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**OPINION**  
Katak Malla



**VIEWPOINT**  
Hemant Arjyal

# NEW SPOTLIGHT

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Jan.- 13, 2023

FORTNIGHTLY

POKHARA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

## Inaugurated With Fanfare

### INSIDE



**POLITICS**  
NEPAL'S LEARLEFT, RIGHT...RIGHT LEFT...NING

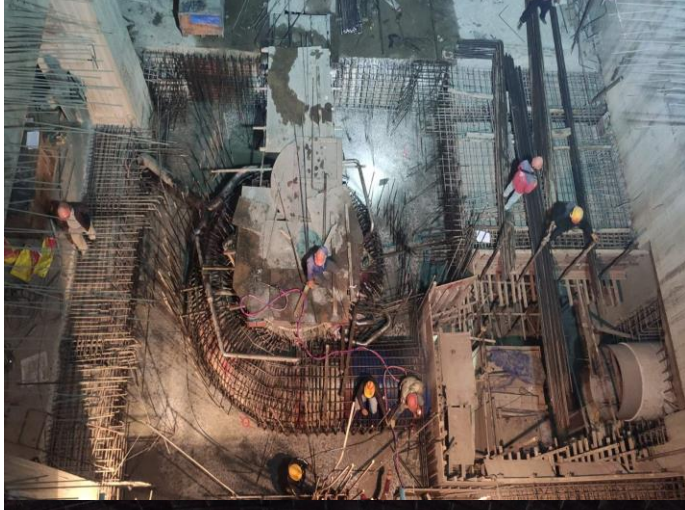


**CHANDRA PRASAD DHAKAL**  
HUMBLE BANKER



**INTERVIEW**  
DINESH KUMAR GHIMIRE





सिन्धुपाल्चोक जिल्लामा निर्माणाधीन जिल्लाकै सवैभन्दा ठूलो मध्य भोटेकोशी जलविद्युत आयोजना निर्माण कार्यमा सम्बन्धित सबै पक्षले आ-आफ्नो स्थानबाट आवश्यक सहयोग पुऱ्याई ऊर्जासंकट समाधानको राष्ट्रिय अभियानमा सहभागी भइदिनु हुन हार्दिक अनुरोध गर्दछौं ।



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Despite the formation of new five-party coalition governments, the country is yet to see any sense of stability among the public. Two leading political leaders Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda and UML leader KP Sharma Oli have been stating that this coalition will last for five years. Given Nepal's political history and culture of the alliance, there is no reason for people to assure from their words. Nepalese had seen the fall of the government with two third majorities in a matter of a day. Former Prime Minister Oli and Prime Minister Dahal harped on such statements regularly till the fall of the government. The key challenge for the current political leadership in Nepal is to prove that they can provide a stable government. Sending farewell to the COVID-19 border restriction by China put Nepal in a very difficult situation. For Nepalese tourism entrepreneurs, the arrival of Chinese tourists in this session is good news but lurking danger due to the surge of the new variant is worrisome. Nepal's government needs to take a step to control its border for visitors from China till the World Health Organization (WHO) comes out with a clear-cut issue on the nature of the virus and how lethal it is. However, we have decided to cover this week the importance of Pokhara International Airport as our cover story. We have made effort to analyze various aspects international airports and their implications.

**Keshab Poudel**

Editor



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KALI GANDAKI

# Connecting Nepal-India

*Nepal decides to provide stones from the Kaligandaki River to construct a statue of Ram in Ajodhya showing how the river connects the civilization of the two countries*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although the Kali Gandaki River connects the common civilization of Nepal and India, it is yet to come into wide public discourse. From legendary sage Jad Bharat to Saint Byash, the river has also direct connections with the Ram.

According to a religious book, King Dasharath came to Ramdi of Syangja district, a riverside of Kaligandaki to invite Bashistha to perform Yagya to have princes for him. After the performance Yagya, Ram, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan were born.

The recent decision of Nepal to send a stone from the river to build the statue of Ram is a right and highly significant decision to reconnect Nepal and India religiously and civilization.

Kaligandaki River is used to build the statue of lord Vishnu. Two prominent statues of Vishnu in south Indian including the Padmanabhaswamy Temple of Kerala and Srirangam in Tamilnadu also constructed from Saligram.

The Kaligandaki River, which originates from Damodar Kunda in Mustang district, and flows through Myagdi's religious destination Galeshwar, is mostly known for the availability of 'Shaligram Shila'.

Among many types of stones found on the banks of the Kaligandaki River, Shilas are stones with special properties. And Shaligram Shila, a particular variety of Shila which is hard to find, is believed to be the representation of God Vishnu by Hindus.

A team of experts has been studying the Shilas for the possibility of crafting a statue of Lord Ram in

Ayodhya of India. The team was deployed under the Gandaki Province government.

"Shilas are found in the three-kilometer section of the river from the south of Beni to Galeshwar. A study is being performed with a plan to send Shilas to Ayodhya via Janak-



purdham," said Surat KC, Mayor of Beni Municipality.

The team has already arrived on the bank of the Kaligandaki River in the Beni area to identify and study the Shilas.

"Study has been performed in two Shilas, each of 7 feet in height, 5 feet in length and 3.5 feet in width. If Shilas of our river is taken to Ayodhya, it would promote our place as well," said Mayor KC.

The office of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teeth Kshetra sent a letter to the Janaki Temple on November 5, 2022, asking it to send the Shilas to Ayodhya.

A meeting of the Council of Ministers held on December 18, 2022, had decided to provide two pieces of Shila from the Kaligandaki River area to the Janaki Temple in Janakpurdham.

After the decision, the pro-

cess to study the stones and ways to transport them has been started, informed Mayor KC.

The Kaligandaki River has religious importance, and Hindu texts show that sages, including Pulaha, Kapila, and Jadbharat, attained Siddhi (completeness) by meditating along the bank of the river's Beni-Galeshwar section.

"The Kaligandaki is a holy river and it has made Shilas along its bank purer every day. The two pieces of Shila will be transported to Janakpurdham first," said Kulraj Chalise, a member of the Shila Study, Excavation and Relocation Campaign and a scholar of the Krishnagandaki River.

"The Shilas will be used to construct the statue of Lord Ram in Ayodhya. It is expected to further strengthen the relationship between Ayodhya, Janakpur and Muktinath culturally and religiously," said Chalise.

He also informed that Guru Rajendra Singh Pankaj has arrived in Pokhara from Ayodhya to receive the Shilas. "Since they are the gift of Nepal, it is our responsibility to transport the Shilas to Ayodhya. The provincial government will be looking after it," added Chalise.

Mayor KC informed that the municipality would provide necessary assistance once the study team decides which Shilas they want to take.

Given such a long relationship between the Kaligandaki river and with the baidik civilization, the decision to use the stone of Kali Gandaki River to build the statue of Ram further enhances and strengthens Nepal-India relations.

## NEWSNOTES

### The newly appointed Chinese Ambassador To Nepal Arrived

Newly appointed Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Chen Song has said that he would work to write a new chapter in Nepal-China relations.

Speaking to journalists upon his arrival in Kathmandu today to assume his post, the Chinese Ambassador said, “As the new ambassador to Nepal, I am deeply aware of the glorious mission and great responsibility.”

I stand ready to work closely with Nepali friends from all walks of life, gather wisdom and pool



strength to bring more benefits to the two peoples, and jointly write a new chapter of the China-Nepal Strategic Partnership of Cooperation Featuring Ever-lasting Friendship for Development and Prosperity, said the ambassador, according to a statement issued by the Chinese Embassy today.

The Chinese ambassador was welcomed by the Chinese embassy officials and the officials from the Foreign Affairs ministry of Nepal at the Tribhuvan International Airport upon his arrival.

Full text of the statement made by the newly appointed ambassador:

It is my great pleasure to come to Nepal, a flower-filled beautiful country, as the 22nd Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to Nepal. I would like to express my heartfelt respect and sincere thanks to friends from all walks of life who have cared about and supported the development of China-Nepal relations for a long time.

Linked by mountains and rivers, China and Nepal enjoy ever-lasting friendship. More than 1,600 years ago, Chinese eminent monk Faxian and Nepali eminent monk Buddhahadra exchanged visits and cooperated in translating Buddhist classics echoed through the ages.

During Tang Dynasty, the eminent monk Xuanzang visited Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha Sakyamuni, and left precious written records. In Yuan Dynasty, the famous Nepali craftsman Arniko came to China and built Miaoying Temple in Beijing. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1955, China and Nepal have always been respecting, trusted and supporting each other. In the critical moments of responding to the 2015 Nepal earthquake and fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic, the two countries have lent mutual support to each other, setting an example of equal treatment, friendly cooperation, and mutual benefit between neighboring countries.

In 2019, President Xi Jinping paid a historic state visit to Nepal. The two heads of state agreed to build the Strategic Partnership of Cooperation Featuring Ever-lasting Friendship for Development and Prosperity. In recent years, under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Development Initiative, China-Nepal practical cooperation in various fields has been improved both in quality and efficiency, and the trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network has gradually taken shape.

In October 2022, the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was successfully held in Beijing. The most important result of the meeting was the election of a new central leadership of the CPC Central Committee with General Secretary Xi Jinping at its core. China embarked on a new journey to build China into a modern socialist country in all respects and advance the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts through a Chinese path to modernization. Not long ago, Nepal successfully held federal and provincial elections and formed a new government. Changes in the world, of our times and history, are unfolding today in ways like never before. In the face of new situations, new opportunities and new challenges, China will, as always, firmly support Nepal in safeguarding state sovereignty and national dignity, exploring a development path suited to its national conditions, and pursuing independent domestic and foreign policies. China is willing to work with Nepal to stay true to our original aspirations, inherit friendship, join forces to seek common development, and build a closer China-Nepal community with a shared future in the new era.

As the new ambassador to Nepal, I am deeply aware of the glorious mission and great responsibility. I will follow the important consensus reached by President Xi Jinping and Nepali leaders, stay devoted and dedicated to outlining their freehand brushwork of bilateral relations into a meticulous painting. A Nepali is saying “even a drop of water can fill a tank”. Chinese also



say “the fire burns high when everybody adds wood”. I stand ready to work closely with Nepali friends from all walks of life, gather wisdom and pool strength to bring more benefits to the two peoples, and jointly write a new chapter of the China-Nepal Strategic Partnership of Co-operation Featuring Ever-lasting Friendship for Development and Prosperity.

### Japan Provided Assistance For The Construction Of Sunaulo Library In Province 1

The inauguration ceremony of the Sunaulo Library took place in Sunsari district, Province 1 on December 24. Kikuta, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, attended the ceremony to celebrate the inauguration.

The library was damaged by the 2015 earthquake and was no longer accessible. Now an earthquake-resistant library has been constructed as part of a project supported by the Japanese Government under the Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects schemes.

The project is being implemented by the Japanese NGO Shanti Volunteer Association, and it is currently in its final year. The project aims at improving services provided by community libraries and learning centers and supports the construction of a total of four libraries and learning centers, including the Sunaulo Library. The library will not only operate as a library, but



also be equipped with rooms for children and women, a computer room, and a meeting room, where various programs such as reading promotion activities for children, empowerment of women and youth, and activities to improve the lives of people in the community, will be implemented.

On the occasion, Ambassador Kikuta congratulated and appreciated the efforts of everyone involved in the construction of the library. Ambassador expressed his hope that the library will become a community asset

that contributes to the development of the region and that the library will be further developed by the community and local government. Ambassador Kikuta also mentioned that this year marks the 120th anniversary since Nepal dispatched its first eight students to Japan for study and that he was delighted to see the completion of the library construction in this celebratory year.

