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**VIEWPOINT**  
Nona Deprez



**OPINION**  
Hemant Arjyal



**FORUM**  
Dr. Prabin Manandhard

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March.- 10, 2023

FORTNIGHTLY

PRESIDENT-ELECT PAUDEL

## Partisan Balance

### INSIDE



**AMBASSADOR FELICITY VOLK**  
JOURNEY TO REMOTE KARNALI



**MINERGY'S PROJECT**  
POWER FOR WOMEN TO EMPOWER THEM



**NEPAL WOOL HOUSE**  
THREE GENERATIONS IN BUSINESS

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**Kathmandu, Ph.: +97 1 4530250**  
**Email: [spotlightnepal@gmail.com](mailto:spotlightnepal@gmail.com)**



**Editor and Publisher**

Keshab Poudel

**Contributor**

Sabine Pretsch

**Design/Layout**

Sahil Mokthan, 9863022025

**Marketing Manager**

Madan Raj Poudel

Tel: 9841320517

Nabin Kumar Maharjan

Tel: 9841291404

**Editorial Office**

Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 977-1-4530250

**E-mail**

spotlightnepal@gmail.com

P.O.Box: 7256

**Website**

www.spotlightnepal.com

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**Notes From The Editor**



Once Ram Chandra Paudel, a leader of the Nepali Congress and a former speaker of the House of Representatives, was elected president of the Republic of Nepal, a month-long disagreement and debate about who should hold the country's highest ceremonial and constitutional role came to an end. Paudel is the third president to be chosen after the monarchy was politically abolished in 2008. Although the president of Nepal only has a very limited ceremonial function under the Constitution of Nepal, his two predecessors had demonstrated that there was still room for the president to wriggle authority in favor of their political parties. To hold the elections for the second Constituent Assembly, the first president, Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, even formed an interim administration and reinstated the chief of army staff who had been fired by the prime minister. Bidhyadevi Bhandari has adopted Dr. Yadav's policy of supporting the prime minister of her party in all political decisions. Even two House of Representatives-passed proposals were rejected by Bhandari. Political parties have gone above and beyond to elect the candidate they choose after reflecting on all of their past terrible experiences.

A fresh coalition of eight parties was created after 40 days of 40 days long five-party coalitions breaking apart during the selection of the nominee. In this case, President-elect Paudel faces opportunities as well as challenges. He can accept the constitutional function and establish himself as the state's neutral and ceremonial head. Similarly to this, Paudel can utilize his position to support the coalitions and political parties that helped elect him. The countdown has started as he will formally take office as president on Monday, March 13.

**Keshab Poudel**

Editor

# CONTENT

## ARTICEL

Hemang Dixit 3

## NEWSNOTES

4

## BUSINESS BRIEF

10

## OPINION

Hemant Arjyal 12

## ENVIRONMENT

Batu Uprety 18

## COURT HEARING

Prosecuting Maoists 20

## VIEWPOINT

Nona Deprez 21

## AMBASSADOR FELICITY VOLK

Journey To Remote Karnali 22

## FORUM

Dr. Prabin Manandhar 23

## MINERGY'S PROJECT

Power For Women To emPOWER\* Them 28



COVERSTORY: PRESIDENT-ELECT PAUDEL: Partisan Balance

14



IMWI-NEPAL: Water Storage In South Asia

24



NEPAL WOOL HOUSE : Three Generations In Business

31



# Blind Justice



BY: HEMANG DIXIT

In Mathew 3 of the Bible which was written almost 2000 years ago, it says 'Let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth'. Over the course of years its implication has been a separation of one's actions especially as regards charity and that one should not boast about such matters.

They say that love is blind and in some societies it is also accepted to go on a 'Blind Date' with someone of the opposite sex who one may never met and seen before. Such is an accepted norm too!

*Lady Justice:* This concept is said to have originated at the time of the Roman Emperor in 63 BCE and is said to be personification of moral force in the judicial system. This led to the western concept to show and depict justice as a blindfolded lady with a naked sword, signifying power in one hand and an evenly matched pair of scales depicting fairness in the other. This was claimed to signify fair justice to all, irrespective of their status in society. A cartoon in a recent issue of The Economist writing about the Legal Reform Bill in Israel shows a blindfolded Lady Justice about to be whacked by PM Benyamin Netanyahu! The first reading of the Bill has been passed by the Knesset but two more to go!

Regarding justice in our land I have vague memories of seeing a cartoon, just after the era of Man Mohan premiership, said to be depicting a Chief Justice, sitting on a branch of a tree. This, considered to be very derogatory to the judicial system, created a furore. Subsequent to this episode, journalists in Nepal are very wary of not getting on the wrong side of the law and are loathe neither writing much nor voicing much in the way of comments.

Our fickle minded politicians, at time of having to make a difficult decision, turn to the high court of the land to solve their problems. They are literally trying to pass the buck. Their modus operandi is to fill up the court positions with persons who will toe the line as they direct. Besides, another tactics is to leave vacant for ages the posts so that it is easier to make decisions. A classical example of this is the functioning of the Constitutional Council of the land. The inherent intention is that decisions should be unanimous. The ploy by the PM i.e. who heads it is to leave some posts so that he always has an upper hand to make decisions easier! Such is the road of justice in Nepal. However this type of practice or action by the Chairman of a high powered committee is not something just restricted to Nepal. The Supreme Court in USA, where it matters if the majority of the justices are inclined to the Democrats or to the Republican way of thinking! One has only to think of the USA where Donald Trump during his term as president nominated three Chief Justices to the Supreme Court. Having a majority in tune with his way of thinking, the 50 years old Roe vs. Wade decision on abortions was overturned sometime after.

A noted journalist Bijaya Kumar has posted in FB

this comment about court, "In some political matters it sometimes gives its decision as a bullet train. Then in many other instances, the engine doesn't even start. Why is it so?"

The work of the Truth & Reconciliation Committee in Nepal is at a standstill as far as justice is considered. This seems worldwide for such is the situation in South Africa too. What shame. Justice delayed is justice denied. There is the case of rape and murder of Nir-mala Pant plus another who after fasting for justice tried to immolate herself with a baby in her lap! Then too is the case of the murder of Dilip Mahato by the sand mafias.

The classical concept that the Nepalis have of justice can be taken by the saying current all over the country that states 'For justice go to Gorkha'. This is proved by the fact that Nepalis demonstrating for justice do so in the middle of the day with lighted lanterns or even candles in their hands. Whilst this is an accepted fact, a local saying in use advises 'Affanai hath Jagannath'. We in this present day in this part of the world are however in danger if we consider the words of philosopher Fulton J Sheen who said, 'Civilisation is always in danger when those who have never learned to obey are given the right to command.'

Around this time also another picture was posted of a policeman inspecting a car tyre with the comment, "If a car has to be 'roadworthy' before it is allowed on the road, then how come that it is not necessary for a road to be 'vehicle worthy' before a car to be driven on it?" This is certainly a worthy thought to be kept in mind by the concerned authorities!

Following the Yeti Airlines crash near the Pokhara Airport, a contributor in FB commented that if following an accident the driver or the owner of the vehicle can be arrested then why not with the same logic should not the owner of an airline in which a large number of people have died be similarly dealt with. EU wants CAAN to be divided into two parts i.e. Separation of the regulatory and the managerial aspects is essential for fair practices. Nepal is in an air safety blacklist as late as Oct. 2022. Why is our government not prepared to separate the authority as EU has demanded.

The 'Take home message for all of us Nepalis are the words of Albert Einstein who said, "Blind belief in authority is the greatest enemy of truth". The situation in Nepal during the last thirty years can be well compared with that of the elephant and six blind men. The different governments at various times have like the blind men have tackled only the problems piecemeal so that the country has not made much progress in all these years. This is the blind justice in our motherland.

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

## NEWSNOTES

### DPM Shrestha Stresses The Need For All Out Support

Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Physical Infrastructure and Transport and the Head of Nepali delegation, addressed the 5th United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries in Doha today.

In his address, Deputy Prime Minister said that LDCs cannot wait another half a century just to leave the tag of LDC. He strongly called our development partners for the effective implementation of the Doha Program of Action in tandem with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Deputy Prime Minister underlined that together we can rebuild the economies of LDCs, overcome the climate crisis and save our planet from the brink of climate hell, and achieve SDGs in the spirit of leaving no one behind.

He expressed Nepal's firm commitment to graduating from the LDC category even in the face of profound economic setbacks owing to the pandemic, earthquake, and climate change. As a responsible member and incoming

technology transfer for LDCs.

In the afternoon, Deputy Prime Minister Shrestha Co-Chaired the High-level thematic round table 3: Structural transformation as a driver of prosperity in LDCs. In his remarks, he highlighted the importance of achieving structural transformation not only for LDC's economic prosperity and well-being but also for their social development and environmental sustainability.

He also underscored major challenges of LDCs that prevent LDCs from accelerating progress toward structural transformation such as insufficient investment in the development of human capital, science and technology and innovative capacities as well as infrastructure deficits and emphasized scaling-up support to address these challenges. He said that as a graduating country, Nepal has no other alternatives than to increase investment for a robust structural transformation to make graduation sustained and irreversible.

In the evening, Hon. Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha, Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Commission, delivered a statement at the side event on 'Facilitating structural transformation towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals in Asia-Pacific LDCs' organized by UNSCAP.

In his statement, Vice-Chairman highlighted the key policy initiatives that the Government of Nepal is taking for industrialization, infrastructure development-particularly hydropower and transportation, modernization of agriculture, digitization and innovation and tourism for the economic structural transformation of the country.

Presenting the development priorities set by the government and expressing Nepal's determination, he called upon the international communities for collaboration and partnership in the course of Nepal's structural transformation to ensure sustainable and irreversible graduation and attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

While delivering his remarks at the high-level Panel discussion on the LDC climate Fund, the Secretary of the National Planning Commission Mr. Kewal Prasad Bhandari expressed thoughts on how Nepal would implement the National Adaptation Plan as well as the utilization and facilitation of the Global Environment Fund for LDCs.

At the sidelines of the Conference, Deputy Prime Minister had a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Malawi Nancy Tembo M.P. The discussion was focused on various matters of bilateral and multilateral affairs and exchanged views on further promoting cooperation between the two countries. They also exchanged views on how the interests of LDCs would be promoted and protected in an effective manner as Nepal is taking over the chair of the group from Malawi.

Deputy Prime Minister also met Tharaka Balasuriya, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka and discussed various matters of mutual interest including cooperation in the field of human resources, trade, investment,



Chair of the LDC Group, Nepal remains committed to upholding the Group's collective interest in all possible manners, he said.

Deputy Prime Minister also shed light on Nepal's political transformation and emphasized that federal democratic republic and socialism-oriented inclusive democracy have been institutionalized in the new constitution promulgated in 2015. Now, we are in the process of implementing the constitution which has shouldered upon us the historical task of economic development and prosperity with social justice as the main task of today, he added.

On climate change, he welcomed the decision to establish the Loss and Damage Fund in CoP27 and underscored the need for collective action to tackle this crisis. Meeting the \$100 billion climate finance promise stands as a test case for sustainable climate finance for the future of LDCs, he emphasized. He also called for a comprehensive debt relief initiative and enhanced digital cooperation and



and tourism.

Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal had a meeting with Carlos D. Soretta, Undersecretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, and Ms. Marie Bourrel-Mckinnon, Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority, and discussed the matter of mutual concerns.

### Foreign Secretary Paudyal Addressed BIMSTEC Meeting

Foreign Secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal shared the progress made in this sector led by Nepal. In his statement, Foreign Secretary highlighted the plans of Action prepared by Nepal on Culture and Tourism Sub-Sectors, and underlined the need for early operationalization of BIMSTEC Tourism Fund and Tourism Information Center.

