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OPINION
Dipak Gyawali



VIEWPOINT
Chandra Prasad Dhakal



VIEWPOINT
Hemant Arjyal

NEW SPOTLIGHT

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March 21, 2025

FORTNIGHTLY

PRO-MONARCHY MOVEMENT

Rising Dissatisfaction

INSIDE



IME GROUP
Expands Into Paper Industry



DR. PRABIN MANANDHAR
Person with Humility



CPN UML
Instigated By India

हिमाल स्टील
DUCTYL 500D

जिविजो जगि, बजिजो जगि

बढी
हिमालले सुरक्षित घर बनाउँछ ।



१००% गुणस्तर परीक्षण । लीडशेडिगना पनि निरन्तर उत्पादन । ७६ डिग्री आफर्ट याद्विको स्थानना नेपालगढि तुलनै डेलिभरी हुने । निर्माणकर्ताको पहिलो योजना । पारदर्शी वजन र गुण



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Editor and Publisher

Keshab Poudel

Contributor

Sabine Pretsch

Design/Layout

Sahil Mokthan, 9863022025

Marketing Manager

Madan Raj Poudel

Tel: 9841320517

Nabin Kumar Maharjan

Tel: 9841291404

Editorial Office

Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 977-1-4530250

E-mail

spotlightnepal@gmail.com

P.O.Box: 7256

Website

www.spotlightnepal.com

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Notes From The Editor



Frustrated by the government's poor delivery, frequent changes in leadership, and economic slow-down, there is a growing sense of disenchantment among the youth in Nepal towards the current political leaders and system. The recent increase in youth participation in pro-monarchical rallies reflects this frustration. Rather than acknowledging and addressing people's grievances, the ruling parties have chosen to discredit the rallies and the former King. This has only intensified the frustration among the youth, leading to calls for the abolition of the constitution. Unlike previous instances, the recent rallies have spread to various parts of Nepal with a unified demand for the reinstatement of the monarchy and the end of the federal republic. If those in power continue to use confrontational language, the protests may escalate into anti-government demonstrations. Given Nepal's history of political instability, with frequent changes in leadership and the abolition of the monarchy in 2008, the outcome of the current pro-monarchy movement is uncertain. We have decided to feature the pro-monarchy protests, anti-monarchy statements from political leaders, and their potential implications as our cover story this week. Additionally, we will cover other contemporary economic and social issues.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

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Instigated By India

CPN UML accuses India of fueling pro-monarchist movements in Nepal

By A CORRESPONDENT

The ruling party has accused former King Gyanendra Shah and his supporters of intensifying their efforts to undermine the republic of Nepal, allegedly with the support of India.

During a secretariat meeting at the party office in Chyasal on Monday, a special resolution was passed, confirming this assessment. The meeting, presided over by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, stressed the need for united efforts by republicans to counter the monarchist movement against the Federal Republic.

UML Vice President Ashtalakshmi Shakya told Ratopati, “The UML believes that the recent actions and strategies of former King Shah and his supporters are a deliberate attempt to weaken the republic, possibly influenced by external forces. Our party is of the view that India is behind these pro-monarchy activities.”

The party argues that the recent surge in efforts to reinstate the monarchy or the king is not spontaneous and has been triggered by external influences. The political situation in Nepal has been unsettled by former King Gyanendra Shah’s statement on Falgun 7 (February 19) and the royalist demonstration on Falgun 25 (March 9).

The arrival of former King Shah in Kathmandu from Pokhara was met with a warm reception by a large crowd of supporters at Tribhuvan International Airport. This has energized royalists who are now rallying around the idea of reinstating the monarchy and declaring Nepal a Hindu nation. In pursuit of this goal, they have formed a committee with former Panchayat Nawaraj Subedi at the helm.

The increased activities of royalists have raised concerns that the general public may start turning away from pro-republican political parties. Despite the efforts of monarchists and pro-monarchy groups to overthrow the democratic republic and revert to a monarchical system, their chances of success are slim. Advocates for the republic believe it is crucial to educate the public about the differences between monarchy and democracy.

The decision to establish a federal democratic republic was made by the historic Constituent Assembly after recognizing the incompatibility of monarchy with democracy. The monarchy had consistently violated people’s rights and leaned towards totalitarianism, disregarding previous agreements.

UML Deputy General Secretary Pradeep Gyawali stressed that any efforts to overturn the people’s decision and backtrack the country’s progress will be unsuccessful.



Republican supporters are united in opposing these attempts, as monarchists are trying to undermine achievements, create a negative narrative, lower morale, and use these tactics to push the country towards undemocratic practices.

The CPN UML highlighted that Nepal has made significant advancements since the establishment of democracy, despite facing challenges like armed conflict, a prolonged transition period, and natural disasters such as earthquakes. The party emphasized progress in physical infrastructure, the social sector, living standards, and international relations.

The UML acknowledged that there is still more work to do and emphasized the importance of rejecting the idea of hereditary rule based on inherent superiority in the modern era. The CPN (UML) reiterated its commitment to upholding the Constitution of Nepal and the achievements it has secured, including a federal democratic republic, an inclusive system, and social justice.

The UML is dedicated to promoting the effective implementation of the constitution, ensuring political stability, good governance, efficient service delivery, economic development, and reform. The party is also committed to strengthening the democratic system by reviewing the past decade of constitution implementation.

Vice President Shakya highlighted the UML’s serious stance on restoring the monarchy and preserving the king’s legacy, despite the monarchy’s historical context. She emphasized the importance of the photos from the royalist demonstration on Falgun 25, underscoring that the establishment of the republic of Nepal was for the benefit of the Nepalese people, not any specific group.

Shakya acknowledged that there is discontent among some individuals regarding Nepal’s constitution and the controversial map, with ongoing attempts to manipulate them.

The UML is concerned that political parties, which previously prioritized stability, are now engaged in internal conflicts instead of focusing on driving positive change and advancing Nepal’s prosperity and strength. This situation could potentially be exploited by national and international actors.

It seems that even supporters of the republic have strayed from the main objective of enhancing the federal democratic republic and fostering development and good governance,” Shakya observed. “It is crucial for republicans to unite in order to protect the republic and progress the country without getting sidetracked by minor matters.”

The UML has also decided that leaders must highlight the significance of educating, informing, and increasing awareness among the public through parliament regarding the actions of royalists. “The UML has stressed the importance of spreading awareness from parliament to the grassroots level to safeguard the people’s rights,” Shakya explained.

NEWSNOTES

IGP Deepak Thapa Receives Insignia

Home Secretary Gokarna Mani Duwadee conferred an insignia of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) on Deepak Thapa amidst a special function held at the Home Ministry.

The government on Monday evening promoted and appointed him as the 31st IGP of Nepal Police to head the command of nearly 80,000 police personnel.

With Thapa's appointment as IGP, the second and third senior-most AIGs, Sudip Giri and Tek Bahadur Tamang, will now retire from their AIG positions.

Thapa, Giri, and Tamang had all joined the police service together as Police Inspectors on September 4, 1995. They will all retire in six months.

According to the Police Regulations, Thapa will remain in police leadership until September 3, 2025. However, if the proposed Federal Police Act, which has been tabled in the Parliament, is passed, his and other senior officers' tenure could be extended.

IGP Thapa Vows To Strive For System In Police Force

Newly appointed Inspector General of Police (IGP) Deepak Thapa has said that he will make every effort to establish a system within the police force.



Speaking at the insignia conferring ceremony organised at the Ministry of Home Affairs, IGP Thapa said, "I will strive to establish a system in the police organisation, not favouritism."

Emphasizing fair evaluation of performance for career development and promotion, the newly appointed IGP assured that police personnel would not suffer during promotion processes.

Thapa stated, "I want to assure you that police personnel should not face any distress during promotions."

