



**OPINION**  
Dipak Gyawali



**VIEWPOINT**  
Arup Rajouria



**FORUM**  
Dr. Prabin Manandhar

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# NEW SPOTLIGHT

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## NEPAL-INDIA JWC MEET **A Breakthrough**

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UNITY OF THE RULING ALLIANCE



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**Notes From The Editor**



The cabinet has formed a committee to investigate the week-long dispute between Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and the business community regarding power tariff dues for dedicated and trunk line services. The probe committee, led by former Supreme Court Justice Girish Chandra Lal, will recommend a solution to resolve the issue. Additionally, the cabinet has instructed line agencies to restore power supply to industries whose service was cut off due to long pending dues. NEA has asked industrialists to pay their due amount, as directed by the Auditor General and Public Account Committee. The Auditor General's annual report referred to the due amount as an amount to recover. NEA issued a notice to disconnect industries that did not pay the due. Currently, there is temporary respite for all, but the legal issues surrounding the due amount remain unresolved. It is unclear how a commission formed by the cabinet can recommend suggestions for constitutional matters. Some have attempted to frame the dispute as an individual issue between NEA and the business community. However, as this is purely a legal issue, individual interests and concerns have no bearing on it. This week's cover story will focus on the Nepal-India Joint Water Commission meeting and the decision to expand electricity trade between the two countries. We covered important issues such as the unity of coalition partners in national assembly elections and its impact on domestic politics.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keshab Poudel'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Keshab Poudel**

Editor

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# Embracing The ‘Empty Chair: Advancing Global Inclusivity And Equitable Development



BY: DR. PRABIN MANANDHAR

The essence of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) lies in the commitment to “leave no one behind,” requiring concerted efforts to reach individuals caught in situations of conflict, disaster, displacement, vulnerability, and risk. Yet, the translation of this principle into tangible action, encompassing inclusive participation, decision-making, and equitable benefit-sharing, demands further attention and implementation on a global scale.

At the core of the mission for inclusivity lies in the crucial need to amplify the voices of the most marginalized. However, reality often obstructs the representation of these marginalized groups alongside influential powerholders and decision-makers in significant dialogues.

Let me introduce the concept of the “empty chair.” Reflecting on my insights gained during early 2000s doctoral interviews, I came to recognize the profound significance even in silence - a silence that signifies a “missing voice” warranting consideration in qualitative analyses. This concept serves as a reminder of an absent presence at crucial national and global discussions on developmental agendas. The symbolic “empty chair” persists in international summits, governmental conferences, donor assemblies, and sessions involving various international and non-governmental organizations.

Globally, the journey toward inclusivity faces multifaceted challenges. While diverse countries and regions grapple with their unique landscapes, the overarching aim remains consistent—to ensure that no one is excluded from the development trajectory.

It is heartening to witness individuals from various marginalized communities gaining representation in global forums. However, mere representation does not guarantee the authentic inclusion of the most marginalized in the decision-making processes.

We urge elected officials and leaders - representatives, policymakers, and influencers to acknowledge the symbolic “empty chair” in all deliberations. This vacant seat signifies the voice of the most marginalized, those furthest from access, those severely affected by local and global crises, and those silenced by systemic oppressions and marginalization.

Embracing a positive outlook toward the “empty chair” is pivotal, recognizing it as the most critical presence in the room. This involves empathizing with those represented by the “empty chair,” understanding their needs and barriers, and recalibrating strategies from this perspective. Additionally, reshaping perceptions about the capabilities of the most marginalized is essential, acknowledging their invaluable potential contributions to global society.

We anticipate innovative and inclusive leadership from national and global decision-makers, fostering a sense of belonging for every individual, including the metaphorical “empty chair.” This commitment ensures that no one is excluded and that everyone, irrespective of background or circumstance, has equitable opportunities to thrive in a globally inclusive world – a visual reminder to decision makers!

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

## NEWSNOTES

### Nepalese Ambassador To Switzerland Subedi Presented His Credential

Ram Prasad Subedi presented the Letters of Credence to Viola Amherd, President of the Swiss Confederation, accrediting him as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Nepal to the Swiss Confederation amidst a special ceremony organized at the Federal Palace in Bern, Switzerland. Upon arrival at the Palace, the Ambassador was accorded Guard of Honour.

Ambassador Subedi was granted an audience by



the President Amherd where he conveyed greetings and best wishes from the President Ramchandra

Paudel and the Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to the Swiss President's personal health and happiness as well as for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of the people of Switzerland.

While underscoring the excellent bilateral relations between Nepal and Switzerland, Ambassador Subedi expressed his commitment to work towards further strengthening bilateral ties and expanding the areas of cooperation. He further elaborated about the opportunities to work together in the areas of trade, tourism and investment. He also acknowledged the Swiss support through Swiss Development Cooperation in Nepal, including in the peace process.

President Amherd while echoing the similar sentiments stated that Nepal and Switzerland enjoy longstanding friendly relations and reaffirmed the strong bonds of goodwill and friendship between the two peoples, and assured the Ambassador of full cooperation in the discharge of his duties.

The Credentials Ceremony was attended by Senior Officials of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs as well as spouse Jyoti Rijal Subedi, Deputy Chief of Mission Paras Pandit and First Secretary Amar Rai.

Later in the evening, Ambassador Ram Prasad Subedi called on Alexandre Fasel, State Secretary of Swiss Confederation at the Federal Palace in Bern. They discussed about exploring the opportunities for working together for the meeting of high-level political leaders, holding regular meetings of bilateral consultation mechanism, promoting economic cooperation and cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts.

### Prime Minister Hasina's Party Secured Two Third Ma-

### jority In Bangladesh General Elections

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League Party secured two third majority in the elections held yesterday. This is her fourth consecutive victory. As predicted, Awami League has won a record fourth straight term in an election that saw the second lowest voter turnout since the restoration of democracy in 1991.

The turnout was 27.15 percent at 3:00pm, but after voting closed at 4:00pm, the Election Commission estimated the final tally could stand at around 40 percent, a 13 percent jump in an hour.

The 2018 election, dubbed as a "night-time election," saw more than 80 percent vote cast.

The turnout in the controversial February 1996 polls was 26.5 percent, the lowest in Bangladesh's history. Unofficial results from the Election Commission as of 3:00am today show 162 AL picks and 50 AL independents have won the race.

At least three state ministers and 14 incumbent MPs lost heavy defeat at the hands of the rivals from their own party.

Jatiya Party bagged 11 seats, while AL's alliance partners Workers Party and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) one each. With this win, Sheikh Hasina is poised to become the longest serving prime minister in Bangladesh since independence. Earlier, she was prime minister from 1996-2001.

Following BNP's boycott threat in the lead-up to the election, the Hasina administration undertook a series of strategies that allegedly include creating pressure and a failed attempt to cut a deal with BNP to bring it to the polls.



Subsequently, Hasina went for a tight-fisted seat-sharing with Jatiya Party and other allies, and invited essentially any and all her party leaders and activists to join the race as independent candidates in efforts to make the election look participatory and competitive.

As part of the deal, AL gave up 26 seats for JP and six for its 14-party alliance partners. Of the six, three went to JSD, two to Workers Party and one to Jatiya Party (Manju).

### Sub-variant of COVID-19 confirmed in Nepal

The Ministry of Health and Population has con-



confirmed the spread of the new sub-variant JN.1 of COVID-

ID-19 in Nepal. This sub-variant has been observed spreading in some countries in recent weeks. In a press statement issued on Monday, the Ministry urged everyone to exercise precautionary measures following the detection of sub-variant JN.1. Dr. Prakash Budhathoki, the Ministry's spokesperson, informed the RSS that seven out of 16 samples collected from various parts of the country and different age groups confirmed the presence of sub-variant JN.1 of Omicron.

The Ministry emphasizes the need to avoid crowds and gatherings, maintain physical distance, continue using masks, and regularly wash hands with soap and water."

**Government Forms Panel To Probe Power Tariff Dues**

The Council of Ministers on Tuesday appointed 25 persons in the National Development Council.

The appointees come from amongst the representatives of the District Coordination Committees (DDCs), local governments and other agencies. A cabinet meeting held today took this decision, according to the PM's secretariat.

Likewise, the government has decided to announce martyrs to different persons whose names were missed in the Nepal Gazette in the past and made corrections to the list of martyrs announced in different dates.

Similarly, the cabinet approved the resignation tendered by Chairperson of Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA) Purushottam Khanal.

As decided by the cabinet meeting, NTA Board of Directors Nabaraj Adhikari has been assigned as the Acting Chair until next decision as per the Rule 3 (A) of the Nepal Telecommunications Authority Regulations, according to the PM's secretariat.

For the appointment of the new NTA Chair, a panel has been formed under the leadership of the Secretary at Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.



Furthermore, the cabinet meeting today formed a committee to probe the issues of power tariff dues related to dedicated and trunk line services. Former Supreme Court Justice Girish Chandra Lal shall lead the probe panel.

The cabinet meeting has also directed the line agencies to ensure power supply in the industries whose power supply was cut off due to the long pending dues

**Melamchi Water Will Be Supplied In A Week In Kathmandu**

The water processed by the Melamchi Drinking Water Project, located in Sindupalchowk district, is all set to make a comeback in the federal capital, with repair work in its final stages.

The project had suffered significant damage due to a destructive flood in the Melamchi river in June 2021, particularly in the estuary area.

Padam Bahadur Kunwar, the project's Senior Engineer, reported that 70% of the repair work in the estuary area had been completed.

On Wednesday, a delegation of stakeholders conducted an on-site inspection of the work at the source of the Melamchi water supply project in Helambu municipality-1 of Sindupalchowk.

During the visit, Senior Engineer Kunwar stated that efforts were underway to ensure water diversion in line with the government's targets. Member of Parliament Amresh Kumar Singh, a member of the delegation,



emphasized that the government should prioritize the Melamchi drinking water project and ensure a year-round water supply to the residents of Kathmandu.

Suresh Acharya, Secretary at the Ministry of Water Supply, affirmed that maintenance work is being carried out to provide a sustainable water supply to Kathmandu.

The delegation also included Balananda Paudel, Chair of the National Natural Resources and Fiscal Commission, Fiscal Commission member Judda Gurung, Kamalraj Shrestha, Director General of the Department of Water Supply, and Zakki Ahmed Ansari, Executive Director of the Melamchi Water Supply Development Board.

## BUSINESS BRIEF

### FNCCI President Dhakal Urges Indian Investors to Invest in Nepal's Booming Hydel And Tourism Sectors

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, the President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), has called upon Indian investors to



explore the vast potential of Nepal's thriving hydropower and tourism sectors. Speaking at the India Nepal Business Forum in Kath-

mandu on Monday, Dhakal emphasized the abundant investment opportunities available in Nepal's rapidly growing tourism industry.

Dhakal highlighted the strategic advantages of investing in Nepal's tourism infrastructure. He underlined the recent progress in Nepal's tourist infrastructure, with the opening of two new international airports in Bhairahawa and Pokhara, in addition to the established Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu. He pointed out the ample investment opportunities in various tourism-related sectors, including hotels, cable cars, theme parks, adventure tourism, sports tourism, and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) Tourism.

"The tourism sector in Nepal is experiencing significant growth, and we invite Indian investors to explore and capitalize on the diverse opportunities it presents. With the new international airports, we are well-positioned to welcome a surge in tourist arrivals, creating a conducive environment for profitable investments," stated Dhakal.

He also stressed the need for collaboration beyond traditional sectors, urging Indian investors to consider emerging areas such as education, healthcare, agriculture, and manufacturing. The FNCCI President expressed confidence that such investments would not only contribute to the economic development of Nepal but also strengthen the economic ties between the two neighboring nations.

As the India Nepal Business Forum continues, Dhakal's call for Indian investors to venture into Nepal's burgeoning tourism sector echoes the shared commitment to fostering economic cooperation and collaboration between the two nations.

