

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



VIEWPOINT
Jutta Urpilainen



ARTICLE
Hemang Dixit

NEW SPOTLIGHT

www.spotlightnepal.com

Feb.- 10, 2023

FORTNIGHTLY

EU'S BEEN PROJECT

Promoting Hollow Brick

INSIDE



TRANSMISSION LINE CHILIME-TRISHULI
CORRECT COURSE



NEPAL COUNTRY ACTION PLAN
CCA'S ROAD MAP TO CLEAN COOKING



LATE HIMALAYA SUMSHER RANA
THE END OF AN ERA

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IME Pay मा बिदेशबाट पठाएको
पैसा प्राप्त गर्दा पाउनुहोस् **रु. ५०१-** बोनस ।

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Kathmandu DAO Regd. No.

148/11/063/64

Central Region Postal Regd.

No. 36/067/068

US Library of Congress Catalogue

No. 91-905060, ISSN : 2091-0711

(Print), ISSN: 2091-0754 (Online)

Printing

Megha Offset Printing Press P. Ltd.,

Dhapasi, Kathmandu

Tel. : 977-1-4363624

Notes From The Editor



Various regimes and constitutions have changed over the last 72 years of democracy, but Nepal has yet to achieve political stability and stable government. Following the resignation of Rastriya Swatantra Party ministers, Pushpa Kamal Dahal's five-party coalition government has been shaken. Although the party's president, Rabi Lamichhane, has stated that the party's support for the government remains, Prime Minister Prachanda has already begun negotiations with the other two parties for their support in the event that the Rastriya Swantatra Party withdraws its support.

Following the verdict of the Supreme Court's five-member Constitutional bench, which declared Rabi Lamichhane's citizenship illegal and his election as a member of parliament null and void, everything in Nepali politics has turned sour. With no political parties and no clear majority in the House of Representatives, Nepal will have an unstable government and political instability on a regular basis. As political instability persists, Nepal's capacity to govern will deteriorate.

However, we have chosen as our cover story the introduction of hollow bricks to replace centuries-old traditional bricks and their contribution to energy consumption. BUILDING Energy Efficiency in Nepal (BEEN), a four-year project led by the University of Innsbruck, Austria and funded by the European Union under the SWITCH-Asia Program, aims to transform the use of brick in Nepal from traditional brick to modern energy efficient hollow brick. Along with this, we cover the visit of USAID's Administrator to Nepal, as well as any other pertinent issues.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

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POLITICS

Trouble for the Coalition

The coalition government led by Prachanda, which was formed in an unexpected move more than a month ago, is in trouble following the resignation of four Rashtriya Swatantra Party ministers.

By A CORRESPONDENT

The press conference and statement issued by Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) leader Rabi Lamichhane accusing his rival and the media fraternity are still shaking the society and political process.

Nepal's major media outlets are challenging Lamichhane, demanding proof of his accusation. Nepal's political process is twisting and turning, with no sign of abating anytime soon.

As President Bidhya Bhandari accepted the resignations of Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) ministers, the future of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda's government is uncertain.

Although the RSP has stated that it will continue to support the government, the prime minister has begun efforts to court Madhav Nepal's CPN US and Upendra Yadav's Janta Samajbadi Party.

Given the unpredictable nature of RSP leader Rabi Lamichhane, it is natural for Prime Minister Prachanda to seek support from other parties. However, bringing the CPN-US, led by Madhav Kumar Nepal and Upendra Yadav, is a difficult task. Joining the government dominated by his archrival KP Sharma Oli is virtually impossible for CPN-US leader Nepal.

Dividing Parties

As the government is in limbo following the resignation of RSP ministers, disagreement over a consensus candidate is exacerbating the situation.

According to the gentleman's agreement reached between Prime Minister Prachanda and CPN-UML leader Oli, the CPN-UML controls both the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President. However, the vast majority of Maoist leaders are opposed to this.

The Nepali Congress has already stated that if there is no political consensus, their candidate will run in the elections. Given this scenario, Prime Minister Prachanda and Oli have already met one-on-one.

According to Oli's Secretariat, during the meetings, UML Chair Oli stated that the Presidential position should be given to the par-

ty in accordance with the previous agreement, and that the party would finalize the candidate's name after intra-party discussions.

Similarly, Prime Minister 'Prachanda' emphasized the importance of maintaining unity among the ruling partners at all costs. He stated, "I attempted unity; I support national consensus. The ruling alliance must remain cohesive."

During their meeting at Oli's private residence in Balkot, the two agreed to convene a high-level political mechanism to discuss the upcoming presidential election.

"We have agreed to arrange a meeting of the high-level political mechanism and discuss the Presidential elections tomorrow," Prime Minister Dahal said after the meeting. Our efforts will be directed toward finding a more convenient path forward."

Following the Court's Decision

Lamichhane has been removed from his positions as Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister as a result of the Supreme Court's decision. A series of political events occurred. Lamichhane, the leader of the Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP), resigned from the DPM and the Home Ministry and obtained new citizenship.

Four cabinet ministers resigned. The party has decided to continue its support for the government while withdrawing its ministers from the Cabinet. RSP Chair Rabi Lamichhane announced the decisions of the RSP's central committee and parliamentary party meeting.

The Supreme Court last week invalidated Rabi Lamichhane's status as a member of parliament, citing that the citizenship he used to contest the election was invalid.

The Supreme Court's certiorari order nullified Home Minister Lamichhane's positions as both a legislator and a minister. The

verdict was issued by a constitutional bench consisting of acting Chief Justice Hari Krishna Karki, justices Bishwambhar Prasad Shrestha, Ishwar Prasad Katiwada, Dr. Ananda Mohan Bhattarai, and Anil Kumar Sinha.

In the case of citizenship and passport, the Supreme Court found Lamichhane guilty. Lamichhane was elected to the House of Representatives (HoR) from Chitwan 2 a month ago and appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister.



Lamichhane is also the president of the Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP), which has 20 legislators in the House of 275. Following the Supreme Court's decision, a by-election will be held in Chitwan's Constituency No. 2.

The verdict stated, "Lamichhane was discovered not following the legal process to reclaim Nepali citizenship after giving up his US citizenship. As a result, he did not deserve to be a House of Representatives candidate, nor could he serve in that capacity. With this, a certiorari order is issued in accordance with Articles 133 (b and c) and 137 of the Nepalese Constitution, halting all activities such as making Lamichhane an election candidate, announcing his election victory, and conferring him with the certificate."

The coming days will be politically difficult for Prime Minister Prachanda. Given the growing schism over the presidential candidate, it is not impossible for Prachanda to form a new coalition with the Nepali Congress leaving Oli.

NEWSNOTES

Japan To Provide Medical Equipment To Himalaya Eye Hospital In Kaski District

Kikuta Yutaka, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, signed a grant contract with Dr. Eliya Shrestha, Medical Director of Himalaya Eye Hospital, for installing medical equipment at Himalaya Hospital in Kaski district. The signing ceremony



was held at the Embassy of Japan in Kathmandu today.

The project is funded under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) of the Government of Japan and involves a grant of USD 60,289 (approximately NPR 7.6 million). Himalaya Eye Hospital was established in 1993 in Pokhara and consults more than 100,000 people and conducts 5,500 surgeries annually.

In addition, the hospital conducts yearly 25 to 30 surgical eye camps for free in Gandaki and Karnali provinces, consults more than 10,000 people, and performs more than 1,300 cataract surgeries per year. However, for eye camps, the existing equipment is not sufficient for diagnosis, and more advanced medical equipment is needed to safely perform surgeries.

The project supports the installation of medical equipment to be used in the hospital's surgical eye camps, primarily for cataract surgeries. It is expected that the medical equipment provided by GGP will enable the eye camp to more effectively provide advanced and safe medical services.

Indian Ambassador Naveen Srivastava Visited Janaki Temple

Ambassador of India to Nepal Naveen Srivastava met political leaders of all parties in Janakpur. According



to a twitter of Indianin Nepal, he is currently in a visit of Madhesh Province.

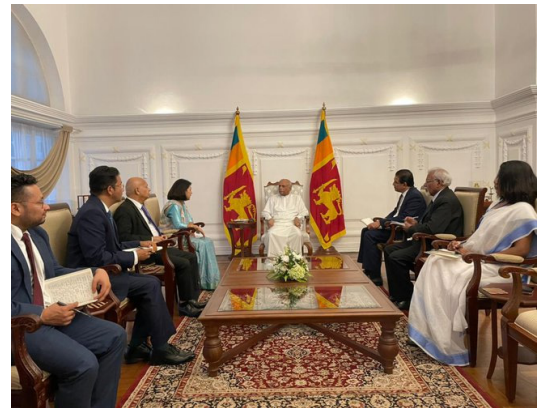
He also visited Janaki Temple and participated in the Ganga Aarti. Finally, he had a meeting over dinner with Harishankar Mishra, Governor of Madhesh Pradesh.

Foreign Minister Dr. Rai Paudyal Paid A Courtesy Call On Prime Minister Of Sri Lanka

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Bimala Rai Paudyal paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Dinesh Gunawardena this afternoon at the Temple Trees, the official residence of the Prime Minister.

She conveyed the greetings and best wishes on behalf of the President and Prime Minister of Nepal on the auspicious occasion of the 75th Independence Day of Sri Lanka for the continuous peace, progress and prosperity of the people of Sri Lanka.

The matters including direct air connectivity between Colombo and Bhairahawa, attracting Sri Lankan investment in small hydro power projects in Nepal, enhancing cooperation in the field of agriculture and



collaborating in teachers' training program were discussed during the meeting.

Earlier, the Foreign Minister called on Mahinda Rajapaksa, the former President of Sri Lanka at his residence in Colombo. Minister congratulated the Former President on the historic occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the Independence Day of Sri Lanka.

Japan Supported The Reconstruction Of Shree Sahid Jagat Prakash Jung Shah Sanskrit Secondary School

The handover ceremony of the reconstructed Shree Sahid Jagat Prakash Jung Shah Sanskrit Secondary School took place in Bidur Municipality, Nuwakot District on February 2.

The school was severely damaged by the 2015 Gorkha Earthquake, but it has been reconstructed under the "Emergency School Reconstruction Project" (ESRP), which is a Japan assisted project to reconstruct many schools. On behalf of the Government of Japan Kikuta Yutaka, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, sent his congratulatory video speech to the people who have made contributions

under the ESRP, in particular, the team of Shree Sahid Jagat Prakash Jung Shah Sanskrit Secondary School.

Ambassador Kikuta stated that “Japan launched ESRP aiming to reconstruct 274 schools in total, covering six severely hit districts. As of to-



day, 273 schools, including this one, have been completed. Moreover, ESRP aims to rebuild and refurbish schools under the concept of “Build Back Better” to make schools more earthquake resilient.” Ambassador Kikuta welcomed the increase in the number of students during the reconstruction of the school.

Foreign Secretary Paudyal Held Talks With The Netherlands Officials

Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal held a meeting with Vice Minister/Director General for Political Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Marcel de Vink in The Hague today.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed various matters of bilateral interest.

Highlighting the significant level of Dutch cooperation to Nepal in the past particularly in the areas of human resources and rural development, the Foreign Secretary requested the Netherlands government to continue such cooperation as human resources development is Nepal’s key priority area.



The Foreign Secretary shared about Nepal’s graduation from the category of the least developed countries in 2026 and the green, resilient, inclusive development (GRID) strategy, emphasizing the country’s huge resource needs in these contexts.

The Vice Minister of the Netherlands appreciated Nepal’s developmental aspirations and assured of possible support from the Netherlands in this endeavour. He also shared about the Netherlands’ global outlook, perspectives on rules-based international order and strategy on international cooperation.

The Foreign Secretary is scheduled to meet the EU Special Representative for Human Rights Eamon Gilmore later today.

Japan Hands Over Medical Equipment To Kirtipur Eye Hospital

The Government of Japan handed over Medical Equipment for Diabetic Retinopathy patients to Kirtipur Eye Hospital in Kathmandu district today. Kikuta Yutaka, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, attended the ceremony.

