



OPINION
General Gaurav
SJB Rana (Retd)



VIEWPOINT
Arup Rajouria



FORUM
Dr. Prabin Manandhar

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

NEW SPOTLIGHT

www.spotlightnepal.com

July.- 21, 2023

FORTNIGHTLY

CHAMELIA HYDROPOWER Transforming Sudur Paschim

INSIDE



**NEPAL-INDIA
FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING**



**EU'S ERASMUS MUNDUS SCHOLARSHIP
ENHANCING CAPACITY OF NEPALI YOUTH**



**PROF. Y.N.KHANAL LECTURE
SAFEGUARDING THE NATIONAL INTEREST**

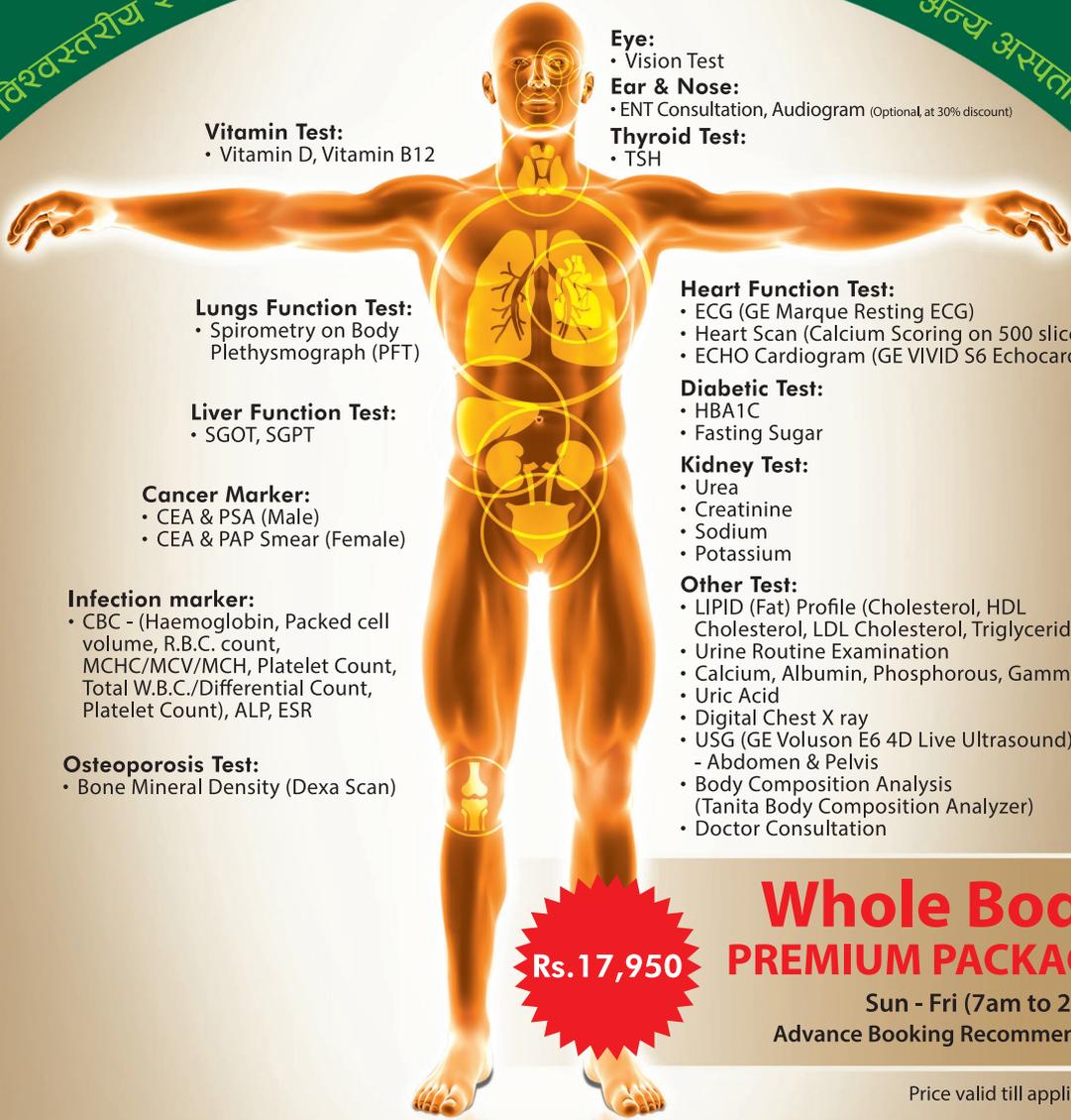
सर्वोत्कृष्ट स्वास्थ्य परीक्षणको लागि

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Kathmandu DAO Regd. No.

148/11/063/64

Central Region Postal Regd.

No. 36/067/068

US Library of Congress Catalogue

No. 91-905060, ISSN : 2091-0711

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

Printing

Megha Offset Printing Press P. Ltd.,

Dhapasi, Kathmandu

Tel. : 977-1-4363624

Notes From The Editor



Following a political agreement among the country's three major parties, the political deadlock in the House of Representatives and National Assembly has finally come to an end, leading to the successful passing of the fiscal year's budget in both houses of Parliament. However, the fate of the Prachanda-led government remains uncertain, as the nature of the parliament makes anything possible.

While the CPN-UML and a faction within the Nepali Congress are advocating for the formation of a new coalition government between the two major parties to replace the Prachanda-led coalition, the situation is yet to take shape. Media reports from last month indicated a meeting between NC leader Sher Bahadur Deuba and UML's influential leader Shanker Pokharel in Singapore. Given the track record of both the NC and UML leaders in the past, Prachanda seems to have an advantage, being considered the best among the worst candidates in this power struggle. Amidst this political uncertainty, emerging parties like Rastriya Swantra Party and revived conservative Rashtriya Prajanttra Party are finding it challenging to assert their roles both inside and outside the parliament. They are losing popular support and appear to be seen as mere extensions of the CPN-UML, lacking distinct issues and agendas.

As Nepal continues to grapple with political instability, we have decided to feature the Chameliya Hydropower Project as our cover story this week. The project, supported by financial aid from the Republic of Korea, has demonstrated how transformative a good project can be for the underdeveloped Sudur Paschim region. The 30 MW Chamelia hydropower plant and the transmission line built to evacuate electricity have significantly improved the lives of people in the region. This successful mega project in the western region showcases how hydropower can bring about positive changes in remote areas. In addition to the cover story, we will also cover other important contemporary issues in this week's edition.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

CONTENT

FORUM

Dr. Prabin Manandhar 3

NEWSNOTES 4

BUSINESS BRIEF 8

OPINION

General Gaurav SJB Rana (Retd) 10

NEPAL-INDIA
Foreign Ministers Meeting 13

VIEWPOINT
Arup Rajouria 14

PROF Y.N.KHANAL LECTURE
Safeguarding The National Interest 15

ARTICLE
Hemang Dixit 20

ARTICLE
Parmita Shrestha 29

ARTICLE
Lucie Chabrilat-Bleses 33

EU'S ERASMUS MUNDUS SCHOLARSHIP
Enhancing Capacity of Nepali Youth 34



COVERSTORY: CHAMELIA HYDROPOWER : Transforming Sudur Paschim 21



INTERVIEW : BINAYAK SHAH 30



HETAUDA-BHARATPUR TRANSMISSION LINE : Strategically Important 26

Mental Health In Youth



BY: DR. PRABIN MANANDHAR

Youth are a significant group in the world. They have unique characteristics with immense potential and influence on various aspects of society. They possess a natural curiosity and expression with an ability and willingness to challenge the status quo and drive societal change.

Despite their vibrant energy and enthusiasm, youth are also among the most vulnerable groups when it comes to mental health issues. The challenges, pressures, and peer-influences they face during their transitional period of their lives can significantly impact their mental well-being and decision making. Some of the commonly observed mental health challenges among youth are anxiety disorders, mood disorders, behavior disorders, depression, attentive-deficit, eating disorders, substance abuse, feelings of isolation, self-harm and suicidal thoughts, post-traumatic stress disorders, etc.

Adolescent and youth undergo biological and hormonal changes (physical and emotional), family dynamics (home environment and conflict), peer pressure (influences and relationship), academic stress (college applications, course work and exams), and identity formation (values, beliefs and personal identity). According to the World Health Organization, it is estimated that approximately 25% of individuals worldwide will experience one or more mental or behavioral disorders at some point in their lives.

Mental health issues are prevalent in both rural and urban areas, although the specific challenges and resources may vary. Rural areas generally experience higher rates of poverty, limited job opportunities, stigma and limited access to healthcare, all of which can impact mental health. On the other hand, the fast-paced urban lifestyle with increased competition and disparities contribute to anxiety and depression.

Mental health disorders are common and can affect people of all ages, genders, and socio-economic backgrounds. We need to be curious with people, rather than judgmental to understand individuals on an individual level, recognizing their unique complexities, and avoiding

generalizations. It says that sometimes we need to talk to a 5-year-old and an 85-year-old to understand life again.

Life is a combination of ups and downs for people of all ages including youth. Taking life too seriously can contribute to increased stress level. Finding a balance between responsibility, self-care and a sense of humor is crucial for youth for maintaining mental well-being and managing stress effectively.

Managing stress is a personal journey, and what works for one person may not work for another. While not all mental health issues are prevented, they are treatable through counseling and medication. While speaking with young people of different age groups and backgrounds, they said that making lifestyle changes and self-care can have a significant impact on mental health. Moreover, engaging in regular physical activity, maintaining a balanced diet, getting sufficient sleep, and practicing stress reduction techniques, such as meditation or yoga, can contribute to overall well-being and support mental health.

Mental health begins in childhood and plays a decisive role in shaping an individual's overall well-being throughout their life. It is crucial to create supportive environments in homes, schools, and communities to adapting to changes and promoting positive mental health in childhood and teenage years. Getting a good mentor can also be extremely beneficial for youth in various aspects of their lives where they can discuss concerns without fear of judgement. Further, sharing struggles, seeking advice, and connecting with peers can provide a sense of belonging and support during ups and downs.

Be kind to yourself and prioritize self-care, avoid negative self-talk and celebrate small wins!

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



NEWSNOTES

Nepal-Bangladesh Soon Start Electricity Trade: Indian Envoy Shirvasava

The Indian ambassador to Nepal, Naveen Shrivastava, said that Nepal will soon be able to export electricity to Bangladesh through India. He said that this will be the first sub-regional-level energy trade in the region.

He claimed that Nepal is working closely with India and Bangladesh to sell electricity to Bangladesh via an Indian transmission line.

Ambassador Srivastava stated that India and Nepal are going forward with the development of hydropower in Nepal while speaking at a seminar on foreign direct investment (FDI)



on Nepal held by the Association of Former Career Ambassadors of Nepal (AFCAN) and Center for Diplomacy and Development (CDD).

In recent years, hydropower development in

Nepal has advanced significantly thanks to India and Nepal. He said that the 900 Arun III project is currently being built by the state-owned Sutlej corporation in India, with an early completion goal.

According to Ambassador Srivastava, the business has also built 490 Arun-4 in collaboration with the Nepal Electricity Authority. He also mentioned that West Seti is being invested in by an Indian enterprise.

US Assistant Secretary Lu Calls On NC President Deuba

United States Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Donald Lu, paid a courtesy call on Nepali Congress President and former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Friday.



Lu who arrived here today on a day-long visit reached President Deuba's residence, where the two leaders discussed how Nepal-US relations could be strengthened in the days ahead, according to

Deuba's secretariat.

On the occasion, NC President Deuba expressed gratitude to Assistant Secretary Lu for the unwavering support of the US to promote peace, democracy and development in Nepal. (RSS)

US Assistant Secretary Of State Donald Lu Paid Meets Foreign Minister NP Saud

Donald Lu, US Assistant Secretary of State, paid a courtesy call on Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs NP Saud at his office. According to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the discussions during the meeting revolved around the relations and cooperation between Nepal and the United States.



Similarly, US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu, US Ambassador to Nepal, Dean R Thompson, paid tributes to the late Sita Dahal in Baluwatar.

During his visit, US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu also met Finance Minister Dr Prakash Sharan Mahat, Minister for Communications and Technology Rekha Sharma, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Sudan Kirati and Minister for Urban Development Sita Gurung visited the Prime Minister to extend heartfelt condolences to the Prime Minister.

French Embassy Hosted A Reception

French Ambassador to Nepal Gilles Bourbao hosted a reception to celebrate the French National Day/Bastille Day

on Friday, 14th July 2023. Attended by ministers, high level government officials, leaders of political parties, Kathmandu based foreign diplomats; French National living in Kathmandu businessmen and people from different walks of life, Vice President Ram Shaya Yadaya was the chief guest of the program.



Welcoming the guests, French Ambassador to Nepal Gilles Bourbao said Peace and stability go hand in hand with economic progress. He also thanked the dedicated team of the French Embassy and of Alliance française de Katmandou, cultural and linguistic arm, for organizing this party.

Japan Hands Over The Mental Health Therapeutic Center In Kathmandu District

The Government of Japan handed over the Mental Health Therapeutic Center in Kathmandu District today. KIKUTA Yutaka, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, attended the ceremony.

The project for the construction of the Mental Health Therapeutic Center in Kathmandu District run by KOSHISH was supported with a grant of USD 296,856 (approximately NPR 35.36 million) under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) of the Government of Japan.

This is the largest amount of grant support ever pro-

vided to Nepal through GGP. On this occasion, Ambassador Kikuta congratulated and expressed his appreciation for the efforts of all those involved in the project.

He emphasized that the new facility supported by this project will contribute to providing high quality therapeutic services and enhancing activities for patients suffering from mental health issues. He also expressed his hope that the patients will be able to resume their independent lives as soon as possible through the excellent health care services provided by the new center.



KOSHISH, founded in 2008, is a non-governmental organization that works to enable people with mental health problems to live independently with dignity and to participate in their community as equals. It has run a transit home for women to support recovery from mental illness since 2011.

