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**OPINION**  
Dipak Gyawali



**VIEWPOINT**  
Nona Deprez



**FORUM**  
Hanan Goder-Goldberger

# NEW SPOTLIGHT

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May.- 26, 2023

FORTNIGHTLY

**NIJGADH AIRPORT**

## Contrary To All Conventions

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**BANGLADESH AGREEMENT  
SWITCHING POWER**



**PRACHANDA'S INDIA VISIT  
ONE OR MORE RITUALS**



**AUSTRALIAN MINISTER  
FRIENDSHIP VISIT**

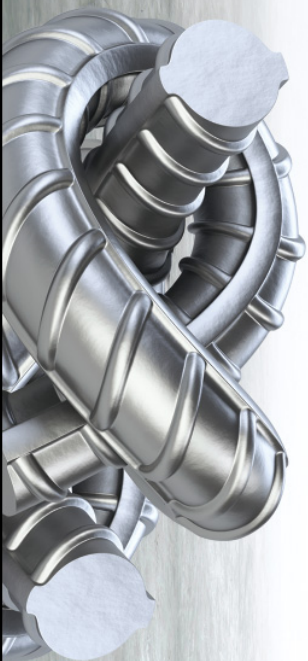


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# नचिने जोगि, बलियो ल्यानि

बढी  
हिमालले सुरक्षित घर बनाउँछ ।



१००% गुणस्तर परीक्षण । लोडशेडिंगमा पनि निरन्तर उत्पादन । ७६ डिग्रे आफ्नै बाहिरो स्थानमा नेपालभरि तुरुन्तै डेलिभरी हुने । निर्माणकर्ताको पहिलो योजनाई । पारदर्शी वजन र गुण्य



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**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**

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**Notes From The Editor**



The date of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's official visit to India has not yet been revealed. However, at various levels, the conversations have already begun. Nothing novel emerged from the discussions held at various levels, just like in the past. It is also impossible to perceive any real change given the present geopolitical narratives predicated on mistrust and suspicion. Similar to every prior visit by a prime minister before him, Prachanda's tour would come to an end without any personal interactions. Geopolitics aside, religion, culture, and interpersonal ties between Nepal and India are extremely strong. Despite being politically two separate nations, India and Nepal have the same civilization. The leadership of Nepal and India needs to make some bold announcements and promote a single civilization concept in order to alter the prevalent narratives that are misunderstood. Although there are many topics to cover, we have chosen to focus on the most contentious ones that are pertinent to the Nijgadh Airport's relevance and its technological, ecological, and economic sustainability.

The Nepalese government leadership, which has been implicated in several scandals and acts of corruption, has announced plans to build the airport against apex court directives, rules, and criticism from environmentalists. The remaining and extremely valuable ecosystem of the area will be finished in a matter of seconds if this decision is carried out. We also talked about Tim Watts, Australia's Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, a critical trip to Nepal.

**Keshab Poudel**

Editor



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# Bright & Beautiful



BY: HEMANG DIXIT

The first session of our House of Representatives is now over without there being not much to show what has been achieved. There has been much too and fro words from amongst the non rulers to the members of the 'Gathbandan' who have been doing 'HaTa' i.e. presenting and fleeing with no sense of duty nor shame! Ministers who should be there to answer queries from members of the House do not seem to have the moral courage or the disposition to answer to what they have been doing when in power. Some members of the previous ruling party have been adding to the crescendo resounding in this chamber, but to what purpose? Both groups have not been able to say 'Bhure, Bhure Baad' as the hope of both is that some support will come from this direction! The public in the meantime is watching with unblinking eyes to see what is in the offing! Are they going to get any solace from the budget in the horizon? The katu sachhya that we Nepalis must gloss over is that during the course of the 110 days which ended at midnight on 28<sup>th</sup> April. Of course new President, Vice-President and some Ministers were elected and sworn in but not a single bill was passed. So much for work done when the cost of running the House has been said to be Nepali Rs. 10 lakhs per day!

There is an old Chinese saying that goes, 'Even the sparrow has five organs' meaning thereby I suppose that a small living object has been endowed with so much facilities. The question then comes by whom? This brought to my mind an evensong composed in early Twentieth Century which I had sung in my school days that went:

'All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful,  
The Good Lord made them all.'

The crux of the message of the Chinese saying is that every being in this planet of ours has a right to exist.

As far as Nepal is concerned, we have tales of valour of Nepali individuals such as Kaji Damodar Pande, Bir Balvadra and Bhimsen Thapa all of whom have been in the forefront for the existence of our country and the individuals living therein. These were individuals with the country uppermost in their minds.

The modern struggle of the common Nepali against the rulers of the land may be said to have been started in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when the ruling Ranas imprisoned or banished from the country a number of individuals for so termed 'anti-national activities'. It was this action that accelerated the movement against the Rana oligarchy and gave us our four Saheeds. Thence onwards the movement accelerated and led to the end of the Rana rule in Nepal.

Our situation in Nepal may be summed up by the saying of Plato – 'The price good men pay for indifference to public affairs is to be ruled by evil men'. The common man has been following the words of Mark Twain who wrote, 'Pat-

riotism is supporting your country all the time, and your government when it deserves it.' We in Nepal have to rethink on these words and act accordingly. What has our governments got for us is more likely 'Ugly and dirty' so far.

The trouble in Nepal is that as Greek philosopher Astrophanth has said, 'Under every stone lurks a politician'. The current position in our country is that our never aging politicians from the middle of the twentieth century are as per a common saying 'All birds of the same feather'. Most have not performed in the interest of us, the people.

Unfortunately as another writer Hannah Arendt has remarked, 'Truthfulness has never been counted among the political virtues, and lies have always been regarded as justifiable tools for political dealings' in our country by our aged leaders who are all out of step with the current realities of the world. Thus as per the words of Thomas Paine who wrote, 'A body of men holding themselves accountable to nobody ought not to be trusted by anybody' should be trust our aged leaders who have never done justice to the Nepali populace?

The current situation in Nepal is that we should be a neutral country as per the aims of Panchasheel which was propounded by the late leaders of China, India and Nepal namely Zhou Enlai, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and King Mahendra in the Nineteen Fifties of the last century. Whilst we have had our 'Roti and Beti' relationship with our Southern neighbour for centuries, the fact remains that our relationship with our Northern neighbour has been in existence for centuries too.

The Aarniko Project in a recent despatch states that spinach i.e. 'Bocai' in Mandarin was introduced in China from Nepal during the Tang Dynasty (618-906 CE). Licchavi King Narendra Dev is said to have presented it to Chinese Emperor Taizong's during his rule from 641-680 CE. History tells that Jung Bahadur was presented tea plants by the Chinese Emperor. These Camellia Sinesis tea plants were then propagated in Ilam by Jung Bahadur's Jwai Saap Col. Gajraj Singh Thapa in 1863 by establishing a tea estate there. It goes to show that contacts between Nepal and China has been taking place over many centuries in spite of the high Himalayan mountains between the two countries.

We the common citizens of this country have been looking forward to a 'Swachhcha & Sundar' Nepal.

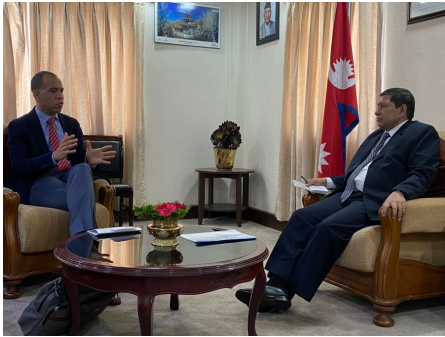
So finally:

God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, Courage to change the things which should be changed, and the Wisdom to distinguish the one from the other. Serenity Prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr.

*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 And MCC Deputy Vice President Brooks Discuss Implementation Of MCC



Deputy Vice President for Europe, Asia, Pacific and Latin America (EAP-LA) programs, of Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), Jonathan Brook, paid a courtesy call on Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Narayan Kaji Shrestha at the

latter's office in Singha Durbar.

The MCC delegation led by MCC Deputy Vice President Brooks urged the DPM and Home Minister for assistance with regard to the land acquisition needed for the MCC, security and cooperation.

A participant of the meeting and Home Ministry Secretary Govinda Bhattarai said that, in response, DPM Shrestha said that Home Ministry and subordinate administrative agencies will provide the needed and adequate help for the project to complete on time.

### Australian Minister Hands Over Rescue Equipment

Australia's Assistant Foreign Minister, Tim Watts, MP, handed over an Australian-made Portable Altitude Chamber (PAC) to the Himalayan Rescue Association (HRA) for use at Pheriche Aid Post and the Everest ER Clinic at Everest Base Camp.

Assistant Minister Watts thanked HRA on behalf of the Australian Government for the organisation's assistance to Australians and others who require medical support during expeditions and treks.



“Australia is deeply grateful to HRA and the Nepali authorities for their support

to Australian mountaineers and trekkers.”

He said Nepal is a favoured destination among Australians for adventure tourism. Almost 27,000 Australians visited Nepal in 2022, making Australia the fourth largest

source of foreign tourists to Nepal that year. He expected many more Australians would visit Nepal in 2023 as the tourism industry recovers.

“As we mark the 70th anniversary of the first successful ascent of Mount Everest by Tenzing Norgay and Sir Edmund Hillary, we are mindful that over 300 lives have been lost in attempts to reach the summit,” Assistant Minister Watts said.

“I also offer my deep condolences to the Sherpa guides and others involved in the Khumbu Icefall accident in April. These tragic events underline the importance of Australia's ongoing partnership with HRA.”

The PAC is made by Australia's Bartlett Manufacturing to assist with managing high-altitude sickness when conditions do not allow for an immediate and effective descent, or when the patient is too ill to move.

Australia's past support to HRA has included communications equipment, such as satellite phones, to enable medical teams to provide good quality high altitude health care to Nepali and foreigners in mountain locations.

### MoUs For Two Projects To Be Implemented Under Gol Grant Assistance Signed

The Embassy of India, Kathmandu and Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration, Government of Nepal today signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)

for undertaking two High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) in Nepal under the

grant assistance of Government of India - one each in health care and education sectors, at a total estimated cost of NRs. 80.33 million.

These two projects, namely, construction of Malagiri Shanti Yogashram, Ramechhap District and Kedar Jyotipunja Multiple Campus, Doti District of Nepal shall be implemented through Ramechhap Municipality and Badikedar Rural Municipality, respectively.

The construction of the above projects will provide better health care and education facilities for the local community and improve the quality of life for people in Nepal.



### Nepal Army's Team Summit Mt. Everest

Nepali Army's five member successfully climbed Mount Everest on Monday. They reached the summit of the world's tallest mountain as part of a 10-member team under





the army's mountain clean-up campaign.

The team comprised Captain Bishnu Bal Rai, Captain Dipendra Singh Khatri, Corporal Shankar Kunwar and Lance Corporal Kishor Jabegu and was led by Lieutenant Colonel Kishor

Adhikari. The five personnel, accompanied by five Sherpas, reached Everest's summit at 10.05 am on Monday, according to a press statement issued by the army.

According to Nepal Army's Public Relations and Information Directorate, permit-holding climbers from over five dozen countries began scaling the 8,848.86-metre peak from Sunday, a day after a nine-member group from the company Imagine Nepal Trek and Expeditions finished fixing the ropes from Camp II to the mountain's top.

On the first day, 11 climbers reached the top, as per the data provided by the Department of Tourism (DoT). Naila Kaini of Pakistan became the first foreigner to reach the peak, dubbed the top of the world, this year. She is also the second Pakistani ever to achieve the feat.

Similarly, 46-year-old Pasang Dawa Sherpa matched Kami Rita Sherpa's record of the highest number of successful ascents of Mount Everest by reaching its summit for the 26th time. He reached the summit at 9.06 am on Sunday. Kami Rita has announced his intention to reach Everest's peak a 27th time this month, though.

Yubraj Khatriwada, director of the Mountaineering Section of the DoT, told The Rising Nepal that many people summited Everest on Monday. However, the Department had not received the exact number from its monitoring office at the base camp as of 6.30 pm Monday.

### Indian Ambassador Naveen Srivastava Inaugurated A School Building In Surkhet

Ambassador of India to Nepal Naveen Srivastava along with Khadga Bahadur Pokharel, Minister for Social Development of Karnali Province, Chief of DCC Surkhet & Mayor, Bheri Ganga Municipality inaugurated a school

building of Nepal Rashtriya Secondary School in Surkhet.

B u i l t under Indian grant assistance, the new building provides students enough spaces with furniture's.