He added his hope to see various people who use this library play a leading role in people-to-people relationships between the two countries as well as in the development of Nepal in the future. The Embassy of Japan in Nepal hopes that the assistance further strengthens the relationship between Japan and Nepal, and the friendship between the peoples of the two countries for the future generation

### Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio Congratulated Prime Minister Puspa Kamal Dahal

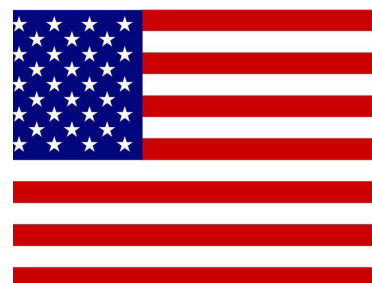
Japanese Prime Minister Kishida KISHIDA Fumio, Prime Minister of Japan, sent Puspa Kamal Dahal an official letter congratulating his inauguration as Prime Minister of Nepal on December 26, 2022.



The Government of Japan is looking forward to further working with the Government of Nepal to promote bilateral relations and friendship between the two countries and cooperate in the social and economic development of Nepal under the leadership of Prime Minister Dahal.

### The United States Congratulated Newly Appointed Prime Minister Dahal

The United States congratulates newly-appointed Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal and his coalition on their victory in Nepal’s federal election. We are proud to have had robust and longstanding ties with Nepal and will continue to stand with the Government of Nepal to promote issues of bilateral, regional, and global importance, such as achieving sustainable economic growth and strengthening democracy and human rights.



## NEWSNOTES

Nepal's commitment to democracy is an example to countries around the world, and we commend all those involved. We look forward to supporting Nepal as it continues to deepen its democratic traditions. China To Lift Quarantine For Inbound Travelers

### Indian Prime Minister Modi Congratulated PM Prachanda

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated newly elected prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda through Twitter.

"Warmest congratulations @cmprachanda on being elected as the Prime Minister of Nepal. The unique relationship between India & Nepal is based on deep cultural connections & warm people-to-people ties. I look forward to working together with you to further strengthen this friendship," tweeted PM Modi on December 26.

In his reply, PM Prachanda tweeted that he



looks forward to working closely with him to consolidate bilateral friendship

"Thank you, Prime Minister @narendramodiji for your warm message. Nepal and India share close cultural ties and a natural affinity. I look forward to working closely with you to consolidate our bilateral friendship," tweeted PM Prachanda.

### Chinese Premier Li sends a written congratulatory message to PM Prachanda

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang has sent a written congratulatory message to Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'.

Wang Xin, Charge d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Nepal, handed over the message to PM Prachanda at the latter's office in Singha Durbar.

"On December 30, Mr. Wang Xin, Charge d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy in Nepal, called on Prime Minister Prachanda, conveyed the congratulatory mes-

sage from Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, and exchanged views on China-Nepal relations and issues of mutual interests," the Chinese embassy said in its Twitter.



### Japan Hands Over Medal Grand Cordon Of The Rising Sun To Former Speaker

The Ambassador of Japan to Nepal Kikuta Yutaka handed over the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun to the former speaker of the House Of Representatives Ram Chandra Poudel amid a function today at the residence of the Japanese Ambassador to Nepal.

Former speaker Poudel received the decoration on April 29, 2020, in recognition of his contributions towards strengthening the relationship between Japan and Nepal and promoting the interchange of members of the parliaments of both countries. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the ceremony has been unfortunately postponed but was completed today.

Member of House of Representatives Poudel contributed to the activation of contacts between parliamentarians of the two countries. He established the Japan-Nepal Friendship Parliamentarian League in 1999 when he was the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nepal. He was the first Chairman of the League from the beginning until 2017.

He was also actively involved in the promotion of bilateral relations by receiving many VIPs from Japan such as His Imperial Highness Prince Akihito and





Her Imperial Highness Princess Michiko, Prime Minister MORI Yoshiro, State Minister for Foreign Affairs KIUCHI Minoru, and others. Furthermore, he participated in the 40-year, 50-year and 60-year anniversaries of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and made congratulatory statements.

Japanese Decorations are conferred upon foreigners twice a year, on 29th April and 3rd November, concurrently with the conferment of decorations and medals to Japanese nationals.

The Order of the Rising Sun is bestowed upon individuals of merit, in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the nation or public. This is also conferred upon foreign nationals who have made notable contributions to the promotion of relations between Japan and other countries in areas such as politics and diplomacy, research and education, medicine and social welfare, economy and industry, and culture and sports.

The Government of Japan announced the foreign recipients of the 2020 Spring Imperial Decorations 2020. Former Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nepal Poudel was among the 2020 year's foreign recipients.

The medal was conferred to him in recognition of his contributions towards strengthening the relationship between Japan and Nepal. For this role, Poudel has received the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun.

In his speech following the program, ambassador Kikuta said that Poudel contributed to the activation of contacts between parliamentarians of the two countries and established the Japan-Nepal Friendship Parliamentary League in 1999 when he was the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Nepal.

"He was also actively involved in the promotion of bilateral relations by receiving many dignitaries from Japan such as Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko, Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, Minoru Kiuchi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, and others and participated in the 40 years, 50 year and 60 year anniversaries of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries," said the ambassador.

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diplomacy, research and education, medicine and social welfare, economy and industry, and culture and sports.

"I am very grateful to the Government of Japan for kindly conferring on me the high decoration on the Order of the Rising Sun Gold and Silver Star," said Poudel. "I served as Ambassador of Nepal to Japan. I will work in the future to further strengthen relations between the two countries," said Poudel. He said that Japan is a great friend of Nepal as it has been supporting Nepal for over five decades in economic progress,

"Poudel has been actively involved in the promotion of bilateral relations between the two countries. The honor will be handed to the personalities for their contribution to the promotion of political, diplomatic, research, education, medical and social welfare, economic, industry, culture and sports between the two countries," said the Minister of Communication and Information Technology Gyanendra Bahadur Karki.

On 29 April, 2020, the Japanese government announced the foreign recipients of the 2020 Spring Imperial Decorations.

#### **Sri Lankan President congratulates PM Prachanda**

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe had a telephone conversation on Friday.

According to the Prime Minister's secretariat, Sri Lankan President Wickremesinghe congratulated Dahal on being elected to the post of the Prime Minister of Nepal.

The two leaders had a crucial discussion on further strengthening the persisting bilateral relations between Nepal and Sri Lanka.



During the conversation, President Wickremesinghe expressed his confidence that the relations between the two countries would further grow during the tenure of PM Prachanda. -

#### **US Ambassador Thompson Calls On DPM Shrestha**

American Ambassador to Nepal Dean R. Thompson paid a courtesy on Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport

## NEWSNOTES

Narayan Kaji Shrestha at the latter's office in Singha Durbar today.

During the meeting, American ambassador



Thompson reiterated that the US will continue development assistance to Nepal while referring to 75 years of diplomatic relations and cooperation between the two countries, according to DPM Shrestha's press coordinator Kamal Giri.

The Ambassador expressed happiness that a senior leader, Shrestha, has been in charge of the physical infrastructure and transport and then said that the US was willing to extend assistance in socio-economic and agriculture sectors in Nepal in addition to energy and humanitarian ones.

In response, DPM Shrestha appreciated the US assistance to Nepal and expressed best wishes for Thompson during his tenure as the ambassador.

### Nepal Embassy in South Africa issues travel advisory amid trafficking cases

The Embassy of Nepal in Pretoria, South Africa, has issued a travel advisory for Nepali nationals in the wake of the increased cases of human traffickers and manpower agents taking Nepalis illegally to South Africa via various African or Indian cities or leaving them stranded on the way.

Of late, youth in Nepal are illusioned by the human traffickers that it would be easy to go to Europe and America from South Africa and the latter take millions of rupees and send them here via various countries in Asia and Africa, said the embassy in the advisory issued on Thursday.

The traffickers have been using New Delhi and Mumbai of India, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar in Asia, and Tanzania, Mozambique, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Congo and other countries in Afri-

ca as the transit to take Nepali nationals to South Africa. "They are brought to South Africa in a very difficult and risky manner while many are left stranded in various places en route in extreme conditions," read the advisory.

The embassy has requested the concerned people to refrain from such illegal activities and to be aware of the fact that the act of engaging in foreign employment or other similar temptations, taking a large amount of money and bringing a person abroad is punishable.

According to the embassy, a notice published in the Official Gazette of South Africa on August 2, 2022, mentions that there is a legal arrangement to employ foreign nationals only in cases where the positions of 140 types of skilled manpower requiring special knowledge and skills are not filled by native citizens.

Even if any Nepali is fit to apply for or be recruited in any of such positions, they should mandatorily obtain 'labor approval' from the government of Nepal. The list of such positions is available online in the website of the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) of South Africa.

The schedule published by the DHA gives a



piece of detailed information about the occupations and positions that could be taken by foreign nationals, their description, the minimum qualification required and the professional body of the registration. For example, Policy and Planning Manager's job description is to plan, develop, organize, direct, control and coordinate policy advice and strategic planning within the organization. It requires a minimum qualification of a Bachelor's Honours Degree, Postgraduate Diploma, or Bachelor's Degree, and such a professional should be registered with the relevant professional body, council, or board recognized by the South African government.

Likewise, since the tourist visa issued by the South African High Commissioner and Consulate General in India is only to go to South Africa on a tourist visit, it is not possible to engage in employment based on that visa.

As it is illegal to engage in any kind of em-



ployment on a tourist visa, the persons involved in such activities will be arrested by the relevant South African authorities and punished and fined according to the law and deported, read the advisory. "It is misleading and false that it is easy to go from South Africa to Europe, America and other countries as a visa of the respective country is required to go to any country," said the

Superintendent of Police Dan Bahadur Malla, who is also a Spokesperson for the Anti-Human Trafficking Bureau of Nepal Police, said that the issues of Nepalis being trafficked to various African countries have come to the notice of police but no complaint has been filed by anyone yet.

"There are many complaints from the Middle East and East Asian nations, and many Nepali nationals have been rescued, but we have not got any complaint from those exploited in the African countries," he said.

Meanwhile, the Embassy of Nepal in London, the United Kingdom, Friday issued a notice that it had not issued any notice on the 'UK Seasonal Visa'.

A notice was published on a letterhead by the embassy four days ago informing that the date of the interview for the Seasonal Worker Visa is changed. "The notice is published by faking the letterhead, seal and signature of the Embassy of Nepal in London. So, this embassy requests to all concerned not to apply for the visa based on that notice," read a notice of the embassy.

### Nepalis Ambassador To Pakistan Adhikari Meets Fatemi

Nepali's Ambassador to Pakistan Tapas Adhikari on Monday met with Syed Tariq Fatemi, Special Assistant on Foreign Affairs to the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The meeting was held at Fatemi's office in Islamabad.

Adhikari informed Rising Nepal that they discussed Nepal-Pakistan bilateral relationship during the meeting." We also discussed the regional cooperation in South Asia and the relevance of the South Asian Associ-



ation for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in promoting regional cooperation in the region," said Adhikari in his email.

### Conference on Model UN 2023 held

Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme to Nepal Ayshanie Medaganoda-Labe has emphasized the importance of collaboration between public and private schools in instilling academic and social skills in an attempt to address community and global issues. Speaking at a three-day



conference on 'Kathmandu Pragya Kunja Model United Nations 2023' organized by Kathmandu Pragya Kunja School here today, Labe shed light on the 5P model, i.e., People, Problems, Partnership, Peace, and Prosperity, which the UN adheres to in its visions and actions.

Organized by the KPKS in collaboration with Lumbini Asian Model United Nations Society, the KPKS MUN 2023 consists of five committees - World Health Organisation, Disarmament and International Security Committee, United Nations Human Rights Council, United Nations Environment Programme, and Economic and Financial Affairs Council. "The participants will hold dialogues and make resolutions on the set agendas and suggest strategies and programs that the school will comply with," said Sunita Poudel, the school's principal. Earlier, welcoming the participants, School Director Kapil Dev Regmi emphasized the significance of Model United Nations in inspiring collaborative dialogue and action among the youths to solve the common problems of societies and nations as a whole.

## BUSINESS BRIEF

### SAWTEE Organizes Workshop On Trade Policy And Economic Diplomacy in Federal Nepal

South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), in collaboration with The Asia Foundation (TAF), organized a seminar on “Trade policy and economic diplomacy in Federal Nepal”. Findings of two studies on the topic were presented and discussed at the event.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Toyam Raya, Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies (MoICS), said that Nepal’s future trade policies must be formulated through proper and adequate consultations



among all the tiers—local, provincial and federal—of the government as well as the private sector. Diplomatic missions play a vital role in promoting exports, he added.