Leading the Nepali delegation to the Twenty-Third Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting which was held virtually in Bangkok, foreign secretary Paudyal also conveyed Nepal's concurrence for the inclusion of Poverty alleviation as sub-sector under the People to People Contact Sector.

The fifth Summit of BIMSTEC held in Colombo, Sri Lanka last year had reconstituted the areas of cooperation under seven sectors each of them being led by a Member State. Nepal is the lead country in the People to People contact sector and Culture, Tourism and People to People Contact sub-sectors.



The Meeting also considered the reports of the progress made in different areas of cooperation under BIMSTEC. The Meeting endorsed and recommended the Rules of Procedures for BIMSTEC Mechanisms, Terms of Reference for Eminent Persons' Group on the Future Direction of BIMSTEC, Concept Note and Text of the BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030, among others for approval and adoption by the 19th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting.

The Meeting also finalized the agenda and the proposed text of the Joint Statement of the Nineteenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting to be held virtually tomorrow, 09

March 2023.

### LDCs Are The Worst victims Of Climate Crisis: DPM Shrestha

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport and Leader of Nepali Delegation



at the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Summit Narayan Kaji Shrestha has said that the LDCs are the worst victims of the climate crisis.

“As a matter of justice and for the survival of our economies and societies, the climate finance commitments made for adaptation, mitigation, loss and damage must be fully operationalized, with simplified access to LDCs.”

He said that similarly, technology transfer, including digital ones, must be ensured as they can catalyze SDG implementation, and help combat pandemics and other crises. Nepal is committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2045.

We are implementing a transition strategy for smooth and irreversible LDC graduation. We are committed to exerting all-out efforts for the effective implementation of DPOA and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development to ensure that the graduation process would be smooth and sustainable.

He said that this is an opportunity to collectively persuade our partners for their greater support to our resolve to implement the DPoA and Agenda 2030.

### Zonta Club Of Kathmandu To Honor Various Individuals Working Towards Gender Equity

Zonta Club of Kathmandu joined the global celebration of the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women as part of the International Women's Day and Yellow Rose Day by honoring the efforts of individuals working toward gender equity.

“Every year we celebrate International Women's Day and ‘Yellow Rose Day’ by paying tribute to women who have made a difference in our society,” said Ava Shah,

## NEWSNOTES

President of Zonta Club of Kathmandu. “This year we are proud to honor 12 exceptional women who have made an



indelible mark in their respective fields and who continue to inspire young girls and women to pursue their dreams.”

At the Yellow Rose Day event held today, the Zonta Club of Kathmandu presented the awards to the women from various walks of life.

The list of awardees for 2022 are as follows Mira Rai - Princess Helen Shah Inspirational Award, Muskan Khatun - Amar Rana Game Changer Award, Sushma Tamang and Sonika Dhakal - Ratna Devi Women in Sports, Bibhusha Pathak and Samiksha Khadka - Jyoti Scholarship Award, Anjani Pokhrel and Kalbina Shrestha Indrakala Scholarship Award and Unsung heroes: Sita Subedi - Dancer, Nisha Chaulagain - Driver, Suneera Regmi – Aero Space, and Pinkey Shital Gurung – LGBTQ activist.

In addition, Zonta Club of Kathmandu also paid tribute to editors and reporters of major newspapers who have played an important role in promoting gender equality and social inclusion.

“Today we also honor media personalities who continue to provide a platform for the voices of those affected by gender inequality and amplify their stories. The Zonta Club of Kathmandu truly appreciates and recognizes the important role that the media plays in challenging gender stereotypes and discrimination and raising awareness on important social issues,” said Zontian Shah.

The Zonta Club of Kathmandu promotes gender equality by supporting women to become financially independent through skills-based training, by building their capacity, and by organizing events, workshops and seminars. Zonta members also engage at the local and national level in advocacy and awareness efforts focusing on ending gender-based violence, equal pay, closing the gender gap in male-dominated fields and more.

This year’s International Women’s Day global campaign theme is #EmbraceEquity. According to internationalwomensday.com, truly embracing equity “means to

deeply believe, value and seek out difference as a necessary and positive element of life. To embrace equity means to understand the journey required to achieve women’s equality.

### Pooja Sharma Appointed As New Country Director Of Practical Action Nepal

Pooja Sharma has been appointed as new Country Director of Practical Action Nepal. “I am very excited to take on the role of Country Director in Nepal starting today. It has been six years since I joined Practical Action as the Head of Energy and later as the Thematic Lead of Energy. I have learned and enjoyed each day with the amazing team here. I would like to take a moment to thank everyone - family, friends, supervisors, mentors, colleagues, and teachers - for helping me grow and be able to take on this leadership position,” writes Sharma in her wall in LinkedIn.

“Practical Action is an organization that works with communities to identify ingenious solutions that contribute to their resilience. We start small but think big analysing the factors that can change the underlying systems and identifying where we are best placed to affect change. This is why I love Practical Action.”



“I will continue to uphold its values and remain the ‘me’ transformed by the experiences and exposure I have had so far. I am committed to the growth of Practical Action in Nepal, along with the awesome team of experts I have here. Looking forward to yet another exciting journey and partnering with many of you to make the world a better place for everyone!”

Pooja Sharma believes, “A sign of a good leader is not how many followers you have but how many leaders you create.”

“We are thrilled to share that we have found an exceptional leader to join our team as the new Country Director. Join us in welcoming Pooja Sharma Pokharel, who is an experienced leader and has a proven track record of driving growth and innovation in the positions she has held.



With her strategic vision and passion, we are confident that Pooja will guide us to new heights. Congratulations!," writes Practical Action Nepal in LinkedIn

### International Community In Nepal Express Solidarity With Ukraine, Its Independence, Peace, And Freedom

International community in Nepal in a joint statement issued on the One-Year Anniversary of Russia's War in Ukraine said that they stand with Ukraine, its Independence, Peace, And Freedom.

One year ago, Vladimir Putin unleashed an unjust



tifiable war against Ukraine's land, people, and sovereignty. Since then, more than 8,000 civilians have died and 14 million have been displaced from their homes. Russia's assault on a free nation has destroyed schools and healthcare facilities in what has become the largest land war since World War II.

As part of the international community in Nepal, we mark this solemn occasion with hope. For twelve months, the people of Ukraine have courageously protected their freedom, and the global community has unified behind them. After staving off Russia's attempt to destroy their country, the Ukrainian people are prouder and braver than ever. We have no doubt, Ukraine will be victorious. Today and into the future, we stand with Ukraine, its independence, peace, and freedom.

The statement was issued by Embassy of Australia, Nepal, British Embassy Kathmandu, Delegation of the European Union to Nepal, Embassy of Finland, Kathmandu, Embassy of France, Kathmandu, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Kathmandu, Embassy of Japan in Nepal, Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Nepal, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kathmandu, United States Embassy, Kathmandu and Honorary Consul of Ukraine in Nepal.

### EU Ambassador, Ambassadors Of France, Finland and Germany Call For An End To Russian Aggression Against Ukraine

Ambassadors of EU and three other EU member states based in Kathmandu have called for end to Russian aggression Ukraine. In a joint-oped, Nona Deprez, Head of Delegation of European Union to Nepal, Gilles Bourbao, French ambassador to Nepal, Riina-Riikka Heikka, Finnish ambassador to Nepal and Thomas Prinz, German ambassador to Nepal on, have said that Ukraine is the victim of an

illegal and unprovoked aggression by Russia, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, which is bound by the UN Charter. "These attacks are blatant violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law."

#### Full text:

24 February marks one year since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, its peaceful neighbour. This is a brutal war, which has brought immense suffering and destruction upon Ukraine and its people.

Ukraine is the victim of an illegal and unprovoked aggression by Russia, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, which is bound by the UN Charter.

For the past year, Russia has been shelling Ukraine's cities on a daily basis.

These attacks are blatant violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. Moreover, in 1994, Russia committed itself to guarantee Ukraine's security, when it joined the Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Budapest Memorandum) and yet Russia is brandishing the threat of nuclear weapons against Ukraine.

On 9 February, the Heads of State and Govern-



ment of the Member States of the European Union reiterated their resolute condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a manifest violation of the UN Charter.

On 23 February, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution urging Russia to stop this atrocious war immediately.

Russia continues its deadly and indiscriminate strikes against civilians and civilian infrastructure. Such international crimes must stop. International humanitarian law, including on the treatment of prisoners of war, must be respected. Ukrainians who have been forcibly transferred to Russia, in particular children, must be immediately allowed to return safely.

The European Union stands ready to support

## NEWSNOTES

Ukraine's initiative for a just peace based on respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Alas, to date, Russia has not shown any genuine willingness regarding a fair and sustainable peace.

Russia is also waging a war of misinformation.

For example, Russia claims it is conducting a special military operation to “de-nazify” Ukraine which is backed by the “anti-Russian” powers. There are no “anti-Russian” powers, only UN members determined to defend a rules-based international order and the principles of the UN Charter.

Moreover, as recently recognised by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine started in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, already in 2014.

Russia is also accusing the European Union of targeting fertilisers through its sanctions regime, when in fact, Russia itself is restricting the volume of its exports of fertilizers, so as to artificially increase their price. The transfer of Russian fertilizers to third countries through European ports is still permitted and EU Member States are working closely with UN agencies to facilitate their transfer to third countries.

Also contrary to Russian allegations, it is not action by the International Community that is affecting food security but Russian action. The EU is supporting the Black Sea Grain Initiative as well as the “Grain from Ukraine” initiative, that facilitates the export of Ukrainian grains to third countries in need. We support the extension and full implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. The prolongation of this agreement beyond March 2023 is crucial to stabilize prices and allow the continuous flow of grains, including for humanitarian purposes. It is important that Russia fully commits to its implementation, and scales up the necessary inspections, instead of blocking them.

The EU remains the world's biggest provider of food and development assistance. Together with our Member States, we have increased our financial support to address the global food crisis, providing around 18 billion EUR this year.

As President Putin escalates this illegal aggression, weaponizing winter, food and hunger, the European Union will continue to support the Ukraine with all its resolve and all its might, until Ukraine is liberated from its aggressor.

### **Korea Resumed Process Of Recruiting Nepali Worker: Korean Envoy Park Chong-suk**

Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Nepal Park Chong-suk expressed his happiness over the much-awaited inauguration of the UBT Building in Nepal.



The COVID-19 pandemic had affected the pace of the building construction and also hindered the recruitment process.

The Korean ambassador informed that the process of recruiting workers had resumed with the receding of the pandemic. Ambassador expressed this remark while addressing a function of inauguration of A Ubiquitous-Based Test (UBT) Building in Bhaishepati Lalitpur.

Secretary at the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security Eak Narayan Aryal and visiting Vice President of Human Resource Development Service of the RoK Kim Sung-Jae jointly inaugurated the UBT Building amidst a special programme on Thursday.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Secretary Aryal expressed his hope that the recruiting process of Nepali workers willing to work in Korea under EPS would be more transparent, credible and professional with the operation of well-equipped UBT Building.

“Nepali youths are contributing to the economic development of the country by sending their earnings back home and providing services to Korea. The Government of Nepal hopes that the Korean government will increase labour quota for Nepal in the coming days,” he said.

As Nepal is willing to send skilled youths abroad, especially Korea, the government is planning to establish vocational training centres in all seven provinces as the one in Butwal.

“We would like to request the Korean government to support Nepal in this endeavour as well,” he said.

Saying that there is a need for amending the labour agreement signed between two countries, he said that the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security was ready to discuss the matter.

On the occasion, HRD Service Korea's Vice President Kim said that Nepal is the major and first choice of the RoK and Korean employers among coun-



tries for recruiting foreign workers through EPS.

“Nepal is the first among the 16 countries to have the UBT Building to hire workers transparently using smart devices,” said Kim.