After serving in the police force for 29 years and six months, Thapa said that the highest rank he achieved was not just a matter of pride but also a serious responsibility bestowed upon him by the government.

He further stated, "I will work without any prejudice against police personnel."

Highlighting that the police force exists to serve societal needs, Thapa pointed out that internal weaknesses cannot be concealed to bring about improvements.

He declared that there is no need to wait for an auspicious time to initiate reforms within the police force and said, "I will begin the reforms with myself."

US Official Assures FM Dr. Deuba For Continual Support To Nepal

Ricky Gill, National Security Assistant to President Donald Trump of the USA and Senior Director for South and Central Asian Affairs at the National Security Council, has reaffirmed the US government's commitment to continuing economic assistance to Nepal.

In a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Nepal, Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba, at the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogue, organised by India's Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, on Tuesday, he assured the continued economic support to Nepal, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) informed in a statement.



"Appreciated meeting Ricky Gill, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and National Security Council Senior Director for South and Central Asia, on the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogue. Gill and I also discussed Nepal-U.S. ties, which are rooted in shared democratic and human rights values. I am confident that our cooperation will continue to grow over the years," writes FM Dr. Deuba in her X wall.

During the meeting, various aspects of Nepal-US relations were discussed.

FM Dr. Deuba has urged the US government to take necessary steps for the release of Nepali student Bipin, who is under the control of Hamas. She recalled that she had previously requested US intervention in the matter and reiterated Nepal's expectation of US assistance for Bipin's safe release.

Japan Assists in Improving Learning Environment in Gorkha District

The handover ceremony of the new classroom building of Prabhat Kiran Secondary School took place in Gorkha district today.

TAMURA Takahiro, Charge d'Affaires ad interim of Japan to Nepal, attended the ceremony. The new classroom building has been constructed under the Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects supported by the Government of Japan.

The project is being implemented by Japanese



NGO ChildFund Japan, and is currently in the final year of a three-year project. The project aims to improve the learning environment and increase students' attendance in Gorkha district, not only by constructing classroom buildings, but also by providing training to improve the capacity of teachers and programmes to support the establishment of child-friendly schools.

Tamura congratulated and appreciated the efforts of all those involved in the project. He expressed his hope that the new school building will be properly managed and maintained, that the various training programs will continue and that the learning environment at the school will become even more child-friendly in the future.

Tamura also expressed his expectation that the students of this school would play a leading role in people-to-people relations between Japan and Nepal as well as in the development of Nepal in the future.

Achyut Wagle Appointed As KU Vice-Chancellor

Prof. Dr. Achyut Wagle has been appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of Kathmandu University.

He was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, who is also the Chancellor of the university.

He took over as acting vice-chancellor after the term of Vice-Chancellor Bhola Thapa ended on Magh 4. Before that, he was the registrar of KU.



A three-member committee formed to recommend names for the post of vice-chancellor of KU had recommended three names.

Committee coordinator Dr. Suresh Raj Sharma, members Dr. Arjun Kar-

ki and Janardan Nepal had recommended names separately. The names of those they had recommended were kept secret.

'Joint People's Movement Committee' Formed To Restore Monarchy

Pro-monarchy supporters have formed a Joint People's Movement Committee to restore monarchy.

They formed the Joint People's Movement Committee under the chairmanship of Nawaraj Subedi at a program on Monday and made their commitment public.

Subedi, 86, is also a former president of the National Panchayat. He said that the monarchy will be reestablished by making everyone one place.

The member secretary of the committee is Rabindra Mishra, while the members are Pashupati Shamsheer Jabra, Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani, Kamal Thapa, Rajendra Lingden, Durga Prasai, Asmita Bhandari, Hari Bahadur Basnet, Keshar Bahadur Bista, and Rama Singh.

Similarly, a five-member advisory committee has also been formed in the committee, whose advisors include Dr. Jagman Gurung, Buddhiraj Bajracharya, Dr. Shastradutta Pant, Dr. Rajesh Ahiraj, and Khemraj Sedai.

The committee's four agendas are restoration of the constitutional monarchy, restoration of the Sanatan Hindu kingdom, abolition of federalism, and control of corruption and good governance.

Helvetas Nepal launches Book "Towards 70 Years of Togetherness"

With 70 years of experience in Nepal's development sector, Helvetas Nepal, a Swiss international development agency, has made significant contributions to Nepal's progress and development.

Helvetas Nepal is one of the organizations that has played a key role in Nepal's modernization and development process. Its installation of suspension bridges has greatly improved connectivity in the mountainous country, saving the lives of many people who previously risked their lives crossing rivers.



Throughout its long journey in Nepal's development, various development partners have come and gone, but Helvetas Nepal remains committed to supporting Nepal's development and economic prosperity.

Celebrating 70 years of partnership in Nepal, Helvetas Nepal has released a book titled "70 Years of Togetherness," showcasing its journey through pictures and words.

The book launch coincided with the transition of leadership from Dr. Prabin Manandha to Maneesh Pradhan, highlighting Helvetas' ongoing commitment to Nepal.

The publication traces Helvetas Nepal's evolution from supporting cheese production in the 1950s to pioneering projects in trail bridges, water and sanitation, technical education, governance, and sustainable enterprises.

With the new country director, Maneesh Pradhan, taking the helm from Dr. Manandhar, who has been instrumental in the development sector in Nepal, Helvetas Nepal is poised to continue its efforts to contribute to Nepal's progress and prosperity.

Helvetas Nepal presented its photo book "Towards 70 Years of Togetherness", showcasing nearly seven decades of dedication to sustainable development and rural transformation in Nepal.

The book features a foreword and well wishes from Prime Minister of Nepal, KP Sharma Oli, Swiss Ambassador to Nepal, Dr. Danielle Meuwly, and Helvetas President Regula Rytz, highlighting the strong Nepal-Switzerland partnership and joint efforts towards inclusive and sustainable development.

This photo book serves as a testament to the importance of

NEWSNOTES

partnerships and a shared vision that has influenced Nepal's development journey. Helvetas Nepal expresses gratitude to government counterparts, local communities, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and all partners who have been part of this collaborative effort.

Reflecting on the past, we are dedicated to fostering innovation, enhancing Nepal's federalism, and implementing impactful solutions for a more resilient future.

Dr. Om Khadka, the head of Om Khadka, PhD IT and Knowledge Management at Helvetas Nepal, with expertise in GIS and Strategic IT Solutions, is leading the charge in driving technological innovation in development sectors.

SAARC Secretary General Urges For Urgent Integrated Action For SDG

Md. Golam Sarwar, Secretary General of SAARC underscores urgent Integrated Action for Sustainable Development with a Focus on South Asia and Regional Cooperation

During the plenary session of the World Sustainable Development Summit 2025, the Secretary General delivered an impactful address, emphasizing the critical imperative of integrated action to accelerate Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) achievement, with a particular focus on the challenges and opportunities within South Asia.

Recognizing that the South Asian region is currently off track to meet most of the SDGs and has even witnessed regression

in key areas, the Secretary General stressed the urgent need for a coordinated and holistic approach that acknowledges the deep interconnections between the SDGs and the specific vulnerabilities of the region to climate change. He underlined necessity of strong regional

cooperation and integrated strategies to build resilience and foster sustainable socio-economic development.

The World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is the annual flagship multi-stakeholder event organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi. The twenty fourth edition of the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) was held in New Delhi under the theme 'Partnerships for Accelerating Sustainable Development and Climate Solutions' from 5th to 7th March 2025.

The Secretary General highlighted the crucial role of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and its initiatives in addressing the challenges of achieving SDGs. The address emphasized the need for South Asian member states to review and ensure the timely implementation of existing regional action plans on climate change, promote the use of green technology, invest in low-carbon research and development, and integrate climate change action plans in the policy formulations.