Bharat Raj Paudyal, Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), said that federalism can be leveraged to address the major issues that plague Nepal’s exports: weak intergovernmental coordination, supply-side constraints, poor adoption of technology, weak production capacity, lack of trade policy coherence, and finally poor implementation of policies. He also pointed out that economic diplomacy cannot function in isolation, hence collaboration and coordination between various stakeholders are essential.

Dr. Posh Raj Pandey, Chairman, SAWTEE, pointed out that while Nepal has accorded the highest priority to export promotion, even acknowledging the importance of promoting exports in the directive principle of the Constitution, the export performance in the past decade has been dismal, primarily because of poor supply capacity.

Dr. Paras Kharel, Executive Director, SAWTEE, said that as Nepal stands on the verge of graduating from the LDC category (in 2026), trade and economic diplomacy carry special importance in charting the post-graduation landscape.

Presenting the findings of a study, Purushottam Ojha, Former Secretary, MoICS, and Neelu Thapa, Re-

searcher, SAWTEE, recommended identification and development of products along with the need for product and market diversification to boost Nepal’s exports. The study highlighted the need for technical support and capacity building programs and recommended strong coordination within the three tiers of governments for effective implementation of trade policies.

The panelists, including former policymakers, emphasized on the need to make trade policy more focused. The private sector representatives such as Neeru Rayamajhi Khatri, President, Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal (FWEAN), Shanta Baskota Koirala, Director, Kanchanjanga Tea Estate and Research Centre (KTERC) and Mr. Rajendra Timilsina, Entrepreneur, Himalayan Natural Food Product and Export Pvt. Ltd., called attention to the need to integrate trade policy to promote entrepreneurship by increasing access to technology, infrastructure, knowledge, and capacity building activities of the entrepreneurs.

Urging the policymakers to take advantage of the federal structure, Rajan Sharma, Former President, Nepal Freight Forwarders Association, emphasized on the need to allow subnational governments to play a role in enhancing the supply-chain.

On the topic of economic diplomacy, Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai Former Ambassador, and Swastik Aryal, Research Officer at SAWTEE presented the findings of a study on economic diplomacy for trade facilitation and export promotion in the context of federal Nepal. The major gap identified by the study was underutilization of economic diplomacy for trade facilitation and low coordination within government agencies as well as with other stakeholders. The study recommended strong partnership between government agencies for the utilization of economic diplomacy and the need to establish and strengthen the institutional arrangement for economic diplomacy.

Prof. Shambhu Ram Simkhada, Former Ambassador, highlighted the importance of focusing on improving structural and supply-side constraints to trade. He emphasized that focus should be on high-value niche products instead of mass production of low-value products for export.

Suraj Vaidya, Former President, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), gave an insight into the challenges faced by the private sector in trade such as lengthy bureaucratic processes. He called for putting Nepal’s internal house in order, which he deemed a precondition for diplomacy to work efficiently.

Rabi Shankar Sainju, Trade and Economic diplomacy Expert, highlighted the importance of infrastructural development, better linkages between buyers and suppliers, and effective diplomacy to remove protectionist measures applied by other countries.

The event saw the participation of current and former policymakers, trade experts, diplomats, researchers,



academicians and journalists, among others.

### **Joint Exercise And Appreciation Ceremony For Nepal Police**

The Embassy of Israel in Kathmandu awarded Certificate of Appreciation to Nepal Police Personnel deputed at the Embassy, providing impeccable security with tireless dedication.

On this occasion, the Embassy held a Joint Exercise and Appreciation Ceremony at Tapout Fitness Nepal, Kathmandu, to strengthen the cooperation between the co-operating bodies.

During this event, the representatives of the Embassy acknowledged the high-level quality performance of the people involved in this activity as well as day-to-day activities, performed at the Embassy.

Since the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Nepal and Israel on 1 June 1960, the two nations have continuous to cooperate and collaborate on various areas of mutual interests benefitting both the countries in various fields including agriculture, education, health, security systems among many others.

The Embassy expresses its gratitude for the relentless cooperation provided by Nepal Police and their great work making



ing a big difference and facilitating the security.

### **Over 300 New Vehicles were Imported Through Rasuwagadhi**

More than 300 new vehicles have been imported into Nepal from China through the Rasuwagadhi transit in the past six months of the current fiscal year, 2022. The total 350 imported vehicles include 132 electric cars, 82 electric vans, 11 Hilux vehicles, 78 fuel cars and two loaders, said security personnel posted at the transit.

Most of the imported vehicles have yet to go through the customs process, and they have been kept at Ghattekhola and Timure near Rasuwagadhi.

Similarly, five trucks full of readymade clothing, materials related to hydropower, motor and electric parts, telephonic materials, fruits and furniture have been imported during the same period.

Although transportation through Lehendekhola Miteri Bridge, the transit between Nepal and China, has



halted since COVID-19, the Chinese side has been helping transport goods to Nepal on Chinese number plate vehicles with the help of Chinese drivers.

Over 2.9 billion in revenues has been collected from the imports of the goods, said Narayan Prasad Bhandari, chief of the Rasuwa Customs Office, Timure. (RSS)

### **Kathmandu-Keung Railway Moves Ahead**

Work has moved ahead on the detailed study of the Kathmandu-Kerung Railway Project that connects the federal capital, Kathmandu, to China.

A Chinese team that arrived here on Monday has commenced work in this connection, the Department of Railways said. An agreement has been reached before this. The study is being carried out with the support of the Chinese government.

Department's director general Rohit Kumar Bisural said the Chinese team consulted with them in this regard. "It is understood that work on the detailed study has been started as they have arrived here for the same purpose," he added.

The Department said it will take three and half years for the study of the Kathmandu-Kerung railway for now.

Although it was said before that the Chinese government would carry out a study of the railway to Pokhara or Lumbini via Kathmandu, immediately there is no plan for this, Director General Bisural said.

According to him, 72 kilometers of the railway will lie within Nepal based on the preliminary study carried out before this. The Department stated that the railway line will originate from Kerung and connect Kathmandu via Rasuwagadhi.

"The study of the railway will be carried out in such a way that the railway track will bifurcate towards Nepal from the railway track going towards Mansarovar of Tibet from a lake above Kerung," said Bisural, the Railway Department Director General.

The Chinese government had sent a Letter of Undertaking (LoU) to Nepal based on an agreement reached five years back. The LoU was approved by the government on December 22 and the Chinese team arrived immediately after that. Bisural shared that the Chinese side had sent the LoU to Nepal in November. The Department forwarded

## BUSINESS BRIEF

the document to the Ministry of Finance for its action, but it was delayed for a long due to various reasons.

The pre-feasibility study of the railway was conducted in November 2018 and an agreement for carrying out the feasibility study was reached during the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Nepal from 12-13 October 2019.

After this, a memorandum of understanding was reached in course of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Nepal in March 2022 for expediting the feasibility study. Even though the Chinese government had stated that it will start several projects, it did not do so for some years citing the COVID-19 pandemic. The feasibility study of this railway was one of them.

Discussions on the matter between the officials of



Nepal and China were held after the National Railway Administration of China submitted a preliminary study report on the

Kerung-Kathmandu railway to the government.

The feasibility study report paved the way to do further homework on the issue of how and in which model to construct the railway.

The feasibility study report has incorporated a geographical study from Kathmandu-Kerung via Trishuli, and topographical features, among others. A detailed study is going to be held based on the preliminary study report.

The transit and Transport Agreement was one of the important documents signed during the China visit of President Bidya Devi Bhandari.

Similarly, Trans Himalaya Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network and Nepal-China Cross-Border Railway would be of great help to Nepal in the expansion of its connectivity network with China, it is said.

Construction of the railway, which Nepal is looking for with hope, is not easy due to the complex geographical territory. Most of the places of the railway would be inside the tunnel. Ninety-nine percent of the railway would be inside Nepal, reads the preliminary report.

### Himalayan Airlines Airbus Makes First Landing At Pokhara Int'l Airport

Himalaya Airlines Airbus A320-214 performed a successful demonstration flight at the Pokhara International Airport (PIA) on Sunday. For the Inauguration Ceremony of the PIA, Himalaya's narrow-body aircraft had taken off

from Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA), Kathmandu. With this, it has become the first airline to have landed an Airbus A320-214 in Pokhara.



The aircraft 9N-ALV was welcomed with a water cannon salute as an inaugural gesture. A team Himalaya led by Vijay Shrestha, Vice-President, Administrations and Captain Hao Di, VP of, Operations was received by high-ranking officials of PIA, the company said in a statement. The aircraft returned to the TIA later in the afternoon on Sunday.

### Technical Team Arrived To Fix Passport Software

With the arrival of the high-level Technical team from a software company, the Department of Passport hopes that they will fix the passport department's software problem and resume distribution regularly.

An expert team to fix the malfunctioning software of the department of passport is arriving in Kathmandu following an initiative from the technical team of the office of the Prime Minister (PMO).

A high-level technical team from IMEDIA, the technology company that provided software to the department of passport, has sent a team to solve the problem, said Surya Kiran Sharma, press coordinator of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'.

With the arrival of the high-level Technical team from a software company, the Department of Passport hopes that they will fix the passport department's software problem and resume distribution regularly.



A team of the PMO reached the passport department to see the problems on Wednesday after the department issued a notice about software malfunctioning and its inability to process passport issuance.

The PMO expert team also held discussions with the officials of the passport department and the representatives of IMEDIA in Nepal today again and then held talks



through video conference with the concerned officials of IMEDIA to immediately solve the problem.

The IMEDIA technical team dispatched from its headquarters is expected to arrive in Kathmandu today and start fixing the problems from tomorrow morning in such a way that such malfunctioning does not erupt in the future.

### **Slash Petro Prices: PM Prachanda**

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has instructed the Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) to take steps for reducing the prices of petroleum products.

According to the Prime Minister's Secretariat, the head of the government directed making adjustments in the



price of petroleum products commensurate with their international market price. At present, the prices of petroleum products have fallen in the global market.

During his meeting today with Toyam Raya, Secretary at

the Ministry of Commerce and Supplies, at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, the Prime Minister gave this instruction. The Commerce Secretary is the Chairperson of NOC, the State's monopoly of oil supplies.

According to the NOC's latest details, the NOC is likely to secure a profit of Rs 990 million in 15 days.

Despite a fall in the petro prices in the international market, the NOC is reluctant to adjust the prices citing a burden of previous losses though it has already switched to an automatic fuel pricing system. As it says, their debt obligation is worth Rs 18 billion.

The PM's direction follows the NOC's stand not to reduce the prices despite wider pressure for the same.

### **Rahughat Hydel Project To Be Completed By August, 2023**

The project manager of Rahughat Hydel Project Raj Bahadur Bista said that work has been accelerated from all aspects of the project to complete by August 2023. The deadline for the construction, which was completed a year ago, has been extended by another two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, floods and landslides, Bista said.

The construction of the 40 MW Rahughat hydropower project, under construction at Raghuganga Rural Municipality in Myagdi, has gained momentum recently.

Bista said that the preparation for the installation

of the equipment has been started along with the construction of the power plant building in Tilkenichaur. He said that the work of the power house is almost finished and the work of the unit base has started.

He said that the construction of the project has accelerated since October. "We have made the necessary preparations to continue the construction at the dam site even during the summer." A contract agreement was signed with Jaiprakash Associates (JP), the civil contractor for the project.

The project is being built with the joint investment of the NEA and the government and a concessional loan of USD 67 million from the Indian Export-Import (EXIM) Bank. After the expiry of the contract period of 45 months, it has been by two and a half years. The capacity of this project, which was initially designed at 32 MW, has now been increased to 40 MW.

According to the project, 40 per cent progress in physical infrastructure and 50 per cent in finance has been achieved so far. Construction of the tunnel, dam site and power house has been expedited together.

