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OPINION
Dipak Gyawali



VIEWPOINT
Arup Rajouria



FORUM
Torun Dramdal (Ms)

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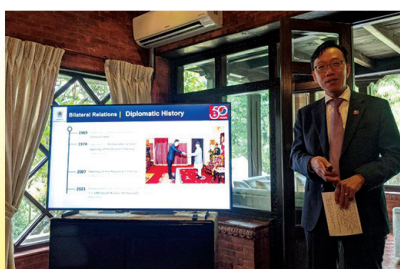
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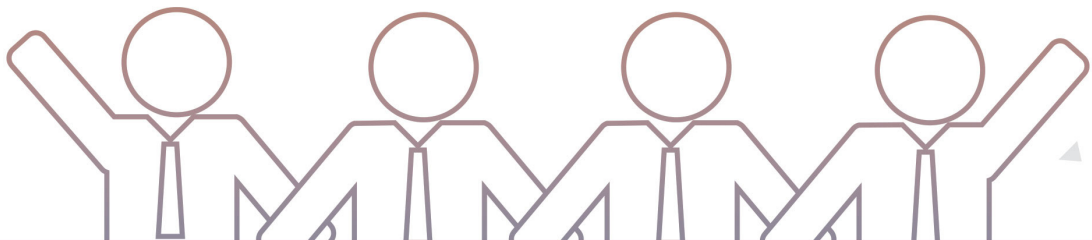
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Nepal and its people have long struggled to achieve a stable government and a smooth political process. Despite numerous changes in constitution, political systems, and forms of government, the country has been unable to establish a lasting stability. Over the past 18 months, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda has managed to secure the support of the House of Representatives through four votes of confidence, forming and changing alliances along the way. However, his position remains uncertain as he relies on a slim majority, making him vulnerable to political trouble if a small party withdraws its support. Furthermore, the ongoing disputes between the ruling party and the opposition, particularly regarding the cooperative scandal involving Deputy Prime Minister Rabi Lamichhane, have hindered the smooth functioning of the House of Representatives. The opposition, led by the Nepali Congress, has vowed to obstruct the proceedings of the house until a high-level parliamentary probe commission is formed and DPM Lamichhane resigns.

The recent detention of Kailash Shiroia, the chairman of Kantipur Media Group, on allegations of fraud in Citizenship issue, presents a significant challenge for the government. Rather than adopting a lenient stance, Prime Minister Prachanda, along with the main coalition partner leader and former prime minister KP Sharma Oli, are supporting Deputy Prime Minister Laimchhane's decision to remain in office. Given the political stance and positions involved, there seems to be little hope for a resolution to the current deadlock. The arrest of Kailash Shiroia is a highly contentious and objectionable action by the government. At a time when the group has been reporting on DPM and Home Minister Rabi Lamichhane's alleged involvement in a Cooperative scandal, the arrest appears to be nothing more than a targeted attack on the freedom of the press. New Spotlight stands in solidarity with KMG's Chairman and the freedom of the press, strongly denouncing the government's heavy-handed tactics in the name of upholding the rule of law. Meanwhile, we have featured the completion of Trishuli B Hub and its contributions to Nepal's goal of achieving zero emissions by 2045 as our cover story for this week.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

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The Brutal War Of Aggression By Russia Against Ukraine Has Brought Back War To Our European Continent



BY: VERONIQUE LORENZO

Let me start by thanking you all for being here to celebrate Europe Day and 50 years of EU-Nepal friendship.

A special thanks to the Youth representatives: the next 50 years will be for you! Every year on the 9th of May we celebrate Europe Day and the Schuman Declaration, a turning point in Europe's history that laid the foundations of what is now the European Union. On 9 May 1950, 5 years after the end of the Second World War that devastated Europe, the Foreign Affairs Minister of France, Robert Schuman, called on France and Germany to work together to make war on the continent impossible. To make this project of peace stronger, they then offered their cooperation to other European nations.

Growing Stronger Together is the slogan marking the 50 years of diplomatic relations between the European Union and Nepal. The European Union has been in Nepal at all the critical junctures of the last decades: to support the Nepali peace process, to accompany the first democratic elections. We were very much here when the terrible earthquakes hit Nepal in 2015 and a few years later, when COVID-19 put a stress test on your health system and economy.

In this challenging world, we cannot overstate the importance of having good friends. And this is what the European Union is for Nepal and what Nepal is for the European Union.

I will not tell you anything new by saying that, in our world of today, the challenges are many and they are multiplying. To the brutal war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine that has brought back war to our European continent, we now add the inhuman and indiscriminate attacks in Israel in October last year that have unleashed a chain-reaction causing an unprecedented loss of civilian lives, a critical humanitarian situation in Gaza and increased instability in the region.

Even peace-loving Nepal has been deeply affected by these crises, and we stand in solidarity with the families who suffer today, be it the family of Bipin Joshi, still held hostage by terrorists, or the families of Nepalis tricked into joining the Russian army.

In this challenging world, we, the European Union, continue to engage globally to promote peace, common values such as the rule of law and human rights, multilateralism and provide humanitarian assistance and partnerships.

Having overcome many challenges in the last five decades, Nepal is now at a crucial point in its trajectory: it will graduate from Least Developed Country status in 2026 and needs to attract investment to foster economic growth and create business and employment, especially for the young generation.

The European Union's way of supporting Nepal's agenda is through its "Global Gateway", together with the European Union Member States and European Development Finance Institutions. Global Gateway can support Nepal's progress and

narrow the investment gap through smart, clean and secure investments in quality infrastructure and connectivity.

As a very concrete step in this direction, we are organising the second EU-Nepal Business Forum next week on 15-16 May, bringing in our EU companies to showcase the potential for investment Nepal holds in a number of sectors. I hope many of you will attend.

Let me conclude by wishing the European Union and Nepal to continue growing stronger together over the next 50 years and beyond.

Veronique Lorenzo is the EU Ambassador to Nepal. Excerpts of her statement delivered at Europe Day Reception 2024.



NEWSNOTES

Environment And Climate Change Minister Of Bangladesh Calls For Unity amongst Vulnerable Countries

Saber Hossain Chowdhury M.P., Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change called upon the vulnerable countries



to unitedly raise voice for meaningful actions to save themselves from the onslaught of climate impacts. He said this while addressing the opening session of the Interna-

tional Expert Dialogue on Mountain, People, and Climate Change organized by the Government of Nepal on Wednesday (22 May 2024) at the Chandragiri Hill Resort in Kathmandu.

Inaugurated by Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' the event was attended by high-level delegates including scientists and experts from about 25 countries concerned with the deterioration of the mountain health including the Himalayas.

In his remarks, Chowdhury mentioned that Bangladesh was equally concerned with the melting of the glaciers across the Himalayas, which would certainly have adverse impacts on the rising sea levels in Bangladesh and other low-lying countries. Therefore, urgent action was necessary which can only be implemented with adequate and meaningful support from the developed countries. Adaptation by developing countries will not be enough, mitigation by developed countries will play the key role if the world temperature needed to stabilize at 1.5 degree Celsius. It was unfair to expect climate action only from developing countries, which were fighting climate change impacts along with poverty. "Unless the entire world decarbonizes, whatever we try to do in terms of adaptation and resilience building would never be enough", he said.

The Bangladesh Minister also spoke as a panelist in the session "Ambition for 1.5 degree Celsius: Urgency for Action in Mountains and Beyond". His remarks both at the inaugural and thematic session received appreciation, support and solidarity from the audience.

Earlier, on arrival at Kathmandu on Tuesday (21 May 2024), the Minister made a courtesy call on the Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' at his office. During the meeting various issues related to environment and climate change were discussed. Mr. Chowdhury recalled with deep gratitude the moral and material support extended by the people and political leadership of Nepal to the people of Bangladesh during the War of Liberation in 1971.

On the sidelines of the event, the Bangladesh

Minister also attended a trilateral meeting with the Nepalese Minister for Forests and Environment Mr. Nawal Kishore Shah Sudi and Bhutanese Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Mr. Yorten Phuntsho. They discussed the issue of vulnerability in detail, particularly in the post LDC scenario, and emphasised on taking a common position in the UNFCCC and other platforms.

PM Prachanda And Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol Exchanged Congratulatory Messages

On the happy occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and the Republic of Korea, congratulatory messages have been exchanged between the Prime Minister of Nepal and the President of the Republic of Korea.

Marking the momentous occasion, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' extended the heartiest felicitations to Yoon Suk Yeol, President, the Government and the friendly people of the Republic of Korea.

The Prime Minister highlighted close and friendly relationship between the two countries based on cordiality, mutual respect and goodwill. While expressing satisfaction over a half-century old journey of bilateral relations, the Prime Minister stressed on celebrating the occasion with wider cooperation under the tagline 'Everesting Friendship'.



Similarly, President of the Republic of Korea, Yoon Suk Yeol, in his congratulatory message to Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', extended his greetings to the Government and people of Nepal.

He emphasized the strong ties of friendship and cooperation in various sectors between the two countries. He also expressed his confidence that the bilateral relations between Nepal and the Republic of Korea would further accelerate in the years to come.

According to a press release issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nepal and the Republic of Korea established their diplomatic relations on 15 May 1974.

Japan Hands Over A New Classroom Building to Shree Malika Secondary School in Dailekh District

The Embassy of Japan in Nepal handed over a new classroom building to Shree Malika Secondary School in Thantikandh Rural Municipality, Dailekh District.

This furniture-filled building has been construct-



ed with a grant of USD 88,105 (approximately NPR 10.45 million) under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) of the Government of Japan.

The school was found-

ed in 1964 and currently educates 367 students from early childhood development through 10th grade. It is a vital educational institution in the region. However, the school did not have an appropriate learning environment due to the simple structure of the two buildings, which were not earthquake resistant, and the lack of sufficient classrooms for younger students.

To improve this situation, the school and Volunteer Corps Nepal (VCN), the project implementing organization, applied to the GGP to construct a new building with eight classrooms. VCN is the NGO, was established in 2018, and has been actively working on socio-educational development, disaster relief, and volunteer activities across Nepal.

In November 2023, following the completion of the construction of the building in May 2023, a major earthquake occurred in the vicinity. However, the school building was not damaged, and the suitable learning environment has been maintained.

The Embassy of Japan appreciates the people who have been involved in all the efforts to complete the project. “We hope that the support will significantly improve the learning environment for the students, and further strengthen the friendship between the people of Japan and Nepal. GGP was established to implement projects that directly benefit people at the grassroots level for the socio-economic development of communities. Since 1991, over 200 GGP projects have been completed in Nepal.”

President Paudel Unveiled Policies And Program 2081/82

President Ram Chandra Paudel said that the government has introduced the ‘President Climate Change Management Program’ to combat climate change.



Unveiling the policies and programs for the upcoming fiscal year 2081/82 BS the annual policies and program of Nepal Government, he said that resilience will be built by increasing adapt-

ability and reducing the negative impact of climate change.

“To address the impact of climate change on mountains, hills, and Terai region, and sustain the high snow-capped mountains and river system, a ‘President Climate Change Management Program’ is being introduced, said President Ramchandra Paudel while unveiling the policies and programs for the upcoming fiscal year 2081/82 BS at a joint meeting of federal parliament today.