The medical equipment has been installed with the support of USD 154,100 (approximately NPR 18.35 million) under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) of the Government of Japan.

On this occasion, Ambassador Kikuta congratulated and appreciated the efforts of everyone involved in the project.

He emphasized that without proper medical equipment, patients are not able to be diagnosed and treated as needed. In



In this regard, people suffering from diabetic retinopathy, one of the most pressing diseases in Nepal’s modern society, will receive better medical services with the medical equipment granted by the project.

Ambassador Kikuta said that 2022 was the 120th year since Nepal dispatched its first eight students to Japan for their study. He expressed his pleasure to celebrate the completion of the project in February 2023 in the same spirit of the wonderful anniversary. He added that he hoped the results of this project would contribute greatly to the development of healthcare in Nepal and further to the exchange between the two countries.

Japan Government And UN-Habitat Implement The Project In Nepal, Cambodia And Sri Lanka

The Government of Japan and United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) Implement the Project on Emergency Support Initiative for Green Building-based Prevention and Control Measures for Vulnerable

NEWSNOTES

Communities in Cambodia, Nepal and Sri Lanka Kathmandu, Nepal, 31 January 2023:

The Government of Japan and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) have been im-



plementing the Project on “Emergency Support Initiative for Green Building-based Prevention and Control Measures for Vulnerable Communities in Cambodia, Nepal and Sri Lanka” since March 2022.

The Project is funded by the Government of Japan amounting in total to USD 452,611 (JPY58,638,018). The Project aims to reduce the urgent risks of vulnerable communities and contribute to safer and cleaner cities in the Asia and Pacific region through green building initiatives. Extreme weather conditions and COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to a plethora of issues among communities.

Many of these unpredictable and strong weather conditions require countries to take actions, requiring quick remedial measures supported by behavioral change for improving living conditions.

Poor communities are highly susceptible to such unprecedented weather-related risks. They lack resilience, owing to poor living standards and more importantly deteriorating economic conditions due to COVID-19 and climate crisis. In this regard, the project was successful in reducing the urgent risks to health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable households with poor basic facilities. The energy expenditures of these vulnerable households were reduced through improved cooking stoves and solar solutions for electricity.

US Wants To Make Its Collaboration And Strong Economic Relation In Nepal: US Under-Secretary

US Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Victoria Nuland, said that the US wants Nepal to take sovereign decision on the issues of its national interests.

At a press conference organised here on Monday, the US Under-Secretary, who arrived here on Sunday on a two-day Visit, shared that, mentioning that the US would welcome Nepal’s friendly relations with its neighbouring

countries.

On the occasion, she informed that various issues of bilateral interests were discussed during the meeting with Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’, Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba, CPN (UML) Chair KP Sharma Oli and Foreign Minister Dr Bimala Rai Poudel.

Similarly, discussions were held on the issues including next step of the implementation of MCC, transitional justice process, and building environment to increase US investment in Nepal, mentioned the US Under-Secretary Nuland.

Saying that the US has been supporting and collaborating for Nepal’s education, health, agriculture, tourism and economic sectors as well as strengthening democracy, she expressed the view that she felt proud to inform about the US support in Nepal’s green energy, electrification, small and middle-scale women enterprises for next five years.

She visited different cultural heritages located at Patan Durbar Square of Lalitpur on Monday.(RSS)

US Under Secretary Nuland Pays A Courtesy Call On PM Prachanda

The United States Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland has paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda at his office in Singhadurbar.

According to PM Prachanda’s press secretariat, PM Prachanda and under-secretary Nuland discussed the matter of mutual and bilateral interest between Nepal and the United States of America.



She is the senior-most foreign dignitary to visit Nepal following Dahal’s appointment as Prime Minister on December 25, 2022.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day Marked In Nepal

For the ninth consecutive year, the United Nations Nepal together with the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Embassy of Israel and Delegation of the European Union observed the 78th International Holocaust Remembrance Day in Nepal today.

The 2023 commemoration centered around a me-



memorial ceremony at Boudhanath Stupa where representatives of the four agencies lit 108 butter lamps in memory of the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jewish children, women, and men, as well as the Roma and Sinti, the people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ and countless others who perished during the Holocaust.

On behalf of the United Nations, Elke Wisch, UNICEF Representative in Nepal reading the UN Secretary General's statement emphasized, "As we mourn the loss of so many and so much, we also recognize that the Holocaust was not inevitable. No genocide ever is. Today and every day, let us resolve to never again remain silent in the face of evil – and to always defend the dignity and rights of all."

The theme for this year's Holocaust Remembrance Day is "Home and Belonging" highlighting the humanity of the victims and survivors, whose very belonging was questioned in places they previously called home.

In Nepal, the commemoration of Holocaust Remembrance Day focuses on paying tribute to the memory of the victims of the Holocaust and reaffirms its unwavering commitment to counter antisemitism, racism, and other forms of intolerance that may lead to group-targeted violence.

Following the recitation of the memorial prayer at the ceremony, Ms Dana Fisher, Chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of Israel said, "The holocaust happened during WWII was a crime against humanity as a whole. Our message today is to promote values of tolerance, respect for others and standing up to any form of violence. Only by educating on the importance of these values, humanity will be able to prevent the reoccurrence of these atrocities and influence our world for the better."

"The Holocaust was a crime of unprecedented scale and brutality, and it is our duty to ensure that it is never forgotten. On this Holocaust Remembrance Day, we honor the victims of the Holocaust and pledge to work towards a world where such atrocities never happen again." shared H.E Dr Thomas Prinz, German Ambassador to Nepal

Speaking at the memorial ceremony on behalf of

the EU Delegation to Nepal, Dr. Joelle HIVONNET, Deputy Head of Delegation, said, "On this day, may we remember that the European Union was built on the ruins of the Second World War, as a peace project, so that the Holocaust could never be repeated. May we also remember that genocides always begin with the stigmatisation of one community by hateful politicians who demonise and de-humanise some of their fellow human beings for the sake of power."

During the ceremony, in honour of the victims of the Holocaust, students of Kathmandu Pragya Kunja played "Violin of Hope" a beautiful holocaust themed music.

China To Enlist Nepal In Top Tourist Destination: Chinese Ambassador Chen

Chinese ambassador to Nepal Chen Song has paid a courtesy call on Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport, Narayan Kaji Shrestha, at the latter's office in Singh Durbar.

During the meeting, the Chinese Ambassador assured of speeding up construction of different projects funded by China or being constructed by Chinese companies in Nepal.

In his interview with The Rising Nepal, Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Chen Song has said that China is willing to enlist Nepal in the top tourist destination so that the Chinese tourists visit Nepal as in the past, before the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world.

"Nepal is the favourite destination for the Chinese tourists, especially high-end tourists. We expect many Chinese tourists will be visiting Nepal soon. There needs to be done some paper work between the two governments (with regard to enlisting Nepal in countries for group travel)," said Ambassador Chen when asked about Nepal not being included in the list of countries for Chinese group travel.

China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism has recently issued a list of countries for outbound group travel for Chinese starting from February 6.



"We are for speeding up our work in infrastructure projects in Nepal. China is ready to support Nepal on infrastructure building, improvements," told the Ambassador to

NEWSNOTES

The Rising Nepal after his meeting with DPM Shrestha.

74th Republic Day Of India Celebrated In Kathmandu

The 74th Republic Day of India was celebrated at the Embassy of India in Kathmandu by organising a special ceremony on Thursday.

Ambassador of India To Nepal Naveen Srivastava unfurled national flag of India to celebrate the 74th Republic Day Of India at the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu. Following the ceremony, Ambassador Srivastava read out address to the nation from President of India.

In her address, President Murmu noted the encouraging progress made by India on the economic front to achieve Gandhiji's ideal of 'Sarvodaya' or the upliftment of all, despite global economic uncertainties.

Ambassador Srivastava also felicitated war widows and next of kins of deceased soldiers by disbursing their dues of Rs. 46 million and blankets, according to a statement issued by the Embassy of India.

Reiterating its commitment to helping the retired soldiers, the embassy unveiled the Bhu Puu-2022 magazine covering the welfare initiatives of the government of India for ex-servicemen domiciled in Nepal.

The ambassador also presented books to various institutions. Meanwhile our Birgunj correspondent adds: Chief Minister of Madhes Province Saroj Kumar Yadav expressed his view that India had played an important role in the development of Nepal.

Speaking at a special ceremony organised on the occasion of the 74th Republic Day of India at the Consulate General in Birgunj on Thursday, Chief Minister Yadav said that the Indian government had provided important support to the development of Nepal in the fields of education, health, and physical infrastructure.

Australia Day Celebrated In Kathmandu

Australian Ambassador to Nepal Felicity Volk hosted a reception in Kathmandu on Wednesday on the occasion of the Australia Day, which is celebrated annually on 26 January.

Vice President Nanda Bahadur Pun was the chief



guest of the event held at the ambassador's residence in Bansbari. During the reception held at Ambassador's Residence in Bansbari, people from various walks of life including justices of Supreme Court, secretaries, head of security bodies, Head of Diplomatic Missions based in Kathmandu and Australians living in Nepal presented.

Addressing the program Australian Ambassador to Nepal Felicity Volk said that Australia Day is a day for Australians to reflect on what it means to be Australian and to celebrate our cultural diversity. She said that Australia has been supporting Nepal in various development activities to uplift the life of Nepali people.

Japanese Foreign Minister Hayashi congratulated Foreign Minister Paudyal

Hayashi Yoshimasa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, conveyed his congratulatory letter to Foreign Minister

Dr. Bimala Rai Paudyal. This follows Prime Minister Kishida's congratulatory letter to Prime Minister Pushpa



Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" sent on December 27.

Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, Kikuta Yutaka handed the letter to Foreign Minister Paudyal when he paid a courtesy call on the Minister today, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singha Durbar.

Ambassador Kikuta expressed his best wishes for the success of Prime Minister Dahal and Foreign Minister Paudyal. Foreign Minister Paudyal expressed the appreciation for the congratulations.

Ambassador Kikuta highlighted the recent high-level visits between two countries, including the election observation delegation led by Takei Shunsuke, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, who visited Nepal last November.

He also stated that Japan had been working with Nepal as a long-term friendly development partner, and would continue to assist the country's challenge to deal with the socio-economic development.

Foreign Minister Paudyal, who had a close working experience with JICA, and Ambassador Kikuta shared the views to cooperate further to expand the bilateral relations between the two countries, as well as working in multilateral fora. Ambassador Kikuta emphasized the am-

icable bilateral relationship between Japan and Nepal and expressed his wish to further deepen the friendship by promoting the people-to-people exchange.

NHRC Inks MoU With UNFPA

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)



has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) separately for promoting the human rights of women.

W o n Young Hong, Country Representative of UNFPA, Navanita Sinha from UN Women

and Murari Prasad Kharel, secretary of NHRC, signed the Memorandum of Understanding in the presence of Top Bahadur Magar, chairperson of the NHRC, and other officials of the NHRC on Monday.

According to separate statements issued by the NHRC and UNFPA, the UNFPA had entered into a partnership with the NHRC.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Won Young Hong stated that, “Nepal has made significant progress in formulating progressive laws and policies protecting women’s rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Despite this progress, there has been inconsistency in the enforcement and implementation of these laws and policies.

This is why we are pleased to partner with NHRC to ensure women’s rights and choices are upheld through the national development process”.

The new partnership will support the national protection systems to deliver on Nepal’s international obligations, including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which are essential to the advancement of sexual and reproductive health and rights and preventing and effectively responding to violence against women and girls in Nepal, read the statement of UNFPA.

JICA Co-hosted Seminar On Politics In Nepal And Japan: Political Parties And Periodic Elections

JICA Nepal co-hosted two days (6-7 Feb 2023) ‘JICA Chair’ academic seminar together with Tribhuvan University (TU), Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS). The theme for the seminar was “**Politics in Nepal**

and Japan: Political Parties and Periodic Elections,” referring to the various changes in political and social settings. Similarly, the seminar also focused on history of politics, transition of party politics and lessons learnt through the process in Japan.

