independent and autonomous constitutional body not a shadow of the government. “Still the commission does not have the right to announce the election date, let’s have more such study and research, the commission is ready to work with Niti.”

“I would like to request Foundation to make further study



so that other unclear issues can be addressed. My perception is that not only the role of individual constitutional bodies but also to take intense study on the role, responsibilities and inter commissions relations. It will further highlight and bring more clarity to our roles, responsibilities and accountability issues. Although the report has widely dealt with this, I would like to suggest that Niti make the second round of study and research more intensively on the relations and role of the commissions. After the elec-

tions in November, we will have more free time to closely work to bring reform in the elections and elections management process,” said Chief Elections Commissioner Thapaliya. Thapaliya said that the current trends of regular informal meetings among all constitutional commissions will bring some positive results.

The Constitution of Nepal has created 13 Independent Constitutional Bodies including seven traditional Elections Commission, Commission of Investigation of Abuse of Authority, Public Service Commission, Auditor General, National Human Rights Commission and National Natural Resources and Fiscal Commission Constitutional bodies included in Part 27 of the 2015 Constitution of Nepal, known as ‘Other’ Commissions National Women Commission, National Dalit Commission, National Inclusion Commission, Indigenous Nationalities Commission, Tharu Commission, Madheshi Commission and Muslim Commission

As Elections Commis-





sion and other regular commissions, Nepal's 'Other' Commissions are critical actors in the constitutional framework to ensure the rights of specific minority and historically marginalized groups in the country.

It is essential to explore their new constitutional role in federal Nepal to see how they can affect societal and legislative reform for these groups. This note was commissioned with this purpose.

Mohan Das Manandhar

The recently concluded study on other commissions overviews the history behind the formation of the 'Other' Commissions; the mandate of these commissions; their performance; and the challenges they face for effective delivery of their mandates. This note also provides strategic recommendations for future engagement by the 'Other Commissions' to ensure effective fulfillment of their mandates going forward.

"We hope that this note is a useful baseline for further consideration of the role of the 'Other' Commissions to ensure

ies, each with specific mandates. These bodies are designed to be independent of the other branches of government and together are meant to serve as a check on the executive and make it accountable towards fulfilling the promises made to the Nepali people in the Constitution," said Manandhar.

"As they do not neatly fit into the traditional tripartite division of the executive, legislature and judicial branches of government, these kinds of independent bodies are sometimes referred to as 'fourth branch' institutions. They are thus envisaged to play important roles to ensure the development and sustenance of the rule of law, an egalitarian society, social justice, social and

justice, equity, and inclusion in federal Nepal," said Mohan Das Manandhar, Executive Director of Niti Foundation.

"The Constitution of Nepal 2015 provisions for 13 independent constitutional bod-

cultural solidarity, federalism, multiparty democratic governance, civil liberties, fundamental rights, human rights, adult franchise, and periodic elections."

Conducted by Niti Foundation and prepared by constitutional lawyer Dr. Bipin Adhikari, the recently presented study disclosed that constitutional commissions despite their constitutional roles and responsibility. Dr. Adhikari in his presentation highlights the areas of his study and presented views on where there need interventions.

"For the last 12 years, Niti Foundation has been conducting research and studies on various aspects of policies and trying to show what kinds of policy there require. We have made several diagnostic studies. We visited provincial governments and local governments to observe the role of constitutional commissions," said Manandhar. "However, our study has shown that Constitutional Commissions are yet to show their presence at the local level and provincial level."

In his statement, Chief Elections Commissioner Thapali-



ya has made it clear that the local governments should take responsibility for voter list updates, collections and voter education.

“I have already urged local level governments to take the responsibilities working in close collaboration with our district election offices,” said Thapaliya.

In this context Executive Director Manandhar has made it clear that there need to make the policies public. The idea of the public is very weak in Nepali. The word is used for the long time or period of Rana. However, they rarely reach the public.

“Although the policies are implemented to address the concern and problems of the people, they have never been part of public or citizens,” said Manandhar. Nepal’s key problems at the policy level are a misinterpretation of spirit of word public, representation and implementation,” said Manandhar. “In the context of constitutional bodies

“Constitutionalism and democracy are the important elements safeguarding and protecting the sovereign rights

of people. The key problem in the policy-making is public, representation, implementation and

accountability,” said Manandhar.



Without periodical elections, a constitution cannot function. However, it alone cannot make the political system inclusive. To make the process inclusive, proportional representation is one of the key elements. Proportional representation gives space to the voiceless others.

However, the first-the-past post system and proportional elections alone cannot address

voiceless, they need a separate forum.