Furthermore, the Secretary General underscored the importance of strengthening regional cooperation for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, and referred to contributions of the SAARC Agriculture Center, SAARC Energy Center, South Asian University and SAARC Disaster Management Center, in capacity building and awareness generation among Member States of SAARC.

One In Four Countries Report Backlash On Women's Rights In 2024

On International Women's Day, UN Women calls on everyone to stand up for Rights, Empowerment and Equality for ALL Women and Girls. Women's and girls' rights are facing unprecedented growing threats worldwide, from higher levels of discrimination to weaker legal protections, and less funding for programs and institutions that support and protect women.

UN Women's latest report "Women's Rights in Review 30 Years After Beijing", published ahead of the UN 50th International Women's Day on March 8, shows that in 2024 nearly a quarter of governments worldwide reported a backlash on women's rights.



Despite important progress, only 87 countries have ever been led by a woman, and a woman or girl is killed every 10 minutes by a partner or member of her own family. Digital technology and artificial intelligence spread harmful stereotypes, while the digital gender gap limits women's opportunities.

KOICA Volunteer Supported Namobuddha Municipality Via Construction Of A Tourist Information Center

KOICA Volunteer Youngman Lim, with the support of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), successfully completed "The Project to Build a Namobuddha Tourist Information Center." The project involved the construction of a 32 lightweight steel-framed building near Namobuddha Stupa. The center is well-furnished with air conditioning, furniture, an inverter system, a computer, a printer, and a restroom, featuring customized interior designs. The center will provide promotional brochures, playcards, and will have a dedicated operator to manage the facility. KOICA contributed approximately \$19,916, while the municipality provided land and technical support for the project. The center will be used as a hub for tourism promotion and also support local farmers by giving space to sell organic produce. The target beneficiaries of the project are local as



well as international tourists.

KOICA has been partnering with Namobuddha Municipality since 2018. In 2024, KOICA dispatched Youngman Lim for 15 months as a tourism KOV to support local tourism development. The project handover ceremony was held on March 11, 2025, at the Namobuddha Stupa premises. The event was attended by Mooheon Kong, Country Director of KOICA, Kun-sang Lama, Mayor of Namobuddha Municipality, representatives from three ministries, including Ministry of Finance, Department of Immigration, Department of Labour and Occupational Safety, Municipal staffs as well as ward representative and local people of Namobuddha Municipality.

Mooheon Kong, Country Director of the KOICA Nepal Office, extended his deepest appreciation to Lim for his dedication and impactful contributions, which will be remembered for years to come. He also expressed gratitude to the municipality and their staffs for their invaluable collaboration with the volunteers. He anticipated that the municipality would continue to expand the project in the coming years by incorporating additional equipment and items related to the initiative.

KOICA's volunteer program is one of the main programs to contribute to socio-economic development of the partner countries at the grass root level. KOICA dispatches Korean national volunteers to partner government organizations as per the need of expertise, knowledge, and experience. Each volunteer serves in Nepal for 1 year in various fields such as education, health, agriculture, Tourism, ICT etc. Currently, 7 KOICA volunteers are actively working in various government sectors in accordance with an agreement between the governments of Korea and Nepal. Till now 410 KOVs have worked in Nepal in various sectors.

3rd JICA Chair discussion On “Disaster Risk Reduction In Nepal And Japan: Concept Of Public, Mutual and Self-Help”

JICA Nepal office organized “JICA Chair” academic symposium in collaboration with the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS), Tribhuvan University (TU) on 05 and 06 March 2025 with gross 50 participants, calling on Prof. MURATA Masahiko, Professor, Kansai University of International Studies.

This year 2025 marks the 10th anniversary of the Gorkha earthquake, hence JICA aims to create an opportunity to discuss what Nepal, as a country with high disaster risk, should do to prepare for public, mutual, and self-help respectively, considering Nepali social features as well as Japan's experience in disaster risk reduction, and to raise awareness of DRR.

The symposium provided an opportunity to learn from Japan's experience in disaster risk reduction and management as well as discussion on how these kinds of helps are functioning in Nepal that “as a nation, one of the most important thing is to invest the national budget to reduce disaster damage in order to protect the safety of citizens (public help)”, and that “self-help” and “mutual-help” are possible only with risk reduction efforts of the government i.e. “public help”.

Prof. Murata presented report on Japan's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies after the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake (GHAJ) and highlighted the importance of Public, Mutual, and Self-help in disaster preparedness as well as disaster response and recovery. Similarly, he shared key lessons from the GHAJ and emphasized the role of self-help in personal preparedness, mutual help especially community-based efforts, and public help in government-led DRR-related activities.

Following his lecture, the symposium provided an opportunity to discuss what is needed regarding DRR and disaster preparedness in Nepal, taking consideration of social value including cultural, geological, social condition, and so on.

From the Nepali side, Prof. Mrigendra Bahadur Karki, Executive Director, CNAS TU, presented his views on significance of Disaster Management in Nepal along with Risk Reduction and Preparedness for enhancing sustainable development.

Various interactive sessions during the symposium led to productive discussions amongst the panelists and the audience who successfully discussed widely on the positive implications of DRR strategies from the view point of both Nepal and Japan and further emphasized on customizing development models, governmental roles and policies leading to the process of developing a resilient Nepal.

‘JICA Chair’ is an initiative of Japan International Cooperation Agency launched with an objective to develop future leaders in developing countries. JICA Chair is organized in JICA partner countries in collaboration with the leading universities to strengthen existing research and education programs as well as becoming a starting point to new initiatives. JICA Chair's activities include intensive lectures conducted by leading professors and lecturers dispatched from Japan to disseminate Japan's development experiences in various fields such as politics, economics, public administration, law, and others.

The first and second symposium of ‘JICA Chair’ in Nepal was organized on Jan 2022 and Feb 2023 respectively. JICA Nepal aims to continue academic fruitful dialogue between Japan and Nepal through similar extensive interaction sessions in the future as well.



BUSINESS BRIEF

Nepal Investment Mega Bank Chairman Prithvi Bahadur Pande Takes Oath

The oath-taking ceremony of Nepal Investment Mega Bank Chairman Prithvi Bahadur Pande has been completed before the Governor.



Nepal Investment Mega Bank Limited Chairman Pande, who was elected by the Board of Directors held last Tuesday, has taken the oath of office and secrecy before Governor

Maha Prasad Adhikari at a program at Nepal Rastra Bank.

The event was attended by Deputy Governors of Nepal Rastra Bank, Dr. Neelam Dhungana Timsina and Bam Bahadur Mishra, and high-ranking officials of Nepal Rastra Bank.

FNCCI President Dhakal Prioritizes Industrial Environment For Job Creation In The Country

President of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI) Chandra Prasad Dhakal emphasized the importance of prioritizing the creation of an industrial environment for industrial development and job creation in the country. He highlighted the significance of political and policy stability in attracting investors and generating employment opportunities.



Additionally, Chairman Dhakal stressed the need to identify and promote sectors that can offer innovative employment opportunities for the Nepali work-

force and effectively utilize their skills and knowledge. He pointed out the current challenge of Nepali workers seeking employment abroad due to limited opportunities in the domestic labor market.

In light of this situation, it is crucial to analyze the gaps in employment demand, supply, skill development, and employment relations to discover new opportunities for labor and employment. To achieve this, an investment-friendly environment in the sector must be established.

He emphasized that the private sector is the primary driver of employment creation, accounting for over 86 percent of Nepal's total employment. He urged policymakers to avoid creating uncomfortable situations by using unnecessary conjunctions like 'and', 'but', 'comma', and 'or' when formulating industrial policies and regulations.

Chairman Dhakal Highlighted That Private Sector Investments not only benefit the private sector itself but also the government and local communities. He called for a shared vision among

the government, political parties, and the private sector for development and infrastructure improvement.