The Embassy believes that this assistance will contribute to further deepening the friendship between the people of Japan and Nepal. GGP was established to implement projects that directly benefit people at the grassroots level for the socio-economic development of communities. Since 1991, over 200 GGP projects have been implemented in Nepal.

ROK Provides USD 9.5 Million To Establish 150 Bed Hospital In Madhyapur Thimi

The Republic Of Korea Shall Spend USD 9.5 Million To Establish 150 Bed Hospital In Madhyapur Thimi.

Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Embassy of Republic of Korea in Nepal signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the project “Capacity Building Of Medical Service To Achieve Universal Health Coverage For The Poor In Vulnerable Areas In Bhaktapur, Nepal” on 11 July 2023 at the Ministry of Finance, Singhadurbar, Kathmandu.

The MoU was signed by Arjun Prasad Pokhrel, Secretary of MoF and Park, Tae-Young, Ambassador of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Nepal. Likewise, Kamal Prasad Bhattarai, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA), Mayor Surendra Shrestha of Madhyapur Thimi Municipality and representatives from Nepal Korea Friendship Municipality Hospital (NKFMH) were also present at the ceremony.

The Korean Government through Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) will spend US\$ 9.5 million for this project for 5 years. The project aims to enhance the capacity of medical infrastructure and professionals for quality hospital management, infection control, and improved coverage of public health insurance to attain the goal of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in Bhaktapur,



Nepal. This project shall be implemented by KOICA, Madhyapur Thimi Municipality, KOICA and Nepal Korea Friendship Municipality Hospital (NKFMH) in close collaboration and coordination with MoFAGA.

KOICA shall construct a 150 bed hospital in the adjoining land of NKFMH, provide necessary medical equipment and develop the capacity of medical and administrative staff of the hospital. The old and new hospital buildings shall be interconnected for effective service delivery.

During the signing ceremony, Shreekrishna Nepal, Joint Secretary of International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division of MoF, acknowledged the support of the Korean Government. He stated that Korea has grown as a very close development partner of Nepal over the years and he appreciated people-to-people relations between the two countries.

UN Women Appoints Patricia Fernandez-Pacheco As The New Country Representative To Nepal

Minister for Foreign Affairs Narayan Prasad Saud received the Credentials from the newly appointed UN-Women Representative to Nepal Patricia Fernandez-Pacheco Estrada.

Congratulating the Representative, Hon FM assured the government’s full support in discharging her mandates.

Saud expressed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ commitment to continue their close collaboration with UN Women Nepal to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment in Nepal.

Pacheco shared, “We look forward to supporting the Government of Nepal to uphold its progressive constitutional mandate on gender equality and social inclusion.” Patricia Fernandez-Pacheco has over 20 years of experience serving the United Nations at country, regional and headquarters offices.



Prior to joining UN Women Nepal Country Office, she served as the Deputy Country Representative at UN Women Colombia and in Vietnam as part of the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office. She has also worked with UN Women in Ecuador, in New York as well as in the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in Panama.

Japan Extends JDS Scholarships To Nepali Government Officials

The Government of Japan has decided to extend grant assistance of up to four hundred and twenty-four million Japanese Yen (¥424,000,000), equivalent to 385 million Nepali Rupees to the Government of Nepal for the implementation of the Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS).

KIKUTA Yutaka, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, and Arjun Prasad Pokharel, Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, signed notes to this effect today. The JDS grant offers Nepal’s young government officials two-year Master’s Degree courses and three-year Doctoral level courses in reputed Japanese uni-

NEWSNOTES

versities.

According to a press release issued by the Embassy of Japan, the Government of Japan has received more than 140 Nepali government officials to Japan. After completion of studies, the JDS Fellows are expected to engage in formulating and implementing socio-economic development plans and evolve as



leaders in Nepal, as well as contribute to the expansion and strengthening of friendly relations between Japan and Nepal.

On the occasion of signing the notes, Ambassador Kikuta announced that the Govern-

ment of Japan has revised the Development Cooperation Charter, which articulates the basic policy of Japan's development cooperation, and Japan would implement development cooperation in a more effective and strategic manner in order to actively contribute to ensuring peace and prosperity of the international community.

Ambassador Kikuta also mentioned that basic policies of the Charter point out the importance of constructing strong and resilient countries through "investment in people" such as strengthening individual capabilities. Therefore, "JDS will contribute to Nepal's development by 'investing in people' exactly in line with the revised Charter. I hope that the grant assistance we are signing today will help even more Nepali officials to improve their capacity and contribute to encouraging the development of Nepal," the Ambassador said.

The Embassy of Japan is confident that the objectives envisaged by the JDS will be achieved, and contribute towards further strengthening the relationship, friendship and cooperation between the peoples of Japan and Nepal.

22 Nepalese Young Civil Servants To Get JDS Scholarship In Japan

JICA and the Government of Nepal signed a Grant Agreement on assistance for "The Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS)" today, for the Fiscal Year 2024 amounting to Japanese Yen Four Hundred and Twenty-Four million (424,000,000).

The Exchange of Notes regarding the assistance was signed between Arjun Prasad Pokharel, Secretary, Ministry of Finance on behalf of the Government of Nepal (GON) and KIKUTA Yutaka Ambassador of Japan to Nepal on behalf of the Government of Japan (GOJ).

Similarly, the Grant Agreement was signed between Shreekrishna Nepal, Joint Secretary, International Economic Cooperation Coordination Division (IECCD), Ministry of Finance on behalf of GON and IIZUKA Kenichiro, Senior Representative of JICA Nepal Office on behalf of JICA.

With the signing of G/A, JICA will offer 22 scholarships to the Civil Servants of Nepal to study in graduate schools of renowned Japanese Universities. The selected participants enhance their expertise in respective professional areas ranging

widely from judicial, economic policy, and develop broad network at the global level.

The objective of the JDS is to strengthen the government's administrative capacities in Nepal for the young and capable government employees who are expected to engage in formulating and implementing social and economic development plans and thus play leadership roles to contribute to the development of Nepal.

This agreement expects to expand and enhance the foundation for bilateral relations between Japan and Nepal by means of accepting students from Nepal in Japanese Universities as overseas students.

Government of Japan has been providing this scholarship since 2016. Until now, 105 civil servants have graduated from Japanese universities and are spread across key ministries of Nepal building a strong alumni network. At present, 38 JDS fellows, 35 for master's and 3 for PhD courses are pursuing academic degree in the prestigious Japanese universities.

IIZUKA Kenichiro, Senior Representative of JICA Nepal stated that, "JICA always have and always will aim to contribute to strengthening human resource in Nepal, which is indispensable for delivering better public services to the people."

JICA is celebrating its 45th year of service in Nepal (1978-2023) this year. Since 1978, JICA has supported Nepal's developmental efforts ranging from physical infrastructure such

as transport, energy, water, and sanitation to social infrastructure such as agriculture, health, education, governance, peace building and disaster management

In order to realize JICA's vision "Leading the World with Trust," JICA Nepal continues to take the lead in building strong bond with Nepal by providing maximum support to Nepali people and the Government of Nepal for sustainable peace and prosperity aiming to support Nepal's growth in a comprehensive manner.

ADB Approves Support For Strengthening Of Customs and Logistics Sector In Nepal

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$50 million loan to support the implementation of policy reforms by the Government of Nepal to help improve its domestic and international trade.

In fiscal year 2022, trade and industry contributed 14.1% to Nepal's gross domestic product (GDP). The government is pushing to increase the contribution of trade to GDP by improving the trade and export promotion environment and strengthening the supply chain of primary products. Essential to this is the improvement of customs and logistics systems and services such as efficient transport, transit arrangements, and border procedures.

"The development of the trade and industry sector will boost competitiveness and help steer the country toward sustain-





able economic growth,” said ADB South Asia Department’s Director of Regional Cooperation and Operations Coordination Thiam Hee Ng. “Furthermore, improved trade facilitation can boost exports and help address Nepal’s balance of payment.”

The program will help implement the current Customs Reform and Modernization Plan by improving customs processes through the introduction of digital technologies, such as electronic payments of customs duties and fees, and electronic submission of export documents. It will establish an online customs valuation database and reduce export documentation to facilitate customs clearance.

KOICA-KAAN Knowledge Sharing Program

The first KOICA-KAAN Knowledge Sharing Program was organized in collaboration with Kathmandu Model College, Bagbazar today.

The program’s primary goal was to foster the exchange of experience and knowledge pertaining to the Master’s Scholarship program. As part of the event, Parbati Lamichhane, a recent graduate of KOICA’s Master’s Degree Scholarship Program in 2021 and an officer working in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Planning, Gandaki Province, Pokhara, shared the insights, experiences, and knowledge she gained during her time in Korea, focusing on her thesis.

The presentation by Pokharel was titled “A Study on the Potential Impacts of Nepal’s LDC Graduation on the Economy.”



The main objective of her research was to examine the potential effects of Nepal’s graduation from the category of Least Developed Country (LDC), using case studies and SWOT analysis.

The program witnessed active participation from over 150 undergraduate students pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Business Studies and Business Management. KAAN organizes an annual knowledge sharing program, providing a platform to share the expertise acquired by KOICA’s Masters Fellows.

Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) Arrives In Nepal After 3Years

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has dispatched one new Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) to work in Nepal.

Miki ENOMOTO arrived in Kathmandu on July 04, 2023 and will join JICA Alumni Association of Nepal’s (JAAN) Integrated Community Development Program in Lele, Lalitpur from July 05, 2023.

JICA’s volunteer program in Nepal was on temporary

halt since the outbreak of COVID-19 in April 2020. With the arrival of Ms. Miki ENOMOTO, JICA assures that more volunteers will be coming to Nepal in the following months.

“Amongst the 17 goals of SDGs, each JICA volunteer is working in Nepal to achieve one or few of its targets. As per the SDG motto ‘No One Left behind’, our volunteers work at the grass-root level with local people, which is the most significant advantage of this program.

Simultaneously, the programs biggest achievement so far is facilitating the friendship and partnership between Japan and Nepal. By resuming our volunteer program, we hope to contribute more for the development of Nepal”- Mr. OKUBO Akimitsu, Chief Representative, JICA Nepal.

The first JICA volunteers came to Nepal in September 1970. Since then, their activities have diversified in various sectors and sub-sectors which includes agriculture, health, education, forestry and fisheries, repair operations, civil engineering, sanitation, sports, and culture, as well as planning and administration. JICA volunteer program in Nepal is dedicated to the sharing of resources and technology at the grass-root level for Nepal’s nation building endeavor through the ‘Learning by Doing’ approach.



The total number of volunteers dispatched by JICA in Nepal in the last 53 years is 1,436 . JICA is celebrating its 45th year of service in Nepal (1978-2023) this year. Since 1978, JICA has supported Nepal’s developmental efforts ranging from physical infrastructure such as transport, energy, water, and sanitation to social infrastructure such as agriculture, health, education, governance, peace building and disaster management

PM Prachanda’s Spouse Sita Dahal Dies

Sita Dahal, the wife of Prime Minister and Maoist Centre Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and his “comrade-in-arms” for five and a half decades, died in Kathmandu on Wednesday morning. She was 69 and suffering from multiple conditions for the past few years. Norvic International Hospital, where she was taken to on Wednesday morning, cited a cardiac arrest as the cause of her death.



She had long been suffering from Progressive Supranuclear Palsy along with Parkinsonism, Diabetes Mellitus-II and hypertension, and was taken to the hospital following a deterioration in her health, the hospital said in a statement.

BUSINESS BRIEF

Nepal Exported Processed Grass To China, 10 Trucks Left

Nepal has officially started exporting processed hay to China for the first time. The export of this grass from Nepal to China's Sigatse has started.



Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Narayan Kaji Shrestha, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Development Dr. Beduram Bhusal and Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Chen Song formally launched the

haulage export during a program on Saturday.

10 trucks with 80 tons have left from Bharatpur carrying haulage to China. New Horizons Pvt Ltd, a Chinese-run industry in Bharatpur 5, has produced Haylage.

The industry has purchased maize with stalks produced by Nepali farmers and made haylage. They will use this silage in the chauri firm operated by this company in China, said Chang Jing.

This company can produce 60 thousand metric tons annually. They said the China-based Pratchauri firm required 1 million tonnes. According to the permission of the government of Nepal, the company is preparing to expand the industry and produce 300,000 tons of haylage annually to take it to China.

Jagat Shrestha Has Been Named CEO Of The Budhigandaki Hydropower Company

Budhigandaki Jalvidyut Public Limited Company's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has been named by the government as Jagat Shrestha.

The company's CEO will make all the necessary preparations for the construction of the 1200 MW Budhigandaki Reservoir Hydropower Project. The Minister of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation has made a decision.



The company was founded on August 17 of last year with the intention of constructing the project under the direction of the Ministry of Energy. However, the project is currently moving forward under the direction of the Nepal

Electricity Authority. The government appointed Shrestha as CEO. He also serves as the coordinator for the Budhigandaki hydropower project's environmental, compensation, rehabilitation, and rehabilitation units. He was a previous assistant dean and a former director of the Infrastructure Development Center. He has taught at the Institute of Engineering Studies for 25 years.

Shrestha, who has been named as the chief executive officer, stated that he will be actively involved in the project's foundation-laying. "I will soon start laying the foundation stone for the project after making other preliminary preparations, including the management of the field office for the project."

Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta And RMDC Laghubitta Joint Operation Started

Finance Minister Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat stated that the merger of these two financial institutions will significantly increase investment in the rural agriculture sector when he announced the start of the Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta and RMDC Laghubitta joint operation.

Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada, a former finance minister, spoke on the program and stated that the SKKBL now has sufficient capital to register as a development bank.

In the midst of an event held in Kathmandu, Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta and RMDC Laghubitta merged. Joint operations start on July 9.

Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha Limited (SKBBL) has successfully merged with RMDC Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha Limited (RMDC).

From Ashad 24, 2080 BS, the two businesses will begin combined transactions under the name "Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha Limited."



On Jestha 24, 2080 BS, Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) already gave the merger its final clearance. On Falgun 18, 2079 BS, the two wholesale microfinance organizations signed the final merger agreement.