According to Embassy of India, till date, 14 such community development projects have been implemented in Karnali province, under the robust India Nepal Development Cooperation

### Foreign Minister Saud Calls On The Prime Minister Of Bangladesh

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal Narayan Prakash Saud called on the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina at Ganobhaban, Dhaka this afternoon.

On the occasion, Hon. Foreign Minister congratulated the Government of Bangladesh on the successful hosting of the 6th Indian Ocean Conference and appreciated the opportunity to participate in the Conference.



Matters of bilateral relations such as trade, investment, energy cooperation, tourism as well as interest of Nepali students studying in Bangladesh were discussed in the meeting.

The Foreign Minister underlined the steady growth of Nepal-Bangladesh cooperation and stressed the need to ramp up efforts to strengthen economic linkages.

Prime Minister of Bangladesh expressed satisfaction over the excellent state of bilateral relations and highlighted the need to build on the progress and further the areas of cooperation.

### UN Women Organizes Seminar On Enhancing Access To Justice For Women In Nepal

In efforts to create a more enabling environment for gender-responsive justice in Nepal, UN Women and Legal Aid and Consultancy Center Nepal (LACC) hosted a joint dialogue series across three tiers of government on "Strengthening Gender-Responsive Justice at Local Level".

Speaking at the event, Minister, Aman Lal Modi of Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration shared, "To take Singha Durbar at the doorsteps of everyone, we need to do more, not only the government but all stake-



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holders need to do more.”

Navanita Sinha, Head of Office a.i., UN Women also shared, “Nepal has a strong normative legal framework for gender justice and the formation of judicial committees is a testament to its commitment. Despite numerous challenges, judicial committees have played a critical role in enhancing gender justice, but these are only initial steps and we need to do more to ensure these institutions can deliver on the substantive promise.”

Kamala Kumari Parajuli, Chair of National Women Commission, urged to scale up UN Women’s project, ‘Enhancing Access to Justice’ across all 753 local levels of Nepal and called on local government units, provincial governments and the federal government to address gaps and challenges for gender-responsive justice at the local level.

Un Women Strengthening Gender-Responsive Justice at Local Level Srijana

Bringing together diverse stakeholders such as the government, executive, legislative, judiciary, community-based women’s organizations, and development partners, the dialogue highlighted best practices for gender-responsive justice:

- a) Enabling survivors to access gender-based violence elimination fund
- b) Discouraging forced mediation
- c) Mobilizing grassroots women organizations for community outreach and integrated justice delivery
- d) Home visit by Judicial Committee members for ensuring accessible justice for victims
- e) Interim Protection Order to enable gender-responsive justice for victims
- f) Creating coordination and collaboration platforms between justice actors at the local level
- g) Strengthening capacity of Judicial Committee to manage case backlog
- h) Strengthening capacity of formal and informal justice actors and monitoring mechanisms
- i) Technical support of legal advisors to Judicial Committees

UN Women promotes a gender-responsive approach to justice. It supports community-based models for gender justice by enhancing gender responsiveness of community-based justice mechanisms, and establishing platforms for coordination; supporting women’s rights organizations to advocate and support women’s pursuit of justice; involving whole communities to change social norms that result in the prevention of discrimination and acceptance of women as active citizens.

### Foreign Minister Saud Highlights The Strategic, Economic And Ecological Significance Of The Indian Ocean

Minister for Foreign Affairs Narayan Prakash Saud underscored the strategic, economic and ecological

significance of the Indian Ocean and highlighted its importance as a gateway to international markets for the landlocked countries like Nepal.

Addressing this afternoon the

Plenary Session of the 6th Indian Ocean Conference being held in Dhaka, Foreign Minister Saud while underlining the natural link between mountains and the oceans stressed the urgent need to address the impact of climate change on mountains, oceans, as well as the lives and livelihoods both in the coastal and hinterland states.

He called upon the countries to work together to ensure real, robust, and responsible actions for a healthy Indian Ocean and for a peaceful, prosperous, and resilient future of the region.

Earlier this morning, Foreign Minister visited Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhaka along with other Ministers/Heads of Delegation to pay tribute to the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

### Nepalese And Indian Foreign Ministers Discussed On Agenda Of Consolidation Of Cooperation

Foreign Minister Saud And Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. Jaishankar Discussed On Consolidation Of Cooperation Between Nepal And India

Minister for Foreign Affairs NPS Saud had a meeting with External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S Jaishankar on the sidelines of IOC2023 meeting in Dhaka, Capital of Bangladesh.

“Discussions were held on ways to consolidate cooperation in trade, transit, connectivity & people to people linkages. During the meeting, Nepalese ambassador to Bangladesh Ghanshyam Bhandari and other Nepalese officials also present.

In his tweet, external affairs minister of India. Dr. S. Jaishankar mentioned his meeting with Nepal’s foreign minister Saud





as a good first meeting.

“A good first meeting with FM N.P. Saud of Nepal. Congratulated him on his new responsibility. Discussed further steps in our steadily expanding partnership. Spoke about energy, connectivity, and our enduring people to people ties,” tweets External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar.

### Israeli Ambassador Hanan Goder-Golberger Paid A Courtesy Call On CoAS General Sharma



Hanan Goder-Golberger, Israel's Ambassador to Nepal, made a courtesy call on Chief of Army Staff (CoAS) General Prabhu Ram Sharma at the Nepal Army Headquarters.

During the meeting, they discussed bilateral matters of mutual importance as well as the two countries' long-standing friendly relations.

### Diamond Jubilee Celebration of Israel's Independence In Kathmandu

The Embassy of Israel in Nepal hosted a reception to celebrate the 75 years of Independence Day of Israel amid a special function in Kathmandu.



Vice President Ramsahay Prasad Yadav was the chief guest of 75 years of Israel's Independence day celebration. There were 400 guests from Nepali government officials, foreign diplomats, media fraternity and friends.

Welcoming the guests, Ambassador of Israel to Nepal said, “Israel and Nepal share common values and challenges. As both are

small countries, we must always build bridges of good relations with similar countries. Nepal and Israel were and will always remain close friends.”

Prime Minister of Israel offered his congratulations in a video message: “75 years ago, we emerged from the Holocaust... today, Israel is a rising power among the world... We have become the example of how you build something seemingly from nothing. We do more with less... We've built this, based on the age-old dream that we never

gave up to return to our homeland; to rebuild our national life, to be able to defend ourselves, to be able to create and forge a future of peace.”

In a video message, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel said, “Even when things seem difficult and impossible, think about what we have managed to build and accomplish in just 75 years of Independence. Anything is possible, with a little faith.”

### JICA Completed Reconstruction Of 274 Schools Under The Emergency School Reconstruction Project

Reconstruction of 274 schools is complete under the Emergency School Reconstruction Project

Central Level Project Implementation Unit (CLPIU) / Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) organized a “Closing ceremony of Emergency School Reconstruction Project”:

Nepal - Japan cooperation post Nepal Earthquake 2015, today in the presence of Minister of MoEST Ashok Kumar Rai as the Chief Guest. About 100 participants representing the government, development partners, civil society, academia, and media were part of the ceremony.

Total 274 schools with 760 Blocks and over 4700 rooms were built under Emergency School Reconstruction Project (ESRP) with a total

cost of JPY 14 billion (about NPR 14 billion) to support the reconstruction of disaster resilient schools in Gorkha, Dhading, Nuwakot, Makwanpur, Rasuwa and Lalitpur Districts, based on the earthquake-resistant type design guidelines jointly formulated by Japan International Cooperation agency (JICA) and ADB under the principle of “Build Back Better” (BBB).

The reconstruction of the school structures is part of the Emergency School Reconstruction Project (ESRP) supported by JICA. The Project is being implemented by CLPIU - Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST). The ESRP was implemented based on designs and structural guidelines which complies with Nepal National Building code.

All the 274 school buildings are reconstructed with multi-hazard resilient structures which are child, gender and disable friendly to provide improved learning environment for the students based on the concept of BBB which increases resilience not only physically but also socially.



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Besides the school buildings, the support also includes classrooms well equipped with furnitures, laboratories, early childhood development centers, separate toilet blocks for boys & girls, solar back up, playground, boundary fences and footpath pavement. Amongst the 274 schools, two of the schools in Lalitpur- Patan Secondary School and Namuna Machhindra Secondary School were reconstructed with special designs where Namuna Machhindra Secondary School, being reconstructed with a focus on providing a conducive learning environment for students with visual impairments.

During the ceremony, Minister for Education, Science and Technology Ashok Kumar Rai thanked the Government of Japan for providing its assistance for reconstruction of the 274 school buildings with the concessional loan post the earthquake and contributing towards enhancing the education sector. Secretary of MoEST and the Chairperson for the event, Ram Krishna Subedi recalled the long history of Japanese cooperation to education through different schemes.

He opined that it has been instrumental for enhancing access and quality education and capacity of education system in Nepal. He also requested for continuous cooperation to the sector. Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, H.E. Mr. KIKUTA Yutaka reiterated “Japan’s assistance aim is not only limited to the rebuilding and retrofitting of the schools, but also to build back to the further extent under the concept of “the Build Back Better”.

It contributes to the improvement of education services and earthquake resilience for sustainable socio-economic growth. He further stated his hope on cooperation between Nepal and Japan will further strengthen the friendly relations the two counties have developed over the years.”

At the beginning of the ceremony, project director of CLPIU Mr. Dilli Ram Luintel welcomed all the guests and CLPIU also presented synopsis of school reconstruction including ESRP. In addition, JICA also provided a brief overview of Japanese assistance for reconstruction and recovery in Nepal through presentation and video show.

### Europe Day 2023 Observed In Nepal

Europe Day 2023 was observed by the European



Delegation Embassy in Nepal by hosting a reception and other events.

On May 9, in the midst of a celebration, the European Union Delegation in Nepal organized a reception to celebrate the “Europe Day.” The event’s chief guest was vice president Ram Shaya Yadav.

Guests included past ministers, lawmakers, top government officials, foreign ambassadors stationed in Kathmandu, and representatives from numerous organizations.

Nona Deprez, the ambassador of the European Union to Nepal, emphasized the significance of Europe Day throughout the program and expressed EU’s strong support for Ukraine and its people in their struggle against the Russian invasion.

### KOICA Volunteer Supports The Construction Of A Taekwondo Hall APF School

Jeong Eun Song, Country Director a.i., and school’s principal of APF jointly inaugurated Taekwondo Hall amid a function in Kathmandu.



Jeong Eun Song, Country Director a.i., Yoonhee Chung, Deputy Country Director, other KOICA representatives, as well as the school’s principal and staffs. KOICA has been collaborating with Nepal APF School since 2019 A.D.

Jeong Eun Song, Country Director a.i. of KOICA Nepal Office thanked the school for providing support to KOV Yun. Similarly, she mentioned that the project will have a significant impact on promoting taekwondo as a sport and encouraging proper teaching and learning skills in taekwondo within the school and the community. She anticipated that the school will further expand the project in the coming years by adding more taekwondo equipment and buildings.

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) volunteer Yongman Yun with the support from the KOICA Nepal Office completed the Korea Overseas Volun-



teer (KOV) small project “Establishing Professional Taekwondo Training Center in Nepal APF School for Cultivating Talented Taekwondo Athletes”.

Through this project KOICA taekwondo volunteer Yun supported to construct a new Taekwondo hall and supported necessary taekwondo equipment's in the school. For this project KOICA has supported around \$19,908.46 and school has supported \$700.

The primary objective of this project was to create a safe training space for the participants and prevent accidents during the taekwondo training.

In addition to the construction of the taekwondo hall, the project supported the acquisition of 70 pieces of floor mats (2.5cm), 8 pieces of chest shields, 8 helmets, 8 sets of knee pads and 2 mitts (gloves for kick motion practice). Similarly, 1 piece of dummy, 12 pieces of leg gloves, 6 pieces of hand gloves, 11 pieces of kick pad and 4 pieces of chest cover has also been purchased from KOV activity support program worth NPR 1,13,700. Although the school had been offering taekwondo classes for a long time, it had been lacking a fully equipped taekwondo hall.

KOV Yun has been volunteering with the school since December 2021 for a duration of 2 years. Since the outbreak of Covid 19, Yun is the first batch of KOV from which KOICA resumed its KOV program in Nepal. His project marks the first initiative of a KOICA volunteer supported by KOICA after the COVID-19 situation. As a result, KOICA holds high hopes for the project.