Recalling the recent agreement between Nepal and India on power trade, Dhakal stated that the agreement to trade up to 10,000 megawatts of Nepali power into the Indian market would open up huge prospects for investment in Nepal's hydropower sector. He invited Indian investors to join the upcoming Nepal Investment Summit.

He further asked for the support of the Indian Chamber of Commerce to form the BIMSTEC Business Forum to promote business and the economy in the South Asia region.

### Himalaya Airlines Becomes The First Registered IOSA Operator In Nepal

Himalaya Airlines, a leading international carrier of Nepal has paved the way for elevating the safety standards in Nepal's Aviation sector by becoming the country's first and the only IOSA Registered Operator. The Airlines received its milestone achievement with the issuance of IOSA certification by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) on December 28, 2023 with the validity until March 03, 2025.

The certificate reads "Himalaya Airlines Pvt. Ltd. has been successfully registered as an IOSA Operator under the IATA Operational Safety Audit program (IOSA), in accordance with the provisions of the IOSA Program Manual."

The IOSA certification for Himalaya Airlines confirms that Himalaya Airlines adheres to the highest safety standards and best practices, providing passengers with a secure and reliable travel experience. As the first and only IOSA certified airline in Nepal, Himalaya Airlines gains inter-



national recognition for its commitment to safety. The rigorous IOSA audit process also evaluates and enhances various aspects of H9's operations, leading to certifiable efficiency, risk management, and overall performance. Addressing the media, Vijay Shrestha, Vice President of Himalaya Airlines, expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "This milestone signifies a positive shift in Nepal's aviation industry. We are proud to lead by example, setting new benchmarks for safety and operational excellency. This certification not only validates our ongoing efforts to maintain the highest safety standards but also posi-



tions us as a trusted airline in the global aviation community. We look forward to continuing to raise the bar in the years to come.”

Deputy Director General of Aviation Safety & Security Regulation Directorate Nabina Karmacharya remarked, “On behalf of Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal, I commend Himalaya Airlines for their exceptional dedication to safety leading to the prestigious IOSA certification. This accomplishment of Himalaya has definitely helped in reinforcing trust and confidence amongst the passengers, contributing significantly towards the growth and development of air travel in the country.”

The IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) is a globally recognized and standardized audit program for airlines developed by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) to assess the operational management and control systems of an airline with the primary goal of enhancing operational safety and promoting a common safety standard within the aviation industry.

This process involves an audit of an airline’s policies, procedures, and practices. It includes both document reviews and on-site assessments. After successful completion of Audit and compliance of all findings IOSA certification is provided to airlines. IOSA registration is thus seen as a mark of safety excellence, and is also the prerequisite for IATA membership.

### **CNI Asks Government To Make Legal Reforms**

The Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI) has submitted a detailed report along with recommendations to be carried out in the legal framework for the country’s economic development.

The CNI said that President Rajesh Kumar Agrawal has submitted the report to Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’ on Monday. The report was also shared with Speaker Devraj Ghimire and Chief Secretary of the government, Dr Baikuntha Aryal.

The CNI has recommended amendment to 28 Acts and Regulations, scrapping of five Acts and unveiling three new ones.



The CNI has stated that reforms in the law were inevitable for making economy robust.

According to Agrawal, the research report was prepared following intensive consul-

tations with the legal experts, industrialists, stakeholders, thematic experts and others. Comparative study was also conducted by taking references from different countries.

Agrawal shared that the recommendations are related to Industrial Business Act, 2076; Industrial Business Regulations, 2078; Income Tax Act, 2058; Company Act, 2063; Act relating to Act, 2021; Forest Act, 2076; Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act, 2075 and others

### **Tatopani Customs Succeeds To Collect More Revenue Than Target**

Tatopani Customs Office has collected more revenue than the target in the first five months of the current fiscal year. According to Surya Prasad Kafle, customs officer of Tatopani Dry Port Customs Office, 168 per cent revenue of the target has been collected from mid-July to mid-December of the current fiscal year.

In the first five months of the current fiscal year, the Office has collected revenue of Rs. 3.886 billion against a target of Rs. 1.949 billion. The Office has collected around Rs. 616 million in the month of Shrawan,



Rs. 768 million in the month of Bhadra, Rs. 1.148 billion in the month of Ashoj, Rs. 752 million in the month of Kartik and Rs. 1.18 billion in the month of Mangsir of the current fiscal year.

He said that due to the import of goods such as apples, pears, garlic, onions, walnuts, ready-made clothes, roll cloths, vehicles, cars, microbuses, scooters, among others, the revenue is being collected in excess of the target.

The handicrafts, mattresses and other items were exported from Nepal to China on September 1, 2023. He said that no goods were exported to China after that.

### **Third Investment Summit rescheduled for April 28-29**

The Third International Investment Summit, initially scheduled for April 21-22, has been rescheduled to take place on April 28 and 29. Sushil Bhatta, the Chief Executive Officer of the Investment Board and member secretary of the Investment Summit Steering Committee,

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informed the RSS that the date for the Summit has been rescheduled. The revised schedule is set to be endorsed during the second meeting of the Steering Committee at



the Finance Ministry today.

The Steering Committee, led by Finance Minister Prakash Sharan Mahat, is responsible for approving the schedule and format of the Summit, identifying areas for policy reforms to enhance the investment atmosphere, and overseeing all aspects of the Summit. Its members include ministers from various sectors such as foreign affairs, energy, water resources and irrigation; physical infrastructure and transport; culture, tourism and civil aviation; industry; agriculture; urban development; federal affairs; and general administration. It also includes the vice-chair of the National Planning Commission, chief secretary, governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, the finance secretary, industry secretary, and representatives from the private sector.

The first meeting of the Steering Committee, held on November 26, directed the government to facilitate discussions with potential investors, identify likely investors, call for project proposals, and secure their endorsements. In preparation for the Summit, the Implementation Committee and the Technical Committee have been formed to undertake legal and structural reforms and to inform investors about the event. The Implementation Committee, coordinated by the chief secretary, recently issued a circular through the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration to province and local levels, seeking details of viable projects to be presented as showcase projects during the Summit.

### IPPAN Calls The Nepal-India Agreement A Milestone In Energy Trade

Independent Power Producers' Association, Nepal (IPPAN) has welcomed the long-term electricity trade agreement signed between Nepal and India to export 10,000 megawatts of electricity in the next 10 years.

Speaking at a press conference on Sunday, Pres-

ident of IPPAN Ganesh Karki expressed his belief that the private sector of Nepal can also benefit greatly from the long-term electricity trade agreement signed between Nepal and India during Nepal visit of Minister for External Affairs of India Dr. S. Jaishankar on January 4 and 5.

He said that the long-term electricity trade agreement, which will allow 10,000 megawatts of electricity to be exported to India every day in the next 10 years, is historic and welcome. Since 1971, electricity has been exchanged between Nepal and India, and a Power Trade Agreement (PTA) was signed in 2014. Based on the same agreement, up to 500 megawatts of electricity is being exported to India for a short period of time from Nepal.

He said that the private sector would also contribute significantly to the export of 10,000 megawatts of electricity. In the current fiscal year, electricity worth more than Rs. 15 billion was exported from Nepal to India, and a large part of it was hydropower projects built by the private sector.

Along with this agreement, the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) which is currently being held by the Nepal Electricity Authority should be fully opened and licenses should be given to the private sector for electricity export, said the IPPAN. It said that the banks and financial institutions should increase investment in energy, and the government should announce more concessions for energy



production. It demanded that the government should be more active and move immediately to solve the administrative and procedural problems. President Karki said that the agreement would create important opportunities in Nepal's energy development and open more doors. He said, "It is impossible to export so much electricity without the involvement of the private sector. The private sector is also ready to achieve the goal of electricity export."

### NIMB's New Branch Opened In Simara Of Madhesh Province

Nepal Investment Mega Bank Limited has launched a new branch located at Ward No. 02, Simra Road, Bara District Simra Sub-Metropolitan City from

## BUSINESS BRIEF



Wednesday.

Along with this, there are 21 branches of the bank in Madhesh province. The Chief Executive Officer of the Bank Mr. Jyoti Prakash Pandey inaugurated the Simra branch.

While inaugurating, Jyoti Prakash Pandey, Chief Executive Officer, said that financial transactions will now be done through banks, so it will be easy for the residents of that area. He said that banking facilities will be easily available to consumers and industrialists living in Simra and surrounding areas who are out of reach of banking services.

The head of Simra branch of the bank said that the bank will provide effective services to the customers through this branch. At present, the bank has been providing facilities through 262 branch offices and 63 extension counters.

### **British Council Nepal Celebrates 100 Years Of The UK-Nepal Friendship Treaty**

British Council Nepal Celebrates 65 Years of Strengthening Cultural and Educational Ties in Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the UK-Nepal Friendship Treaty.

The British Council Nepal is commemorating sixty-five years of collaboration, partnership and impact with an exhibition at its London head office. This milestone coincides with the centennial celebration of the UK-Nepal Friendship Treaty, underlining the enduring diplomatic ties between the two nations.

Rob Fenn, the British Ambassador to Nepal, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to acknowledge this milestone. "The relationship between the UK and Nepal has

endured, and the British Council Nepal has played a pivotal role in strengthening cultural and educational ties between our two nations," said H.E. Rob Fenn.

'The British Council's exhibition highlights cultural and educational exchanges between Nepal and the UK, reflecting on the past and indicating prospects for future collaborations. This exhibition aims to broaden and strengthen friendship, collaboration, and cooperation between the two nations against the backdrop of a bilateral relationship spanning over two centuries.' - H.E. Gyan Chandra Adhikari, Nepal Ambassador to the UK.

Established 65 years ago as part of the diplomatic relationship between the UK and Nepal, the British Council Nepal began with the inauguration of the first British Library. Since then, it has become a key and trusted partner for the Government of Nepal in educational and cultural reforms, impacting millions of lives across the country.

Shahida MacDougall, the Country Director of the British Council Nepal, reflected on the journey from the establishment of the first British Library to the present day. "Six decades later, we have reached millions of lives by working with individuals and institutions," she noted, emphasising the transformative impact the British Coun-



cil Nepal has had on Nepal's educational and cultural landscape.

The London head office exhibition pays tribute to the British Council's efforts and significant contributions in the education and culture sectors. Over the past 65 years, the British Council Nepal has fostered partnerships, facilitated collaborations and implemented programmes that have left a lasting impact on the communities it serves.

The exhibition is open for public till 1 April 2024 at 1 Redman Pl, London E20 1JQ, United Kingdom

# Remembering An Inspiring Karma Yogi



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

Strange indeed are the ways of Karma: my link with Toni Hagen started just before I was born till the time he passed away after writing his very last piece for a book *Ropeways in Nepal* that I was editing. My father, who subsequently became Nepal's longest serving attorney general and then law minister, was then subba at Birganj Goswara with added duties of local judge and protocol officer receiving important foreign visitors to Nepal from Raxaul. Toni Hagen arrived in Nepal in 1950 towards the end of the Rana regime to begin his monumental geological journey across the Nepal Himalaya. He was received at the Birganj railway station by my father before being sent on to the last station at Amlekhganj and then (by foot) to Kathmandu. It was a clear day and he remembered Toni Hagen asking what the snow peaks seen from there were called. My father replied with the generic name as would any other Nepali who had not the faintest idea or interest in mountaineering: "Himal", he said.

This was before I was born. My earliest memory of Toni Hagen was around 1956 when as a young school student in St. Xaviers Jawlakhel, our principal Fr. Marshall Moran took a few of us for a walk to nearby Ekanta Kuna where the Swiss Mission's office was located. I remember a bearded Toni Hagen and Fr. Moran with a few others seated around a table with a big cheese wheel in the center. With a kind of a hollow screw, they were extracting cheese bits from the inside, tasting them and plugging the hole back with the waxy rind head. Their conversation made no sense to us, but we were given a small piece to taste: we found it horribly stinky and awful in taste! Strange it is, and call it development or progress, that today I love cheese, especially the more stinky Roquefort variety, with beer!