In light of the Government of Nepal's declaration of the next 10 years as the Decade of Domestic Employment Promotion, Chairman Dhakal emphasized the importance of collaboration between the government and the private sector to enhance production, productivity, and create more domestic employment opportunities.

He also emphasized the importance of maintaining harmonious industrial relations between employers and trade union organizations for a conducive industrial environment. He mentioned that the federation is actively working towards fostering good relations between employers and workers.

He commended the recent amendments made by the government, in response to the federation's suggestions, and urged for the swift implementation of regulations and procedures.

The 5th National Labor and Employment Conference was inaugurated by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, aiming to gather feedback for policy and legal reforms to drive the country's social and economic transformation. The conference also sought suggestions for policy and programmatic improvements.

During his address at the conference, Prime Minister Oli stressed the importance of promoting entrepreneurship to generate employment opportunities. He expressed the government's willingness to collaborate with the private sector in this endeavor.

During that event, Prime Minister Oli introduced the Internal Employment Promotion Decade 2081 and the Internal Employment Promotion Program 2081.

At the gathering, Minister for Labor, Employment and Social Security Sharat Singh Bhandari, Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies Damodar Bhandari, and Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister and former Finance Minister Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada, along with others, discussed Nepal's labor market, challenges, and employment opportunities.

Chief Ministers from different provinces, as well as chairmen and representatives of employers' organizations such

as the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Confederation of Nepalese Industries, Nepal Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Nepal, and representatives from development agencies, are participating in various sessions covering a range of topics during the conference.

Supreme Court Halts Energy Minister's Committee On NEA Billing

The Supreme Court has issued an interim order preventing the government-formed task force from proceeding with its review of electricity bills issued by the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) for dedicated feeder and trunk line users.



A joint bench of Justices Saranga Subedi and Tek Prasad Dhungana issued the order on Sunday in response to a writ petition filed by advocate Khadananda Kandel, who argued that the task force was formed illegally by Energy Minister Deepak Khadka.

The committee, led by former National Planning Commission member Prof. Dr. Arvind Kumar Mishra, was assigned to verify the bills issued by NEA.

With the Supreme Court's ruling, the committee can no longer function.

Chartered accountant Sujan Kumar Kafle and Shriram Raj Pandey were also members of the committee, which was tasked with reviewing whether the NEA's billing was calculated based on Time of Day (TOD) meters.

Despite being formed in early December, the committee had already requested NEA to provide billing details of industries that had used dedicated and trunk line services without paying dues.

However, NEA Managing Director Kulman Ghising had refused to recognize the committee and had not provided it with any documents.

He had maintained that industries disputing their bills could seek a review within NEA or appeal to the Electricity Regulatory Commission and the courts.

Earlier, the Council of Ministers had decided on November 10 to implement the Lal Commission report and collect outstanding electricity dues within 15 days based on TOD meters.

NEA's board subsequently directed its management to enforce this decision, and notices had been sent to industries for payments.

However, industrialists had contested the billing, leading the energy minister to form the now-suspended committee.

The Lal Commission report had recommended different approaches for settling dues from various periods, including before and after the end of load-shedding in Nepal.

The disputed period, from January 2016 to April 2018, was identified for recalculating dues based on NEA's own load-shedding records.

However, with the Supreme Court's ruling, the government's intervention through the task force has been legally blocked.

Joint Exercise Begins

Based on a disaster management scenario, the exercise - Multinational Planning Augmentation Team Tempest Express (MPAT TE - 40) has begun in Kathmandu from March 17.

The exercise, which was conducted with the aim of effectively enhancing disaster response capacity in the future through the exchange of theoretical, practical and special experiences between military, non-military and various other agencies related to disaster management, will be conducted until Chaitra 14, 2081.



A total of 95 people, including 25 from the Nepali Army and other security agencies, 58 from government and non-government agencies affiliated with the Government of Nepal, and 37 from 15 different countries, are participating in the exercise, which is jointly organized by the Nepali Army and US INDOPACOM.

The program was attended by Dean R. Thompson, Ambassador of the United States to Nepal, Chief of Staff of the Army, Lieutenant General Pradeep Jung KC, Lieutenant General, various government and non-government agencies affiliated with the Government of Nepal, and high-level officials from foreign organizations.

KOICA Initiates Green Venture Zone At Pokhara Metropolitan City

The groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of Green Venture Zone (GVZ) at the Exhibition Centre, Ward No. 9, Pokhara Metropolitan City under the

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project “Green Job Creation through Recycling and Upcycling Project in Pokhara Metropolitan City” was held.

Country Director of KOICA Kong Mooheon, Mayor of Pokhara Metropolitan City Office Dhana Raj Acharya and. Christophe Bahuet, UNDP Deputy Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific and Director UNDP were present during the program.

The newly established GVZ will serve as both an incubator and a hub for recycling and upcycling enterprises.



This innovative space will offer essential support, including financial assistance, technological resources, and market linkages, to aspiring entrepreneurs and established businesses

alike. The collaboration between the Pokhara Metropolitan City and KOICA, promises to strengthen local businesses while reinforcing sustainability efforts.

KOICA will spend USD 3.4 Million to establish approx. 4,496 sq. m. 4 storey building. Tentatively GVZ will be established within 2 years from now. KOICA will also provide necessary equipment for the GVZ.

The overall project implemented by UNDP aims to transform municipal waste management into a mechanism for sustainable development. With a budget of 9.8 Million USD from the Government of the Republic of Korea and collaborative efforts from local agencies, the project is set to pave the way for a greener and more prosperous future.

The project aims to establish a comprehensive framework for recycling and upcycling municipal waste by promoting Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), thereby enhancing municipal capacity and developing supportive policies that align with global circular economy trends and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It seeks to create an enabling environment for sustainable business practices while generating new economic opportunities, significantly contributing to local job creation and environmental awareness. Additionally, a key objective is to drive behavioral change in waste management through educational initiatives aimed at both children and adults, fostering a culture of waste awareness that underscores the importance of recycling and upcycling in everyday life, which is essential for achieving the project's goals.

At the ceremony, remarks from distinguished guests highlighted the project's significance. The Deputy Regional Director Christophe Bahuet of UNDP expressed

gratitude for the partnership between Nepal and Korea, emphasizing how such collaborations can lead to impactful changes in communities. Similarly, the Country Director of KOICA Mr. Mooheon Kong underscored the importance of collective efforts in achieving sustainable development through projects like the GVZ. He shared heartfelt congratulations, noting that this initiative stands as a testament to the unwavering commitment to enhancing environmental sustainability, economic growth, and the overall well-being of the people in Pokhara.

The Mayor of Pokhara Metropolitan City Dhana Raj Acharya concluded the event with an inspiring message about the transformative power of community involvement in driving sustainability and economic resilience.

The construction of the Green Venture Zone marks a crucial step towards embracing sustainable practices in waste management within Pokhara Metropolitan City. The project not only symbolizes a commitment to environmental stewardship but also highlights the potential for green job creation and economic revitalization.

With the combined efforts of government bodies, international cooperation, and local entrepreneurial spirit, the GVZ is set to become an inspiration of hope and innovation, inspiring communities far and wide to embrace the principles of recycling and upcycling for a cleaner, greener tomorrow.

The Government of the Republic of Korea has been supporting the Government of Nepal through KOICA in various areas of health, vocational training, rural development and IT since 1991. By 2024, total amount of KOICA's support surpassed Two hundred million US Dollars. 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.

Zonta Club Kathmandu Honors Inspirational Women On Yellow Rose Day

Zonta Club Kathmandu celebrated the global International Women's Day as Yellow Rose Day, recognizing extraordinary achievements of women.

As part of this signature event of the Club it honored exceptional women who have made an indelible mark in their respective fields and who continue to inspire young girls and women to pursue their dreams.

Bina Rana, President of the Zonta Club Kathmandu said, “Yellow Rose Day is a celebration of resilience, leadership, and the relentless pursuit of gender equity.