KOICA's volunteer program is one of its main initiatives aimed at contributing to the socio-economic development of partner countries at the grassroots level. KOICA dispatches Korean national volunteers to partner government organizations based on their expertise, knowledge, and experience. Each volunteer serves in Nepal for 2 years in various fields such as education, health, agriculture, and ICT. Currently, 8 KOVs are actively engaged in various government sectors under an agreement between the governments of Korea and Nepal.

## FAO Conducts Training To Combat Food borne Antimicrobial Resistance through Codex Standards Implementation

FAO in collaboration with Department of Food

Technology and Quality Control organized 3-day Training of Trainers (TOT) program on the “Implementation of Codex Standards to support the containment and reduction of foodborne AMR” from May 8-10, 2023. Around 25 government officials from various departments, including DFTQC, Department of Livestock Services, Department of Health Science, Nepal Agriculture Research Council, and Academia, are participating in the program. The officials will be trained on implementing Codex Standards and supporting the reduction of foodborne AMR in the country, becoming potential human resources for raising awareness on the matter.

The Department of Food Technology and Quality Control (DFTQC) is leading the “Action to support the implementation of Codex Texts (ACT) Project” with technical assistance from FAO Nepal.

Sabnam Shivakoti, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, urged all participants to actively engage in the project and committed to recommending relevant policies based on the findings of AMR status in Nepal. One of the objectives of the project is to improve surveillance and monitoring systems while raising awareness and developing institutional and human resources to tackle food borne AMR.

## Luxembourg's Minister Action Franz Fayot Visited Nepal

Luxembourg Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Action Franz Fayot and Director Christophe Schiltz returned after completing the visit to Nepal.

During their stay in Nepal, the minister led delegation visited projects supported by Luxembourg in Nepal and met higher government officials including Minister of Foreign Affairs N.P. Saud.

According to a press release issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the two Ministers exchanged views on various aspects of bilateral relations, development cooperation, climate change and other areas of mutual interest. <https://twitter.com/MofaNepal/status/1653988528408395777>

Similarly, European Ambassador to Nepal Nona Deprez and Team Europe hosted the minister. “Ahead of Europe Day 2023, an honor to host Luxembourg Minister for development cooperation and humanitarian action Franz Fayot, Director Christophe Schiltz, Ambassador Frantzen and delegation on their visit to Team Europe,” tweets Ambassador Nona Deprez.

The purpose of this one was to visit the projects of a number of Luxembourgish NGOs, namely the NGOD FNEL Scouts et Guides, Coopération Humanitaire Luxembourg, Handicap International Luxembourg, ECPAT, Aide à l'Enfance de l'Inde et du Nepal (AEIN), and Life Project for Youth (LP4Y).

“The visit was successful as he visited various projects supported by Luxembourg government. He met higher government officials including foreign minister NP



## NEWSNOTES

Saud,” said Shree Ram Lamichhane, honorary consul general of Luxemburg to Nepal. “The minister told before leaving Nepal that he was extremely touched by the love and affection and friendship shown by Nepalese.”

His visited schools and other projects supported by Luxembourg. In Dakshinkali, near Kathmandu, Franz Fayot visited the Agriculture Learning and Resource Centre of the Shikharapur Community Learning Centre (SCLC), a



local partner of the NGDO FNEL Scouts and Guides.

According to a press release by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Action [https://gouvernement.lu/fr/actualites/toutes\\_actualites/communiqués/2023/05-mai/06-visite-travail-fayot-nepal.html](https://gouvernement.lu/fr/actualites/toutes_actualites/communiqués/2023/05-mai/06-visite-travail-fayot-nepal.html)

, the organization’s activities include creating an environment for young people to improve their skills, learn to work independently, and explore opportunities for young people. Thus, the Minister was able to get an image of the SCLC’s farm school, the Bottle House, which offers practical training in innovative and sustainable agricultural techniques.

In Pokhara, the NGO Coopération Humanitaire Luxembourg is supporting a development project implemented by its local partner SOS Bahini, which aims to improve access to protection, education, vocational training and health care for vulnerable children and women which aims to protect children from early and forced marriage, and a regionally operating project to combat human trafficking in Nepal, India and Bangladesh.

The Minister received briefing from the beneficiaries on the functioning of the programs and was able to see the various infrastructures of SOS Bahini, including an eco-village and a training center.

Minister Fayot then visited the activities of Handicap International Luxembourg (HIL) in the district of Gorkha. As disability is not considered in education, health or economic development in Nepal,

HIL’s operations notably pursue the objective of

improving access to education for children with disabilities, and enabling people who are injured or have a disability to benefit from rehabilitation sessions and integration services.

During discussions with the beneficiaries of the NGO’s economic inclusion program, the minister was able to learn more about the difficulties and challenges faced by people with disabilities in Nepal.

In the capital, Franz Fayot visited three different projects supported by ECPAT. It was a project to prevent the trafficking of young girls in the adult entertainment sector, a project which aims to protect children from early and forced marriage, and a regionally operating project to combat human trafficking in Nepal, India and Bangladesh.

With the aim of improving justice and social transformation, as well as the socio-economic development of the disadvantaged and marginalized people of Nepal, the NGDO AEIN supports, among others, projects in the fields of education, community development, livelihoods and sustainable agriculture.

In this context, Minister Fayot paid a visit to two projects supported by AEIN, namely a rural women’s fruit and vegetable cooperative and a school that was rebuilt after the 2015 earthquake.

In addition, Franz Fayot visited the Green Village of the ONGD LP4Y, which welcomes young women from rural provinces of Nepal and accompanies them towards their social and professional integration. In order to enable women to create their own income-generating activities, the program offers training in areas such as creativity, marketing, English, communication, as well as project management, pro-activity and leadership.

Finally, in Kathmandu, Minister Fayot had a bilateral meeting with Narayan Prakash Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nepal, during which they underlined the good relations between Luxembourg and Nepal as well as the importance of the contribution of NGOs. On the sidelines of the project visits, the Minister also had a working dinner with Nona Deprez, Head of the European Union Delegation in Nepal.

### FAO Nepal Launched Country Programming Framework 2023-2027

For the transformation of Nepal’s whole agriculture and forestry sector, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Country Programming Framework 2023–2027 has been published.

The framework work was officially launched by Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Development Bedu Ram Bhusal, Vice Chairman of the National Planning Commission Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha, Jong-Jin Kim, Director of the Food and Agriculture Organization’s (FAO) Asia Pacific Region, United Nations Resident Coordinator Hanaa Sing-



er-Hamdy, and Ken Shimizu, FAO Country Representative for Bhutan and Nepal.

Ken Shimizu, Director of FAO Nepal, and Shri Krishna Nepal, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, jointly signed the contract at the occasion.

While acknowledging FAO Nepal's assistance in the development of Nepal's agricultural sector, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Development Bhusal expressed his hope that this framework will aid in reaching sustainable development objectives.

He stated that this framework is a joint product of the Government of Nepal and FAO and expressed his appreciation for their cooperation and help with FAO Nepal for more than seven decades..

He thinks that doing this will support the sustainable growth of Nepal's agriculture and forestry sectors, guarantee food and nutrition security, and advance the aims of sustainable development.

Dr. Min Bahadur Shrestha, vice chairman of the National Planning Commission, stated in the program that the CPF will play a special role in assisting Nepal's food system reform, the country's fight against hunger and poverty, and addressing climate change.

Jong Jin Kim, the director of FAO's Asia-Pacific region, stated that he is prepared to assist the priorities and policies established by the Nepalese government in accordance with FAO's mission.

He claims that the FAO has carried out projects and initiatives in its member nations in line with the strategic goals of raising output, enhancing nutrition, enhancing the environment, and raising living standards.

He underlined that these actions not only promote equitable development but also guarantee the safety of all residents' access to food. According to Kim, the nation's food system needs to be changed in order to properly address problems with malnutrition and other difficulties with food security.

Hanna Singer Hamdi, the UN Resident Coordinator, expressed her happiness that this framework has given special attention to the development and promotion of women's friendly technology as well as women's empowerment in the context of increasing the responsibility of women in agriculture because young men and women in Nepal are leaving their homes for foreign employment. By 2026, she pledged, the country would move from being underdeveloped to becoming a development-oriented country with the full assistance and participation of the UN.

Ambassadors, representatives of development part-

nership organizations, government officials, representatives of the private sector, agriculturalists, business owners, and development partners were present at the public Country Programming Framework 2023-2027 event.

IFC's Invests USD 55 Million in Nepal's Financial Sector to Support SME Growth and Green Finance

IFC's \$55 million for Siddhartha Bank Limited (SBL) will support the bank in increasing access to finance for small businesses, while also fostering climate finance in Nepal.

IFC has been supporting the growth of Nepal's financial sector for the past two decades, and this is our largest investment in any financial institution in the country.

This investment is also the first ever foreign currency syndicated loan facility in the financial sector in Nepal.

As Nepal's economy continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, small and medium enterprises (SME) need increased access to finance to create more jobs and support inclusive growth.

This funding will allow SBL to increase its on-lending to SMEs, including women-owned businesses, thereby helping support up to 15,000 jobs. Ten percent of the loan is earmarked for climate financing across several areas, including electric vehicles, climate-smart agriculture, and energy efficiency.

"IFC's timely investment will help increase our lending to micro, small, and medium enterprises, especially in remote and rural areas, while also allowing us to expand and diversify our climate portfolio," said Sundar Prasad Kadel, CEO of SBL. "We expect it to further bolster our banking services, enabling us to offer greater value to our

customers."

SMEs are the backbone of Nepal's economy, accounting for 22 percent of the country's gross domestic product and employing 1.8 million people. Yet access to finance remains a major constraint for 44 percent of SMEs, deterring their growth prospects and hampering job creation. The SME finance gap is estimated to be around \$3.6 billion.

IFC will also support SBL's effort to identify and evaluate green lending opportunities, and provide advisory assistance designed to further strengthen the bank's operations.

"IFC is pleased to bring more liquidity to Nepal's financial sector in addition to our various efforts designed to meet the needs of underserved SMEs," said Babacar S. Faye, IFC's Country Representative in Nepal. "SBL's commitment to expanding its green finance portfolio will also help demonstrate the viability of this segment in Nepal."



## BUSINESS BRIEF

### Himalayan Bank's Provides 2 Million Rupees To Bhagwan Koirala's Non-profit Organization

Himalayan Bank Ltd has provided financial support



of two million rupees to the non-profit organization led by Prof. Dr. Bhagwan Koirala to build a children's hospital. The bank has supported under corporate social responsibility.

According to a press release issued by the bank, Kathmandu Institute of Child Health in Budhanilkanth received the amount. Bhagwan Koirala is the president of that organization.

Chief Executive Officer Ashok Shamsher Rana handed over the amount to the organization. The organization is building a facility-equipped hospital to provide child health services at affordable prices.

### ADB Approves \$300 Million Loan To Improve Road Connectivity And Trade In Nepal

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) today approved a \$300 million loan to improve transport connectivity of the Kakarbhitta–Laukahi road in Nepal to international trade routes, particularly to India and Bangladesh.

“The project road is along the East–West Highway which forms part of the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation corridor,” said ADB Transport Specialist for

South Asia Sin Wai Chong. “Together with other regional cooperation initiatives under the SA-SEC framework, better infrastructure, improved connectivity, and safe road networks will boost border trade and logistics and improve the lives of

rural communities.”

At least 95 kilometers (km) of road from Kakarbhitta to Laukahi will be upgraded from a two-lane to a four-lane dual roadway. It will incorporate climate- and disaster-resilient design features such as higher thermal resistant pavements and bridges with stringent flood-proofing requirement. The project will improve road safety through features such as junctions with traffic signals, footpaths with streetlights and tactile paving surface, overhead pedestrian crossings, road crossings with raised platform, and bus stops equipped with lighting system.

The project will build the capacity of the Department of Roads in climate- and disaster-resilient strategies, road asset management, road safety, and project management and implementation. Community awareness campaigns on road safety, health and hygiene, and human trafficking will also be conducted. This will be complemented with capacity building programs for women and disadvantaged groups to improve their mobility and access to services.

ADB will provide an additional \$750,000 technical assistance grant from its Technical Assistance Special Fund to develop climate change mitigation and adaptation guidelines for road projects, bidding documents, performance indicators, and a user handbook on long-term performance-based maintenance.

### Upcoming Budget Should Take Special Initiatives To Improve The Existing Economic Situation: FNCCI Chairman Chandra Dhakal

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, President of the Federation of Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has said that the upcoming budget brought by the government requires special initiatives to improve the existing economic situation.