The agenda for the merger has already been authorized by the firms at their respective annual general meetings, which were conducted on Chaitra 10, 2079 BS.

The merger agreement between these two businesses was previously signed on Bhadra 31, 2079 BS [September 16, 2022].

The merger agreement was signed by Bhupesh Chutkali and Umesh Lamshal on behalf of RMDC Laghubitta and Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta, respectively.

The merger's share swap ratio has been set at 100:87. This implies that each 100 shares of SKBBL and RMDC Laghubitta will turn into 100 and 87 shares of the new company, respectively, after the merger.

'Sana Kisan Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha Limited' will be the name of the new corporation that results from the merger. Khem Bahadur Pathak will continue to serve as chairman, and Dr. Shivaram Prasad Koirala will serve as CEO.

SKBBL has a paid-up capital of Rs. 197.11 crores as of Chaitra's end in 2079 BS, whilst RMDC Laghubitta has a paid-up capital of Rs. 156.37 crores.

The swap ratio of 1:0.87 was approved by both firms' AGMs, which were held separately on the 10th Chaitra, per the special resolution voted by those meetings. Investors who now own 100 shares of RMDC Microfinance would consequently acquire 87 shares in the combined business. The merger has also been given final approval in accordance with the letter from the NRB, SEBON, and Office of the Registrar of Companies.

It has been decided on "Sana Kisan Bikas Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha Limited" as the name of the new firm that will be

created as a result of the merger, and the integrated business will be run starting on 24th Ashad, 2080. On Bhadra 31, 2079, the corporations formally agreed to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

SKBBL currently has a paid-up capital of Rs. 1.97 Arba, whereas RMDC has a paid-up capital of Rs. 1.56 Arba. After the merger, the total paid-up capital will be Rs. 3.33 Arba.

Nepal Investment Mega Bank Opened New Extension Counter In Lumbini Province

Nepal Investment Mega Bank Limited has opened a new extension counter at Balkot located in Ward No. 2 of Chhatradeo Rural Municipality, Arghakhanchi District from Sunday.

Along with this, there are 4 extension counters of the bank in Lumbini province. Chandraman Shrestha, chairman of Chhatradeo Rural Municipality and Lakshman Chhetri, head of Arghakhanchi branch of the bank jointly inaugurated the extension counter.

While inaugurating, President Shrestha said that financial transactions will now be done through banks, so it will be easy for the residents of that area. The program was attended by Shankhar Pandey, Ward Chairman of Chhatradev Village No. 2, Rajesh Kumar Panthi, former Ward Chairman of the same Ward, Tej Prasad Khanal, Ward Chairman of Ward No. 3 and local intellectuals and common people.



Speaking in the program, the chief guest and special guests said that banking facilities will be easily available to the customers and industrialists living in Balkot and surrounding areas, which are out of reach of banking services.

The bank's Arghakhanchi branch chief said that the bank will provide effective services to the customers through the extension counter.

In line with the Bank's policy of extending extension counter based services and network, the bank has already extended extension counters at various locations. At present, the bank has been providing facilities through 296 branch offices and 62 extension counters.

IWMI Organized A Workshop For Solar Pump Sizing Tool Scaling In Nepal

Dr. Manohara Khadka, Country Representative of International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Nepal highlighted that solarization of food systems and groundwater irrigation holds immense promise for food security. She said that the tools that support governments, the private sector and practitioners are scarce.



Participated by various individuals from Nepal's development partners, NGOs and the government of-

ficials, one day Workshop for Solar Pump Sizing Tool Scaling in Nepal concluded discussing various ways.

"The main goal of this workshop is to create a tailored innovation package for the Solar Pump Planning tool in Nepal, with the aim of facilitating its scaling," said Dr. Khadka.

Shilp Verma, Senior researcher at IWMI- India presents the experiences of the Solar Irrigation Pump sizing tool from India.

According to IWMI, this workshop is part of the NEX-US Gains research initiative, which aims to realize multiple benefits across water, energy, food and ecosystems in selected transboundary river basins, by leading global nexus thinking and providing tools, guidelines, training and facilitation for analysis and research for development.

First Solar Irrigation System With Net Metering Installed In Pyutar

For the first time ever in Nepal, MinErgy in collaboration with BMZ, WWF Nepal and Bagmati Rural Municipality have been able to install a 14.4 KW Solar Irrigation System with net metering. The net metering allows excess electricity generated by the system to be fed into the grid and conversely, when the system doesn't produce sufficient electricity, it can draw the required power back from the grid without any additional cost. This unique feature ensures that the system can operate even during cloudy days and at night, maximizing its usability.



The net metering is expected to significantly enhance the capacity utilization factor of solar pumps in Nepal. Currently, studies indicate that approximately 70% of the energy generated by solar pumps in the country goes to waste. Furthermore, the installed system is equipped with a GSM-based remote monitoring unit, allowing ten individuals to access real-time information on the system's status and yield using their mobile phones from any location worldwide. This remote monitoring feature provides convenient access to monitor and manage the system's performance, ensuring its optimal operation and maintenance.

The Solar Irrigation System has been successfully installed in Khairenibesi, Pyutar, located in Bagmati Rural Municipality Ward No. 4 of Lalitpur District. Despite being just a three-hour drive away from the capital city, the village has been plagued by insufficient infrastructure and limited economic development. The vast fertile land adjacent to the perennial Bagmati River in the village remains barren due to the absence of pumping facilities. This system will benefit 54 households by increasing their crop production from 139 ropanis to 300 ropanis, ensuring a year-round supply of irrigation water.

The implementation of a Solar Irrigation System with Net Metering holds great significance for the sustainability of solar pumps in Nepal. It enhances capacity utilization of solar irrigation pumps, ensures reliability & year-round operation and saves cost of drawing electricity from grid during low solar energy generation.

The Nepali Army –A Strength Or Liability



BY: GENERAL GAURAV SJB RANA (RETD)

A rather sad element about contemporary debates over the size, structure, shape and utility of the Nepali Army; covered by the academia, press and social media; is that they frequently gather momentum after the announcement of a new budget year, or follow on the heels of a scandal or rising emotions. The cascade of undeveloped opinions devalues the significance of a vital concept and institution; that of national security and the Nepali Army.

Though pertinent, these views are largely defined by inaccuracies, given full reign by the woes of lackadaisical parliamentary oversight practices; bordering on negligence. This appalling display of obstreperous arguments by a coterie of representatives and analysts; tabled repeatedly to score publicity points; detracts focus from the core issue of analyzing the roles and missions assigned to the Nepali Army and assessing in detail its influence and sway in determining composition, size and structure.

Based on an objective evaluation of the current debates over the size and structure of the Nepali Army, it is evident that the fundamental issue is one of determining “Whether the Army is valuable national asset strength, or a wasteful financial burden a liability? This debatable issue carries significant portent for the future. In a recent survey of the Nepali people conducted by Kathmandu University and interdisciplinary analysts in 2022 CE, 91% of the respondents said, “The Nepali Army was the institution they trusted the most”. A response that implies it’s a valuable national asset, by/for the people. Additionally, in a recent retort to questions and statements aired by parliamentarians, regarding the efficacy of the force structure and composition of the Nepal is Army, the Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister in person retorted emphatically by reiterating its necessity in its current form and size; as a strategic imperative. Thus, the government and the people, two primary constituents of a nation state believe in the utility and necessity of the Nepali Army.

This brings us to the question of whether the current force is a burden. Peace and stability are prerequisites for development and progress. At present, Nepal is peaceful but to assert that we are stable is a stretch of the imagination. Alternately, from a financial perspective maintaining the current force structure and strength of the security forces i.e. the Civil Police and Armed Police and the defense force i.e. the Army is a strain on the national coffers, ex-

acerbated by competing demands generated by social and economic sectors. This predicament cannot be overcome by knee-jerk actions. Regrettably, it is the flavor of the day.

The need of the day, however, is to conduct well-coordinated cross-cutting deliberations leading to comprehensive reviews of overarching government policies and processes; on governance and governing. Security being a basic need, as defined by its comprehensive nature will inevitably feature in all aspects of governance to a degree. Therefore, security concerns need to be tackled explicitly, by elevating its status to a priority sector on the national agenda. This would greatly enhance in formulating suitable plans, programs and budgets that steadfastly support government policies and people’s aspirations.

The periodic outbursts of unschooled opinions unfairly undermine the credibility of a fine national institution and summarily consign numerous relevant concerns, raised by well-meaning individuals that require constant scrutiny, supervision and direction to the back burner. Providing structure, direction and guidance to debates over national security and the Nepali Army, to ascertain constructive outcomes, is an obligatory responsibility of the state. The means to deliver it is constitutionally mandated in the form of parliamentary oversight committees. Besides, the issue in hand is a simple one of energizing and reinforcing oversight measures by synchronizing and energizing the overall national security apparatus by means of injecting some energy and verve in it.

The quandary, of relentless pressure exerted by shallow controversies, casts a veil over more consequential issues. It contributes towards incapacitating a vital organ of the state, assigned with the role of safe guarding its sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. It is a distressing state of affairs, particularly, in the context of a regionally contested and geopolitically fluid security environment, in the middle of a rapidly emerging multi-polar world order. Considering the centrality of the issue and its relative importance for the survivability of the state, this persistent malaise must be confronted squarely. Creating a separate parliamentary committee for National Security - Defense and Security by simply transferring current responsibilities held by the State Affairs Committee, is an effortless option. By doing so, the compulsion of elevating defense and security concerns on the national agenda is also

fittingly addressed.

Taking into account the nascent and developing stage of strategic thought and planning, concerning the challenges posed by the 21st century, in our context; developing a common threat perception to guide our thought processes along least resistant lines, is of primary importance. Furthermore, clarity and comprehension of the concept of national power; its use and limitations; is necessary to weave diverse strands of logic and perceptions into a single piece of cloth. This endeavor leads to national consensus and pragmatic solutions; an essential criterion for national security strategy formulation. Without a doubt, it is a principled effort that will preserve the sanctity of a proud legacy handed down by our forefathers, whose Grand National strategy has kept Nepal afloat as a sovereign and independent nation over the centuries.

A foundational Weberian understanding; the threat of or use of force remains to be the monopoly and last resort of the state. It is, as a rule, entrenched in military organizations; with a police or armed police force as subsidiary additions to bolster national security, a concept that acknowledges the external and internal dimensions of national security. This arrangement essentially enables a graduated response from the state for the purpose of using force internally. However, this aspect of the state and statecraft



in practice is often a source of constant-friction that provides sample room for divisive elements to exploit; as they feed on neglect and inadequate political commitment. This truth, further cements my argument for the state to shoulder the burden of responsibility to streamline the ongoing debates on a priority basis. It will inhibit ill-intention and ill-equipped security expert from parachuting in, to needlessly interfere and complicate matters. It also assists in guiding and moderating a sensitive issue along pragmatic lines to build national consensus; a statutory obligation.

Security is an abstract and unquantifiable concept that inhabits the domain of perceptions. Security threat perceptions are susceptible to rapid change; in the face of fear, pressure, intimidation, or coercion; which is a discernible feature in Nepal. Conversely, military organizations are large quantifiable entities, raised to provide and maintain security. They are built to withstand coercion, pressure and shock. Security levels though, are proportionately equiva-

lent to the degree of threat posed which changes habitually. Therefore, presenting security environments as reason enough to downsize or augment force structures, is rather puerile, comparable to beating around the bush. All nations have dedicated organizations working in concert, to assess likely belligerent's capabilities, threats and intentions. In our case, this exists in the form, of a constitutionally mandated National Security Council. A well-established, sufficiently manned and adequately resourced but defunct organization, it needs to be activated and mobilized in its visualized lead role, as the apex advisory and coordinating body of the state.

At this stage, we are without doubt on the horns of a dilemma, a dilemma of choices between ego-strategic gorge-economic imperatives and guns or butter, choices that will requires tradeoff between government spending on national defense and security and domestic programs. This predicament requires thorough analysis to enable sensible choices. The National Security Council should be tasked to undertake a comprehensive Strategic Defense and Security Review, for decision and necessary action by the government. Give it a catchy name or phraseology like SDSR 2023. Extensively publicize the undertaking intending to educate the public and promote transparency. Determine a realistic timeline for

submission; unlike the timeline settled in the Interim Constitution 2007 for the integration of Maoist combatants and promulgation of a new constitution. As the saying goes, "A bird in the hand is better than two in the bush". The bird is the NSC. This review must incorporate national debates to encourage wide participation driven by a preponderant axiom, "Effective defense and security do not come cheap".

Therefore, taking all the factors discussed into account, it is reasonable to conclude that the Nepali Army is a valuable asset of the state, to be cherished and nourished to safeguard the nation against any and every existential threat. Though its utility may not be felt as it was during the Maoist insurgency; the comprehensive peace process remains unsettled, internal politics is still too complex and uncertain and it is untimely to put one's guard down. Moreover, all arguments aimed to rationalize the downsizing of the Nepali Army are premature at this point. Furthermore, military capabilities cannot be built overnight or purchased

OPINION

off the shelf asap. Any immediate decision to fiddle around with the composition and structure of the force is ill-advised and inopportune.

Determining the size, composition and capabilities of a military organization is incorporated in the force planning and force structuring modalities in practice. It is a process best left to the military professionals, under the direction and stewardship of the government. Factors ranging from an analysis of the threat, geography, technology, doctrine and resources required to organize essential battle operating systems, are considered to formulate various force options. They are subsequently, presented to the political leadership for decision and further action. From the outset, force planning is governed by the roles and missions mandated to the Army. Therefore, critical appraisals must focus doggedly on comprehending this aspect. There are two models of force planning and force structuring available to military planners, a threat-based and capability-based model respectively. Founded on experience, the later model is more compatible from all perspectives and has had a greater influence in determining the current force structure and strength. Therefore, selecting the capability-based model, to transform our force structure and develop capabilities to meet the security challenges of the 21st century is highly recommended.