He said the government has announced to establish a Citizen Service Centre to dispense public service of the different agencies from a single point.

President Paudel during the presentation of the policy and programme of the fiscal year (FY) 2081/82 today announced that the Citizen Service Centre will be established in coordination with the local level.

He further announced that a plan to continuity of professionalism in sensitive infrastructure related to communication and information technology will be implemented for providing public service without any obstruction.

He said that the law will be formulated for the security of personal data and e-governance.

Korean Government Supports USD 9.8 Million To Create Green Jobs In Pokhara

The Korean government is set to provide assistance of 9.8 million US Dollars for the creation of green jobs in Pokhara.

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) on behalf of the Government of Nepal signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the project “Green Job Creation through Recycling and Upcycling Project in Pokhara Metropolitan City (PMC) on 14 May 2024 at MoF.

The MoU was signed by Taeyoung Park, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Nepal and Madhu Kumar Marasini, Secretary of MoF. In the event, Mooheon Kong, Country Director of KOICA Nepal Office and Kamal Prasad Bhattarai, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration were also present.

The Korean Government through the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) will spend USD 9.8 million for this project. The project will be implemented by UNDP in Pokhara in close collaboration with MoFAGA and Pokhara Metropolitan City.

The primary objective of this project is to create sustainable recycling and upcycling enterprises to foster green economic practices. One of the core components of this project is to establish a Green Venture Zone (GVZ), which is one of the state-of-the-art centers for understanding recycle, upcycle, innovation and startups. The GVZ will showcase final products crafted from recycled and upcycled materials, featuring exhibition halls hosting national and international events revolving around environmental themes.

The project shall create programs focusing on re-

NEWSNOTES

cycling and upcycling ventures, coupled with initiatives aimed at facilitating behavioral changes related to waste management.

The project aims to establish 30 Recycle Upcycle (RU) enterprises, consequently generating numerous green jobs in Pokhara. These efforts are expected to produce substantial behavioral transfers at the community level, encouraging waste segregation practices at households, thereby alleviating the burden on Pokhara's waste disposal sites.

PMC is hoping that the project will establish a mechanism where waste is managed in an efficient manner leading to sustainable solutions for landfill site management. Moreover, PMC expects that the project will create a better environment to host larger number of tourists as Pokhara has recently been declared as a tourism capital of the country. In addition to this, PMC wants to demonstrate its successful circular economy created by recycling and upcycling to other cities of Nepal.

During the proceedings, Secretary Marasini expressed gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea for the partnership which will enhance the friendly relation between the two countries. He further assured to fully cooperate for the successful implementation of this project.

Similarly, Ambassador Park highlighted the opportunities presented by this initiative, emphasizing how the project could enable unemployed individuals to leverage their skills, establish green ventures, and contribute to the economic growth of the country.

Furthermore, in his remarks, Kong emphasized that the project shall create the next level of understanding among community people on managing waste properly. He expressed optimism that the challenges confronted by Pokhara Metropolitan City regarding waste management would be substantially mitigated and underlined the uniqueness of the GVZ concept, composed to position Pokhara on the global stage.

The ceremony also commemorated the 50 years of diplomatic ties between Nepal and Korea. Expressing the similarities between the two countries, Ambassador Park stated that Nepal is a priority country for development cooperation and he assured to further strengthen the cooperation and friendly ties between the two countries.

The Government of the Republic of Korea has been supporting the Government of Nepal through KOICA in various areas of health, vocational training, rural devel-

opment and IT since 1991. By 2023, total amount of KOICA's support surpassed Two hundred million US Dollars.

This comprehensive assistance encompasses 45 Country Partnership Projects, 114 Civil Society Organization(CSO) Projects, Capacity Enhancement Programs that have benefitted 2,211 participants and the World Friends Korea(WFK) program, which has dispatched 3,236 volunteers and specialists to Nepal. Nepal's designation as a Core Partnership Country by the Government of the Republic of Korea for 15 consecutive years highlights the strong bilateral relationship and commitment to Nepal's development goals.

The Korean Government through the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) will spend the assistance amount for this project. The project will be implemented by UNDP in Pokhara in close collaboration with the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA) and Pokhara Metropolitan City.

The primary objective of this project is to create sustainable recycling and up-cycling enterprises to foster green economic practices.

Govinda Raj Joshi Unanimously Elected Chairperson Of BPINS

Govinda Raj Joshi has been elected as the Chairperson of BPINS with unanimous support. Despite the disassociation of many Nepali leaders from BP's liberal democratic ideals, Joshi has remained committed to championing these ideals through BP Bichar Rastriya Samaj.

He emphasized the importance of working diligently to uphold the ideology of BP Koirala, especially in light of the current trends within the Nepali Congress. Joshi pledged to follow in the footsteps of KB Gurung and take the necessary actions to promote BP's ideology throughout Nepal.

After presiding over the organization for more than 12 years, K.B. Gurung, Co-Chair of the society, transferred his duties to Joshi, Co-Chair of BP Ideology National Society.

During the general assembly meeting on 9 May, the chairman was selected unanimously. In accordance with the Society's constitution, Chairman Joshi appointed 31 new executive members.

India Provides Grant To Built School In Baitadai Dis-



trict of Nepal

Gauri Singh Rawal, Mayor, Patan Municipality and Avinash Kumar Singh, First Secretary, Embassy of India, jointly laid the foundation stone for the construction of Shree Bhumeswor Secondary School Building at Patan Municipality-4, Baitadi District, Nepal.

It is being built with Government of India's financial assistance at the tendered cost of NRs.31.05 million under 'Nepal-India Development Cooperation'. Political representatives, government officials, social workers, representatives of the school

management, teachers, parents and students were also present on this occasion.

The Government of India grant under 'Nepal-India Development Cooperation' is being utilized for the construction of double storied school building Block-A and Block-C with other facilities for this school.

Switzerland To Provide Assistance To Nepal For -based Tourism Development Project

Ambassador of Switzerland to Nepal Danielle Meuwly and Shree Krishna Nepal, Joint Secretary of Nepal's Ministry of Finance, have just signed and exchanged a bi-lateral agreement to launch the Trail-based Tourism Development Project (TTDP).

This project is all about boosting local economic development and sustainable tourism by upgrading the stunning trails in Koshi Province. Over the next four years, Switzerland is contributing CHF 9.01 million (NPR 1.26 billion) while Nepal will provide CHF 1.3 million (NPR 186 million) for trail improvements and promotions.

In collaboration with 29 local governments and the Koshi Provincial government, the project will create around 2,000 local jobs and generate half a million person-days of employment through cash-for-work during trail construction.

Once the trails are complete, they're expected to welcome around 80,000 visitors annually, boosting local communities and preserving the region's rich cultural heritage.



"This is Another milestone in the Swiss-Nepal partnership for sustainable socio-economic development," writes Swiss Embassy in its social media wall.

Ambassador Volk inaugurates Coming Home Photo Exhibition

Australia's Ambassador to Nepal, Felicity Volk, inaugurated Coming Home, a photo exhibition that celebrates the stories of Nepalis who have returned from Australia to contribute to their local communities and Nepal's prosperity.

Coming Home was conceived and created by Australian artist and documentary photographer, Jo Rankine, with funding from the Australian Embassy. Through photographs and interviews, the exhibition traces the journeys of Nepali alumni who studied in Australia as privately funded students or recipients of prestigious Australia Awards scholarships, and who have come home as skilled entrepreneurs, community workers, chefs and designers to create new opportunities in Nepal.

Jo Rankine, who is completing a Bachelor of Craft and Design at Kathmandu University, said, "Coming Home invites viewers to reflect on the possibilities of a better future



for Nepal and its people. It aims to create a shift in thinking around the current exodus of young people, to show the positive impacts of returning home after studying and working abroad, and to celebrate the hard work and courage of those who return."

She said, "The stories featured in the exhibition and many hundreds of thousands of such stories across Nepal, confirm that returning home from abroad does not make you a failure, but opens up new opportunities to explore your capabilities."

Ambassador Volk said she hoped the exhibition would encourage other young people with plans to study and work overseas, to hold fast to Nepal as their final destination. She said, "Australia delights in its Nepali students and communities, but we are keenly aware how important it is for Nepal's long-term prosperity and well-being that talented professionals come home and take up opportunities here."

"I celebrate those eleven individuals whose efforts, perseverance and achievements are showcased in Coming Home. Their stories are an inspiration to others to acquire global training, experience and networks, and to bring all of that back to Nepal."

BUSINESS BRIEF

The Budget Needs To Announce A Special Plan To Promote The Private Sector: Chandra Dhakal

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, President of Federation of Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has said that a special plan for private sector promotion should be brought in the budget for economic transformation.



In the pre-budget discussion organized by the Federation on Wednesday with the Minister of Finance, President Dhakal emphasized that the private sector should be at the center of the budget.

He said that the government will consider the introduction of a special plan for the promotion of the private sector for economic transformation as a new phase of economic reform campaign.

He suggested that the size of the budget should not be increased for the next financial year. He mentioned that increasing the size of the budget will put pressure on the government to increase revenue and internal debt.

President Dhakal said that when there is pressure on revenue and internal debt, the private sector will be discouraged and debt obligations will increase.

He suggested that it would be appropriate to increase the actual expenditure by a maximum of 10 percent instead of estimating the revenue and expenditure based on last year's budget.

He mentioned that the reform policy is necessary to increase investment through financial and monetary policy. Chairman Dhakal said that increasing the competitiveness of the manufacturing industry by attracting investment is another challenge and mentioned that it is necessary to provide interventional concessions and support from the budget in all cycles to expand the capacity of the manufacturing industry.

He suggested creating an entrepreneurship policy and conducting an Entrepreneurial Nepali program. He demanded that the product-based concession program should be conducted for five years in which concessions are given on the basis of production, import substitution and export.

He said that the policy and program that came on Tuesday includes the promotion of investment companies promoted by the private sector, so the private sector is happy.

He mentioned that there is a demand from the private sector that the budget should play a transformative role in order to achieve sustainable and high economic growth by addressing the basic problems of the economy and the private sector.

He said that since the budget will also guide the direction of the monetary policy, a policy should be introduced to ensure that excess liquidity in the financial sector flows to the private sector.

He said that to attract the private sector, there is a need to improve the lending and collection policy.

He suggested that arrangements related to current capital loans, including restructuring and rescheduling, should be made by mutual agreement between the bank and the borrower.

To ensure the future of entrepreneurship in Nepal, the Federation has demanded that concessionary programs be con-

ducted for small, domestic and small entrepreneurs to facilitate their establishment and expansion.

According to the federation, the local level should be authorized to register at one place, as the small domestic small and medium entrepreneurs currently only have to register in more than five places. He said that it is necessary to develop service business expansion and other industries as the main catalysts under the prosperity through technology program.

It has been suggested that only one percent income tax should be levied on export-oriented firm companies related to information technology for five years.

NIMBL Opened A New Branch At Bhadrapur, Jhapa

Nepal Investment Mega Bank Limited (NIMBL) has expanded a new branch in Bhadrapur, Jhapa.

Bank Bhadrapur municipality ward no. The Bhadrapur branch has been put into operation since Wednesday 05. With this branch, the number of branches of the bank has reached 272. All banking services have started from the new branch from Wednesday.