“The constitution has created the constitutional commission as a forum to address the issues of this group. Whether the issue of Dalit, Women, Marginalized or Indigenous group, Muslim, Tharu or Madheshi, they don’t need to go to elections. This constitutional commission has

the right to address their concerns and problems. These commissions are created to address the problems and grievances. These commissions can issue recommendations to the state as per the constitutional provisions,” said Manandhar.

“Our study has made efforts to find out whether these commissions have been working closely with their constituencies

and addressing the issue. Whether these commissions reached the province or local level. There are three tiers of governments and each government has been facing the issue of human rights and inclusion. To address the issue of representations



the grievances of marginalized and identity-based groups who are weak, poor and backward and

horizontally, this commission can play a role. Although there are several policies, programs and

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laws, they have to face implementation barriers.

“Implementation barriers are two: 1. Formal Institutions such as laws, acts, regulations, guidelines and mechanisms of delivery- hospitals, schools, agro office CDO for using resources such as budgets, people technology, etc. 2. Informal Institutions: Social norms, values and ideas that shape decision-makers behavior to use or not to fully use formal Institutions For example, even though untouchability is a crime by law, it is still practiced in society in villages, due to adherence to social norms and the idea of purity.”

“Our study also looks at the implementation parts. The study finds two sides to failing to implement policies. First is a formal institution that is related to the norms and values. All the mechanisms created to implement the policies are formal institutions,” said Manandhar.

Other commissions’

chairpersons also agreed on the current lapses in the execution and implementation of the agenda of Nepal’s constitution have constituted constitutional bodies. “The constitutional bodies can play an important role to implement constitutionalism and democratic values and belief to make state’s bodies accountable and inclusive,” said Dr. Vijaya Kumar Dutta, Chief Commissioner of the Madheshi Commission. “To make our function effective and show the visible presence, all commissions have been working now in close collaboration and coordination. We have been holding monthly meetings regularly and formed an informal mechanism among ourselves,” said Dr. Dutta.

At a time when there is confusion on the role of the commissioners at three tiers of gov-



ernments, it is expected that the study and research will help to understand the functions and actions of these constitutional bodies and how they support and play role in strengthening constitutionalism and democratization jointly.

“Constitutional bodies are not only strengthening constitution and democracy but also helping to increase access of the citizens. In total, this commission can give direction to the implementation of the constitution,” said Manandhar.

A number of measures have been written into the Constitution to ensure that these bodies are independent of the executive. For most important part is that their commissioners are appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Constitutional Council with a hearing from parliament.

Similarly, the commissioners are appointed for fixed terms and the eligibility criteria for their appointment are stipulated in the Constitution. The commissioners’ remuneration and conditions of services cannot be altered to their disadvantage, and the mandates of most



of the constitutional bodies are constitutionally stipulated so that they cannot be circumscribed through the ordinary political and legislative process.

Out of 13, eight of these thirteen constitutional bodies were created for the first time in the 2015 Constitution while others had been carried over from Nepal's previous constitutions.

"We are equal to all other commissions. There are no old or new commissions. Our appointment and removal process is the same. However, the right-based and inclusion base commissions have been receiving small budgets and get neglected by the federal government," said Bishnu Prasad Chaudhari. "I have to accept the fact that this year we had got the opportunity to present before the federal parliamentary committee to discuss our agenda and suggestions presented in our report. "We have also started to visit the provinces and Tharu-dominated local government units to discuss our report."

The Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), the Auditor General,



the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN), were included in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990 and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) which received constitutional status in 2007 Interim Constitution, have functional institution. However, the National Natural Resource and Fiscal Commission (NNRFC), and the 'Other' commissions, located in Part 27, consist of the National Women Commission (NWC), the National Dalit Commission,

Madhesi Commission, Muslim Commission, Tharu Commission and National Inclusion Commission are in the process of institution building.

Among them, NNRFC is more effective at its institutional level and functional levels. "The sources of all our authority and power derived from the constitution. Thus, all the commissions are equal. Of course, the pace is slow, but we are heading in the right direction to achieve the objective envisaged by the Constitution of Nepal," said Balananda Paudel, chief commissioner of NNRFC. He said that there needs to have close collaboration among the commissions and a regular exchange of experiences.

Sharing his own experience, Paudel said that the recent few studies conducted through Niti Foundation helped to narrow down the gap between the concerned federal parliamentary committee and the commission.

"Established to sort out the conflict of power and authority in each area, the functions and



role of the commission need to be further extended,” said Paudel. Paudel regretted having a consensus among the political parties on the proposed draft act of the commission complaining to the government for not taking the commissions seriously.

Imminent constitutional lawyer and researcher Dr. Bipin Adhikari said that all the commissions have the same constitutional status irrespective of their functions. “Instead of blaming laws and constitution, the commissioners of the commission have to go and work defending their rights,” said Dr. Adhikari.

He said that it is mandatory for the government to implement the recommendation given by the commissions. Dr. Adhikari cautioned political parties to appoint commissioners not affiliated with any political parties.