In line with this year's IWD's Campaign theme #AccelerateAction, today we honor extraordinary women in Nepal who have broken barriers, challenged norms, and inspired change in their homes, workplace and communities.

Their contributions remind us that progress is possible and when we recognize and uplift them it inspires others towards accelerating their actions.”

Award Recipients: Unsung Heroes Award is given to Bivisha Mathema Shrestha ·Binita Adhikari, Sunita Chidimar, Arika Gurung and Princess Helen Shah Inspirational Woman of the Year to Shyam Badan Shrestha and Amar Rana Game Changer Award to Palesha Goverdhan.



Indrakala Scholarship for Women in Aerospace (2025) goes to Ankita Bhattarai and : Oshika Shrestha received Jyoti Scholarship for Women in Business (2025).

Jyoti Scholarship for Women in STEM: Anupa Baral, Indrakala Scholarship for Young Women in Public Affairs Smriti Kunwar.

Likewise, Babita Basnet, Sonila Awale and Charu Chadha received the Leadership in Media Award recognized three distinguished women editors for their contributions to journalism and advocacy in Gender and Social Inclusion, Climate Change and Business and Finance respectively.

This year the International Women’s Day theme “For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment,” emphasizes the need for collective action to unlock equal rights, power, and opportunities for all women and girls. It highlights the importance of empowering youth—particularly young women and adolescent girls—as key drivers of a future where no one is left behind. Through these awards, Zonta Club Kathmandu reaffirms its commitment towards building a Better world for women and girls.

Installation Of Transmission Line Monopole In Butwal Is Underway

Installation work for a transmission line monopole in Butwal is currently underway. The project involves replacing the tower with four legs on the 132 kV double circuit transmission line from Butwal to Motipur with a monopole structure on the road section between Yogikuti Chowk and Horizon Chowk in Kalikapath, Butwal Sub-metropolitan City-11.

The foundation for the monopole is being constructed, and it is expected to be completed within 15 days. The

monopole has been delivered to the construction site. Two monopoles measuring 30x30 meters and two measuring 32x32 meters will be installed on the road section.

The existing transmission line will be temporarily shut down for approximately 15 days during the installation process. The old tower in the section will be removed, and new wires (conductors) will be utilized. Nepal Electricity Authority’s Managing Director, Kulman Ghising, has emphasized the importance of monitoring the construction site and completing the installation of the monopoles before the summer season begins.

The Managing Director of Ghising instructed the Butwal Grid Division to finish the work before summer begins, as the demand for electricity in the Butwal region will increase, making it challenging to shut down the transmission line.

Monopoles are currently being installed on the Yogikuti-Horizon Chowk road section to prevent accidents that could occur if large vehicles come into contact with the transmission line due to the close proximity between the road and the line. Currently, the distance between the road and the line is less than 6 meters.

Once the monopole is installed, the distance between the road and the line will be approximately nine meters. The road section

is narrow because the transmission line tower is currently located in the middle. The current tower’s basement diameter is around 8 meters.



The monopole’s basement diameter will be approximately two and a half meters, which will also widen the road. Additionally, with the installation of the monopole, the right-of-way of the current transmission line will be reduced, making the houses on its right and left sides safer.

A contract was signed for the construction of the monopole at a cost of Rs 36.5 million. The entire construction of the monopole, funded by the Authority, is expected to be completed by the end of the month of Jestha.

Re-Thinking Democracy: Why South Asians Are worried



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

The basic requirements of a good governance regime are its responsiveness to the concerns of its citizens, its holding officials to account for misconduct or poor performance, and most important, delivery of goods, services and justice expected of them. For the majority of the citizens, there is also the expectation of basic stability or predictability that allows them to go about with their professions and lives without disruption or fear. Its leaders also must not only be honest and not corrupt but also, in the memorable saying of Julius Caesar some 2000 years ago, they and their close relatives and friends must be above even any suspicion of corruption.

Much of South Asia fares poorly on these indicators, while its northern neighbour China does quite well, forcing South Asians to retrospect and revalue their system of governance inherited from their erstwhile colonial masters. (The Chinese shoot their corrupt officials, and have managed to uplift 400 million people out of poverty!) In Pakistan, a democratically elected [prime minister has been removed](#) by the army which has cobbled together an opposition group of old elites, using that veneer of democracy to legitimize its stranglehold on the country's politics and economy since its very founding. Sri Lanka saw its [Aragalaya](#) movement that forced a president and his coterie widely perceived as corrupt to flee the country. In Bangladesh, a [student revolt](#) forced a long-ruling prime minister, so autocratic that the opposition had boycotted parliament and elections for the last decade and a half, to flee for refuge to India. In Nepal, something similar is brewing with people fed up of kleptocratic leaders and even clamouring for a [return of constitutional monarchy](#).

It was against this background that the [Social Scientists' Association of Sri Lanka](#) organized a Dialogue on Reclaiming Democracy in South Asia, which was held in Colombo on March 8 and 9 in partnership with

the Global Forum on Democracy and Development of the Central European University's Democracy Institute. The background was the decline in legitimacy of the conventional idea and practice of democracy with its capture by a corrupt elite here at home as well as its backsliding and dysfunction in Euro-American Collective West. It was not just the Trump Tandav seen in the US that is upending many old sacred cows, but also the electoral and policy rifts as well as misadventures in UK, France and Germany that has finally deprived them of the right to preach democracy at the rest of the world. South Asia has seen its imported liberal parliamentary democracy captured by its moneyed interests resulting in blatant crony capitalism that has robbed it of any pretense of emancipation or egalitarian equity. It has degenerated into veneration of its forms (parties, elections) and missed out on its substance highlighted in the first paragraph above.

The basic idea of the gathering was to reflect on the state of democracy in their respective countries and to explore ways in which the core values of that imported style could be rescued and melded with democracy's richer forms of indigenous grassroots struggles happening all over South Asia. Our region has seen a plethora of such seminal emancipatory movements for economic and social justice, self-determination, and inclusion in the political and development processes. They range from the Chipko and Narmada movements in India, Orangi in Pakistan, microcredits in Bangladesh as well as community forestry, electricity, maternal health care and water supply in Nepal. The region, in its over three millennia history, has also seen excellent examples of its own civilizational forms of democracy, the gana-rajyas of Buddha's time for instance, King Parakramabahu's hydraulic civilization in Sri Lanka, or King Prithvi Narayan Shah's "diverse flower garden nationalism where each group is to protect and maintain its own kul dharma", an indigenous secularism already enshrined in the very

foundation of the Nepali state in the 17th Century.

The tone was set by India's Yogendra Yadav at an inaugural lecture entitled "Re-enchanting Democracy" at the Bandaranaike Center for International Studies. While it is true that among all South Asian countries, India has exhibited remarkable stability over the last 8 decades with its post-colonial political system, all is not well in "the world's largest democracy". Indeed, it too has seen politics increasingly degenerate in these decades from service to profession, with all its distortions and fall from democratic idealism. While the Nehruvian period saw most of the MPs coming from the voluntary service sector such as social workers or trade unionists, given how expensive elections have become, it is seeing the moneyed class as well as those who have made politics their income and wealth-generating profession that has captured the electoral form of democracy.

Yadav's core point was that the term democracy has acquired ingrained moral power that is difficult to disengage from, even though it has three roles conflated into one big contradiction: the name, the idea and the mechanism are rolled into one. The word itself is much abused to garner legitimacy (think Ukraine's Zelensky, a purported "democrat" even though he has banned 11 political parties, thrown the leader of the opposition in jail, nationalized five TV stations and hangs on to his office even though his term ran out almost a year ago!)