He hoped that the new facility would be an important milestone to hire skilled workers in a credible manner in the days ahead. “With the operation of the UBT Building, the aspiration of many Nepali youths to work in Korea will come true,” he added.

A Ubiquitous-Based Test (UBT) Building for conducting Korean Language Test (EPS-TOPIK), constructed at Bhaisepati, Lalitpur, has come into operation officially. The modern facility has been built with joint investment of Nepal and the Republic of Korea (RoK).

The Government of Nepal has managed land and investment for the construction of the building while the Korean government has supported in interior management with modern technology.

The UBT Building is a symbol of commitment made by the two friendly countries in the labor agreement. This will also help strengthen the bilateral relations between the two nations.

On the occasion, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security felicitated Kim Un Duck, Representative of EPS Centre in Nepal, recognising his significant contribution in recruiting workers through EPS even in the challenging period of COVID-19 pandemic.

The building, a variation of electronic assessment using smart devices for EPS-TOPIK exams, was constructed as per the labour agreement signed between the two countries in 2007 to recruit Nepali migrant workers under the Employment Permission System (EPS).

The first EPS test was conducted in Nepal in 2008 after the inking of a deal between the two governments on July 23, 2007. Nepal’s participation in the EPS has been mutually rewarding to both countries.

### Nepal-India Multilingual Poetry Festival Organized

Embassy of India, Kathmandu jointly with Swami Vivekananda Cultural Center, Central Department of Hindi, Tribhuvan University, Valmiki Vidyapeeth of Nepal Sanskrit University and Akshar Yatri Pratishthan, India organised ‘Nepal-India Multilingual Poetry Festival’ on the occasion of International Mother Language Day on 21 February 2023.

Chancellor of Nepal Academy ShriBhupalRai graced the event as the Chief Guest. In his address, he highlighted the importance of mother tongues and said that cultural and literary relations between Nepal and India will be further strengthened by such events.

Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India,

Kathmandu Prasanna Srivastava was also present. Distinguished Marathi litterateur from India Dr. Swati ShindePawar and Nepal’s senior writer and litterateur Dr. Ganga Prasad Akela were present as special guests.

The program was presided over by Dr. SanjitaVerma, Head of the Department of Hindi, Tribhuvan University. The program was coordinated by Dr. AsawariBapat, Director, Swami Vivekananda Cultural Center, Embassy of India, Kathmandu.

During the program, poets from India and Nepal recited poetry in Sanskrit, Hindi, Marathi, Nepali, Doteli, Maithili, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Bengali, Punjabi, Urdu and English languages. More than 100 poets, litterateurs, linguists and writers participated in the programme. Among them were also the office bearers and members of AksharYatriPratishthan who had specially come to Kathmandu from India to participate in this program.



According to a press release issued by the Embassy of India, Kathmandu, International Mother Language Day is celebrated every year on 21 February to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism in the world. In the year 1999, UNESCO had declared to celebrate it. International Mother Language Day is celebrated to commemorate the historical language movement in Bangladesh in the year 1952.

## BUSINESS BRIEF

### Nepal Investment Mega Bank Reaches At 38

Nepal Investment Mega Bank completes its 37 years of establishment and reach at 38 from today. The bank celebrated 37th anniversary in Kathmandu. Addressing the anniversary program, chairman of the bank Prithvi Bahadur Pande said that Nepal Investment Mega Bank (NIMB) is able to stand as a leading commercial bank of Nepal.

Chairman Pande added that the bank has been able



to maintain best management and provide high-level satisfaction to the customers. Chairman Pande said that the merger of two major commercial banks

Nepal Investment Bank Ltd and Mega Bank Ltd merged in last December inspired other banks as well.

In a similar vein, the bank's chief executive officer, Jyotiprakash Pandey, claimed that Nepal Investment Mega Bank has solidified its position as a top-tier, well-respected, and well-liked commercial bank in Nepal. CEO Pandey expressed his pride at heading a bank that has become known for its reliability and high standards as a result of its revolutionary ideas and vision.

A blood donation program was organized by the bank during the event. To educate children about banking literacy, the bank also published a book.

The joint entity has been established, bringing the NIMB's total paid-up capital to Rs 34.12 billion. The overall number of deposits held by the bank has surpassed Rs 360 billion, while the total amount of loans disbursed has beyond Rs 329 billion.

Moreover, NIMB now has 296 total branches, 279 ATMs, 59 extension counters, and over three million clients. Seven international prizes have already been given to the bank.

### Himalayan Bank Ltd Started Joint Operation With Civil Bank

Himalayan Bank Limited has successfully acquired Civil Bank Limited. After the acquisition, the two entities have started joint operation from February 24, 2023 (Friday).

Following the successful acquisition of Civil Bank Ltd (CBL), Himalayan Bank Ltd (HBL) has commenced its joint operation from today as 'Himalayan Bank Ltd'.

Prachanda Bahadur Shrestha, chairperson of HBL, announced the commencement of joint operation amid a ceremony held here today morning. Addressing the ceremony, Shrestha said that the acquisition of CBL was done considering the current financial situation of the country and potential of market expansion, investment environment and overall de-

velopment of the bank.

"HBL vows to be a companion on the path of progress, development and prosperity of its customers in a more comprehensive and sophisticated manner," Shrestha added. Likewise, Pradip Jung Pandey, former chairperson of CBL, stated that the merger of both the banks is to become one of the most efficient and capable banks in the industry.

The CEO of HBL Ashoke SJB Rana said that HBL has turned into the one of the most efficient and biggest banks of the country and added that the bank shall focus on providing maximum returns to its investors and offer products and services based on latest technology. After acquiring CBL, the authorised capital of HBL now stands at Rs 26 billion whereas paid-up and issued capital has reached Rs 21.65 billion. Moreover, the total capital and total assets now stand at Rs 34 billion and Rs 334 billion, respectively.

The bank's total deposit has reached at Rs 274 billion while the total disbursed loan amount stands at Rs 250 billion.

Also, the total branch network of the HBL is now 189, along with 263 ATM booths and 20 extension counters spread all over Nepal. Following the acquisition, the current board of directors of the HBL, including HBL Chairperson Shrestha will continue in the same post. Likewise, HBL CEO Rana shall also retain his post. HBL has acquired CBL at 1:0.8028 share swap ratio and headquarter of HBL, located at Kamaladi, in Kathmandu, has remained as the central office.

Following the acquisition, the transaction will be carried out under "Himalayan Bank Limited". Ashok Shumsher Rana is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the bank.

Earlier, both the banks had reached a preliminary agreement to for acquisition on Ashad 29, 2079 BS.

After the acquisition, the Himalayan Bank's total



paid-up capital has reached Rs 34 billion. Likewise, total deposits have reached Rs 274 billion and total loans Rs 250 billion. The total branch network of the bank has reached 189.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the joint transaction of the Himalayan and Civil Bank, CEO Ashok Shumsher Rana said that bank ranked in the seventh and sixth positions in terms of deposits and lending respectively.

### Upper Trishuli-1 Project: The Diversion Tunnel Completed

The Construction of the diversion tunnel of the 216 MW Upper Trishuli-1 (UT-1) run-of-the-river hydroelectric project in Rasuwa District has been completed.

UT-1 is the largest hydroelectric Project under construction with foreign direct investment for domestic consumption in Rasuwa District. It has successfully constructed



a full concrete lining diversion tunnel with 420-meter length and 5-meter diameter. The Trishuli river has been diverted via a diversion tunnel on 28 February 2023 to commence the construction activities of the head works.

Tae Hak Yoon, CEO of Nepal Water and Energy Development Company, stated that the river diversion is a significant achievement in constructing the UT-1. The Project has made progress by completing a 4.5 km excavation of the 13.5 km tunnel, which includes the head race, adit, and tail race tunnel. The excavation work of the underground powerhouse has advanced by 21%, and the overall progress rate of the Project is 14%. The team is striving to complete the Project within December 2026.

The Project's main construction started in January 2022 and is estimated to complete in December 2026. Approximately 700 workers work at the construction site, including



300 local residents from Project affected Rasuwa district. Doosan Enerbility is the engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) contractor for the Project.

The 647.34 million USD (including Interest during Construc-

tion) project is financed through 70% debt and 30% equity. The project partners will provide an equity investment of 194.20 Million USD. In comparison, the debt of 453.12 million USD is being provided by a group of international lenders, including the International Finance Corporation (IFC), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Korean Exim Bank (K-EXIM), Korean Development Bank (KDB), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), FMO (The Netherlands), the British International Investment (BII), Proparco (France), and the OPEC fund for International Development (OFID).

The shareholders of NWEDC include Korea South-East Power Company Limited, Korea Overseas Infrastructure and Urban Development Corporation, International Finance Corporation, and a local Nepalese partner. In the future, the Project affected communities will be made available a right to apply for 10% of shares of the Project. UT-1 is expected to generate up to 1,533 GWh of electricity. Out of the total annual energy generated by the Project, 38.75 percent will be generated during the dry season, which is higher than most of the other run-of-the-river hydropower projects in Nepal, thus contributing vastly to managing the dry season electricity shortfall.

The Project is very attractive for the country's power system as it is close to the Kathmandu Load Center and will get 104 MW of electricity even in the dry season with high electricity demand. The generated energy will flow to the national grid by connecting it to the Trishuli-3B hub substation the Nepal Electricity Authority is constructing.

#### **NEA Urges Consumers To Install Meter For Street Lights**

The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has urged the electricity users not to install streetlights on their own without its consent.



Issuing a public notice on Tuesday, NRA has urged the users to immediately install meter for measuring power supply to the streetlights.

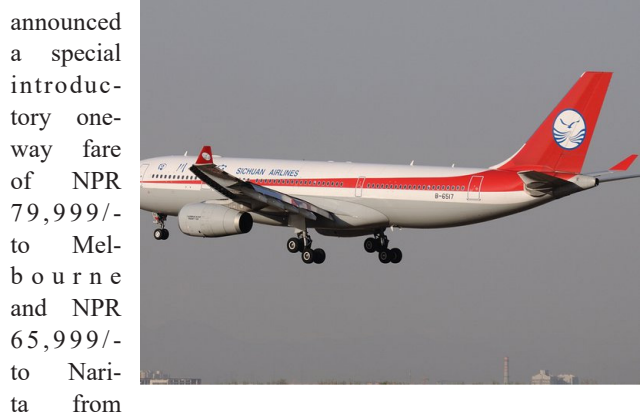
Noting that streetlight has a big share of electricity tariff dues, NEA issued a directive to the concerned to clear the payment without any delay.

“NEA has to face a huge loss in absence of measurement of power consumption in streetlamps and clearance of dues. The Authority calls for the concerned people to clear the tariff dues. Please do not install street lamps from electricity line without consent from the NEA”, the notice reads.

#### **Sichuan Airlines Announces Special Package From Nepal**

Sichuan Airlines would like to announce the resumption of their scheduled flights to and from Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) - Kathmandu starting from the 20th of March, 2023. Sichuan Airlines will conduct 4 weekly flights from Chengdu.

Taking into account the current high demand in the Nepal market for travel to Australia and Japan, Sichuan Airlines has announced a special introductory one-way fare of NPR



79,999/- to Melbourne and NPR 65,999/- to Narita from Kathmandu with 46 kgs check-in baggage and 7kgs hand carry.

Passengers traveling to Melbourne will benefit with great connectivity to their onwards flight from Chengdu with a minimal of 4 hrs. 30 minutes only.

Sichuan Airlines is represented by Society International Travel Services as the General Sales Agent (GSA) in Nepal.

Sichuan Airlines would like to thank the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) for their continuous support and encouragement concerning our operations in Nepal.