Addressing a discussion program of the private sector's contribution to the economy held in Kathmandu, President Dhakal said that for the improvement of the government economy, interest rate stability, restructuring and rescheduling of loans and re-loans should be provided to entrepreneurs.

He said that the Rastra Bank has partially covered the demands of the businessmen in the quarterly review of the monetary policy, but it is not enough to make the market viable and the future monetary policy needs to be more flexible.

He emphasized that the government should plan to bring in more remittances through formal channels. President Dhakal demanded the government to restart the stopped remittance service used by people with low income.

He said that since the external sector is satisfactory, it is possible to come out of the recession immediately, and there is a need to bring tools that can create demand in the market through monetary and financial policies.

He said that there is a possibility of gradual improvement in the economy from the next financial year, and said that it is not possible for the government to promote the private sector for economic transformation. He said that the







government should give opportunities to the private sector in investment areas with comparative advantage and in new areas.

He said that a special program is necessary for the production

and export of mineral products including iron in Nepal.

He said that it is possible to earn about two billion dollars per year only from the gravel and sand accumulated in various rivers.

He said that it is necessary to identify such mines and promote products of comparative advantage by minimizing the environmental impact. President Dhakal said that the industry, trade and construction sectors are negative and the private sector has not been able to work as expected for the past one year. He studied industry,

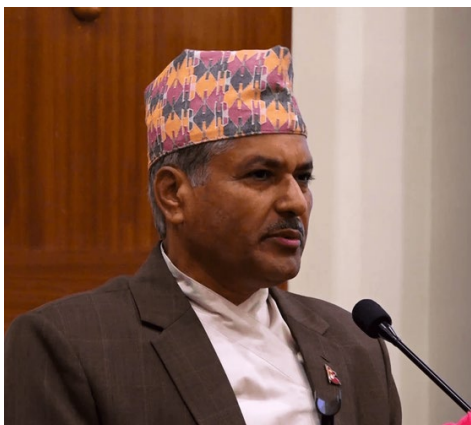
He said that as the revenue has decreased by 16 per cent, it is becoming difficult for the government to meet its current expenses. He said that 600,000 youths have migrated abroad for work in the last 9 months due to the inability of the private sector to provide employment.

He said that the leading role of the private sector is necessary for sustainable economic development in the country. He said that the starting point for economic reform should be the upcoming budget. He said that due to low demand, most businesses in the private sector are operating at less than half capacity. He said that the negative economic growth rate in three quarters is a worrying situation

### NRB Reviews The Monetary Policy

In order to support internal economic activities while maintaining macroeconomic stability, Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) has made the monetary policy somewhat flexible.

Making the third quarter review of its monetary policy for the current fiscal year 2022/23 on Friday, the NRB said that the monetary policy direction has been made somewhat flexible based on the current situation and potential scenario of inflation and foreign exchange reserves.



## BUSINESS BRIEF

Presenting the review of the policy, Executive Director of the NRB, Dr. Prakash Kumar Shrestha, said that while many countries have adopted tight monetary policies and some are holding the stable policy, Nepal has decided to go against the tide to make it flexible.

The NRB has reduced the bank rate by 1 percentage point to 7.5 per cent.

### EU-Nepal Business Forum Shows Business Opportunities In Nepal

The two days first EU-Nepal Business Forum, a platform to promote increased contacts between Nepal and EU business in Kathmandu, draws attention from the large number of business community in Nepal.

Supported by the European Union Delegation to Nepal, the first EU-Nepal Business Forum will conclude today.

Undertaking in collaboration with European Economic Chamber-Nepal (EEC-Nepal), Nepal's Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies is a partner in this effort.

"Great presentations and networking on investment opportunities in Nepal, integrated trade strategy, LDC graduation and sharing of success stories at first day of EU Nepal business forum! Looking forward to tomorrow !," tweeted EU Ambassador to Nepal Nona Deprez.

After attending the program Secretary at Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Supply Madhu Marasini said that the EU-Nepal Business Forum is highly valuable for Nepal in the present context.

"Had a wonderful opportunity to listen to the rich deliberations as well as to chair/moderate the session on Opportunities for Business in Nepal during EU-Nepal Business Forum 2023! Huge untapped opportunities and scope! Thanks to the organizers! @EUAmbNepal @MOICS\_Official," Tweets secretary Marasini.

"This is the first event of its kind to promote business to business contacts between EU and Nepal, and we're confident it will provide new momentum towards expanding our trade and investment relations," said Nona Deprez, EU Ambassador to Nepal before inauguration.

The Forum has brought together over 250 participants from Nepal and over 30 foreign participants, including government officials, EU member states representatives, and trade representatives working in the South Asia region.



# How Pump Storage Hydro Forces Rethinking Hydropower Development



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

The last time I attended a workshop that was truly “paradigm shifting” was the May 1986 Mohonk Mountain Conference. It debunked the “Theory of Himalayan Degradation” which, to crudely summarize, asserted that poor and fecund Nepali farmers cutting trees and deforesting Nepal contributed to flooding in Bangladesh. Not only has Nepal not been denuded bald of all forests by the year 2000 as it predicted: today we have more forest cover than ever in our recent history thanks to innovations like community forestry. Exactly 37 years later, it was my good fortune to visit field sites and attend workshops in Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal regarding Pump Storage Hydro (PSH) with colleagues from there as well as the Australian National University (ANU), and was similarly conceptually challenged.

The principle behind PSH is very simple and it has been used in Europe since a hundred years back: you pump water from a lower water body (a lake or a river) to a pond at a higher altitude when electricity is throwaway cheap during off-peak night time and send the water back to drive a turbine and produce electricity during peak hours when most needed. The difference in peak and off-peak price of electricity is more than able to offset the efficiency loss incurred in pumping water uphill. Conventional hydro development is about building a dam across a river and sending the water to turn a turbine at the toe of the dam or via a tunnel further down the river to take advantage of the bigger height difference (head). PSH in contrast often does not even require damming a river: a sump on the side of a river bank or an existing pond/lake does the trick. One just has to find an appropriate site for a small pond on a nearby hill to collect the water pumped uphill; and the higher the hill site is, the smaller is the pond – and much less the socio-environmental impact – required as power produced is a product of head and water flow, the higher head requiring much less flow to produce the same amount of power.

There is renewed interest in PSH primarily due to the fact that globally the cost of solar photo-voltaic (PV) power has decreased dramatically. In 2010, PV produced electricity cost 40¢/kWh but today the global average is 5¢/kWh, about the same as, or slightly lower than, conventional hydropower. India’s energy think tank TERI esti-

mates that in India the cost can come down to as low as 2.5¢/kWh by 2030 (or half of what hydro will cost!). Given that solar panels have no moving parts, once installed, their maintenance cost compared to conventional hydro is near zero

(requires only washing the panels every now and then of the accumulated dust). US Energy Information Administration estimates that capital “overnight” costs (as if no interest was incurred during construction) per Watt is lowest for solar PV, three times more than that for conventional hydro and six times more for coal with 90% carbon capture. Add climate change concerns, which is forcing economies worldwide to de-carbonize their power systems in favour of renewable energy, and both solar PV as well as hydro (and more specifically PSH) are experiencing a renaissance in increased attention.

There is, however, a major catch for solar PV: though Nepal, like much of tropical semi-arid South Asia is blessed with ample sunlight unlike countries in the northern latitudes, it is available only for some eight hours a day. This means some form of storage is required for the remaining 16 hours. Batteries are expensive and can handle only the requirements of limited number of households or small factories. For grid-level storage, only PSH can currently provide the required large volume of energy stocking. Thus, a program of solar PV expansion has to go in tandem with PSH development as the grid system’s “battery”. Approached this way, solar PV does not displace conventional hydro but rather provides for its more efficient exploitation by using developed and established skills of civil and electro-mechanical engineering in the hydro sector as a powerful complement, thus reducing potential political backlash.

ANU has prepared, based on remote sensing data, a global atlas that identifies over 600 thousand potential sites worldwide, in Nepal alone several thousand. As a research effort undergoing constant improvement, it was felt that some ground-truthing was needed, hence the recent fieldwork and workshops in Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal. The first insights to emerge was that, unlike in Australia which is mostly dry and flat except in its eastern fringes, height availability is not an issue at all in the Himalaya: it comes in any shape and size and numbers desired. This immedi-



ately means two things: first, we can immediately go for the cheapest option of simple penstocks avoiding expensive tunnelling thus generating very cheap peak electricity; and second, the number of potential sites thus balloons towards infinity! Any reservoir or pondage site on a Himalayan river is surrounded by many high hills which should theoretically provide any number of potential upstream PSH ponds. Geology, land tenure and many other screening issues would ultimately filter out many but still leave a significant number to be considered.

The second insight to emerge was the multiple benefits that could be had from small upper ponds that could also provide besides peak electricity: drinking water to hilltop villages, some small-scale irrigation, and – as the local-level public consultations in Bhutan showed – tremendous help in fighting forest fires! It is well known that one big obstacle to hydropower development has been the very negative role of forest departments that are loathe to allow hydropower developers any permission to cut trees. The possibility of being a help to fight forest fires, as well as other local benefits, would mean a much easier buy-in of concerned interested parties than for conventional hydro.

The third and most important insight in the case of the Himalaya is PSH pointing to the possibility of developing existing and planned hydropower projects anew to get more Mega Watts from the same amount of water. The case of Kulekhani PSH identified by the ANU atlas was very instructive. While NEA is planning a lower reservoir at Sisneri and using the existing Kulekhani reservoir as an upper one, the ANU atlas identified another alternative possibility of using the existing reservoir as the lower one and discovered a small 14-27ha pond some 470m above on the western hill near Simbhanjyang that would allow a 265MW PSH with 6 hours of storage time. The challenge this poses is this: ignoring KL-2 and KL-3 downstream for the while, would you use the reservoir water in the conventional hydro fashion to produce 60MW from the powerhouse below the dam or would you rather use the same water to generate 265MW WITHOUT “losing” the water downstream. (In this PSH case, the water

just goes from the lower to the upper reservoir and returns back without being lost to the lower reservoir as is the case in conventional hydro.)

This is a challenge not just for existing Kulekhani HEP but also for other existing and planned hydropower dams. Would you develop the proposed Budhi Gandaki or West Seti multipurpose seasonal storage reservoir project to generate say 600MW at the toe of the dam and lose the water from the reservoir, or would you develop it with PSH in higher mountains surrounding the reservoir generating two or even three times more MWs without losing the water

from the reservoir? The answer is obvious and requires a revamping of all hydropower planning. This applies even more to the over one-hundred Nepali private sector hydro developers: since you already have sunk investments in your existing power plants, would it not be beneficial for you to get much more MWs out of those schemes by developing PSH in surrounding hills above your current dam sites and power houses, all at much, much lower costs than building new equivalent sized conventional hydropower plants?

Although the concept is very attractive, there

are many challenges up ahead, not the least in revamping Nepal government’s hydropower and energy policies to take advantage of this new for Nepal technology. It will also require a reform of the existing buy-back tariffs to give space to off-peak rates. Meanwhile, given how the price of solar PV is plummeting down, it makes a lot of sense to merge PSH with solar PV, installing the panels floating on lakes or in otherwise wasted land around power plants. And given how both India and China are going full steam with solar PV, India government even relaxing many of its rules to promote PSH to balance the solar expansion, Nepali developers can look forward to their own PSH becoming even more valuable for electricity exchange with our neighbours. Nepal will then be exporting not water but its heights, of which it has plenty!



## PRACHANDA'S INDIA VISIT

# One or More Rituals

*Leadership in Nepal and India needs to alter preexisting narratives based on mistrust of one another rather than visiting a ritual.*

By A KESHAB POUDEL

As the visit of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda to India approaches, there are greater doubts on the political and intellectual levels.

The Indian media has been spreading sensational material labeling Nepal as a country that is unfriendly to India and close to China, despite the fact that Indian political leadership has not made any ambiguous or questionable statements. The debate over the visit, which will center on geopolitical issues, has already been initiated by former top bureaucrats, diplomats, and officials.

Members of parliament and the political establishment adopt increasingly anti-Indian stances as a result of communist parties holding the majority in the House of Representatives.

"In the framework of the border, we will not cede even a single inch of our territory, nor do we desire a single inch of our neighbor's territory. This will be stated on the journey to India. In response to a question in the House of Representatives, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda stated that nothing would be done that would jeopardize the national interest and unity of Nepal.