The idea of democracy has the incorrect idea of a neo-liberal market mapped onto it, implying that voters are consumers who can chose good or reject bad options while voting. In theory, yes; but hardly so in practice. It also fails to account for rampant "market cartels" that make entry for political alternatives impossibly high, presupposes an extraordinarily level playing field, and assumes voters vote for political values enshrined in a candidate and are held accountable by a free media and civil society. Yadav quotes Ambedkar to look for the best definition of radical democracy: "a form and method of bringing about revolutionary change in social life without bloodshed". One ironically sees the best example of that in King

Mahendra's 1962 Panchayat reform of Jang Bahadur's 1854 Mulki Ain (civil code) to legally abolish untouchability.

Yadav closed his lecture saying South Asian democracies will have to be works-in-progress with no easily available templates. He argues for moving away from a liberal democracy interpretation of democracy to one of "democratic republicanism". In this, liberty has to be seen not a non-interference (lib-dem) to one of not dominating but foregrounding equality. Citizens must not be seen as atomized individuals (consumers) but as individuals embedded in their extended families and communities engaged in politically acting together. And formal institutions of elected bodies and their procedural shenanigans have to be replaced by civic campaigns and practices not codified in the constitution.

There were six panels that engaged in rich discussions of problems of democracy not just in South Asia but also Brazil, Uganda, and Kurdistan too

that are impossible to summarize in one short essay. One on rethinking development as part and parcel of rethinking democracy, however, needs mentioning. As practiced over the last eight decades, development has degenerated into being "whatever it is Western development agencies are saying it is". It has consisted mainly of ensuring (badly and failingly even at that) of GDP growth which has been the source of environmental degradation and increasing social impoverishment of a large section of society. It has stripped citizens of their cultural capital to turn them into labour, much as a living tree giving fruit, fodder and oxygen is cut into dead marketable lumber. Furthermore, it is the nation-state that is seen as the sole carrier of development when there have been other outfits both of civic movement and local markets that have shown more equitable and effective development results. The question remains: what is that political path to realizing a better and more relevant development?

I did talk about Nepal's hijacked democracy at the gathering and how a Cultural Theory approach would help in re-imagining it anew. That, however, would demand a separate essay.



PRO-MONARCHY MOVEMENT

After successfully organizing the largest political rally and former King Gyanendra engaging with the public in an approximately 8-kilometer march from TIA to Maharajgunj, pro-monarchy supporters are feeling optimistic. However, those in authority in the Federal, Secular Republic are responding with apprehension. The political landscape has been shaken by the monarchist movement, sparking uncertainty about the potential restoration of the monarchy.

By KESHAB POUDEL

Two decades after Nepal was declared a federal, secular republic following the removal of the monarchy, there is now a movement on the streets calling for the reinstatement of constitutional monarchy and the abolition of the federal republic.

Thousands of people gathered

in Kathmandu to welcome former King Gyanendra back to the capital from Pokhara two weeks ago (March 4), and since then, there has been a growing enthusiasm among royalist supporters.

On March 4, the King was warmly welcomed in Pokhara with people chanting slogans in

his favor and unveiling a statue of former King Birendra.

Pro-monarchy demonstrations have spread throughout Nepal, with supporters of former King Gyanendra organizing bike rallies and chanting slogans to demand the return of the monarchy in the country.

Displeased with the current



government under Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli, protesters organized a motorbike rally from Babar Mahal to the former Royal Palace on Durbar Marg, chanting the slogan ‘Narayanhitki Khai gara, hamra raja audai chhan’ (vacate the Royal Palace, we are bringing our king back).

On the 75th Democracy Day on 19th February, King Gyanendra Shah appealed for public support to lead the country towards unity, progress, and prosperity during a visit to Galeshwar Dham and Baglung Kalika. He mentioned that he abdicated the throne in 2008 after Nepal was declared a Republic not due to weakness but to witness peace in the country.

While the republican parties have announced plans to showcase their strength, supporters of the monarchy have informed the BBC that they are in talks about the roadmap for

their movement.

The pro-monarchy rally in Nepal has gained momentum recently, drawing a large number of supporters. A political event organized to welcome former King Gyanendra has significantly impacted the situation. The rally, spanning approximately 8 kilometers from Tribhuvan International Airport to Maharajgunj, was widely covered by both domestic and international media. Notably, the 78-year-old former King Gyanendra interacted with people along the route, which took five hours to traverse.

This marked the first time that foreign media extensively reported on the mass gathering for the former king. Indian media outlets also showed keen interest in the event, highlighting the support and enthusiasm of well-wishers in Kathmandu.

Yubaraj Ghimire, editor of Deshsanchar.com and a seasoned journalist with experience in India, noted that the Indian media portrayed an accurate depiction of the situation in Nepal and expressed curiosity about their analysis of the events.

Some analysts, like Ghimire, have emphasized that the ongoing process is an internal development in Nepal and cannot be influenced by foreign powers.

Narendra Modi, from the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, is currently serving as India’s Prime Minister for the third time. Analysts who anticipate some level of Indian involvement in Nepal’s significant changes argue that the developments in Nepal should not be seen in isolation.

Many experts have highlighted that the United States, a



superpower, has recently reduced aid to Nepal, as the Trump administration has shifted towards a more trade-focused foreign policy. The opposition leaders of Nepali Congress, CPN-UML, and Maoist parties were shocked by the large rally in the capital and criticized it as a move by King Gyanendra to stir up trouble.

Unpopular Government

Prime Minister Oli, who also serves as the chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), has been facing criticism from the public for the government's alleged corruption and its failure to deliver on promises to improve the economy and infrastructure of the country. Oli recently became embroiled in controversy when individuals were arrested for protesting against him, and the press credentials of two journalists were revoked for questioning him.

During a speech in Mahottari, Oli rejected the idea of a return to monarchy in Nepal. "There are some individuals calling for the reinstatement of the monarchy,

but that is not feasible," the PM stated. He suggested that the former king should establish a political party and participate in elections. "If the former king believes he has popular support, he is free to form a party and run in elections while respecting the constitution," Oli remarked.

During his birthday celebrations on Friday, Madhav Kumar Nepal, the former Prime Minister of Nepal and Chairman of the CPN-Unified Socialist, stated that the monarchy is a thing of the past and there is no chance of its restoration.



Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Chairman of the CPN-Maoist Centre, also expressed opposition to the idea of bringing back the monarchy, cautioning the former king against any 'foolish' actions.

Prachanda, who led the Maoist insurgency against the monarchy and served as Prime Minister three times, described the former king's rule as autocratic and emphasized that the people of Nepal had taken power away from him through their fight against his oppressive regime. "The people wrested power from the king and they know how to protect it," he stated.

Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda has warned the King that there will be serious consequences if he continues to hold anti-Republican rallies.

Nepali Congress senior leader Bimendra Nidhi stated that the Federal Republic of Nepal cannot be changed and the return of the monarchy is only a fantasy. Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli encouraged King Gyanendra to participate in elections and gain power through the people's vote.

Pro-monarchist party leaders called the event historic and urged the ruling parties to negotiate with the King to reinstate the monarchy in Nepal and eliminate federalism. RPP Chair Rajendra Lingden stated, “People have shown their support for the revival of the monarchy and are against the corruption brought about by the three political parties through the federal republic. If peaceful negotiations fail, the people will take action to abolish the federal republic.”

Amidst the current division among monarchical forces, reports have emerged that supporters of the monarchy are attempting to unite. While there are differing views on who should lead this movement, there is a shared recognition of the need for such a unified front.

Restoration of Monarchy, out of the 14 parties in the House of Representatives, only the Rastriya Prajatantra Party seems to be in favor of the monarchy. Discussions have begun within the party about the structure of the movement and the potential



leader.

Various names have been suggested in the media as possible leaders for the movement. However, Dhruv Bahadur Pradhan, a vice-chairman of the RPP, expressed uncertainty about the idea of selecting a coordinator and progressing with the movement. “We have not made any decisions regarding leadership. It could be determined through mutual understanding. It is premature to claim that a decision has been made. There are also logistical challenges,” he stated. “Ultimately, the people must take ownership of this. We will make decisions as we move forward.”