# Small, Weak, And In Turbulence



BY: HEMANT ARJYAL

The above title summarizes the current status of Nepal Airlines (RA). And despite its mediocre showing, it gets repeatedly touted as the ‘flag carrier’, as if it was a robust airline. A flag carrier is often taken as an airline that is accorded preferential rights or privileges to operate internationally by the owning country. It is an old concept as big countries have many, not just one, flying internationally and airlines are more likely to be privately owned these days. The government indeed had a role in supporting aviation during the early years given the investment required as the private sector lacked both the capital and expertise. Besides, for rich and colonial countries airlines offered the most visible way to show off their world domination.

Early years, aircraft did neither fly high nor went too far. Pressurization became essential only when aircraft had to fly high to fly faster and go further. On being, thus capable de Havilland DH.106 Comet, became the world’s first-ever passenger jetliner. But it had a very inauspicious beginning, with six accidents, in the first 21 months of operation. The first three hull losses had accumulated a total of eighty-nine fatalities. Naturally, the public got increasingly concerned about the safety of traveling in a jetliner. It was doubly devastating that a British make jet flown by a British airline (BOAC) had suffered thus. The government then decided to make a very elaborate and extensive investigation to get to the root. And the BOAC donated the entire wreckage of the

10 Jan ’54 crash for the purpose.

It was found that the failure was a result of metal fatigue caused by the repeated pressurization and depressurization of the cabin. The problem was exacerbated by the punch rivet construction technique employed in making. Unlike drill riveting, the imperfect or jagged hole created by punching may have caused the start of fatigue cracks around the rivet. And the fuselage had rivet holes all over and it had been flying, all along, with tens of thousands of silently ticking time bombs.

Aircraft’s propulsion system consists of an engine, maneuverability is provided by flaps/rudder/aileron, etc and avionics help runs various navigational gadgets and the flight management system (FMS) computer. And all critical systems have solid backups for unforeseen eventualities. But aircraft do also fly with unresolved flaws, but only when the approved minimum equipment listing (MEL) is not compromised. Needless to say, they do not fly with faulty cabin pressurization systems nor with faulty toilets, just to name two. That said, the reliability of any “scheduled airline” hinges on the size of its operational fleet such that it can keep to the schedule at any cost.

For any passenger, the biggest issue with RA, the “flag carrier” is its unreliability. Those holding RA tickets cannot be sure if the aircraft will fly on time or if it will fly at all. It is worse if you hold a normal economy ticket and get stuck in some other airport away from home. The reason RA is so unreliable is that it



has a tiny fleet. So long as all its four jets are in flying condition, it is reasonably so-so. But one cannot foresee what happens to the next flight. One flies for a reason, certainly not for pleasure. Being on time counts as people with various important engagements fly as close to the date as possible.

RA is seen to be having frequent engine-re-

lated issues concerning its A320s. I have noticed at least two occasions in which its A320s were grounded for around 40/45 days. The logical question

would be; why does it take so long for RA to make those fly sooner? Or is it normally so for other airlines in our neighborhood too? No airline, anywhere, would keep their aircraft grounded for so long. An aircraft makes money only while flying, it bleeds money when grounded. But if quick fixing was not possible, it should have leased or taken on a short-time loan from another friendly airline. There must be a system, for smaller carriers, to have contracts with leasing companies so that they make a spare engine available as and when required. Next best would be to have a contract with appropriate maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) companies to take care of such eventualities around the year.



Surely, all airlines will be facing such issues regularly and the flying public hardly ever notices this because a backup frame is quickly made available. Agreed, RA does not have that luxury of fleet strength nor it can justify increasing fleet strength to overcome this. But it surely can keep, at least, one engine each

for narrow and wide body as spare.

I am sure RA has plenty of issues, on all fronts, that have remained unresolved for a long. Surely, identifying problems with RA would be in no way

as arduous and elusive compared to what went into identifying that bedeviled Comet, as we saw. As such, we have had many task forces formed to identify the issues and suggested ways forward to improve its state of affairs. But still, nothing seems to be happening. It is all in the open and yet its performance is well below par. Unless decision-makers resolve to make an earnest attempt to make RA fly higher and further, so that people can fly with trust and pride, all we can do from our side is to sigh with (आकाशभैरवसरणम्)Aakash bhairab saranam,

***Hemant Arjyal can be reached at [harjyal@yahoo.com](mailto:harjyal@yahoo.com)***

## PRESIDENT-ELECT PAUDEL

# Partisan Balance

*By electing Nepali Congress leader Ram Chandra Paudel as the nation's third president, an eight-party coalition led by the Maoist Center and Nepali Congress has demonstrated their shared commitment to a cause.*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Ram Chandra Paudel, the incoming president, has already made clear to whom he is to by beginning his meeting with Maoist leader and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, NC Leader Sher Bahadur Deuba, and CPN-US leader Madhav Kumar Nepal.

President-elect Paudel will have plenty of time to put an end to partisan politics after the election results are announced. He was elected through an electoral process that was violently divided along partisan lines.

The message would have spread differently if he had visited K.P. Sharma Oli, the leader of the largest opposition party, and people who did not initially vote for him. President-elect Paudel, however, squandered his first opportunity to elevate his position as a leader above politics.

At a time when the question of the president's objectivity is being discussed, newly elected president Paudel, who was a candidate for eight political parties, has the opportunity to

establish the institution as a constitutional body beyond politics.

The two previous presidents, Ram Baran Yadav and Bidhya Devi Bhandari, received harsh criticism for acting politically while in office. Even though the position of president is largely ceremonial, several constitutional requirements still give it significance during a pivotal political period.

Ram Baran Yadav demonstrated his unrestricted power as president by designating the Chief Justice as the head of the cabinet to conduct the elections and by returning the Chief of Army Staff after he disobeyed the prime minister's order.

Similarly to this, President Bhandari demonstrated the power of the office by supporting the dissolution of the House on both occasions and refusing to sign the citizenship measure passed by both Houses.

President-elect Paudel has hinted that his job won't be all that different from the two previous presidents' contentious duties.

Rastriya Prajatantra Par-

ty (RPP) and Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party, two political parties, agreed to abstain from voting for either candidate during the election, claiming that doing so represented their respective political parties and ideas.

President-elect Paudel met with Prime Minister Dahal "Prachanda," NC leader Deuba, and CPN-US head Nepal at the latter's home and defended their positions.

In the course of their meeting, Prime Minister Prachanda—who is also the head of the CPN (Maoist Centre)—was thanked by President-elect Paudel and received his congratulations as well as the Prime Minister's best wishes for a fruitful term in office.

Paudel also met with Madhav Kumar Nepal, chair of the CPN (Unified Socialist), and Sher Bahadur Deuba, president of the Nepali Congress and a former prime minister. Deuba's residence in Dhumbrahi and Nepal's residence in Koteswar were both visited by President-elect Paudel.

"President-elect Paudel must





uphold the constitutional tasks assigned to the president after the elections. He is now a national leader rather than the leader of any one political party, according to constitutional attorney Bhimarjun Acharya. “President must conduct himself in accordance with the Constitution.”

the choice of a president

The elections this year were exceptional. Paudel and Nembang both served as House of Representatives speakers in the past. Paudel, a prominent member of the Nepali Congress, is Nepal’s third president. He won the presidential election on Thursday by defeating his opponent Subas Chandra Nemwang of the CPN UML (March 9, 2023).

The president-elect Paudel received 33,802 votes, according to

the election commission, while Nemwang received 15,518 votes.

The President is elected by an electoral college consisting of the members of the Federal Parliament (House of Representatives and the National Assembly) and the Provincial Assembly. A total of 313 members of the Federal Parliament and 518 Provincial Assembly members took part in the vote today.

The vote weightage of a Federal MP is 79 and that of a member of the Provincial Assembly is 48.

Former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Paudel was a common candidate of CPN (Maoist Center), CPN (Unified Socialist), Janata Samajwadi Party Nepal, Loktantrik Samajbadi Party Nepal, Janmat Party, Nagarik Unmukti Party, Rash-

triya Janamorchha and Nepal Samajbadi Party along with his party, the Nepali Congress.

Also a former Speaker and Chairperson of the Constituent Assembly, Nemwang represented the CPN-UML. The term of office of the President is five years and he/she can be elected for not more than two terms, as per the constitutional provision.

#### **Strength And Weakness**

Despite being a senior leader in the party and being well-known for it, he does not have a sizable following in the district congress. He got his start in politics in Kathmandu as a student with a communist lean, eventually joining Nepali Congress at the district level.

Despite his high standing, he is regarded as the leader of the



faint-hearted. Paudel is constantly angry toward his opponent, and he never made any attempts to develop newcomers. For instance, his animosity toward Govinda Raj Joshi, a former political associate of his, has grown to the point that the two of them are no longer friends.

Paudel appears straightforward, but he is a highly shady politician. He ran for prime minister 17 times but never came out on top. He engaged in tandem play.

Paudel is a notorious political crook despite his unassuming appearance. He ran for prime minister 17 times but never came out on top. With Girija Prasad Koirala and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, he performed. Although identified himself as Bhattarai's replacement, he supported Koirala in the recent election.

The founder of the Nepali Congress, Bhattarai, frequently referred to him as a cunning politician. Despite his reputation as being an-

ti-Deuba, Paudel was able to get Deuba's full support in order to become Nepal's president. Deuba supported Paudel in the presidential election despite having a close political connection with Krishna Prasad Sitaula.

Paudel has a long political history and has always been renowned for his fiery temper. He has no problem making decisions based on his impulsive nature. Such choices can occasionally be destructive to the nation.

According to reports, Paudel was a crucial figure in severing the bonds between the three founders, Krishna Ganesh Man Singh, Prasad Bhattarai, and Girija Prasad Koirala, towards the latter stages of his career.

Paudel, who is thought to be close to Bhattarai, changed his mind and supported Koirala. When the party legally split, he supported Koirala even though he had encouraged Deuba to do so.

For the sake of achieving political success, Paudel ruined the political careers of several of his younger opponents and colleagues, most notably Govinda Raj Joshi.

Girija Prasad Koirala sup-





ported Paudel in his final campaign despite having disliked him throughout his whole political career. Deuba always thought that Paudel had deceived him, but he also supported Paudel at the expense of his close political ally Krishna Prasad Sitaula during Paudel's final political campaign.

### Who is Paudel?

The senior leader of the Nepali Congress and former Speaker Paudel has been elected President through a vote.

He was born to the parents-Hrishi Maya and Durga Prasad Paudel at Mirlung Bahunpokhara of Tanahun district (presently Vyas Municipality -8, Risti) on 14 October 1944. Paudel currently resides at Boharatar, Balaju Height in Kathmandu.

The President-elect holds a MA degree from Tribhuvan University in 1970 and earned Bachelor's in Sanskrit (Shastri) from Valmiki Vidyapeeth, Kathmandu in 1967. Similarly, his school education (SLC) was completed at Nandiratri Secondary School, Naxal, Kathmandu in 1963 and IA from Saraswati College, Kathmandu in 1966.

The president-elect has had a very significant social and political career. He was the founder secretary of the Himalayan Chhatra Sangh; chairperson, secretary and executive member of the Nepal Students' Union from 1960 to 1967. He was involved in the Student Union campaign as the general secretary of the Nepal Sanskrit Students' Association and participated in the Kathmandu Conference in 1962.

Paudel was the founder and president of the Gandaki Chhatra Sangh in 1966. Paudel also served as founder and general secretary of the Democratic Socialist Youth League in 1967.

Paudel had active involvement in the Jayatu Sanskrit am Aan-dolan, a campaign for truth, social justice, and cultural reform; played a lead role in the student's movement through Nandiratri Students' Union; Ranipokhari Madhyamik Bidhya-



laya's Students' Union and others from 1985 to 1967.

He was inspired to join the democratic movement at the early age of 15 against the coup d'état that dissolved the first popularly elected parliament and jailed the leaders including Prime Minister BP Koirala on 15 December 1960.