The State Head of the Bank Mr. Rajiv Gajurel inaugurated the new branch. In the opening program, the state chief Gajurel said that the new branch will provide excellent banking services and facilities to the customers.



Currently, the bank has 272 branch offices, 64 extension counters, 88 branchless banking and 265 ATMs.

EU-Nepal Business Forum Begins

The two-day EU-Nepal Business Forum begins today! The forum brings together European investors & the Nepali private sector to explore Nepal's potential for trade, investment and business. Trade and investments are key components of The European Union's Global Gateway strategy.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal inaugurated the EU-Nepal Business Forum 2024 on Wednesday stressing that green economy technology and the green economy would be at the centre of Nepal's future prosperity.

He said the government was reforming the legal landscape to ensure the ease of doing business and attract private investment. The Prime Minister said the 50 years of EU-Nepal relationship, also marks the beginning of a new chapter for shared growth and prosperity.

The inauguration session was attended by Hon. Damodar Bhandari, Minister, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies, Myriam Ferran, Deputy Director General, International Partnerships, European Commission, ambassadors from eight EU Member States, and the Global Director of the European Investment Bank (EIB).

Addressing the



opening session, the EU Deputy Director General of International Partnerships, said the European Union's Global offer for sustainable investment, Global Gateway, was already supporting the renewable energy and would further support investments in priority sectors for Nepal.

The business forum brought together over 300 participants, including 50 panellists who discussed different sectors including renewable energy, information and communication technologies, high end tourism and agriculture.

The EU Ambassador to Nepal, H.E. Veronique Lorenzo, mentioned the achievements in Nepal such as the 64% growth in IT service exports in 2022 to Euro 500 million and the arrival of over a million tourists in 2023. These achievements are all opportunities for European businesses.

Ambassador Lorenzo added that Nepal had approved about 400 projects of around NPR 47 billion since the last business forum, with notable contributions from small firms.

Global IME Bank Was Honored As The Best Bank By Global Finance Magazine

Global IME Bank has been honored with the Best Bank Award by Global Finance Magazine. Global Finance Magazine honored Global IME by selecting the best banks around the world.

According to the press release issued by Global IME, Somba and Global Finance Magazine has declared itself as the best bank in Nepal based on the criteria of reliability, financial resources mobilization, expansion of access, establishment of strategic relationships, development of business and customer friendly services, credit rating etc.

Global IME is the first bank in Nepal to be honored with this prestigious award by Global Finance.

The bank said that the honor received from Global Finance as the best bank of Nepal has made it more motivated to provide creative services in the future. The magazine honored the best banks in the Asia Pacific, Africa, Caribbean, Central America, Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, Middle East, North America and Western

Europe regions.

HSBC of Hong Kong, Bank of America, State Bank of India, China Construction of China, May Bank of Malaysia, Standard Chartered of Bangladesh, Metro of the Philippines and others have been honored.

FNCCI President Dhakal Receives Corporate Excellence Award

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), has been honored with the Corporate Excellence Award by the Association of Chartered Accountants of Nepal.

President Ram Chandra Poudel presented the award to Dhakal during a special event in the capital on Thursday.

The Association commended Dhakal for his significant contributions to the country's economy, physical and human development, job creation, and social and economic progress.

Starting from his upbringing in rural western Nepal, Dhakal has established a successful presence in sectors such as banking, investment, tourism, hydroelectricity, insurance, and social services.

The Association acknowledged Dhakal's dedication, commitment, competence, and capacity, which have been recognized through this award.

In the appreciation letter, it was stated, "Your achievements in fostering the nation's economy, development, and employment across various sectors underscore your dedication and competence. This award is a testament to your dedication."

Expressing gratitude for the recognition, Dhakal mentioned that the honor has inspired him to embrace further responsibilities in the future.



Nepal Government And World Bank Launch \$4.6 Million Project To Strengthen Response To Gender-Based Violence

The Institutionalizing Gender-Based Violence Response in Federal Nepal Project was jointly launched today by the Honorable Minister of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens, Bhagwati Chaudhary and World Bank Country Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, Faris Hadad-Zervos.

The three-year project will help increase women's and girls' access to multisectoral gender-based violence (GBV) response services such as legal aid, psychosocial counseling, and medical support in six municipalities in Koshi and Lumbini provinces. It aims to benefit 49,000 women and girls who have experienced violence through better access to quality services.

"Addressing gender-based violence is a priority for the government of Nepal. This project will help establish a functioning coordination system to link GBV response mechanisms at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels," said Bhagwati Chaudhary, Honorable Minister of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens.

The project is financed by a \$4.6 million grant from the State and Peacebuilding Trust Fund and will be implemented by the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens.

The project will help strengthen institutional frameworks and capacity, pilot innovative GBV service models with a focus on improving service coverage and quality, and promote behavior change among first responders and local stakeholders for improved GBV response.

"This project will help empower women and girls to readily access GBV services, report violence, and seek help, especially in the most remote and hard to reach areas. This is key to supporting Nepal's development that is green, resilient, and inclusive," said Faris Hadad-Zervos, World Bank Country Director.

The Government of Nepal and the World Bank signed the financing agreements for the project on April 24, 2024.



As You Step Out Into The Real Wide World Of New Challenges...



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

It is indeed a great privilege to be invited by SAIM to address the graduating class of 2024. I feel deeply honoured. With age and experience come insights of value, some of which I wish to share with you on a day of great pride and excitement for you as well as your family and your teachers.

The first thing to realize is that this degree is only a union membership, an entry ticket to a wider vista ahead. Remember how excited you were when you passed your final high school SLC exams? But does anybody ask you about that anymore? No, because what will be asked of you from today, especially in a practical discipline like management science, is what can you do? What have you done? Soon you will all be looking for jobs. Some of you will hopefully start your own businesses, while some may navigate towards further studies and academia. And in this search, there is a catch: you can't get a job because you have no experience and you don't have experience because you have not had a job.

How do you break this vicious circle? Start with any job or activity you can find, whatever it may be voluntary or very modestly paying, and start immediately. Don't wait for that perfect job to come by or you may be waiting for ever as time slips by. Management is such a wide field with so many branches, you can enter anywhere. The moment you start doing something, you start building networks; you come to know your own field as it really is outside of the classroom; and you will understand the lay of the land, its promises and pitfalls.

My early job as an engineer was in bringing electricity to Dandeldhura some four decades ago. It was tough because one could find nothing, not even a shovel or nuts and bolts in Mahendranagar: one had to go to Palliya crossing the jungle where dacoit Phulan Devi was lurking, or even go to Lucknow for such pieces of equipment. This is not something they teach you in engineering schools, and has to be learned the hard way. In the process you also learn what it is that you really like doing; and I realized engineering as practiced in Nepal is mostly part of the problem and rarely that of a solution, leading me to migrate towards political economy. Engineering and management are wide fields with many ramifications: do you like shop floor work or personnel management or finance or something else? You have to find that out early because you will probably be doing that for the rest of your life. Otherwise, life – doing what you do not like – will be hell!

One of my fellow hydropower students while stud-

ying in Moscow Energy Institute was sent to work after graduation to the Bratsk hydropower station and got embroiled in reservoir level

maintenance issues so some particular fish could spawn, fish that was part of the diet of Siberian cranes that transmigrate in winter across the Himalaya. Later he ended up becoming a major authority on Siberian cranes. Another fellow student in Berkeley, California ended up from being an economist when he came to the Energy and Resources Group program to becoming a major authority on the aquatic biology of the San Francisco Bay. Life is one life-long learning process and you can be whatever it is you like!

For those planning further studies and veering towards academia, my advice – and there are many who come to me asking “Sir, what should I do my PhD thesis on?” – is: first find out WHAT is the PROBLEM that so bothers you that it eats you from the inside. It should be such a problem that leaves you happy at 3AM poring through books and journals in a library rather than thinking you should have been in bed! That is the essence, the very start of good research, and not search for data, which is what you gather later to prove or disprove the solutions to your problem.

I also have a special message – through an event way back in 2006 – for those of you going to pursue professional management. I had been asked to serve in the International Environmental Advisory Board of Coca Cola, which was chaired by UK's former agriculture and environment minister John Gummer and had as members eminent environmentalists like China's Ma Jun and Amory Lovins of Rocky Mountain Institute known for his Soft Energy Paths. It was a time when India was rocked with the “pesticides in Coke” scandal as well as groundwater overdraft by Coke's bottling plants.

Taking our advice, Coke did not become confrontational with environmentalists but argued that, since they did not use pesticides at any stage of their production processes, they sure would love to cooperate with environmentalists and find out where it came from (it transpired it did not come from any establishment under Coke jurisdiction). They also initiated massive water harvesting and artificial groundwater recharge efforts.

It was a surprise to me how advising business was so different from advising governments and NGOs, how they would resist any advice since it would come with a price, and once they figured out the cost versus benefits and accepted it,

the energy and resources they would pour into following it was so astounding. My Cultural Theory colleague Michael Thompson recounts a similar story with the Dutch multinational Unilever and the controversy surrounding its sanitary toilet rim blocks. Not being confrontational but willing to take part with critics in a manner of constructive engagement allowed them to replace the controversial product with a better one they had sitting in their research labs all along!

One day the chairman of Coca Cola Neville Isdell (in 2008, Obama took him away to save General Motors) invited us to his palatial house for dinner. In the conversation that followed, I asked him what he looked for when hiring entrance level managers. His reply was very surprising: it was not just those with top-notch MBA degrees but whether they had also studied philosophy or English language and literature. Taken aback, I asked him why. He said complicated business contexts demanded out-of-the-box thinking and he had observed that those with a background in philosophy could play with complex ideas and those with good English could effectively convey such ideas and instructions that went with them in succinct memos. Think about this in your life-long learning.

Also remember how the neo-Marxist Stanford Prof. Paul Baran distinguished between an intellect worker such as, say a brilliant neurosurgeon, and an intellectual. The former merely uses his brains like a worker uses his hands but an intellectual is able to transcend the narrow confines of his discipline to relate it to the bigger concerns of the wider world. This also applies to the contradiction in the very title of your degree. You are students of management but your degree says Masters in Business Administration (MBA). An administrator is merely asked to rigorously follow the rules that are laid down by the higher ups; however, a manager has to play with complex options, decide the course and bear its consequences! Think of it!

A question many in your generation are facing is: should we work here in Nepal or go abroad? Based on my experience and those like me who studied abroad but came back to Nepal to work, I can say with confidence that the social returns and rewards are infinitely greater if you work here. While you may earn more in monetary terms in say the US (and also spend more for rent and living), there (with a handful of exceptions) you become – and forgive my harsh language – merely an overpaid, glorified clerk with no social standing. Think of Nepal's first private sector architect/engineer Shankar Rimal who has left his mark on Kathmandu's landscape whether in the Royal Palace or Shahid Gate. Others such as Dr Upendra

Devkota and Dr Ashok Banskota set up hospitals, others who set up schools and colleges. Think of the respect they command here compared to what they would have if they had worked abroad.