However, there are discussions within the party about finding a leader who could be universally accepted, and a decision will be reached during a party meeting.

General Secretary Dhaval Shamsheer Rana emphasized that the upcoming movement will require the support and cooperation of all, and a leader who is trusted by everyone. There have been ongoing divisions and disagreements among the various parties and groups supporting the restoration of the monarchy.

RPP Nepal Chairman Kamal Thapa, who served as Home Minister during the 2062/2063 BS People’s Movement, recently suggested that pro-monarchy forces should come together.

However, some pro-monarchist leaders who welcomed the former king back from Pokhara later showed divisions among themselves.

Durga Prasai, a leader and medical practitioner who participated in the demonstration, stated that he would not collaborate with RPP and RPP Nepal.

What made the monarchists enthusiastic?

Gyanendra, who had the rare





opportunity to serve as king twice in Nepal's history, made a plea in a video message released on Democracy Day (February 19) for people to "support me if you want to save the country." Expressing dissatisfaction, he remarked, "Even though the country's system has changed, the citizens' situation remains the same."

The former king, who claimed to have relinquished his position and comforts for the benefit of the people, cautioned against viewing it as a sign of weakness.

"We have already made sacrifices to address national issues. Now, we are prepared to make any further sacrifices necessary for Nepal's progress," Shah's message declared. Gyanendra had been involved in various public events from Butwal to Pokhara in recent weeks.

These events attracted a "significant" turnout of ordinary citizens. The warm reception he received in Kathmandu and the subsequent discussions in national and international media appear to have further emboldened him.

How to take the current debate?

Yubaraj Ghimire, editor of Deshsanchar.com, suggests that the lack of good governance has caused a decline in the popularity of political parties and an increase in support for the king, who has remained in the country despite the establishment of the republic.

He believes that the ongoing movement may lead to the emergence of a common leader, and the outcome will depend on the understanding reached during the movement. The king has called for unity among political parties, emphasizing that a decision cannot be made by one party alone.

Ghimire attributes the current situation to the citizens' frustration, anger, and optimism. Some question whether the competing forces, who are divided and have gathered in support of the king, have the ability to bring the movement to a conclusion that would restore the monarchy.

There is significant momentum in the movement. If someone attempts to make this issue their sole focus, they will be marginalized. Who will emerge as the leader of the movement? There is still a long road ahead, but the answer will eventually reveal itself."

He mentioned that in the days ahead, the king might seek support from various sectors of society, including the youth and the international community. He added, "Similar to the appeal made on Falgun 7, there may be a broader call for support. However, I do not foresee the king himself taking to the streets."

How did the monarchy come to an end

After the Maoist insurgency in Nepal, the king's powers were suspended on January 15, 2007, and an interim legislature was established.



On May 28, 2008, the monarchy was officially abolished by the first constituent assembly, and Nepal was rechristened as the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.

Since the abolition of the monarchy in Nepal, Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' was elected as the Prime Minister in August 2008 in the first government formed. T

he political landscape in Nepal has been unstable since becoming a Republic, with no Prime Minister completing a full five-year term.

Nepal has seen 8 Prime Ministers since 2008, with some being re-elected. Recently, there has been a rise in demonstrations by 'monarchist' political groups in Nepal, advocating for the reinstatement of the monarchy.

Former King Gyanendra Shah was welcomed by a large crowd of pro-monarchy parties and supporters upon his return to the capital from Pokhara, escorting him from the airport to his residence in Maharajgunj.

King Gyanendra took the throne for the second time on 19 Jestha 2058 BS following his brother's passing at the Narayanhiti Palace. His authority was at risk as he became more ambitious and sought to actively govern. In

2005, he dismissed the elected government and placed party leaders, including the prime minister, under house arrest.

In response, the parliamentary party and the Maoist rebels at the time signed a 12-point agreement in Delhi, reportedly brokered by India. This agreement led to King Gyanendra relinquishing power to political parties after a 19-day uprising in 2006.



The reinstated House of Representatives limited his powers, and the major parties had already committed to adopting a federal republican system of governance before the Constituent Assembly elections.

Challenges of geopolitics

Nepal is situated between the two large countries of India and China, presenting challenges for Nepalese rulers in managing relations with both neighbors.

Despite this, Nepal has a close and extensive relationship with India, with strong cultural and trade ties. India is Nepal's largest trading partner, accounting for over 80% of its foreign trade. However, rather than adopting a realistic foreign policy approach, Nepalese political leaders have often engaged in political games under the guise of neutrality.

Nepal declared itself a federal democratic republic in 2008, and since then, the country has seen the formation of 13 governments, with the current government being the third in office. The country's foreign policy often fluctuates depending on the ruling party.

Past events have demonstrated the challenges faced by the Nepalese

government in balancing its relationships with India and China.

The question of whether the monarchy will be restored in Nepal remains unanswered, but the political situation in the country continues to be unsettled due to recent protests by pro-monarchy groups and a large rally attended by former King Gyanendra.

ENERGY MINISTRY'S REBUTTAL STATEMENT

Questioning the Purpose of FM Dr. Deuba's India Visit

Energy Ministry responds to doubts about FM Dr. Deuba's India trip.

By A CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Energy, Water Resources, and Irrigation's recent rebuttal statement (issued on March 12) regarding the Nepal India Power Exchange Committee (PEC) has sparked controversy in the Nepal-India energy trade.

As Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba is on a visit New Delhi to engage with high-level officials, including Minister of External Affairs Dr. S. Jaishankar, in an effort to improve Nepal-India relations, the rebuttal press release from the Ministry questioning the legitimacy of minute of (Power Exchange Committee (PEC) meeting co-chaired by NEA and Central Electricity Authority of India which agreed incensement of 1.5 percent power exchange rate for Indian fiscal year 2025/26, will likely to make a major setback.

Prabal Adhikari, who has attended numerous PSC meetings during his time in NEA's top tier, is currently serving as a senior expert (Special Class) under Minister Khadka. The language used in the Ministry's response criticizing the outcome of the bilateral meeting may not simply be an error or oversight. Some view it as a potential conspiracy to undermine the visit of FM Dr. Rana. "I fail to comprehend why such rebuttal statements are being released without prior consulta-

tion with the Foreign Ministry at this critical juncture. This marks the first instance where the energy ministry has sidelined the Foreign Ministry during a crucial period. Previously, there was a practice of consulting the Foreign Ministry before issuing any statements related to water and energy matters with

meeting with senior officials.

During the 12th meeting of the Nepal-India Energy Secretary-level Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on February 11, co-chaired by Energy Secretary Suresh Acharya and his counterpart in New Delhi, it was observed that the Power



India," stated a former high-ranking official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

The controversy raised by Nepal's ministry is now a new source of tension in the bilateral relationship and erode the confidence established between the two countries.

The ministry's rebuttal press statement defending Minister Dipak Khadka and Secretary Suresh Acharya was released at the same time as Nepal Electricity Authority Managing Director Kul Man Ghising's clarification, coinciding with the visit of Foreign Minister Dr. Deuba and her upcoming bilateral

Secretary-level Committee (PSC) meeting scheduled for February 12 would be attended by Kul Man Ghising representing the Nepal Electricity Authority.

When the JSC meeting concluded and noted that the PEC meeting was set for 12 February, Energy Minister Khadka was in New Delhi.

The official statement from the ministry now solely criticized MD Ghising and raising questions on the decision and minutes of PSC meeting. , ,

This rebuttal statement from the Ministry may create tension in the

bilateral energy relationship, which has seen significant progress in recent years.

After decades of effort, Nepal and India have made significant progress in bilateral electricity trade in recent years. Since signing the agreement for PEC in 1992, Nepal has been conducting import and export electricity with Indian states, and Nepal has earned nearly half a billion rupees in the last three years exporting the electricity to India.