“Whatever written in the constitution, there are discriminations among the constitutional bodies. The government discriminate against the commissions,” blamed Dr. Dutta.

Former minister Ganesh Shah said that there is no other way than to strengthen and provide adequate resources to the

commissions formed in the constitution of Nepal 2015. “The effective roles of other right and identity-based commissions are highly important to achieve the inclusive policies pursued by the constitution.”

Moderated by Purushottam Ghimire speakers taking part in an interaction program organized by the Niti Foundation on the Role of Constitution-



al Bodies in Constitutionalism and Democracy, speakers have expressed their views that constitutional bodies are not functioning effectively.

Wrapping up the program, National Assembly Member Kamala Panta said that constitutional bodies are created to strengthen inclusive democracy and safeguard the rights of minorities, and marginalized and identity-based groups. “I am ready to play any role in National Assembly to make these constitutional bodies stronger,” said MP Panta.

Professor Kapil Shrestha, a human right activist, sug-

gested the need to implement effective policies and programs to make the constitutional commissions more functional and efficient. He praised the role of the Elections Commission to ensure free and fair elections during the last local elections.

Participated by a wide range of stakeholders from var-

ious sectors, members of the National Assembly Kamala Panta urged the commissioners to work in collaboration with the province and local government so that they can implement their recommendations presented in the reports.

Former members of the House of Representatives Chhikka Bahadur Lama and Sher Bahadur Tamang argued that the other eight commissions are important to implement the agenda of inclusion and equality.

As chief election commissioner Thapaliya, who has been implementing effectively all elections power to ensure the elections are free and fair, highlighted the importance of studies, Niti Foundation will have to work for advanced and more intensive studies to bring all these commissions on the right track.



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१५औं वर्ष पूरा गरी १६औं वर्ष प्रवेशको सुखद अवसरमा जस्तोसुकै प्रतिकूलताका बीच पनि बैंक परिवार यहाँहरूको सेवामा सदा भै कटिबद्ध रहने सविनय अनुरोध गर्न चाहन्छौं ।

साथै

आजको विषम परिस्थितिमा पनि विगतका प्रगति एवं उपलब्धिको गतिलाई निरन्तरता दिन यस संस्थालाई हरदम सहयोग गर्ने, सद्भावना र सदाशयता राख्ने आदरणीय ग्राहकवर्ग, विभिन्न संघ संस्थाहरू, नियामक निकाय, सञ्चार जगत्, कर्मचारी वर्ग लगायत शुभेच्छुक सबैमा हार्दिक आभार प्रकट गर्दछौं ।



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Three Decades Of Engagement In Climate Negotiations



BY: BATU UPRETY

Nepal attended all official meetings of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Kyoto Protocol (KP) and the Paris Agreement (PA) from May 1992 to June 2022 and is expected to attend the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) to the UNFCCC, 17th of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the KP (CMP17) and 4th session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the PA (CMA4) from 6 to 18 November 2022 at Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt. The Conference will make decisions to implement these legally binding instruments. The Conference themes are finance, science, youth and future generations, decarbonization, adaptation and agriculture, gender, water, civil society, energy, biodiversity, and solutions.

Nepal is expected to focus on adaptation, mitigation and scaling up mitigation ambition, loss and damage associated with climate change impacts, finance, and mountains during COP27/CMP17/CMA4. Delegates will also participate in other agenda items such as the development and transfer of technologies, capacity building, LDC matters, gender and climate change, etc.

The provisional agenda of COP, CMP and CMA does not have agenda on mountains although Article 4.8 of the Convention provisions for funding and transfer of technology to meet the specific needs of the countries with, inter alia, areas prone to natural disasters, fragile ecosystems, including mountainous ecosystems, and landlocked countries, relevant to Nepal. As per Article 4.9 of the Convention, developed country Parties should provide funding and technologies to least developed countries (LDCs). Article 4.9 is partially implemented by adopting the LDC work program, establishing LDC Expert and LDC Fund in 2001. Nepal has also accessed LDC Fund to adapt to and build resilience to climate change impacts.

Nepal has regularly included climate change impacts on the mountains in its statements in high-level segments of the COPs. At the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, the then Prime Minister announced the 'Mountain Initiatives' (MI). Before and

during Copenhagen Summit, Nepal organized a regional conference on 'from Kathmandu to Copenhagen' in August-September 2009, a Cabinet meeting at Kalapatthar with Sagarmatha declaration in December and a rally with summiteers at the prescribed area at Copenhagen city in December 2009 to draw the attention of the international communities and leaders on the adverse impacts of climate change in the mountains, peoples, livelihoods, and resources. The then Prime Minister also handed over a 'black stone' to the then US President in New York. To advance MI and let the international people know about her initiatives, Nepal started organizing side-events on the mountain agenda from 2010 onwards during COP sessions, mostly in partnership with ICIMOD. Nepal also organized an international conference of mountain countries on climate change in April 2012 which was inaugurated by the then President, and statements were made by the Prime Ministers and deputy PM, including Ministers or high-level delegates from participating mountain countries.