That first cheese made in Nepal seems to have come from Jiri in Dolakha district where the original Thodung cheese factory had been set up by the Swiss. Jiri valley was on the trekking route from Kathmandu towards Mt. Everest, and the Swiss seem to have fallen in love with it as it reminded them so much of their

own valleys in the Alps. It also symbolized the spirit of Swiss development cooperation in Nepal best described half-jokingly as follows: the Swiss first set up a cheese factory, then realized that a road was needed to transport the cheese to the market; they then proceeded to build the rather expensive (including to maintain) Lamosangu-Jiri road and only subsequently realized that development did not happen just because a road was built. Thus, was born their not very successful Integrated Hill Development Project (IHDP), the head office of which at Dandapakhar was abandoned after it was bombed by the Maoists.

Though without having much personal contact, I did come across the name of Toni Hagen in the late 1980s when I was working on an urban-rural interlinkage research project with the Swiss research firm INFRAS. The Swiss in Nepal were about to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Swiss-Nepal cooperation; and with Nepal reverting back to multiparty democracy, there was a growing debate in Switzerland about what development cooperation was and should be. It had all started in 1951 with the idea of rural development meant to banish both rural impoverishment and rural-to-urban outmigration. However, with almost four decades of development interventions, rural poverty, far from being banished, was increasing and outmigration to city areas was accelerating.

The debate in Switzerland – in which Toni Hagen was an important figure – was polarized between those who thought the way rural development was done should be revised for the better and those who thought it should be forgotten with the focus shifting to urban development. Our research was to understand what the underlying dynamics was in rural-urban interlinkages, and how one affected the other. To do this, we chose an innovative "toad's eye science" method, identifying products that were urban (metal goods) and rural (perishable vegetables and fruits) and followed them up and down the supply and consumption chains to identify balance of trade, technology diffusion, resource colonization, as

well as information and population exchange.

Our assumption was that metallic goods originated in urban areas whereas perishable vegetables came from rural farms. To our surprise, during the course of the research, we encountered a deep-rooted but dying tradition of village metal workers (kamis who made all the agri-implements but were being displaced by imports from India and China) and vegetables that came to rural areas either from urban wholesalers or were grown as per forward supply contracting by those in urban haat bazaars. To make matters worse, national as well as international donor policies were willy-nilly externalizing economic, social, and environmental costs to favour urban areas and rural elites. Even the beneficial-sounding “forest conservation” was biased against rural kamis that made agri-implements (by prohibiting charcoal production they required) and favoured urban traders importing equipment from abroad.

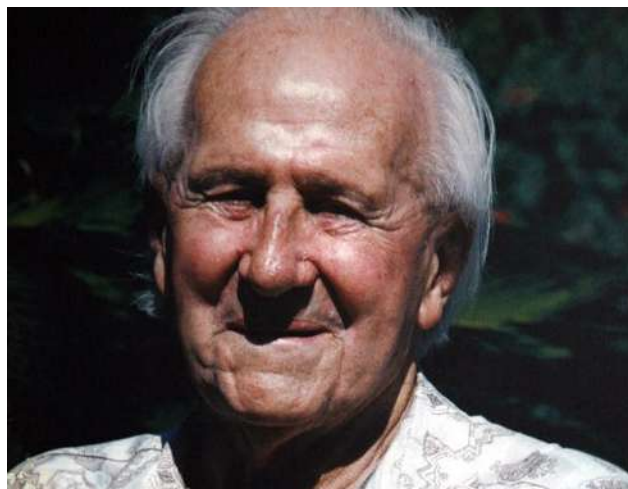
This initial research led me to two further investigations. One was on Re-imagining the Rural-Urban Continuum supported by UK’s NERC, ESRC and DfID which explored the concept of *desakota* (from Bahasa Indonesia meaning neither rural nor urban or both in a mix of institutional strengths). It is an area which is both peri-urban and peri-rural – and dominates much of the Global South – where the hold of traditional rural institutions is in decline but where formal urban regulation is weak, tapering off or even non-existent. That seeming anarchy is an area of tremendous local innovations both social and technical, pointing to the need to not compartmentalize development into water-tight boxes such as rural or urban. These insights are even more important in today’s national Nepali context where the federal governance structure has devalued the concept of “rural” and replaced all rural governance mechanisms such as village development committees (VDCs) by “*palikas*” or municipalities, thus accelerating rural underdevelopment and rural to urban migration.

The second research was on a climate-friendly and mountain-friendly technology, the ropeway or cable car. It began with an attempt to increase the day-time load of micro-hydro plants by using their electricity to ferry goods from valley bottom (*besi*) to villages on hilltops (*gaon*). We selected Rangrung valley bottom in Gorkha district to Barpak village about five hours hike uphill as the pilot site to install a *gaon-besi* goods carrying ropeway. It was to be powered by unused day time electricity from local entrepreneur Bir Bahadur Ghale’s micro-hydro, with the financial support coming from British Ambassador Barney Smith.

When Toni Hagen learned of this, he managed to get hold of an auctioned off Swiss army’s goods-carrying ropeway, which was what was installed in Barpak.

The action research proved that this technology, compared to even the most rudimentary dirt roads in the mountains of Nepal, is three times cheaper, eight times quicker to install, does not gouge mountain slopes leading to landslides, and uses only half the energy (that too clean hydropower) to transport goods than do dirty diesel-burning trucks. It is the best example of a mountain-friendly, climate-friendly and sustainability-friendly technology that, despite having come to Nepal exactly a century ago, is still to find proper place in Nepal’s transport policy. To acknowledge Toni Hagen’s critical contribution to rethinking rural access and rural development in Nepal, the book *Ropeways in Nepal* was dedicated to his memory.

Today, as the Age of (Foreign) Aid is ending and neither the Age of New International Cooperation nor the rethinking development suitable to such a new order has found firm footing, Nepal faces the challenge of redefining its future. In the Age of Climate Change



and the emerging new multipolar world, where new players and new values will define what apt versus mal development should mean, Nepalis will have to go back to their last century of development past to chart the way forward. In doing so, names of foreigners who made Nepal their *karma bhoomi* will stand out: Fr Moran for setting up the first modern English school, Drs Robert and Bethel Flemming for establishing the first modern hospitals, Odd Hoftun for developing Nepal’s hydropower as part of her innate technical capacity building – and Toni Hagen for laying the foundation for earth sciences of the Himalaya.

{This essay will appear in the book Dr Toni Hagen’s Approach on Sustainable Management of Agriculture, Biodiversity and Environment, to be published by Toni Hagen Foundation in February 2024}



## POLITICS

# Unity of the Ruling Alliance

*Despite rebellion and resistance within the ruling alliance, the parties of the alliance shared the seat of the National Assembly.*

By A CORRESPONDNET

With the filing of nominations by the candidates of major political parties including the ruling alliance, the month-long dispute over who will contest the elections for 19 vacant seats has come to an end.

Given the current scenario and position at the local, provincial and national levels, it is likely that the ruling alliance of Nepali Congress, Maoist Center, Nepali Con-

gress, CPN-Unified Socialist and Madhesh-based Federal Socialist will sweep the elections.

Among the candidates, Nepali Congress leader Krishna Prasad Sitaula is one of the most senior who would like to contest the post of National Assembly Chairman.

Among the coalition, Nepali Congress is contesting in eight, Maoist Center 6 and CPN-

UML and Madhesh-based parties two each. However, the main opposition CPN-UML has fielded 19 candidates, followed by the RPP.

The election to 19 vacant seats from all seven provinces is scheduled to be held on January 25 under the National Assembly Election, 2080.

According to the National Assembly Election Act, the electoral collage consisting of provin-

cial assembly members, chiefs (mayor/ chairman) and deputy chiefs (deputy mayor/deputy chairman) of local municipalities can vote in the election to be held for the National Assembly members.

According to the law, National Assembly members must be elected 35 days before their term expires.

Candidate filing for the 19 vacant posts of National Assembly members scheduled for January 25 has already taken place.

Candidates have submitted their nomination papers to the Returning Officer's Office set up in the capitals of all seven provinces.

Election Commission spokesman Shaligram Sharma Poudel said that all necessary preparations and responsibilities have been completed before the registration of nominations.

Members of provincial assemblies, chairmen and vice-chairmen of rural municipalities and mayors and deputy mayors of municipalities are the voters in the



election of NA members.

According to the law, 549 provincial assembly members and 2047 local leaders (mayors/chairmen and vice-mayors/vice-chairmen) have been registered as voters.

The weight of votes of the members of the Provincial Assembly has been set at 53, and the weight of votes of the chiefs and deputy chiefs of the communes/rural communes has been set at 19. The total weight of votes of the members of the Provincial Assembly is 29,097 and that of the chiefs and deputy chiefs is 28,462.

According to the Election Commission, the final list of voters

was released on Sunday (January 7).

Candidates will receive their election symbols on January 13. One polling station and two polling centers have been set up in each province for the election.

Voting will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on January 25. The term of one-third of the 59-member National Assembly expires every two years. Women, Dalits, persons with disabilities or minorities and members of other communities will be elected from different provinces and regions in this election.

Although efforts are being made to push the government forward, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda has shown a way to adapt and accommodate coalition partners for much-needed stability. By allowing space and flexibility in seat-sharing with major parties, Prime Minister Dahal is able to maintain unity among the ruling political parties.



# Navigating The River of Doubts: The Evolving Dynamics Of India-Nepal Water Relations



BY: ARUP RAJOURIA

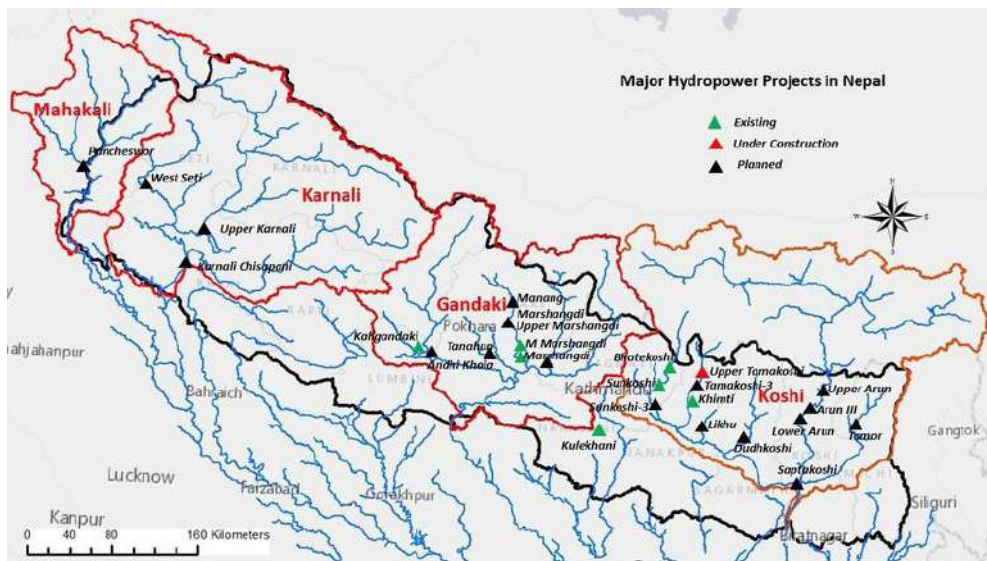
Beneath the diplomatic handshakes and signed agreements during India’s foreign minister Dr. S. Jaishanker’s recent Kathmandu visit, a chilling question lingers: will Nepal’s glacier-fed rivers, the lifeblood of millions, become India’s pipeline? Recent studies have shown that Himalayan glaciers are melting at unprecedented rates, and if global warming is not controlled, they could lose up to 80% of their volume by the end of the century.