What you should keep in mind on this issue is the formidable US debt crisis, the de-dollarization underway, and the looming recession in Europe and America which will force many recent emigrants into joblessness. The advice I give to

Nepalis abroad when I meet them and they ask me what job they can get if they come back to Nepal is this: if you ask that question, you are not qualified to come back, since there is no job waiting for you. You with your knowledge and experience should come back and create jobs for at least ten others! I tell them in Nepal you have the freedom to choose between two extremes: one, you cannot do anything in Nepal and

two, you can do jolly well anything. Use your moral compass to decide where in the spectrum you want to be.

For those of you with a political bent, my advice is: party politics and the politics of votes is not the only politics you have to engage in. There is a wide vista open for those who do non-partisan, issue-based politics whether in education, industry, natural resources, waste management, transport or a whole lot of other fields.

That is a more pressing

need in Nepal today (where elected party politicians do not have the faintest idea what to do), and it is also certainly more rewarding as I can testify.

I finally close with a story former UK ambassador Barney Smith recounted (in his preface to our book *Ropeways in Nepal*). His Thai editor friend, an economist, had lost his job and on the train coming back home met someone who was building a hotel but could not find a good manager. Barney's editor friend offered to take up the challenge. When asked what he knew about hotels or construction management, he replied he knew nothing but having studied in Cambridge, he felt as a Renaissance man he could take up any challenge. He got the job and built a great hotel. Nepal needs more men and women with such broad vista confidence who are able to think outside the box. Hopefully we will see most of you with that inspiring boldness.

{Convocation address delivered by Mr. Dipak Gyawali (Pragya (Academician), Nepal Academy of Science & Technology (NAST) and former Minister of Water Resources) to the South Asia Institute of Management (SAIM) graduating MBA/BBA class of 2024 on 10th May 2024}





POLITICS

Forming New Alliances

The ongoing political deadlock regarding Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Rabi Lamichhane is likely to disrupt the long-standing monopoly of political power held by three parties for more than two decades.

By A CORRESPONDENT

Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Rabi Lamichhane's refusal to step down, despite facing opposition from supporters and the recent arrest of Kailash Shiroia, a media mogul and chairman of Kantipur Media Group, is deepening the divide between the ruling coalition of Maoist and CPN-UML and the Nepali Congress.

Even the Rastriya Prajantantra Party (RPP), a pro-monarchist

party, has criticized the arrest of KMG chair Shiroia, citing it as an attack on press freedom.

RPP leader Rajendra Lingden and senior member Rabindra Mishra released a statement claiming that the arrest was motivated by personal animosity between the Home Minister and Shiroia.

Nevertheless, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda and CPN-UML leader KP Shar-

ma Oli have come out in support of Home Minister Lamichhane's decision to arrest Shiroia.

Prime Minister Prachanda recently stated that there is no need to create a fuss over the arrest of Kailash Shiroia, as it was done in accordance with a court order. Echoing Prachanda's sentiments, Oli emphasized that arresting an individual for investigation does not infringe upon media freedom. He urged people not to equate arrest with media

freedom.

The Nepali Congress has accused the government of arresting a media owner for covering the Cooperative scandal involving DPM Lamichhane. NC leader Bimlendra Nidhi stated that if the ruling parties have concerns, the government should investigate the dual passport and citizenship issue of Home Minister Lamichhane. Nidhi believes that Kailash is innocent and a victim of political vendetta.

As the stalemate in parliament persists, the government has decided to present its political agenda and programs for a vote. Speaker Deb Raj Ghimire is assisting the government in tabling these policies and programs before the parliament. It is anticipated that Speaker Ghimire will deploy a significant number of forces inside the parliament to prevent any attempts of obstruction from opposition parties, similar to what occurred during the vote of confidence motion. The Congress, the main opposition party, has been blocking



Parliament for an extended period, demanding a parliamentary inquiry into the cooperative fraud issue. They have warned of protests if an agreement is not reached on the formation of the committee.

Opposition parties, led by the Congress, have accused Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Ravi Lamichhane of involvement in the cooperative fraud case and are pushing for a parliamentary inquiry committee to be established.

Amidst the ongoing deadlock, both ruling and opposition parties are engaged in behind-the-scenes negotiations to reach a consensus on the terms of reference (ToR) for the inquiry committee. While the ruling party is open to investigating the troubled cooperatives, they are adamant that Home Minister Lamichhane's name should not be excluded.

The Congress maintains that Lamichhane must be investigated for his alleged role in misappropriating funds from the cooperatives.



Based on the current situation, it is improbable that an agreement will be reached to open the house. Consequently, the government is expected to cancel the House and is likely to announce the new budget through an ordinance. As a result, the three parties that possess complete control over state power are anticipated to fragment, thereby creating opportunities for new political alliances to emerge.

Himalayan Meltdown: Threat Beyond Borders



BY: ARUP RAJOURIA

Human induced climate change has been a global challenge with far reaching consequences, impacting economies, ecosystems and communities worldwide. Blunt warnings from leading climate scientists as highlighted in The Guardian's recent survey, paint a grim future where global temperatures are expected to exceed agreed upon limits, heralding the cascade of calamities including famines, conflicts, and mass displacements where the drivers will be extreme weather events of unprecedented intensity.

The intricate web of human induced climate change impacts in Nepal, which serves as a distressing microcosm of these challenges, and the region weaves together the alarming projections of global temperature rise, weather extremes, the surge in forest fires and the ever-escalating retreat of Himalayan glaciers.

This retreat alters the region's hydrology and poses an imminent threat in the form of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), where sudden drainage of glacial lakes can unleash a catastrophic flood downstream. Nepal, alone has over 2,700 such lakes

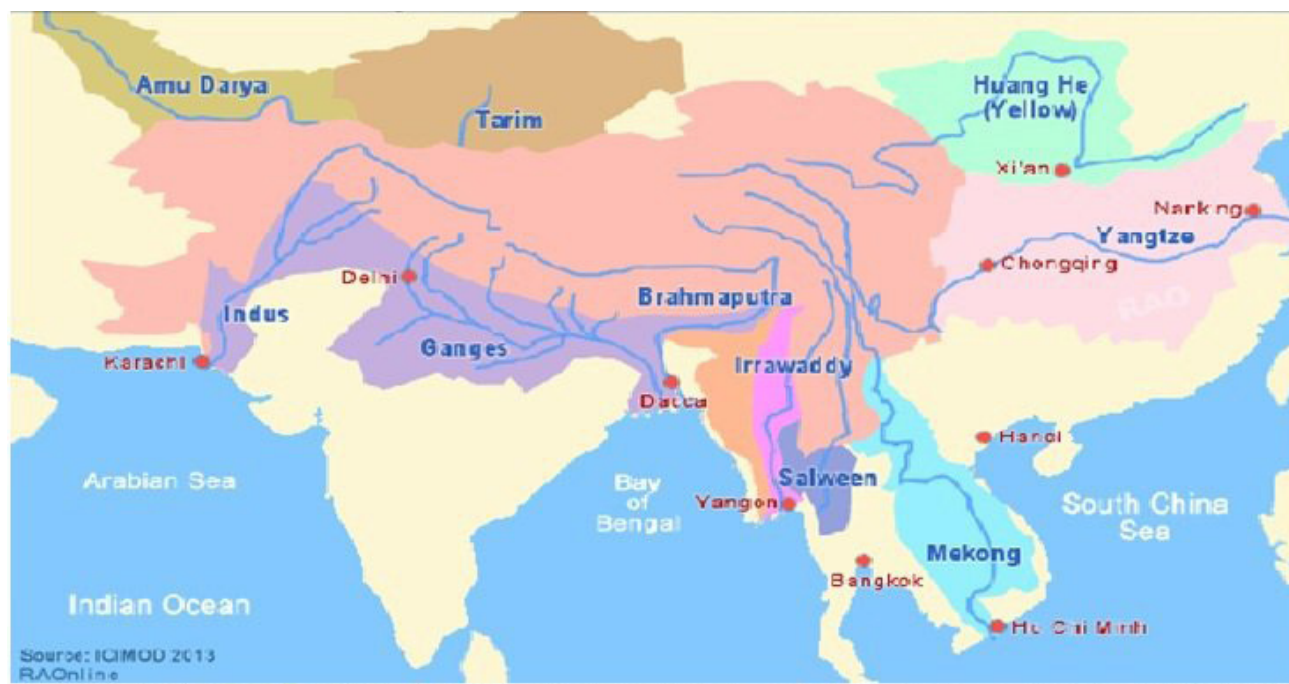
- ticking time bombs threatening millions. These interconnected issues are a major threat to over 2 billion people in 12 countries of South and Southeast Asia, 10 major river systems, ecosystems, biodiversity and cultural heritage that are dependent on the Himalayan glaciers for their sustenance.

In parallel, the increasing frequency and intensity of forest fires in Nepal and the region add another layer of complexity to the already challenged environmental landscape. Triggered by a combination of climate change induced weather extremes, drought, erratic precipitation patterns and anthropogenic activities,

these wildfires ravage ecosystems substantially decreasing the carbon sequestration, threaten biodiversity, degrade air quality and deposit black carbon on the Himalayan/Hindukush glaciers further accelerating their melting.

Available data underscores the sobering predictions that, even in the most optimistic scenarios, the Himalayan glaciers could lose up to 50% of their volume by 2100. In the worst-case scenario, the Himalayas and the Hindu Kush region could see 75-80% loss of glacier ice, with





devastating consequences for the countries and communities depending on these vital resources.

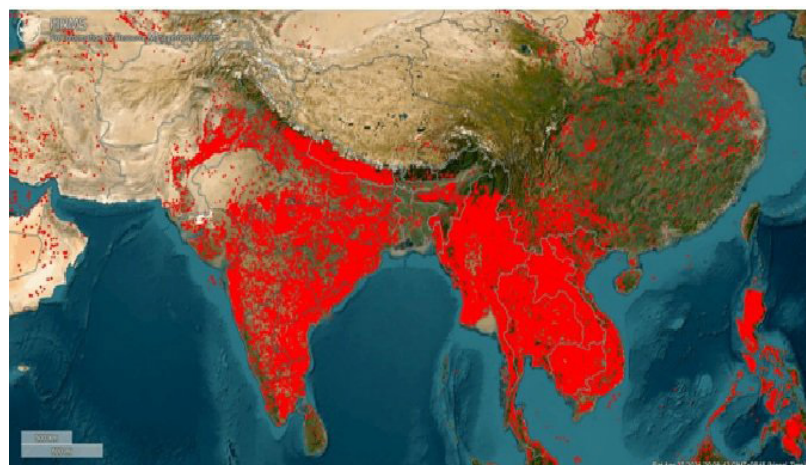
Addressing this upcoming existential crisis requires a coordinated, intergovernmental effort to monitor, study, and develop strategies, policies and programs to mitigate the impacts of human-induced climate change on glacier retreats. The establishment of a laser focused International Center for Glaciers would be a crucial step in this direction.

The aim of such a center would bring leading experts, researchers, and policy-makers from the respective countries to comprehensively monitor glacier dynamics, embark on interdisciplinary research, assess vulnerabilities, devise adaptation and mitigation strategies on a trans boundary approach and advocate for evidence based policies to ensure the future of this vital region and the well-being of over 2 billion peo-

ple – 1/3 of the global population who depend on its glacier-fed water resources.