Drawing examples, to validate down-sizing from comparisons between various Armies around the world, is a viable approach to critical thinking. However, it is important to anchor one's judgments on ground reality, based on a thorough understanding of restraints and constraints placed on planning by factors such as geography, size, population, economy, resources, etc. etera and the inherent limits of our composite national power. All criticism must be rooted in are cognition of what we have, and not based on what others have or hope we had. The ability to discriminate between what is possible and what is achievable, against what is desirable is indispensable, and so is the need to develop and apply the Means + Ways = Ends strategic framework; to devise sensible strategies that are successful in application and not only good looking on paper.

To conclude, rather than getting caught up in churlish banter over the size and strength of the Nepali Army, the crux of the deliberations must focus on understanding the basic structure, composition, capabilities and planning modalities of the existing force and its determinants. Organizations are created and structured to fulfill specific objectives. To do so, they are equipped with capa-

bilities commensurate to their tasks. The entire process is determined by the threat, geography, natural resources, and technology and so on, underlined by an intangible factor “national prestige”.

The current foundational structure of the Nepali Army despite intense internal and political vacillation, has weathered the vagaries of time and change commendably. Transforming it into an effective and relevant force for the 21st century requires a major overhaul, a process that is a pipe dream given the current political and economic conditions. Therefore, restructuring and implementation of far reaching reforms, to build a springboard for subsequent transformation as visualized by the leadership, is the logical step ahead. Transformation entails time, money, commitment and a leap of faith; not just empty words and hollow promises.

The current situation in Nepal is a manifestation of unhealthy politics. Nepal has undergone tremendous political changes in a condensed time frame. Therefore, it is natural for inquiries to be directed pointedly at the military. However, a modicum of restraint in passing judgments is essential, as the military is only an instrument of the state and operates under the rubric of the government and the prevalent national security policies prescribed by it. The reform and transformation of the Nepali Army, in reality, is a long-haul task that requires national commitment and political will.

To my knowledge, only one Strategic Defense Review has been carried out in the Nepali Army between 1974 to 2015 which was in 1978. This comprehensive internal review consisting of 14 files placed in a black briefcase called the “Black Box” was retained in the office of the Director of Military Operations (Plans & Policy). It laid the ground for the reorganization, modernization and doctrinal development of the Nepali Army until 1990.

Ever since, despite tectonic shifts in internal, regional and global politics the government has remained complacent in pursuing this primary obligation despite constant pleading and prodding. In light of the observations above, the complacency on display by a series of weak governments and the prevalence of a pessimistic view concerning the functions and capability of the Nepali Army among some parliamentarians; a long overdue Strategic Defense and Security Review is imperative to undertake without delay. As an afterthought such reviews as envisioned are resource intense and time-consuming endeavors that require a minimum of 4/5 years to prepare to be of any value.

General Rana is a Chief of Army Staff of Nepal Army (Retired)

Foreign Ministers Meeting

When Indian authorities are putting obstacles in the way of energy trade, Foreign Minister N.P. Saud and External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jai Shanker met in Bangkok

By A CORRESPONDENT

Amid the increasing hurdles faced by Nepal in exporting electricity to India, the recent high-level meeting between foreign minister N.P. Saud and India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar holds great significance.

Though the specific issue of the obstacles to electricity export was not explicitly mentioned during the meeting, both foreign ministers described the talks as fruitful. The meeting took place during the gathering of foreign ministers from member countries of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

Both sides confirmed that the 'sideline' discussions held during the two-day BIMSTEC foreign ministers' meeting in Bangkok were successful. After the meeting, Foreign Minister N.P. Saud tweeted about the productive discussion with External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, where they exchanged views on matters related to bilateral cooperation and their multifaceted relationship.

Dr. S. Jaishankar also took to Twitter, stating that he had a good meeting with Nepal's Foreign Minister, Narayan Prakash Saud. They agreed to work closely to implement the agenda of cooperation set out by their respective leaderships and expressed their commitment to staying in touch.

Notably, during the BIMSTEC foreign ministers' gathering, discussions were held on enhancing cooperation within the regional organization. The member nations deliberated on ways to consolidate their collaborative efforts.

The recent positive outcome of the meeting between the foreign ministers could potentially pave the way for addressing and resolving the hurdles faced by Nepal in exporting electricity to India in the future. During the BIMSTEC foreign ministers' meeting in Bangkok, Thailand,

a range of important topics were discussed, including energy cooperation, expansion of power transmission lines, climate change, health, food security, and technology.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Narayan Prakash Saud, who was part of the meeting, highlighted the fruitful discussions held among the BIMSTEC member states. The major areas of focus during the meeting included exploring avenues for energy collaboration, expanding power transmission lines, addressing the challenges posed by climate change, ensuring health and food security, and fostering technological coop-



eration.

By engaging in these comprehensive discussions, the BIMSTEC member countries, including Nepal and India, are demonstrating their commitment to strengthening mutual cooperation and finding solutions to the challenges they face. These deliberations could hold the potential to facilitate a resolution to the issues related to electricity export and enhance overall bilateral relations between the nations in the long run. Nepalese authorities are expressing concerns about India's new hurdles in importing electricity from Nepal. India has requested financial closure details for projects that have been pending approval for several months. Despite India's earlier commitment to purchase 10,000MW of electricity from Nepal over the next decade, it is now subjecting the approval process to more bureaucratic obstacles. This comes as India has been cautious about approving hydropower projects involving China and is in-

vestigating any potential Chinese investment or involvement in projects planning to sell power in the Indian market.

Prabal Adhikari, the power trade director of the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), confirmed that India has sought details of financial closure, including project financing and the involvement of various financial institutions and agencies. Interestingly, India did not request these details when granting approval for the 10 projects from which Nepal has been exporting electricity.

Nepal has sought Indian approval to sell power from an additional 18 hydropower projects, with a combined capacity of over 1,000MW. Some of these projects were submitted for approval as early as August 2021. The new request from India implies that Nepal may also need to submit financial closure details for the existing 10 projects when seeking a renewal of export approval.

The annual renewal requirement for export approval has caused uncertainty for Nepal's access to the Indian power market. In response, Nepal had sought a long-term inter-governmental agreement on power trading, allowing both countries to engage in long-term power purchase agreements. The 10,000 MW agreement was signed during Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal's visit to India in May-June.

Indian officials have not provided a specific reason for their request for financial details, but it may be related to ensuring there is no financing from other countries, particularly China. India has clearly stated that it will not purchase power from any Nepali project with any direct or indirect involvement from China. As a result, India has been reluctant to approve the export of power from the 456MW Upper Tamakoshi Hydropower Project, where a Chinese contractor was involved in the civil works.

Given India's current stance, it is unlikely that there will be any significant changes in its policy towards Nepal, despite positive reactions expressed by both foreign ministers during their recent meeting.

Climate Change's Impact On South Asia: A Threat To National Security And Foreign Policy



BY: ARUP RAJOURIA

National security and foreign policy are under severe threat due to climate change, a global issue that has been impacting the world. One region particularly vulnerable to these impacts is South Asia, including Nepal, which is categorized as one of the most vulnerable nation. The changing climate poses a significant threat to the region, where up to 800 million people, already among the world's poorest and most vulnerable, could experience a sharp decline in their living conditions.

Human-induced climate change, primarily caused by the release of greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels, has far-reaching consequences. Rising sea levels, more frequent and severe heat waves, droughts, floods, and storms are some of the adverse effects impacting the environment, human health, and the economy.

Melting glaciers serve as visible indicators of climate change in the Himalayas, with significant implications. These glaciers are the source of major rivers in Asia, such as the Ganges, Brahmaputra, Mekong, Yangtze and Indus among others that originate in the Himalayas. These rivers sustain an estimated two billion people in South and Southeast Asia. As the glaciers melt, the rivers swell, leading to increased risk of landslides and floods. Nepal, in particular, faces the formation of glacial lakes due to glacier melting, increasing the risk of devastating downstream floods if these lakes burst.

The impact of climate change on South Asia and Nepal cannot be underestimated. The region is already experiencing intensifying heat waves, cyclones, droughts, floods, and unpredictable monsoons, which strain the capacity of governments, businesses, and citizens to adapt. Over the past two decades, more than half of all South Asians, totaling 750 million people across Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, have been affected by one or more extreme climate-related events, mention can be made of the floods in Pakistan, the Melamchi project in Nepal and the current floods and landslides in North India.

Nepal relies on hydropower for its energy needs, and the country has invested heavily in this sector. However, climate change is impacting water resources and energy security, which could have a significant impact on Nepal's economy. Changes in water availability; influenced by melting glaciers, have profound implications for the country's hydropower generation. Furthermore, the resultant landslides and floods pose threats to Nepal's infrastructure and agricultural sector, compounding the challenges faced by the nation.

Agriculture is a major source of livelihood for millions of people in Nepal and is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of

climate change. Rising temperatures, changes in rainfall patterns, and more frequent extreme weather events are all having a negative impact on agricultural productivity, leading to food insecurity, increased poverty, and social unrest. To mitigate the impacts of climate

change on agriculture in Nepal, there are a number of steps that can take, such as adopting climate-friendly and providing agricultural practices investing in research and development to create new crop varieties better suited to the changing climate and providing financial assistance to farmers affected by climate-related disasters.

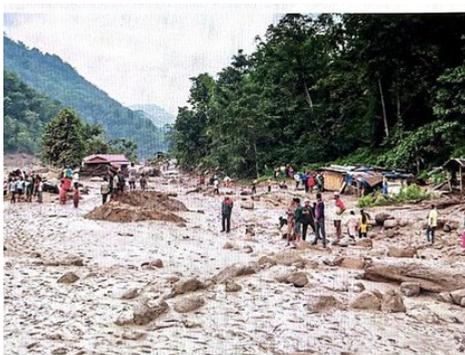
Additionally, it is also important to take a gender sensitive approach to climate change in Nepal. Women are disproportionately affected by climate change, as they are more likely to be poor and marginalized and have less access to resources and decision-making power. It is essential to include women in the design and implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures to ensure that the most vulnerable citizens are not left behind.

A just transition to a low-carbon future requires collaboration and cooperation between different stakeholders, including governments, development partners, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples, and other communities, to ensure the burdens and benefits of climate change are shared equitably.

Cooperation is essential to mitigate the effects of climate change and achieve sustainable development. Cooperation is the only chance humanity has in the face of unprecedented climate change. The impact of climate variability and climate change on human and natural systems poses serious challenges to our objective of reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development.

In conclusion, human-induced climate change has global ramifications and poses significant risks to national security and foreign policy. South Asia, including Nepal, is particularly vulnerable to climate shocks, as evidenced by melting glaciers, landslides, and floods. Urgent action is necessary from governments, development partners, businesses, and citizens to mitigate climate change's consequences and adapt to the changing climate. By addressing this crisis collectively, we can strive towards a more secure and sustainable future for all.

Rajouria is a former Member Secretary of NTNC. He also worked for UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNEP and USAID. He completed MPA from Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and Climate Change & Public Policy Issues. Chairman, Climate & Co-Existence, and is also on the Board of like minded organizations.



PROF Y.N.KHANAL LECTURE

Safeguarding The National Interest

Former Foreign Secretary Madhu Raman Acharya addressed in-depth about Nepal's skills and strategy for defending and preserving its national interest in the current changing international order. Acharya, as the keynoter for the second edition of the Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series, outlined prospects and challenges for Nepal.

By KESHAB POUDEL

In the domestic politics of a small country, international issues often play a deciding role - Nepal is no exception. Foreign influences on domestic politics have always been a major factor, regardless of the topics of discussion and debates - be it foreign relations or policy.

The perspectives and viewpoints presented at Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series on "Safeguarding Nepal's National Interests: Foreign Policy Choices in the changing International Environment" predominated Nepal's relations with two neighbors particularly with India.

Although the keynote speaker Acharya, a former Foreign Secretary and Nepal's permanent representative to the UN, elaborated broadly on

choices and challenges to safeguard Nepal's national interest in the changing international order, most commentators, including those on the extreme left, right, and center, limited their views to India and China.

As Nepal is a nation with a wealth of natural riches and strong spiritual foundations, the country should use the issues such as religion, civilization, culture, and nature.

Santatan (Hinduism and Buddhism)-based civilization has regional and international significance due to the existence of revered Hindu and Buddhist religious sites, as well as natural resources like water and the Himalayas. These are the elements that can support and protect Nepal's interest.

Nepal cannot safeguard

its interests by merely expressing sentiments and wishes; rather, the reality that Nepal is currently experiencing. This is what matters most when dealing with other nations and defending national interests.

Nepal needs to develop its capabilities in a number of areas, including the institutionalization of political and bureaucratic institutions, strengthening of foreign ministry, and the utilization of its own cultural, religious, and natural resources to support its foreign affairs.

The lecture series, which was attended by young Mandarins from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and foreign policy specialists, as well as retired officials and politicians from an older generation, was an excel-

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lent learning environment.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister of Foreign Affairs N.P. Saud, properly highlighted Nepal's cultural and religious components, proposed the use of Eastern philosophy in foreign policy practice.

In his remarks, he stressed the importance of Nepal's traditions, religion, and civilization. "Safeguarding national interests is paramount for every country. This is something that cannot be compromised under any circumstances. The Constitution of Nepal has broadly defined our national interests. Foreign policy is the tool in pursuit of these interests. In our part of the world, we grew up listening to the stories from the Ramayan, the Mahabharat, teachings of the Buddha and the tenets of Chanakya niti. These

treasures are full of knowledge, wisdom and insights on statecraft and diplomacy. The worldview presented therein is a fine blending of values and pragmatism," said foreign Minister Saud.

"Nepal is situated between two big, powerful and fast-growing economies of the world, India and China. We seek to maintain friendly relations with both of them, based on the principles of sovereign equality, mutual respect, coop-

eration and mutual benefit. We seek to prosper by being better connected to both sides of our neighborhood--in economic terms-," said Foreign Minister Saud.

The lecture series launched in the second year of Bharat Raj Paudyal's tenure as Foreign Secretary is meant to become the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' signature yearly event for exploring Nepal's foreign policy topics. Secretary Paudyal has demonstrated how a senior official can make a dif-

al lecture series hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs aims to stimulate enlightened deliberations on the issues of national, regional, and global importance that have direct bearing on Nepal's national interest and the conduct of foreign policy and diplomacy. We hope the lecture will help us better understand the dynamics of contemporary international relations and provide insights to navigate through these challenging time."