The Himalayan glaciers, the “Water Towers of Asia,” are melting at an alarming rate, transforming water security into a geopolitical and climate flash point. The melting of glaciers in the Himalayas has already led to a water crisis in South and South-east Asia, and the situation is likely to worsen in the future. India’s interest in regulating Nepal’s river is not new, but with the depleting glaciers, India’s interest in regulating river flow has grown. Man Bahadur Gurung, of Thasang Village, a Lower Mustang farmer, speaks for many when he asks, ‘Will our once-gushing Kali Gandaki river, shrinking glaciers,

quench downstream thirst while leaving us parched?’ This anxiety is not unfounded, it’s a blunt reality for those who witness the lifeline of over 2 billion people across 11 nations, those that depend on Himalayan glacier-fed rivers, dwindling before their eyes.

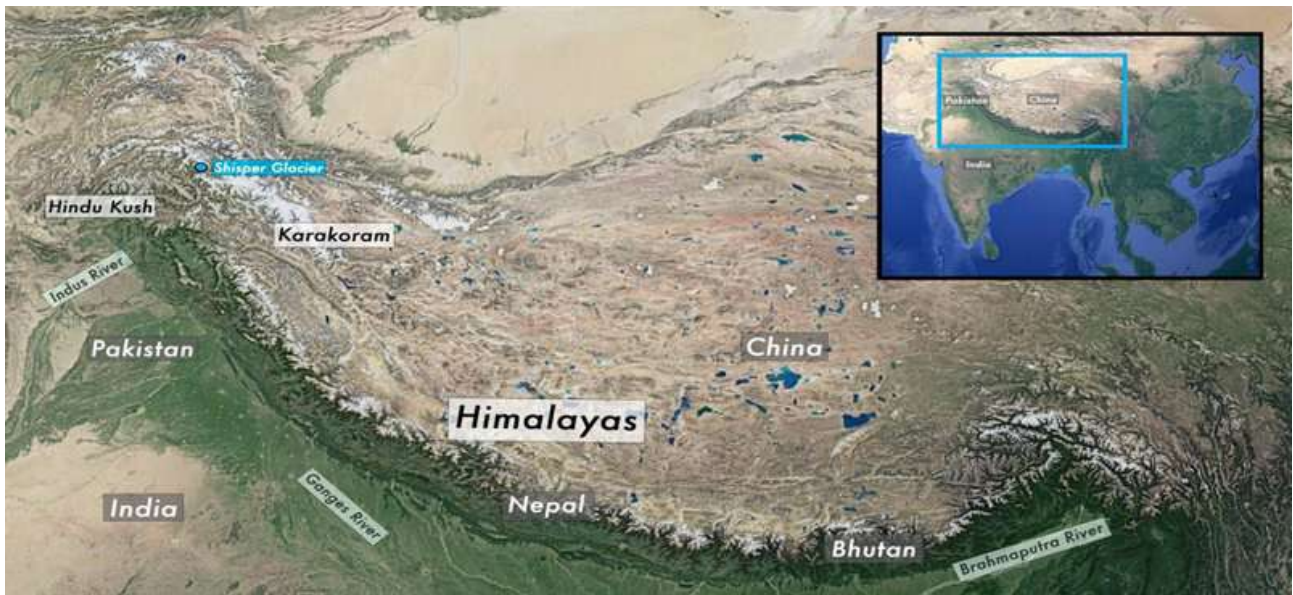
The specter of the 1996 Mahakali Treaty, a controversial water-sharing agreement, casts a shadow over the present. The mere mention of “regulation” evokes an instinctual reaction in Nepal, reviving memories of past power imbalances and opaque negotiations. These historical wounds have left a reservoir of

mistrust, threatening to derail any prospect of harmonious cooperation.



Despite this, the recently concluded 28th Conference of Parties (COP-28) in Dubai, UAE, echoed an urgent call to action against the rapid melting of the Himalayan glaciers. This phenomenon threatens the very existence of mountain communities, and





water security for billions, and threatens as a potential trigger for conflicts.

The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, and Nepal's Prime Minister, Puspha Kamal Dahal, amplified the cry of help for the melting glaciers, emphasizing the interconnectedness of mountain and low land communities in the global fight against human-induced climate change.

However, the simple power imbalance between India, an emerging regional power with economic and military might, and Nepal, landlocked and still a Least Developed Country(LDC), further complicates the equation. This imbalance evokes the old adage in international relations: "The rich and the powerful do what they want, the weak and the poor do what they must" resonates uncomfortably in this context. It fuels anxieties about exploitation and deepens the cracks in an already delicate relationship.



In spite of these challenges, there are opportunities of collaboration. Agreements on electricity imports and infrastructure, while important and significant, are merely temporary bridges. The path toward a sustainable future lies in embracing regional collaboration, guided by three principles: climate action, sustainable water management, and transparent agreements. These principles are essential in mitigating the impact of melting glaciers, managing the water crisis effectively, and rebuilding trust through open dialogue and equitable sharing agreements.

The Himalayas stand at a crossroads, with 3 declared nuclear powers with the world's largest armies surrounding it. Will they become a battleground for resources, reflecting fractured relations and a desperate scramble for survival? Or will they emerge as a symbol of shared resilience, a testament to the power of collaboration in the face of a shared crisis? The answer lies in the choices we make today.

*Rajouria is a globally recognized professional in climate change and natural resources management, with an impressive track record at organizations like former CEO of NTNC, UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNEP, and USAID. He holds an MPA degree from Harvard Univers.*



## NEPAL VISIT OF JAISHANKAR

# Pashupatinath At The Forefront

*After finishing all of his formal meetings and negotiations, he worshiped at Pashupatinath Temple, emphasizing the significance of India's cultural links with Nepal*

By KESHAB POUDEL

India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, wrapped off a 26-hour visit to Nepal, during which he had multiple high-level talks and signed four major agreements, including one to purchase 10,000 MW of electricity. His visit was significant this time.

After finishing all of his

formal meetings and negotiations, he worshiped at Pashupatinath Temple, emphasizing the significance of India's cultural links with Nepal.

Dr. Jaishankar expressed gratitude for his visit to the Pashupatinath Temple and prayed for both peoples' and the India-Nepal relationship's well-being. Dr. Jais-

hankar inscribed on the X wall, "Blessed to attend the Pashupatinath Temple."

Not to be outdone, after ending his formal talks and business, he worshiped at the Pashupatinath Temple, emphasizing the importance of India's cultural links with Nepal. India's relationship with Nepal appears to be shift-

ing from a state-to-state to a people-to-people basis. This crucial component of Nepal-India relations, which has been eroded for decades, is suddenly becoming a significant aspect in the two nations' relations.

Hinting the shift, External Affairs Minister Dr. Jaishankar stated on Friday (5 January) at the inauguration of Tribhuvan University's new library building in Kirtipur that the government of India is committed to redefining its relationship with neighbors, particularly Nepal, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Dr. Jaishankar also remarked that India-Nepal relations have changed significantly in recent years. The collaboration has grown in a variety of ways. This expanding

collaboration increasingly relies on physical, digital, and energy-related interconnection.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited key religious sites in Nepal, including Janakpur, Pasupatinath, Mukteswar, and Lumbini since he first visited Nepal in 2014. Modi is the first Indian prime minister to place such a high value on India's spiritual ties with Nepal. Dr. Jaishankar was in Kathmandu to co-chair the seventh meeting of the Nepal-India Joint Commission, where four agreements were signed and three cross-border

transmission lines were inaugurated by Nepal and India's foreign ministers.

Some academics and communist leaders have opposed the latest Nepal-India agreement to support community development initiatives through the Indian Embassy.

Dr. Jaishankar, on the other hand, writes in his X that the 7th India-Nepal Joint Commission, which he co-chaired with his counterpart FM @NPSaudnc, was thorough and constructive.

The discussions centered



on strengthening our bilateral ties, trade and economic relations, land, rail, and air connectivity projects, defense and security cooperation, agriculture, energy, power, water resources, disaster management, tourism, civil aviation, people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and development partnerships.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Narayan Prasad Saud spoke at the ceremony about many facets of Nepal-India ties. Economic linkages, connectivity, trade and transit, power and water resources, education, culture, and political issues

were all covered.

"The signing of an agreement between Nepal and India for the purchase of 10,000 MW of power by India was one of the event's most notable outcomes. In addition, Nepal and India signed four other accords," said Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda.

Even though former foreign secretary Bharat Raj Paudyal prepared all of the groundwork for the visit under the leadership of foreign minister NP Saud, the Nepalese delegation included former

secretary Sewa Lamsal, Nepalese ambassador to India Dr. Shanker Prasad Sharma, Spokesperson Amrit Kumar Rai, and India division head Bhriku Dhungana.

The gathering covered every facet of bilateral

relations and collaboration. The two countries inked bilateral agreements on network expansion, trade, water resources, and electricity trade.

Amrit Bahadur Rai, the Foreign Ministry's spokeswoman, revealed that Nepal and India have inked an agreement for Indian financial support to achieve high-impact community development through government agencies or enterprises.

Furthermore, the two countries have signed agreements for long-term energy trade, collaboration between the Nepal Elec-



tricity Authority and the National Thermal Power Corporation for the development of renewable energy, and cooperation between the Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) and New Space India (NSI) on the launch of a Nepali satellite.

#### **Transmission Line**

According to the power trade agreement, Nepal would export 10,000 MW of electricity to India over a 10-year period. Meanwhile, three 132 KV inter-state transmission lines were opened on Thursday: Raxaul-Parwanipur, Mainahiya-New Nautanawa, and Kushaha-Kataiya.

Foreign Minister Saud and his Indian counterpart Dr. Jaishankar jointly inaugurated the transmission lines. Following the meeting, the two Ministers witnessed the signing of a long-term electricity trading deal between the governments of Nepal and India. Shakti Bahadur Basnet, Minister of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation, was also in attendance.

The second circuit of the Raxaul-Parwanipur line, the second circuit of the Kataiya-Kusaha line, and the new Nautanwa-Main-

hiya lines were remotely inaugurated by the Foreign Minister of Nepal and the External Affairs Minister of India.

Other agreements signed today include the Agreement between the Governments of Nepal and India on Indian Grant Assistance for the Implementation of High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs), the Launch Service Agreement for the Munal Satellite, and the Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in the Development of Renewable Energy.

The fifth batch of post-Jajarkot earthquake relief supplies from the Government of India to the Government of Nepal was delivered remotely. Prefabricated dwellings, tents, and other relief materials make up the tranche.

The Indian government has granted a Rs 10 billion assistance to Nepal for reconstruction following the earthquake.

The two sides addressed all elements of bilateral ties and areas of cooperation during the Joint Commission meeting, including connectivity, infrastructure development, economic partnership,

commerce, transit, investment, energy, water resources, culture, tourism, sports, health, and education.

The two ministers expressed satisfaction with mutual support on matters of mutual importance in regional, sub-regional, and multilateral fora.

Nepal also discussed the issue of new aviation access routes, as well as floods and inundation, according to a press statement released by Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Amrit Kumar Rai. "Views were also exchanged on the review of the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship, security and boundary issues," according to a news release.

#### **High level Meeting**

Dr. Jaishankar, India's External Affairs Minister, paid a courtesy call on President Ramchandra Paudeland and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'. Various matters of mutual interest were discussed during the calls.

Jaishankar also met with former prime ministers, including Sher Bahadur Deuba, KP Sharma Oli, Madhav Kumar Nepal,

## NATIONAL

200 million per project through a 'lax vetting process'.