During the last 13 years, the government and development partners signed a compact on climate change (an understanding between the Government of Nepal, Ministry of Environment and development partners on ways to address climate change challenges) in September 2009, declaring the 'Kathmandu Call for Action' in April 2012, made Rara declaration on climate change and environmental threats: protecting lives and livelihoods of mountain people in October 2014, Sindhuupalchowk (Gufadanda) declaration in January 2019, Nepalgunj declaration in June 2019, and Mustang Advocacy Summit in September 2022 with the declaration of Sustainable Mountain Solutions. The President of Nepal inaugurated the Gufadanda and Nepalgunj conferences immediately after her participation at the High-level segment of the CoP24 at Katowice, Poland in December 2018. Furthermore, Nepal has flagged the impacts of climate change at the UN Summits and events. Nepal's Head of Delegation at the UN General Assembly in September 2022 stressed on 'disproportionate burden of climate change Nepal is bearing, including melting

of glaciers, and impacts on people, lives and properties. These events have contributed to drawing the attention of the climate partners to the impacts of climate change in the mountains. Despite these efforts, Nepal may wish to officially table 'climate and mountains on the COP's agenda. This issue is well matured and it would be appropriate to consider pushing it as a separate agenda item in collaboration with other mountain countries, Parties to the UNFCCC.

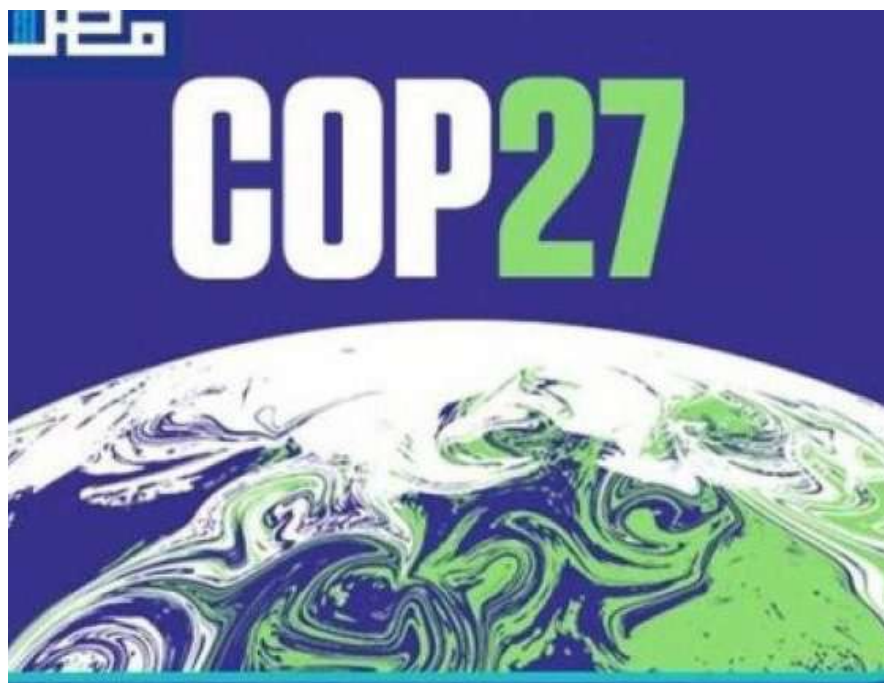
The then Joint Secretary and chief of the Environment Division of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Mr. Tara Bhattarai attended the last meeting of the Inter-governmental Negotiating Committee (INC)

which adopted the UNFCCC text in May 1992 in New York. During the last 3 decades (1992-2022), a total of 30+ Ministers, 26+ Secretaries and 17+ Joint-secretaries offered leadership on environment/climate change. One of the Ministers provided political leadership for over 3 years and one of the technical Secretaries led climate change for 5 years. Recalling

bureaucratic leadership, Secretaries from administrative and technical streams leading climate change were almost equal. About 60 percent of the Joint-secretaries were from a technical stream. From 2009 to mid-2017, climate change activities were pushed for accessing funding and implementation. However, major climate change projects were blocked from mid-2017 and mid-2019- the black years -at the bureaucratic level. Reviewing the published initiatives, climate change took the momentum from 2009 to 2014, 2016 to mid-2017, 2019 and 2021.