Rahuganga Hydropower Limited, a subsidiary company of Nepal Electricity Authority, which is overseeing the project, has already constructed 3,700m of the 6,270m long tunnel. The project manager Raj Bahadur Bista informed that the tunnel construction was going on through three audits along with the work of digging 180 to 200 meters of tunnel per month.

According to him, 60 per cent physical progress in

tunnel work has been made so far. Bista said that the necessary structures were going to



be built to continue the construction work at the dam site even during the rainy season.

According to the project, civil contractor Jaiprakash Associates has forwarded the construction of dam, tunnel and power house simultaneously. Around 400 labourers have been mobilised at the project site on a daily basis in addition to sufficient equipment.

# Where Is Money For The Climate Loss And Damage Fund?



BY: KATAK MALLA

'Show me the money'! This is part of the dialogue from the 1996 Hollywood film 'Jerry Maguire', with a screaming scene between the actors Cuba Gooding Jr and Tom Cruise. This dialogue metaphorically illustrates well the present situation with the people demanding political action in dealing with the dangers of climate emergency and the political leadership class who fail to fulfil promises made over the decades. Here, the focus is on the outcome of the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the world leaders having reached an agreement on the Loss and Damage Fund. This Fund is to be set up by the rich countries on the basis of voluntary individual contribution. COP 27 was held in Cairo, Egypt, marking 30 years of the UNFCCC. Each previous COP held every year has been branded as a 'make or break', but seldom delivered much needed decisions on emission reduction targets, climate finance and transfer of technology. Although the COP 27 outcome is being described as historic, no country has specified the amount of its financial commitment, e.g., who shall pay what amount and on what basis is unclear. Therefore, 'show me the money' is a crucial question.

Politics plays a starring role in this decision making. The political decisions (or lack thereof), thus, become a subject to critical scrutiny. The political leadership class are, and should, be held accountable for not taking the scientific findings seriously, especially the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports. Anthropogenic greenhouse gases identified by scientists include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, HCFCs, HFCs and CFCs. Scientists have pointed out that rapid temperature rise is a cause and consequence of anthropogenic greenhouse gases, threatening human life and ecosystem. The IPCC suggested actions for urgent stabilization of the global temperature to pre-industrial levels, i.e., below 1.5°C, in earnest. In its recent report (2022), IPCC warned as global temperature will exceed 1.5°C by the year 2030, if the current amount of global emission continues.

The fact that climate change impacts are felt by everyone and everywhere the situation increases the expectation on the decision making political class. What the de-

cision-makers did undertake - or did not- in the past three decades should be accounted for in view of some crosscutting issues, e.g., loss and damage, cutoff date of historical emissions, war and climate emergency.

## Financial schemes including loss and damage

At COP16, Cancun, established a Standing Committee on Finance. Since then, various kinds of financial schemes have been announced e.g., Green Climate Fund, Special Climate Change Fund, Least Developed Countries Fund and Adaptation Fund. Countries are expected to contribute to these schemes on a voluntary basis. The Green Climate Fund particularly aims to support clean energy, coastal protection, flood management, and climate resilient livelihoods for vulnerable communities. Where is the money for all these schemes?

COP19 Warsaw, Poland, established the Loss and Damage Mechanism to address vulnerable countries' need to deal with adverse effects of climate change. Despite the agreement on the Loss and Damage Fund in COP 27, its administration remains an issue for further discussion. Furthermore, the hidden agenda of the COP 27 outcomes is that no legal action will be allowed against states on their failure of emission cuts. As there are climate litigations being filed in different courts of the world against states' the acknowledgement of 'Loss and Damage' means that the developing countries seem to have given up their legal claim on historical emissions against industrial countries.

The track record of the world's rich countries is that promises have not been fulfilled by any country. For example, rich countries had earlier on made pledges to provide US\$100 billion per year by the year 2020. Further, the World Bank record shows \$31.7 billion funded for 'climate action targets', but most financed as loan instead of aid assistance, leading to vulnerable countries facing a debt crisis from loans to pay, which has never been a serious agenda of COP meetings. More often than not, when it comes to climate finance the rich countries point to the lack of financial sources. In reality, there is no lack either of will or money when it comes to waging wars, e.g., Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya as well as war in Ukraine. The world's arms traders are profiting from wars as did pharmaceutical



companies during the covid-19 pandemic time. No one is asking why the arms trade is outside the jurisdiction of the World Trade Organization (WTO) adjudication tribunals. The so-called preferential market access for goods from developing to developed countries has not made any tangible result under WTO rules.

#### A cutoff date on historical emissions

Although not perfect, UNFCCC is a reasonable agreement concluded by the world leaders from rich industrial as well as from developing countries. The crucial issue missing in UNFCCC is a cut-off date, holding emitters legally responsible. Instead of setting the year 1992 as a cutoff date, the implementation of the UNFCCC was left to benegotiated. No discussion or decision has been taken on acut-off date since then. This has never been a North-South agenda either.

COP 3, Kyoto, Japan, adopted the Kyoto Protocol 1997 as a legally binding agreement, whereby industrialised countries (and economies in transition) agreed to limit and reduce emissions with individual country targets. During the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (2008-2012) parties reduced their emissions by 12.5 percent through a complex system of emission trading, clean development and joint mechanisms. Except for EU member states, the other world leaders failed to extend Kyoto's second commitment period (2012-2020). The world leaders' indecisive character was exposed in 2009 at COP15 Copenhagen, Denmark, particularly in failing to continue the Kyoto Protocol. No one talks nowadays about COP15's outcome or 'Copenhagen Accord', known as 'legally non-binding political agreement.'

After a series of failed attempts to continue the Kyoto Protocol in the post-2012-era, the Paris Agreement was finally agreed upon in 2015. Kyoto Protocol-based emission trading is replaced by the Paris Agreement's so-called Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Whether NDCs will stabilise the exceeding temperature by the year 2030, remain to be seen. According to a report, NDCs submitted by 193 countries (in 2020) will only reduce global emissions by about 7% from 2019 levels by 2030.

Based on the culminating effect of anthropogenic emission and climate change as well as on the basis of due diligence principle, it is logical to argue that emissions of

UNFCCC parties after 1992 are unethical, if not illegal. The loss and damage caused by historical emission is the source of contention of North-South. It should be noted that North-South is not geographical, but rather about developmental gaps between richer industrial and poorer developing countries. Although emissions before 1992 may be considered unintentional, the emissions after 1992 are clearly intentional or negligent, which may constitute tortious liability (if not crime) against humanity and biodiversity. Now, the loss and damage is officially recognised, this is an attempt to keep climate issues outside adjudication.

#### War and climate emergency

At the time of the COP 27 the US is on the brink of war with Russia and China. Russia's aggression of Ukraine has turned into a war between two nuclear powers, the US and Russia, holding the most destructive weapons in the world. At the same time, China continues its deadly arms exercises around Taiwan. North and South Korea are fir-

ing missiles across the sea border. Even Iran is being dragged into the European war for allegedly selling drones to Russia.

The climate emergency is as dangerous as the threat of nuclear wars. Next COP to be held in the United Arab Emirates may sort out the working details of the loss and damage fund. Everyone must be aware that scientific research has established that the culminating effect of the



greenhouse gases emissions is resulting in a rapid global temperature rise. Most visible climate change impacts include global warming, changes in weather conditions and rainfall patterns as well as rising sea levels. These impacts in turn stand as obstacles in achieving UN sustainable development goals, e.g., prosperity for all, ending poverty and inequality, protecting the environment and ensuring health and justice by the year 2030. It is an emergency situation; time is running out to act, achieving sustainable development goals and stabilising global temperature rise, albeit with the ongoing war and energy shortages and food crisis. The political leadership class is responsible for the 27 years of failed negotiations. They have pushed the world to the brink of climate disaster and dangers of nuclear war.

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## POLITICS

# Left, Right...Right Left.....

*Pushpa Kamal Dahal, commonly known as Prachanda, has secured the support of a diverse group of political parties, including a liberal democrat party, a communist party, and a right-wing party. However, this is not unusual in Nepali politics and that “rainbow alliances” have been a characteristic of the political process in Nepal for the past 70 years. In the last seventy years of modernization of the political process, such surprising rainbow alliances remain the main character of Nepali politics. PM Prachanda secures vote of confidence with a historic majority*

By KESHAB POUDEL

The decision of the Nepali Congress to vote in favor of a vote of confidence motion at the House of Representatives on January 10 supporting Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda was surprising for many. He Prachanda, a radical Maoist leader, is the first prime minister in the last 8 years to receive the vote from rightists, regional Madheshis, leftists and centrists. Only two members representing radical communist parties voted against him.

Different parties are able to put aside their differences and work together for the sake of power. However, it can also be challenging to maintain such a coalition, as the different parties may have competing priorities and agendas.

Prime Minister secures vote of confidence with a historic majority, which implies that the PM has strong support from the parliament, further strengthening his position in the government. Nepal's political scenario is

complex, and it's a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual country and to maintain a balance among them, a coalition government is needed.

With this backing Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has secured a historic vote of confidence. A total of 268 out of 270 members of the House of Representatives (HoR) present in the meeting voted for the proposal on

the vote of confidence to the government presented today at the HoR meeting by PM Prachanda.

Out of 275 members of the HoR, 270 members were present in the HoR meeting on January 10. CPN (Maoist Center) Chairman Prachanda was appointed the Prime Minister of Nepal on December 25, 2022.

Pashupati Shumsher JB







Rana, the senior-most member of the HoR who presided over the HoR meeting, declared that PM Prachanda has got 268 votes in favor of his proposal while two votes were against the proposal, and thus PM Prachanda got the vote of confidence. He said 270 members of the HoR were present in the meeting.

As Prime Minister Prachanda receiving the highest vote was unusual, the political alliance announced by Maoist leader Prachanda and UML leader KP Sharma Oli, who were in a fight to eliminate each other's political existence eating oranges in Prachanda house, was also shocking.

Another surprising event is the rise of TV anchor Rabi Lamichhane and his independent party in power. Lamichhane went to Oli house and became deputy prime minister and home minister and Monarchist RPP supported the republican Prachanda was another accidental incident in Nepali politics in recent times.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the first person to congratulate Prachanda who arrived to take the oath of prime minister by

posting wishes on his social media on the birth anniversary of Chinese leader Mao.

Indian Prime Minister Modi, a devout Hindu, was the first leader to congratulate the anti-religionist Maoist leader Prachanda, but it was a regular occurrence. India has always seen the pro-Hindu monarchy of Nepal as being close to communist and Republican China.

From Monarchy to Democracy and present-day democracy, the system, characters and trends have changed but sudden and unexpected events are happening regularly in different periods with no political ideology taking shape.

However, those were a regular occurrence in Nepali politics. Giving a shocking surprise to political analysts, common people and Nepal's western and other friends, Maoist Center Leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal, a staunch republican and hardcore follower of radical Chinese communist leader Mao claims the formation of a government with an alliance with Rajendra Lingden, leader of Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), a staunch monarchist, anti-secularist and anti-federalist.

Along with RPP, Nepal Swatantra Party was led by former Television Program producer Lamichhane, who emerged in a mysterious and surprising circumstance vocally criticizing CPN-UML leader KP. Sharma Oli, Maoist Leader Prachanda and Nepali Congress leader Sher Bahadur Deuba with #no not again# in Twitter, backed the Maoist leader in reconciling with Oli. Lamichhane, who was sent to custody during the tenure of PM Oli and whose case on Citizenship and passport issues is in court, became deputy prime minister and Minister of Home Affairs.

As the formation of the government under Maoist leader Prachanda was surprising, the decision of the Nepali Congress decided to support the vote of confidence motion for a Prachanda-led government is another surprising event in politics.

Mobilizing the support of all major political parties, Prime Minister Prachanda has shown that Nepali politics does not have strong ideological differences.

Although the current political alliances and matchmaking



are surprising and unbelievable for the diplomats and leaders of western countries, what happened on the floor of the House of Representatives on Tuesday ((January 10) and the meeting between Maoist leader Prachanda and UML leader K.P. Sharma Oli, die-heart rivals splitting the party 17 months ago, on December (17) were accidental but regular phenomenon which has been occurring in Nepal over the last seven decades.