"We also hope that the lecture will inspire current and future practitioners of foreign policy and diplomacy to internalize the values, ideas, and ideals that Prof. Khanal epitomized in Nepal's foreign policy process," said Foreign Secretary Paudyal.

The name chosen for the lecture series is

ference by launching a few new programs to strengthen institutional capacity.

"The overarching objective of this lecture series is to bring knowledge, expertise and experience from renowned diplomats, policy makers, professors, and researchers on a diverse range of themes of international relations and foreign policy," said Foreign Secretary Paudyal in his welcome remarks.

"This flagship annu-

very valid in the present context. Professor Khanal illustrated his abilities as a diplomat with talents, wisdom, and the aptitude to deal with all three main powers—India, China, and the United States—when he was appointed by King Mahendra to advance its foreign policy and preserve Nepal's national interest.

He was appointed as Foreign Secretary twice in 1961 and 1967; Ambassador of Nepal to India in 1963; Ambassador to



the United States and Canada in 1973; and Ambassador to China in 1978. Even after his retirement from active diplomatic service, Professor Khanal continued to advise the government on matters of international affairs and foreign policy. He had a diverse career as a teacher, scholar, civil servant, and diplomat. He embarked on his career in foreign policy and diplomacy as a member of the Nepali delegation to the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955.

Despite the fact that billions of cubic meters of water flow from the Bagmati, the narrow mindset of Kathmandu's elites has not changed. Leftist academic Hiranya Lal Shrestha, revolutionary communist leader and Member of Parliament Prem Suwal, and some other retired Nepali diplomats discussed how the cancellation of the 1950s treaty, the Gurkha Recruitment Agreement, and the release of the EPG report are key elements in advancing Nepal's national interest.

Sujata Koirala, a former foreign minister, and Dr. Sambhuram Simkhada, a specialist in international relations, have stated slightly different opinions, though they are unable to be more specific.

"Thanks to the wisdom, vision and pragmatism

of our predecessors, Nepal has maintained its independence throughout history and continued its engagement with the wider world. Foreign Minister Saud praised late Yadu Nath Khanal as a towering figure unmatched in the magnitude of wisdom and the level of judgment."

Regime and system have changed yet; internal political instability and international factors still receive greater attention in the conversation. Professor late Leo E. Rose wrote in his book Nepal



Profile Of A Himalayan Kingdom published in 1980: "It is a normal phenomenon for the foreign policy of any society to be strongly affected by domestic political and economic factors, and this is certainly the case in Nepal. But, the reverse principle-namely, that international factors have a strong and often decisive impact on Kathmandu's domestic politics – is even more apparent."

What Professor Rose wrote in his book remains pertinent in the Nepalese environ-

ment. The bulk of Kathmandu intellectuals, professors, and even retired bureaucrats are victims of petty fear psychology, ranging from extremist to centrists.

In the current complex international order, the name of Professor Yadu Nath Khanal's annual lecture series, chosen by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is most fitting considering his position and competence in safeguarding Nepal's interests.

Professor Khanal demonstrated how to live with global power in the context of a changing international order while serving as Foreign Secretary and Nepalese Ambassador to India, China, and the United States of America.

Nepal's diplomats and political leadership in the past demonstrated that preserving national interests has no bounds by establishing diplomatic relations and permitting the State of Israel to open an embassy in Kathmandu. Despite being a member of non-aligned groups, Nepal had supported Israel's independence and sovereignty, displaying solidarity as a small nation. During the Cold War, when neither of Nepal's neighbors had diplomatic relations with Israel, scholar diplomats like Khanal devised and formulated these plans.

Nepal also increased its contacts with Japan during Kha-

NATIONAL

nal's tenure as Foreign Secretary in order to solicit Japanese financial and technical aid for Nepal's overall development.

"Prof. Khanal demonstrated, in diplomatic practice and through his writings, the wisdom on how Nepal could pursue its vital interests against the constraints of the time. He took a lead to diversify and expand Nepal's diplomatic contacts and engagements. His counsels derived from his vast experience and incisive observation of international politics of his time continues to inspire and guide succeeding generations of Nepali intellectuals and foreign policy practitioners," said Secretary Paudyal.

"His wisdom that a country like Nepal needs to maintain clarity, consistency, credibility and coherence in foreign policy stands as relevant today as it was in the time of Prof. Khanal."

Acharya's Views

While former Foreign Secretary Acharya has written several books on Nepal's fundamental foreign policy decisions. Acharya comes in second place behind former Foreign Secretary Bishwa Pradhan, who detailed Nepal's strengths and weaknesses in defending the interests of the country in a number of books. Foreign Secretary Madan Kumar Bhattarai has also authored a number of

books on the individual contributions of the country's diplomats.

Former Foreign Secretary Acharya was well described by the Foreign Secretary Paudyal in his welcome speech. "Ambassador Acharya does not need any introduction. He is well known among us as a diplomat, a scholar and an analyst. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Joint Secretary in 1996 bringing vast experience and knowledge of working in different key Ministries



of the Government of Nepal. He then rose to become the Foreign Secretary of Nepal from 2002 to 2005, Ambassador of Nepal to Bangladesh from 1998 to 2001, and Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations from 2005 to 2009," said Paudyal.

In his lecture, former Foreign Secretary Acharya suggested that Nepal should develop a full-fledged neighborhood policy so that there are no political differences among the

parties and national stakeholders, and 'national interest' takes precedence in bilateral and multilateral dealings.

Speaking at the Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series 2, Acharya said that all diplomatic affairs should be managed or practiced only by or through the foreign ministry.

"While maintaining the best relations with our 'land neighbors'-India and China, we should also continue balanced relations with our 'sky neighbors'- including the United States and the European Union – as they are partners in our progress," said Acharya.

He further noted that to maintain the best diplomatic and friendly relations with neighbors, the country needs to resolve outstanding issues with India such as the Treaty of 1950, boundary issues,

and Report of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on Nepal and India Relations.

Acharya also proposed the implementation of innovations in foreign affairs, such as the third neighborhood policy practiced by Magnolia. Former Foreign Secretary Acharya also suggested the Mongolian model as a choice for Nepal. "Mongolia seeks to diversify its relations with countries beyond its immediate neighbors Russia and China, through its Third

Neighbor Policy which include the United States, the EU and Japan,” said Acharya. He said that Nepal can also weigh such options in foreign policy to safeguard our national interest.

He stressed the need for the resurrection of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), noting that the current deadlock should be ended at the earliest. He suggested that Nepal should start consultations at the foreign minister or foreign secretary level to further the SAARC process and that the prime minister should take initiative to revive the regional mechanism given the Nepal is its current chair.

Acharya further suggested taking into account the emerging alliances and partnership in the region, without being dragged into their competition. He mentioned the Indo-Pacific Strategy, Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, and multilateral partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States stating, “We need not fear them but rather be vigilant without taking sides while not missing opportunities arising from them for our economic development.”

Finally, Acharya as-

serted that the foremost priority of the country should be to strengthen relations with its immediate neighbors and benefit from their economic advancement.

According to him, Nepal has mostly failed to transform into a transit economy and that goal has remained a catchphrase. Our integration into the value chains of China and India is what the transit economy is all about and when an opportunity arises, we must take it, he



remarked.

Acharya, who has worked for numerous UN missions across the world, said it is regrettable that Nepali leaders frequently take sides and form opinions based on conspiracies that circulate on social media. He claimed, “They externalize our political issues and permit others to meddle in domestic affairs.”

Foreign Minister Saud aptly described the current global order and complex situ-

ation. “The world is witnessing rapid change, which has made the formulation and conduct of foreign policy more dynamic and complex. Identifying the global trends which may shape the global geo-political, economic and social systems in the coming decades is a strong imperative. “We need to analyze and understand these changes, assess their implications for us and fine-tune our response keeping the national interest and welfare of the people at the center,”

With changing old order and new contexts in the neighborhood, Nepal needs to adjust its foreign policy to safeguard national interest and promote economic prosperity. To do this, Nepal must treat its neighbor as

a partner and conduct foreign affairs weighing its historical, cultural and civilization ties and closeness.

However, the old way of thinking cannot be changed by one or two of these discussions alone. In order to safeguard Nepal’s national interest, Nepalese must engage in vigorous discussions and debate regarding these issues. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ endeavor is a wise move made at the appropriate time.

Utter Confusion



BY: HEMANG DIXIT

It is an understatement to say that we are living in an age in which all things of the past have in a matter of few decades completely become out of fashion. Ways of thinking, living and reacting have changed completely. This is said to be a natural process brought about by modernisation. Is this correct? Or has the world changed completely in a manner which may in fact be said to be topsy turvey or in a matter of utter confusion? I remember the old days when we used to collect the soft drinks or the beer bottles and take it back for refund. The golden days when machines were repaired and reused are long past. Now it is use and throwaway that is the current practise.

We grew up with ideals such as: Honesty is the best policy. Now it claimed by many as a misconception. I read a quote from Arundati Roy that went, “Once weapons were manufactured to fight wars. Now wars are manufactured to sell weapons.”

One recalls a Saddam Hussein boasting of having a “Mother of All Guns” but it was on the presumption of then President of US George Bush with the connivance of the UK PM Tony Blair, that the Iraqi ruler was accused of having ‘weapons of mass destruction’. Saddam’s onslaught of Kuwait was met by the barrage of weapons supplied by the US. The old weapons were used up and Kuwait paid for it. The situation in Ukraine is similar in that weapons from US, UK and various countries of Europe have been extensively used to confront the Russians. At the end of this exercise the armoury of all the countries involved will have to work overtime to replace it all and so the weapons industry in all countries will provide jobs and prosper. Who is going to pay for the rebuilding of Ukraine is another matter which can wait in the meantime. But all this is as per accepted practices of the past. After all it was the then neutral country of Sweden which caused a worldwide furore by supply the Bofor guns to India. Yes, everything is not what appears at first sight. Surprisingly Sweden is now trying to join NATO!

But coming to matters nearer home, our PM PKD managed to go officially first to India on this 4th trip. What must be considered as an ‘accomplished achievement’ by PM Modi is sending PKD to the Mahakaleshwar Mandir at Ujjain to do an official puja, presumably wearing a janai? Though our PM seems to have complied with what India wanted to do i.e. Citizenship Act. Our PM has confessed that he did not raise the longstanding Eminent Person Group’s report so as not to vitiate the atmosphere. What a state of affairs? It seems that like electricity generated by projects done by China is not acceptable to India, nor can Indian planes land at airports built by Chinese aid! The reality that India imports pharmaceutical

drugs to make medicines in India and also has many other imports is another matter.

An extraordinary news in Nepal was that 15 Murro bhainses were being gifted to Nepal. After a lot of discussion in FB and other media it turns out that this was in response to a request for 30 rangos which Nepal had requested for some seven years. Is this the established norm that any request, or treaties with Nepal has to await years before action is taken. Is this a ‘Big or Elder Brother’ that India is always prone to take, be it the EPG report, or agreements on road building or river projects between India and Nepal. What one commentator has written in FB is that whilst PKD could not revert Kalapani back to Nepal, he did however bring back a number of black rangos! Another version is that Kalapani and Lipulekh is being bartered for land elsewhere. Does a PM has the right to such action is a relevant question at this stage. Let us wait and see what the true state of affairs is.

The next visit of our PM is to China in the North. Will he dare to travel either from Gautam Buddha International or Pokhara International Airport to Chendu or Kunming or even to Peking? Will he go to the Baita Temple or the Miaoying Temple aka White Pagoda constructed by Araniko in 1271 CE in Baizong? As far as I am aware he will not be able to worship there as this practice was stopped in 1961.

What are the projects that are in the offing? There is talk of a railway line from the North as the one from the South is progressing albeit at a snail pace. The Raxaul – Kathmandu link seems to be on hold at the present. The small print regarding this is that the system in the North and that in the South are of different gauges and so the boggies or the carriages from the North or the South will not be transferable causing a problem for locomotion. Is it a question of ‘North is North & South is South and the twain shall never meet?’

Another recent development following the visit of the Chairman of the National Assembly to Russia is the offer of various scholarships and many other projects from that country. For some unknown reason our government has been extra quiet and not made any comment on this kind offer. What is the reason for that? My feeling is that it should be accepted immediately. But perhaps I am what an English saying states i.e. flogging a dead horse. Perhaps “It is better to be silent, than to dispute with the ignorant’ as has been said by Pythagoras.

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

CHAMELIA HYDROPOWER

Transforming Sudur Paschim

The Chameliya Hydropower Project, a 30 MW power plant, has brought about a remarkable transformation in the Sudurpachim Province since its inception just five years ago. With financial support from the Republic of Korea, this project has revolutionized the way of life in the region. It is essential to acknowledge the key individuals responsible for its success, including Janardan Sharma Prabhakar, the visionary Energy Minister, Anup Kumar Upadhyaya, the dedicated Secretary, and Managing Director Kul Man Ghising. Thanks to their efforts, the project, which had remained stagnant for several years, finally commenced operations in February 2018. Today, the Chameliya Hydropower Project acts as a catalyst for progress in the Sudur Paschim Province, significantly improving the overall quality of life. The people and political leaders are deeply grateful to the Republic of Korea for their substantial investment, which has brought about this transformative change.

By KESHAB POUDEL

The operationalization of the Chameliya Hydropower Project has proved to be a game-changer, significantly improving the lives of residents in Nepal's remote region. Despite initial skepticism surrounding the substantial investment in such a large-scale project, the decision by the government of the Republic of Korea to support the 30 MW Chameliya hydropower project in 2005 was aimed at enhancing the lives of people in the Sudur Paschim Province, formerly known as the

Far Western Region.

The project, which began in 2005 and was completed in 2018, faced a temporary halt from 2014 to 2018 due to cost implications associated with altering the tunnel's course. However, during his first tenure as the Managing Director of NEA, Kul Man Ghising successfully revitalized three major hydropower projects, Kulekhani III, Trishuli 3 A, and Chameliya, which had been abandoned by the government as unviable ventures.