The main opposition CPN-UML opposed the decision, saying the government did not consult them. Foreign Minister NP Saud defended the extension of the terms of the HICDPs. He stated that the extension



and leaders of various political parties. He also met three leaders from Madhesh including Upendra Yadav, Mahanta Thakur and CK missing two leaders of major political parties RPP leader Rajendra Lingden and Swatantra Party leader Rabi Lamichhane.

Unlike in the past, he did not spend much time on Nepal's domestic politics, but stated that the ruling alliance would complete its full term, according to one leader.

During his stay in Kathmandu, the Indian foreign minister also met office bearers of the Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) and assured them that India would provide all possible help for Nepali cricket.

"Congratulated them on qualifying for the T20 World Cup," Jaishankar wrote in X, formerly Twitter, "assured them of India's support in their preparations. Underlined our commitment to the growth of cricket in Nepal," he added.

### Controversy over HICDPs

The renewal of the agreement on the implementation of High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs), formerly known as 'small development projects', has sparked debate. Some political leaders and civil society members are concerned about allowing India to invest up to Rs

was carried out following the same guidelines and modalities used during the Communist Party of Nepal's rule in 1919.

The budget per project has been increased from Rs 50 million to Rs 200 million, which will benefit the country. Saud stated that the guidelines, modalities, and terms of reference are unchanged from those prepared by the Oli government in 2019.



## NATIONAL

In 2019, the Oli government amended some provisions of the ‘small grant project’ due to Nepal’s constitution prohibiting local and provincial units from directly seeking funds and projects from donors.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, while addressing a parliamentary committee on Friday, defended the government’s decision to increase the budget for small projects from 50 million rupees to 200 million rupees.

“The government of Nepal should create counter funds for the small grant projects,” the prime minister said. “The projects will be implemented through joint investment and decision making.”

He also pointed out that India alone cannot decide to invest in HICDP projects. But UML deputy general secretary and former foreign minister Pradeep Gyawali argued that the HICDP agreement went against the spirit of the constitution, which states that local or provincial governments cannot seek direct foreign aid.

“This kind of agreement would foster a rent-seeking mentality among our local units, leading them to queue up at the embassy for assistance,” he said.

Similarly, UML general secretary Shankar Pokhrel, who organized a press conference at the party headquarters, criticized the government for not consulting the main opposition on issues of na-

tional importance before the joint commission meeting.

Communist leaders Jhalnath Khanal and Chitra Bahadur KC also criticized the decision to renew the Small Grants Project agreement. They said the agreement was against the national interest.

Former secretary Krishna Gyawali in his X writes that the



agreement is against the existing law of Nepal.

In her commentary in X, Navita Srikant, a development expert and Nepal watcher from India, writes: “this is how #disinformation campaign is launched! When a section of the media lacks factual accuracy, deliberately undermines

the country’s systems and peddles provocative statements to serve an ‘agenda’, it shows desperation and not substance.”

However, former foreign secretary Madhu Raman Acharya said Dr. Jaishankar’s visit was a ‘good and positive follow-up’ to the visit of the prime minister to India last year and it is now up to the two sides to effectively mobilise bilateral mechanisms to implement the agreements reached during the meeting.

“Together, we successfully concluded the important meeting of the Nepal-India joint commission and delivered positive outcomes for the mutual benefit of our countries,” Minister Saud remarked after seeing off Jaishankar at Tribhuvan International Airport. We shall continue to collaborate to keep the momentum in Nepal-India friendship.”

Nepal and India are close neighbors with many points of cooperation and some issues of contention. To oppose the visit, Nepal’s communist-led opposition is emphasizing the bad aspect for political gain. It is critical to have frequent visits at all levels in order to strengthen civilizational links.

PM Modi began to restore Nepal-India civilization relations during his median visit in 2014 by performing a special prayer in Pashupatinath. Dr. Jaishankar, India’s External Affairs Minister, continued to deepen ties by exploring new avenues.

GLOBAL IME BANK

# Nepali Global Brand

*17th years ago, Chandra Prasad Dhakal founded Global IME Bank with a vision to make it a global Nepali financial brand. Today, Global IME Bank is the largest bank in Nepal with a global presence. As it celebrates its fifteenth anniversary, Global IME Bank continues to demonstrate its strength.*

By A CORRESPONDNET

The phrase 'Think globally, act locally' has been repeated millions of times worldwide in recent years. The idea is to focus on your local environment and let your small actions add up, leading to change in your office, neighborhood, community, city, state, and beyond.

René Dubos, a

French-American microbiologist, experimental pathologist, environmentalist, and humanist, proposed this idea. It has traditionally been associated with the environment and sustainability, but it can also be applied to innovation, banking, and other areas. In today's changing markets, only a few people are able to apply it.

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, Chairman of Global IME Bank, was inspired by this phrase and has practically proven its effectiveness in Nepal's banking sector.

Dhakal entered the banking sector over two decades ago through IME Financial Institution. As the President of the



Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, he proves that a global brand can make a difference by acting locally.

"Initially, we started as IME Financial Institution. Even that financial institution did not seem to help much in doing the remittance work." Dhakal said that since only commercial banks handle foreign exchange, he felt the need for a commercial bank in the area.

He decided to open a bank after securing financing. Initially, the central bank did not grant a

banking license in Kathmandu, so they applied for a commercial bank license in Birganj. However, while the process was ongoing, the central bank opened provisions for granting licenses in Kathmandu as well.

Dhakal stated that they upgraded the bank, which was

initially registered regionally, and centralized it, resulting in the opening of Global Bank. At that time, there was no IME. Following the establishment of Global Bank, there was no need for a commercial bank and finance from the same promoter.

Currently, Global IME



Bank is a comprehensive financial institution consisting of 21 banks and financial institutions, including 5 commercial banks, 10 development banks, and 6 finance companies. Reconciling the interests of 21 presidents, 21 CEOs, and 7



## ECONOMY

Despite starting much later in Nepal, we became number one in a short period. If we continue to work hard, we can become one of the best thousand banks globally.

We have served a diverse clientele, from individual savers to large corporations. As digitalization continues to shape the industry, we are prioritizing our

efforts to adapt. Our network currently spans all districts, and we

are undergoing some consolidation through mergers and acquisitions. It is imperative that every employee and branch strive to improve our services. We are currently working on it.

The central bank has clearly specified that the spread



boards of 21 organizations and management is not an easy task.

Global IME Bank, the largest commercial bank in Nepal, is a global brand that works to serve locally.

With representative offices in the UK, Delhi, and Australia, we have also opened a branch office in Korea after obtaining permission from the National Bank. It is important to note that Nepal's problem is not the lack of a credit rating. The country rating process has progressed as expected. Additionally, there is a plan to expand internationally.

Our bank currently has 4.5 million depositors, which is a significant achievement considering we started with no business, seed capital, and had to take care of our families.

Dhakal believes that we can do even more. Creating an organization that provides many types of jobs and pays taxes to the state is possible even without

a foundation, as long as there is an environment. Dhakal stated that Global IME, despite being the 19th ranked bank, has paid the highest income tax. This is a matter of pride for us.

I aim to make Global IME Bank one of the thousands of banks in the world. This is not a significant challenge. Being one of the thousands of banks globally will help us become more global.



## ECONOMY

rate should not exceed a certain limit. It is now up to the banks and financial institutions to increase public confidence in the banking system. In some cases, slogans promoting the non-payment of bank loans have become popular, but these are only temporary. A bank loan is money borrowed from a bank that must be repaid with interest.

It is important to repay the loan on time to avoid financial difficulties. Banks should prioritize raising public awareness to increase public confidence in their services.

Dhakal stated, 'If we look at the time of private sector banks and even the last 20 years,'. There

Ratiri Commercial Bank. I took a job in a bank to help myself study, teach my siblings, and meet my basic needs. A bank job is considered a good and permanent job. My principle is to work diligently and honestly.

Global IME Bank Limited is the largest bank in Nepal's banking sector. Recently, it achieved a remarkable milestone by emerging as the highest taxpayer among all banks and financial institutions for the fiscal year 2078-79. This feat highlights the bank's robust financial standing and its significant contribution to the nation's economic development.

Global IME Bank con-

showcases its financial strength but also underscores its dedication to supporting the government's initiatives and the broader economic well-being of Nepal. The bank sets a standard for financial institutions by being the highest taxpayer in the banking sector, demonstrating the positive impact the private sector can have on the nation's revenue generation.

Global IME Bank became the largest bank in Nepal due to its impressive size and capital strength. The bank has a paid-up capital of Rs. 36.13 billion, making it a financial giant in the nation. It was established in 2007 as a commercial bank and

achieved its current status through a strategic approach that involved the merger and acquisition of 21 banks and financial institutions. Global IME Bank incorporated five commercial banks, ten



has been a radical change in Nepal's banking sector in the last 20 years, particularly in terms of service and accessibility. Digital banking has improved the quality and accessibility of services, and banks have expanded their reach to all local levels.

Before entering the business, I was a junior employee of

tributed a corporate tax of Rs. 3,200 million for the fiscal year 2078-79. This demonstrates the bank's commitment to fulfilling its fiscal responsibilities and highlights its important role in supporting the national exchequer.

Global IME Bank's substantial tax contribution not only

development banks, and six finance companies.

The bank is committed to growth, as demonstrated by its 'Vision-2025' strategic plan, which aims to double its business through the adept utilization of modern technologies and digitization. This forward-looking approach positions Global IME

Bank not just as a financial institution but as a key player driving innovation and efficiency within the banking sector.

Global IME Bank has an extensive reach across Nepal and beyond. It has solidified its nationwide presence with a network of 355 branches, 377 ATM counters, 274 branchless units, and 65 extension counters, spanning all 77 districts of Nepal. This network ensures accessibility for customers from urban centers to remote regions, contributing to financial inclusion and economic development.

Global IME Bank has expanded internationally with representative offices in London (UK), New Delhi (India), and Sydney (Australia). These offices serve as gateways for global collaborations, fostering economic ties and contributing to the bank's standing in the international financial arena.

The bank's success is due to its dedicated workforce of over 4,000 employees. This team plays a crucial role in implementing the bank's strategic vision, providing excellent customer service, and driving innovation in banking services.

Global IME Bank has over 4.2 million customers, reflecting the trust and confidence it has earned from individuals and businesses. The bank is committed to customer satisfaction and

excellence, making it a preferred choice for a diverse range of customers across the nation.

This achievement is not only a financial triumph but also a testament to the bank's impact on Nepal's economic landscape. Global IME Bank recently achieved the status of the highest taxpayer in Nepal. As the largest



bank in the nation, Global IME Bank has demonstrated resilience, innovation, and a commitment to contributing significantly to the nation's economic growth. Global IME Bank shapes Nepal's banking sector through strategic plans, an extensive network, and international presence. The bank sets benchmarks for excellence and fiscal responsibility.

Its journey symbolizes not just financial success but a legacy of leadership, people-centric values, and a dedication to being a catalyst for positive change in Nepal's evolving economy.

Despite merging with several other banks, one of the biggest achievements of the bank

is the acceptance of the leadership of Global IME.

The bank has undergone several mergers, yet no elections have taken place. Last year, Global IME and Bank of Kathmandu merged, and the board of directors was elected unopposed. Those who sit on our board work in the interest of the bank and

shareholders first.

Under the leadership of Dhakal, Global IME Bank is now Nepal's largest bank and highest taxpayer, proving that the saying 'think locally and act globally' generates opportunities everywhere. Dhakal's positivism has been instrumental in the bank's success. It is important to keep personal matters separate when taking on a leadership role.

Under the leadership of Dhakal, Global IME Bank is now Nepal's largest bank and highest taxpayer, proving that the saying 'think locally and act globally' generates opportunities everywhere.

## The Knockout Punch : Pokhara Crash Investigation Report



BY: HEMANT ARJYAL

The seventy-three pages accident investigation report on Yeti's ATR/9N-ANC Pokhara crash has just been released. The first-ever procedures for air accident investigations were laid down in 1928 in the USA. These procedures required investigations to consider the immediate and underlying factors of the accident to establish and apportion blame for its occurrence. However, the focus on assigning blame during investigations was later abandoned around 1946/47. Instead, the Accident Investigation Division of ICAO developed standards and recommended practices, which later became Annex 13 of the Chicago Convention.