In response to a question from CPN-UML member Raghujii Panta about whether talks about the 1950 Nepal-India Treaty and the protection of Nepal's border and territory would take place during the PM's visit to India, Prime Minister Dahal has reaffirmed that Panchasheel, or the five principles of peaceful coexistence, serve as the foundation for Nepal's foreign policy. According to him, the national interest will be taken into account as Nepal's foreign policy was progressed.

Former prime minister and CPN-UML leader KP Sharma Oli expressed concern about PM Dahal's desire to preserve the national interest and said that his government could not return the Nepalese territory of Kalapani and Limpiyadhura, which had been included in the country's

new map during his time in office.

As foreign minister NP Saud began consulting with past foreign secretaries, foreign ministers, and others from many walks of life, media reports indicated that their ideas were also close to the prime minister and the main opposition leader.

## Indian Anti-Nepal

There is widespread skepticism and suspicion of Nepal due to her relationship with China, following the lead of the Indian media sources. Academics and former bureaucrats from India expressed their serious concern about Nepal's involvement, accusing the Nepalese leadership of aligning itself with China against Indian core interests.



Kanwal Sibal, a former foreign secretary of India who also held the position of deputy head of mission in the Indian embassy in Nepal from 2000 to 2002, accused Nepalese leaders of favoring China in a recent tweeter argument.

"Palace said Nepal was non-aligned between India and China, Ex-FM B. Thapa and present FM Saud said the same thing. Oli issues a new map of Nepal with Kalapani coinciding with China's aggression in Ladakh. I agree on majority of Nepalis value special India ties but not all," tweets Kanwal Sibal. Veteran Indian diplomat Sibal said that Nepal is even more difficult for us than others."



While senior Indian diplomat Sibal criticizes Nepal of failing to assist India, communist leaders in Nepal Oli, Prachanda, Madhav Kumar Nepal, and some other rightists have also expressed a similar opinion.

Some contend that diplomats, such as Sibal in his most recent interview, represent India's bureaucratic leadership's misperceived attitude toward Nepal. Along with Sibal, a large number of ex-diplomats and government representatives from India have been spreading false information about Nepalese in India.

#### Nepalese Anti Indian

Nepalese communist leaders like Pachanda, Oli, Madhav Nepal, Dr. Baburam Bhattara, and their comrades have little respect for the shared culture, regions, and civilization of Nepal and India because they were raised in communist schools where Mao, Lenin, and Stalin were read.

All communist groups emerged, chanting anti-Indian epithets that attacked shared culture, civilization, and religion. The grim reality is that the majority of those advocating against India are graduates of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in India.

The disputed land of Limpuyadhura was never claimed by King Mahendra or his two predecessors, despite accusations from Indian authorities that he was a pioneer of anti-Indian promotion of China. Common ancestries remain the basis for monarchies.

"Retired senior bureaucrats, like Kanwal Sibal, must ensure that their views are appropriate and do not worsen the neighborhood's already problematic ties. Such careless remarks probably make it harder to build deep relationships," tweets Arup Rajouria.

#### Two Nation, One Civilization

Nepal and India, which are separated by a formal border but share the same terrain of the Indian subcontinent, have close religious, cultural, and civilizational ties that run deep inside their respective societies.

India and Nepal are thus politically distinct nations that belong to the same civilization. Nepal and India have very unique and distinct relations because China is Nepal's neighbor and the two nations share a long border.

The policymakers of Independent India have handled Nepal by focusing more on the geopolitical issue that places it in the orbit of China and ignoring the relationship between its culture, religion, and civilization. Some of India's earlier practices not only gave rise to more anti-Indian organizations but also shattered the fundamental tenets of

Nepal's shared civilization.

The results of the previous policies were stated by the Nepalese leadership, their supporters in the public, and the media.

Since there are pragmatists in both India and Nepal working to restore relations, they are pursuing aspects of a common civilization. People like Navita Srikant in India perceive the connections between India and Nepal's cultures and civilizations. "India-Nepal communities exemplify the cultural linkages between the two countries. Despite obstacles, the linked nature of relationships endures," tweets Navita in response to a recent interview with Kanwal Sibal. "India has since 2014 evolved in prioritizing neighborhood first and strengthening relationships with South Asia and South East Asian Countries. I am so glad that the mindset of great difficulties with neighbors and expression as "Nepal is even more difficult for us than others" does not hold water today.

The geopolitical narrative that currently dominates Nepal-India relations is founded on mistrust, misinformation, and suspicion. Pushing deeply ingrained cultural similarities between two nations' populations at the bilateral level could eventually improve tense relations.

Due to their open borders, Indian and Nepalese citizens can travel freely to religious sites without encountering any barriers or hesitations. Thousands of Nepalese



are traveling to Haridwar, Badrnath, and Kedar as the Chardham Tirtha Yatra session gets underway, while thousands of Indians are visiting Pashupati and Mukti Chhetra. Nothing is impossible to have intimate political and state-to-state relations if common people in both countries can achieve it.

Nepal and India share a common civilization and a common interest. As a result, neither Indians nor Nepalis can consider rebelling against India. They must cohabitate.

# European Union Has Recently Launched “Global Gateway”



BY: NONA DEPREZ

Today we are celebrating the adoption of the Schuman Declaration, which, in 1950, marked the reconciliation of the Peoples of Europe and laid the foundations of what would later become the European Union.

“Europe Day” is a celebration of the European Union as a peace project, based on universal values and fully anchored in the rules-based international order, which was created on the ruins of the Second World War.

The European Union has now become one of the largest economies in the world, together with the US and China. It has also become a global political and economic player and a staunch supporter of the multilateral system, with the UN at its core.

Once again, war is raging in Europe, following Russia’s brutal aggression against Ukraine. And yet, the European Union remains engaged with the rest of the world.

That is why the European Union has recently launched “Global Gateway” as a positive EU investment offer to narrow the global investment gap worldwide to bring us closer together.

“Global Gateway” is about

smart, clean and secure investments in quality infrastructure connecting goods, people and services around the world in a sustainable way

Global Gateway is fully aligned with the UN’s Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the Paris Agreement, and will create strong, sus-

tainable links –and not dependencies- between Europe and the world.

This year, we also celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

That is why, on “Europe Day”, the European Union wants to reiterate its support to Multilateralism and the three pillars of the United Nations (Human rights, Peace & Security and Development) with a focus on trade and business as a driver of sustainable development.

That is the reason why, this week, labelled “Nepal-Europe Week”, the EU Delegation also organized a “Business Forum” yesterday and today and will organise a “Business & Human Rights” roundtable, to coincide with the launch of Nepal “Business & Human Rights National Action Plan”, tomorrow and a lecture on the “Decent Work Agenda”, on Friday.

Throughout Nepal-Europe Week, we would like to raise awareness about what the European Union does to assist Nepal in achieving a green, resilient and inclusive development, and in meeting its target for graduating from LDC status by 2026.

On this special day for the European Union, we pledge to further strengthen our relations so that the EU and Nepal may continue to grow stronger together.

*Nona Deprez is the ambassador of European Union to Nepal. Excerpt of the statement delivered at EUROPE DAY RECEPTION in Kathmandu on 9 May 2023.*





# Israel And Nepal Are Two Small Nations With Unique Cultural And Natural Assets



BY: HANAN GODER-GOLDBERGER

It is a great honor to be here to mark the Diamond Jubilee of 75th Independence Day of the state of Israel. Indolence and sovereignty are dear to any nation. In our case it took us 2000 years to obtain it again. Israel is proud of what we have achieved during this period. We are yet to achieve another thing which is the peace with rest of our neighbors and I hope this year will mark a breakthrough in this field. It is important for it is important for our neighbors.

Nepal and Israel have established diplomatic relations in 1960. This courageous step was taken by the Nepali government when taking such action was not popular, especially in this part of the world. This courageous step will never be forgotten!

During these more than six decades of diplomatic relations we build strong ties in agriculture, in health, in education, and in other various fields of cooperation. 7000 Israelis visited Nepal last year and the numbers are increasing every year. Parallel to that, thousands of Nepalese are working in Israel at the moment. I know that both, Nepalese staying in Israel and Israelis visiting Nepal are impressed by the friendship, sympathy and popularity Nepal has in Israel and Israel has in Nepal.

Why is that so? We are both small nations in a fast changing surrounding and we both try to maintain our identity. This is the reason that, in spite of the long geographic distance, we have such strong bridges between our two nations, governments and people.

I know that together we are going to further strengthen in the future.

Israel and Nepal are two small nations that have unique cultural and natural assets, and more than that the asset of friendly people. In Israel, it is the dessert and the

golden coast of the Mediterranean. In Nepal it is the amazing Himalayas and the beautiful plains of the Terray. Let us use this year and have a long distance friendly handshake from the two extremes on our planet: From the highest point to the lowest point, from 8 kilometers high Mount Sagarmata down to below ocean level of the Dead Sea – Mrita Sagar.

Hanan Goder-

Goldberger is the Israel's Ambassador to Nepal. Excerpt of his statement delivered at the reception hosted to mark 75th Independence Day of State of Israel



## BANGLADESH AGREEMENT

# Switching Power

*The announcement by Bangladesh that it will import 40 MW of power from Nepal ushers in a new era of bilateral energy trade between the two nations.*

By A CORRESPONDENT

A significant benefit for secretary Ghimire is the attendance of Kul Man Ghising, Managing Director of the Nepal Electricity Authority. In a same vein, he has a strong staff from both his ministry and NEA.

Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, secretary of energy, water resources, and irrigation, considered the signing of the electricity agreement between Nepal and Bangladesh a momentous occasion. He has been participating in negotiations with Bangladesh regarding regional electric trade ever since he started working in the ministry as a carrier.

The first agreement for this one was set down by secretary Ghimire back when he was appointed secretary. The moment he signed the contract was historic for him. Every bureaucrat yearned for such a momentous occasion.

Even though the amount of electricity is relatively tiny (up to 40 MW) and insignificant, if this deal is implemented with India's backing, it will have a historic impact on the bilateral relations.

Soft-spoken but extremely intelligent and skilled Secretary Ghimire is a government official who knows how to close deals. With India, Nepal has also entered into a number of electricity trading agreements.

A significant benefit for secretary Ghimire is the attendance of Kul Man Ghising, Managing Director of the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA). In a same vein, he has a strong

staff from both his ministry and NEA.

Finding a market for 40 MW

Bangladesh, ever since he arrived in Dhaka as an ambassador.

In a meeting of the joint di-



is a joyous occasion for MD Ghising, who has been working to boost the volume of electricity exported to nearby nations. The NEA's grid will have over 1000 MW of electricity from the upcoming monsoon session, and it will quadruple the following year.

The role that the Nepalese ambassador to Bangladesh, Ghanshyam Bhandari, has played in supporting the Nepalese team is crucial, despite the fact that he has kept a low profile. Bhandari has pushed for this accord in all official meetings, including his meeting with the prime minister of

rectorate committee between the energy secretaries of Nepal and Bangladesh, which was held in Bangladesh, the two countries decided to import 40 megawatts of electricity from Nepal utilizing the Indian transmission line. As a result of this agreement, Nepal and Bangladesh have decided to work together to begin trading electricity during the upcoming wet season, which runs from June to November.

This agreement was signed after the completion of 5th meeting of Joint Steering Committee between the Energy Secretary of Nepal and





Bangladesh. In the Nepal-Bangladesh Energy Secretary-level meeting held on Monday and Tuesday (15-16 May), it was also decided to call a tripartite meeting to persuade India to use the transmission line of India.

For this tripartite power sells agreement signed between NEA, NVVN-India and Bangladesh Power Development Board as soon as possible.

In the same meeting, it was decided that there will be joint investment of Nepal and Bangladesh in Sunkoshi-3 hydropower project and the agreement letter will be signed within 6 months. The meeting also reviewed the progress made since the 4th meeting & decided to intensify efforts to materialize energy cooperation between NPL and BGD.

According to the spokesperson of the Ministry of Energy, Madhu Prasad Vetwal, a power purchase agreement between Nepal Electricity Authority and Bangladesh Power Development Board also signed. According to Bhetuwal, India's NVVN and Bangladesh Power Development Board will sign an agreement as soon as possible to export up to 40 megawatts of electricity produced in Nepal to Bangladesh.

Dinesh Kumar Ghimire, secretary of the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, said that Nepal will first provide 40–50 MW of electricity to Bangladesh, and supply will rise further after a major power plant is completed.