‘JICA Chair’ is an initiative of Japan International Cooperation Agency launched with an objective to develop future leaders of developing countries. JICA Chair is organized in JICA partner countries in collaboration with the leading universities to strengthen existing research and education programs as well as becoming a starting point to new initiatives. JICA Chair’s activities include intensive lectures conducted by leading professors and lecturers dispatched from Japan to disseminate Japan’s development experiences in various fields such as politics, economics, public administration, law, and others.

The keynote speaker for the ‘JICA Chair’ seminar in Nepal was Prof. IOKIBE Kaoru from Tokyo University who is an expert on Political and Diplomatic History of Japan. His lecture illustrated the development of the pre-WW2 and post-WW2 Japanese party politics in response to issues of violence, corruption, and policy inefficiency. Prof. IOKIBE also shed light on the modern political system and the coalition between political parties in Japan to maximize efficiency and support economic growth.

The Moderator/Speaker for the event was Prof. Dr. Mrigendra Bahadur KARKI, Executive Director, CNAS (TU), and his topic for the speech was Political Process in Nepal: Political Parties, Elections and Economic Development. The primary objective of the seminar was to discuss strengths and constraints of economic growth in several types of governments.

The round table discussion during the seminar highlighted on the “Political Parties, the New Federal Parliament and Economic Prosperity of Nepal in Relations to Japanese

Economic Development”, that included participation of Professors from TU and media personnel. Topics such as

philosophy, theory, and practices of political coalitions in context to Nepal and Japan were discussed.



BUSINESS BRIEF

European Commissioner For International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen Visits Nepal

Nutrition, Education and the Green Recovery top the agenda for the visit.

European Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen, will arrive in Nepal on 8 February for an official one-day visit to meet Nepali leaders and launch several EU actions in the country.

Commissioner Urpilainen said: “I am delighted to be visiting Nepal to strengthen our partnership and engage on matters of common geopolitical interest, not least Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, which had disastrous consequences on food security in the world, including in Nepal. I look for-



ward to present our Global Gateway strategy, the EU’s positive offer to partners to boost smart, clean and secure links in digital, energy and transport sectors and to strengthen health, education and research systems across the world.”

Commissioner Urpilainen’s visit comes at an important moment as Nepal is preparing to graduate from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2026, thus reaffirming the European Union’s strong and unwavering engagement with Nepal, including through the recent launch of the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Nepal for 2021-2027.

Through the MIP, the European Union will contribute to Nepal’s green, resilient and inclusive development (GRID) effort to overcome the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as requested by the government of Nepal.

Action will focus on 3 priority areas: inclusive green growth to support efforts at local level to achieve a green economy, green jobs and sustainable growth in Nepal, human capital development in sectors matching government priorities for climate-resil-

ient development, especially in the field of Education and nutrition, while giving adequate attention to regional disparities and human development indices and good governance - the EU and its Member States have been long-term supporters of good governance, the democratic transition from conflict to peace, institutions and civil society in Nepal.

Commissioner Urpilainen will visit the Human Milk Bank at the Paropakar Maternity and Women’s hospital, and renews the EU’s commitment to the Multi-Sector Nutrition Programme of the Government (supported by the EU, Germany and UNICEF) with Mr Padam Giri, Minister for Health and Population. This programme will continue improving maternal, adolescent, and child nutrition throughout Nepal.

Commissioner Urpilainen will hold bilateral discussions with Prime Minister Dahal and new Foreign Minister Bimala Rai Poudel and launch a €50 million EU support to Nepal’s new education sector plan with Education Minister Shishir Khanal. This marks 20 years of EU support to increase access to education for boys and girls and a new era to increase the quality of education in Nepal.

Commissioner Urpilainen will also meet with civil society organisations, members of the business community, representatives of the International Financial Institutions. She will also meet with members of the EU Youth Sounding Board, a consultative space for Nepalese youth to have an influence on the EU’s action in Nepal, making it more relevant and effective for them.

Finally, Commissioner Urpilainen will launch the Team Europe Initiative on Green Recovery with the ambassadors of the EU Member States resident in Nepal (France, Finland & Germany), Government representatives, Development Partners, and private sector and civil society representatives.

The Team Europe Initiative (TEI) on Green Recovery will support Nepal’s efforts to recover from the pandemic and grow stronger and greener through more jobs, energy access, increased resilience of society to shocks by better services in water supply, sanitation, nutrition, and education, while fostering increased participation of women in leadership and the economy. Since 2021, the EU and Member States have committed €200 million in grants for the TEI alone and stand ready to double this amount in the next years.

NIMB Enables NEPALPAY TAP & NEPALPAY

QR In Fin POS

Nepal Investment Mega Bank Ltd. partners with NCHL and Citytech to enable its fin POS with NEPALPAY TAP and NEPALPAY QR for merchant payments.

The customers can now make a payment by just tapping NFC-enabled mobile onto finPOS device at merchants. The customer will no longer require to connect to internet for such payment with NEPALPAY TAP. Similarly, dynamic NEPALPAY QR has also

been enabled by NIMB at its finPOS available at their merchants. Any of the mobile



banking, wallets and connectIPS can be used for QR payment available in such finPOS..The service was started as the first in Nepal by NIMB.

NEPALPAY TAP is based on NFC technology that enables secure transactions between two devices in close proximity. It can be used for P2P and P2M payments as contactless transactions. The sender does not require internet in its device for such NFC payment.

With this, it is now no longer required for customers to use a card for POS transactions, rather they can just tap the device and make payment, currently available through connect IPS mobile app. The payer's mobile needs to have NFC-enabled phones to use this feature. Currently, the transaction limit of NEPALPAY TAP is up to Rs 5,000 per transaction and can be controlled by the customer itself.

Citytech has been providing finPOS as an all-in-one POS machine for various banks, that is safe, secure, and interactive for the merchants to keep track of all business transactions. With the addition of NEPALPAY TAP & NEPALPAY QR, it will provide the banks to enable its merchants with an additional option to accept payments.

NIMB is one of the prominent banks in Nepal which has recently been aggressive in providing its services to the customers through digital channels. It

has over 9 Lakh of mobile banking users, 7 Lakh cards issued and 278 ATMs and over 4000 POS. The bank will be able to service its ever-growing merchants with the addition of QR and NFC based payments.

Nepal, Malaysia Ink MoU To Revise Labour Agreement

A memorandum of understanding has been reached between Nepal and Malaysia to revise the bilateral labour agreement.

The agreement to this effect was reached between the two sides after the delegation led by Home Minister of Malaysia, Saifuddin Nasution Ismail, met Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'.

According to the PM Dahal's Secretariat, the authorities concerned of both countries would work on mutual cooperation for the same.

During the meeting, discussion was held on the issues related to carrying out activities jointly in the sector of trade, investment, tourist, and economic development by increasing high-level political and administrative visit and dialogue between the two countries.

The Prime Minister thanked the government of Malaysia for increasing minimum wage of workers to 1,500 Ringgit from 1,200. Expressing commitment to strictly implement free visa, free ticket system, he opined that employment sector could be made more systematic if the provision was implemented.

Urging the Malaysian government to increase the number of Nepali workers in Malaysia in future,



he laid emphasis on the need of support of the government of Malaysia on the issue of making the labour sector open, transparent, accountable, effective and systematic for Nepali workers in Malaysia.

Similarly, the Malaysian Home Minister said

BUSINESS BRIEF

the Malaysian government was serious on the issue of welfare and security of Nepali workers and bringing in foreign workers in Malaysia.

Stating that there is need of workers in five economic sectors in Malaysia, he expressed commitment to make policy-level reform for the welfare of workers.

Nepal-Belgium Bilateral Consultation Mechanism Held In Belgium

The second meeting of the Nepal-Belgium Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was held at Federal Public Service, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of Belgium today.

Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sewa Lamsal and Ambassador Cornet d'Elzium, Director of the Asia-Oceania Department jointly led the proceeding.

During the meeting, the two sides took stock of all aspects of bilateral relations and exchanged views on further promoting cooperation between the two countries. Views were also exchanged on engaging in global issues such as climate change and Sustainable Development Goals.



Nepali side shared about the country's graduation from the LDC status in 2026 and the preparation of transition strategy and requested for the continuation of support measures provided by Belgium as well as the EU in terms of market access and development cooperation.

IFC Appointed Riccardo Puliti As Its New Regional Vice President For Asia And The Pacific

IFC today announced the appointment of Riccardo Puliti as its new Regional Vice President for Asia and the Pacific. Puliti will oversee IFC's region-

al efforts in spurring private sector growth and identifying impactful collaborations for a green, resilient, and inclusive recovery, in response to multiple crises and a deteriorating global economic outlook.



Economies in the Asia and Pacific region continue to suffer from COVID-19 disruptions, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and tightening global financial conditions, including through higher food and energy prices. In addition, weaker global growth and more frequent disruptive weather events linked to climate change threaten to dampen the region's growth trajectory, according to the World Bank's latest Global Economic Prospects report.

In taking on the role as IFC's Vice President for Asia and the Pacific, Puliti stressed the need for more private sector investment, given the limited fiscal space of countries in the region.

"With the global economy facing multiple headwinds this year, there is an urgent need for more private investment in the region to create jobs and boost output," Puliti said. "With the right policies in place to attract and incentivize new investment, countries can leverage private sector financing to help meet their large unmet investment needs.

"The reality is investment growth in emerging markets and developing economies in Asia and the Pacific – as in the rest of the world – remains below the average rate of the last two decades. That must be turned around as history tells us strong investment growth delivers dividends. It is also vital for climate targets and to progress the development of clean, renewable and affordable energy and seize all the opportunities digital infrastructure can deliver for the region's people."

An Italian national, Puliti most recently served as the Vice President for Infrastructure at the World Bank, leading the Bank's global efforts to build effective infrastructure in developing and emerging markets. Previously, Puliti served as Regional Director, Infrastructure, Africa, and before that as Global Director, Energy & Extractives. Before joining the World Bank Group, Puliti was Managing Director at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Develop-

ment.

“Asia and the Pacific is one of the most vulnerable regions to climate shocks, underscoring the need for urgent action to protect the lives and livelihoods of billions of people,” Puliti said. “The region also needs to bridge the massive trillion-dollar infrastructure gap, limiting people’s access to basic services. Gender equality, digital growth, and capital mobilization are also key priorities as IFC continues to work to improve financial inclusion, strengthen health care systems, and increase access to finance for smaller businesses, as they are the engine of growth in the region and key incubators of jobs.”

“The challenges are profound but so are the opportunities. Together, they only reinforce the importance of IFC’s work with the private sector in catalyzing investment, driving innovative green and blue transactions to address marine pollution and climate change and redoubling our efforts to lift people out of poverty.”

Puliti holds an MBA from Instituto Superior de Estudios de la Empresa (IESE) and completed his postgraduate studies at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and Imperial College.

Nepal Has Huge Potential As A Producer Of Green Energy: British Ambassador Pollitt

British Ambassador to Nepal Nicola Pollitt said that Nepal has huge potential as a producer of green energy.

“In my meeting with Minister of Energy we discussed UK support to this sector and the value to Nepal and the region of energy trading. Look forward to working together at this important time for the energy sector in Nepal,” ambassador Pollitt Tweeted.



ambassador Pollitt also said that British government is ready to provide support to Nepal.

According to RSS, they also discussed the issues of bilateral relations and interests were discussed. DPM Lingden reminded the UK is the most reliable

development partner of Nepal and it had provided assistance to Nepal during crisis.

DPM Lingden shared that present government had prioritized national unity, good governance and effective service delivery. He also hoped the British government would continue its assistance to the Nepal government.

NUSACCI Delegation Calls On DPM Lingden

Nepal-USA Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NUSACCI) Hydropower and Renewable Energy Committee delegation paid a courtesy call to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, Rajendra Prasad Lingden at his office in Singhadurbar.

The delegation extended best wishes and congratulations to Lingden for his appointment as Deputy



Prime Minister and Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation.

The delegation briefed Deputy Prime Minister that hydropower is one of potential areas for US investment. The legal regime and enabling environment plays a crucial role for attracting US investment in Nepal.