Nepal offered leadership in climate change negotiations from 2013 to early 2017 being chair of the LDC coordination group, LDC Expert Group and the Adaptation Fund. These four years were effective in accessing climate funds and connecting to several organizations to inform the impacts of climate change in Nepal. Senegal is chairing the LDC Coordination Group

for 2022-2023 and Ms. Madeleine Diouf Sarr has over two decades of continuous engagement in climate negotiations. She is the first woman to chair the LDC Group since it began negotiating as a bloc in the UNFCCC process in 2000. In Nepal, the government replaced the seasoned Joint Secretary of the Climate Change Management Division who functioned as the Chair of this Group in 2013 and till October 2014 with a completely new official in the climate negotiations for basically COP20 in December 2014. Although the new office was the Chair of the Group, Secretary Dr. K. C. Paudel led LDC negotiations in a professional manner.



During negotiations for the chair of the LDC Coordination Group in late 2011, Nepal was repeatedly questioned for the non-continuation of high-level officials in climate negotiations. In 2012, a 'core group' concept was developed and approved by the

government to start a process for developing and mobilizing a 'specialized team' within the government for the UNFCCC process. It worked for 5 years and then disappeared. Non-continuity in the negotiation process, considering nominations as an incentive, the practice of taking 'overload' international commitments such as net-zero emissions by 2045, country ownership over such ambitious commitments, and under-functional national policies to comply with the international commitments have always been a challenge in Nepal's climate negotiation processes and in accessing climate finance. It is necessary to develop and mobilize a 'permanent negotiating team' of experienced and new/young officials to contribute to and benefit from the UNFCCC process. The government may form 'teams' of experienced in-country officials for developing proposals and accessing funding, and 'implementing projects.

चाडवाडको समयमा खानपानमा ध्यान दिऔं ।

- मासु, धेरै चिल्लो तथा गुलियो भएको खानेकुरा आवश्यकता भन्दा बढी उपभोग नगरौं ।
- खानेकुराहरू सुरक्षित राखेर मात्र उपभोग गरौं ।
- बासी, सडेगलेको र गन्हाएको खानेकुरा उपभोग नगरौं ।
- मासु तथा धेरै चिल्लो भएको खानेकुरा खाँदा सन्तुलन मिलाएर उपभोग गरौं ।



नेपाल सरकार
विज्ञापन बोर्ड

Request Pending

At a time when Nepal has been wasting about 800MW of electricity due to lack of consumption in domestic market, India can generate huge goodwill in Nepal by allowing additional 212MW electricity import from Nepal

By KESHAB POUDEL

It is peanuts for India in allowing an import of additional 212MW electricity from Nepal but the gesture will gain a huge goodwill in Nepal, proving redundant the old populist anti-Indian narratives that India does not purchase Nepal's electricity.

In the last one year and a half, Nepal and India have made many meaningful negotiations in their bilateral relations, taking each other's concerns and responding to them with care. Among the most valuable deal was the beginning of export of electricity from Nepal to India.

After a long hiccup, India has agreed to import 364MW of electricity from Nepal. For this, Nepal also has reciprocated awarding license to Indian state-owned power company to construct two lucrative reservoir hydropower projects, including West Seti in far-west.

As trade is a process of negotiations and give and take, it is natural for Nepal and India to make deals that make business sense. Goodwill is not tested on electricity trade only. Backing India's bid for permanent UN membership and calling for the UN Security Council reforms firmly, while siding with India, Nepal has given a clear message.

However, Nepal and India power trade faced disruptions with India's adamant response to Nepal's proposal to export additional 212MW electricity to India.

Knowing that the country would have huge surplus energy in September and October, Nepal has requested India for export of additional 212MW to prevent spillover, of up to 800MW daily, due to increasing electricity generation within the country and decreasing domestic demand.

As soon as local online media reported the story regarding waste of Nepal's electricity due to lack of market, those, who were defeated in their narrative

after Nepal began the export, found the right moment to push their narrative that India cannot purchase electricity generated in Nepal. Social media like Twitter are full of comments and criticisms against India and Nepal's authorities on this.

Allowing 364MW of import of electricity from Nepal, India has gained



huge goodwill in Nepal. Had India allowed additional 212MW import, the narrative that a group of Nepal's have been using to criticize India would have completely vanished.

In June, Nepal started exporting the total approved 364MW of electricity to India through its power exchange market. Buoyed by surplus rainfall this year, Nepal is exporting surplus electricity to India through its power exchange market, according to the state-owned power utility body, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA).

"We are facing from 400 to 800MW as losses due to increasing electricity generation within the country and decreasing domestic demand," said Pradeep Thike, Deputy Managing Director of NEA told PTI.

"We have asked the Indian authority for the approval of exporting an additional 212MW of electricity for the last two months, but have not got any response

from them," he said.

By selling 364MW electricity to India from June to November end, Nepal will receive Rs 4.78 billion, according to the NEA.