The Government of India

has appointed NVVN as the nodal organization for energy exchange with Bangladesh, Nepal, and other nations. NVVN currently handles all electricity import-export transactions between Nepal and India. The Indian side's consent is also necessary for the agreement to be put into effect. However, at the discussion, it was also discussed



whether to build a second, dedicated transmission line between Bangladesh and Nepal.

Nepal wants to move forward with trilateral talks with Bangladesh and India in an effort to foster Indian agreement. A tripartite agreement between Nepal, India, and Bangladesh is required, and it was decided

at the seventh meeting of the Nepal-India Energy Secretary-level Joint Steering Committee held in India on 18 February 2023, that this will be discussed at a separate meeting the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs will hold in three months. India, meanwhile, has not yet requested such a meeting.

It was also decided to hold a tripartite meeting to convince India to utilize the transmission line of India during the Nepal-Bangladesh Energy Secretary-level conference that was held on Monday and Tuesday.

The Sunkoshi-3 hydropower project will receive joint funding from Nepal and Bangladesh, and the

joint venture agreement will be signed within six months between NPL and BPD.

Ghimire, who has spent enormous hours to make deal with India and Bangladesh to export Nepal's electricity, also proves that Nepal has a good team of bureaucrats of energy trade and negotiators to make the deal.

## Decade-Long Experience In Implementing The LAPAs



BY: BATU UPRETY

Cabinet approval of the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) in September 2010, Climate Change Policy in February 2011 and National Framework on Local Adaptation Plan for Action (LAPA) in November 2011 opened avenues to implement NAPA-prioritised adaptation actions in Nepal. The Nepal Climate Change Support Programme (NCCSP) - the first project for NAPA implementation - was formulated to implement people-centric adaptation actions and to build adaptive capacity of the most climate vulnerable communities in 14 districts of West Nepal with the grant assistance from UK Department for International Development (DfID), European Union and the Government of Cyprus. This project focussed to prepare and implement LAPAs and provided adaptation services to at least 50 percent of women of the total beneficiaries. LAPAs were prepared and implemented for about 100 local bodies with people's participation. Experience and learning of this five-year 'on-budget and on-treasury' Project encouraged both the Governments of Nepal and UK to implement its second phase in 42 municipalities of 3 Provinces - Karnali, Sudurpashchim, and Lumbini Provinces. After a decade of experience in implementing 'on-budget and on-treasury' modality, it sounds appropriate to share reasons for the adoption of this approach while finalising NCCSP formulation process in 2012.

In 2008, the Government of Nepal (GoN) received US\$ 0.2 million from Least Developed Country (LDC) Fund (each LDC received equal amount from LDCF) to prepare NAPA through UNDP - the GEF Implementing Agency (IA). GoN requested UNDP to function as the GEF IA for this project. GoN also received US\$ 0.885 million from DfID and US\$ 0.2 million from the Government of Denmark to prepare NAPA and implement other climate change activities. These funds were channelled through UNDP. 'Unwanted behavior' (like a fund giver) of the UNDP officials engaged in supporting for NAPA preparation called for exploring solutions to internalise adaptation actions in Nepal's development planning. This led to the

adoption of 'on-budget and on-treasury' modality for NCCSP implementation. This was 1800 turn on fund channelling from development partners on climate change adaptation. Development partners provided fund directly to the Government, and GoN allocated and disbursed part of the fund to the 'service providers' for technical services. During 2013-2017 period, UNDP provided services to implement NCCSP phase I and in 2019-2023, Matt MacDonald is providing technical support by following the same modality - 'on-budget and on-treasury'. Continuation of this modality informs that it has worked well, internalised climate change adaptation into government planning process, enhanced government 'ownership' and has slowly established 'proponent-driven' approach in implementing climate change programmes and projects.



On 16 May 2023, the Ministry of Forests and Environment uploaded a notice that calls for the submission of a concept note of a Project to utilize GEF 8/LDCF allocation for Nepal. The notice clearly mentioned that Project should be executed through 'on-budget, on-treasury' funding modality.

The NCCSP-I laid the foundation to prepare and implement LAPAs to help climate vulnerable communities



to adapt to and build resilience to climate change impacts and integrate adaptation options into local planning processes through orientation, exposure, information sharing and building individual and institutional capacities. In a workshop, information shared by the Regional Climate Coordinator on 6 April 2023 at Birendranagar, Surkhet informs support of the NCCSP-2 in 42 municipalities to mainstream climate resilience in the long-term development planning, improve and manage climate finance by municipalities in a transparent manner, promote resilient and inclusive infrastructure, and provide services effectively targeting to nearly 0.5 million climate vulnerable communities. This Project aims, inter alia, to strengthen capacity to plan, design, implement and sustain climate investments at different levels, advance climate resilient plans and infrastructure in water, agriculture, and forestry sectors for implementation by municipalities, support to municipalities to manage climate finance, and generate and disseminate knowledge and learning for evidence-based planning and decision-making.

It seems that the Project has focussed its activities in developing LAPAs, preparing climate profiles and hazard atlas, generating science-based information, promoting construction, monitoring & supervision, and scaling-up its success activities in Palikas to advance climate smart agriculture linked with livelihoods, infrastructure for disaster management such as flood & landslide control, and slope stabilisation, and support in generating clean energy & developing watershed management plan etc. Mohan Dev Joshi, then Province Secretary at the Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forests and Environment, Karnali Province specifically mentioned drinking water supply in drought area - the Retcha of Surkhet with support from NCCSP, and Project success lies in its bottom-up planning. In a nutshell, mainstreaming of climate change adaptation through LAPA framework into local periodic plans and programmes would contribute to internalise and institutionalise adaptation planning and implementation to address the needs of the climate vulnerable communities.

Nepal has pioneered to preparing and implementing LAPAs and institutionalising 'on-budget' and 'on-treasury' modality. Several projects have prepared LAPAs, and few projects have implemented them. Knowledge and learning from the LAPAs implementation Project offer con-

vincing results for replication and scaling-up by selecting location-specific adaptation options, knowing performance of adaptation measures and technologies, and further understanding the possibilities to build adaptive capacity. It urges to prepare and implement practical and easy-to-implement climate resilient and gender-responsive LAPAs for municipalities by 2030 as targeted in the Second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). LAPA preparation and implementation in all 753 Local levels would greatly contribute to minimise adverse impacts of climate change on human beings and natural resources. The GWP Nepal/JVS support in preparing gender responsive LAPAs for Kaligandaki and Chhatrakot Rural Municipalities would also offer learnings for future actions. Depending upon the climate vulnerabilities of the area, Nepal should sufficiently promote nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based adaptation interventions.

I had the opportunity to see local people's prioritised two adaptation sites - road-induced unstable slopes stabilisation, and water source protection works - in Dailekh in the first week of April this year. Engagement of local people in planning, implementing, and managing adaptation interventions provides hope for reducing climate impacts on local people and natural resources. Existing adaptation works also inform to concentrate in generating science-based information to confidently prove that existing challenges and vulnerabilities are due to climate change.



Such information would greatly contribute to develop realistic funding proposal to further implement site-specific adaptation interventions.

Being involved in preparing NAPA, Climate Change Policy and LAPA framework during 2008-2011, and in conceptualising NCCSP to implement NAPA prioritised adaptation options, progress made in NCCSP-1 and II offers hopes to: (i) building adaptive capacity of the climate vulnerable communities and making natural resources resilient; (ii) orienting and re-orienting adaptation and non-adaptation communities for planning and implementation; (iii) generating, documenting and sharing knowledge, experiences and learning; (iv) institutionalizing 'ownership'; and (v) accelerating scaling-out and scaling-up adaptation actions in Nepal's climate vulnerable areas.

*Former Joint-Secretary (Tech) and Chief of Climate Change Management Division, then Ministry of Environment, upretybk@gmail.com*

## NIJGADH AIRPORT Contrary To All Conventions

*After a year, none of Nepal's two brand-new international airports, Pokhara International Airport (PIA) or Gautam Buddha International Airport (GBIA), has begun operations. It is confusing that the government wants to build the Nijgadh International Airport while ignoring issues with law, commerce, and the environment. Despite a severe economic crisis in Nepal, where revenue has decreased by 37%, the coalition government under Pushpa Kamal Dahal has declared intentions to build the airport. People are questioning the integrity of the top officials in the government, including the opposition party, in the wake of the current fake Bhutanese refugee controversy. Whose interests are served by the government's announcement that another white elephant will be added at the price of 2.4 million crucial natural forests and habitats for endangered Asiatic elephants?*

By A KESHAB POUDEL

One of the primary advocates for the construction of Nijgadh International Airport, Madhah Kumar Nepal, has declared that the decision to construct GBIA and PIA as two separate international airports was a mistake.

The idea to build Pokhara Airport was floated during his time as prime minister, and his government wrote to Chinese Exim Bank requesting a loan of more than Rs. 20 billion.

The airport, which is claimed

to be technically inappropriate for even operation of small aircraft due to closeness of mountains, is now open without any international flights after spending more than Rs. 40 billion, including Rs. 20 billion loan from Exim Bank of China.

The international airport was built, but the former prime minister of Nepal admitted that this was a mistake. GBIA is technically feasible and has no doubts about its position in comparison to Pokhara. The failure of

political leaders like Nepal to persuade India that they will not hurt Indian interests prevents the GBIA from operating at full capacity.

As soon as he arrives in India for an official visit, Nepal's communist leader, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, a crucial member of the current coalition government, will be able to secure the new air route, ensuring the viability of the GBIA project.

If one believes his most recent comments, Nepal has no desire





to manage these two international airports. His focus is on a new airport that will cost billions of rupees only to claim land and sell timber.

Along with the Communist leaders of all groups, Madhesh-based parties, which identify as the rescuer of Madhesh and Madheshi, support the airport that will obliterate their territory and their people's assets. Both the populist Rastriya Swatantra Party and the Rastriya Prajatantra Party have remained silent.

It appears that all political groups, from the far left to the far right, agree on Nijagadh, which would likely destroy Nepal's priceless natural resources and plunge Nepal into economic ruin.

#### Prachanda's Interest

One of the controversial and environmentally sensitive massive Nijagadh International Airports will be built, according to the government of Maoist leader Prachanda, whose administration is undergoing severe financial crises. The two international airports, Pokhara International Airport and Gautam Buddha International Airport in Bhairwa, have not yet been put

into operation by the government.

The administration announced its determination to proceed with the building of Nijagadh International Airport in Bara through the annual program that was presented in the joint sitting of the House.

In response to a petition filed by senior advocate and renowned environmental lawyer Prakash Mani Sharma, the Supreme Court's full bench issued an order directing the government not to clear the trees for the airport's construction. A young environmental attorney named Sanjaya Adhikari has been keenly following the case.

#### Verdict Of The Court

The Supreme Court's complete bench annulled all plans to build the proposed Nijagadh airport on May 26, 2022, and ruled that if the government still wants to construct the international airport, it must choose a different location. The Supreme Court had issued an interim order to halt all works linked to cutting Nijagadh woods for airport development in response to two petitions.

With the release of a formal

decision, the protracted discussion and legal battle over whether to build the Nijagadh International Airport has come to an end.

The Supreme Court made it clear in a 3-2 decision that building an airport at the expense of extremely valuable natural forests is unacceptable. Even slight differences in the judgments rendered by the two judges included strong requirements for little environmental harm.

"This verdict signifies the urgency of ensuring environment conservation and protecting biodiversity during infrastructure development and analyses alternatives to make the development environment-friendly and sustainable," argues environmentalist Batu Uprety.

#### Active Lobbyists

Despite the court's strong direction, proponents of the construction of a multibillion dollar mega international airport at Nijagadh, including political figures, land brokers, and members of the small business community, have been working to claim that the minority judgment still leaves that option open.



“The Supreme Court’s decision has put an end to Nijgadh Airport’s construction. In each decision, the majority judgment of the judges is taken into account. The president is clearly within the law, according to former judge Gauri Bahadur Karki. Even two of the minority of judges have stated that it is wrong to harm a natural forest.

All former government judgments on the construction of a massive international airport in the Southern Terai were reversed by the Supreme Court in a 3-2 decision.

The court announced the complete text of the decision on the Nijgadh International Airport on May, 2022. The decision was rendered by an expanded full bench that included justices Hari Krishna Karki, Bishowambhar Prasad Shrestha, Ishwar Prasad Khatiwada, Prakash Man Singh Raut, and Manoj Sharma. After the hearing procedure was finished, the preliminary ruling was released on May 26.

Shrestha, Khatiwada, and Raut have instructed the government to develop the airport while carrying out an appropriate environmental impact assessment that ensures the environmental damage is low.