According to a press release issued by NUSACCI, the delegation discussed the emerging issues on the private sector investment in the hydropower sector and possible collaborations between private sector and Nepal government Nepa in bringing the foreign investment in hydropower sector.

NUSACCI delegation included General Secretary Prof Dr. Gandhi Pandit, Chairperson of the committee Brindaban Man Pradhanang, and members Moti Lal Dugar and Bikram Sthapit.

NEPAL-EU

Meeting Of Mind

Led by foreign secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal, the recently concluded 14th Joint Commission meeting of the European Union and Nepal agreed to explore new areas of cooperation

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although it was a hectic tour conducting several meetings in his short visit to Europe, foreign secretary Dr. Bharat Raj Paudyal is able to convince Nepalese friends in Europe to continue their support to Nepal in green energy, climate change, education and other sectors.

The European Union and Nepal concluded the 14th meeting of the Joint Commission on 1 February 2023 in Brussels. They exchanged views on a broad range of issues, a sign of deepening ties and expanding EU-Nepal agenda.

The EU expressed its condolences to Nepal with regard to the tragic airplane crash near Pokhara on 15 January.

The EU and Nepal reiterated their support for a rules-based international order with the UN at its core, as well as their commitment to safeguard the principles of the UN Charter.

In the first Joint Commission meeting under the new leadership in Nepal, following the federal and provincial elections on 20 November 2022, both partners expressed determination to continue working on strengthening bilateral ties further. They also underlined the importance of further strengthening the representation of women and disadvantaged groups. The EU

welcomed Nepal's commitment, as expressed in the Government's Policy Priorities and Minimum Programme of 9 January, 2023, to prioritise the tabling in the Parliament of those key draft pieces of legislation that would promote further the implementation of the Constitution and the completion of the remaining tasks of the peace process, namely transitional justice. The two sides also discussed the need to continue the efforts of controlling corruption and promote good governance.

Human rights, in particular the situation of women, children and disadvantaged communities, were discussed at the meeting. The EU and Nepal confirmed their intention to constructively engage in the Human Rights Council on the matters of common interest, and the EU invited Nepal to give positive consideration to the pending requests for visits of UN Special Rapporteurs.

The EU praised Nepal's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including its vaccination campaign and economic stimulus. Nepal appreciated the swift cooperation of medicines, medical equipment and vaccines from the EU Member States during the difficult time of COVID-19 pandemic.

The EU and Nepal dis-

cussed bilateral trade relations in light of Nepal's future graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2026. Nepal seeks to diversify its exports to the EU, to make full use of the benefits offered by the "Everything But Arms" trading regime, while preparing to apply for the EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) arrangement. The EU offered close cooperation during the transition period following Nepal's graduation from Least Developed Country status, and asked Nepal to share its graduation strategy, also stressing the importance of an open and competitive business environment.

The EU and Nepal highlighted strong investment potential, notably in the area of renewable energies. The EU encouraged Nepal to take advantage of investment opportunities, including from the European Investment Bank and other European financial institutions, which can be supported by guarantees and grants through the new European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+). Such investments are expected to support shared priority objectives in areas such as green and sustainable economic development and poverty reduction.

The EU and Nepal reaffirm

firmed that air safety was among the key priority areas of their bilateral relations. They both agreed that the EU on-site assessment planned for mid-February would be postponed to a later date, to allow the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) to deal with the aftermath of the recent airline crash.

In the field of people-to-people contacts, they welcomed the outstanding participation of Nepali Erasmus Mundus scholarship-winners in 2022. Five

this trajectory. They both highlighted the importance of transparency and accountability of climate finance commitments, and the need to ensure that green transition is sustainable and socially inclusive. They welcomed the ambitious outcome at the COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity and reiterated their resolve to urgently implement actions to restore, protect and sustainably use biodiversity in alignment with the new framework.

Paudyal, Foreign Secretary of the Government of Nepal. The working lunch on foreign policy was co-chaired on the EU side by Enrique Mora, Deputy Secretary General/ Political Director of the European External Action Service.

The next Joint Commission meeting will take place in Kathmandu in 2024.

The EU's bilateral Multiannual Indicative Programme

(MIP) for development cooperation, with a financial envelope of €209 million for 2021-2024, is fully aligned with Nepal's National Development Plan, and focuses on Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID). In addition, the EU is pooling resources for a Team Europe Initiative for "Green Recovery", with the participation of Germany, Finland, France and the European Investment Bank (EIB).



new capacity-building projects with Nepali universities were also selected in 2022 focusing on new programmes on e-health, disaster resilience and cyber security. The two sides stressed further enhancing cultural diplomacy ties, including through the exchange of artists.

On global climate and environmental governance, the EU praised Nepal's commitment to reach full net zero emissions by 2045, and encouraged maintaining

The EU and Nepal discussed regional processes and existing platforms to foster economic integration. The EU highlighted the Global Gateway as an instrument to strengthen regional inter-connectedness, notably in energy and digital areas.

The meeting was co-chaired by Paola Pampaloni, Deputy Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific of the European External Affairs Service, and Bharat Raj

In the area of humanitarian assistance, the EU has been supporting Nepal on emergency response and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) with a total amount of €116 million since 2001. Out of this, €34.3 million have been allocated to support natural disaster mitigation and improving disaster preparedness capabilities of local authorities and communities.

EU'S BEEN PROJECT Promoting Hollow Brick

Attending the Hollow Brick Promotion Campaign alongside the mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan City (LMC) Chiri Babu Maharjan and senior government officials from the federal, provincial, and local levels, European Union Ambassador to Nepal Nona Deprez demonstrated the EU's strong commitment to Nepal to promote energy-efficient new hollow brick. BUILDING Energy Efficiency in Nepal (BEEN), a four-year project funded by the European Union under the SWITCH-Asia Program and led by the University of Innsbruck, Austria in collaboration with MinErgy Pvt Ltd, Nepal, Greentech Knowledge Solutions Pvt Ltd, India, and Asociación Española de Normalización (UNE), Spain, aims to transform the use of brick in Nepal from traditional brick to modern energy efficient hollow brick. At a time when urbanization is speeding up, the BEEN project, which will cover 60 municipalities all over four bio-climatic zones throughout Bagmati, Lumbini, and Gandaki provinces, will be watershed moment in promoting energy-efficient buildings.

By Keshab Poudel

On January 20, Nona Deprez, the European Union's ambassador to Nepal, had a busy day. The trip began at midday with a visit to the brick factory and ended with an inspection of a building under construction. However, the time and effort ambassador Deprez put in were very well worth it because it was a watershed moment in Nepal's brick-making history, with the switch from traditional Nepali brick

to energy-efficient hollow brick.

Hosna Brick Factory, Harisiddhi, 10 kilometers south-east of Kathmandu, was selected from among 200 brick factories to host a program and welcome high-level guests. It was a significant day in the factory's 20-year history because the factory was preparing to say goodbye to Nepal's century-old emissions-laden traditional clay brick and formally start mass production

of different sizes of energy-efficient hollow bricks.

The day was momentous to Kalpana Shrestha, a landlord at the opposite side of Lalipur in Gwarko, close to Ring Road, Koteshwor. The mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan City (LMC), Chiri Babu Maharjan, the envoy of the European Union to Nepal, Nona Deprez, together with leaders and representatives from the federal, provincial, and local levels



as well as private sector brick producers, have all been welcomed to Shrestha's home, which is currently undergoing its final stages of construction.

The program was frantic for Mayor Maharjan, Ambassador Deprez, and other dignitaries, but the promotion of hollow-fired clay brick was initiated in support of Nepal's efforts to cut emissions and conserve energy. The ultimate goal of the initiative is to lower emissions levels globally.

In her address during the gathering, Ambassador Deprez emphasized its significance. "I am encouraged after engaging in activities. Everywhere in the world, hollow brick are used. The presence of individuals from various governmental tiers and organizations makes me very pleased. It's good to note that

this project coordinates with other projects. I'm hoping for synergy rather than overlap or gaps."

"Several different groups and individuals have been engaging on this initiative at different levels. The possibility that this initiative will support change gives me enormous hope. I considered it a positive move because brick producers, local and federal agencies, and the Alternative Energy Promotion Center were collaborating together," said Ambassador Deprez.

"It all boils down to thinking and mindset change. However, altering one's perspective is not simple. In my conversations with people and what I have witnessed today, I feel encouraged."

"What is needed right now is to enhance consumer knowledge that this brick is in their long term

interest as a citizen since it impacts the air we breathe and our health. In the end, it comes down to how well our shared planet, on which we all reside, is doing. We would all gain as citizens if we can each do our small part in reducing air pollution and harmful fuel efficiency," according to Deprez.

The mayor of LMC, Chiri Babu Maharjan, has said that LMC will opt to push the usage of hollow brick in building construction throughout LMC, expressing support for ambassador Deprez's stance. "On behalf of the citizens of Lalitpur Metropolitan, I would like to thank the European Union and Ambassador Deprez for picking our region to kick off this historic initiative to revolutionize brick production in Nepal. We are thrilled to contribute to the worldwide green movement,"

COVERSTORY

stated mayor Maharjan.

Mayor Maharjan announced, “I will make all necessary steps to enforce the use of only hollow brick as LMC is building a massive new extension building.”

Tour to Brick Factory

Despite its many advantages, local customers have not yet adopted a liking to hollow brick. To broaden the use of the hollow bricks, BEEN plans to start a promotion

ing practices.

The ambassador and visitors were briefed by Suyesh Prajapati, BEEN Team Leader, on the technical, market, and contributions of hollow bricks to emissions reduction in urban settings. Prajapati explained the complete process of creating hollow bricks in the factory and their application on the construction site with the assistance of his colleague Engineer Sanu Babu Dangol. “As

the various stages of brick manufacturing, the market, and conformity assessment.

The Mayor of LMC Maharjan voiced his full support to make this project successful when serving in Bungmati and Pilachhen during his first term. They worked closely together to complete initiatives funded by the European Union.

Mayor Maharjan frequently interrupted the briefing to question how LMC could assist the cause of making complete brick a requirement for building construction.

The LMC’s ward chair backed the mayor. According to Ganesh Maharjan, Chair of Lalitpur Metropolitan City Ward 29, the new technology will probably lessen the concern from local residents about the pollution caused by brick kilns.

Shyam Kazi Awale, the owner of the brick factory, expressed his hope that the hollow brick will eventually replace the conventional brick at the introduction of the brick factor. He claimed that the hollow brick uses less than 60% less coal, 50% less water, and 20% less soil than solid bricks. Awale, who now imports coal daily from the United States and Australia, said of the environmentally friendly brick, “It helps greatly to save the money in importing the coal.”

First Building of Hollow Brick

After the hollow brick was introduced at the factory site, ambassador Deprez and mayor Maharjan traveled to Gwarko, Ward No. 9 of the Lalitpur Metropolitan City, to view its use in a multipurpose structure.

The new home, which belongs to Kalpana Shrestha and is currently being finished up, is the first one to be constructed utilizing various hollow brick sizes.



campaign.

Ambassador Deprez stayed for more than two hours in a brick factory inspecting, observing, and discussing about many aspects of hollow bricks, such as the market, the manufacturing process, and its role in reducing emission. The ambassador asked a variety of questions about the brick’s manufacturing, marketing, and overall impact on energy efficiency and the environment during their discussion.

The Hosna Brick Factory was windy, noisy, and dusty, but the guests and visitors of the launching programs eagerly observed the event intended to alter Nepal’s brick-making

part of the launch campaign, we looked at how hollow bricks are made at the Hosanna Brick Factory and how they may be used in a residential building that was still under construction.”

Jyoti Joshi, the deputy director general of the department is accountable for standards and metrology in Nepal, gave an update on the hollow brick Nepal Standard. Joshi said, “We already have started the process to convert Nepal Standard to hollow brick.”

The ambassador, mayor, and other attendees were briefed by the factory owner Krishna Awale and his son Shyam Kazi Awale on

Once it is complete, Shrestha's House will demonstrate the difference between hollow and regular brick in terms of how heat is managed. In this showcase structure, the use of hollow bricks has decreased the structural load by 22.7 tons and the CO₂ emissions by 3.36 tons.