Indifference to the accelerating melt of the Himalayan/ Hindu Kush glaciers would trigger a domino effect of catastrophic consequences of the region and beyond. Water scarcity, conflicts, mass displacement/migration, cultural and ecological collapse represents a mere fraction of the devastation future inaction promises. We stand at crossroads. Do we passively witness the glacial retreats or address this crisis collectively for a sustainable future for generations to come? The time for decisive action is now.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/article/2024/may/08/world-scientists-climate-failure-survey-global-temperature>



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 US-AID. He holds an MPA degree from Harvard University.



NEPAL-INDIA RELATIONS

Dispute Over New Currency

Amidst the deteriorating Nepal-India relations caused by Nepal's decision to print hundred rupees notes featuring a new map, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Naryan Kazi Shrestha has made efforts to address the situation. During a recent program, DPM Shrestha emphasized that Nepal's relations with India should not be influenced by any other country and that issues with India should be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy. Considering the ongoing dispute over Nepal's independent decision, DPM Shrestha's call for talks is a positive step forward.

By KESHAB POUDEL

India is currently in the final phase of its General Elections for parliament, while Nepal is facing various challenges such as reviving its economy and resolving political deadlock. In the

midst of these issues, Nepal's communist-led coalition government, backed by CPN-UML leader Oli, has made the controversial decision to print 100 rupees notes featuring the new

map of Nepal. This decision has sparked a major diplomatic dispute with India.

Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda's government, under pressure from

Oli, has no choice but to endorse the decision in order to appease him and maintain stability. It is no secret that former prime minister Oli supports the printing of the new notes. Despite India's objection, Oli has defended Nepal's right as a sovereign and independent country to make its own decisions.

However, the decision to publish notes with the new map has raised many questions, even leading to the resignation of Dr. Chiranjibi Nepal, President Ram Chandra Poudel's Economic advisor and former Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, due to his critical opposition at this particular time.

FM Shrestha's Initiative

The ongoing dispute between Nepal and India has prompted Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Narayan Kazi Shrestha to take action to resolve the deadlock.

During the Third edition of Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series in Kathmandu on 14 May 2024, DPM Shrestha emphasized that Nepal's relationship with India is unique compared to any other country.

Initially launched three years ago by the former foreign secretary and current ambassador of Nepal to Canada Bharat Raj Paudyal, with support from the former chief Secretary Shanker Das Bairagi, the current foreign secretary Sewa Lamsal is continuing Nepal's flagship program.

In the presence of distinguished individuals from various



sectors of national life, DPM and Minister for Foreign Affairs Shrestha highlighted the long-standing history of mutual friendship and cooperation between Nepal and India as close neighbors.

The minister highlighted several key aspects of the Nepal-India relationship, including their close proximity, shared religious, cultural, and linguistic ties, strong economic engagement, and thriving people-to-people connections. He emphasized that these ties are nurtured by nature, bound by cultural affinity, and are comprehensive, multi-dimensional, and incomparable.

However, he acknowledged that there are historical bilateral issues that still need to be resolved through dialogue and diplomatic channels, based on historical facts and in the spirit of good neighborliness. It is worth noting that the third series of lectures, which focused on Nepal-India relations, coincided with a challenging period

in the relationship, with Prof C Rajmohan, former Director of the Academy of South Asian Studies, serving as the keynote speaker. In the previous series, Professor Dr. Surya Subedi and former foreign secretary Madhuraman Acharya were invited as keynote speakers.

Minister Shrestha emphasized that this initiative has paved the way for elevating Nepal-India relations to unprecedented heights, a commitment that the Government of Nepal firmly upholds. He reiterated that the foundation of these bilateral relations is built upon principles of sovereign equality, peaceful coexistence, goodwill, mutual trust, and understanding.

Furthermore, Minister Shrestha highlighted that the exchange of high-level visits has significantly contributed to strengthening the relations and fostering partnerships across various sectors. He also mentioned the establishment of a consultative mechanism, which has effectively facilitated cooperation



in multiple areas of bilateral relations, thereby enhancing mutual cooperation and partnership.

In addition, Minister Shrestha emphasized the immense potential for cooperation in various sectors that can bring mutual benefits. He specifically emphasized the importance of partnership in the energy sector, stating that the proper utilization of Nepal's abundant hydropower resources can revolutionize the development landscape of the region by promoting clean energy.

Regarding trade and transit, Minister Shrestha acknowledged the ongoing expansion of cross-border connectivity to facilitate trade. He emphasized the need for further expansion and improvement of this network, emphasizing that both countries should explore ways to make mutual trade more profitable.

Lastly, Minister Shrestha highlighted the attractiveness of Nepal as an investment destination, noting that multinational companies have withdrawn their investments from other countries to invest in Nepal. This signifies the growing confidence in Ne-

pal's potential and opportunities for investment.

The Foreign Minister emphasized the potential for collaboration in the field of information technology between Nepal and India. He also highlighted the importance of expanding bilateral cooperation in education, science, and technology. Additionally, he expressed that Nepal's development and economic prosperity would benefit its neighboring countries, emphasizing the desire for a peaceful neighborhood.

Professor Rajmohan pointed out that Nepal and India face similar global challenges and stressed the need for political leaders to carefully address the power struggle between powerful nations, which has negatively impacted smaller countries.

Furthermore, he noted that Kathmandu and New Delhi should take lessons from Beijing, as China has successfully improved its relations with both Russia and the USA based on their respective needs. Despite the strained relations between

Beijing and Washington, its relations with Moscow remain strong.

Nepal-India relations.

Foreign policy analyst Jayaraj Acharya has expressed concern over the deteriorating relationship between Nepal and India, attributing it to the lack of diplomatic skills among the country's political leaders. Acharya believes that the government's decision to introduce new currency notes reflects immaturity in handling relations with India.

He further emphasizes that instead of resorting to cheap anti-Indian rhetoric, Nepal should focus on protecting its own interests and fostering a thriving relationship with India. Acharya suggests that Nepal needs to adopt a new approach to diplomacy, particularly considering its strategic position between two major powers. He also notes that Nepal's diplomatic influence has diminished and sees no potential benefits in maintaining its current relations with India.

The primary challenge facing Nepal's foreign policy lies in enhancing its ties with India. Shyamsharan, an Indian diplomat, delves into the intricate dynamics of the relationship between the two nations in his book. He sheds light on the issues involving Pakistan, China, and Nepal, stressing the necessity of engaging in high-level political dialogues to tackle these challenges. Shyamsharan expresses apprehension regarding the current state of affairs and underscores that India's backing for Nepal, such as in the WHO elections, hinges on the en-

hancement of their relationship.

Acharya underscored that Nepal garnered diplomatic significance during the reign of BP and King Mahendra owing to their charismatic personalities. Leading the nation for 51 years from 2048, Acharya outlined three pivotal factors that determine a diplomat's effectiveness. These factors form the basis for the clout wielded by politicians and diplomats. "Those possessing a greater share of these qualities exert more influence," he remarked. In contrast to common belief, geography plays a minor role in this context, as illustrated by Acharya through the example of Yadunath Khanal.

He emphasized that the key factor is not the individual's position or the country they represent, but rather their capabilities. Additionally, Acharya highlighted that Nepal's diplomatic importance is mainly due to its geographical location, with more than 100 countries being smaller than Nepal.

The decision has been made by the Nepal government to replace the old administrative map of Nepal on the Rs.100 banknotes with a new map of Nepal. Minister for Communication and Information Technology, Rekha Sharma, announced that the government has authorized the Ministry of Finance to carry out this change.

Indian Discontent

India expresses its dissatisfaction as Nepal plans to introduce a new Rs 100 currency note featuring a new map that includes territories of Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh, and Kalapani.



Dr. S. Jaishankar, the External Affairs Minister of India, has voiced his dissatisfaction over Nepal's unilateral decision. According to him, this decision does not alter the actual situation on the ground. Dr. Jaishankar emphasized that Nepal took this step while discussions were underway regarding the established mechanism between the two nations.

During the tenure of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, a new map of Nepal was introduced in 2077, which included territories claimed by India such as Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani.

This move sparked controversy and tensions between the two countries. In his article, Dipak Gyawali highlights the consequences of supporting corrupt leaders in Nepal and warns India of potential challenges ahead due to its involvement in Nepal's political landscape in his X wall.

However, Indian analysts have begun to accuse Nepal of leaning towards China. "The current actions taken by Nepal are

largely influenced by its new political leadership, which is intentionally using its close ties with China to intimidate India.

Additionally, there are several other concerns that have arisen, causing worry in Kathmandu. What makes Nepal's actions particularly significant is its perceived alignment with China. In recent years, the relationship between Nepal and China has significantly strengthened, driven by mutual economic interests and strategic cooperation," states an Indian commentator.

Despite Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Shrestha's efforts to address the controversy surrounding the printing of new currency notes, the irrational and nationalist decision made by the Prachanda-led government does not serve Nepal's broader interests.

From a political and personal standpoint, individuals may hold varying opinions on Nepal-India relations. However, the reality is that Nepal and India share close geographical and cultural ties that are unbreakable.

Revisiting The EIA Report



BY: BATU UPRETY

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report of any project is multi-stakeholder owned. The project proponent, local beneficiaries and interested people, and approving and other agencies are sufficiently engaged in the EIA process right from the preparation and approval of the environmental scoping and its EIA report, including in public hearing. Local people are also engaged in implementing the appropriate measures, when necessary.

The EIA reports are prepared for the prescribed projects, and legally approved to make the project environment-friendly and sustainable. Almost all countries have internalised the use of EIA tool for the environmentally sensitive projects and have enjoyed with the outcome of such a study to timely address project-specific environmental impacts. This process has a well-defined beginning and an end. Alternatively, it starts with environmental scoping and ends with auditing. The EIA is a predictive tool and uses science to identify, predict and evaluate the significance of the impacts. It addresses two types of impacts - 'will happen' and 'might happen'. Both identified and predicted impacts are evaluated based on existing policies, legislations or national and local priorities, practices and value of resources that will or might be impacted by the project activities. Each step of the EIA process has specific meaning and value. Misunderstanding or misinterpretation would lead to the preparation of under-quality report and will create additional problems during the implementation of the legally approved EIA report. To understand the existing situation, an EIA report of a hydro-project is reviewed.

The EIA report of the Bajhang Upper Seti Hydro-electricity Project was made public on 4 April 2024 to collect suggestions within 7 days. This project has an installed capacity of 216 MW and will generate 163.6 gigawatts hour net energy during the dry season. This is a peaking-run-of-the-river project designed for 4.5 hours peaking capacity. It will store 0.835 million m³ of water by damming the Seti Khola which has 34.1 m³/sec water discharge. This review flags few issues that are ignored or overlooked in the EIA report with a view to encourage the proponent and the government to carefully look such reports.

One of the objectives of this EIA study, as mentioned in the report, is to identify positive and negative impacts and recommend appropriate and practical mitigation and benefits enhancement measures. The objective ignores the need for predicting and evaluating the impacts, the fundamentals of the EIA tool.

The EIA report clearly mentions the record of tree species from the representative samples along the proposed road, adit portal and dam site of the direct impact zone. Representative samples represent over 1 percent of the potentially impacted total area of forests. For compensatory plantation (@ 1:10), enumerated data would be realistic. The sample-based

estimation might create practical challenges in issuing forest area and number of trees that should be felled as a part of site clearance. The beauty of this EIA report lies on conformity on impacts on few aspects. For example, this report confirms no

fish in the Seti khola between the proposed dam site and downstream of powerhouse site based on handset net used 6 times to know fish diversity. However, it proposes 10 percent release of water to maintain downstream ecosystem. It includes issues raised during the public hearing, and measures proposed to address people's concerns.