Associated with the Armed Insurrection Movement for the restoration of democracy and siege of Bharatpur/Chitwan in 1961, he initiated Free Students' Movement in 1962, and was elected president of the Saraswati College Student Union in 1966; elected as a founder president of the Gandaki Student Committee in 1966; and elected as the general secretary of the Democratic Socialist Youths League (DSYL) in 1967.

Leader Paudel was elected as a Member of Parliament from Tanahun constituency no 1 in 1991 and served as the Minister for Local Development and Agriculture from May 29, 1991, to 1994.

For the second time, he was elected as a Member of Parliament from Tanahun constituency no 2 in 1994 and elected the Speaker of House of Representatives in 1994 and served until 1998.

He became the Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister from 1999 to 2002. Moreover, he was named the coordinator of the Peace Secretariat which included represent-

atives from top political parties from 2006 to 2007 and served as Minister for Peace and Reconstruction from 2007 to 2008.

Elected as the general secretary of the Nepali Congress in 2006 and the vice president in 2007, he again became a Member of the Constituent Assembly from Tanahun constituency no 2 in 2008.

Paudel's political career continued to rise, as he was elected as a parliamentary party leader of the Nepali Congress in 2008. He became vice president of the Nepali Congress after being elected as a central working committee member of the party at the 12th general convention of the party in 2009.

The President-elect is known as a socialist thinker and experimenter. Down-to-earth, with high thoughts, Paudel is a leader of a clean image. He is an eloquent speaker and ardent advocate of democratic socialism.

The challenge before the presidential election now is to establish the credibility of the ceremonial head of the state as a guardian of the nation and unifying forces irrespective of political parties and political ideology.

# Communicating Actions At Water Conference



BY: BATU UPRETY

Water - a precious resource and linked to survival - is being threatened from human activities. Change in climate system has posed additional threat to water resources. People face and will continue to face socio-economic challenges from water scarcity. People living in the dryland would further experience remarkable impacts of water scarcity, while island people may consider it a 'risk' with threatened existence from sea level rise.

Understanding the emerging threats of water scarcity, lack of access to a safe drinking water and basic sanitation services, lack of capacity to ensure integrated water resources management (IWRM), increased water- and climate-induced disasters and pollution, international community has realized the urgency for addressing water issue individually and/or and jointly.

On the initiative of the Republic of Tajikistan, the UN General Assembly on 21 December 2016 adopted a resolution to observe 'International Decade (2018-2028) for Action - Water for Sustainable Development (WSD)', an enhanced commitment after a 2005-2015 decade for action on 'water for life'. This WSD was started on World Water Day (WWD, 22 March 2018) and will end on 22 March 2028 by observing WWD. This decade is expected to promote efficient use of water at all levels.

Water Decade focuses, inter alia, on sustainable development and IWRM to achieve socio-economic and environmental objectives by promoting cooperation and strengthening multi-stakeholder partnership at all levels to achieve SDGs. This Decade will engage countries to further realize the urgency of conserving and sustainably utilizing water resources, and to enhance cooperation and effective participation of multi-stakeholder actors, generate and disseminate knowledge and learning to achieve water-related SDG targets, and promote sustainable use of water.

On 29 December 2020, UN General Assembly adopted the provisional agenda for UN Water Conference to support to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SD). This Conference will assess the progress of implementation of the decadal objectives, identify possible challenges & obstacles and opportunities & inno-

vative ways to accelerate progress, exchange views and develop actions, and share experiences good practices. The Conference report would include the summaries of the interactive dialogues such as of side-events, seminars, workshops and panel discussion to advance the implementation of the decadal actions.

Water communities underscore the importance of water to adapt to climate change impacts and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by generating and utilizing clean energy, replace use of fossil fuels and contribute to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement. They have committed to advance water-related actions to achieve the 2030 Agenda for SD, implement actions of the Water Action Decade (2018-2028), and other initiatives that address water crisis.

The UN Water Conference to be held at New York from 22 to 24 March 2023 is expected to agree on Water Action Agenda (WAA). The UN Member States and multi-stakeholders may include actions as a part of the Action Agenda and implement them voluntarily during the remaining period of the Water Decade and the 2030 Agenda for SD. The Agenda is expected to include voluntary commitments for water actions, ensure their implementation through multi-stakeholders participation with provisions for sustaining and scaling-up actions, and follow-up annual review.

Nepal will participate in the UN Water Conference and will organise a side-event on 24 March 2023 at the UN Headquarters on 'achieving water security in Nepal in a changing climate' to share challenges and lessons learned for achieving water security in the context of climate change. This side-event is expected to focus on growing water insecurity, opportunities and difficulties of implementing local solutions to water insecurity, understanding connections amongst water, energy, food and ecosystem, and possible contribution of Water Tracker tool to support increase water security and resilience. Outcomes of the side-event may contribute to mainstream climate change adaptation and mitigation in water resources stream and also contribute to move towards water security by building adaptation capacity of the climate vulnerable and water-dependent communities in Nepal.

Nepal's Nationally Determined Contribution

(NDC), 2020 targets to: (i) expand clean energy generation to 15,000 MW by 2030; and (ii) ensure supply of 15% of the total energy demand from clean energy sources. Clean energy will likely increase the usage of e-vehicles, and e-cooking, which will reduce GHGs emissions by replacing fossil fuels. The NDC Implementation Plan, 2022 has identified activities, inter alia, to develop hydropower plants, policies and legislations for deregulation in the energy market, strengthen early warning system for risk reduction, increase involvement of local government and local communities in developing, managing and maintenance of renewable energy plants, launch electricity distribution system audit and safety audit mechanism, promote electricity use in residential, commercial, industrial, transportation and agriculture sectors to reduce GHGs emissions.

Nepal has prepared the National Adaptation Plan (NAP, 2021-2050) to reduce climate vulnerability of water re-

sources sector as well. NAP has prioritized eight adaptation programs on energy and water resources and their effective implementation is expected to lower the risk of Glacier Lake Outburst Floods, improve water availability, promote clean energy mix and build national capacity to promote climate resilient water resource management and hydropower generation.

Nepal will chair the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Coordination Bureau as agreed at Doha in March 2023. The 5th UN Conference of LDCs at Doha has adopted the Program of Action (PoA) for LDCs. On water sector, Doha PoA includes actions, inter alia, to provide safe drinking water and sanitation, accelerate access to climate-resilient water and sanitation services, increase access to technology, and develop and implement IWRM interventions. The DPoA underlines multiple pressures in the water resources and their sensitivity to climate change impacts such as the drying-up of sources, disruption in rainfall patterns and increased frequency of extreme and slow-onset events. It realizes the urgency of, inter alia, localizing climate actions, including support for local governments, build resil-

ience of communities, support for climate resilient water infrastructure, and urge for capacity building and finance for adaptation to climate change to reduce climate vulnerability.

Keeping in view the actions specified in NDC, NAP, DPoA, barriers prioritized (policy implementation, institutional coordination, and data & capacity building) under the Global Water Leadership Program and outcomes of the application of Water Tracker tool in 14 climate change and water resources policies and plans that informs

to make water policies and plans 'climate-resilient' and climate policies and plans 'water-smart', Nepal may wish to prioritize actions for Water Action Agenda and commit for their voluntary implementation to promote climate-resilient water resources management and expedite replacing fossil fuels by clean energy sources.

Water must be considered a 'resource' than simply

understanding it a 'sector' and a pronounced 'risk' for climate- and water-induced disasters, and should accept its contribution to reduce GHGs emissions and achieve adaptation goals.

Nepal may wish to use this UN Water Conference an opportunity to inform the global community on our initiatives, knowledge and learning and urgency for making water resources climate-resilient for its sustained use. Nepal may also wish to inform its voluntary actions under Water Action Agenda to advance IWRM, further realize the role of water resources in mitigating climate change impacts and initiate actions in partnership with the multi-stakeholders. This Conference may be an opportunity to inform national and sub-national challenges, and urge international communities to expedite channelling of additional support from bilateral and multilateral sources and climate finance to implement national targets and commitments to effectively implement the Water Action Agenda, and contribute to the Paris Agreement on climate change.





## COURT HEARING

# Prosecuting Maoists

*Following the issuance of an order by the Supreme Court, Nepal's PM faces a court hearing into deaths during the Maoist insurgency*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Although it has been almost over 15 years since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Nepal Government and Maoist insurgents ending the 12 years long violent insurgency, nothing has been done to settle the violent activities committed during the period.

Several governments have already been formed under the leadership of former rebels. However,

Nepal's top court will hear a petition on Thursday demanding the arrest of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal and an investigation into his leadership during a decade-long civil war that killed thousands of people, court officials and petitioners said.

Dahal, a former Maoist guerrilla commander, led rebels against Nepal's security forces during the conflict, which raged for 10 years until 2006 and killed about 17,000 people before a peace deal overseen by the United Nations put an end to hostilities.

The Himalayan nation is already in the midst of a political crisis

since Dahal backed an opposition candidate as the country's president last month, prompting one of his allies in the communist-dominated ruling coalition to withdraw support.

Bimal Paudel, an official at the Supreme Court, said the petition seeking Dahal's arrest has been registered and the first hearing is scheduled on Thursday.

In a public gathering three years ago, Dahal - who still goes by his nom de guerre Prachanda - said he was ready to take responsibility "for 5,000 deaths" during the civil war, blaming the then-state forces for the remaining fatalities.

In December, Dahal, 68, was appointed prime minister for a third time after joining the political mainstream under the peace deal.

Relatives of the victims of the conflict said in the petition: "Since the transcript of his objectionable expression accepting that he killed people, including our relatives, is available (on) the social media ... we demand that he be arrested and investigated".

A spokesperson for the prime minister declined to comment on the



petition. On Sunday Dahal said there was a "conspiracy" against him.

The former rebels, including Dahal's ruling Maoist Centre party, have said that cases of abuse committed during the conflict must be settled by two transitional justice panels set up under the peace deal.

Nepal abolished its 239-year-old monarchy after the peace deal turned the Hindu-majority County into a secular republic and created seven federal provinces.

As the process of hearing has already begun in the Supreme Court, the government has tabled an amendment bill on Transitional justice to separate the killing during the armed insurrection as non-criminal.

However, the decision of the court to start the hearing on the petition filed by two petitioners demanding the prosecution of Maoist leader Prachanda and other leaders has formed all Maoist factions to come together opposing any moves to prosecute them.



# European Union Supports Nepal To Close The Digital Gender Divide



BY: NONA DEPREZ

This year theme for International Women's Day DigitAll: invocation and technology for Gender Equality highlights the opportunities that the digitalization brings for women empowerment. It also reminds us that we must take a meaningful step to close the digital gender divide.

Indeed, the gender digital divide, among other things, prevents women to advance in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. And these fields are crucial and they constitute a high demand in the job market and they are still dominated by man. The digital gender divides prevent women fully benefiting from the digital transition. The European Union in Nepal has been strongly focusing on education and we are now aware that we need to strengthen our focus on quality education and this means also driving forward a human centric digital transition that leaves no one behind.

In Karnali, for instance, the European Union supports schools and local governments in increasing access and ability of all children, specially girls and children with disability, to use quality digital learning resources. With Finland, the European Union will also

start working on teacher's digital competences, improving teachers' knowledge and access to training programs on digital technologies. This will enhance teachers' ability to acquire and adopt the new technological challenges and prepared Nepali students to live and work in digital society and economy.

Central to this digital transitions are youth and young people and the Youth Sounding Board and the

advisory board of the European Union actions is one of the way that we have been engaging with youth under our youth action plan which is first ever European Union's Policy Framework for a meaningful partnership and strategic partnership with young people around the world. I am so pleased to have our Youth Sounding Board members engage in



this project with Helvetas. I am really excited to learn about their experiences as a woman in the Nepal's digital space.