This brick kiln has accepted the challenge of making hollow bricks, which may help to reduce CO₂ emissions by 225 tons this season and nearly 90 tons next.

In addition to saving energy during construction, hollow brick buildings also use less energy over time. If a room is constructed of hollow bricks rather than solid ones, it is predicted that up to 5% of the energy used for air conditioning will be saved, according to Prajapati. "The creation and use of hollow bricks can drastically lower fuel costs for brick manufacturers, which improves the nation's economy overall. Brick kiln emissions are also decreased by the lowering in coal use."

Ambassador Nona Deprez and the mayor of LMC Chiribabu Maharjan accompanied the owner of the house and the brick factory after viewing how hollow bricks are formed at the Hosanna Brick Plant and touring the Gwarko House that was under construction.

Deprez and Mayor Chiribabu Maharjan of the LMC provided support to the owner of the property and the owner of the brick plant.

Suyesh Prajapati, BEEN Team Leader/MinErgy, demonstrates the advantages of using hollow bricks in a small function.

Similarly, Shankar Bahadur Chand, the President of the Federation of Nepalese Brick Industry (FNBI), emphasized the challenges encountered by brick proprietors.

A vote of gratitude was given by Daniel Neyer, the manager of

to Prajapati. "Everything will be reduced by hollow brick. "Hollow bricks are environmentally friendly since they use less energy and clay during production. Thermal comfort is provided by hollow bricks. It keeps the building's internal walls cool in the summer and warm in the winter. A hollow brick is capable of supporting a load."

According to the ICIMOD study from 2018, 504,750 tonnes of coal are used annually in Nepal to fire bricks. The ability of hollow bricks to conserve clay and fuel is one of their main advantages.

The percentage of hollowness affects fuel savings. According to studies, a brick with 15% hollowness can save up to 24% on clay and up

to 30% on fuel (TERI, 2017).

In addition, bricks with tubular hollow cavities have better insulating qualities, which eventually lowers building operating costs.

According to studies, the U-values of a hollow brick wall are up to 25% lower than those of a solid brick wall. If a room is constructed of hollow bricks rather than solid ones, it is predicted that up to 5% of the energy used for air conditioning will be saved.

Use in Nepal

In spite of its numerous advantages, Hollow brick manufacture and use are uncommon in Nepal. It had been used by some people in the past. The mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan City asserts that he placed a



the University of Innsbruck's BEEN Project.

How does hollow brick contribute?

Harisiddhi has been associated with brick production for generations because of the high quality soil and water supply there.

There was also built the first, highly advanced brick factory about fifty years ago. It is the proper choice to select Harisiddhi once more to introduce a new hollow brick technology to replace the century-old clay brick.

"The anticipated yearly average brick production in Nepal is 5.14 billion. The primary fuel used to fire bricks is imported coal from India and other nations, according



building order for hollow brick in 2012.

But the reason is a lack of customer knowledge and a small amount of market demand. The marketing of hollow bricks in Nepal has significant challenges due to a lack of national standards, adequate knowledge for producing hollow bricks, and soil preparation, according to Prajapati.

Why BEEN?

Through the development of circular economy techniques in the building sector, the BUILDING Energy Efficiency in Nepal (BEEN) project helps achieve the overarching goal of the European Green Deal (2019) and the EU Circular Economy Action Plan (2020).

By promoting green technology through capacity building, policy, and financial interventions, the initiative eases the transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient, and circular building sector.

It is consistent with national pledges to reducing the effects of climate change, where the building industry plays a significant role.

In terms of promoting European standards in other regions, it also concurs with the new EU Standardization Strategy.

By making it easier to design, build, and renovate climate-friendly structures, the four-year project BEEN intends to sup-

port the growth of low-carbon and resource-efficient construction in Nepal's construction industry.

To further lower the building's carbon footprint, BEEN works to promote materials that are low energy and resource efficient

during both their manufacture and use phases. The purposes because of the following, BEEN works to promote hollow bricks.

By encouraging climate-responsive building design, construction, and rehabilitation through the integration of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures, the BEEN Project seeks to assist in the achievement of low-carbon and resource efficiency in the Nepalese building sector.

In Nepal, solid-fired clay bricks are the most common type of building material. A niche product with minimal output is hollow brick.

Bricks are a crucial component of Nepal's exquisite archi-

ecture, especially the numerous historical sites in the Kathmandu Valley. In all parts of Nepal, solid-fired clay

bricks are the primary walling material and are frequently employed in building construction.

Decarbonizing Building

Brick kilns use imported coal to fire bricks despite using locally available building components. According to a report, importing coal from India and other nations costs a significant amount of convertible currencies, or Rs. 25 billion.

Burning coal significantly increases air pollution and carbon emissions.

In these conditions, Nepal's net-zero greenhouse gas emission goal by 2045 will depend on decarbonizing the building sector.

By encouraging climate-responsive building design, construction, and restoration through the integration of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures, the European Union will help Nepal reach this goal through the four-year BEEN project.

BEEN Project facilitates the transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient and circular building sector through capacity building of micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), supporting the creation of enabling policy and financing environments





and enlarging market share for energy-efficient and resource-efficient products and services.

Hollow Bricks Support Green

A product that uses less resources, hollow brick, is utilized all over the world. It is not yet a common product in Nepal, though. “Hollow bricks of various sizes conserve energy to varying degrees. According to research, fuel savings rely on the hollowness percentage.

According to studies, a brick with a 15% hollowness can save up to 24% clay and up to 30% fuel. According to Prajapati, a tubular hollow cavity improves insulation, which helps to lower energy costs for maintaining thermal comfort when operating buildings.

The study found that using and producing hollow bricks can dramatically save fuel costs for brick manufacturers, energy expenses for building occupants, and national economic benefits.

Brick kiln emissions are also reduced by the reduction in coal consumption. Its application results in a reduction in structural load in the building due to its lighter weight, which lowers the cost of building construction. The creation and use of hollow bricks

are uncommon practices despite their enormous advantages on numerous levels. The low level of market demand can be ascribed to customers’ lack of awareness.

Additionally, the marketing of hollow brick has not been helped by a lack of national standards and adequate know-how for producing hollow bricks.

With the help of Nepali stakeholders, the EU is launching the Hollow Brick Promotion Campaign through the BEEN Project in order to advance its larger objective of low-carbon and resource-efficient development. “The advertising campaign will be extended to other regions of the nation.

Hollow brick manufacture has also begun at another brick

factory in Kapilvastu. BEEN will begin test production in another brick factory in Gandaki Province in collaboration with the Federation of Nepalese Brick Industries, according to Prajapati.

In addition to providing energy savings and improved thermal comfort for end users, the reduction of pollution is a benefit. For the producers, the users, the national economy, and the general public, it is a win-win-win situation.

In order to reduce the carbon footprint of buildings and establish a low-carbon and resource-efficient building construction sector in Nepal, hollow bricks are produced in the brick industry and used in multipurpose showcase buildings in the Lalitpur Metropolitan City.

Both visitors saw how hollow bricks are made in Harisiddhi and how they are used in a multipurpose structure in Gwarko, Lalitpur. With the support from EU, Nepal now enters to new phase of hollow brick. In the span of four years, the project will cover a lot of ground.



USAID ADMINISTRATOR'S NEPAL VISIT

Supporting Development

After a two-day visit, USAID Administrator Samantha Power announced a \$ 60 million grant to Nepal.

By A CORRESPONDENT

With shrinking revenues and a growing trade deficit, Nepal is in a precarious economic situation, unable to invest in development projects, clean energy, and strengthening local and provincial institutions. The announcement by USAID Administrator Samantha Power to provide \$ 60 million to Nepal provides relief to the country.

Samantha Power, the administrator of USAID, announced during a two-day official visit to Nepal that USAID will provide up to \$58.5 million in assistance to

advance Nepal's democratic progress, subject to funding availability. The announcement was made in the presence of Nepali government, civil society, and private sector leaders.

The amount of \$ 20.2 million was part of a \$659 million development objective agreement announced in 2022, according to the US Embassy in Kathmandu.

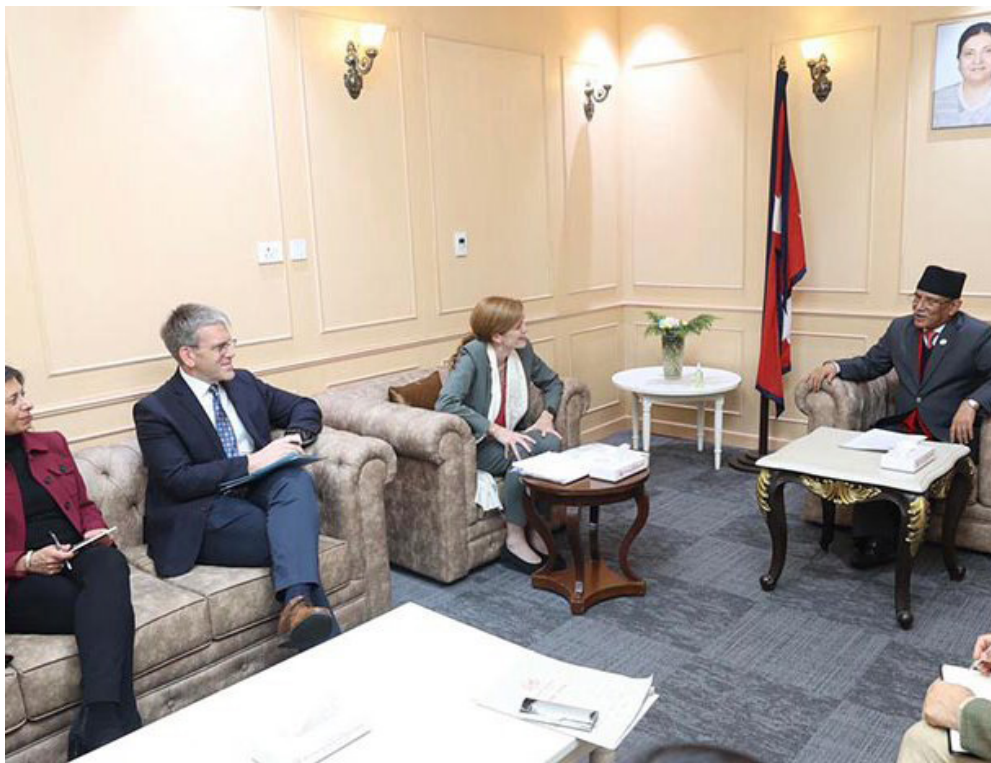
"Following transparent and peaceful election this year, Nepal has an opportunity to strengthen federalism, advance the inclusion of women and marginalized

communities, empower youths and demonstrate that democracy can deliver for its people. The US would work with Nepal in these areas, according to the Embassy.

The USAID investment would help to strengthen public financial management, independent civil society and media, democratic processes and institutions, rule of law, and the private sector, thereby consolidating democratic achievements and inviting further wider prosperity and resilience.

"USAID would also continue to assist Nepal in its fight against human trafficking," according to the statement. The investment announced today includes up to \$20 million to support provincial and local governments in strengthening inclusive democracy and prosperity in order to deliver services in a more accountable and transparent manner from an economic standpoint.

Similarly, up to \$ 18.5 million in assistance is included in the package to support independent CSOs led by and for women, youth, and marginalized





community members in advancing community needs, fundamental freedoms, and accountability.

USAID would work with CSOs to help them develop the skills, credibility, and techniques needed to effectively engage with the government and the general public.

The international development agency has stated that it will also work with the media to improve public access to credible information and diverse narratives. This will increase social trust in the media.

The USAID has also stated that it will work to strengthen the rule of law and legal framework in order to combat human trafficking and ensure free and fair elections. These new initiatives build on more than 60 years of US-AID collaboration with the Nepal government and people, the private sector, and others to support Nepal's goals and aspirations.

It has been shared that US-AID is ready to collaborate with the relevant Nepal government agencies by aligning aid with government priorities, including the recently released common minimum programs.