Finding the causes of accidents, big and small, and the resulting safety recommendations, was thought to help prevent such events from re-occurring. It was assumed that all stakeholders namely, pilots, aircraft manufacturers and regulatory agencies benefited by learning from their or other's mistakes. The big question is, have these been of any use at all, here? With accidents number not declining, and Pokhara crash, sadly, has set new high in number of fatalities for a domestic crash. One wonders if our establishment treats crash investigation just as a "mandated nuisance". Now that the accident investigation committee is through with the entrusted job, this piece attempts to pose questions from a different angle altogether. Let me hasten to add that, this scribe is neither qualified nor intends to demean their work in any way.

The core report, actually consist of 62 pages (pg11-73) and 59% of the report is attributed to "Factual Information "that sets the background. The "Analysis "section takes about 17%.

Of the remaining, we get three pages of - very sharp -"Findings", two pages of rather blunt "Safety Recommendations". But it is an irony that the report ends stating "Safety Actions", claimed to have been initiated by stakeholders, sadly after the horses had escaped.

As for the "findings", the first seven just state facts, the critical ones run from #8-18. But I find the one listed under #12 showing concerns raised by one of the domestic airline planning to operate to new airport at Pokhara (PHR) had identified lack of published data on the airport AIP as a hazard of high risk category, to create the unsafe event crew confusion and disorientation and ultimately the possible outcome of as CFIT. Hats off to the unnamed Nepali private operator which foresaw it happening, while our "very capable" CAAN did not. That beside, when seen in conjunction with findings #8,9,10 and 11, it shows that the laissez-faire manner in which the matter related to aviation safety is taken by the "high profile" organization entrusted to look after aviation safety here. And with all this happening right under its nose, we are made to believe that it is doing its "level best" to address EASA's safety concerns. It is truly a "knockout punch" delivered on CAAN, against its regular but hollow bravado to create a false "make believe" environment all around about our aviation safety. No wonder our Neros were playing the "legendary flute", unconcerned, while the Seti gorge was on fire.

The finding is no less devastating for the operator of the flight as well. It states that the training was insufficient, to say the least, while the crews are seen to be "complacent" for not per-

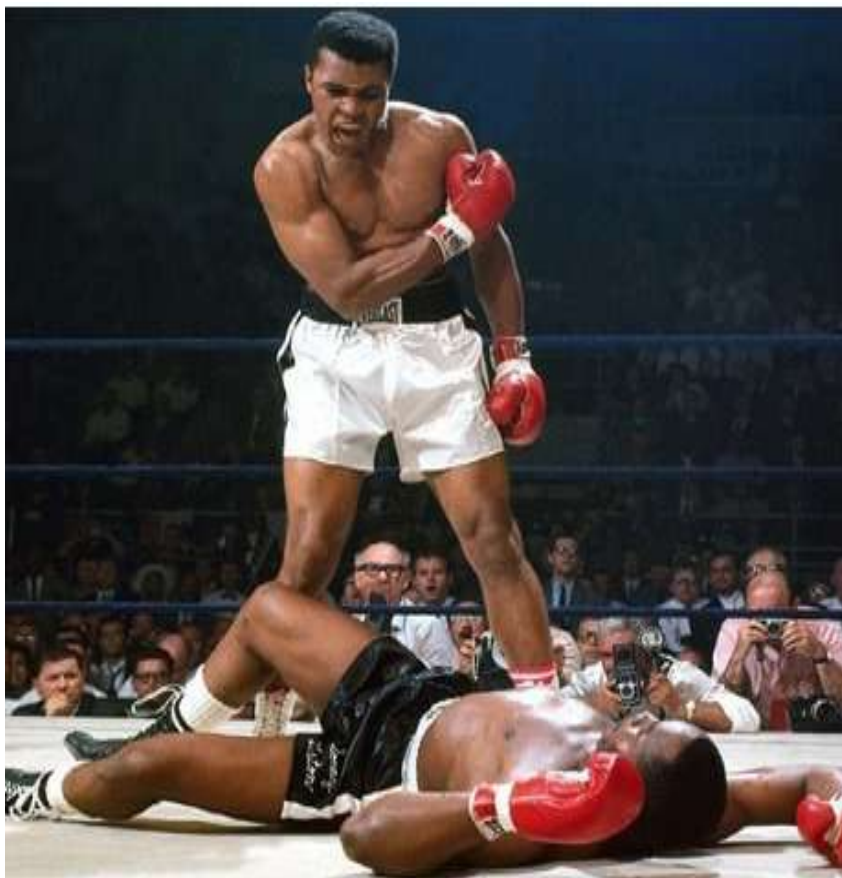
forming checklist and cross checks as required as listed under #14-18. The Pilot Monitoring (PM), or real Captain of the flight, literally, sealed the fate of all on board by inadvertently feathering the propellers at the most critical juncture when the ATR was required to make a sharp turn. While the propellers kept rotating, they were not biting as much air to produce required forward thrust.

It is said, when leaders get too comfortable with a high level of performance, they lose the edge to sustain it. This overconfidence / feeling of security can lead to massive failure. The blunt message is “Complacency kills” proving what followed at Pokhara on 15 January 2023.

Thinking out of the box, I always wondered what was so special about the left cockpit seat that the Captains always sat there. Understand, this tendency came about due to the nature of early rotary-driven aircraft, particularly fighter aircraft of WW1 days. It was easier for those aircraft to turn left as this allowed them to follow the torque of their engines. But the right turns were difficult as it required pilots to exert more force and rudder to do the opposite. If they can switch roles (PF/PM) in flight, why can't they interchange seats? I am saying this only because, if PM in the ill-fated flight had occasional experience of seating on the right as well, he might not have mistaken the propeller feathering lever with flap leavers even if the two levers could be easily differentiated by

mere touch.

It was a very devastating outcome of an event that should not have happened, in the first place. On the other side, this exemplifies massive failures at all fronts and top to bottom, in our aviation sector. Not blaming individuals is fine, but why should the establishment get that



benefit? B737 MAX's episode is still raw in our memory; was Boeing not lying right through that there was nothing wrong with the plane? Think it will be right to name and blame establishment, if found to be severely negligent on their responsibilities.

Though it may sound extremely bitter, it looks

quite probable that we will be stuck deep in the “black list” for decades to come. That is, unless our organizations and government works to make “honest” improvements all around. The government could start the ball rolling by establishing a permanent investigation entity with sufficient financial, human and technical resources to meet the international obligation as per Annex 13 of the Chicago convention as suggest in the report along with various other recommendations.

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BOOK

# On BP Ideology

*Former President Yadav Released Book On BP Bad (BP's Ideology)*

By A CORRESPONDNET

Former President Ram Baran Yadav unveiled a book titled 'BP Bad (BP's Ideology)' at a function today. The book, published by BP Bichar Rastriya Samaj (BP Ideology National Society), contains articles written by scholars about BP Koirala's ideology and his thoughts on democracy, socialism, foreign policy, and the constitution.

Bashudev Khanal edited a 606-page book, the first of its kind in the market, focused on various aspects of Nepali Congress leader Koirala.

The book was published to mark the 48th National Unity and Reconciliation Day. Former president Dr. Yadav stated that Nepal does not have a leader with the stature of BP Koirala. He also mentioned that Koirala's thoughts and ideologies on democracy, nationalism, and socialism are still relevant to the country.

Dr. Yadav stated that global circumstances have recently undergone drastic changes, and new ideologies are emerging. However, the ideology of democracy and a liberal society remains unchanged. He mentioned that Nepal is on the right path with a constitution based on Republicanism, Federalism, and Secularism.

The former president urged intellectuals and political leaders to follow the new constitution while adhering to B.P. Koirala's ideology, as we cannot reverse the current political course.

Govinda Raj Joshi, the former General Secretary of Nepali Congress and Executive President of BPINS, stated that the book aims to showcase BP Koirala's ideas on nationalism, democracy, socialism, and

the constitution.

Joshi emphasized that the publication of this book is crucial to prevent the distortion and perversion of Koirala's thoughts, which is prevalent in today's society.

Joshi stated that the book provides a comprehensive understanding of BP Koirala and his multifaceted ideology. In his final conversation with late Ganesh Raj Sharma, BP Koirala expressed concern that his followers might manipulate his views for personal gain. Unfortunately, the cur-



rent leaders proved his fears to be true by inviting radical Maoist leaders as chief guests to the program organized to commemorate BP Day. Joshi was expelled from Nepali Congress for his unwavering support of Koirala.

The following individuals contributed to this work: Dr. Jayaraj Acharya, Dr. Bipin Adhikari, Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai, Professor Dr. Ram Chandra Pokharel, Professor Dr. Badri Narayan Gautam, Professor Dr. Ram Prasad Gyawali, Professor Dr. Narayan Chalise, Dr. Bashudev Khanal, Dr. Vijaya Prasad Mishra, and

Bhattarai Bandhu.

Moderated by Binaya Dhoj Chanda, General Secretary of BPINS, Dr. Bipin Adhikari contributed an article on BP's relations with the King, Communists, and other parties. He emphasized the importance of BP's thought in the present context.

Dr. Jaya Raj Acharya also spoke about BP's ideology on socialism and his impressive presentation at the global socialism forum. He described BP as a visionary personality who has even influenced global leaders.

Dr. Dinesh Bhattarai, foreign relations advisor to former prime minister late Sushil Koirala, writes about BP Koirala's foreign policy in the context of present Nepal.

He highlights the importance of BP's foreign policy in this context.

Editor Basudev Khanal also emphasizes the signif-

icance of the book. He stated that the book is the result of extensive research and the authors are highly qualified in their field.

Although he is expelled from Nepali Congress Party, former minister Joshi has been putting all his efforts to publish important documents and works of party's ideologue BP Koirala. No matter where he is, Joshi is dedicating his life to the party's tall leader Koirala when all so called Congress leaders are busy to maximize the benefits for the power.

## UPPER MODI A

# Loan Agreement Signing

## *Upper Modi A Hydropower Project Loan Agreement Signed*

By A CORRESPONDNET

**W**ith the government's ambitious target of producing over 10,000 MW of electricity for export to India and increasing domestic consumption, the signing of the loan agreement for the construction of 42 MW Upper Modi A Hydropower Project is significant.

At a time when Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and its subsidiaries are constructing 1061 MW Upper Arun, a four-digit hydropower project, and 635 MW Dhudhkoshi Hydropower Project and dozens of other projects with a capacity of 16000 MW, the first largest storage project, Upper Modi A is a small one. But it has its own significance.

Kulman Ghising, Managing Director of NEA and Chairman of Modi Hydropower Company, said that Nepal's hydropower development will take a big leap in the coming days. "Through the authority, the construction of projects with 3-digit capacity is now progressing to 4-digit capacity, and the financial management of the 1061-megawatt upper Arun and 635-megawatt Dudhkoshi reservoir hydropower projects will be carried out by 2024," Ghising said.

"About 16,000 megawatts of projects by the authority and its subsidiary companies are at the stage of study, construction and investment gathering," MD Ghising said.

"The NEA and its subsidiaries are currently studying, constructing and gathering investment for approximately 16,000 megawatts of projects," said MD Ghising.

With the signing of the agreement, NEA's subsidiary Upper Modi Hydropower Company Ltd. will manage the financial aspects of the construction of the 42 MW Upper Modi A hydropower project.

Located in the Annapurna Rural Municipality of Kaski District, the project is estimated to cost Rs. 10.57 billion with 70 percent debt and 30 percent equity financing. The NEA and the general public

will invest in the equity.