The Nijgadh woodland lands should not be used for building, according to the justices. “While it is natural for any development activities to cause environmental degradation,

every possible attempt must be made to find alternatives to minimize such degradation,” the ruling states.

“Nijgadh is the last remaining patch of Charkose Jhadi in the Eastern Nepal, a home to protected sati sal trees (some of which are nearly 400 years old), around 500 species of birds, 37 mammals, 13 reptiles/amphibians and 8 species of fishes (ICIMOD, 2019). IUCN listed this area as an ‘environmentally sensitive zone’ in

National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1973. Seven animals are under Annex-I of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), meaning they are internationally considered endangered. Nijgadh is also home to 22 endangered plants, including sati sal trees.”

Why it impossible

Due to the airport’s proximity to the Sirsiya and Lal Bakaiya rivers, building it would have resulted in the flooding of vast tracts of land, escalating the floods. Technically, for an airplane to land at this airport, it must descend from Patana, India, which is very close to the Indian border.

Given its proximity to several important airports in India, including the Indian Air Force Base, Nijgadh Airport is not only physically unsuitable but also hazardous to the environment. Additionally, it is not profitable. The only reason the current crop of politicians are pressing on its construction is so that a small number of land brokers, lumber barons, and commission agents may profit financially, is nevertheless.

At a time when the govern-



1994,” writes Roshani Giri, a lawyer in her article.

“Among these species, 10 animals and birds are protected under IUCN red lists as well as Annex-I of

ment is unable to allocate the adequate budget to Nepal Army to timely completely the Fast Track construction, which has already delayed for five years, the announcement of mega pro-





ject like Nijadh has no justification. For the construction of fast track, there need to allocation of over 100 billion rupees annually, the government is allocating merely Rs.20 billion.

“Politicians want to make money selling 2.4 million trees. This will pay huge money,” said Sharma. According to officials, the lumber’s market worth of approximately Rs. 85 billion will cover half of the cost of construction.

Senior advocate Sharma warned that building such a large airport will financially devastate Nepal, similar to recent events in Sri Lanka. “Political leadership has demonstrated that they are the destroyers of nature by announcing the construction. We shall use the law to our advantage.

However, the agenda has been advanced by the current ruling party, which is supported by Madhav Kumar Nepal, a former prime minister, and other communist parties.

The administration led by Prime Minister Prachanda announced plans to develop the airport in defiance of the court decision, giving priority to the multi-billion dollar project that is close to Indian aerospace and Indian government consent is most important

for the operation of the airport like GBIA.

The government of Prachanda, in accordance with CPN-Unified Socialist leader Madhav Kumar Nepal, decided to move forward with the construction of Nijgad International Airport despite growing calls for the opening of corruption-related files involving the Lalitanibas Land Scandal, Maoist Cantonment issues, and others.

The development of Nijgad International Airport has slowed down as a result of the apex court’s directive not to cut down millions of priceless trees to build the airport and to look for other land.

The Maoist-led coalition government passed policies and programs for the upcoming fiscal year 2080–81 without taking into account Nepal’s financial status, the inactivi-





ty of two international airports, or the worries of domestic and international environmental groups.

The forest sections of Nijgadh contain uncommon botanical flora and are located right next to Parsa National Park, which is home to Asiatic elephants. President Ramchandra Poudel also stated that the development of the regional airport will be considered and that the construction work will move forward, making this the last forest that is technically unfit. To ensure the safety of air services, he said that safety regulations will be strictly upheld.

Additionally, he stated that an improvement would be made to the domestic and international airport terminal building. He claimed that the finished airport would be fully utilized.

“The Nijgadh airport is a disastrous dream to conceive of in a conscious mind. We cannot afford such an offense against the already depleting biodiversity. Out of the 20 targets set for 2020 under Aichi Biodiversity Targets (under CBD) in 2010, including the target to halve the loss of natural habitats, including forests, we failed to achieve even one of them, which is alarming. We are now eyeing similar targets for 2050. Achieving these

targets depends on the choice we make—the habitats of other species or developmental projects regardless of the costs,” writes Roshani Giri the litigating lawyers’ team for the Nijgadh Airport case.

“It is only sensible we take a step back and understand that once



this disastrous project is realized, there is no going back. The forest will disappear. Its biodiversity will perish, and there will be consequences for us as well. The ethical question of Nijgadh

again brings us at the cross-road of whether all development should essentially be ‘us against the rest’, and whether humans should be so inconsiderate that we give up on the survival of the rest of the species just to make our lives better.”

“THE DENSE FOREST OF NIJGADH, the proposed site for a massive international airport which is envisaged as an airline hub, is at the center of the environment-development equation debate in Nepal. While environmentalists argue that the chopping of 2.4 million trees constitutes an environmental disaster with serious repercussions, development advocates in favor of the project highlighting the economic benefits that come with the new airport. All things considered, an international airport at the dense forest of Nijgadh is an environmental disaster,” writes Giri.

As Prime Minister Prachanda is paying his official visit to India, he should focus his strategy to open new air route to Bhairawa. Instead of doing all these, he has pushed the con-

struction agenda despite all court decisions and environmentalists’ concerns. In the words of rising young environmental lawyer, Sanjaya Adhikari the battle is not over yet.



# Australians Love Nepal



BY: TIM WATTS, MP

I am humbled to be here today, as Assistant Minister, on behalf of Australia and all Australians, to oversee the return of this tunda.

In 1975, thieves took it, illegally removed it. A collector acquired it, treasured it. When he died, he donated it. It sat in an Australian art gallery, which exhibited it, honoured it. People came to see it, were moved by its elegance and craft. But it didn't belong there either – that wasn't its home. One day, someone recognised it, told the gallery.

The Art Gallery of New South Wales began the hard work of confirming through research and painstaking evidence that this tunda was the one illegally taken from Ratneshwar temple.

And when that fact was irrefutably established, there was only one logical, pure and right course of action. Thanks to our art gallery friends, I am proud to be able to witness the return this precious item of your living culture – this sacred yakshi – to Nepal, and to all Nepali people.

It's back. It's home. It never should have left. Today is a day of celebration. This is a noble and significant gesture by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, deserving of praise. Today, we have shown ourselves to be absolutely committed to the highest standards of ethical practice and international obligations. That is what the Australian people expect of us, and what the world expects of Australia.

I recognise the leadership of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, one of Australia's foremost cultural institutions, in setting an example for cultural institutions everywhere. Today, we live in a world where – happily – the fences separating us no longer seem so tall, nor the distances between us so daunting. So, it's my hope that today is not the end of the story, but the beginning of a new one. An opportunity to deepen collaboration between our cultural institutions in Australia and Nepal.

Today is a day of celebration because it is clear that

the Australia-Nepal relationship is flourishing.

Our ties have never been deeper nor stronger. Because it's our people who have been at the heart of these ties. Like Nepal, Australia is a multicultural country. We're home to one of the earth's oldest continuing cultures, and our people speak over 300 languages. When Australians look out to the world, we see ourselves reflected in it. See Australia today and you'll see Nepal. You'll see over 50,000 Nepali students enrolled in our schools and universities.

You'll see our Nepali-Australian communities are some of our fastest growing, with over 130,000 people of Nepali ancestry living in Australia already. You'll see that Momo Fest, in my hometown of Melbourne, is a beloved culinary fixture – and certainly one of my family's favourites!

Australians love Nepal – the tens of thousands of Aussie tourists who travel here every year make that plain.

Ours is a relationship that is growing significantly, and deserves significant attention. We're pleased we've been able to work with Nepal on climate change, disaster preparedness, and good governance.

And we're always interested in new initiatives, like the possible introduction of direct flights between Australia and Nepal.

We're bringing our two countries closer and connecting our peoples.

Today is a day of celebration because with the return of this tunda, we celebrate the ties

between Australia and Nepal.

We celebrate here. And in Australia, they are also celebrating.

We create karma, I'm told, through our words and our deeds. Today, we have made a wrong a right. Turned sadness to a joy. We have returned a 700-year-old goddess to her home. We can only hope to receive 700 more years of her blessings.

*Tim Watts, MP is the Australia's Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs. Excerpts of his speech delivered at the program in Patan Museum in a ceremony to handover a 13th century tunda of the Ratneshwar Temple at Sulima Square, Patan.*



# Ratneshwar Tunala Repatriation



Namaste! My name is Michael Brand and I am the director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales in the Australian city of Sydney. I feel very honoured to be here in Patan today, alongside art professionals and government representatives from both Nepal and Australia. I am also very proud to be involved in the return of a magnificent work of Nepali art to its original home here in Patan, in the beautiful Kathmandu Valley.

The Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney is honoured to have worked with the Australian Government in developing this moment of celebration. I thank Australia's Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs for recognising the importance of the Art Gallery's determination to ensure this significant work of art returns to where it should be, and to whom it belongs – the people of Nepal.

The Art Gallery of New South Wales recognises of the power and responsibility of leadership in the world of culture – in the accountability of our decisions to our artists, to our citizens and to the global arts community. As we grow in our understanding of the past, we are privileged to live in a more connected world, where collaboration is inherent in our work and in our relationships with both our professional colleagues and the many diaspora communities thriving in Australia. These connections inform our research and the understanding of the art of which we have assumed custodianship.

This beautifully carved 13th-century tunala, or wooden strut, was acquired by the Art Gallery in Sydney many years after it originally left Nepal. With the assistance of international colleagues, and through our own research, we have come to have a more complete understanding of its provenance. We now know the tunala, one of 16 similar struts that were integral to the architecture of Patan's Ratneshwar Temple, was illegally removed in 1975. This particular tunala depicts a yakshi, or tree goddess, with lush foliage above her head. It was through photographs of Ratneshwar

Temple taken by the American anthropologist and archaeologist Mary Shepherd Slusser in 1969 that we came to identify the original home of the architectural element that ended up in Sydney.

I first visited Nepal with my older brother when I was just 15 years old. During this brief visit I met the architectural conservator John Sanday who was then leading restoration work on the Hanuman Dhoka in Kathmandu's Darbar Square. This experience made a huge impression on me. Two years later, when I was 17 years old, I returned to Nepal by myself for almost a month, revisiting the sacred sites of the Kathmandu Valley and trekking from Pokhara up towards Annapurna. These two trips changed my life, and ultimately led to me studying the art of South Asia before becoming a curator, and then an art museum director. And from that very first trip I gained an understanding of the importance of architectural conservation.

Now, so many years later, the repatriation of this beautiful carving made for the Ratneshwar Temple in the

13th century can be seen as a manifestation of the friendship between the Art Gallery of New South Wales and our Nepali archaeologists and museum colleagues, and a representation of the deep friendship between the peoples of Australia and Nepal.

Thank you for welcoming me back to Nepal. Your amazing country has always had a special place in my heart. I will never forget the friendship and collegiality I have experienced here in Kathmandu over the past couple of days. I hope I can return again before too long. Jai Nepal!

*Michael Brand is the Director of the Art Gallery New South Wales, Australia. Excerpts of his statement delivered during an event organised at Patan Museum to handover a 13th century tunda of the Ratneshwar Temple at Sulima Square, Patan.*





# Norway And Nepal Are Long-standing Partners



BY: TORUN DRAMDAL

It is a great pleasure to welcome all of you to this celebration of the Norwegian Constitution Day and the 50th anniversary of formal diplomatic relations between Norway and Nepal. This evening, we do have a lot to celebrate.

Back home people take to the streets on the 17th of May. Children participate in parades and wave flags. The 17th of May is a celebration of our Constitution, of freedom – as a nation and as individuals. It is a celebration of the privilege of living in a peaceful society and of the values upon which our country is founded.

The values underpinning the Norwegian Constitution are also the values underpinning the Constitution of Nepal: Democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

We sometimes take for granted our ability to speak out against our own governments, our freedom to move freely about our own countries or our freedom to form political parties – rights that our constitutions grant us both in Norway and in Nepal. Rights that people in some countries have never known.

Norway and Nepal are long-standing partners. Our partnership started even before we established formal diplomatic relations in 1973. We work together in renewable energy, climate change and food security, in education and good governance. With gender equality and human rights as cross-cutting priorities.

We are proud of our long history of cooperation,

which has developed over time in line with changing needs. Our Minister of International Development, Anne Beathe Tinnvold, visited Kathmandu last week. Our continued bilateral partnership was confirmed at ministerial level.

This is a day to celebrate our rights and our constitutions. Yet, we cannot ignore the violation of the rights of others. More than a year has passed since Russia's attack on Ukraine.