Even the ongoing politics shocked Balen Shah, the mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City who has surprisingly emerged in the politics of Kathmandu defeating two main contenders of major political parties.

On social media, he wrote “I will return the king”, “I don’t want the king”, and “I will kill the king”. All three are in government. We the people are always suffering.

As seen by Mayor Balen, this was not the first and will not be the last incident where political Bam-Bam, Kang Bam and Rajabadi have come together and separated.

The formation of the Maoist Center and the UML coalition, which is now running a coalition government with the backing of the other three parties, shocked everyone including Nepali in 2073. In the name of left unity, CPN-UML and Maoist jointly untested federal election against the Nepali Congress, a coalition partner of the Maoist Center then.

Another surprise was the merger of the Maoist Center and UML as one party within a year. But the government led by KP Oli, who had a two-thirds majority in the HoR, collapsed like a house of cards.

Nepali Congress leader Deuba became prime minister in an HoR which was reinstated under the order of the court. With the support and backing from Prachanda and Madhav Kumar Nepal, NC leader Deuba run a coalition government for 18 months and contested the local and federal elections-making alliance.

In the same way, no one could have imagined that the party of Television news producer and

anchor Lamichhane would get such success in the recently concluded election he would become the Home and Deputy Prime Minister.

No one thought that Lamichhane of the independent party, which raised slogans against Oli, Deuba and Prachanda, with #no not again # campaign, would so soon accept the shelter of the same leaders.

In the political horizon of Nepal, such seemingly accidental events have been happening regularly since the first mass movement of 1990/91 was being prepared.

Even the idea that the Seven Communist Party Alliance, which included radical, moderate and anti-revisionism, and the Nepali Congress, which considers itself liberal democratic, will form a united front and unite in the anti-Panchayat movement.

As the anti-Rana moment of 2007 (1951) ended with a power-sharing agreement between the revolutionary Nepali Congress and oppressor Rana forming the national government accidentally, all the political events and changes since then



concluded with agreement among the hostile ideology.

In 1990 when people all over the world were overthrowing the communist regime including the collapse of the Soviet Union and many communist regimes of eastern Europe, Nepali Communists, extremely radical, moderate, and liberal, formed seven party alliance and joined the front with Nepali Congress to overthrow Panchayat.

Communists were not only able to overthrow Panchayat; they also rose as a strong political force in Nepal against the global trends of anti-communism.

Nepali Congress and Communist Parties overthrow Panchayat and they did not allow Panchas to contest the elections in 1991 leaving only 4 seats for former Panchas. Four years later in the mid-term elections of 1995, Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) emerged as a key party with 20 members in the hung House of Representatives of 205.

Backed by CPN-UML and Nepali Congress, the late Surya Bahadur Thapa and Lokendra Bahadur Chandra rung the minority government side by side.

No one expected that Nepali Congress leader Girija Prasad Koirala and radical Maoist leader Prachanda, who killed and displaced thousands of NC workers, would ally against the monarchy. However, by signing the 12-point agreement,

NC not only launched a joint struggle with Maoist against the monarchy but also backed the Maoist agenda for republic, federalism and secularism.

These events are constantly destabilizing the country. Due to this instability, new characters, trends and characters are constantly rising and falling in politics.

Situated between two geographically and economically emerging giant countries in world politics, Nepal remains constantly unstable due to such sudden events brought about by geopolitical

As Nepal, a traditional, underdeveloped country, has limited economical and political capacity, such regular but accidental events will occur repeatedly and there is no solution shortly.

With immature political and power-monger leadership in power, there is likely that the unstable situation will be prolonged for a long time to come. For the sake of power, political leaders continue to sacrifice the ideology of left and right.

After Rabi and Oli, there will be Kabi or Sabi in political power which will continue to put Nepal

into a course of prolonged political instability.

In Nepal, which is connected with India by civilization, culture, religion and geography, Communists have an overwhelming majority and depth influence. Although India has been ruled by the Bam party Bharatiya Janata Party



maneuvers.

In the words of the late Leo Rose, an American expert on Nepal, the events of sudden political upheaval that occur regularly in Nepal are the destiny of Nepal. Late Rose writes in his Book Strategy for Survival that the internal policy of a small country depends on the foreign policy of a large country and the foreign policy of a large country is influenced by its internal policy. In this context, Nepal's internal political dynamic has nothing to do with the ideology of left, right, centrist and communist.

ty wiping out communists, Nepal's communists are rising and ruling the country from time to time. Given the ideological closeness with India, the influence of Nepal's liberal and rightist democrats is shrinking.

Regular occurrences of the political alliance of left, right, right, center and right, left right are the nature of Nepal's politics, while instability is the destiny. From this perspective, the alliance of left, right, center, extreme left and centrist seen recently in the formation of the new government are just a regular and continuation phenomenon.

# Three Diverse Missions And An Argument



BY: HEMANT ARJYAL

The instant reach of the social media while being good and helpful is also a fertile ground for spreading doctored/fake materials. But it is a no small work to bring out unrecorded facts before it becomes too late. Being nothing more than an “aviation geek” I follow aviation more as a passion and try to write not too often. But doing so also entails earning the ire of people within the fraternity. Sadly, some get irked, quite so often, even when plainly at fault. But I will continue to pose questions, interpret things differently, suggest extreme solutions or even have misgivings about big project etc.

That said, there must be numerous important events that are not yet fully understood or known. It will be prudent to bring out facts, if it is still possible to get them, before it becomes too late. And this is no less true in the case of Nepal aviation. There are not many left who can still provide a glimpse into our early aviation days. This piece is precisely about some such events as detailed by a retired RA captain Capt. KK Shrestha, currently cruising through mid-eighties. This piece aims to describe events related to circumstances of early years that had necessitated conducting flights even during period beyond permissible hours. Four incidents related to Nepal aviation are dealt here, with the oldest one listed last.

One cannot blame people for cursing disturbing unearthly hour aircraft noise these days. The cause of the problem lies is the lack of interest on the part of Civil Aviation Authority Nepal (CAAN) for being utterly inept in restricting noisy aircraft or to show any inclination in enforcing noise abatement procedures (NAP) as one expects of a responsible organization.

Talking about the past, Department of Civil Aviation (DCA), in collaboration with RNAC (RA) in 1977, had designed night flying procedures to let RA get more productive hours out of its B727s. And it became possible to fly under instrument flying rules (IFR) only after the installation of the first VOR/DME at Koteswor. The next step was to design the safe ap-

proach and departure procedures. As such, several daytime practice runs were made to achieve the most suitable profile. The first B727 night trial runs were successfully conducted on November 17, 1977. Imagine the hurry, RA operated its first commercial night arrival from Bangkok the very next evening. Unfortunately, the relations between RA and CAAN is more “confrontational” these days as the recent incident with hundreds of passengers made to suffer quite unnecessarily, all because of someone’s deplorable ego.

It was nothing less than sensational in 1974 to see Army’s Skyvans heading west some three hours before sunrise. As later learned, the army was in a rush to seal Col. Gey Wengdi’s escape route. While camped in Nepal, Wengdi was running insurgency operations in Tibet with CIA’s help. He was felled at Tinkar-lipu on September 15, 1974 near about 30N/81E location, less than three kilometers from the India “occupied” Nepal territory. Obviously, the flight did not come within the ambit of civil aviation rules. Nevertheless, it is an important part of little known Nepal military aviation history now.

A brief background becomes necessary to help understand the Palungtar mission of November 2, 1960. Following the first parliament election the government led by BP Koirala was installed. An uprising had been ongoing in Gorkha and its surrounding since about a year and was initiated by none other than Yogi Naharainath. The Yogi was a scholar and a staunch nationalist, but also an overtly outspoken person. He even labeled the King Mahendra for being too weak and was naturally not too kind with political parties either. Taking advantage of the ongoing unrest, other small parties also started playing mischief by not just spreading rumours but carrying out not just looting, but even arson. In one rather nasty firing incident at Gorkha on October 25, 1960 (9 Kartik 2017) ten persons happened to be killed and seven injured (as quoted by Rajesh Gautam citing GB Devkota). Some eight days after the incident an aircraft was dispatched



to Palungtar (known also as Gorkha airport), on the banks of Marsyangdi, to fly the injured to Kathmandu. The flight was run by a DC3 (9N-AAE) and was captained by ASP Jaipal with KK Shrestha as the FO. They had clear instructions from the Royal palace to get the injured to Kathmandu “at any cost” that day. As the winter days are shorter, the sunset was at 17:04 hours local.

The pilots waited at Palungtar the whole day, not knowing when or if the injured will ever arrive from Gorkha. As it was getting late they were repeatedly asked by the ministry, unaware of the palace’s instruction, to night stop at Gorkha if unable to depart well before sun set. Interestingly, while the pilots, on their part, were telling “Gauchar” to be on the “stand-by”. The injured finally arrived early evening on mules with most suffering advanced stage of gangrene. Air-lifting them became more of an act of mercy than abiding by the rule. The pilots decided to take-off not minding the overpowering stench that had even engulfed the cockpit. As per the logbook they departed at 17:25 and arrived Kathmandu at 17:55.

But they just asked to position two jeeps at the grassy RWY34 end, beaming into the direction of the runway. Fortunately, it was a day before the full moon and that was a big help. Both pilots were ready to face the music for disobeying, but they were not duly concerned as they safely made it, as instructed.

The last case relates to an interesting night stopping incident at Dhangadi. Captain KK is not sure about the exact date, but feels it was before the Palungtar mission. This involved two pilots namely Capt PK Mondol and Co-pilot KB Singh. The third person was a Radio officer named AK Sen. As usual, the pilots got into a light-hearted argument, as they sat drinking. It turned serious as, who, among the two, was the most

daring pilot. They wanted to prove it at that instant. They took off into the night sky, not bothering about how they will ever land. What they did was illegal, undisciplined and, above all, unauthorized. They even wanted AK Sen to come along but he bluntly declined.

We do not know for how long they flew over, or if they could see anything at all. Ironically, Sen was more worried about getting them safely on the ground than two drunks flying in the dark and he was sensible enough as to know what he was required to do. He raised the alarm and got villagers nearby to help in lighting two bonfires at ends of the grassy runway. And he also had people run with a burning torch along the runway edge. This was enough to let drunks land

back safely, to everyone’s relief. We do not know if the dispute between the two was settled or not.

Guilt-ridden KB Singh resigned the very next day and was never heard thereafter. AK Sen, a Bengali from Calcutta, died about a few years ago. Mondol had made great contributions to Nepal aviation and was



undoubtedly a very daring pilot. He continued with RA even after the said incident. He is said to have repeated a similar prank somewhere in Borneo/Malaysia later but was lucky to survive again.

Capt Prafulla Mondol was known as Prof. Mondol and he even penned a spy fiction titled “Operation Tibet” set in Kathmandu of the early 60s. But no matter what, the Dhangadi incident marks an unrecorded event making it the first ever night flying in Nepal even if the act itself was unbecoming of good airmanship.

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# Nepal Has Made Significant Progress In Increasing Its Clean Energy Generation Capacity: DINESH KUMAR GHIMIRE

**DINESH KUMAR GHIMIRE** is an electrical engineer who has spent his entire career in the civil service working for various agencies under the Ministry of Energy, Irrigation and Water Resources in Nepal. Ghimire has held various policy-level positions and has participated in bilateral meetings to formulate energy policy. Recently, Nepal has been transitioning from fossil fuels to clean energy sources as part of its commitment to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and Nationally Determined Contributions. To aid in this transition, Ghimire is currently serving as the head of the energy ministry. At the UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC) COP 27 in Cairo, Ghimire presented Nepal's energy transition policy and future strategy. Nepal is also exporting surplus hydroelectricity worth over Rs. 11 billion to India and promoting the use of electric cooking and electric vehicles to minimize the use of LPG and petroleum products, respectively. As Nepal is in a crucial phase of its energy transition, Ghimire is well-suited to lead the ministry. In a recent interview, Ghimire discussed various issues related to the energy transition, including the export of energy, expansion of transmission lines, and upgrading of distribution systems to increase domestic consumption. Excerpts:

**As Nepal is moving towards achieving the target for clean energy, how do you see the preparation?**

Nepal has made significant progress in increasing its clean energy generation capacity and is now focusing on improving its infrastructure to better utilize this energy domestically. It is important to have a strong transmission and distribution system in place to ensure that the generated electricity can be effectively distributed and used. It is also good to see that Nepal is prioritizing domestic use of electricity before exporting any excess. It is always beneficial for a country to prioritize meeting the energy needs of its own citizens before exporting resources. It is understandable that it may take some time to build the necessary infrastructure to increase demand, but it is important to continue making progress in this area to ensure a reliable and sustainable energy supply for the country.