As per the agreement signed at a function on Monday, NMB Bank and Hydroelectricity Investment and Development Company (HIDCL) will co-finance the project with a total investment of Rs. 7.4 billion including interest during the construction period. The loan will be divided into 4.4 billion rupees from NMB Bank and 3 billion rupees from HIDCL.

NMB Bank and Hydroelectricity Investment and Development Company (HIDCL) will co-finance the project with an investment of 7.4 billion rupees, including interest during the construction period. NMB Bank will provide 4.4 billion rupees and HIDCL will provide 3 billion rupees of the total loan.

The promoters of the project,



Modi Hydropower Company Ltd., NMB Bank and HIDCL, signed a tripartite loan agreement in the presence of Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Shakti Bahadur Basnet.

Minister Basnet said that the focus is now on increasing production and domestic consumption as well as exports as the export of 10,000 megawatts of electricity to the Indian market has been secured for the next 10 years.

Minister Basnet said that the government has clear guidelines to increase domestic consumption of power generated in the country and sell the saved power to India and Bangladesh.

"In the past, hydropower was considered only as infrastructure and its economic potential was not understood by looking at electricity consumption." It

has been seen that those who do not make any progress for years after getting a production license (generation license) and after signing a power purchase agreement (PPA), they do not work even one percent for 9-10 years. We will soon take an important decision to put an end to this situation," he said. "The state is not behaving unfairly, including electricity tariffs, it is behaving justly," said Minister Basnet.

The state is taking steps to end this situation. It is important for the state to act fairly, including with regard to electricity tariffs," said Minister Basnet.

"Discussions are underway to further develop and strengthen infrastructure structures between Nepal and India for export of domestically produced electricity. In the coming days, Nepal's hydropower development will take a giant leap forward," said Gopal Prasad Sigdel, Secretary, and Ministry of Energy.

HIDCL CEO Arjun Gautam emphasized the importance of completing government projects on time. He said the company is ready to meet the government's target of producing 28,000 megawatts of electricity by 2035.

Sunil KC, CEO of NMB Bank, said that investing in the authority's project is a historic opportunity and a milestone for private banks.

The aim is to complete construction of the Upper Modi A hydropower project within four years of commencement. Preparations for the project are currently underway. The evaluation of the bidder's technical proposal for the civil and hydro mechanical works in Phase 1 of the project is in its final stage.

Construction of offices and residences at the project site is underway. Private land acquisition and forest land use have been approved. NEA Engineering Company has been appointed to supervise the construction of the project and will also construct the 18.2 MW Upper Modi Hydroelectric Project.

NEPAL-INDIA JWC MEET

# A Breakthrough

*Nepal And India Have Agreed To Increase The Capacity Of The Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur Transmission Line*

By A CORRESPONDNET

In a positive response to Nepal's demand for more power imports, Nepal and India agree to increase the capacity of the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur transmission line to send 1000 MW of power to India.

India has decided to promote cross-border transmission lines to carry more power during monsoon. This decision was taken during an energy secretary level meeting between Nepal and India, where India expressed interest in buying more power from Nepal. Netra Gyawali, Chief Executive Officer of the National Broadcasting Grid Company Limited, said that the Indian side was willing to receive surplus power during droughts.

The Nepalese side proposed to

export more power, which was accepted by the Indian side. Although the project proposed by Nepal has not yet been approved, the Indian side has shown a positive attitude towards giving further approval. Gyawali mentioned that not all the electricity will be taken, but the Indian side is open to the proposal. The old agendas have continued.

Nepal has been allowed to export up to 600 MW in the Indian day-ahead market, and a medium-term PPA has been agreed to buy 110 MW of power for five years. For the first time, India has agreed to sell power to Haryana during the dry season under a mid-term PPA. On Thursday, Nepal and India signed a long-term power trade agreement.

On Wednesday, Nepal and India held a joint secretary-level meeting. The following day, an agreement was reached in the presence of Indian Foreign Secretary Dr. S. Jaishankar.

Energy Minister Gopal Prasad Sigdel and his counterpart Pankaj Aggarwal signed an agreement. According to the agreement, India will import 10,000 megawatts of electricity from Nepal over the next 10 years. However, Nepal has not yet approved the export of about 800 MW of electricity.

In addition, the Chinese company refused to buy the 456 megawatts of Upper Tamakoshi power. Last monsoon, 500 megawatts of power was wasted. The



Nepalese side has requested an additional permit, citing an expected increase in production and potential wastage.

Currently, there is only one 400 kV transmission line, Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur, for exporting electricity from Nepal to India, which allows for an exchange of about 600 MW. Both sides have agreed to increase the capacity of the transmission line to allow the exchange of up to 800 MW.

The implementation of Inruwa Purnia and New Lamki (Dodhara) and Bareilly 400 KV transmission lines for import and export of electricity between Nepal and India has already been decided.

The transmission lines will be constructed under the investment modality of the new Butwal-Gorakhpur transmission line. The investment modality will be finalized early. However, the modality could not be decided in this meeting. Though the construction is to start immediately, the modality has not been finalized yet.

In addition, Nepal's electricity trade with Bangladesh was discussed and a tripartite agreement was reached. Nepal has agreed to export 50 MW of electricity to Bangladesh through the Indian transmission line. These are three positive aspects. Once the tripartite agreement is signed, exports will start. The business plan, which was supposed to start last summer, has not yet been finalized. Nepal has proposed to build a dedicated transmission line in India to trade electricity with Bangladesh, but the Indian side has not yet responded.

#### India is ready

"India is ready to construct the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur 400 kV transmission line with a capacity of 1000 MW. The Indian side is also willing to increase the capacity of this transmission line to 2000 MW, which can exchange 800 MW of electricity.

During the energy secretary-level meeting between Nepal and India, Director General of Power Development Department, Chiranjevi Chatout, announced that they are ready to increase the power capacity by exchanging up to 800 MW," said a Nepalese official who attended the meeting.

The technical team will oversee the infrastructure required to achieve 100 MW. Currently, the capacity of the three transformers is limited to 800 megawatts due to the N minus one criterion, which also needs to be addressed. With the new trans-



mission line, it will be possible to transmit up to 1000 megawatts of electricity.

The Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur 400 KV transmission line has a capacity of 2,000 megawatts, but it can currently import and export only 1,000 megawatts due to the "N minus one" standard. This standard requires one line to be kept on standby in the event of an outage, resulting in a reduced capacity.

A secretary-level meeting was held in Sauraha on Friday. On behalf of Nepal, Energy Secretary Gopal Prasad Sigdel and his Indian counterpart Pankaj Aggarwal chaired the meeting. India is constructing a Dhalkebar-Sitamarhi 400kV "dedicated" transmission line to carry power only to the projects it has built.

During the meeting, the discussion focused on Nepal's use of transmission lines constructed by India to transport power to its projects. It was noted that India had given the green light in the previous meeting and this was reiterated in the current meeting. Specifically, the Dhalkebar-Sitamarhi 400 kV transmission line is being constructed by India to transport power from the 900 MW Arun III hydropower project.

The construction start date is uncertain as the modality has not yet been finalized. Two or three options have been discussed and will be finalized gradually. The investment modality was not finalized during the meeting.

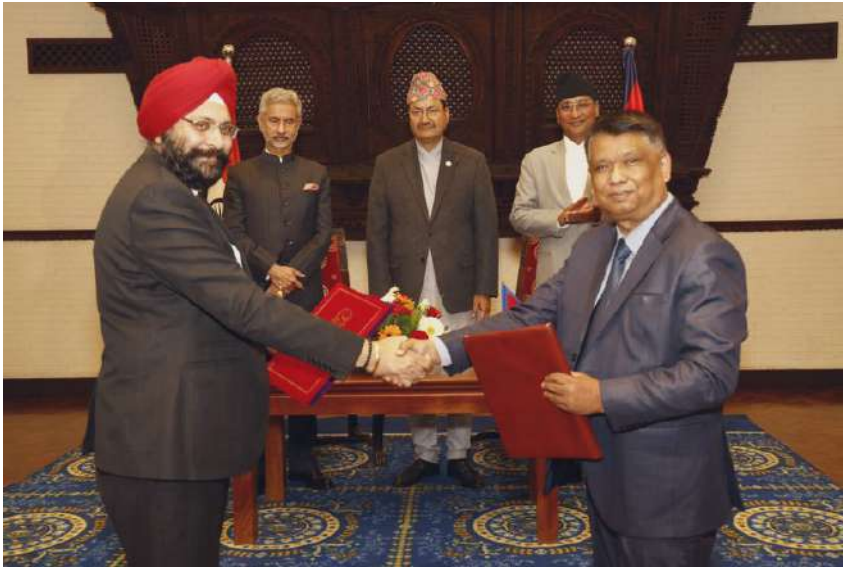
India is preparing for increased power demand during the upcoming mon-

soon season. Nepal has received approval to export up to 600 MW into the Indian day-ahead market. In addition, a medium-term PPA was signed for the purchase of 110 MW of power for five years. India has agreed a mid-term PPA to sell power to Haryana during the dry season for the first time. Last year, India wasted approximately 500 MW of power due to non-purchase.

This year, more power is being wasted due to increased production during the monsoon. As a result, Nepal has proposed to purchase the power wasted during droughts. The Indian side has agreed to the proposal.

#### This press release is an unofficial translation.

The 11th meeting of Nepal-India Energy Secretary-level Joint Steering Committee (JSC) was held on January 4th, 2021, in Chitwan, Nepal. The JSC was co-chaired by Gopal Prasad Sigdel, Secretary of the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation of the Government of Nepal, and Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary of the Ministry of Power of the Government of India. The meeting took place in Meghauli. During the meeting, the Joint Working Group (JWG) reviewed the recommendations made on 18th Paush (3 January, 2023). The group discussed existing electricity transmission lines between Nepal and India, as well as under-construction and proposed international transmission lines. They also reviewed various hydropower projects of Indian investment and related transmission



line projects, international electricity import-export, and other issues.

The group mainly agreed on the following point: 1. After constructing the necessary infrastructure at Dhalkewar substation, a study will be conducted through JTT to increase the electricity import-export amount from 800 to 1000 megawatts using the first inland Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur 400 kV transmission line, which is currently operated by SJVN Arun-3 Power Development Company Pvt. Ltd.

(SAPDC). The SAPDC has commissioned a study through JTT to determine the capacity of electricity that can be exchanged from the Dhalkevar-Sitamarihi 400 kV transmission line.

Additionally, JTT will conduct a study on possible options for exporting up to 200 MW of electricity from the Tanakpur-Mahendranagar 132 kV power transmission line or other high-capacity transmission lines.

The Central Electricity Authority of India, in coordination with the Nepal Electricity Authority and other Indian bodies, has prepared a legal procedure for importing and exporting electricity between the two countries.

This will be done using the transmission system of neighboring Indian states from Nepal during the rainy season through the existing transmission line of 132 kilovolts or less.

The modalities have been approved. The JWG was instructed to finalize the investment

modality to complete the construction of two more inland transmission lines between Nepal and India.

The first line will run from Innerwa to Purnia, and the second line will run from New Lumki (Dododhara) to Bareilly. Both lines will have a capacity of 400 kV and are expected to be completed by 2027/28 and 2028/29, respectively. Nepal Electricity Authority, India's NTPC Electricity Trade Corporation, and Bangladesh's Power Development Board discussed the theoretical aspects of exporting 40 megawatts of electricity from Nepal to Bangladesh using India's transmission system. They plan to make a tripartite agreement soon.



JTT studied additional high voltage level transmission lines needed for importing and exporting electricity between Nepal and India. Currently, Nepal exports electricity to India's Day Ahead Market, and soon it will be approved to export electricity to the Term Ahead Market and Green Day Ahead Market.