Samantha Power, Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), also met with Nepal's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Bimala Rai Poudyal.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they met at the ministry and discussed a variety of issues concerning Nepal-US mutual interests.

The meeting's agenda included discussions about the implementation of US assistance through the Millennium Challenge

Corporation, climate change, and assistance to Nepal after it graduated from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) category.

From 2013 to 2017, Power served as the United States' 28th Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Power worked as a special assistant to the President and

Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights at the National Security Council from 2009 to 2013.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and the United States, Nepal has received assistance from the US government for the construction of infrastructure and the establishment of institutions. The recent announcement is part of the United States' ongoing assistance to Nepal.



NEPAL COUNTRY ACTION PLAN

CCA's Road Map To Clean Cooking

The Nepal Country Action Plan (CAP) Report 2022 has signaled the beginning of a new age of clean cooking in Nepal. The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the worldwide fossil fuel crisis led Nepal to speed up the campaign for electric cooking, even though the Clean Cooking Alliance (CCA) has been supporting it for the past few years. In order to reach a large population, the Nepali government has already made a number of announcements through its budget, reducing the import of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and conserving foreign exchange resources. A crucial milestone in advancing Nepal's clean cooking campaign is the current version of CAP, which has a clear strategy and timeline. It was made possible by CCA and The National Planning Commission works closely with the Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC). The report's release coincides with an important official visit to Nepal by top representatives from USAID and the EU, Nepal's two main development partners.

By Keshab Poudel

The head of the Alternative Energy Promotion Center, representatives from CCA, Development Partners, INGOs, and NGOs jointly launched Nepal Country Action Plan (CAP) 2022 on Thursday, February 1. As a result, Nepal is now on the right track to continue its clean cooking campaign, which aims to replace the use of dirty biomass and LPG with clean hydroelectricity.

Despite the fact that cold weather has decreased Nepal's hydroelectricity generation recently, Nepal will have a big hydroelectricity surplus starting in April and May. The publication of CAP with specific objectives and a plan of attack to promote electric cooking is pertinent in this situation.

To implement clean cooking in Nepal, the problem currently is to handle more than Rs. 60 billion. The topic of finances and funding will be highlighted as two top officials from

prominent development partners EU and USAID visit Nepal.

Dr. Madhusudan Adhikari, executive Director of AEPC, said, "the creation of CAP in close partnership with CCA and AEPC and launched is a big step towards spreading electric cooking throughout Nepal and attaining Nepal's aim. By 2022/023 electric cooking stoves, the CAP intends to give every home access to electricity. The government of Nepal can use this CAP as a clear road map to launch and expand a clean cooking program."

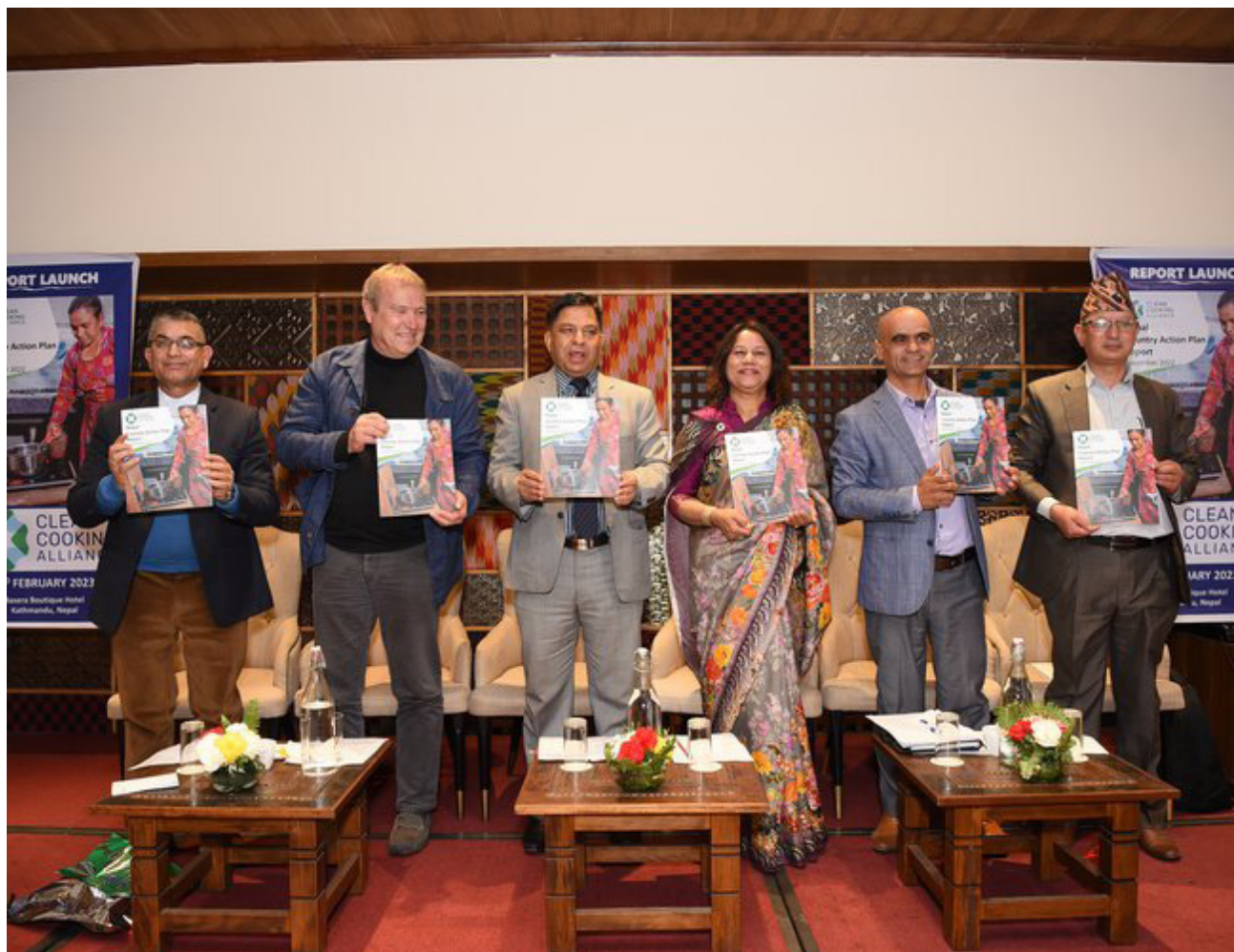
Nepal has already said that it intends to achieve clean cooking by 2030, including making sure that 25% of homes have clean energy by 2045, which is a step up from the current promise. Nepal hasn't, however, made any significant progress in that direction.

Despite the speeding up, more than 68% of families still cook

with conventional biomass including wood, agricultural waste, and animal dung. In urban and semi-urban areas, LPG is the most used fuel for cooking in homes. Over Rs. 60 billion worth of LPG was imported into Nepal last year, according to Nepal Oil Corporation, helping the country's balance of payments.

The supply of electricity is dependable now that a number of hydroelectric projects have been completed as well as the strengthening and expanding of transmission and distribution lines. Given all of these factors, now is the ideal time to switch to electric cooking in order to save on both traditional and imported energy.

"For the promotion of electric cooking in Nepal, this is a significant event. The Country Action Plan (CAP) for Transforming the Cookstoves and Fuels Market in Nepal was developed by the CCA in close



cooperation with the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC),” said Karuna Bajracharya, country manager CCA Nepal, in her opening statement.

According to her, the CAP offers the Nepali government a clear, strategic, and fact-based roadmap along with a prioritized list of interventions that can be put into practice to support Nepal’s goals for energy access, particularly those that are connected to the promotion of electric cooking.

“These top priorities focus on electricity, biomass or are fuel agnostic suitable to electricity, biomass and other clean cooking fuel sources.”

A market-based road map for promoting clean cooking in Nepal is provided by the CAP. To make sure that the CAP is in line with the objectives and initiatives of the Nepali government, the CCA has collaborated closely with the AEPC and, later, the National Planning Commission

(NPC).

“The creation of the CAP offers the Nepali government a crucial road map for speeding the expansion of clean cooking across the nation. A practical and comprehensive CAP is designed by AEPC and CCA in close collaboration with the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, the National Planning Commission, and other pertinent government and non-government stakeholders,” said Dr. Adhikari, the executive director.

“A market-based road map for promoting clean cooking in Nepal is provided by the CAP. The CAP in particular: CCA has done a lot of work. It’s an exciting time for us since the CCA and the AEPC created this Country Action Plan (CAP) to act as a strategic and practical roadmap for changing the cookstoves and fuel market in Nepal, particularly those releases that promote electric cook-

ing. When creating CAP, the National Planning Commission offered invaluable assistance,” said Bajracharya.

The CAP was incorporated into the country’s energy policy and customized for Nepal. In order to get comments and buy-in, CCA also offered the CAP draft to important stakeholders, including municipal and provincial governments.

In her opening remarks, Bajracharya, Country Manager – Nepal, said, “CCA and AEPC developed the CAP based on a rigorous methodology, consultations with partners, key insights from CCA-commissioned foundational research, and various activities by partner organizations in Nepal.”

According to Bajracharya’s the methodology toward designing the CAP was outcome-oriented, identifying critical, practicable, and desired activities to accelerate Nepal’s large-scale transition to cleaner cooking op-



and contains 73 pages, will operate as a strategic and practical roadmap for changing the cookstoves and fuels market in Nepal to one that is focused on promoting electric cooking.

CCA pledges to support the campaign by co-operating on several levels with the National Planning Commission, AEPC, INGOs, NGOs, and the commercial sector.

Launching of CAP

Long-running electric cooking projects in Nepal have included CCA. Supporting the development of strategy and action plans by the Nepali government, AEPC, and other stakeholders.

“CCA has been promoting clean cooking in Nepal to advance the SDGs on a larger scale. We have been formally involved in Nepal since 2017 and have started a number of activities there. One program that shows how clean cooking can maximize health benefits has already been finished. We advocated electric cooking and bio-gas.”

People use electric stoves instead of LPG. This shift is effective. But when I read this research that said LPG is pure, I responded. That is un-

tions.

Electric Cooking Campaign

The major global fossil fuel crisis brought on by the Russian invasion of Ukraine pushed Nepal to the verge of economic collapse. The speed of the campaign is too slow, despite the fact that CCA has been working in Nepal since 2018 and offering customized support to help Nepal realize her lofty clean cooking access targets.

It has been a busy and emergency-filled year in Nepal throughout the past year. Due to the increase in fossil fuel prices, Nepal has a tough time obtaining foreign exchange to import LPG and sell it at a subsidised price. As a result of a serious supply crisis, the government announced that LPG would be replaced by electric cooking. The administration, however, lacks a strategy and action plan to carry out its obligations.

Here comes CCA, which works to support Nepal in quickening the scale-up of cooking across the nation and bringing about long-term effects on the environment, climate, livelihoods, and health.

Policy expert Mohan Das Manandhar, Purushottam Ghimire, and former National Planning Commission member Professor Surendra Labh Karna participated in a number of promotional campaign meetings at

the province and municipal levels with the assistance of CCA Country Manager Karuna Bajracharach.

These sessions also aided in understanding the current condition of electric cooking as well as the policies, strategies, and initiatives of the province and local governments in this area.

Clean cooking, particularly electric cooking, is essential to achieving Nepal’s lofty goals and commitments to combat climate change and simultaneously achieve universal energy access.

The CAP, which was created collaboratively by the CCA and AEPC



true. According to a recent American study, LPG also emits harmful pollutants. I'm pleased to report that Nepal is making progress in the clean cooking initiative, according to Jan Erik Studsrud, Counselor for Energy and Climate at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kathmandu.

"After starting a two-year program in 2017, we learned about household concerns and their needs. Furthermore, we are now aware of the fundamental disadvantages of electric cooking. Household wiring is still a major issue. Other obstacles to promoting electric cooking include funding and a lack of nearby maintenance facilities. Cooking stove warranty replacement needs to be encouraged at the municipal level, according to Bajracharya.