**What is the priority of Nepal?**

Our priority is to use electricity domestically. We will export the electricity that is left out after domestic use. Now we are exporting electricity because we have a surplus. Because of a lack of integrated planning for the transmission, distribution and generation in the past, we are unable to increase our domestic consumption even after the completion of major projects like 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi. We have load demand but we don't have the infrastructures to supply it. It will take some time to build infrastructures to escalate demand. There is generation and investments have already been made including about Rs.90 billion

in Upper Tamakoshi. In this scenario, we have completed exporting electricity to protect the investment.

**How do you see the possibility of increasing domestic consumption?**

It's certainly true that increasing domestic consumption of electricity can be beneficial for Nepal's economic growth and prosperity. However, it's also important to consider the potential benefits of exporting electricity to other countries. Exporting electricity can be a source of revenue for Nepal, and it can also help to strengthen international relationships and increase trade. Additionally, exporting electricity can help to stabilize the domestic electricity market by providing a reliable source of demand for excess electricity that might not be needed domestically. It's important for Nepal to carefully consider both the potential benefits and potential drawbacks of exporting electricity, and to develop a strategy that takes into account all of these factors.

**How does Nepal contribute to global emission reduction?**

It is true that Nepal's clean hydropower has the potential to contribute to global emission reduction efforts. Hydropower is a renewable energy source that does not produce greenhouse gas emissions during operation, making it a valuable option for countries looking to reduce their carbon footprint. Exporting hydropower to other countries can also be a source of revenue for Nepal, which could be used to fund further development of the country's energy infrastructure.



However, it is important to consider the potential environmental impacts of hydroelectric projects and ensure that they are developed in a sustainable manner. Large hydroelectric projects can have significant impacts on local ecosystems, including the displacement of communities and changes to the natural flow of rivers. It is important to consider these impacts and take steps to minimize them whenever possible.

**You attended the COP27 Cairo. How do you present Nepal's case?**

During the UNFCCC COP27 in Cairo, Nepal firmly supported the agenda for global emission reduction. It sounds like Nepal is taking significant steps towards reducing its emissions and working towards a sustainable future. The commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 or even before 2045 is a ambitious and important goal. It is important for all countries to take action to reduce their emissions in order to address the global challenge of climate change. It is heartening to hear that Nepal is actively working towards this goal and participating in international discussions on emission reduction.

I have presented Nepal's energy scenario and the potential to generate clean energy. As Nepal has committed its position to zero emissions through Social Development Goals 2030 and NDC, how do you present the state of Nepal? Nepal has already announced its long-term strategy for net-zero emissions through NDC. We have been working to achieve it. Nepal's goal is to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, whilst reaching net zero before or by 2045.

As the new NDC states that Nepal is in the process of formulating a long-term low greenhouse gas (GHG) emission development strategy to be ready this year and aiming to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2050, what Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation view?

Since Nepal's goal is to be carbon-free by 2045. Similarly, Nepal has committed to providing 15 percent of the country's overall energy consumption from clean energy sources by 2030. The ministry has



already submitted its target to the National Planning Commission. Nepal has ambitious goals for increasing the use of clean energy and reducing its carbon emissions. It will be important for the government to work closely with various agencies and stakeholders to ensure that these goals are met. This may involve developing policies and regulations to promote the use of clean energy, providing incentives for individuals and businesses to switch to clean energy sources, and investing in research and development to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of clean energy technologies. It may also be necessary to address any challenges or barriers that may be hindering the adoption of clean energy in Nepal. However, there needs to be more coordination among different ministries. The Ministry of Energy is a key ministry responsible for implementing energy components. We have been doing so now through the Nepal Electricity Authority and Alternative Energy Promotion Centers.

**What steps is the government taking now?**

We are also working to strengthen the public transportation network and turn more vehicles electric by 2030 to achieve carbon neutrality. The Nepal Electricity Authority has been investing huge resources in strengthening the distribution system and expansion of transmission lines. Along with promoting electric cooking, NEA has already installed electric charging stations in different parts of Nepal to charge electric vehicles. The Ministry is committed to taking action to support the initiatives of SDGs by improving ac-

## INTERVIEW

cess to efficient and environmentally friendly energy sources. In this regard, the Ministry has already announced programs to replace LPG with electric cooking and other clean energy sources, including biogas.

### **How do you see the hydropower sector?**

The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has been working its best to improve the expanded distribution systems and transmission system. Despite many obstructions, it is doing its best. Hydropower development is an emerging sector that provides clean energy resources in Nepal. The currently installed hydroelectricity capacity has crossed over 1200 MW. The increasing trend in hydroelectricity development in Nepal is expected to meet the country's demand for cleaner energy to improve the quality of life for its citizens. As the installed hydroelectricity capacity increases, the GDP per capita tends to increase. Therefore, there is an urgent need to increase electricity production to increase the socioeconomic development of the people.

**As clean energy is a core agenda in the UN-FCCC negotiations, particularly in the context of emission reduction, how much does the Ministry represent in such negotiations?**

Given the current global scenario, the representation of ministries in such global negotiations is inevitable. For instance, Nepal has a high level of energy-based-CO<sub>2</sub> and Nepal does not have other alternatives than zero-emission hydropower. So far as the representation issue of the Ministry in such negotiations is concerned, it needs to increase. We need to do more homework and preparation among the ministries. We also participated in the COP27 under the leadership of the Ministry of Forest and Environment. My experience is that we should have done the homework and prepared for one month well. We should have discussed what outstanding issues were raised in COP26 and what Nepal should prepare for COP27. Had we participated in the COP27 with adequate preparation based upon the role of sectoral ministry, Nepal's position would have been more effectively raised. It does not mean that Nepal has not made an effort. However, it would produce strong results and excellent results. After taking part in the meeting, I

also discussed the issue with the secretary of the Ministry of Forest and Environment and they acknowledged our point. Because of a lack of preparation and coordination, our presentations were ad-hoc and it affected our presentations.

### **How does the Ministry present its opinion?**

Our ministry has been regularly presenting its views and sharing our policies on energy issues through the National Planning Commission, cabinet secretariat and various inter-ministerial meetings. On our part, the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation has been doing its best. Along with the Nepal Electricity Authority, the Alternative Energy Promotion Center has been actively implementing the programs to fulfill NDC's goal and SDGs. We regularly have secretary-level round table meetings. We have been working in the area.

**As the report has shown that the use of induction has increased as many folds as the number of electric vehicles, is Nepal at the stage of the energy transition? Do you see any major shift in the foreseeable future in ten years?**

Nepal has already gained momentum in the energy transition. I have a concise case to prove it. During my tenure as a secretary at the Water and Energy Commission, we did a study on energy transition. a part of our study, we randomly visited a few industries in two different provinces. Charging of the Mahinia-Nautunwa cross border transmission line has had a significant impact on the energy transition in Bhairawa, specifically in the industries we visited. The increased reliability of the power supply has allowed these industries to switch from using fossil fuels to electricity, which can have environmental benefits. It's also good to hear that these industries no longer have to rely on stockpiling energy sources due to unreliable power supplies. This is a positive development in the transition towards a more sustainable energy system. Do you have any other examples or information about Nepal's progress in the energy transition?

### **Where did you visit?**

Our first visit was to an industry in Bhairawa. During our studies, we went to three different indus-





tries: Ambe Steel, Jagadaamba Cement and Jagadamba Spinning Mills. We found that these three industries have already moved forward to the energy transition. They used to furnish oil, husk, and coal for the boiler. However, they now have a big stock of such energy sources and are searching for a market to sell those products. After the charging of the Mahinia-Nautunwa 132 kV cross-border transmission line, the tipping of electricity came to an end. Due to a reliable supply of electricity, these industries switched to electricity. In the past, they used to depend on those sources because of unreliable power supplies. These three industries secured the supply from the Mahinia substation. We got the feedback that there is virtually zero tipping after the charging of the transmission line. This shows that the reliability of the power supply is key to transforming energy.

### **What is the state of the industry?**

All three industries are now exploring the market to sell their stock of furnished oil, husk and coal for around Rs.50 million. Frequent tipping increased the cost of production as well. They are all using electricity now, which is cheaper than other energy sources. Compared to their monthly energy cost of Rs.50 million to furnish oil, husk and coal, they are now paying merely Rs. 30 million for electricity. They save a hundred percent of the fuel cost. Another encouraging sign is that they also increase productivity. Jagadamba Spinning Mill's market is around the world with 60 percent India, 20 percent Nepal and 20 percent Turkey. After the regular supply of electricity, their production capacity has increased from 25000 metric tons to 48,000 metric tons. Earlier, they had 3 MVA transformers and upgraded to 6 MVA and now they are planning to install an 8.5 MVA transformer. In a liberalized and open market, supply creates demand. These three industrial cases show that reli-

ability in supply will increase market demand. Once the demand increases, it will replace coal, furnish oil, diesel and husk with clean hydroelectricity. They are already in transition to clean energy. This situation is gradually moving in the industrial sector. However, our challenges are to build infrastructures and supply reliable electricity.

### **Have you also done studies on the implications of frequent tipping?**

Yes, we also did it. During our study, we



also encountered a problem faced by the dairy industry in Surkhet due to frequent tipping of electricity. Having lost a huge If we are not able to strengthen the transmission line and distribution system, we will also visit a local dairy in Surkhet which is still heavily dependent upon fossil fuels declining to connect with NEA's grid. Due to frequent tip-

ping, the Dairy does not want to switch to NEA's grid as the dairy requires an uninterrupted power supply. These two studies have shown that a reliable supply of electricity in the domestic market can replace fossil fuels.

### **What outcome do you draw?**

It shows that the supply of electricity is not long enough. What is important is that quality and uninterrupted supply is key to increasing domestic demand. Although Surkhet has NEA's grid supply, it is unreliable and low quality. We are now talking about the surplus of generation and low demand. Given the two studies, what I have seen is that the demand will automatically increase once we provide regular electricity. Enhancing the infrastructure and reliability is highly important to replace fossil-based energy. Our strategy is to replace fossil fuels with clean electricity. The use of clean energy has been increasing from 3 percent in the past to now 7 percent, including renewable energy.

CHANDRA PRASAD DHAKAL

# Humble Banker

*Starting from a small financial institution limiting its activities in the remittance, chairman of Global IME Bank Chandra Prasad Dhakal, a former employee of a public sector commercial bank, establish himself as the number 1 banker in Nepal in a matter of just three decades. In his long journey, senior vice president of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) Dhakal, a humble and soft-spoken person from Baglung district, has diversified his investment focusing on banking, the recreation industry with cable cars. Dhakal will assume the post of president in the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the oldest and largest business body following its general assembly slated for April reaching the top of Nepal's overall business sector. Despite all these achievements, nothing has changed in his humility, reconciliatory and humble behavior*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Great mountaineer Edmund Hillary said, “You don’t have to be a fantastic hero to do certain things — to compete. You can be just an ordinary chap, sufficiently motivated to reach challenging goals.”

Edmund Hillary’s words are

vation and determination, and to be willing to work hard and persevere through challenges. It’s also important to remember that we all have our own unique strengths and abilities, and that it’s possible to achieve success by focusing on our own goals and working to improve ourselves. It’s possible for anyone, no matter what their background or circumstances, to achieve great things if they have the right mindset and are willing to put in the effort to reach their goals.