NEA started selling surplus electricity in the day-ahead market of Indian Energy Exchange Limited (IX) at competitive rates from June 2.

Nepal became an energy surplus country ever since the 456MW Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project came into full operation in August last year. As many more hydropower projects are in the process of completion, Nepal will have over 1000MW surplus electricity next year.

At a time when Nepal's domestic market does not have capacity to consume huge surplus electricity and Nepal is unable to make any deal with India, Nepal will have to waste billions of rupees worth of seasonal electricity. This will put a huge financial burden to NEA.

As trade is about negotiations, it involves conditions and other safeguarding measures of parties. In recent months, India's main condition in the electricity trade is exclusion of Chinese investment and its involvement. Due to this condition, Nepal is unable to sell 456MW electricity generated by Upper Tamakoshi, which is constructed through domestic investment.

However, out of 4 contractors, one Chinese contractor was involved in the civil work and two Indian contractors were involved in transmission and hydro-mechanical.

Whether one likes it or not, India is the only big market for Nepal's surplus electricity. For this, Nepal needs to gain goodwill from India. As electricity export is a trade, Nepal also needs to learn the art of trade and deal with India accordingly.

Break Kathmandu-Centric Federalism



BY: DR. PRABIN MANANDHAR

What's the population of Kathmandu? The official figure is superficial data because nobody knows how many people are living in Kathmandu. Over 1 million have left Kathmandu to celebrate Dashain in the last 5 days and it is expected that 2 million will leave Kathmandu this Dashain, while the population of Kathmandu is 1.5 million according to the official figure. Kathmandu must have some 5 million population with one of the highest densities in the world facing the everyday problem of pollution, traffic jams, shortage of drinking water, and inflation.

The issue I wanted to raise here is not the movement of people or the improper management of urbanization. The issue here is whether the federal system of governance has been able to federalize services at the provincial and local levels. The massive number of people going to their homes for Dashain and their suffering getting the bus tickets to speak a lot – a metaphor that I have used here.

With the creation of the provincial and local governments, there was a hope that the country would promote local democracy, foster inclusive development, and improve access to basic services and opportunities at the provincial and local levels. The concentration of the people in Kathmandu is an indicator that the people must rely on the Kathmandu administration for many of the services.

Growing urbanization is inevitable, but federalism is not able to promote balanced urban growth and services in the country. People are coming to the capital due to a lack of employment opportunities and quality health and education services at the province and local levels. People are shifting their livelihood strategy from an agriculture-based

economy to a service and remittance-based economy.

There are a whole lot of issues. The mindset of the political leadership and federal bureaucracy is largely outdated. In the absence of the Federal Civil Service Act, the federal government is operating as the central government leaving little power and resources for the provincial

and local governments. There is a lack of clarity on intergovernmental coordination mechanisms.

The Federal Government should be efficient with a slim structure, and the provincial and local governments should be stronger in the spirit of devolved authority, downward accountability, and inclusive development. In the changed context, political re-

structuring should also proceed in parallel with state restructuring to make federalism work in Nepal and people can access services and opportunities in their province and local levels.

Giving justice to the metaphor I used above - Let's Break Kathmandu-Centric Federalism!

Dr. Manandhar is an expert in international development. Currently, he is working as Country Director of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Nepal. He is the Former Chair of the Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN). He is also a visiting faculty at Kathmandu University and the Tribhuvan University Institute of Crisis Management Studies.

The opinions are of his own and not that of his employer. He can be reached at prabin.manandhar11@gmail.com



NEPAL ARMY

Mission Rescue

Nepal Army Rescued Large Number Of People From Recent Floods And Landslides

By A CORRESPONDENT

As it was unusual, heavy rain occurred at the end of the monsoon season. The damage and devastation caused by four days of rainfall at the end of September created havoc all over Nepal. However, the damage was much higher in Karnali, Lumbini and Sudurpaschim Province.

As the globe is warming, heating the earth, this kind of unusual rain will likely be normal. Scientists have already predicted that Nepal will have to face severe consequences.

Like in all major floods and disasters in the past, Nepal Army got heavily involved in saving lives in Jumla, Banke, Bardia, Surkhet, Dang, Kailali and Kanchapur.

Chief District Officer Ramhari Sharma said it will take some days more to open the Kalikot section of the highway.

CDO Sharma said that 19 persons had gone missing in the incidents of flood and landslide following incessant rains in the district so far this year.

Nepal Army used its helicopter to safely rescue people in the flood affected areas. Nepal Army's helicopter has rescued numbers of people trapped in the landslides and brought

them to district head-quarter.

People were killed in Jumla, Pyuthan, Salyan, Dhading, Jajarkot, Lamjung, and Dang districts, according to Dr. Dijan Bhattarai, Spokesperson and Under Secretary at the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA).