Nona Deprez is the ambassador of European Union to Nepal. Excerpts of Ambassador's statement delivered to Helvetas Podcast on 23 International Women's Day. Visit site

[Helvetas Nepal link](#)



AMBASSADOR FELICITY VOLK

# Journey To Remote Karnali

*Felicity Volk, the Australian ambassador to Nepal, launches a women's business project in Jumla, a mountainous area of Nepal, as International Women's Day was observed calling for the empowerment of women.*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Felicity Volk, the Australian ambassador to Nepal, has been meeting, sharing, and interacting with people of all ages, especially women, since she first arrived in Nepal in her capacity as ambassador.

Ambassador Volk traveled to Kalikot and Jumla along a rough and risky road to start a project for women's entrepreneurship while people from all walks of life were celebrating International Women's Day by arranging numerous programs in the center of Kathmandu.

The project's debut by ambassador Volk was a significant occasion in and of itself because it was attended by a large number of women, who rarely encountered ambassadors visiting their own country.

Ambassador Volk had extensive interactions with the elected officials of the local governments as well as people from other walks of life during her time in Jumla and Kalikot, which are located over 700 kilometers north-west of Kathmandu and 250 kilometers from Surkhet, the provincial capital of Karnali.

Since the two nations' diplomatic ties were established, Australia has generously supported Nepal's growth in several areas. Recently, this support has gone as far as to improve regional and municipal administrations.

Volk, the Australian ambassador to Nepal, visited Jumla to introduce a new initiative to promote 380 women-run small companies engaged in agroforestry in Nepal's northwest.

"On International Women's Day 2023, I'm delighted to be celebrating with women and girls in Jumla. The Australian Embassy is pleased to mark this event by promoting women's economic empowerment through the Advancing Women in Agroforestry Business Enterprises project," said Ambassador Volk.

The NGO, Business and Professional Women Nepal, is implementing the project with financial and technical support from its Australian partner, Assisi Aid Projects, and the Australian Government, through its Australian NGO Cooperation Program.

The development of sustainable agriculture cooperatives under the project will enable women to build profitable and resilient businesses, and be economically self-reliant entrepreneurs, capable of contributing to their local economies.

Addressing the launch event, Ambassador Volk underscored the Australian government's commitment to promoting gender equality in the most remote parts of Nepal.

"Women's economic empowerment underpins the well-being and pros-

perity of local communities, nations and the globe," she said. "It is also key to the realization of the human rights of women and girls themselves."

"That is why the Australian Government has a target that 80 percent of its development investments must effectively address gender equality."

During the visit, Ambassador Volk met with women entrepreneurs from Jumla district and learned from them about harvesting and processing of non-timber forest products, including herbs. She discussed ways the new Agroforestry Business Enterprises project would expand opportunities to add value through processing as well as support the sustainable use of resources.

Although the Surkhet-Jumla Road in Nepal is a notoriously dangerous path, driving it is an exciting experience. It is encouraging that Australian Ambassador Volk highlighted her interest for road trips and visiting women who live in remote regions of Nepal on International Women's Day.

The Australian ambassador to Nepal Volk's trip to the Karnali region will always be regarded as a manifestation of her and the Australian government's generous love for Nepal.





# International Women's Day 2023: DigitALL



BY: DR. PRABIN MANANDHAR

The digital revolution has transformed the way we live and work, and we think and behave with significant implications for women and girls around the world. It offers unprecedented opportunities for innovation, which can improve business performance, enhance service delivery, and transform organizational practices. On this International Women's Day, it is essential to recognize the positive impact of digital tools and technologies in promoting gender equality and empowering women, while also acknowledging the challenges that remain.

Digital transformation has increased access to information and communication for women and girls, enabling them to connect with family, friends, and colleagues across the globe. In Nepal, digital tools are playing a crucial role in supporting migrants and family members, providing them with access to critical information and emotional support. These tools provide a lifeline of communication and support for those who are separated from their loved ones and help them cope with the challenges of migration.

Digital technologies also have the potential to bridge the gap between urban and rural areas, providing women entrepreneurs in remote regions with access to new markets and resources. With access to digital technologies such as e-commerce platforms, digital payments, social media marketing, online training and support, and mobile apps, women entrepreneurs in rural areas are overcoming geographical barriers and connecting with new markets, customers, and resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems, leading to the adoption of digital or blended learning modes. The transition has posed significant challenges, and it is essential to provide effective provisions for upskilling and reskilling the workforce in new-age technologies to keep them updated with the latest digital developments.

However, there are still significant barriers that prevent women and girls from participating equally in dig-

ital transformation. The digital gender gap is a major issue, particularly in rural areas where there is inadequate digital infrastructure and low literacy rates. Addressing these barriers is crucial in promoting shared prosperity and maximizing the potential of digital development.

Online gender-based violence is another challenge that women and girls face, which can have negative and lasting impacts on their mental and physical well-being. Promoting digital literacy among girls and reducing the digital gender gap are essential steps toward achieving gender equality and protecting the rights of women and girls.

A collaboration between practitioners, researchers, and policymakers is crucial in fully harnessing the potential

of information and communication technologies for achieving sustainable development and promoting gender equality. Collaboration can help identify and address the underlying causes of the digital gender gap, including cultural, social, economic, and political factors that limit women's access to technology and opportunities.

Promoting the positive impact of social media is one way to drive change and em-

power women and girls to share their stories, amplify their voices, and promote progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment. Social media platforms provide a platform for women to connect with each other, exchange ideas, and support each other in their personal and professional lives. Let us leverage the power of these platforms to break down barriers, challenge stereotypes, and promote inclusivity.

*Dr. Prabin Manandhar is an expert in international development. Currently, he is working as the Country Director of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Nepal. He is the Former Chair of the Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN). He is also a visiting faculty at Kathmandu University and the Tribhuvan University Institute of Crisis Management Studies. The opinions are his own and not that of his employer. He can be reached at [prabin.manandhar11@gmail.com](mailto:prabin.manandhar11@gmail.com)*



## IMWI-NEPAL

# Water Storage In South Asia

*The recently completed Inception workshop is extremely pertinent to understanding the state of water and potential future paths because South Asian nations like Nepal, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh are currently facing a very challenging time in providing enough water for the needs of their expanding populations. The Built Water Storage in South Asia (BWSSA) project, run in collaboration between the International Water Management Institute and the unnamed Global Water Partnership (GWP), seeks to make a lasting improvement in how water storage is viewed, organized, and maintained.*

By A CORRESPONDENT

South Asia is the world's most vulnerable region in terms of water security. A region of nearly two billion people, South Asia has already begun to experience water-related disasters caused by extreme weather. Similarly, rising temperatures are endangering the Himalayan glaciers and disrupting seasonal flow.

In this scenario, BWSSA will most likely find a way to manage the water by constructing various types of dams in various locations. Climate change is already affecting the water on the surface, the air, and the ground, according to studies.

The Water Resources Research and Development Center at Nepal's Ministry of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation (MoEWRI) was inaugurated by Sarita Dawadi, Senior Joint Secretary and Executive Director of the Water Resources Research and Development Center. In

her inaugural address, Dawadi states the importance of water storage for socioeconomic development in Nepal. She highlights that women are mostly dependent on natural water storage, so women should be key actors in this project.

"We should be thinking about all types of water storage—natural and

human. "This project will identify water storage gaps & strengthen national capacities for integrated water-storage planning and management, taking the context of climate changes into account," said Dawadi.

The project aims to contribute to a sustainable transformation in the way water storage is perceived,





planned, and managed.

In the context of fast snow melting, natural wetlands, moisture, lakes, and swamps are also disappearing. With all these events, people are facing a scarcity of water for irrigation and drinking.

In South Asia, different kinds of water storage technologies have been used. There are glaciers, soil moisture, aquifers, reservoirs, ponds, tanks, and high dams that have been constructed by nature or humans for storing water. With increasing capital costs, environmental and social costs, and management complexity, deep Shallow small, and large dams have been regulating the water in South Asia.

Funded by the US State Department, various stakeholders, including high-level officials from the government of Nepal, water experts, former ministers, and academics, participated in the workshop and presented their views.

IWMI-Nepal's Country Representative, Manohara Khadka has welcomed all the participants attending the program. She has thanked the State Department, the funder of this three-year project to increase water security, and partners.

Dr. Matthew McCartney, project lead for BWSSA, states that

there has been a net loss of, 27,000 billion cubic meters of water storage over 50 years. This decreases the capacity of river basins in the region to cope with hydro climatic variables and increases the risks of extreme events.

He presented the project background, the rationale for integrating natural and built water storage, sustainable water infrastructure, and the ecosystem. Lal Induruwage, the GDP representative, also presented his views.

The one-day workshop concluded with a vote of thanks by Su-sheel C. Acharya, the Director General of DWRI.

The group discussed and reiterated the importance of including women as managers and planners of water storage projects, rather than just beneficiaries or end users.

P a t - r i c k S. G a n, the Regional Environment, Science, Technology, and Health Officer for South Asia,

U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu, expressed confidence in the BWSSA initiative, jointly presented by IWMI-Nepal, GWP and DWRI-Nepal.

Following the inaugural session, experts presented an overview of national water security and storage. In his presentation, Pabitra Gurung, the project country coordinator at IWMI-Nepal presented the overall situation on water resources and water security, climate change and climate change impact, policies that influence water storage, GESI in the water sector, and water-related projects of IWMI Nepal. Dr. McCartney finally summarized how the project addresses water security issues.

### Group Discussion

Divided into four groups, the participants presented their views on critical water storage issues. Group one presented on the theme Water, Energy, Food, Environment - Future Demands and Trends, Implications for Storage. This groups guiding question was: What are the implications of likely future sector water demands for storage? How can we determine future water storage needs? Moderators were Dr. Kapil Gnawali, WECS, Dr. Vishnu P, Pandey, IOE and Dr. Nilahari Neupaane, IWMI.

Similarly, Group 2 theme was Policies, institutions, and trans-boundary cooperation. The guiding question of the group was: How do current policies (not only water policy, but also other sectors (e.g., agriculture,





## NATIONAL

energy, and environment)) affect: a) water storage needs/requirements and b) water storage planning and management? Are there transboundary agreements of any kind that impact on water storage currently or may do so in the future (e.g., energy agreements between India and Nepal)? Presenters were Sanjeev Baral, DWRI and Shristi Shakya, IWMI.

Group 3 theme was Gender and Social Inclusion – Constraints and Opportunities in Water Storage. The presenters were Ms. Sijal Pokhar-el, UNESCO and Dr. Sanju Koirala, IWMI. The guiding questions followed what experience is there of gendered impacts of water storage in Nepal? How should water storage planning and management in the future better incorporate gender?

Likewise, group 4 theme was Investment and Cross-sectoral Synergies for Water Security and Water Storage. Led by Dr. Rajan Bhattarai, DHM, Jigyasha Rai Yangkhurung, DWRI and Pabitra Gurung, IWMI, the guiding questions were: Any insights on investment in water storage? Currently what investment is there and where is it coming from? How does it need to change in future? What are the opportunities for future investment in water storage (particularly in non-traditional water storage (e.g., Nature-based Solution-NBS)?

In their presentations, all groups focused on science, knowl-

edge, and data, capacity development, and requirements. They also presented water resources as natural and artificial reservoirs, snow and glaciers, wetlands, groundwater, and soil moisture.

Experts also stressed the need for water storage to not be treated as a stand-alone project, but rather be integrated into IWRM and NEXUS approaches for holistic water management.

This program will address one of South Asia's most pressing development challenges: enhancing water security through better planning and management of, and greater regional cooperation around, natural and built water storage systems. As emphasized by the recent "White House Action Plan on Global Water Security," water security is essential for sustained economic growth.