This is an assault on a country, on a population, causing immense suffering, and it is also an assault on the

rule-based international order – and an attack on democracy and human rights.

As relatively small countries, Norway and Nepal have common interests in a robust multilateral system. We stand up for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, emphasizing the territorial integrity and political independence of all states.

After fifty years of close relations and adaptation to changing times and conditions, there is a lot to

expand on for the next fifty. Congratulations to the people of Nepal and to the people of Norway, for 50 years of friendship.

Now I would like to propose a toast for Norway – Nepali relations, and for a future prosperous and successful Nepal.

*Torun Dramdal (Ms) is the ambassador of Norway to Nepal. Excerpts of the statement delivered at National Day of Norway in Kathmandu.*



# Putting Foot Down



BY: HEMANT ARJYAL

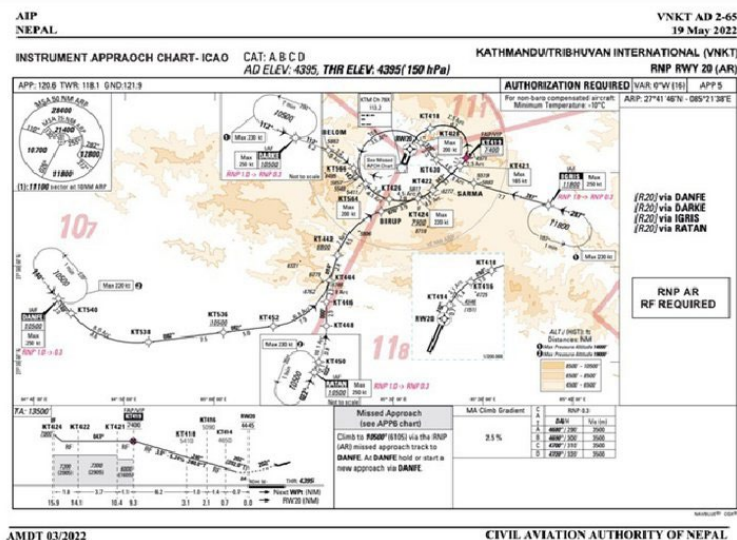
Despite being a clear day landings on the afternoon of May 10 became difficult because of strong tailwinds that were beyond most jets safe operational limit. Some airlines opted to hold long, while others chose to divert sooner. One, wide body, making an inordinately long holding loop was going low on fuel and intended to divert after its 13th or so rounds. It was able to land as the winds calmed a bit. Generally, TIA tends to have calm to mild winds around the year. The situation created difficulty as, first, the wind was strong (over 20 knots) and worse, it blew in the direction (210°) close to TIA's 200°/020° runway orientation. As per, a retired compatriot captain, 10kts tailwind is the limit for landing a wide body.

It is ideal, for any type of aircraft, big or small, to land and take-off against the wind. But that is rarely possible and even more difficult for an airport with a single runway. Airports with two intersecting runways can cope better. Chicago's O'Hare has eight runways, laid in two sets of three parallel runways and two more on top of that. It is just bewildering to imagine how Chicago runs while it is difficult managing a few hours of strong wind here?

Even take-off with a tailwind is not good either, as it needs more runway length to attain higher ground speed before lifting off. Tailwind at cruising altitude is loved as it helps them to arrive at their destination faster, saving fuel and time. For example, RA433 to Narita may take as short as six hours, while the return flight may be close to nine hours. All this depends on the season of the year and how the high-altitude jet stream blows. As such, long-haul flights often try to make the best use of weather/wind information before finalizing their flight plan. It is much simple to do so

over oceanic regions than over landmass, simply because no country owns the oceanic airspace.

Strong tailwind is taken with serious caution because it increases the ground speed, something this is not desirable while landing. Besides, it also increases the rate of descent, which is, again, not good during the approach phase. And may also result in missing runway touchdown marks, making aircraft eat more runway. The length of the runway up front is a precious commodity and has to be used wisely. A 20kts tailwind, like that day, would make landing that much faster compared to that in a calm environment and would result in taking longer to stop. Worse, it can even



result in a runway overrun.

Landing with a tailwind and on a wet runway is the worst possible combination because of reduced runway friction. In a text bookcase, Air India Express (IX812/B737/2010) landed in a similar situation at the Kozhikode airport ending with 158 fatalities. Kozhikode airport is on



a precarious tabletop location with a vertical drop of over 200ft all around. TIA is not as bad, but it also has a drop on the northern side as the terrain drops to Bagmati. Imagine a widebody, with a blotched landing, ending there.

One might wonder why the flights were not told to land from the northern end (20) that day? That would have been the right thing to do. Presently, most jets prefer '02' for landing and '20' for take-offs. But it was normal for jets to land from '20' at times, TIA had a shorter runway. Not just DC9s but even larger DC8s of Thai landed that way. It was only after the runway extension and establishment of VOR/DME that made '02' all too dominating. Thereafter, the straight-in approach became the norm, with landings from '20' got eclipsed. Undisputedly, straight in '02' landing is

as understood no airline has ever sought authorization, thus far, to do that.

Airlines are showing extreme apathy toward using '20' for landings even when that would have been the right thing to do. As TIA has very limited options, being stubbornly stuck to one particular landing and take-off pattern does not bode well for any airline and it is not good for TIA either.

On the other side, limited option airports like TIA have to be a little more unbending in imposing their instructions minding the interests of all airlines. And in this regard, keeping TIA at its best performance level should



much simpler and it does not require making a full semicircle turn (180°) while descending in a narrow area as at '20'.

TIA also offers a satellite-based or more reliable RNP-AR approach for landings. But here again '02' is seems to have an overpowering edge over '20'. Runway '20' was designed only in 2021 while it was nine years earlier for '02'. These procedures are said to provide a comfortable glide slope of 2.8° against 5.3° for VOR, and a navigation accuracy of 0.3 nautical mile. Just wondering if any airline has ever made a runway '20' RNP-AR landing approach since it became effective a year ago? I think not,

be the sole objective. And airlines should be told, in no uncertain terms, to use '20' take-off and even instruct to go for '20' RNP-AR for landing when it suits TIA's operation. Just tell them to divert away, not clutter the narrow holding space, otherwise. While CAAN was bold enough to have decreed airlines to add flights to/from Bhairahawa, it can surely put its foot down in nudging all airlines frequenting TIA to take up landing from the '20' end with increased seriousness. It is time for CAAN to put its foot down firmly, come what may.

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

## AUSTRALIAN MINISTER

# Friendship Visit

*Despite the close proximity of Australia and Nepal, there aren't many visits between the two nations. A significant event was Tim Watts' recent visit as Australia's assistant minister for foreign affairs.*

By A CORRESPONDENT

To improve bilateral relations, the head of the diplomatic mission in the nation plays a crucial role. Felicity Volk, the Australian ambassador to Nepal, has demonstrated how tighter ties can be forged between two countries.

Even though Australia and Nepal have had diplomatic relations for a very long time and that Australia opened a mission there about 30 years ago, the embassy has only been present physically.

Felicity Volk, the ambassador, altered it over the past two years. Ambassador Volk has highlighted Australian initiatives by visiting several areas of Nepal and talking with locals.

Tim Watts, an assistant minister from Australia, recently paid a visit, which was quite crucial in this context. The Nepalese foreign ministry had made every step to ensure the success of this tour because they were aware of the significance and importance of the visit. The previous trip to Australia by foreign minister Bharat Raj Paudyal also influenced the current visit of an Australian minister to Nepal.

During his tour to Nepal, Australian Assistant Minister Watts also had meetings with the foreign minister N.P. Saud, the prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, and other top officials. The visit of Australian Assistant Minister Watts will significantly improve bilateral ties between the two nations.

Watts, the assistant minister for foreign affairs for Australia, visited NP Saud, the minister of foreign affairs, in his office this afternoon. The Australian Assistant Minister and Nepali officials worked on the Nepal-Australia relationship, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On how to further boost bilateral and international collaboration, they traded opinions.

According to the Australian Embassy, Assistant Minister Watts

expressed Australia's gratitude for the close partnership it has enjoyed with Nepal throughout the course of 63 years of diplomatic ties and strong people-to-people ties.

"Australia and Nepal are close friends, and for over 60 years connections between people have underpinned our relationship. I was glad to meet with Foreign Minister Narayan Prakash Saud today, to talk about how we can strengthen the Nepal-Australia relationship even further," tweets Tim Watts, Australian Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Between May 16 and 18, 2023, Australian Assistant Foreign Minister Watts made a three-day trip to Nepal to highlight Australia's strong and expanding links to that country and to look into potential avenues for future cooperation.

This visit is significant since the Nepali community in Australia is currently the fastest-growing immigrant group with a population of almost 130,000 people.

A 13th-century wooden tunala (temple strut) from Ratneshwar Temple in Sulima Square was given to the locals in a ceremony held at Patan Museum as the highlight of Watts' visit. The Art Gallery of New South Wales has given this significant relic back to Nepal, and its director, Dr. Michael Brand, will attend the hand-over.

He also went to Kathmandu University, where he heard about the current collaborations with Australian uni-



versities and discussed potential future relationships in the fields of mining, green hydrogen, and running student exchange programs.

He went to BioVac Nepal, a cutting-edge facility for the manufacturing of animal vaccines and diagnostic tests thanks to Australian technology transfer and academic and scientific collaboration.

He also paid a visit to the Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology (TIO), which was founded as a center for excellence in eye care by Dr. Sanduk Ruit and Dr. Fred Hollows of Australia.

The Fred Hollows Foundation and the Australian Government have sponsored TIO's efforts to provide eye care services in Nepal for the past 30 years, as well as the production of intraocular lenses for both domestic and international distribution.

In order to highlight the intimate cultural ties between Australian Hindu and Buddhist communities and Pashupatinath and Bouddhanath, assistant minister Watts visited these sacred and historic places.

He spoke with Nepali graduates of Australian universities who had gone on to excel in their vocations. Watts presented the Himalayan Rescue Association with a portable altitude chamber produced in Australia for the Pheriche Medical Outpost and Everest ER Clinic at Everest Base Camp.



GOOD COMES HOME

# Australia Returns Strut

*Australia Returns 13th Century Ratneshwar Temple Strut to The Community in Patan*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Australia returned a 13th-century tundaal (temple strut) to the head priest of the Ratneshwar Temple, Heramba Raj Rajopahdyay. The handover of this important artifact was made by the Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW), Dr. Michael Brand, at a ceremony attended by Australia's Assistant Foreign Minister Tim Watts, MP, Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Suresh Adhikari, and Mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan City, Chiri Babu Maharjan.

Addressing the handover event, Assistant Minister Watts who is on an official visit to Nepal from 16-17 May, commended AGNSW, saying, "Today, Australians have shown ourselves to be committed to the highest standards of ethical practice and international obligations. That is what the Australian people expect of us, and what the world expects of Australia."

He said, "Today is a day of celebration because it is clear that the Australia-Nepal relationship is flourishing, and it's our people who have been at the heart of these ties."

"We're pleased we've been able to work with Nepal on climate

change, disaster preparedness, and good governance. And we're always interested in new initiatives, like the possible introduction of direct flights between Australia and Nepal. We're bringing our two countries closer and connecting our peoples," Assistant Minister Watts said.

Handing over the tundaal to the local community, AGNSW Director Dr. Michael Brand said the Art Gallery was honored to have worked with the Australian Government in returning the important piece of heritage to where it should be, and to whom it belongs – the people of Nepal.

"As we grow in our understanding of the past, we are privileged to live in a more connected world, where

collaboration is inherent in our work and in our relationships with both our professional colleagues and the many Diaspora communities thriving in Australia. These connections inform our research and the understanding of the art of which we have assumed custodi-

anship," he said.

Addressing the program, the mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan City Chiri Babu Maharjan Thanked the Australian Government and Art Gallery of New South Wales for returning the statue to its original place.

He assured the Australian government that the Metropolitan City will now completely take care of the returned heritage allowing people to perform their pujas.

Secretary of Minister of Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation Suresh Adhikari thanked the government of Australia for this effort and returning heritage of Nepal. He said Nepal and Australia have very cordial and warm relations and today's event is a reflection of it.

Chief priest Hembaraj Rajopadhyaya expressed his happiness over the return of god to his original place. He admired the Australian government for its support of Nepal.



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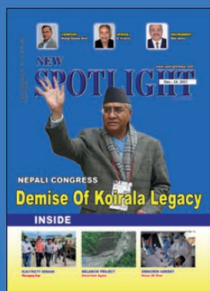


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