In 1990, the EIA Guideline drafting team considered the need for a review of policies and laws to timely inform the decision-makers whether the project can be implemented based on existing national policies and legislations. If not, review should clearly include the policy and legislative barrier(s) for project implementation. Guidelines were developed to help the EIA report preparer(s). In this EIA report, proponent has reviewed number of policies and legislations without any inferences. It simply includes the provisions without linking with the project and its activities.

The EIA report rightly analyses the alternatives, and selects the alternative based on the length of the headrace tunnel, and area of forest to be used, including number of trees to be felled down for the construction of the project. It would have been more logical to identify, predict and evaluate the significance of the environmental impacts of both alternatives and select the best alternative on the environmental ground.

The EIA report has used the magnitude, extent, and duration to know the impact significance. Impacts are mentioned direct or indirect. Summary of impact is given in one sentence within bracket in italic form. The report has used 'shall, will, and may' to describe impacts. Uncertainty on identified or predicted impacts indicate non-consideration of location and activity-specific impacts. For example, drying-up of water sources along the tunnel area is possible but the impact is considered insignificant due to non-use of water sources at the local level. Here, 'use' is the determining factor. The project will not be affected by glaciers as glacier is not reported at its watershed. Impact significance related to reduce climate risk is rated high with low magnitude, regional extent, and long-term duration. Similar prediction is made for earthquake risk (high magnitude, site-specific extent, and long-term duration). These impacts are here considered 'predicted'.

Magnitude of the location-specific felling of 2144 trees along the project direct impact areas with two protected species (lauthsalla and Juglans), and 481 trees along the access road is rated medium. While submergence of plant species with medium magnitude, regional extent and long-term duration is ranked with high significance. Submergence seems site-specific impact, but its extent is considered regional. The report has specified no impact on fish species and magnitude

of the impact on protected species is ranked minor. The EIA report categorically mentions that project construction will not affect water use right as Seti Khola is not used for drinking, irrigation, commercial fishing, or tourism but the significance of impact is categorised low. In some cases, impacts are rated in absence of baseline condition.

The EIA report mentions the importance of impact insignificant, related to the generation of employment at local level, but skill development has high importance like that of climate risk mitigation. It happened so as the scores allocated for magnitude, extent and duration of the impact are unclear. Score-based rating for significant or insignificant impacts confuse the reviewers and decision-makers. This requires proper interpretation, and if necessary, some explanation. Previously, importance value of a plant species was calculated using frequency, density, and dominance in relative terms. Message of the high importance value of a species that will or might be affected by the project activities should be clearly understood to select enhancement or mitigation measures.

Review indicates number of areas where improvement is required to make the EA report practical and implementable. Twenty-eight years of experience in Nepal in facilitating, preparing, approving, and implementing the EIA report of social and economic development, and infrastructure sectors seek for additional initiatives to improve the technical quality of the EIA report to make the development projects environment-friendly and sustainable.

Based on review of the EIA report of this project, and in view of unclarity on identified and predicted impacts, mitigation and enhancement measures proposed for insignificant impacts, and impact score seen in the report, the government is encouraged to be clear on what it needs for the approval of the EIA report(s) and timely inform the proponents to ensure technical quality of such report(s). The government may wish to consider the following for few issues noticed:

a. reasons of lower total score of site-specific impacts, and proposed mitigation measures for insignificant impacts, and/or dealing with impact-based mitigation and enhancement measures, even the score-based impact is ranked insignificant;

b. dealing with mitigation measures and auditing parameters mentioned without baseline; and

c. discontinuation to include the percentage of the total project cost for proposed environmental enhancement and mitigation measures started in 2006.



The EIA report mentions costs for mitigation measures to be included under the civil cost for some measures. The EIA report estimates nearly NRs. 2 crore and 96 lakhs for benefits enhancement and adverse impacts mitigation measures, including NRs 1 crore and 18 lakhs for compensatory plantation, and NRs 19 crores and 50 lakhs (0.5 percent of the total project cost) for community support programmes totalling to about NRs. 22 crores and 46 lakhs, excluding those which will be included in the civil cost. This is less than 0.6 percent of the total project cost. For this project, the need for environmental management cost might be sufficiently below 1 percent of the total project cost.

Interestingly, this EIA report does not specify the cost for environmental monitoring and auditing. It includes

number of plans such as dam protection plan, solid waste management plan, disaster management plan etc. but lack the basic elements of the plan and budget required for their implementation.

The government is encouraged to take measures to make the EIA report project-specific, categorise impacts into identified and predicted, and evaluate the significance of those impacts. The

government should strictly enforce the implementation of the approved EIA report to understand the state of compliance with the implementation of the enhancement and mitigation measures, and effectiveness of the measures in addressing the project-induced impacts. Environmental monitoring and auditing provide multiple opportunities to streamline realistic identification and prediction of environmental impacts, evaluation of their significance along with corresponding appropriate and location-specific benefits enhancement and adverse impacts mitigation measures, and clarify the environmental management plan, including monitoring and auditing requirements.

All countries have institutionalised and benefitted from the use of EIA tool to advance sustainable development. Over 3 decades of experience in internalising the EIA tool in Nepal would provide multiple opportunities to benefit from this tool. However, small effort is required with clarity of both proponents and the approving agencies.

NEPAL-KOREA RELATIONS

Fifty-Years Of Warm Relations

As Nepal and Korea is celebrating fifty years of establishment of diplomatic relations holding various programs and events, Korea's prominent mountaineer Um Hung Gil led Nepal-Korea joint expedition team reached at the Peak of Jugal Mountain, a virgin mountain, proving the slogan of Everesting the relations of Fifty-Years of establishment of diplomatic relations

By A CORRESPONDENT

On May 3, a joint team of Nepal and the Republic of Korea (RoK) climb Mt Jugal I. The maiden ascent of Mt Jugal took place to mark the completion of 50 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. This is a significant achievement for both countries.

Led by Captain Um Hong Gil, world's prominent Korean climber, alongside Lakpa Dendi Sherpa and Lama Babu Sherpa, climbers from Nepal and Korea, participating in the Nepal-Korea Friendship Expedition-2024, have successfully summited the virgin peak of Jugal-I in Sindhupalchok reached the peak on May 3.

NMA General Secretary Mohan Lamsal expressed the confidence that the maiden ascent on Mt Jugal by the joint team will contribute towards promoting tourism in Nepal and strengthening the two countries bilateral relations further.

He said this expedition is considered important also because it is linked with tourism diplomacy.

Renowned Korean mountaineer and honorary Nepali citizen Aum Hong Gill expressed that

reaching the peak of the mountain at this year is highly important for not only mountaineers but also governments and people of both the countries.

As Nepal-Korean joint team climbed the virgin peak of Mt Jugal,



Nepal has made another progress in industrial sector with support from Korean Hundai Company establishing a world class car assembly plant in Nepal. Investing in various sectors, Republic of Korea has placed itself as a four top foreign investor in Nepal.

The bilateral relations between Nepal and Korea have been taking new height in the last fifty years. Republic of Korea has been proving all kinds of support to Nepal.

Korea Is Ready to Support Nepal's Economic Development: Ambassador Park Tae Young

Park Tae Young, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Nepal, expressed the possibility of a High-level visit during the 50th anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Korea and Nepal.

He highlighted the meeting between President Yoon Suk Yeol of the Republic of Korea and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda at the UN General Assembly last year.

Additionally, he emphasized the visit of the Agriculture Minister from Korea and the Special Envoy of the Korean President to Nepal. As both countries commemorate 50 years of Diplomatic Relations, Ambassador Park Tae Young mentioned the likelihood of high-level meetings taking place.

He also mentioned that various programs are being organized to celebrate this milestone. Furthermore, he shared that Korean and Nepali expedition teams successfully reached the summit of Mount Jugal as part of the anniversary celebrations.

During a Media Briefing program held at the Ambassador's Residence, Ambassador Park Tae Young stated that the Republic of



Korea will continue to support Nepal's economic development.

The speaker highlighted the cultural ties between Korea and Nepal, particularly through Buddhism.

He mentioned that a significant number of Korean Buddhists have been visiting Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha.

During the program, Park Tae Young provided the media with an overview of the diplomatic history, economic relations, development, and employment cooperation between the Republic of Korea and Nepal. Mooheon Kong, the Country Director of KOICA Nepal, also presented the ongoing programs implemented by KOICA Nepal for economic development.

Additionally, Doa Kim (Roshani), the Project Action Officer of KOICA, briefed the audience about KOICA's current programs aimed at strengthening the state-wise support system for the stable reintegration of returnee migrants in Nepal.

The diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and Nepal were established in 1974 with the opening of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Kathmandu. In 2007, Nepal established its embassy

in Seoul. Over the past decade, there have been numerous high-level exchanges between the two countries, including visits by ministers and special envoys of the President.

The bilateral trade between Korea and Nepal has seen a significant rise, increasing from \$0.1 million in 1970 to \$37 million in 2023. Over the years, Korea has provided ODA amounting to \$282.4 million to Nepal in various sectors such as Health, Water & Sanitation, Education, Rural Development, and Energy from 1987 to 2022. Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding for the Employment Permit System was signed between Korea and Nepal in 2007, leading to 19,739 Nepalese EPS workers entering Korea in 2023.

As of February 2024, there are currently 43,963 Nepalese workers employed in Korea, with 6,497 Nepalese students pursuing higher education in Korea as of March 2023, ranking Nepal 5th in terms of the number of international students in Korea. The Embassy is planning to organize various events in the future, including a Speech Contest, Quiz on Korea, Cultural performances, Exhibition, Taekwondo, Workshops



supporting successful resettlement of Nepali Migrant Returnees from Korea, Development Experiences Sharing Seminar, Workshop on Cooperation on Climate Change, and Seminar on Economic cooperation. Furthermore, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) Nepal Office, established in 1995, has briefed on the projects carried out by KOICA in Nepal.

During the press briefing, the ambassador Park Tae Young also expressed Korea's willingness to offer support in the development of the hydropower sector. He highlighted the successful completion of the 30 MW Chameliya hydropower project and transmission line project, which was made possible through a concessional loan from the Korean-Exim Bank.

Furthermore, he mentioned that negotiations are currently underway with the Korean Bank for another concessional loan to construct a trans-

mission line. The ambassador also shared that a Korean private company is currently engaged in the construction of the largest hydro power project in Upper Trishul-1, while Korea's largest company, Hyundai, and is partnering with a Nepali private company to establish a car assembly plant in Nepal.

Additionally, he emphasized the significant investments made by Korean companies in Nepal, particularly in the IT and electronic sectors. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Korean visitors used to rank among Nepal's top ten tourists.

The ambassador stressed the importance of signing double taxation and other bilateral agreements between Korea and Nepal to ensure the safety and security of Korean investments in Nepal. He further highlighted that such agreements would contribute to an increase in Korean investment, solidifying Korea's position as the

fourth largest foreign investor in Nepal.