### Project's Purpose

According to the project, enhancing adaptive capacity and improving water security through water storage in South Asia Natural and built stores of fresh water are critical for both ecosystem vitality and societal development, enabling natural and human systems to cope with temporal variations in water supply and demand.

Given the variability of rainfall and the effects of climate change, South Asia's water storage is insufficient to meet current, let alone future, water demand. Further, the benefits and risks derived from its distribution and availability are



deeply unequal within and between countries: large segments of both urban and rural populations, especially women, the poor, and people from disadvantaged communities, suffer from serious water deprivation. Additionally, there are interstate tensions over the management of shared river basins.

Water insecurity, exacerbated by climate change, has contributed to conflict within and between countries in other regions of the world.

Although the South Asia region is diverse in terms of ethnicity and political system, what these countries have in common is their natural ecosystems and environments. "Given this background, the program will work closely with national governments and other stakeholders to enhance water security through more integrated water storage planning and management," said the project.

After the implementation of the project, it will increase understanding of gaps in water storage needs in the context of climate change and integrated water resources management (IWRM) and increase national and regional capacity to address these gaps and optimize water security. Build ca-



capacity for IWRM, including data collection and modeling, to address water management challenges with a focus on storage gaps are other objectives of the project.

Similarly, the project will also promote trans boundary cooperation to address gaps in water storage needs by facilitating cross-border and regional dialogue to promote greater cooperation to achieve mutual water security goals and analyze the roots of the substantial “gender gap” among technical staff and decision-makers, and identify and promote ways to overcome this gap.

### Water for Storage

The demand for water storage is increasing as the human population grows and socioeconomic development progresses. At a time when the impacts of climate change are becoming more visible, including the devastating floods of last year in Pakistan and the prolonged winter drought in the region, water security is going to be a major threat.

However, the capacity to store water is decreasing. Scientists hold the view that, largely unrecognized, declining water storage is a major contributor to local and regional water crises. This is ultimately threatening millions of people and many ecosystems throughout the region.

After decades of degradation of lakes, wetlands, watersheds, and soils, sedimentation of reservoirs,



and over-abstraction of groundwater, we have undermined both natural and built water stores.

With the partnership of various organizations, IWMI researches on the sustainable use of water and land resources, knowledge services and products, capacity strengthening. It also holds dialogue, and policy analysis to support the implementation of water management solutions for agriculture, ecosystems, climate change, and inclusive economic growth.

### Project engagement

In close collaboration with relevant government ministries and other stakeholders, the project is built around three interlinked work streams.

The first work stream, understanding water storage gaps and options to fill them, will develop tools and approaches to map and investigate the seasonal dynamics and trends in different types of wa-

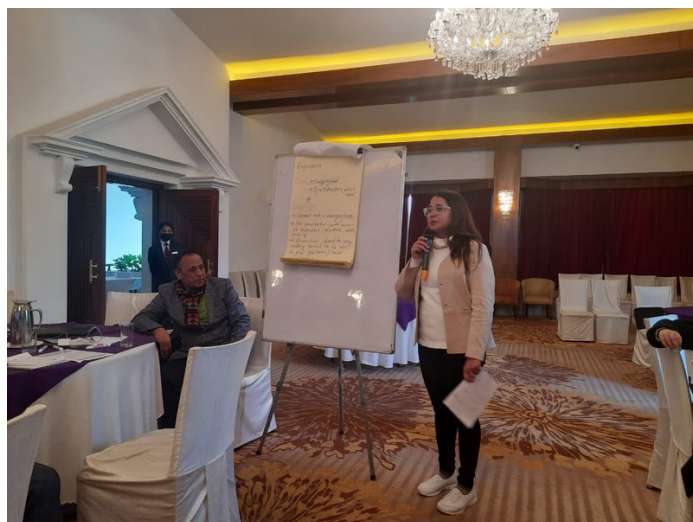
ter storage.

Given the current scenario, storing water is the only available way of coping with water insecurity and climate change challenges. Experts argue that water storage provides a buffer to manage uncertainty and variability.

Experts hold the view that the dams contribute to adaptive capacity by enabling rural communities to satisfy domestic water requirements in drought periods. The dams also help farmers to grow crops in dry seasons and provide water to livestock to survive through the dry season. Finally, the dams regulate rivers to flow all year round, and support to generate hydroelectricity.

As in the past, IWMI-Nepal's BWSSA project will come out with broader suggestions to help the country-specific water shortage issue, trans boundary water sharing and gender issues.

As IWMI-Nepal's Country Representative Manohara Khadka said in the inauguration program, the project would be a game changer in water security in the South Asia, and views expressed in the inception workshop give many homes.





## MinErgy's Project

# Power For Women To emPOWER\* Them

*Members of the Bagmati Rural Municipality who were elected as women representatives have demonstrated that expertise in energy planning can help women become more powerful*

By KESHABPOUDEL

Seven elected representatives of Bagmati Rural Municipality serving on the Energy Development Sub Committee (EDCS) have started an initiative to distribute clean cook stoves and make their rural municipality smoke-free because they are sick of hearing agony and seeing women constantly visiting health facilities for chest infections and forests to collect fuel wood.

A team of seven women representatives led by elected municipality member Sun Maya Thing has already developed a plan to make all kitchens in the Bagmati Rural Municipality smoke-free. The members of EDCS are now ready to create an energy plan for the benefit of women after completing capacity-building courses and other training provided by MinErgy.

When seven women were elected to the Rural Municipality, they had no idea what their roles and responsibilities would be. They lacked the rudimentary legal knowledge necessary to understand how municipal entities, including the executive, assembly, budget, and planning processes, function.

"After taking the training classes offered by MinErgy, everything has changed. We were able to build up EDCS, planning, and budget thanks to the legal position of our job. We will never forget Binita Mam's assistance and guidance, according to Pushpa Thing, an EDCS participant and elected female member of the Bagmati Rural Municipality.

Speaking at a learning and sharing session for a recently completed initiative in the Bagmati Rural Municipality, elected member Thing described how seven elected women representatives went from being unassuming to being powerful.

The project Empowering Women Elected Member for Inclusive Municipal Energy Plan (MEP) Through Capacity Building in Bagmati Rural Municipality in Lalitpur, funded by the Canadian Fund for Local Initiative

is significant from a Canadian point of view as well because supporting renewable energy is a key element of climate change policy. He said that the project backed the causes of climate change and women's emancipation.



and carried out by MinErgy in partnership with Bagmati Rural Municipality, has demonstrated how things can be changed with wider effects by starting a small project.

Colin Shonk, Counselor and Head: Advocacy Program and Public Diplomacy, Media, Academic & Cultural Relations, Embassy of Canada to Nepal appreciated the value of the effort to empower women representatives after hearing their opinions.

"This project through an extremely challenging time, which included the COVID-19 Pandemic and elections. We find satisfaction in hearing the voices of the representatives," said Colin Shonk. He claimed that the initiative

These elected women joined the project following the elections in June of last year, even knowing the project would end in less than a year. Nonetheless, the project team was able to implant an empowerment agenda in women's minds, altering their perspective of elected women leaders and empowering them to create and successfully implement an energy strategy.

"On behalf of our team members participating in the program, I am happy to report that learning about the legal responsibilities, positions, and functions within the municipality, as well as the procedure for developing an energy plan, has altered our perceptions. Throughout the assembly and



budget-making process, all the women members are now able to bring up the subject and express their opinions. We are now able to obtain funding for the implementation of the energy program from the municipality because of the training provided by the initiative,” said Thing.

The learning and sharing program was attended by a variety of stakeholders including the chair and vice chair of the rural municipality, elected women members, the head of the Alternative Energy Promotion Center, experts, the project manager, and personnel from MinErgy, who helped to understand how a modest program brings about a major difference.

The elected women members of the energy subcommittee were able to obtain funding for the distribution of 423 upgraded stoves following their plan in addition to creating a municipal energy strategy for the Bagmati Rural Municipality. According to the plan, the project provided a 60% subsidy for the distribution of improved stoves, with 30% provided by the Municipality and 10% provided by the Beneficiary households.

Together with leading clean cooking campaigns and the distribution of clean cookstoves at the community level, EDSC was also instrumental in the choice of stove models and the creation of a mechanism for the delivery of stove subsidies.

Although the project supported the distribution of stoves, EDSC developed guidelines for enabling socially ex-

cluded and marginalized populations to acquire clean cook stoves with the assistance of the CAO and the project team.

To fund energy projects, EDSC successfully negotiated a bigger percentage of the Rural Municipality’s budget. Similar to this, the EDSC advocated for lessening the toil of women and persuaded the Municipality executive committee, through bilateral discussions and a meeting of the RM executive, to prioritize the installation of clean cook stoves above the installation of solar PV in the RM’s new building.

“We created a municipal policy that was accepted by the Rural Municipal Board to distribute justly and honestly. We distributed the stoves following a standard that prioritized vulnerable, excluded, and single women,” said Bhim Kumari Moktan. “As a result

of the distribution of improved stoves, homeowners’ kitchens are now smoke-free, and the Bagmati Rural Municipality’s experiences have demonstrated how wise energy use can enhance women’s lives and give them more power.”

Everything in the household levels has changed since the deployment of better stoves. The stoves save wood, save cooking time, and nearly eliminate interior smoke. Women save time since the upgraded stoves use less wood and produce more heat, according to Thing’s narration.

It’s not just her either; Bhim Kumari, the another member, stated that the initiative has demonstrated how effectively developing an energy plan can promote the process of empowering women. “Our Municipality is as isolated as remote region like Karnali, even though we are fairly near the capital. Such initiatives that include women and give them fundamental planning information are needed more often.”

Speakers at a half-day learning and sharing session emphasized the value of programs that strengthen the capacity of elected women representatives to support the creation of rural energy plans.

“During its 18-month lifespan, this initiative went through two separate local structures. Newly elected women representatives are the group now represented on the committee, according to project coordinator Binita Shrestha, MinErgy. “We’re pleased to report that the program has succeeded in empowering women who are elected officials.”

According to her, the committee’s members can now create and carry



## NATIONAL

out an energy plan. According to Shrestha, elected women officials now have more power.

She said that the endeavor was a first for the Bagmati Rural Municipality. According to Shrestha, “one of the project’s significant accomplishments is the creation of a gender-inclusive five-year Municipal Energy Plan.”

Acting Executive Director of Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPIC) Dr. Nawaraj Dhakal stated energy may play a significant role in empowering women during the meeting, which was presided over by Bir Bahadur Lopchan, chairman of Bagmati Rural Municipality.

He declared that AEPIC is prepared to cooperate and engage with organizations like Min-Ergy and the local level to put clean cooking plans into action. According to Dr. Dhakal, local governments must create and carry out a plan for clean cooking to be successful. “The project’s lessons will also assist others to implement projects that are similar.”

The initiative increased Bagmati Rural Municipality’s capacity to create a municipal energy plan that takes gender equity into account (MEP). The goal of the project was to create and include a mentoring and empowerment training program in the nine-step Municipal Energy Planning process.

“The empower strategy aimed to bring together three different sources of community energy. Resources-focused interventions tailored to the local environment and community preferences, empowerment training with a focus on individual agency and leadership, and energy-services framing that acknowl-

edges the interdependence between equity, sustainability, and community resilience were among them, according to Shrestha.

“Bagmati Rural Municipality should be proud for putting such a program in place that allows our elected women representatives to create an inclusive energy plan. Women are a major source of energy in the home and kitchen. They played a crucial leadership role in the development of the integrated project, according to Bir Bahadur Lopchan, the municipality’s chairman.

Energy plans and strategies are frequently criticized for being technocratic, supply-driven, and top-down.

emPOWER\* expert, noted that despite holding important leadership positions, women frequently resent sharing their gender-specific expertise and experiences in settings where men predominate. “This project demonstrates how to alter it.”