In his statement Navin Raj Singh, Joint Secretary and Spokesperson, said that the 11th meeting of the Nepal-India Energy Joint Working Group (JWG) was recently held. Navin Raj Singh, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation, and D. Sai Baba, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Power from India, co-chaired the meeting. The meeting discussed existing power transmission lines, under-construction and proposed international transmission lines, various hydropower projects of Indian investment, related transmission line projects, and international electricity import-export. After necessary discussions, the Energy Secretary-level JSC was recommended to make necessary decisions. The Nepal-India Power Trade Agreement, concluded in 2014, established a Secretary-level Committee (JSC) and a Joint Secretary-level Working Group (JWG) to facilitate, guide, and monitor the agreement's implementation.

PM PRACHANDA

# Defending Agreement

*Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal has defended recent agreements with India as protecting Nepal's broader national interest.*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Led by the main opposition party CPN-UML and some other communist groups, the parliamentary committees of the House of Representatives summoned Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal to implicate him in the controversy over the recent agreements signed with India.

With his clear stand, the Prime Minister has made it clear that no agreement has been made with India that is detrimental to the national interest.

Briefing the meeting of the Law, Justice and Human Rights Committee under

the House of Representatives about the agreements signed between Nepal and India during the visit of Indian Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar to Nepal on January 4, he reiterated that no agreement has been reached that involves expenditure outside Nepal's system and mechanisms.

Referring to the High Impact Community Development Project agreed with India, Prime Minister Prachanda clarified that this agreement is a continuation of the previous agreement and has been further systematized and improved. "There is no such provision in the present agreement with India that

allows the Indian side to unilaterally select and implement the project. The regular monitoring and also periodic review of the project implementation will be done by the Nepalese government machinery," he said.

Committee members Mahesh Kumar Bartaula, Pratiksha

newable energy reached between the two countries during the visit of the Indian Foreign Secretary to Nepal.

According to him, as per the understanding reached during his earlier visit to India, an agreement was reached to export 10,000 megawatts of electricity from Ne-

pal to India in the next 10 years and this agreement has opened the door for electricity trade between the two countries.

Similarly, the Prime Minister said, an agreement has been reached under which New Space India Limited of India will launch the nano-satellite developed by Nepalese

students into orbit at its own cost and another agreement has been signed between Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and NTPC of India for carrying out capacity building works and programs including training between them.

The Prime Minister said that preparations are being made to take forward the work on Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project by finalizing the Detailed Project Report (DPR) within a few days.



Tiwari, Sobita Gautam and Dhruba Bahadur Pradhan, among others, sought clarifications from the Prime Minister on this agreement.

The Prime Minister clarified that there was nothing to hide in the agreements after lawmaker Bartaula demanded that the government should provide the written document of the agreement to the parliament and the committee.

Prime Minister Prachanda also briefed the committee on the long-term power trade agreement, the agreement to launch Nepal's nano-satellite and the agreement on re-

# Nepal To Grow At 3.9 Percent

*World Bank's Global Economic Perspective reported that Nepal will grow by 3.9 percent in fiscal year 2023/24.*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Nepal's economic growth is projected to be 3.9% in fiscal year 2023/24 and 5.0% in 2024/25, despite facing several challenges. The World Bank's Global Economic Prospect states that growth is expected to increase in Nepal due to monetary policy easing and the delayed effects of lifting import restrictions.

In 2023, growth in South Asia (SAR) slightly slowed to 5.7 percent. However, it remains the fastest among emerging market and developing economy regions.

This is largely due to a robust expansion in India, which accounted for more than three-fourths of the regional output. Excluding India, activity was more subdued.

In India, despite some slowing, a strong performance in 2023 was driven by robust public investment growth and vibrant services activity. Merchandise exports slowed due to weak external demand, but domestic demand for consumer services and exports of business services sustained India's economic growth.

In Bangladesh, growth is estimated to have slowed in FY2022/23 (July 2022 to June 2023), as activity was hampered by import restrictions and rising material and energy costs, as well as mounting external and financial pressures. The impact of earlier import restrictions, which were subsequently lifted, along with previous monetary policy tightening, weighed on growth in Nepal.

Output in Pakistan is estimated to have contracted during FY2022/23 (July 2022 to June 2023). Inflation remained elevated, partly reflecting large currency depreciation in early 2023.

However, towards the end of 2023, Pakistan's currency exhibited signs of stabilization. Output in Sri Lanka is also estimated to have declined in 2023, while there has been progress in

sovereign debt restructuring. In Afghanistan, despite declining food prices in 2023, poverty rates remained high, exacerbated by strong earthquakes in October 2023.

Outlook: Growth in SAR is expected to edge slightly lower to a still-robust 5.6 percent pace in 2024, before firming to 5.9 percent next year. Domestic demand, including public consumption and investment, will remain major drivers of economic growth. A pickup in external demand, albeit still subdued, is also expected to contribute to growth.

In India, growth is expected to edge up to 6.4 percent in FY2024/25 (April 2024 to March 2025) after softening to 6.3 percent in FY2023/24. Investment is envisaged to decelerate marginally but remain robust, supported by higher public investment and improved corporate balance sheets.

In Bangladesh, growth is forecast to slow to 5.6 percent in FY2023/24. Inflation is likely to remain elevated, weighing on private consumption. Import restrictions are expected to continue and impede private investment.

The outlook in Pakistan remains subdued for FY2023/24. Monetary policy is expected to remain tight to contain inflation, while fiscal policy is also set to be contractionary. The outlook in Sri Lanka remains uncertain, amid debt restructuring negotiations, particularly with private creditors.

Investment related to the tourism sector will support growth in Maldives, while the commissioning of a new hydro plant in Bhutan is expected to contribute to a pickup in growth in the next fiscal year.

Risks: Risks to the forecast remain tilted to the downside, with the most pressing concerns revolving around higher energy and food prices caused by an escalation of the conflict in

the Middle East and adverse spillovers stemming from larger-than-expected increases in policy rates in advanced economies. In addition, elevated external and fiscal financing needs, the growing frequency and severity of extreme weather events, and sharper-than-expected growth slowdown in trading partners also pose risks to the region. Heightened uncertainty around elections in 2024 in some countries is also a downside risk in the region. However, the implementation of growth-friendly policies after elections could improve growth prospects.

As the world nears the midpoint of what was intended to be a transformative decade for development, the global economy is set to rack up a sorry record by the end of 2024—the slowest half-decade of GDP growth in 30 years, according to the World Bank's latest Global Economic Prospects report.

By one measure, the global economy is in a better place than it was a year ago: the risk of a global recession has receded, largely because of the strength of the U.S. economy. But mounting geopolitical tensions could create fresh near-term hazards for the world economy. Meanwhile, the medium-term outlook has darkened for many developing economies amid slowing growth in most major economies, sluggish global trade, and the tightest financial conditions in decades. Global trade growth in 2024 is expected to be only half the average in the decade before the pandemic. Meanwhile, borrowing costs for developing economies—especially those with poor credit ratings—are likely to remain steep with global interest rates stuck at four-decade highs in inflation-adjusted terms.

Global growth is projected to slow for the third year in a row—from 2.6% last year to 2.4% in 2024, almost three-quarters of a percentage point be-

low the average of the 2010s. Developing economies are projected to grow just 3.9%, more than one percentage point below the average of the previous decade. After a disappointing performance last year, low-income countries should grow 5.5%, weaker than previously expected. By the end of 2024, people in about one out of every four developing countries and about 40% of low-income countries will still be poorer than they were on the eve of the COVID pandemic in 2019. In advanced economies, meanwhile, growth is set to slow to 1.2% this year from 1.5% in 2023.

“Without a major course correction, the 2020s will go down as a decade of wasted opportunity,” said Indermit Gill, the World Bank Group’s Chief Economist and Senior Vice President. “Near-term growth will remain weak, leaving many developing countries—especially the poorest—stuck in a trap: with paralyzing levels of debt and tenuous access to food for nearly one out of every three people. That would obstruct progress on many global priorities. Opportunities still exist to turn the tide. This report offers a clear way forward: it spells out the transformation that can be achieved if governments act now to accelerate investment and strengthen fiscal policy frameworks.”

To tackle climate change and achieve other key global development goals by 2030, developing countries will need to deliver a formidable increase in investment—about \$2.4 trillion per year. Without a comprehensive policy package, prospects for such an increase are not bright. Per capita investment growth in developing economies between 2023 and 2024 is expected to average only 3.7%, just over half the rate of the previous two decades.

The report offers the first global analysis of what it will take to generate a sustained investment boom, drawing from the experience of 35 advanced economies and 69 developing economies over the past 70 years. It finds that developing economies often reap an economic windfall when they accelerate per capita investment growth to at least 4% and sustain it for six years or



more: the pace of convergence with advanced-economy income levels speeds up, the poverty rate declines more swiftly, and productivity growth quadruples. Other benefits also materialize during these booms: among other things, inflation falls, fiscal and external positions improve, and people’s access to the internet expands rapidly.

“Investment booms have the potential to transform developing economies and help them speed up the energy transition and achieve a wide variety of development objectives,” said Ayhan Kose, the World Bank’s Deputy Chief Economist and Director of the Prospects Group. “To spark such booms, developing economies need to implement comprehensive policy packages to improve fiscal and monetary frameworks, expand cross-border trade and financial flows, improve the investment climate, and strengthen the quality of institutions. That is hard work, but many developing economies have been able to do it before. Doing it again will help mitigate the projected slowdown in potential growth in the rest of this decade.”

The latest Global Economic Prospects also identifies what two-thirds of developing countries—commodity exporters specifically—can do to avoid boom-and-bust cycles. The report finds that governments in these countries often adopt fiscal policies that intensify booms and busts. When increases

in commodity prices boost growth by 1 percentage point, for example, governments increase spending in ways that boost growth by an additional 0.2 percentage point. In general, in good times, fiscal policy tends to overheat the economy. In bad times it deepens the slump. This “procyclicality” is 30 percent stronger in commodity-exporting developing economies than it is in other developing economies. Fiscal policies also tend to be 40 percent more volatile in these economies than in other developing economies.

The instability associated with higher procyclicality and volatility of fiscal policy produces a chronic drag on the growth prospects of commodity-exporting developing economies. The drag can be reduced—by putting in place a fiscal framework that helps discipline government spending, by adopting flexible exchange-rate regimes, and by avoiding restrictions on the movement of international capital. On average, these policy measures could help commodity exporters in developing economies boost their per capita GDP growth by as much as 1 percentage point every four or five years. Countries can also benefit by building sovereign-wealth funds and other rainy-day funds that can be deployed quickly in an emergency.

# वैदेशिक रोजगारमा जाँदा सचेत रहौं

- आधिकारिक कागजातका आधारमा मात्र वैदेशिक रोजगारमा जाऔं।
- वैदेशिक रोजगारीमा पठाउने व्यक्ति वा संस्था आधिकारिक हो, होइन यकीन गरौं।
- वैदेशिक रोजगारीका लागि पर्यटक भिसाको प्रयोग नगरौं।
- श्रम स्वीकृति लिएरमात्र वैदेशिक रोजगारीमा जाऔं।
- श्रम स्वीकृतिविना वैदेशिक रोजगारीमा जाने कामदारहरूले:
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  - स्वदेश फर्कन कठिनाई हुने,
  - कतिपय अवस्थामा जेल सजायसमेत भोग्नुपर्ने,
  - ज्यानसमेत गुमाउनु पर्ने लगायतका अवस्था आउन सक्छन् ।



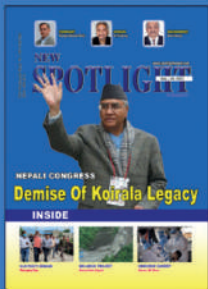
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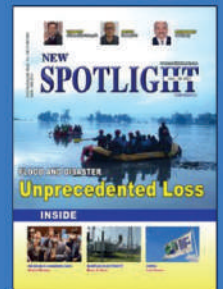
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