Furthermore, in the wake of the severe damages caused by the 2015 earthquake, MD Ghising expedited the construction of the 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi project, ensuring its timely completion. This proactive approach by Ghising demonstrated his commitment to overcoming challenges and furthering Nepal's hydropower development.

The Chameliya Hydropower Project stands as a testament to the transformative impact that well-executed projects can have on remote regions, uplifting



communities and paving the way for future growth and prosperity.

The aforementioned projects have played a pivotal role in ensuring the stability of Nepal's energy supply. However, the significance of the Chameliya Hydropower Project extends beyond this aspect. It holds the distinction of being the first large-scale initiative in the Sudur Paschim Province, spearheaded by former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba.

Prime Minister Deuba officially launched the Chameliya Hydropower Project in Balach, Shailya Shikhar Municipality-1 on February 9, 2018. It is noteworthy that this project was initiated during his previous tenure as prime minister back in 2004.

During the inauguration speech, Deuba emphasized that this 30 MW project would not only bring about a transformative impact on the lives and livelihoods of the people in the Far West region but would also provide a substantial boost to the na-

tion's economy.

Over the course of 11 years, the project was constructed at a cost of Rs 16 billion with government funding. Since its commercial operation began, the plant has been producing 184.2 million units of electricity annually, contributing significantly to the country's power generation and bringing in approximately Rs. 1.10 billion in revenue on an annual basis.

The Chameliya Hydropower Project stands as a testament to the vision and dedication of Deuba, and it continues to have a lasting impact on the region's development, energy generation, and economic growth.

Five years after its inception, the envisioned reality by the government of the Republic of Korea and Deuba, has materialized, albeit with some modifications. Building upon the success of the Chameliya hydropower plant and the establishment of transmission connections to Attaria, the private sector has under-

taken the construction of additional hydropower projects in the region, namely Upper Chamelia, Naugad, Naugad-2, and Makrigad. This development signifies the growing momentum and confidence in the region's hydropower sector.

Reality after Five Year

A notable example is the transformation in the life of Bir Bahadur Thagunna, who turned 24 years old, when the Chameliya hydroelectric project began 17 years ago. He vividly recalls growing up alongside the project with his family, experiencing the changes it brought. The power generation testing for the Chameliya project started in 1974, marking a turning point in the Thagunna family's way of life.

Previously, Bir Bahadur's father, Ishwari Thagunna, worked as a porter in Pithoragarh, India, for six months at a time to sustain the family. Basic essentials like salt and oil would last for a hundred years with the income earned. However, once Ishwari secured employment at the Chameliya project, he began to promote the fruits, vegetables, and legumes grown in his garden. With increased income, he was able to send his son Bir Bahadur to study in Terai. Today, the Thagunna family resides in a concrete home within the community.

In Terai, two additional acres of land have been cultivated, symbolizing the expanding agricultural activities. Ishwari was pleasantly surprised to witness the progress when he visited the Gokuleshwar market, stating that he never anticipated such development, including the accessi-

bility of cars, the transformation of Gokuleshwar into a bustling market, and the availability of various facilities within the hamlet.

Dhan Bahadur Negi from Shailyashikhar, connected to the Chameliya project, shares that life has significantly improved for those in the vicinity. According to him, those who received land compensation from the hydropower project experienced an overnight transformation into millionaires, but even those who did not receive compensation have benefited from the positive impact of Chameliya.

Overall, the Chameliya hydropower project has brought about substantial changes, both economically and socially, improving the lives of individuals and communities in the region. It has spurred further development and has proven to be a boon for the entire area, ushering in new opportunities and prosperity.

Thirteen years ago, Bhuvan Bhandari, a young entrepreneur, embarked on his business journey from a humble two-room guesthouse in Gokuleswar. Following the initiation of the Chameliya project in 2063, Bhandari opened a small hotel and witnessed a significant improvement in the main highway connecting Gokuleshwar. An 18 km new road

was constructed from Gokuleshwar to Balanch, resulting in increased traffic from Koreans and Chinese. Economic activity in the region unexpectedly surged, with debris and resources flowing in.

Bhandari has personally witnessed how gaining direct or indirect employment has profoundly transformed the lives of ordinary people. The Gokuleswar market now boasts three private



bank branches, well-established hotels, an agricultural campus, and private schools. Additionally, a hospital with better facilities than the main office has been developed. Suresh Shrestha, another businessman, concurs that the region's way of life has dramatically changed over the past 15 years.

Seventeen years ago, residents affected by the Chameliya hydroelectric project received over 1.3 billion in compensation. It became more lucrative for individuals to work in the village, offering twice the amount of money

compared to elsewhere. Furthermore, nearly two billion from local resources were utilized during the project's implementation. Although the construction of the project commenced six years later than planned and incurred almost double the expected cost of 16 billion, Bhandari stated that by the time the project was inaugurated in 2007, the economically remote areas of Baitadi and

Darchula had experienced notable progress.

The significance of the first mega hydropower project, Chameliya, as a crucial source of economic growth and infrastructural development, cannot be contested. Despite potential disagreements regarding the project's various costs, it has already generated

enough revenue in less than five years of operation to repay the loan. Furthermore, the construction of a 132 kV transmission line has connected remote areas in the Sudur Paschim region not only to the country but also to the rest of the world.

In summary, the Chameliya project has brought about remarkable advancements, transforming the economic landscape and improving infrastructure in the far western and Karnali Province. It stands as a testament to the project's undeniable value



and its role in connecting previously remote regions to greater opportunities and global connectivity.

The Chameliya Hydro-power Project, with its 30 MW capacity, has been a significant contributor to the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), generating approximately Rs. 1.50 billion annually with an average yearly generation capacity of 184.2 GWh.

The construction of the 131 km long 132 kV transmission line from Balanch in Darchula to Baitadi, Dadeldhura, Doti, and Attariya Kailali has brought about a transformative change in the entire region, which was previously characterized by a low Human Development Index. The availability of transmission lines has spurred investment and economic growth in the area.

Civil works for the project were originally scheduled to be completed by May 2011, following the contract agreement with China Gezuwa Water and Power Group Company on December 21, 2006. However,

political unrest and significant geological disruptions, including the construction of an 800-meter tunnel, caused delays, and the civil construction was ultimately finished in 2018.

The electro-mechanical, hydro-mechanical, and Balanch-Attariya 132 kV Transmission line equipment was built by the Korea-based K.H.N.M.P Consortium, representing the latest and most advanced technology.

While the initial cost estimate for the project was 99.9 million US dollars, political unrest, design changes, and geological hazards led to the final cost amounting to 158 million dollars. It is important to note that project costs have increased during the implementation.

The project was initiated due to the strong commitment of the Korean government's Economic Development Cooperation, which provided a soft credit of 45 million US dollars for the electromechanical, hydro-mechanical, and 132 kV Transmission Line through the Korean Exim Bank.

The electro-mechanical, hydro-mechanical, and Balanch-Attariya 132 kV Transmission Line equipment was reportedly built by the Korea-based K.H.N.M.P Consortium, representing the latest and most advanced technology.

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COVERSTORY



located in Balach of Darchula, 800 kilometers west of the capital, helps to evacuate 8.5 MW generated by Api Hydro before the inauguration of main project.

Despite the substantial cost involved, the completion of the Chameliya project has revolutionized the lives of people in the far-western region, providing a reliable energy supply and paving the way for more new hydro-power projects.

It serves as a testament to the fact that with dedicated leadership and unwavering commitment from concerned ministries and officials, seemingly impossible tasks can be achieved. The support and backing of Kul Man Ghising, Minister Janardan Sharma Prabhakar, and Secretary Anup Kumar Upadhyaya have been instrumental in making the Chameliya project a success.

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The project spent Rs. 600 million on consultants in addition to Rs. 7.84 billion on land acquisition, electromechanical parts, and hydromechanical equipment. Similar to this, Rs. 2.54 billion will go into transmission, Rs. 194.8 million will go toward additional transmission-related projects, and Rs. 50 million would go toward environmental protection. 6.18 billion rupees were added due to currency translation losses, price adjustments, and an extra cost of Rs. 3 billion for ad-

ministration. The overall expense was about Rs. 15 billion.

The strong initiatives of Minister Prabhakar, the administrative support of Secretary Upadhyaya, and the managerial skills of Ghising have played a pivotal role in bringing the nearly stalled Chameliya Hydropower Project, which had experienced delays of almost 10 years, close to completion.

The Republic of Korea's ambassadors to Nepal, veteran career diplomats Choe Young-Jin and Park Young-Sik, who also made significant contributions to the project's completion, would be pleased to learn about the region's economic change.

The 136-kilometer-long Balach-Atariya 132kV Transmission line, which is



HETAUDA-BHARATPUR TRANSMISSION LINE

Strategically Important

With the constant individual efforts of NEA MD Kul Man Ghising, Hetaunda-Bharatpur 220 kV Transmission Line has finally charged almost after two decades increasing the capacity of power evacuation

By A CORRESPONDENT

Kul Man Ghising, the Managing Director of the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), has added a new accomplishment to his résumé by finishing the 220 kV Hetaunda-Bharatpur Transmission project, which had been abandoned for 15 years.

The completion of the 75-kilometer-long, strategically crucial project to move power from the west to the east is very important for MD Ghising because he pledged to do so during his second term. He also promised to upgrade the distribution system.

The project's completion will be significant since it will replace Nepal's only other line that is more than 45 years

old, the 132 kV East West Transmission line.

Another accomplishment for MD Ghising is the completion of a 132 kV transmission line on the Chamelia-Saule-Attaria circuit. The second circuit of the operational 132

The charging of the second circuit of the Chamelia-Saule-Attaria 132 kV transmission line, which was built to connect the Darchula and Bajhang districts' hydroelectric projects to the national grid, will improve the quality of power supply in the Sudurpaschim.

By finishing two significant projects to evacuate the electricity and transmit from one purpose to another, MD Ghising has demonstrated that he valued his words and pledges after publicly promising to finish delayed transmission lines and distribution projects.

H e t - a u d a - B h a r a t p u r

The 220 KV transmission line between Hetaunda and Bharatpur is now in use. The Hetaunda-Bharatpur-Bardghat 220 KV transmission line project



KV Chamelia-Saule-Attaria transmission line has a 250 MW transmission capacity.

has completed the Hetouda-Bharatpur section.

The 73 km long, twin circuit 220 KV transmission line has been charged by the Nepal Electricity Authority and is now operational at 132 KV.

The 220 KV transmission line between the new Bharatpur substation at Amptari, Bharatpur metropolitan city of Chitwan, and the old Hetouda substation in Chowkitol, Hetouda submetropolitan city of Makwanpur, has been charged at 132 kV.

About 170 MW of power can be provided from Hetauda to Bharatpur and from Bharatpur to Hetauda after the commissioning of the Hetaunda-Bharatpur section transmission line.

The original 132 kV transmission line was only producing roughly 90 megawatts of electricity. The Hetaunda-Bharatpur section's commissioning will make it easier to increase the amount of energy in that region.

The Hetouda-Bharatpur-Bardghat transmission line project was initiated to strengthen and reliably supply electricity to the hydropower project that would be constructed in the western area of Nepal.

With funding from the Nepali government and authorities as well as a concessional loan from the World Bank, the project was launched in 2008. There were two sections to the project: Hetaunda-Bharatpur and Bharatpur-Bardghat.

Local challenges with building the transmission line, issues with land acquisition, hold-ups with

clearing the forest area and chopping trees, poor performance by the contractor business, etc. all had an impact on the project's construction.

The remaining work was completed with funding from the government and authorities after the World Bank withdrew from the project in October 2078.

Two 220 KV four circuit (multi-circuit) towers are being built under the Hetaunda-Bharatpur sec-

an company Icom Tel. However, the authorities breached the terms of the agreement and seized the 3.57 million US dollars that the corporation had kept as a performance guarantee after delaying the construction of the crucial transmission line. Similar to that, the authority also decided to levy a 1.6 million dollar advance punishment for the delay in the project. After then, a fresh bid was requested, and in May 2077, a fresh contract was agreed upon.

Within July, the Bharatpur-Bardghat segment

By July of next year, a segment of the Bharatpur-Bardghat 220kV transmission line connecting Bharatpur in Chitwan with Bardghat in Nawalparasi (Bardghat Susta East) would be operational.

The building of two towers in this section of Nawalparasi Vinayi Triveni Rural Municipality-2 Dumkibas was halted in March 2077 as a result of local opposition and an interim decision from the Supreme Court. The transmission line's construction was unable to be finished as a result.

Following the Supreme Court's decision to dismiss the writ and its agreement with

the residents, the tower's construction began. The tower has now been constructed. The 1.7 kilometre wire has been begun. When it became unable to transfer further energy from Bharatpur to Bardghat because of the disturbance in Dumkibas of Nawalparasi, the administration charged the finished portion through an alternative arrangement. The transmission line's limited capacity



tion to transport the line to the substation that is still under construction in Hetaunda sub-metropolitan city-11 thanabryang. The project's manager, Santosh Sah, predicted that the work would be finished by August of next year.

The Hetaunda-Bharatpur segment was to be built, and a contract for its construction was signed in February 2065 between the Indi-

ENERGY

has resulted in a current issue with the flow of energy from Bharatpur to Wardghat.

Chamelia-Saule-Attaria

After five years of completion of the project, a 132 kV transmission line on the Chamelia-Saule-Attaria circuit is also charged.

The Chamelia-Saule-Attaria 132 KV transmission line's second circuit is in use and has a 250 MW transmission capacity.

The Chamelia-Saule-Attaria 132 kV transmission line's second circuit, which was constructed to transfer the electricity generated by the hydroelectric projects in the Darchula and Bajhang districts to the national grid, has now been placed into use.

The second circuit of the 132 KV double circuit transmission line starting from Balanch in Shailyashikhar municipality of Darchula and ending at Attaria substation in Godavari municipality of Kailali through Baitadi, Dadeldhura, and Doti has been put into operation. The transmission line is 131 kilometers long.