Among the total deceased, 12 were men and seven women. In a total of 52 natural disaster cases that occurred in 24 hours, five people had been injured. According to NDRRMA update, the highest rainfall was measured in Dadeldhura with 120 mm in those 24 hours. According to an update of the NDRRMA, out of 187 rain measuring stations of the Meteorological Forecasting Division, 144 stations recorded rainfall.

Nepalgunj Inundation

More than 8,000 households have been affected due to inundation caused by flash floods triggered by incessant rainfall in Banke district.

Eight thousand seven hundred three households at eight local levels in the district have been directly affected due to flood and inundation, said Topendra Bahadur KC, Assistant Chief District Officer of Banke district.

Inundations and floods



after continuous rains in Nepalgunj of Banke district displaced families from nearly 5,000 households.

Breaking all the records so far, when the big flood in the Rapti River entered the Tikulipur settlement in Rapti Sonari Rural Municipality 2,400 families were displaced, according to the Banke Disaster Management Committee. About 3,000 locals have been displaced in the village alone.

Rupan Gyawali, information officer of the Disaster Management Committee, said that work has begun to shift the affected to a safe place. In the same way, 1,500 people from Duduwa Agricultural Chowferi and Panjha villages have also been displaced.

Similarly, the ward office said that more than 500 residents of more than 100 families were also displaced after the flood in Duduwa river in Nepalgunj Ward Number 18 and 20 of Manikapur area. According to the Rural Municipality, 200 houses in various villages of Narainapur, which were heavily affected by floods and inundation, were damaged and more than 7,000 local residents were affected there alone.

Most of the wards of Nepalgunj have been flooded again due to



NATIONAL

the heavy rain that started on the following morning. Due to heavy rain for two hours, hundreds of houses and shops were waterlogged.

The incessant rain had stopped, but due to the heavy rain again from that morning, dozens of houses were flooded after water accumulated in most parts of the sub-metropolitan city.

Gharbari Tole of the city, the area from Setuwichok to Triveni turn of New Road, Ganeshpur settlement, bus park area, Dhambozhi, Ekalaini Tole, Bilaspur, Korianpur and Bhrikutinagar and many areas of wards 20, 14, 22 and 23 had been flooded. Flooding occurred after the water flow of the big canals built for the drainage of water in Surkhet Road, New Road and other places was blocked, according to the locals.

Kailali Damage

Normal life of Kailali residents has been affected badly after most of the houses got waterlogged due to incessant rains. After the continuous rains for four days, the life of those living under the tent and tarpaulins along Postal Highway of Dhangadhi has been hit badly. More than 300 families of Bhajani Municipality have been displaced. Locals have faced floods that entered from Kandra, Kandha and Pathraiya rivers.

Jay Prasad Dhungana of Bhajani Municipality-8 Sonaphanta said that the displaced people living under tarpaulins on the road are forced to live without foods and clothes.

Kalikot Landslide

Landslides damaged 1,495 houses in Kalikot. Kalikot district has been declared a food-hit district. More than 1,495 houses were damaged and more than 3,000 people were rendered homeless due to continuous torrential rains.

Surkhet-Jumla road section came to a complete halt following incessant rains in Kalikot.

Landslides in several places



have brought the Karnali Lokmarga to a complete halt. Over 50 landslides have fallen along Kalikot road section of the Karnali Lokmarga.

Local Tila River washed away a bridge at Serighat in Kalikot road section. Even the alternative road



has come to a halt. Locals have even been experiencing difficulty in crossing the road due to risk of landslide.

Local's access to the district headquarters residing in ward numbers 1, 2, and 3 of Shubhakali Rural Municipality of Kalikot district and Khanda Chakra Municipality-2 have also been disrupted.

According to District Police Office Kalikot and information officer Shubraj Bam, the road of Serighat is the most dangerous followed by landslides in Sunarkhola, Ranchuli and Jubitha. He said that it will take time to clear the debris of the landslides.

The meeting of the District Disaster Management Committee has decided to declare the district as food- and disaster-hit district.

Similarly, more than 667 families have been displaced. The Committee meeting has declared a food-deficient district

as the rains have completely destroyed the crops and vegetables planted by the farmers.

In the initial and first disaster affected report collection, 3,000 people have been found directly affected and 667 families rendered homeless.

The Committee's coordinator and chief district officer, Ramhari Sharma, said that the largest loss of property and infrastructure was reported in Tilagufa Municipality.

He said that out of 19 missing people across the city, the bodies of two people have been found and the search for others is underway. Similarly, one person died in Shannitriveni Rural Municipality and one person

died in Pachaljarna Rural Municipality. A policeman and an Indian citizen of Tilagufa Municipality were also missing, said Sharma.

Meanwhile, life in Lumbini Province has become difficult because of incessant rains. Hundreds have been displaced by floods and landslips triggered by the rains over the week.