"When I first arrived in Nepal in 1987, I visited Sauraha, where locals cook over open fires using wood from the surrounding forest. We came here to do study on using wood for fuel. The forest was still there a few years later, but no one was utilizing it for fuel anymore. LPG, wood, and biomass are no longer used as fuel sources."

Winrock International's country director Badri Baral and a counselor from the Norwegian Embassy both consider CAP to be a significant accomplishment. "Many thanks to NPC and CCA for bringing the report on the Nepal Country Action Plan. We completely understood the significance of healthy cooking in the nation. The use of LPG has an impact on the balance of payments and trade deficit. We wholeheartedly concur that cooking clean is important for both the environment and one's health. Electric cooking will henceforth be the main source of clean cooking. Numerous interventions with advantages to both health and the economy are available, ranging in size from small to greatest. Numerous academic institutes have conducted studies demonstrating the economic and health benefits of clean cooking methods like electric cooking," said Baral.



"Numerous interventions and efforts, some of which were also launched on a commercial basis, have been made. Through a market-based strategy, we have already agreed to adopt 65000 electric cooking stoves. A plan to provide households with 15000 cooking stoves is also in the works. INGOs and other parties have also made interventions. I can only confirm that the nation is moving in the right direction."

Nepal Country Action Plan, which compiles all the information and identifies any gaps, has finally been made public after a protracted effort. The paper identifies what should serve as a road map for attaining the goals set forth in the 15 five-year plans, the NDC, and the SDGs.

The nation's action plan is concentrated on energizing and speeding the market to meet the goals established by the SDGs and NDCs. Given that Nepal's electric market is still in its infancy, the attention paid to it is reasonable. To speed up the market, a lot of work is required. The fact that CAP has offered a clear road map for clean cooking is one of the crucial features of the program.

"First and foremost, I want to express my gratitude to CAA and Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPC) for creating this superb paper to support clean cooking in Nepal. With the help of this practice, we can now promote healthy cooking. With recent expertise in electric cooking,

CAP concentrates on energizing and advancing the industry with the goal of boosting access to over 20%. We are discussing the market's activation. Electric cooking is currently used by 2.5% of urban residents; this percentage needs to rise by 20%. Innovation is needed for acceptance "said Subarna Kapali, the Ajummary Bikas Foundation's executive director.

The CAP also has a road map for the next 10 and 20 years. The CAP initially focuses on the urban market because it is essential to national expansion. The four areas of action suggested by the CAP center on supply and demand.

"Consumer and license are one of the intervention sectors that the report has targeted. "We must first comprehend how consumers behave. Our understanding of consumer understanding has already grown. Anjumari Foundation finished the research to comprehend the early adaptor with help from CCA, according to Kapali.

A study on the market for electric cooking was also carried out by Practical Action. A number of other organizations have also conducted studies of a similar nature. Through the participation of partners in the development sector, studies have already been completed.

"Since the private sector may play a significant role in market expansion and exploration, the private sector should participate in and be involved in the new study. However, it is crucial



for the private sector to comprehend the market from the point of view of development practitioners. These three factors—who the customers are, what their options are, and the location of the market—are all crucial. Manufacturers, importers, and suppliers should all be actively involved in the effort. We should involve the private sector while discussing further research. Understanding the current situation and future direction of the market is the responsibility of the private sector. Their client is who? customer perceptions about electric cooking.”

“Manufacturers, suppliers, and distributors ought to conduct more research. They ought to be involved in the planning and execution of the research. Additionally, CAP recommended raising public awareness. That is vital information. In terms of raising awareness, I think it’s important to cover all facets of clean cooking and stoves so that consumers can make educated decisions about what to buy and how to cook. This needs to be done step-by-step, and our awareness campaign needs to be focused from that angle,” added Kapali.

“We require interpersonal awareness in addition to general awareness. The private sector must be included in public awareness efforts as well. We have discovered that the suppliers are now willing to help spread awareness. When we celebrated Na-

tional Cooking Day last week, the commercial sector demonstrated interest in the industry. They also provide financial support. It is not about a certain brand, but more about clean cooking options and electric cooking. They wish to manufacture their goods, and customers are familiar with the brand. It is possible if clean cooking is at the core of the answer. A transition from an urban to a semi-urban setting was also highlighted in the plan. Consumers must make a decision. There are also some projects in rural areas. We can continue working in rural areas. We may carry on with our efforts there as well. We need an alternative strategy because the market method won’t currently function in rural areas.”

The need for the extension of supply networks in semi-urban and rural areas has also been eloquently stated by CAP. The supply chain has been run by large business organizations in cities. It does not, however, apply to rural and semi-urban areas. There is a significant gap in the supply chain network, and vendors of kitchenware should be one of the possible providers in semi-urban areas. Other potential sources are women’s business associations. Women entrepreneurs in Nepal have a track record of success in the microhydro and solar supply chains. Here, this is applicable. That possibility exists in this situation as well. By supplying a working cash

gap, we must assist them in managing their firm.

Financing is a crucial factor in rural and semi-urban areas. There are several investment hazards in rural and semi-urban locations. As a result, another sector should enter the market. In order to promote electric cooking, a group like the National Association of Community Electricity Users-Nepal is crucial.

“I want to thank CCA and AEPC for releasing CAP first of all. With a clear road map in hand, we can now advance the cause of electric cooking. Our group, which has more than 600,000 members, can significantly contribute to reaching rural areas,” said the National Association of Community Electricity Users-Nepal Chairman Narayan Gyawali remarked.

In order to advance the electric cooking campaign, he declared that the association is prepared to collaborate with CCA, AEPC, the government, and other stakeholders. Nepal requires both the participation of the private sector and financial assistance from development partners to accomplish this.

Having a country action plan, which is primarily owned and carried out by the government and partners, is crucial at this point for Nepal. This was developed after a thorough consultation process involving all relevant parties. We have also evaluated the electrical systems in place for electric cooking. After this was published,

After CCA and AEPC released CAP, the nation was prepared for electric cooking. Given the strong infrastructure for electric cooking, NEA is spending a lot of money to enhance transmission and distribution. It is now appropriate for Nepal’s two major development partners, USAID and the EU, to support a clean cooking campaign through CAP.

Nepal And The EU Share 20 Years History Of Partnership On Education



BY: JUTTA URPILAINE

I'm thrilled to join you for the opening of this important conference. As a teacher myself, I always feel at home in schools.

They're special places, where both students and teachers learn and grow. Today, schools are more important than ever.

The world is home to the largest generation of young people in history. A generation that suffered learning losses due to Covid-19. A generation that faces profound global challenges.

Now, the world risks leaving an entire generation of youth behind. We will let that happen.

At the UN Transforming Education Summit, Nepal and the European Union called for urgent, global action.

We made concrete commitments – to improve teaching and learning, strengthen systems, and increase public financing for education.

Today is about delivering on our commitments. I'm a member of the SDG4 high-level Steering Committee. So it's not just my personal goal, but also my responsibility to foster education partnerships.

This afternoon I'm thrilled to announce the EU's full support for Nepal's new School Education Sector plan. Nepal and the EU share 20 years history of partnership on education. The progress is impressive.

Nepal has significantly increased access to education – especially for girls and disadvantaged communities.

Between 1998 and 2018, literacy rates among people over 15 rose from 21% to 68%! I applaud all of you, members of government, teachers, and students who helped make that happen.

Today, we take the next step to improve quality,

access and learning outcomes. In a diverse country like Nepal, with more than 120 languages, local leadership is key.

Your new constitution empowers local governments to respond to the unique cultural, geographic and demographic needs of their communities. This includes delivering quality education for all.

I'm pleased to see that your new education plan focuses heavily on learning recovery and building resilience into the education system. The EU is eager to help to move from vision to reality.

Our EUR 50 million Quality Support for All initiative offers Nepal the resources and expertise of the EU and its Member States – in particular, Finland, whose education experience and outcomes are

exceptional.

We will do everything we can to ensure that Nepal's new education plan succeeds. This includes donating to the Global Partnership for Education Fund, which is a major development investor in Nepal.

The EU and its Members States are the largest collective donor to this fund, accounting for more than 50%.

When people think of Nepal, they think of the Sagarmatha – or as we call it, Mount Everest. They think of the world's highest mountain.

Today, when I think of Nepal, I think of a different kind of mountain. I think of the heights Nepal can achieve if its young people are equipped with a quality education. I think of jobs, a skilled work force, and economic growth.

Above all, I think of a prosperous, brighter future. Let's do everything we can to achieve it. Together. Visit EU Page

Urpilainen is the EU Commissioner for International Partnerships. Excerpts of her Speech delivered at the high-level conference on primary and secondary education in Nepal – Kathmandu.



TRANSMISSION LINE CHILIME-TRISHULI

Correct Course

The 220 kV Chilime-Trishuli Transmission Line Project, a strategically important undertaking to evacuate clean energy from the region, is now on track and aims to be completed by March. It is funded by the European Union and Germany's KfW.

By A CORRESPONDENT

As a high-level delegation led by Peteris Ustubs, Director for Asia, Central Asia, Pacific, and the Middle East at the European Union, examined the construction of a 220 kV transmission line project with Kul Man Ghising, Managing Director of the Nepal Electricity Authority, the delegation became aware of the difficulties presented by harsh mountainous terrains.

Although it is a difficult project that traversed mountains higher than 8000 feet, the 220 kV Transmission line project is crucial strategically and will serve as a lifeline to evacuate the hydroelectricity produced by hydropower projects from the area.

The contract was signed in the final year of his first year of tenure and has been inactive for about a year throughout his

absence. Ghising announced that all transmission lines which are under construction, including the 220 kV Chilime-Trishuli Transmission line, would be finished.

This transmission line project, which is being constructed with EU assistance, will significantly help to reduce the use of fossil fuels, especially LPG. MD Ghising, who has been working arduously to complete the project before June, gave an update on its condition while touring the site with a high-level European group.

The transmission project, which was delayed for about two years due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and difficult geology and steep terrain, is back on schedule. The project is currently on track to be completed by the amended deadline of June 2023, according to MD Ghising.

The EU delegation appears satisfied after inspecting the construction sites and working with MD Ghising. At





a time when rising fuel prices, including LPG, are causing concern in Nepal.

Upper Sanjen, Sanjen, and Rashuwagadhi projects are nearing completion. “Opportunities and challenges for renewable energy: delighted to have Peteris Ustubs in Nepal visiting with NEA @KulmanGhising and partners,” EU in Nepal tweets.

A high-level European Union team conducted an on-site inspection of the Chilime-Trishuli 220 kV transmission line project, which is currently under construction.

On Monday, a group led by Peteris Ustubs, Director for Asia, European Union, paid visits to the projects being built in Nuwakot and Rasuwa (February 6).

A 220/132/33 kV Chil-

ime Hub substation and a Trishuli 3B Hub substation are being built as part of the project at Thambuchet in the Amachodgingmo Rural Municipality of Rasuwa and Pahrebensi in the Kispang Rural Municipality of Nuwakot.

A 28 km 220 kV transmission line connecting Chilime hub and Trishuli 3B hub substation is also being built.

The project is estimated to cost 30.9 million US dollars, with investments from the government and the Nepal Electricity Authority, as well as a grant from the German Development Bank (KfW).

Concessional loans are available through the European Union’s European Investment Bank (EIB) project. According to the Ghising, a high-level EU team inspected the Trishuli 3B

hub substation and transmission line under construction at Dandagaun, which is located in Uttargaya Rural Municipality-2 of Rasuwa.

The team met with Nepal Electricity Authority, project management, consultants, and contractors involved in the construction to discuss a variety of issues, including the project’s progress, problems, and completion date.

The project’s construction has recently picked up speed, according to team leader Peteris Ustubs, and the progress made thus far is satisfactory, according to Kul Man Ghising, managing director of the NEA, who went on a site inspection with the team.

The COVID-19 epidemic, the project’s problematic location in a mountainous

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environment, and the contractors' and consultants' subpar performance all had an impact on the construction process.