The 30 MW Chamelia hydropower plant in Darchula, developed by the Nepal Electricity Authority, had its first circuit of the transmission line operational as of 2073.

The tower constructions of the transmission line were constructed for double circuit with the assistance of a concessional loan from the Korean Exim Bank. However, the project only created and activated one circuit. The government of Ne-

pal invested roughly 60 million rupees to construct the second circuit and bring the line into service.

According to Kulman Ghising, Managing Director of the authority, another circuit was established because only one circuit could not deliver the electricity generated by the hydropower projects that have been built and would be built in that area.

The door has been opened



for the building of hydroelectric projects in the rivers of the Darchula and Bajhang districts in the far west, according to MD Ghising, following the installation of the transmission line infrastructure by the Chamelia Hydroelectric Project. In addition, when the power generated there is delivered locally, the voltage will be increased in the Kohalpur West region of the Banke district. Currently,

the infrastructure has been established for electricity generation up to 250 megawatts produced in that area.

Currently, the 132 KV Chamelia-Saule-Attaria transmission line is supplied with power from projects developed by the government and the private sector totaling roughly 110 megawatts. Private sector projects totaling 50 megawatts are now being connected.

To guarantee a consistent and dependable supply of electricity in the steep regions of the far western provinces, a 132-33 KV substation is being operated at Syaule in Dadeldhura. Dadeldhura, Darjula, Doti, Vaitadi, and Achham have received electricity from Balanch substation via Syule substation. There, electricity use amounts to about 6 megawatts.

Locally, electricity is provided by Syaule substation; the remainder is transported to Attaria substation and fed into the national transmission network. Around 80 and 200 MW of electricity are required by the western region in winter and summer, respectively, from Kohalpur.

From the fiscal year 2074–2075, work on the second circuit of the 132 KV Chamelia–Saule–Attaria transmission line began. The project's director, Anil Adhikari, said that some delays in the work were caused by the covid-19 epidemic and villagers in the Dadeldhura and Darchula districts who had previously obtained compensation for their obstruction of the pulling of the second circuit's wire.

Japan's Support To Nepal: Uplifting The Economy



BY: PARMITA SHRESTHA

I recently spotted construction going on across from Thankot as I was traveling there. Upon arriving, I noticed a sizable construction crew digging a tunnel. After asking the locals, I learned that the construction was taking place near the entrance to the Thankot-Nagdhunga Tunnel, Nepal's second motorable tunnel since the 1930s' Churia Tunnel, and that it was almost finished thanks to Japanese assistance.

Four things have always stood out to me as a young Nepali. B.P. Highway, Koteshwor-Suryabinayak Road, Maharajgunj Hospital (TU Teaching Hospital), Kanti Hospital, and Kulekhani Reservoir. These are the most prominent examples of contemporary infrastructure that have captured everyone's attention. All those massive infrastructures built with Japanese assistance serve as reminders of Nepal's modernization progress.

Japan has contributed to a variety of humanitarian, medical, and developmental aid to rebuild school, roads, hospitals, and drinking water projects, as well as assistance with daily living in earthquake-affected areas.

One of the nations that have provided Nepal with a sizable quantity of funding is Japan. Since the two countries established diplomatic relations on September 1st, 1956, Japan has supported Nepal with various packages to improve the quality of life for Nepalese citizens. This long and deep history between Japan and Nepal began with the visit of a Japanese monk, KAWAGUCHI Ekai, to Kathmandu in 1899.

Japan is the seventh nation to have established diplomatic ties with Nepal, and the two countries have partnered on a few global issues.

Japan has consistently supported and influenced Nepal in cultural, social, developmental, and economic aspects, despite the disparities in their levels of development. In fact, Japan is among the top donors to Nepal along with the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, India, and China.

Even though Nepal is landlocked, and Japan is sea-locked, their relationship goes beyond diplomatic connections. For more than 65 years, Japan has supported Nepal financially and technologically, significantly improving the quality of life for Nepalese citizens. They have had a positive impact on the everyday lives of Nepalese individuals. As a young Nepali, I appreciate Japan's tolerance and blending of culture, traditions, and lifestyles. The younger generations of urban youth in Nepal, including myself, have started to watch Japanese films and enjoy Japanese cuisine.

Following the 2015 earthquake, Japan rebuilt numerous schools, bridges, and Bir Hospital, Nepal's oldest public hospital, in a brand-new, contemporary structure. Japan has shown its readiness to assist Nepal whenever it faces a serious catastrophe by providing life-saving medications, medical supplies, and COVID-19 vaccines.

Japan generously contributed to Nepal's recovery after that country was hit by the COVID-19 Pandemic and a severe earthquake in 2015 in Nepal. Japan has given Tribhuvan International Airport the most innovative equipment, including a radar system, to modernize Nepal's aviation industry.

Japan has extended their support beyond infrastructure to include the energy and water industries. One of Japan's most significant contributions is the Kulekhani Hydropower Project. The completion of this project has reduced Nepal's reliance on fossil fuels by enabling the people of Nepal to meet their energy needs. Similarly, the completion of the Melamchi Drinking Water Project has provided the people of Nepal with access to enough supplies of clean, safe water in their homes.

Japan has provided assistance in the fields of agriculture, health care, and education. The "One Village, One Product" campaign strategy from Japan has assisted rural regions in creating sustainable enterprises centered on locally grown goods, enabling the villagers to become independent, effective, efficient, and economically self-sufficient through their livelihood ventures. Their assistance in encouraging the production of Mandarin Oranges (Junar) and trout fish has given the farmers new chances to combat poverty.

Japan places a high value on education and has made it more feasible for Nepali students to pursue education in Japan at a reasonable cost by implementing comparable importance toward education in Nepal. Through the scholarships they offered Nepalese people have been able to enhance their knowledge and abilities in a variety of disciplines, producing skilled young people who will eventually help the nation's independence.

Overall, Nepal has developed significantly because of Japan's help. Japan has been assisting Nepal in

laying the groundwork for long-term sustainable growth and resolving issues that have been bothering the populace daily. They can help Nepal today so that it might have a great future. Japan has been awarding short- and long-term scholarships to Nepalese university scholars, government employees, and other students to enhance their human resources; Japan has also been providing Nepalese non-governmental organizations and local governments, which are being used to help improve the living conditions of people of Nepal.

Japan and the Japanese people have given Nepal a lot. Buddhist ties between Nepal and Japan have been strengthened since renowned Japanese architect Prof. Kenzo Tange was tasked with creating a master plan for the orderly development of Lumbini. In 1978, the Nepali government approved the Lumbini Development Master Plan. Nepal currently maintains diplomatic ties with 180 nations, and we cannot compare to any other nation in terms of the support provided to upgrade

Nepal's infrastructure to improve the lives of Nepalese citizens. This is the 121st year since the first eight Nepali students were dispatched to Japan for their studies. However, many young Nepali are still aspiring to pursue their education there.

Parmita Shrestha is a young Nepali student working as an intern for New Spotlight.



“The Tourism Industry In Nepal Is Still Not Fully Recovered”

BINAYAK SHAH, the President of the Hotel Association Nepal (HAN), is a well-known personality in the tourism industry with extensive experience. Having previously worked at the Nepal German Chamber of Commerce and the Nepal-Europe Chamber of Commerce, Shah brings a wealth of knowledge to his current role. He has also spearheaded the construction of Nepali pavilions at various international expos, further showcasing his expertise in the field. Currently, the hotel business sector in Nepal is gradually recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. Shah provided a NEW SPOTLIGHT with commentary on a range of current problems. Excerpts:

How do you see the tourism sector now?

There has been a positive response from international travelers, particularly those from China and India, as well as an increase in domestic travel. However, there are lingering challenges that need to be addressed. For nearly three years, tourism-related transactions were minimal, leading to the closure of many hotels, both small and large. This has resulted in a backlog of unpaid wages, bank interest, and employer payment issues, which are now being actively discussed within the hotel industry.

As the COVID-19 comes to an end, how hopeful are you on the quick revival of the tourism sector?

I am very hopeful for the quick revival of the tourism sector. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. There has been a positive response from international travelers, particularly those from China and India, as well as increases in domestic travelers.

How do you see the investment?

Investment in the hotel sector has been affected but there are several ongoing construction projects for five-star hotels, both in Kathmandu and in other regions of Nepal. These hotels are expected to be operational within a year, significantly increasing the luxury inventory of the hotel industry. With the capacity to accommodate 3.5 million visitors annually and the number of visitors to Lumbini, a popular tourist destination, is expected to reach 600,000 in 2022, I believe that tourism sector will revive quickly.

How do you interpret the Lumbini numbers?

The construction of numerous five-star hotels has already been finished, both inside and outside of Kathmandu. All of these hotels will open within a year, increasing the hotel industry's luxury inventory. There will be 600,000 visitors in 2022. However, the hotel sector in Nepal has the capacity to host 3.5 million visitors a year. As you are aware, the supply side is currently only around one-fourth of the total supply side.

What issues is the most pressing issue?

Nepal is located between India and China, making it an attractive destination for travelers, but the lack of

international flights and well-connected roads is a major obstacle. The connectivity remains a major issue with two new international airports like Pokhara International Airport in Pokhara and Gautam Buddha International Airport in Bhairwa lagging behind. Kathmandu International Airport is already overcrowded and cannot hold more flights.

How would you rate Nepal's current hotel business sector overall as the recently elected president of HAN?

As the recently elected president of HAN (Hotel Association of Nepal), I would rate Nepal's current hotel business sector as promising but facing significant challenges. Following the impact of COVID-19, there has been a gradual recovery in the sector, with international travelers, particularly from China and India, showing a positive response. Domestic travel has also become more popular. However, there are several pressing issues that need to be addressed.

What are the major challenges?

One of the major challenges is the backlog caused by the three-year hiatus in tourism-related transactions. Many hotels, both small and large, were closed during this period, leading to unpaid wages, bank interest, and problems with employer payments. These issues have created a significant burden for the hotel industry, and they are currently being discussed and addressed by industry stakeholders.

How do you see the supply and demand situation?

Although numerous five-star hotels have been completed both inside and outside Kathmandu, the current supply side is only around one-fourth of the total capacity. This poses a potential problem as Nepal has the capacity to host 3.5 million visitors annually, while the projected number of visitors for 2022 is only 600,000. This underutilization of capacity could result in an inability to meet the demand and provide the high-quality services expected by visitors.

How do you see the issues of connectivity?

Connectivity is another pressing issue that needs immediate attention. The construction of two new international airports in Pokhara and Bhairahawa has been delayed, and there have been no international flights to these destinations. Moreover, Kathmandu International Airport is already crowded and unable to handle additional burdens. Improved connectivity, especially with neighboring countries like China and India, is essential to attract more visitors. Well-connected roads would enable travelers from both neighboring countries to conveniently visit Nepal by bus or automobile.

In conclusion, while there are positive signs of recovery in Nepal's hotel business sector, there are several pressing issues that require immediate attention. Addressing the backlog, promoting investment, and improving connectivity will be vital for the industry's growth and to ensure that Nepal can provide the high-quality services expected by visitors.

Why is the private sector investing so much in star hotels when there is poor connectivity?

Additionally, we need to prioritize the improvement of connectivity to remote areas, as this will help to attract more tourists. Furthermore, I believe that it is essential to collaborate with various stakeholders to create an effective promotional campaign to increase the visibility of the hotel industry in Nepal.

How do you anticipate the upcoming problems in the hotel industry as HAN's president?

As the president of HAN (Hotel Association Nepal), I anticipate several upcoming problems in the hotel industry that need to be addressed. While there are more hotel rooms being built up to international standards, it is crucial to focus on boosting demand and conducting effective promotional efforts. To achieve this, we need to ensure the full operational capacity of the international airports at Bhairwa and Pokhara, which requires communication with China and India for initiating flights.

What do you think about alternative provisions?

Regarding alternative provisions, it was a wise decision to designate the decade 2023 to 2033 as Nepal's decade for developing its tourism industry. Aligning the announcement with an international marketing campaign can greatly benefit the tourism sector. Additionally, the government's initiatives of anticipating one million tourists this year and declaring 2025 as a special year for tourism are



commendable. However, it is essential for the government to establish a monitoring system to ensure the effective execution and progress of these programs, involving both the government and the private sector.

What do you have to say in huge investment of private sector in Bhairwaa?

The large investments being made by the private sector in Bhairawa, demonstrate faith in the potential of Nepal's tourism industry. With numerous Indian and Chinese travelers, even a small percentage of tourists attracted to Nepal could lead to fully booked hotels and facilities. However, the limited operation of infrastructure, such as roads and airports, remains a challenge that requires government involvement and investment.

How many rooms are there in the hotel industry in Nepal?

These are currently 3.5 million rooms available in the hotel industry in Nepal indicating that there are around 10,000 beds available. Of these, approximately 5000 are located in Kathmandu. This indicates that there is currently enough space available.

How do you feel about the 2023 budget's increase of taxes for five-star luxury hotels?

Regarding the 2023 budget's increase of taxes for five-star luxury hotels, I believe that imposing further taxes on the hospitality sector at a time when hotels are just starting to recover from the impacts of the pandemic is not ideal. It could discourage potential investors and negatively affect the industry's growth. I hope the government reconsiders this provision and amends it accordingly.

What do you see for the next four years as Pres-

INTERVIEW

ident of HAN?

Whatever the intention, our association must follow the constitution and I must work in accordance with the charter. According to the charter, the association should succeed for its member organizations, and I must adhere to. Our sector needs to grow stronger and make a contribution to the national economy. These are the four principles that I must adhere to.

What do you need to do?

In order to achieve this, there are many things I



need to accomplish as we emerge from the Covid-19 scenario. Numerous international groups have submitted suggestions, some of which mention networking. I will also lobby the government to change the law to include, as we have not yet received the same facilities and concessions that other industries have received, since we are classified as a service industry. For instance, the industry pays substantially less for power than other sectors do. The standard tariff is being paid. I am confident that I can make some audible effects for the industry in the future.

What do you think of the most recent court ruling eliminating service taxes?