Chairman of IME Group Chandra Prasad Dhakal proves that a simple and humble person sufficiently motivated to reach challenging goals can do it. Born in the remote village

of Baglung District in a middle-class Brahmin family, Dhakal is now a leading businessman in the country.

Following the merger of

Global IME Bank and Bank of Kathmandu, Dhakal becomes the chairman of the biggest commercial bank in the banking sector of Nepal. How a coincidence, he is going to be president of FNCCI from April 2023.

It’s certainly true that qualities like patience, courage, and humility can be beneficial in helping a person achieve their goals. These traits can help a person persevere through challenges and setbacks, make difficult decisions with confidence, and remain open to learning and growing.

Chandra Prasad Dhakal has exemplified these qualities in his career and has been able to achieve success as a result. It’s important to remember that achieving success often requires hard work, dedication, and a willingness to take risks and learn from mistakes.

Once he takes a charge of president in April, Dhakal is also going to be a leader of Nepal’s industrial and business community. This will be another feather in his hat.

A great Chinese philosopher Confucius said small always wins the race and nothing no one can pull and push a person with humility. Establishing himself as an entrepreneur in the large-scale cable car industry, Dhakal has shown an example of



certainly inspiring and remind us that we don’t have to be extraordinary or exceptional in order to achieve great things. It’s important to have moti-





how to make success in the recreation industry. Along with Chandragiri, Dhakal is also opening two cable car and recreation centers in Maulakali and Butwal soon.

Supported and backed by his brother Hem Raj Dhakal, who has recently been elected as a President of Chandragiri Hills Limited, support from the family has helped Dhakal to chart the course in other activities.

Entered the business through a small business, Dhakal has still retained his humility and politeness in the business which is one of the factors behind winning the heart of business communities from all over Nepal in an institution controlled by traditional business families of Nepal.

### Bank Merger

In a program attended by Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal as a chief guest and many other highly important dignitaries from the central bank, civil service, business communities and other people, Dhakal addressed the gathering of the joint operation program with his soft and sober words.

“After the merger of Global IME Bank and Bank of Kathmandu, we become the first commercial bank of the country,” said Global IME Bank Chairman Dhakal. “Despite the growing size, our motto and qual-

ity remain the same to provide modern, efficient banking service in the country.”

Dhakal still gives high priority to remittance service. “We will give priority to bringing back money earned by the Nepalese in the Gulf and other countries and deliver their income at homes,” said Dhakal/

With the beginning of the unified transaction with the Bank of Kathmandu, the Global IME Bank has the total capital fund of Rs 57 billion, the total deposit of Rs 410 billion, the total loans of Rs 400 billion, total assets of Rs 500 billion and 1,100 branches. The Bank stated that it also has three foreign contact offices, besides its branches in all the districts within the country.

Following the merger and joint operation, the bank has become the largest bank in Nepal in terms of total capital, paid-up capital and business size. The Board of Directors of the new bank will consist of 5 directors including Chairman Chandra Prasad Dhakal on behalf of Global IME Bank and 2 directors on behalf of Bank of Kathmandu.

Ratnaraj Bajracharya, the CEO of Global IME Bank, will be the Chief Executive Officer of the bank in the same manner as the bank’s total capital, paid-up capital and business size.

With a total of 365 branch

He said that the policy of the Nepal government and Nepal Rastra Bank to have few but effective modern banking systems is a good vision. “With the merger, we are implementing the merger policy and this will also inspire you to join the merger,” said Dhakal.

Dhakal also pointed out the risk involved as a big bank. “Being a big bank, there are risks and managerial challenges. Because of the experience of merging many times, we will address the challenges easily.”

Started banking business bringing remittances back home,



## PROFILE

offices, 367 ATMs, 286 branchless banking services, 61 extended branch offices, and 3 contact offices located abroad, Global IME Bank has more than 4 million customers.

At the formal ceremony of the merger, Dhaka claimed that Global IME will be a bank that will bring great changes not only in numbers and size but also in the economy and financial sector.

### Inauguration Program

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has said that banks and financial institutions' role is vital to establish financial inclusion in Nepal.

During a launching ceremony of the integrated transactions of the Global IME and the Bank of Kathmandu today, the Prime Minister said the foundation for financial inclusion could be prepared and consolidated by ensuring easy access of entire communities to banking services.

The Prime Minister on the occasion stated the firm for results-oriented delivery to address existing is used in the economy.

"The very first meeting of the Council of Ministers of the incumbent government decided to make efforts for balanced implementation of the financial and monetary policies to make the economy vibrant and to cooperate and collaborate with the private sector to seek solutions to the current economic issues collectively," the Prime Minister said. the be-

lieved opinion that it may be easier for banks and financial institutions to manage resources for big projects and to enhance organizational efficiency with the enforcement of a merger.



"More the merger would contribute to discouraging unhealthy competition in the relevant sector. But our concern should be for ensuring unhindered access of people to quality services," he asserted.

Stating that the banking sector had a significant role to making remittance transactions reliable and

ties for them.

Chief Secretary Shanker Das Bairagi said the government was serious and would take effective steps in increasing their morale. "There have been positive indications in the country's economy. There is no point wherein the private sector should be in fear. The government prioritizes them."

Chief secretary Bairagi expressed the hope that the merger between the two largest commercial banks will achieve a more diverse and dynamic banking system for the country.

He said that this will be able to meet the needs of citizens and businesses alike. He also said that mergers will make it easier to raise resources for large projects, increase efficiency

The Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, Maha Prasad Adhikari has said that banks should be self-regulated and enter the productive sector.

He expressed the view that the merger will make the institutions stronger.

He said that banks should reduce single-customer limits and target small loans. He requested that when the bank is big, the single loan limit will be large and they should set the limit themselves and issue small loans.

To get out of this complex and challenging situation, the government has to do some urgent work and some structural reforms.

Even in the minimum common program of the government, sus-



safe, the Prime Minister echoed the need of exploring ways for financial innovations, of promoting people's financial accessible, and literacy and increase self-employment opportuni-



tainable economic development and empowerment of the economy have been put forward as major agendas. Programs include good governance, effective service delivery, changes in policies, laws and structures that hinder the prosperity drive, and effective arrangements for inter-agency coordination and monitoring.

Our financial system will be more secure when banks and financial institutions merge, which is what the system and economy are looking for. Organizations will become more healthy. Will be stronger. This policy has been brought with the expectation that the contribution of individual banks in the banking system will also increase in the economy.

‘Shekhar Gaelchha, the president of the Federation of Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that the economy will be strong only if the banks are strong.

On the occasion of the launch of the integrated business of Global IME Bank and Bank of Kathmandu, he opined that the challenges will also increase as the bank becomes bigger after the merger.

“Being older, the responsibility has increased. 4 million customers should be looked at. The challenge is to give reasonable interest to the depositors and subsidized interest to the borrowers. Be successful in doing that.

According to him, a positive impact on the economy will not be seen unless the government ramped up the development expenditure. Stating that banks and financial institutions are the backbones of the economy, Golchha said the profit of banks should also be seen by linking it with

their investments.

Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) president Bishnu Kumar Agrawal said the private sector’s present expectation from the government and the Nepal Rastra Bank is a decrease in the interest rate and ease of liquidity.

The CNI president added that it would contribute to national capital formation and the government’s achieving the targeted revenue when the BFIs increase investment in the productive sectors.

### Dhakal’s Leadership

As he is going to lead the largest commercial bank and FNCCI, senior Dhakal has also started to hand

ture such as Bhaleshwar Mahadev Temple, Sattal, View Tower, Children’s Park, Seminar Hall, Adventure Games and five-star luxury resort in Chandragiri hill which has historical, cultural and natural importance.

At a time when the country’s economic status is not that healthy with a liquidity crisis, high bank interest rates, decreasing demand and external sector pressure, the experiences of Dhakal will be an asset for the country. Dhakal’s commitment during the inauguration that he has always stood for the promotion of the

private sector and the prosperity of the people is remarkable. As Chinese philosopher, Confucius said crisis comes with opportunities as well because they are brother twins. Dhakal has already shown this.

Chandra Prasad Dhakal has had a successful

career and is highly respected in the business community in Nepal. It’s impressive that he has been able to establish himself as a leader in the banking industry and diversify his investments to include the recreation industry. It’s also notable that he has maintained a humble and reconciliatory demeanor despite his achievements. It’s important for leaders in any field to remember to stay humble and open to learning and improving, as this can help them continue to grow and succeed.



over responsibility to his brother. In a recent annual meeting, Hemraj Dhakal has been elected as the Chairman of Chandragiri Hills Limited. Dhakal has been elected unopposed as the President of Chandragiri Hills.

A successful business leader always grooms a successful replacement. This is what Chandra Dhakal is also doing in his business empire.

Chandragiri Hills was previously held by Chandra Dhakal. He envisioned Chandragiri Hills as an integrated tourism infrastructure since 2009.

The company has developed Chandragiri hill as an integrated tourist destination by building infrastruc-

# Concern for Nepal

*Nepalese health authorities are discussing how to manage visitors from China who will be visiting Nepal following the reopening of its borders giving a final farewell to zero-COVID-19*

By A CORRESPONDENT

After the decision of the Chinese government to farewell to the zero-COVID-19 policy, different countries around the world tighten coronavirus border controls for arrivals from China.

Although Nepal has retained 72 hours of mandatory PCR test results or COVID-19 vaccination certificate to enter Nepal, experts are discussing whether such provisions are enough to contain a new variant of the Covid-19 virus which is now surging in China.

Nepal's health officials said that the government will begin tightening temporary border controls starting Sunday for people arriving from China in response to the surge in coronavirus infections there.

Travelers who arrive via direct flights from mainland China will be required to show proof of a negative test result obtained within 72 hours before departure. Those who test positive will be required to stay at quarantine facilities.

Suffered heavily in the last three years, the Nepalese tourism sector sees the decision as a good gesture. However, they are also worried about the negative arrival of tourists from other countries in case of unrestricted entry of Chinese tourists.

With the evolution of Covid virus, the symptoms related to the infection have also changed significantly. The symptoms like loss of taste

and smell and shortness of breath, which was once classic indications of COVID, are no longer that common. Meanwhile, people today regularly complain of sore throat, sneezing and gut-related sickness when they contract the infection.

Amid the sudden surge in cases in China and a few cases of Omicron

like Omicron except for some small changes, there is no big difference. Most of us have gone through the Omicron wave. So, we don't have to worry about it. Essentially, it is the same virus," he said.

China is experiencing a surge in infections due to its "zero-Covid policy", under which authorities block apartment buildings or even cordon off a neighborhood once a resident tests positive, causing great inconvenience to the people, the scientist said.

As per available reports, nearly 5.37 lakh new cases have been reported in the last 24 hours from major countries like USA, Japan, and South Korea as per the available reports, nearly 5.37 lakhs new cases have been reported in last 24 hours from major countries like USA, Japan, South

Korea, France and Brazil

Travelers began streaming into mainland China by air, land and sea on Sunday, many eager for long-awaited reunions, as Beijing opened borders that have been all but shut since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

After three years, mainland China opened sea and land crossings with Hong Kong and ended a requirement for incoming travelers to quarantine, dismantling a final pillar of a zero-COVID policy that had shielded China's people from the virus but also cut them off from the rest of the world.



cron BF.7 (the variant behind China's infection surge), people are worried about the symptoms that might indicate that they have COVID. Here are COVID symptoms that are currently considered common in India.

Currently, Omicron is the most dominant variant across the world so we should be aware of the symptoms this strain can cause.

**Omicron BF.7 is not that worrisome**

Last week, experts opined that India need not worry too much about its severity on the population.

"This is a sub-variant of Omicron. The main features will be



China's easing over the past month of one of the world's tightest COVID regimes followed historic protests against a policy that included frequent testing, curbs on movement and mass lockdowns that heavily damaged the second-biggest economy.

Long queues formed at Hong Kong's international airport for flights to mainland cities including Beijing, Tianjin and Xiamen and some Hong Kong media outlets estimated that thousands of people were traveling across.