According to Ghising, "in the past, they expressed concern about the construction's delay, but during the inspection visit, the team expressed their happiness and appreciated the fact that the work has picked up momentum and made significant progress, and the project is being carried out in a geographically very dangerous and difficult Himalayan region.

Through the EIB, the European Union is attempting to make significant investments in Nepal's hydropower production, transmission, and distribution, he claimed.

It has stated a desire to contribute to the 635 MW Dudhkoshi Reservoir project through foreign financial institutions' co-financing.

The EIB has also offered concessional loans for the 140 MW Tanahun Hydropower Project, the 220 kV Marsyangdi Corridor Transmission Line,

and the electrification of the districts in the provinces of Sudurpashchim and Lumbini. These projects are in addition to the Chilime-Trishuli Transmission Line.

Geographically, the Himalayan region is incredibly risky and challenging, said Ghising.

In Nuwakot and Rasuwa, the KFW has given subsidies for electricity, the bolstering of the distribution infrastructure, and solar energy. The Chilime-Trishuli 220 kV transmission line was created to link hydropower facilities being built on the Trishuli river and its tributaries that provide elec-

tricity to the national grid.



The project has made 81% of its physical progress so far. Transmission line and substation building are progressing the fastest among them, at 71 and 70%, respectively. To be finished by March of this year, transmission line and substation building is moving forward at top speed.

The support given by the European Union in the transmission project is symbolic at a time when Nepal is undergoing an energy transition, switching from fossil fuel to clean energy for family cooking and transportation.

According to a tweet from the EU, the project has both challenges and opportunities. Once construction is complete, despite the difficulties provided by the mountainous terrain, it would greatly advance Nepal's commitment to clean energy under the SDGs and NDCs until 2050 zero emission.





BY: HEMANG DIXIT

On 10th January 2023 our newly elected House of Representatives gave a 268 to 2 approval to PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal to govern the country. This was considered by many to be a blessing from the North but was perhaps unlikely. Many shades of opinion by elected representatives were made and heard from all over Nepal. The general demand was that it was necessary to get the country out of its present quagmire state. Loud and clear was that the various industries, started as necessities by previous monarchical regime on its own and with aid of other well-meaning countries were sold off at negligible prices. The plea was that a state must not do such activities in modern times!

The result of all this is that Nepal is a country which perhaps imports almost everything it requires. Yes, it exports its precious Nepali souls for whom it cares little, to labour under at pitiable rates. The remittances sent by Nepalis, working, sweating and dying in countries from the Gulf to Malaysia and various other countries is utilised to import more costly goods from foreign lands for the neo local masters who hold power by hook or by crook! Yes, this is the state of our Motherland. No wonder then that we have been cursed by Sati.

The current policy by some of our businessmen of investing in foreign lands or on far off shores should be looked into. They should be made to do it the other way round i.e. Udharka Iddhar. Investment should be here so that workshops and industries spring up in the high, mid and low lands of Nepal and our Nepalis do not have to go to phoren lands to do dangerous, menial and sub-menial work which their own bhumiputras do not opt to do. Looking back at foreign history, one realises that people went from Europe to Africa, the Americas and Oceania to rule and make gains. This was done by subservient means and with the 'Rejuvenating waters and the speaking guns' they took over the lands from the natives! Some victors took back some riches to their homelands but many settled there and made good. The scenario now is that many Nepalis are struggling and sweating abroad, supplying cheap labour for tasks which the locals will not do at monetary rates paid. How long is this to go on?

These thoughts brought back to my mind a film with the legendary Peter Sellers which I saw about sixty years ago. The film, 'I Am Alright Jack' was about Trade Unionism in England but it depicts too what is happening in Nepal. The self-immolation by Prem Prasad Acharya in front of the Sansad Building on 24 Jan. 2023 is example of this. May his soul rest in eternal peace! The attitude of the entrenched business community towards the small Nepali entrepreneur trying to start up a business and succeed is terrifying. The small entrepreneur has to supply his goods to the 'built-in nexus' which in truth wants to obliterate him/her as a supplier by not paying dues on time, creating a state of perpetual tension, depression and suicide. The bigger business community consisting of traders paying commissions to politicians who themselves are the investors, reap the benefits in which the 'Big One' always wins at the cost of the 'Small Fry'! This Small Fry who hoped to flourish in his native land never had a chance in this 'Make Believe Nepal' as the 'cards were all stacked' against him. S/he had no right to exist in Nepal where interest of the rulers is paramount. The Arab Spring may have succeeded in far off Tunisia but is doomed here. Our heritage is that Nepal is a land cursed by Sati!

The export of rocks from Nepal was banned for a few days and then re-started on the plea that many projects under construction will be affected. This order was withdrawn 22 days later on the plea that projects within the country could not be completed. Everyone, licensed or otherwise went back immediately into regular business.

Surprise, but this is Nepal. The Home Minister who had brought about the above happenings resigned on the 32nd day of his appointment. Was he working against the unseen system? Is this a lesson, not to upset the apple cart?

By a court order, Ravi became in his own words a 'stateless' person – a situation which is against the concept of present day Human Rights! The unimagined happened for the usually static government's wheels moved and within 48 hours, because of the weekly holiday, Ravi had almost all his status quo back! Is Ravi's the only case? There are many past instances in our political horizon which need to be brought to light. Hopefully our various citizenship issues will be solved now.

Characterises of government actions over the years are:

Contracts for building road, bridges etc are awarded without adequate homework. Very inadequate compensation for the lands which will be taken over by the government has been offered but is not accepted by the affected landowners. Both the contractor and the concerned authority know it but still the contract is given and commitments made between the two parties signed and settled in full somehow! Sometimes the chosen contractor hands it over to another and moves on. The work is only partially started or a little cannot be completed as the locals whose land is to be used have not been given compensation. This is an example of bad intentions which is rampant in Nepal.

An example of variation to this system may be said to be the extension of the Ring Road between Kandeutastan and Chabahil which the Chinese Government is supposed to be building. They have rightly refused to start the Ring Road Expansion undertaking until the compensation issues pertaining to the land are settled first by our government!

China and US trade, with various clauses en force, still goes on. India and China in spite of the fact that they have been facing each other across a line of control (LoC) for many years with periodic flare-ups at times still trade together. A Vimal Lamich post in Twitter in Mid-Jan. 2023 stated that: India imported from China in 2022 136 billion dollars worth of goods and exported just 19 billion dollars worth. Was Indian media unaware of this? (How does this compare with the Nepal, India trade?)

Even as Europe and US send sophisticated weaponry to Ukraine to fight with Russia and call each other names, usual trade with gas, oil and other goods continues. Such is the realities of life. Here in Nepal everyone knows what is happening but like the populace in the story 'The Emperor's New Clothes' we await a novice to shout 'But he is Naked'!

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

LATE HIMALAYA SUMSHER RANA

The End of an Era

Himalaya Sumsher Rana, the first Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, died at the age of 95, bringing to an end a long era in Nepal's economic development and bureaucracy.

By A CORRESPONDENT

Himalaya Sumsher Rana retired from Nepal's civil service and UNDP a long time ago. However, he never grew tired of participating in all reform activities as an active member of civil society.

The first Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, first finance secretary, and imminent civil society leader, Himalaya Sumsher JBR, who died at the age of 95, urged

grams aimed at reforming the political process, the economy, and society. Rana, who also spent time with family playing with great grandsons and daughters, had a strong sense of patriotism. However, he always prioritizes social works.

Rana, the great-great grandson of reformist and liberal Rana Prime Minister Dev Sumsher, has not only witnessed Ne-

Himalaya Sumsher Rana, who retired 44 years ago and has a family of twenty-three members (sons, daughters, daughter in laws, son in laws, grandchildren, and great grandchildren), is still very enthusiastic about participating in activities organized by civil service, civil society organizations, and professional organizations. He used to play golf until about a year ago.

As a common and humble person, all bureaucrats, from the lowest to the highest ranking officers, hold him in high regard. Nepal Rastra Bank decided to observe three days of mourning following his death.

For over nine decades, Rana has witnessed the ups and downs of Nepal's civil service. From the civil service of a unitary state, where he laid the groundwork for the first annual fiscal budget, to the current federal structure, Rana claims he has witnessed increasing corruption, instability, and irresponsibility.

Rana has witnessed many natural disasters, including the Great Earthquake of 1934, World War II, and pandemics, and has firsthand knowledge of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rana, who was born on January 8, 1928, laid the groundwork for Nepal's institu-



youth to remain vigilant in order to preserve the essence of democracy.

Rana was always active and attended all important pro-

pal's transformation but has also transformed himself to the modern context, using social media such as Facebook to express himself.

tions, including the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance.

Rana founded Himalayan Bank, the country's first private bank, as well as Gorkha Brewery, which brews and markets

system.

He took part in peace talks with Maoists. As a member of civil society, he continues to play an active role in defending democracy and bringing peace and economic

mandu's Norvic Hospital.

From 1962 to 1986, Rana served as a United Nations Development Programme representative in various countries. Rana, a former finance secretary, founded Himalayan Bank.

In recognition of his contributions, he was awarded The Order of Japan (The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star).

Despite the fact that none of his family members are currently in regular civil service, his sons and daughters have been serving the country in various capacities. Pratima Pande, his elder daughter, has worked in heritage conservation and the promotion of Nepal's legacy and identity, becoming involved in organizations such as the Nepal Britain Society and the Honorary Consul General of Italy. Similarly, his elder son Ashoke Rana has served the country as the CEO of Himalayan Bank, a reputable Nepalese bank.

Another daughter, Sangeeta Thapa, is well-known around the world for her contributions to the promotion of Nepalese art. Thapa, the Director and Curator of Siddhartha Art Gallery, is globalizing Nepalese art. His younger son, Amar Rana, who worked for Nepal TV for almost a year, has contributed through his own work.

His two sons, Ashoke Sumsher Rana and Amar Sumsher Rana, and two daughters, Pratima Pande and Sangeeta Thapa, survive him. People will remember him for his contribution as a voice for social, political, and economic reform, even though he died at the age of 96.



high-quality Danish beer, Tuborg and Carlsberg, in the country. It was one of Nepal's largest foreign joint venture companies at the time. Himalayan Bank and Gorkha Brewery are both examples of successful joint ventures in Nepal.

Himalaya Sumsher, born into a Rana family with liberal views, has always followed the path of political liberalism. Himalaya Shumsher Rana faced a kind of personal exile after late King Mahendra dismantled the multi-party system in 1960. He was away from home for over 25 years, serving with the United Nations.

He participated in the 1950 revolution, supporting Subarna Sumsher Rana and signing the letter that ended the autocratic regime. Rana also witnessed changes in the civil service and political

prosperity to the country.

Rana was a living history of over 90 years, witnessing Nepal's transformation and change. He was still active at the age of 95. On April 22, 1956, he was appointed as Nepal's first governor.

He also founded the Himalaya Bank and served as Nepal's first Finance Secretary.

He has recently been active as a prominent leader of Nepal's civil society movement. He has also been proactive in advocating for free, fair, and impartial elections as the founder of the General Election Observation Committee (GEOC).

According to Rana's son-in-law, Nepali Congress leader Sunil Bahadur Thapa, the former governor died around 6:30 a.m. while receiving treatment at Kath-

व्यक्तिगत घटना समयमा नै दर्ता गराऔं ।

- जन्म, मृत्यु, विवाह, सम्बन्ध विच्छेद तथा बसाईसराई जस्ता व्यक्तिगत घटना समयमा नै दर्ता गरौं गराऔं ।
- व्यक्तिगत घटना दर्ता व्यक्ति पहिचानको पहिलो आधार हो ।
- यस्ता घटना ३५ दिनभित्र स्थानीय पञ्जिकाधिकारीको कार्यालय (वडा कार्यालय) मा निःशुल्क रुपमा दर्ता गर्न सकिन्छ ।
- विकासका योजना तर्जुमा गर्न, राज्यबाट नागरिकलाई प्रदान गरिने सेवा सुविधा सुनिश्चित गर्ने, जनसंख्याको विवरण अद्यावधिक लगायतका कार्यका लागि व्यक्तिगत घटना दर्ता आवश्यक छ ।



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