It initially caused confusion, but things are now settling down. The larger hotels are trying to retain staff by offering certain benefits. Unfortunately, the small hotels are left without any help. To turn a profit, the hotel needs to be at least half full, yet the occupancy rate is currently under 20%.

What are the most pressing issues?

The main issue is the bank. We are denied government facilities and concessions offered to the bank because we are not recognized as an industry. Hotels are unable to cover their debts, including interest and banks are pressuring them to make a payment. We are having a very difficult time and we also ask the Nepal Rastra Bank to take it into account. Some hotels in Bhairawa and Pokhara have been unable to operate and they have gone to the district administration to hand over the keys.

Why did investors hurriedly invest in five-star hotels without researching the market or providing any justification? Who is to blame for this?

There were high expectations for drawing more tourists from Southeast Asia, India, and China after the opening of the new airport in Bhairawa. As a result, many hotel owners rushed to build new hotels which seemed achievable. However, it is the government's failure to operate the airport that is to blame. We have an ample Nepali workforce and the hotel industry should be considered one. Numerous things are unreasonable, the government has been informed by us, yet nothing has happened thus far.

What is our daily flying capacity?

Even our own national flag airline can currently transport tourists with ease. However, the managerial side is lacking. With just a small intervention in the construction of the parallel taxi lane, the existing capacity of TIA could be significantly increased. Yet, we haven't taken any action.

How do you see the recent court decision on service charges?

The recent court ruling eliminating service taxes initially caused confusion, but it is gradually settling down. Larger hotels are taking measures to retain their employees, but small hotels face challenges without any compensation. As a result of the current low occupancy rates and financial strains, hotels are suffering in significant losses, as they still have to meet salary obligations and pay social security.

How do you see the increasing number of home stay in Kathmandu?

The presence of unauthorized home stay businesses in urban areas poses challenges as they operate without adhering to regulations and do not contribute revenue and taxes like upscale hotels. It is essential to enforce regulations and end the practice of home stays in cities to ensure fair competition and support the revenue generation of starred hotels.

How does the addition of new lodging options in Pokhara and Kathmandu impact the operations of starred hotels?

Currently, the issue arises from the fact that we pay taxes and follow all rules and regulations while there is nothing comparable for home stays. We must, however, play on the same field. Huge revenue is being lost by the government.

What role can Nepal Tourism Board play?

The NTB plays a crucial role in handling the promotion of tourism. However, it is unfortunate that they have been inactive in this regard. Local authorities should take action to encourage and support NTB.

A Tale Of Two Young Nepali Girls Looking For Jobs Abroad



BY: LUCIE CHABRILLAT-BLESES

A Story About Two Young Nepali Girls demonstrated how miserable the employment market is for the younger generation at a time when everyone is talking about the current trends of young Nepalese fleeing the nation.

“Finding employment is particularly difficult for therapists. I’ll travel abroad for more education and a more stable job because of this. In Nepal, the topic of therapists is still taboo. It is considered improper to seek therapy when necessary. Psychology students Sanjeeta and Prasansa worry about their future careers.

When you need a therapist in Nepal, it can still be difficult to find one. Although initially perceived as a source of shame, the local community cannot afford such a luxury. Therapy sessions are rather expensive.

“I desired to engage in counseling. I searched for a decent location. They informed me that I would pay Rs. 2000 for a single session and Rs. 1800 for each subsequent session, which is pretty expensive for me and many other individuals. according to Prasansa Khadka, a psychology student in Kathmandu. In Nepal, seeing a therapist is actually quite uncommon. Although the issue is somewhat open in several nations.

Psychologists, psychoanalysts, and even hypnotherapists are not popular in Nepal since they are seen as time and money wasters.

In fact, seeking out a specialist with whom we may share our most private thoughts is seen as being weak and psychologically unwell. Additionally, it would be seen as a dishonor in particular by the entourage. “In our nation, few people take mental illness seriously. It would only be better if more people started coming out and began receiving counseling and treatment. Many young people in developing nations like ours experience mental health problems

like sadness, anxiety, over thinking, panic attacks, etc.

Sanjeeta Gartaula, a psychology student, adds that although it won’t be simple, there are many opportunities for therapists in our nation. Although Nepal currently has a large portion of this industry closed, many students plan to work in psychology after graduation. Finding a school that offers a psychology course is not particularly difficult; nonetheless, students appear to be more concerned about the actuality of their post-graduation options. Prasansa affirms, “It’s particularly difficult for a therapist to get a job.

I’ll travel abroad for more education and a more stable job because of this. In Nepal, it is still challenging to find therapists nowadays. Additionally, there are many misconceptions about the topic of psychiatric diseases in particular, and this is especially true

in rural areas. It is true that one of the biggest obstacles to treating these diseases is the lack of access to professional structures in the fields of psychology and psychiatry.

The lack of development of these institutions and behaviors is further highlighted by the issue of Nepalese religion and culture. Even today, it is customary to speak about shamans, religious healers, or to visit meditation facilities. In particular, access to Vipassana meditation, which provides an alternative to the need to satisfy a craving, is common. Prasansa maintains optimism and has faith that the situation will change in the near future.

“I think the field of psychology has a bright future since this generation needs therapy and is more conscious of mental health. After a while, I believe it would be normal for Nepalese who experienced trauma as children to seek counselling.

She is an intern from France



EU'S Erasmus Mundus Scholarship

Enhancing Capacity of Nepali Youth

53 Nepalese students received Erasmus+ scholarships from the European Union to study in Europe at a time when Nepal needs to improve the capacity of the younger generation.

By A CORRESPONDENT

53 young Nepali students were overjoyed to get Erasmus Mundus Scholarships, which will allow them to pursue further education at renowned colleges in Europe.

Young people from Nepal learned how to adapt to new circumstances during pre-departure orientation while gathered in the grounds of the European Union Embassy.

Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO) for the new scholarship holders of Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree (EMJMD) batch 2023-2025 was organized on July 14 by the Delegation of the European Union to Nepal and the Erasmus Mundus Association Nepal.

Nona Deprez, the ambassador of the European Union to Nepal, who will end her three-year term there in a few weeks, appears pleased and delighted to welcome 53 Nepalese youth who have been chosen to receive Erasmus Mundus Scholarships to study in Europe.

Three years ago, when she arrived in Nepal as ambassador, the COVID-19 Pandemic was in full swing. Despite COVID-19, ties between the EU and Nepal have reached a new high in all areas, and the EU's assistance in boosting youth capability and capacity is very important.

53 Nepalese students were once again chosen for the scholarship to receive a top-notch education in Europe. Her remarks demonstrate her delight given her devotion to Nepal and Nepali young.

"I am indeed very pleased to share that Nepal is among the top 20 recipients of the prestigious Erasmus plus scholarship globally," EU Ambassador Deprez said in a statement welcoming the scholarship recipients. "I would like to congratulate the students for their outstanding academic achievements."

The Erasmus scholarship, according to Ambassador Deprez, is excep-

tional in that it enables degree mobility and the acceptance of joint or multiple diplomas within the EU and outside of it. She wished the scholarship recipients the best of luck on their fulfilling academic journeys and hoped to see them return to

stry, Environment Technology & Engineering, Urban Studies, Media, Arts & Culture, Women's & Gender Studies, Documentary Film Making, and Plant Breeding.

The European Union is the



Nepal to help close the country's human resource gap.

She observed that since 30 out of the 53 students receiving the scholarship are from the Bagmati province there is a glaring need to spread the word far and wide across Nepal about this unique opportunity that is open to all.

Altogether 53 Nepalese students- 27 girls and 26 boys have been awarded full scholarships for the period 2023-2025 and they will spend 2 years fulltime in prestigious European Universities and beyond to pursue their Master's Degrees in various fields. During the Pre-Departure Orientation, the students got useful tips and advice for living and studying in Europe.

The main subject areas of their choice are Cyber Security, Global For-

largest global donor in education with its Erasmus+ program. The new Erasmus programmes' budget for 2021-2027 is totalling 26.2 billion euros, compared with 14.7 billion euros for the previous seven-year cycle of 2014-2020. With this very substantially increased budget, Erasmus+ will be even more inclusive, more digital, and more green!

More than 800 Nepalese students have benefitted from the EU's Erasmus+ Scholarship Programme. The Erasmus+ scholarships also provide opportunities for Europeans to undertake short-term studies and teaching in various universities across Nepal.

Prashant Mishra from the Madhesh province, who has received the scholarship for Master's Degree in Sustainable Transportation and Electric-

cal Power System said, “ I would like to thank the European Union and the Erasmus+ programme for giving me this opportunity to attend some of the best universities in the world as a Erasmus scholar. Coming from a province with the lowest HDI scores in the country, it is not always easy for us to get the same opportunities as students from other provinces. That’s why being one of the recipients of the full scholarship means a lot to me and will definitely help me achieve my career goals.” Mishra is going to Italy for his Master level studies.

Another Erasmus+ Nepal awardee Pratibha Pant said, “I am from Sudurpaschim, one of the most remote and underdeveloped provinces in the country. My province may lack many things but one thing it has is young people like me who are willing to help develop our province in a sustainable and equitable manner. This Erasmus+ scholarship will bring me one step closer to achieving that goal, so I would like to thank the European Union for giving me this opportunity. Panta is going to Italy to study Economic Policy Analysis.”

Niranjan Khadka, Country Representative of Erasmus Mundus Association-Nepal, shared EMA Nepal’s current activities and plans. He said, “We have been holding information sessions for prospective applicants of the Erasmus scholarships in different cities of Nepal with the goal of making the scholarship known and accessible to all. We are also equally focusing on strengthening the networking of EMA Nepal and building it as a common platform to share each other’s experience and opportunity,” said Khadka.

Representatives of the EU Member State Embassies based in Kathmandu and New Delhi also participated in the pro-

gramme and answered the queries of the students who are looking forward to begin their studies in different countries in Europe. Those present were Ms. Liisa Ushchanov-Eskelinen, chargée d’ affaires, Embassy of Finland, Kathmandu and Mr Filip Dufek, third Secretary, Embassy of the Czech Republic, New Delhi, Mr. Žymantas MOZŪRAITIS, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania, New Delhi, Ms Gisela Kristoferitsch, Deputy Head of Mission, Austrian Embassy, New Delhi and Mr. Ivan Vassallo, Deputy Head of Mission, High Commission of the Republic of Malta, New Delhi.

In addition to the Erasmus+ scholarships, the EU Delegation in Nepal has been providing ongoing support to the Government of Nepal/Ministry of Education, Science and Technology on Quality Education and Technical and Vocational Training.

Education has been a key component of the EU’s financial assistance to Nepal since the late 1990s through the provision of sector budget support. The EU along with other donors supported the Government of Nepal to complete the School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP-2009-2016) and currently it has been supporting the School Education Sector Plan (SESP), which aims at guiding the reform efforts of the government in line with Nepal’s vision to graduate from least



TVET reform entails strengthening and more effectively implementing a TVET policy responsive to labour market needs, as well as piloting and integrating the Public Private Partnership (PPP) approach in three key economic sectors: agriculture, construction, and hospitality and tourism, in order to offer opportunities for promoting the transition to a greener, climate-resilient and low-emission economy. The TVET-PP aims at reducing youth unemployment by improving access to relevant and high-quality TVET, which will increase their employability and provide them with better economic opportunities in the future.

The EU TVET programme nearing completion has many outcomes, among them, the TVET Sector Strategic Plan for the next ten years is the most significant one in terms of sustainability and lasting impacts. The Ministry of Education received assistance from the EU for the rigours comprehensive analysis of the TVET sector that served as the foundation for the Strategic Plan.

In her latest interview to The Himalayan Times, Ambassador Deprez said, “Nepal is an amazing country. We have supported Nepal’s overall development policies nation-wide but we also support specific programmes in the provinces where HDI indicators are weak and where more support is needed. I have travelled more to Karnali, Sudurpaschim, and Madhes provinces where we support such specific programmes. I have met elected representatives in those provinces.”

Her statements speak volume about her affection to Nepal.



developed country status. Education is one of the major pillars of development cooperation for EU’s ongoing multiannual indicative programme (2021-2027) for Nepal.

Similarly, the EU support in

सुशासन कायम गरौं

- सार्वजनिक सेवा प्रवाह गर्दा सम्बन्धित व्यक्ति र निकाय जिम्मेवार बनाौं।
- विकास निर्माणका कार्यमा नागरिक निगरानी बढाऔं।
- विकास योजना तर्जुमा, कार्यान्वयन र अनुगमनको प्रक्रियामा जनसहभागिता जुटाऔं।
- सार्वजनिक सेवालाई सरल, पारदर्शी र जवाफदेही बनाऔं।
- सार्वजनिक सेवा तथा विकास निर्माणबारे सूचनाको हक प्रयोग गरी जानकारी मागौं।



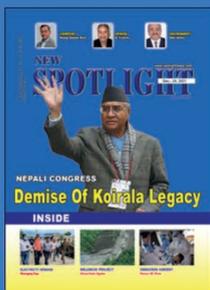
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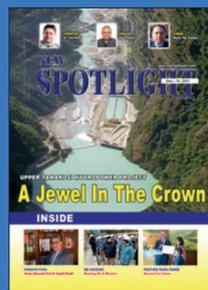
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VOL. 15, No. 10, Dec. 24, 2021 (Poush 09, 2078) Publisher and Editor: Keshab Prasad Poudel Online Register Number: DOI 584/074-75



VOL. 15, No. 09, Dec. 10, 2021 (Mangshir 24, 2078) Publisher and Editor: Keshab Prasad Poudel Online Register Number: DOI 584/074-75



VOL. 15, No. 08, Nov. 19, 2021 (Mangshir 03, 2078) Publisher and Editor: Keshab Prasad Poudel Online Register Number: DOI 584/074-75



VOL. 15, No. 07, Oct. 29, 2021 (Kartik 12, 2078) Publisher and Editor: Keshab Prasad Poudel Online Register Number: DOI 584/074-75

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NEWS MAGAZINE

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NIMB को योजना
गज्जब ६

। कसरी बनाइयो ।



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