The contextualization of empowered entrepreneurs in the training manual, the training handbook, and the integration of human-scale energy services into agency-based empowerment training are all part of the emPOWER\* process, according to a technical expert.

One of the main aspects of the project was the fact that EDSC has been in charge of supervising the implementation of energy sub-projects and closely observing the Municipal Energy Program. The Municipal Energy Plan affected the development and implementation of projects in Bagmati, according to Binod Prasad Shrestha, Deputy Chief Technical Advisor, for REEEP/GIZ.

During the distribution of cooking stoves, the organization prioritized activities based on available resources mobilized a conditional grant and allotted additional internal resources. The most significant thing is that we can see the EDSC actively participating, according to Shrestha.

The initiative has demonstrated that the empowerment of elected women representatives by allowing them to take the lead in the planning and implementation of Municipal Energy Programs ultimately empowers the entire women’s community.



The bottom-up strategy, however, empowers. According to Dr. Ashma Vaidya, emPOWER\* Expert, the top-down method of developing policies and planning programs gives little room for the intended populations to support the suggested solutions.

A rural municipality like BRM can play a significant role in changing the conventional approach of making energy plans and policies and increasing equality and inclusion features of the Municipal Energy Plan because the Constitution of Nepal grants great power to local governments.

Usha Maskey Mananddhar, an



## NEPAL WOOL HOUSE

## Three Generations In Business

*The oldest ready-made clothing store in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal Wool House, is surviving even though many traditional company houses are dying from the competitive market as new business groups with new brands and technology are emerging. Nepal Wool House is retaining its long-time customers and attracting the next generation in a fiercely competitive environment. With the support of young sons Dipesh Ratna Tuladhar, and Gyanendra Ratna Tuladhar, sons of the founder late Dibya Ratna Tuladhar, is modernizing its business procedures and infrastructure*

By KESHABPOUDEL

Confucius, a Chinese philosopher, once said that progress is possible at any pace as long as one does not stop. Gyanendra Ratna Tuladhar, the proprietor of Nepal Wool House, emphasizes the significance of how ongoing business is important, just as it is said in this quotation.

Tuladhar believes that there will always be new technology, procedures, and standards to follow in any field. He currently runs his inherited firm alongside his son. “If my knowledge is stagnant, I could be left behind by competitors who keep abreast of business trends,” said Tuladhar.

The corporate empire of Tuladhar is likewise progressively changing. “We don’t need a

high-profit margin; all we need is enough to keep the business afloat. Applying concepts to running a business means that even

if growth is slowing down, one shouldn’t become alarmed. One need not be concerned as long as their business is not declining or





## PROFILE

losing money.

Confucius held sway over the Newar community of Kathmandu Valley, who had monopolized and dominated Trans-Himalayan Trade for generations due to their shared border and cultural heritage with China.

Numerous things in Newari culture are well known. They are renowned for their ide-

hending, as it is repeated. seeing what one's rivals are doing, keeping one's ears to the ground, and acting. One can detect this between father and son.

One would observe a middle-aged man in his smile lingering around the Nepal Wool House's new modern business complex in Bhotahiti, a historic market in Kathmandu, chatting

his son has been maintaining the family company.

Following its development plan, Nepal Wool House built a seven-story structure that increased a small plot of land from 500 square meters to more than 5000. The company has already automated its financial activities. Even though Nepal Wool, a business that is approximately 90 years old, employs professional personnel and has large showcases to present its items like all readymade shops around the globe, it has yet to maintain some traditions. SomeWool, a brand almost 90 years old, has still retained certain traditions. Some old customers are still asking for discounts.

Tuladhar graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce, attended St. Xavier School from 1958 to 1966, and earned his Senior Cambridge diploma.

**Like Father  
Like Son**

ology as well as their business acumen and abilities. Gyanendra Ratna Tuladhar and his son Dipesh Ratna Tuladhar exhibit this in both their demeanor and language.

They both treat their customers with kindness and humility. As the senior Tuladhar looks after the men's clothing on the first floor, the junior Tuladhar is in charge of the women's clothing.

Business is about hearing, seeing, doing, and compre-

with the clients. My wife assisted my father in glancing at the cash register when he was feeling lonely. She is no longer involved with the company anymore.

The owner, Gyanendra Ratna Tuladhar, who is 68 years old, has been interacting with kindness while speaking in a very humble and quiet tone. Tuladhar's daughter, who is married to the son of the former chief justice Kahayan Man Srestha, is currently seeking managerial positions at the Nidan Hospital while

Dipesh Ratna Tuladhar, a Xaverian, has been helping his father with the business for the past five years. Young Tuladhar, an industrial engineering graduate, does business with clients similarly to his father.

Dipesh attended business school in the Philippines to get his Master in Business Administration after earning his degree in Industrial Engineering (MBA). Tuladhar, who holds an academic degree, is a genuine gentleman and a modest individual who is gradually taking over the family business. "My son has helped me





pay taxes. My father complied with King Mahendr's request to pay a tax of Rs. 100. It was a big money then.

My father was a strong advocate for modernization. Because of this, St. Xavier accepted me rather than sending me to a nearby school. Numerous societal reforms and achievements were also launched by my father. My father registered as a trade house with His Majesty's Government of Nepal when we moved here in 1956. My father made a significant contribution to society's modernization. Early on, my father received assistance in the business from my brother Manik RatnaTuladhar.

### How was it named Nepal Wool House?

Babu Deb Raj Malhotra, the father of Dipak Malhotra and an old friend of my father, proposed the name Nepal Wool House when my father and brother were deciding on a name for the store. My father considered the advice and gave Nepal Wool House its current name. My fa-

with my business. His assistance has greatly aided me in growing the company, according to Tuladhar.

When asked why a person with a Senior Cambridge degree from a Convent School chooses to work for an established company? "Education is not a barrier to doing this or that. Education teaches students to conduct themselves fairly while maintaining their integrity, according to Senior Tuladhar. Dipesh, the son, concurs with his father.

On a query whose ideal will prevail more since you and your son represent two generations? "I would rather argue that our business strategy is built on both conventional and modern visions as well as old intuition," said Tuladhar.

### History of Nepal Wool House History

Nearly 81 years ago, in 1914, my father opened the shop. Our family has been in business for a long time, and they once had a little store in Ason, the val-

ley's former commercial center. In 1956, we relocated to Bhotahity. Bhotahity was then on the outskirts of the city. To make it a business hub beside Ason, my late father Dibya Ratna Tuladhar upgraded it, according to Tuladhar. Nepal Wool House offers goods for men, women, and children as well as yarn imported from throughout the globe. In 1960, my father was the first to





## PROFILE

ther worked extremely hard to build the Nepal Wool House brand for yarn and winter clothing. He creates an orderly market in Bhotahity. My father preferred change and was a modernizer. In Kathmandu, he was the first to install tube lights. He brought it over from Calcutta. People back then utilized low-voltage bulbs, and the lights were red. In 1960, my father employed neon light to provide brighter lighting.

**Why did your father select wool while Tuladhars are renowned for their skill in copper and brass crafts?**

The continuation of business is the reason. Also, a legacy is this. It was started by my dad. This company is successful. We are the people who are addicted to this business. By broadening and growing the firm, we have offered our quality and interest. It has been updated by us. We have been putting all of our work into adapting to the new competitive climate rather than trying to survive in tradition. One of the reasons Nepal Wool House is there is because of this.

**You also entered the tourism industry. The reason why?**

I decided to launch a tourism firm with investments in

the hotel sector while my father and brother were considering this venture. But because we opened a hotel in a rented home, it did not succeed. I advise individuals against launching a business in a rented space. That was the nature of my lesion. The business endeavor failed. I hold no one accountable for this. In Lazimpat, my hotel was rated two stars..

**How is your son doing?**

My two siblings are married. My son Dipesh Ratna, who

Innovation, modernization, diversity, and expansion have all been accomplished. Our business has grown from a 500–600 sq ft floor to over 10,000 sq ft. We now have 60 employees, up from the previous 12 employees. Of sure, we made a profit, but we also gave back to the nation and society by creating jobs and paying taxes. In addition, we have been working on a variety of projects under the umbrella of social corporate responsibility, including enhancing our neighborhood.

**Why did your father decide to start this business?**

The goal of our father's business was to establish a name in ready-made clothing, wool sweaters, and winter wear. We had a modest store that sold knit and



attended St. Xavier as well, graduated from Surat, India, with a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering. Later, he competed for MBA from the Philippines.

He began in the industry at first, but subsequently, he entered the business. Dipesh inspired me to further modernize the company, just as I had pushed my father to do.

**How does your business currently look?**

woolen clothing only. Now, we have expanded our business to include ready-to-wear for men, women, and kids. We have a seasonal winter and wear a variety of clothing.

**What proportion of local and imported materials was used in the store at the time?**

We import everything from many nations, not just wool. Currently, we import 35% of our products from India. 30 percent



local production and 35 percent from China. We used to import the complete product from India in the past. China has been introducing products to the market for the past 20 years.

**You participate in the Nepal Chamber of Commerce as well. What have you personally encountered?**

In the Chamber, I held several honorary roles for 44 years. I'm no longer active there because all of my former buddies have retired. My son is progressively taking my place in the chamber.

**How many of your classmates are company owners?**

Only two of us, including me and my other colleague Mahendra Lal Pradhan from Narayanghat, have joined the business. He also hails from an established Newari business family. I graduated from the 1966

batch, along with hydro-engineer and former minister Dipak Gyawali, Tashi Tenzing, and Balram Shrestha and others.

**How do you perceive the clients?**

There are still a lot of our previous clients. Since Nepal Wool House is a well-known brand, we receive visitors from all walks of life. We still have a reputable brand of winter clothing. Customers are our god, and it is because of their support that

we can grow. As a result, we always make a minimum profit in our business. Increasing turnover is more important to us than profit margin. Some company groups have minimal turnover and significant profit margins. Our clientele frequently changes.

**How about your wife?**

Hira Keshari, my wife, used to help me. She is now primarily limited to household duties.

**Right now, how busy are you?**



My kid is assuming the duty of doing more than 80% of the job. But I come here every day and remain to encourage him. The handover procedure is still in progress. He is developing his buying and selling abilities. These two elements are crucial to our business. I continue to have a say in what I buy and sell.

**Describe your grandchildren.**

The grandchildren I have are too young. My 12-year-old and 7-year-old grandsons come

here. They are still young, therefore nothing can be said at this time. You cannot make them follow your decision now or in the future. The children must be given freedom. We must also steer clear of the kids. We won't be able to force them, but we will be able to guide them. They need to be reminded that this enterprise is 81 years old.

**How do you intend to maintain your business in a cutthroat environment?**

As stated, competing is fighting competition. Our establishment has a unique personality that sets it apart from retail malls. Shopping at department stores is impersonal, but at our store, customer attention is

our top priority. This is the key to our advantage. We gave our employees good customer service training. Along with ours, several of our relatives' businesses are prospering. Tulahdars are highly known for their ready-to-wear brands, including Jujubhai Garment, Tamrakar House, and Peanuts, to name a few. In the floating market, other people come and go. Thank God, we are still alive.

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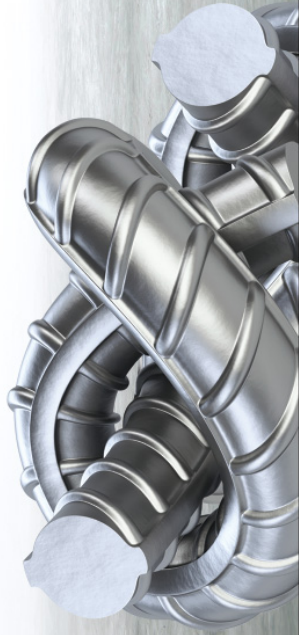


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