Emerging Circular Labor Migration In Nepal



BY: BINDU SHARMA

When we recall the first wave of COVID in some of the most heart-breaking pictures, among many were of the migrant workers, walking for days without food and water to return home in villages, from major cities in Nepal and from India. Some of the most covered stories in the media were either of the people walking out of Kathmandu to far-away villages or of Nepali workers in India walking days and night, stranded at Indian side of the border, and jumping off Mahakali River in hopes to reach home, even losing life.

In a few months, we saw a massive return rate of migrant workers to cities and to India proving the prediction of reserve migration, that returnees will stay, wrong. It was a decision made at a junction of two possibilities; staying-and-dying-of-hunger and going-and-dying-of-COVID. This, however, is a whole different aspect to be discussed another time.

As COVID is becoming a new reality where we are learning to adjust life with it, we have time to dig deeper into those media stories and reports. In many such stories, we see a dark picture of circular labor migration that has undermined worker's protection, right and stability. With COVID relatively becoming less severe, we shouldn't forget the uncovered picture of laborers' fragility it showed us. This picture has always been in the frame; was there before the pandemic, remains there in the post-pandemic period, too, but only exacerbated and became more visible during this global crisis.

Everyone suffered financially and in many other terms during lockdown, but the question remains: why did these wage-based workers suffer the most? It was because they didn't have enough savings to survive in cities with their little or no savings and they didn't have an enabling environment to raise their collective voices against cutoffs and for financial support from their workplaces- something that happens in a circular economy.

Circular labor migration in Nepal can be most characterized by continuous mobility of workers, broken chain of sustainable livelihood at home and precarious working condition at destinations. At first glance, we may not observe issues in high labor mobility, but it relates to worker's stability and protection. Our labor market is designed and operates in a way that short-term employments are promoted. Sometimes employment can be available for longer term but arrangement of hiring, and job promises are in shorter term. This means on the one hand the workers cannot dream of establishing permanent life there, constantly keeping them in a continuous mental stress and worry about what happens tomorrow. On the other hand, since they stay in employment for a short period of time, the possibility of collectivizing the voices of workers and negotiation for collective demands is minimal limiting the

of workers' protection and rights being realized.

Circular labor migration happens from villages to cities and to other parts of the border. There was a time when people in Nepal used to grow food for their families in their lands. Now those fertile lands in rural areas remain barren as people have migrated and their families have also shifted to urban areas for services like children's education and elder's health. Nepal is also one of the fastest urbanizing nations with productive lands being sold and commercialized with plotting, buildings, and other commercial spaces. This has broken the chain of agriculture-based livelihood which was more self-reliant. Even if workers in circular labor migration now want to return, they cannot because no land and other resources exist anymore, cycle of generational agricultural and other skill transfer is broken and there is social stigma of being a failure on returning home.

Working conditions for circular labor migrants are often precarious because their rights and protection remain unnegotiated and informal nature of their work allows vulnerabilities. The garments industry in Nepal is full of circular labor migrants and labor survey report categorizes it as a sector where there is the highest prevalence of sexual violence against workers. There are other industries such as construction and waste collection where not even minimum human safety standards are maintained. The socio-economic discrimination and hierarchies of a person at source are reproduced at destination in circular labor migration. Those at the lowest ladder of society and economy are worse off. For instance, women, adolescent girls, Dalits, people with disability, and illiterate groups face extreme vulnerability.

As the capitalist economy is flourishing, we see circular nature of labor- work impermanency that compels workers to keep on moving from one place to another in search of work. The dominating actors of economic sector play a role to make sure migration is circular in nature because keeping it this way gives them the benefit of not having to ensure protection and rights of workers and makes their wage payment reverse back to them in exchange of services and products.

Circular labor migration is a new reality for Nepal. We cannot reverse circular labor migration overnight as it is rapidly growing, and more and more people are being accustomed to it. In this situation, there can be two strategic engagements; i) Working within the system for protecting the rights of workers and ii) Working to change the system itself – for a systemic transformation into inclusive and sustainable economy.

(Bindu Sharma is a female activist familiar with the practice of development cooperation in Nepal.)

मुटुलगायत स्वास्थ्य समस्याबाट बच्नः

- चिल्लो तथा बोसोयुक्त खानेकुरा नखाऔं।
- नियमित रूपमा शारिरीक व्यायाम गरौं।
- मोटोपन, कोलेस्ट्रॉल, रक्तचाप, मधुमेहजस्ता समस्या भएका व्यक्तिले नियमित स्वास्थ्य परीक्षण गरौं।
- धुम्रपान र मद्यपान नगरौं।



नेपाल सरकार
विज्ञापन बोर्ड



Developed by: S.R. Bhatta

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