KOICA, the leading development cooperation agency in Korea, is responsible for the development and administration of grant aid programs including bilateral/multilateral projects, fellowship programs, volunteer programs, and more.

The K-Hami Project by KOICA is designed to enhance a stage-wise support system for the successful reintegration of Korean Returnee Migrants in Nepal.

This project, scheduled to run from 2022 to 2028, will focus on establishing a positive cycle and support structure for returnees based on their migration stage, with the aim of contributing to Nepal's socio-economic development and boosting employment rates. Ultimately, the project's objective is to achieve Happy Migration and Happy Life.

Centenary Celebration

Organizing a special ceremony, British Prime Minister Office has shown importance of its centuries old relations with Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

As the relations between Nepal and UK are over two centuries old, they share so many things and Nepal's relations with the United Kingdom are warm and unique only a few countries have.

Few years ago, Nepal-Britain celebrate 200 years of signing the treaty and now they celebrated hundred years of signing the treaty recognizing Nepal as independent and sovereign country.

Celebrating a special program by British Prime Minister Office organizing A Special Ceremony To Mark 100 Anniversary Of Signing Nepal-UK 1923 Treaty just a few weeks back was highly important.

Although Nepal and UK has long relations, none of British PM visited Nepal. Marking the program with such high level ceremony, British Prime Minister's office also puts Nepal in priority

A special ceremony was organized at the British Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Friendship between Nepal and the United Kingdom (UK) in 1923.



Addressing the program, the British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak spoke about the various dimensions of the historical relationship between Britain and praised the contribution of British Gurkhas in bilateral relations

Recalling the past visit of King Charles to Nepal, he said that he was inspired by the work and achievements of the Nepalese Diaspora in Britain, who are famous in various fields.

Nepali Ambassador to UK Gyan Chandra Acharya expressed his best wishes on behalf of the Honorable Prime Minister of Nepal. While giving information about the importance of friendship treaty concluded in 1923, he mentioned that after the treaty, Nepal's presence in the international arena and the promotion of international relations have made a significant contribution.

While giving information about the social and political changes and progress achieved in Nepal, he thanked Britain for its support in the development of Nepal. He also expressed his belief that in the next 100 years, Nepal-UK bilateral relations will be expanded to more areas and the relations will



be strengthened.

British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Honorable Anne Marie Trevelyan said that the UK will continue to support Nepal's development efforts and will further expand economic relations to help Nepal become a middle-income country.

The program was attended by the Nepali community, ex-Gorkhas, British MPs and high-ranking officials and British friends of Nepal who are in various professions and businesses in the UK.

This ceremony was held with the support of the Nepalese community and as discussed between the Nepali Embassy and the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the signing of the 1923 Treaty of Friendship between Nepal and Britain.

While celebrating this occasion, a special program was organized in the hall where the treaty was signed on 21 December 2023, the same day the treaty was signed at the Prime Minister's Office in Nepal.



TRISHULI 3B SUBSTATION Supply Of Green And Clean Energy

The commissioning of the Trishuli 3B Substation, despite facing delays, marks a significant milestone in the supply of clean and green energy. This substation will play a crucial role in evacuating the green electricity generated in the Trishuli area, thereby reducing reliance on fossil fuels and helping Nepal achieve its goal of zero emissions by 2045.

By KESHAB POUDEL

The completion of this project, which overcame various challenges such as difficult terrain, will ensure a more stable power supply in the Kathmandu Valley.

The inauguration

ceremony was attended by high-level officials from the European Commission, including Energy Water Resources and Irrigation Minister Shakti Bahadur Basnet, European Commission Deputy Director General for In-

ternational Partnerships Myriam Ferran, EU Ambassador Veronique Lorenzo, German Ambassador Thomas Prinz, EIB Director Thouraya Triki, and local elected representatives.

The inauguration of a



28 KM electricity transmission line in Nepal marks the launch of a new Global Gateway flagship by Team Europe and the Nepal government.

This initiative aims to support the electrification of rural areas and provide clean, affordable, and reliable energy to the Nepali population. The EU International Partnerships, along with the EU Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships, are prioritizing the well-being of people and the planet to create a better future.

The Trishuli 3B Hub, constructed at Pahrebensi in Kispang Rural Municipality of Nuwakot, is a significant component of the Chilime-Trishu-

li 220 kV transmission system project. Additionally, as part of the project's corporate social responsibility, a 33-11 kV power distribution substation has been built in Valche of Kispang Rural Municipality through the community electrification program.

These infrastructures, funded by grants from the EU in Nepal and KfW FZ, along with a concessional loan from the European Investment Bank (EIB), play a crucial role in distributing electricity from newly constructed and under construction hydro plants to households throughout the country.

The construction of the Trishuli 3B Hub substation, which occupies approx-

imately 104 ropani of land, amounted to a total cost of Rs. 1.97 billion. This substation is connected to the Trishuli-Kathmandu 220 kV transmission line through the Matatirtha substation.

Furthermore, the community electrification program, which includes the Valche substation and the Trishuli 3B hub-Valche 33 kV transmission line, incurred a cost of Rs. 420.93 million.

To enhance electricity access and supply in the Nuwakot and Rasuwa districts, as well as ensure reliability and quality, the Community Electrification Program has successfully constructed 33 and 11 kV lines and distribution substations. As a result,



over 2 thousand households in Nuwakot and Rasuwa have greatly benefited from this initiative.

During the opening ceremony, Minister Basnet emphasized the significance of the newly constructed substation. He highlighted that this development not only facilitates the utilization of electricity generated from hydroelectric projects in the Trishuli river catchment area, but also plays a crucial role in managing the country's overall electricity system.

To achieve the ambitious goal of producing 28,000 MW of electricity within the next 12 years, Minister Basnet acknowledged the need for policy, legal, and structural reforms. These reforms aim to create an investment-friendly environment in the production, transmission, and distribution sectors.

Furthermore, Minister Basnet emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts between the government, local community, foreign investors, and the private sector to promote investments in the hydropower sector.

Ferran, the Deputy Director General of the European Commission, emphasized the significance of substations in the expansion of renewable green energy production to address the challenges posed by climate change. He expressed the European Union's pride in benefiting a large community in Nepal through the construction of these substations.

The German Ambassador, Thomas Prinz, announced that a subsidy of 70 million euros will be provided to facilitate the delivery of clean green energy to consumers' households.

Kulman Ghising, the Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), appealed to the European Union and its member states to invest in the infrastructure of Nepal's green energy sector for sustainable development. He highlighted the need for approximately 46 billion US dol-

lars in infrastructure investment to achieve the target of generating 28,000 megawatts of electricity in the next 12 years.

According to Thark Bahadur Thapa, the project's director, the substation will play a significant role in enhancing the reliability and quality of Nepal's overall electricity system. He also mentioned that the completion of the Chilime Hub-Trishuli 3B Hub transmission line is expected within a month.

The Chilime-Trishuli 220 KV transmission system project involves the construction of a 28 km 220 kV double circuit transmission line from Chilime Haw 220 KV substation to Trishuli 3B Hub, located in Thambuchet, Amachodingmo Rural Municipality of Rasuwa. This project is currently in its final stage.



The Chilime-Trishuli 220 kV transmission system project, which is estimated to cost 6 billion 19 million rupees, is a joint investment by the Government of Nepal, the Nepal Electricity Authority, and receives a grant from the German Development Bank (KfW) and the EU. The EU-established EIB has also provided concessional loans for this project.

Chilime-Trishuli 220 kV Transmission Line

The Chilime-Trishuli 220 kV transmission line and the Chilime and Trishuli 3B hub substations have been built to transmit the power generated by the hy-

droelectric projects currently under construction and those planned along the Trishuli river and its tributaries to the national power grid. These transmission lines and substations have the capacity to transmit approximately 1,200 megawatts of electricity.

Out of the total 28 km transmission line, the foundations for 70 out of 75 towers have been laid. The foundations for the remaining 5 towers have been partially completed. 60 towers have been erected and work on the remaining 10 towers is progressing smoothly. Additionally, 15 km of wire has been

stretched and the wire pulling work is currently underway on the erected towers.

As part of the Chilime-Trishuli 3B hub transmission line, a 20 km double circuit Chilime-Mailung section and an 8 km four (multi) circuit line have been constructed up to the Mailung-Trishuli 3B hub. The construction of this transmission line is being carried out at a rapid pace with the aim of completing it within a month.

Korean companies have taken the lead in constructing a multi-circuit line to connect the power generated by the 216 MW Upper Trishuli-1 hydroelectric pro-

COVERSTORY

ject. The Upper Trishuli-1 project will bear 60 percent of the construction cost for the multi-circuit line.

The construction of a tower in a geographically hazardous and challenging mountainous region has been necessary due to the absence of roads. The transportation of materials such as stones, sand, tower components, and water has been carried out by individuals or carts.

Additionally, the project has faced setbacks caused by factors such as floods, the inadequate performance of construction professionals, land use issues in forested areas, opposition from locals, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The transmission line has been successfully built across an elevation range of 680 to 2600 meters above sea level. In areas where there was no existing access road, 33 towers had to be constructed, necessitating the creation of a separate access road to reach these locations.

The integration of electricity generated from various hydropower projects,

including 60 MW Upper Trishuli 3A, 216 MW Upper Trishuli-1, 111 MW Rasuwagadhi, 42.5 MW Sanjen, 42 MW of Tadi Khola, 37 MW Upper Trishuli 3 B, 14.8 MW Upper Sanjen, and 14.3 MW Upper Trishuli, into the national system will be facilitated by the construction of transmission lines and substations.

A contract was signed

tion centers.

Nevertheless, numerous transmission line projects currently in progress have encountered obstacles from various sources. Likewise, the Nepal Electricity Authority requires substantial investment for these constructions, but lacks the necessary resources. MD Ghising has been diligently striving to attract

more investment and overcome these obstacles in order to successfully complete the projects.



In this endeavor,

the completion of the Trishuli 3 B Hub holds great importance. Additionally, with MD Ghising's regular inspections, the 220 kV Trishuli-Chileme Transmission line is nearing completion. The commitment expressed by Nepal's major development partners, namely the European Union, EIB, and KFW, is of utmost significance in addressing the resource scarcity.

Today's Greatest Global Challenge Is Climate Change



BY: TORUN DRAMDAL (MS)

It is a great pleasure to welcome all of you to the celebration of the Norwegian Constitution Day, always celebrated on the 17th of May.

Our Constitution of 1814 is one of the world's oldest Constitutions still in force. Although the Constitution of Nepal is 200 years younger, we share many values. The emphasis on equality has formed modern Norway; the same ambition also forms modern Nepal.

We congratulate Nepal on your progress as a democracy. Norway will continue as a partner in advancing democracy and inclusion.

Freedom, Democracy, Human Rights, and the Rule of Law are values enshrined in our respective Constitutions – values that we strive to comply with. We should not complacently lean back. Each day we must actively promote and uphold these values.

We also congratulate Nepal on considerable improvements in living standards over the past decade.

The national poverty rate has decreased from 25 percent in 2011 to 3.5 percent in 2023 when using the old poverty line. These numbers tell a story about many men, women and children having a better life today than a few years ago.

For Norwegians, the 17th of May is a day of joy. However, we cannot ignore the suffering elsewhere.