"I'm so happy, so happy, so excited. I haven't seen my parents for many years," said Hong Kong resident Teresa Chow as she and dozens of other travelers prepared to cross into mainland China from Hong Kong's Lok Ma Chau checkpoint early on Sunday.

"My parents are not in good health, and I couldn't go back to see them even when they had colon cancer, so I'm really happy to go back and see them now," she said, adding that she plans to head to her hometown in eastern China's Ningbo city.

Investors hope the reopening will eventually reinvigorate a \$ 17 trillion economy suffering its lowest growth in nearly half a century. But the abrupt policy reversal has triggered a massive wave of infections that is overwhelming some hospitals and causing business disruptions.

The border opening follows Saturday's start of "Chun Yun", the first 40-day period of Lunar New Year travel, which before the pandemic was the world's largest annual migration of people returning to their hometowns of taking holidays with family.

Some 2 billion people are expected to travel this season, nearly double last year's movement and recovering to 70% of 2019 levels, the government says.

Many Chinese are also expected to start traveling abroad, a long-awaited shift for tourist spots in countries such as Thailand and Indonesia, though several governments - worried about China's COVID

spike - is imposing curbs on travelers from the country.

Travel will not quickly return to pre-pandemic levels due to such factors as a dearth of international flights, analysts say.

China Sunday also resumed issuing passports and travel visas for mainland residents, and ordinary visas and residence permits for foreigners. Beijing has quotas on the number of people who can travel between Hong Kong and China each day.

## VISITORS, HOMECOMINGS

At the Beijing Capital International Airport, families and friends exchanged emotional hugs and greetings with passengers arriving from Hong Kong, Warsaw and Frankfurt at the airport's terminal 3, meetings at the arrival hall that would have been impossible just a day ago due to a now-canceled requirement for travelers from abroad to quarantine.

"I've been looking forward to the reopening for a long time. Finally, we are reconnected with the world. I'm thrilled, I can't believe it's happening," said a businesswoman surnamed Shen, 55, who flew in from Hong Kong.

Other people waiting at the airport included a group of female fans carrying long-lens cameras in hope of catching a glimpse of the South Korean boy band Tempest, the first idol group from South Korea to enter China in the past three years.

"It's so good to see them in person! They are much more hand-

some and taller than I expected," a 19-year-old who gave her name as Xiny told Reuters after chasing the seven-member boy band, who flew in from Seoul via the Chinese city of Dalian.

"With quarantine restrictions lifted, it's going to be so much more convenient to fly over to see them, and for them to come to Beijing," she said.

## PROTESTS

Such scenes of reunions, however, jarred with other protests in some cities around China over the weekend, a reminder of how the economy remains under strain.

Protests are not rare in China, which has over the years seen people come out in large numbers over issues such as financial or property scams. But authorities have been on higher alert after widespread protests in Chinese cities and top universities at the end of November against COVID restrictions.

On Saturday, hundreds of Tesla (TSLA.O) owners gathered at the automaker's showrooms and distribution centers in China to protest against its decision to slash prices for the second time in three months, a move it made to spur sales at a time of faltering demand in the world's largest auto market.



## POKHARA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT Inaugurated With Fanfare

*When Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda was inaugurating Pokhara International Airport, the country's third international airport, two airlines announced to shut down their regular flights from Gautama Buddha International Airport (GBA) citing a lack of landing system to land in fog. With no use of the fourth international airport without utilizing the full potential of the newly constructed two international airports, nobody understands the rationale of the statement issued by PM Dahal to build Nijgadh Int'l Airport*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**D**oes Nepal need a fourth mega international airport with a big investment? Economists and environmentalists say no given the current non-functional of two newly built international airports.

However, Nepal's political leaders, who have bitter personal and political relations, have a consensus

on the agenda of building the international airport at Nijgadh as a huge environmental and financial cost.

As building mega projects like airports involve hefty commissions and omissions, it is natural for political leadership to lure to construct the airports. For instance, the land accusation cost of Gautama Buddha International Airport

exceeds Rs.50 billion. In Pokhara, along with the loan of over Rs.22 billion from the Chinese Exim Bank, the Nepal government spent over 30 billion for land accusations.

Building airports mean raising the prices of land benefiting the real estate businessmen or middlemen. In the case of Nijgadh, real estate businessmen in tacit partnership





with political leaders have already purchased huge land at throwaway prices to sell letters to the airport authority.

This is the reason Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has said that the construction of Nijgadh International Airport would be started soon even before the newly inaugurated two international airports are yet to go into operation.

### Unstable Government

In his first national address, PM Prachanda, who is heading the most unstable rainbow government of seven parties, said that he will talk less in his second tenure. His recent statement showed that he is also a populist leader to issue a ridiculous economically unviable statement.

PM Prachanda showed that he does not care about the court order, financial viability and environmental damage. What he wants is mega projects like Nijgadh which will benefit a handful of people.

"With technical hitches, Nepal is baring heavy price operating two international airports using them for domestic flights. In his recent statement PM Prachanda has shown

that he seems to have no sense about the financial cost and burden the country is going to face for spending for such a mega infrastructure project," said senior advocate Prakash Mani Sharma. "We are considering filing a case against him," said Sharmia, a lead petitioner who filed a case in the Supreme Court.

He said that PM Prachanda's statement was also against the order of the full Bench of the Supreme Court, which directed the government to protect the pristine forest and nature before going to construct a mega project.

With his controversial statement, PM Prachanda inaugurated the Pokhara International Airport here. He said that the air route is the most effective way for connectivity in a land-locked country like Nepal and the construction of Nijgadh International Airport is required for that.

"The country's third international airport has come into operation in Pokhara from today, establishing international connectivity to the international sector," PM Dahal said, adding that he had taken initiative for the prompt construction of

this airport through the Chinese embassy and in a face-to-face meeting with the Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Stated that Shankar Raj Pathak, the man who conceptualized Pokhara International Airport, is his teacher, and he praised him.

The Executive Chief urged the Chinese government to extend support in the construction of projects including the railway service and in easing trade by opening the transit points.

He viewed that there could not be two opinions that the operation of the international airport in Pokhara will contribute to the economic development of the entire nation, along with that of the Gandaki province.

"I have become the Prime Minister winning the general election from Gandaki province. The Gandaki people have provided the opportunity to serve the nation as the Prime Minister for the third time and I want to thank you for that," PM Dahal said.

Premier Dahal reiterated that the government under his leadership will carry out work, taking

## COVERSTORY

social justice, good governance and people's prosperity as the main slogan.

"I fulfilled a leading role before this for establishing the democratic republic. Now, I will take the country on the development trajectory through economic development, prosperity and promotion of good governance," he said.

PM Inaugurated Pokhara Int'l Airport

Construction of the national

recommendation by the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation while the Export-Import Bank of China provided the loan of US\$ 215.96 million. The Ministry of Finance, and Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN), the aviation sector regulator in the country, had signed the loan agreement with the Chinese bank.

The test flights at the PIA were conducted a week and a month ago. Thailand's Aero Thai conducted the calibration flight from November

April 2016, by then Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, construction works started in July 2017. The project was expected to be completed by 2020. But various reasons including the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the project. Meanwhile, the Office of the Pokhara Metropolis issued a notice on Saturday announcing the closure of all offices and schools on January 1 and asked all to join the inaugural ceremony of the airport.

Earlier, Buddha Air had announced conducting a direct flight



pride project in Chhinedanda, 3km east of the existing Pokhara Domestic Airport, of Pokhara Metropolitan City in Kaski district was completed at the cost of Rs. 22 billion. The project was constructed with the support of China while construction works were carried out by CAMC Engineering Company of that country.

Nepal's Cabinet had awarded the contract to develop the airport to CAMC Engineering as per the

21 to 27.

The construction of the airport was completed in March 2022, and a virtual completion ceremony was organized during the visit of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on March 26. The CAAN had announced in August that the airport would be brought into operation from January 1, 2023.

Although the ground-breaking ceremony was conducted in

from Pokhara to Varanasi of India, three days a week.

Pokhara International Airport is situated at Chhine Danda, Pokhara Metropolitan city, Kaski, Gandaki Province. It is approximately 3km east of Pokhara's existing domestic airport and 200km west of the capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu. Its elevation is around 800 meters above mean sea level.

According to the PIA, the





airport serves as the main gateway for pilgrims and tourists traveling to the famous religious sites, Mulpith, Jomsom and Annapurna Round Trek, among others.

The airport is expected to handle one million passengers per year. Its runway is of the ICAO 4D category and is 45-meter wide and 2500-meter long, and runway designation is 12-30, informed the PIA.

The airport has three international parking bays and eight domestic parking bays.

The largest type of aircraft expected to use the airport is the B737 series and similar aircraft types.

Meanwhile, issuing a statement, the Embassy of China in Kathmandu said that the PIA is designed and built following the standards of China and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which reflects the quality of Chinese projects and symbolizes the national pride of Nepal.

“The new airport not only facilitates personnel exchanges between Nepal and China and other countries but also proves the true friendship and mutual assistance between the two countries in times of adversity,” read the statement.

Jubilation in Pokhara, Dis-

trepreneur In Lumbini

Following the cancellation of flights by the two international airlines, Tourism Entrepreneurs Demanded Regular Flights At Gautama Buddha International Airport

Tourism Entrepreneurs in Lumbini asked the government to install necessary technical types of equipment at Gautama Buddha International Airport (GBIA) to avoid flight cancellations due to weather.

They called following the weather-induced cancellation of flights at the GBIA has negatively impacted the tourism businesses of Bhairahawa.

Rachana Pant, first vice president of the Lumbini Province chapter of the Nepal Association of Tour and Travel Agents (NATTA), said that the cancellations, caused by fog and poor visibility, had prevented tourists from making hotel bookings.

“Tourists prefer to come here in January, February and March,” she said. “They want to arrive without any hassles and do not like it when their flights are delayed or canceled.”

Pant worried that the lack of flights would cause great harm to the businesses reliant on tourist inflow.

Zajeera Airways and Hima-

laya Airlines, the only two carriers that provide international flights from the airport, have stopped their services completely while domestic companies have not been able to fly as scheduled due to the thick fog.

This need not have been the case though because GBIA is equipped with an Instrument Landing System (ILS) which, according to the airport’s Managing Director Govinda Prasad Dahal, can enable planes to land in low visibility conditions. But it has not been brought into operation.

“Because we are an airport located near the border, our ILS will cover the Indian skies as well. So, we need to get permission from India to bring it into use which requires a dialogue at the higher level,” Dahal shared.

And the private sector finds the delay in holding this dialogue inexcusable. Bhisma Neupane, president of the Siddhartha Chamber of Commerce and Industry, called it “inappropriate” to not use an already-available technology to facilitate landing at the airport.

Commercial flights to and from Bhairahawa started in 1964 from a grassy airfield. The airfield was upgraded to a domestic airport two years later. In 2015, the government of Sushil Koirala began work on building the international airport which took seven years and nearly Rs. 35 billion to complete reports The Rising Nepal.

As the country’s two newly built international airports are facing such a grim situation, the announcement of the prime minister to start the construction of a mega project soon likely to put Nepal into great economic turmoil.

## चिसो मौसममा मुटुलगायत स्वास्थ्य समस्याबाट बच्न

- चिसोमा बाहिर ननिस्कौं,
  - धुम्रपान मद्यपान नगरौं,
  - रुघाखोकी लाग्नबाट बचौं,
  - चिल्लो तथा बोसोयुक्त खानेकुरा नखाऔं,
  - शारीरिक व्यायमलाई निरन्तरता दिऔं,
  - हृदय रोग, मोटोपन, कोलेस्ट्रॉल, रक्तचाप, मधुमेहजस्ता समस्या भएका व्यक्तिले स्वास्थ्य परीक्षण गरौं,
- जाडोको जोखिमबाट आफु पनि बचौं र अरूलाई पनि बचाऔं ।



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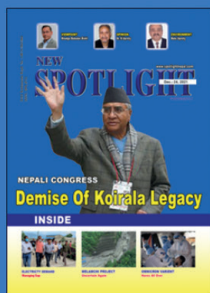


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