After Russia's full-scale invasion, the Ukrainian people are bravely fighting for their independence and freedom. Every day we are also reminded about the ongoing tragedy and despair of innocent civilians in the Middle East. The privilege of living in a peaceful society should never be taken for granted.

Many Norwegians have strong ties to Nepal. People-to-people contacts are just as important, perhaps even

more, than our formal diplomatic ties. Since the first Norwegians arrived in Nepal in the late 1950s, close friendships have been forged.

Today's greatest global challenge is climate change. In the Himalayas, we witness climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. The effects of this triple crisis are already evident. The glaciers are rapidly melting.

Ambition and climate action must be stepped up. Norway is fully aware of the need to increase climate finance and support to developing countries. We are doing our part and will continue to be a reliable partner.

Knowledge and research must be at the core of how we deal with climate change. Norway has for many years supported the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development – ICIMOD -because it is an organization for knowledge and regional cooperation.

Access to clean and affordable energy is a fundamental enabler for sustainable development. Norway and Nepal have been working together in renewable energy and hydropower for 60 years, and we will continue to do so.

As we will continue to be a dedicated partner in the education sector, and in good governance- the main sectors of our bilateral cooperation.

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

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

Torun Dramdal is the Ambassador of Norway to Nepal. Excerpts of her statement delivered at a ceremony held on Norwegian Constitution Day in Kathmandu



MoICS/IFAD

SAMRIDDHI'S Leading To Apprenticeship

The Rural Enterprises and Remittances Project (RERP) Samriddhi's Leading to Apprenticeship Program has emerged as a solution during a time when young individuals are facing unemployment challenges and businesses are struggling with a shortage of skilled labor. This project, a collaboration between the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supply (MoICS) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), has effectively showcased the creation of job opportunities for the unemployed and addressing the scarcity of skilled labor in industries. With financial support from IFAD and supervision from MoICS, the Learning to Apprenticeship model is currently being executed in partnership with the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), the largest umbrella organization of the private sector. This initiative is specifically designed to target unemployed individuals from impoverished and marginalized communities, with the goal of providing them with training and apprenticeship opportunities. By tapping into the local population, particularly those who are currently unemployed and lack skills, the project is aiding industries in recruiting trained and skilled human resources. On the occasion of International Labor Day, Nepal is commemorating the event by highlighting the collaboration between employees, employers, and the government project. Supported by MoICS/IFAD, this partnership demonstrates how a conducive environment for decent jobs can be created through working together.

By KESHAB POUDEL

Pushpa Thapa Magar, a 35-year-old individual residing in Hatimuda in Budhiganga Rural Municipality Ward no 5 of Morang district, has benefited from this initiative by securing a job at Shivam Footwear Pvt Ltd as a skilled worker. As the spouse of a migrant worker, Pushpa received training at a factory before being employed by the footwear company.

With her new skills, she now earns around Rs. 25,000.00 (US\$ 150)

per month, working nine hours daily. Specializing in swing, cutting, and soles of footwear, Pushpa stated, "Relying on remittances to support my family and cover household expenses, including school fees, the job and income have made me self-sufficient." The collaboration between the Nepal Government, IFAD, and the private sector is vital to the project's success.

With strong support from FNCCI, Nepal's largest private sector association, the project has thrived. Over the last five years, many indi-

viduals like Pushpa have found job opportunities post internships. In a time where youth face unemployment challenges and businesses lack skilled labor, the Rural Enterprises and Remittances Project (RERP) Samriddhi's Leading to Apprenticeship Program Model 2 has offered a solution.

Nepal, the country with the highest rate of youth unemployment, is currently facing challenges in its industries sector due to a severe shortage of skilled labor. The Samriddhi Project has implemented the Leading to Ap-



prenticeship Program Model 2, which has proven to be a mutually beneficial solution for both industries and unemployed youth.

In collaboration with The Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), the largest private sector organization, Samriddhi has successfully launched this program to tackle the shortage of skilled manpower in various industries that employ young individuals.

The decentralization of FNCCI to the provincial level, with FNCCI's Koshi province overseeing program implementation, has allowed for the introduction of the cutting-edge

Apprenticeship Training Model in partnership with SAMRIDDHI. This initiative has significantly boosted Pushpa's monthly income in the more secure formal sector, compared to her previous earnings as an unskilled worker in the informal sector.

The local industries in the region have greatly benefited from the customized 900-hour apprenticeship training program. This program has provided trainees with valuable hands-on experience and practical training, enabling them to enhance their skills in a real work environment. The main objective of the program is to equip trainees with the necessary expertise

to excel in their chosen fields. The president of FNCCI Koshi Province expressed his satisfaction with the new Leading to Apprenticeship program Model, as it effectively addresses the shortage

of skilled labor in the region.

FNCCI Koshi Province will independently launch the program, with the support of Helvetas-Nepal and CTEVT recognized instruction. The president also mentioned that numerous industries have shown keen interest in participating in the program, which initially aimed to train 1,040 individuals in collaboration with SAMRIDDHI.

However, due to the pandemic, the training was initiated in the latter part of 2020. Despite the challenges, the training proved to be successful, with 86% of participants now employed in member industries that collaborated with the program. These individuals are earning an average monthly income of NPR 16,700.

Helvetas-Nepal has demonstrated its strong institutional capacity through various programs, including apprenticeship opportunities offered under different projects. The organization effectively utilized its expertise during the implementation of the Samriddhi Project.

Pratik Raut, the Managing Director of Shivam Footwear Pvt. Ltd, has emphasized the necessity of





employment opportunities abroad, having skilled workers in Nepal can help boost incomes both locally and internationally.

Given the current trend of many Nepalese seeking employment opportunities abroad, the presence of skilled workers in Nepal has the potential to enhance incomes both domestically and internationally. Dr. Prabin Manandhar, the country director of Helvetas Nepal, has emphasized the organization's efforts to provide relevant training to unskilled youth. Through the Samridhhi project's De-

cent Work component, Helvetas Nepal offers skill training, including the innovative Leading to Apprenticeship Program Model, to create job opportunities within the country.

Apprenticeship training is specifically designed to meet the demands of the labor market while promoting self-esteem, employability, and vocational career advancement for individuals. In this regard, apprenticeship programs are widely recognized as an effective approach to developing

skilled human resources as the company expands its footwear production using new machinery. He has highlighted the significance of training programs in addressing the shortage of skilled labor within the industry.

Saroj Prasad Guragain, Joint Secretary at MoICS and the Project Manager, has stated that despite having a large youth population in the country, Nepalese industries are still struggling with a lack of skilled workers. This has resulted in the need for recruitment from other sources at higher costs. He has emphasized the importance of the Leading to Apprenticeship Program Model 2 in providing skilled human resources to the industry and creating job opportunities for the unemployed.

According to the findings of the labor force survey, approximately 500,000 individuals enter Nepal's labor market each year, with over 95 percent of them lacking training and skills. The survey also reveals that skilled laborers earn three times more than unskilled workers.

Sanjeev Kumar Shrestha, an expert in Value Chain & Markets and a National Consultant at the In-

ternational Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), has described this project as a new model supported by IFAD, aiming to provide skills and employment opportunities.

Shrestha mentioned that the placement rate of trainees exceeds 80% due to the collaboration between FNCCI and industries. He described this as a successful partnership model between the Samriddhi Project and FNCCI, a leading private sector organization. In the current scenario where many Nepalese are seeking



the labor force and reducing youth unemployment.

Rajendra Raut, the president of FNCCI Koshi Province, has acknowledged the challenges faced, such as outdated curricula and the absence of skills tests provided by the NSTB. However, he has emphasized that the shortened apprenticeship model has proven highly suitable for meeting the labor demand of member industries within a short timeframe. He has expressed optimism

about implementing similar projects more effectively in the future.

During its initial stages, the short apprenticeship training program encountered challenges in gaining recognition from industrialists. However, the Samriddhi Project has successfully demonstrated that short-term programs are more efficient and effective for both industrialists and unemployed individuals. Sandip Poudel, the Team Leader of Helvetas Nepal's decent job category of Samriddhi Project, em-

phasized the advantages of this model, which guarantees employment for unemployed youths and supplies the necessary human resources for member industries.

Poshraj Niraula, the program officer of Helvetas-Nepal's Team in the Samriddhi Project, affirmed that industrialists find this approach valuable in addressing the demand for skilled workers in factories.

In collaboration with the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI)

of Koshi Province, a total of 566 individuals, comprising 212 men and 354 women, have been trained in 7 different occupations until the year 2023.

The project is a joint initiative between the Nepal Government and IFAD, implemented across 16 districts encompassing Koshi, Madhesh, and Bagmati Province. Its primary objective revolves around establishing viable Rural, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (RMSEs) in both farming and off-farming sectors. Helvetas Nepal provides technical assistance to sub-component 1.3 Decent Jobs, which aims to achieve this through TVET, job placement, and apprenticeships.

The FNCCI Province has made a noteworthy decision to adopt the same approach for females independently, following the remarkable achievements of the Samriddhi Project. This development is a significant result of the project's success.



गर्मीयाममा लाग्नसक्ने रोगबाट बचाऔं र बचाऔं

- पर्याप्त मात्रामा पानी वा झोलिलो पदार्थ पिउने गरौं,
- मौसमअनुसारका ताजा तरकारी एवं फलफूल उपभोग गरौं,
- सडेगलेको र बासी खानेकुरा नखाऔं,
- खुलास्थानमा असुरक्षित तरिकाले राखिएका खानेकुरा नखाऔं,
- धेरै अमिलो, चिल्लो र मसलेदार खाना नखाऔं,
- घर बाहिर हिड्दा शरीर ढाक्ने गरी लुगा लगाऔं,
- घर, आँगन र आसपासको क्षेत्र सफा राखौं,
- व्यक्तिगत सरसफाईमा ध्यान दिऔं।

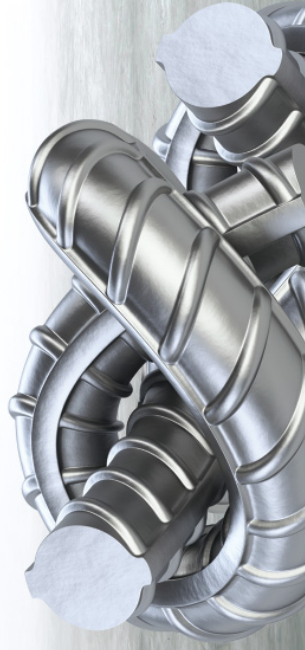


नेपाल सरकार
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जाचिष्णो जाति, बाणिश्यो त्याति

बढी
हिमालले सुरक्षित घर बनाउँछ ।



१००% गुणस्तर परीक्षण । लोडरोडिङमा पनि निरन्तर उत्पादन । ७६ डिपो माफर्त चाहिएको स्थानमा नेपालमा नैपालमति दुरुन्तै डेलिभरी हुने । निर्माणकर्ताको पहिलो रोजाई । पारदर्शी वजन र मूल्य

NIMB गज्जब छ मुद्दती खाता

भविष्यका आर्थिक आवश्यकता पूरा गर्न
NIMB को योजना
गज्जब छ

* धार्मिक लागू हुनेछैन ।



थप जानकारीका लागि NIMB को नजिकैको शाखामा सम्पर्क गर्नुहोस् ।



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