The actions taken by Energy Minister Khadka directing MD Ghising are likely to strain Nepal-India relations evolved in energy sector.

This setback will also affect Foreign Minister Dr. Deuba's talks. Despite waiting for over two weeks, the Ministry issued a rebuttal clarification on 12 March that disregarded the understanding reached in New Delhi Between Nepal and India.

The ministry squarely blamed MD Ghising for agreeing to increase tariff for importing electricity from

India during PEC meeting.

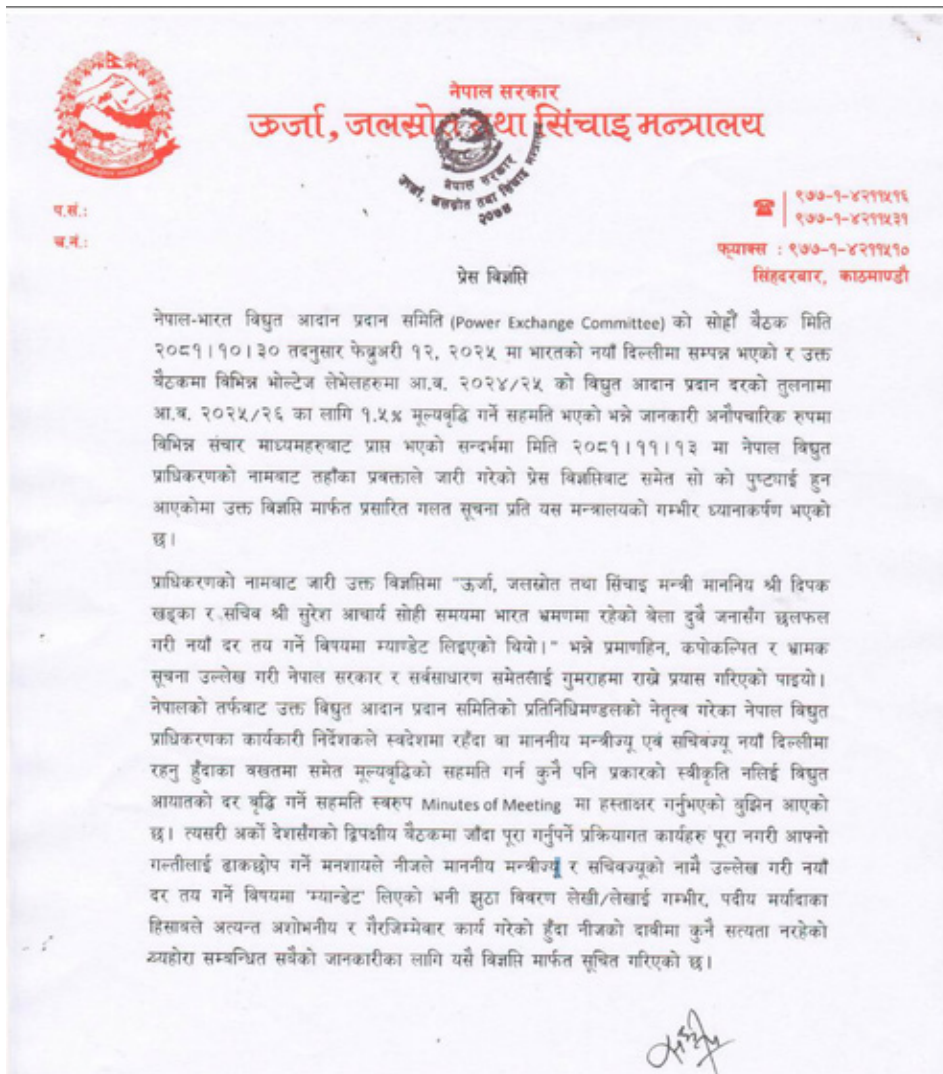
Earlier, MD Ghising was asked to explain why he took actions beyond his authority though Secretary Acharya personally led the Nepali side in the JSC meeting and signed the minute meeting for PEC.

starting in 1992.

Minister Khadka and Secretary Acharya are entitled to express their disapproval or critique of MD Ghising personally and his work.

However, they must also consider the matters of bilateral interest.

The minutes of the PSC and JST are not solely about MD Ghising, but rather concern Nepal as a whole. It is the responsibility of the Minister and Secretary to show respect for these matters, regardless of any personal disagreements they



The truth is that the Indo-Nepal Power Exchange Committee was established during the second Indo-Nepal Joint Commission meeting in December 1991.

This committee facilitated the creation of a mechanism for electricity tariff exchange between Nepal Electricity Authority and the Central Electricity Authority of India

may have.

The press release from the Water Resources and Irrigation department questioning the minutes of the PSC meeting during Foreign Minister Dr. Deuba's visit to India has caused a fresh controversy in Nepal's relationship with India.

Expands Into Paper Industry

After being inaugurated by PM Oli, the IME Group's Paper Industry, built with a Rs 2 billion investment, has commenced operations.

By A CORRESPONDENT

Led by a prominent figure and the president of the Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNC-CI), the Global IME Group has achieved success in various sectors such as banking, hydropower, hospitality, trading, insurance, and recreation. Now, the group has ventured into the industrial sector.

The newly inaugurated paper mill in Mahottari district of Madhesh Province started operations last week and is expected to help reduce Nepal's trade deficit by producing paper locally.

With a strong presence in cable, car, hotels, and banking sectors, the IME Group, under the leadership of Dhakal, has established a reputation for contributing to the country's economy by creating employment opportunities in various parts of Nepal. The paper industry is also expected to generate employment for local residents.

Prime Minister Oli inaugurated the Nepal Pulp and Paper Industries in Ramnagar, Gaushala Municipality Ward No. 1, Mahottari district, with a Rs 2 billion investment from the IME Group.

The industry is now operational, producing 75 metric tons of high-quality paper daily for writing and printing purposes. Initially, the production focuses on photocopy paper and paper for copy books to meet demand in educational and administrative sectors.

During the inauguration, Prime Minister Oli visited the environmentally friendly calcium carbonate production facility. This initiative also supports the use of indigenous products like the Janak Shiksha Samagi Kendra, which prints school textbooks.

IME Group Chairman Dhakal highlighted that the establishment of Nepal Pulp and

Paper Industries marks the group's entry into manufacturing and a new phase in Nepal's industrial growth.

Chairman Dhakal emphasized that the industry's launch reflects the nation's commitment to self-sufficiency, economic progress, and sustainable industrial development. He underscored the private sector's role in supporting the country's development objectives.

Chairman Dhakal emphasized the importance of establishing new industries to reduce reliance on foreign imports and create job opportunities within the country, preventing Nepali youth from seeking employment abroad in harsh conditions. He expressed confidence

that IME Group's entry into manufacturing would drive proactive industrial development.





President of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhakal, highlighted the role of industrial growth in job creation, noting that Nepal Pulp and Paper Industry has directly employed over 300 individuals and provided indirect employment to thousands more, including engineers, technicians, factory workers, supply managers, retailers, and farmers. The industry has started offering opportunities to over 50 percent of locals and women.

Chairman Dhakal stressed the importance of considering this effort as a partnership with the government's vision and the aspirations of the Nepali people to enhance domestic industries and achieve self-reliance in key sectors.

In his capacity as the president of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Chairman Dhakal expressed confidence that the government's efforts to create an investment-friendly environment in Nepal will yield positive results.

He also mentioned that the government is now incorporating suggestions from the private sector when formulating policies and laws to boost the country's economy. The private sector has acknowledged the significance of collaborating with the government for mutual progress.

Investors, whether local or foreign, assess the progress in the field of work. Therefore, the introduction of new and large projects like this within a year will indicate a favorable investment environment in the country.

Chairman Dhakal stressed that the industry inaugurated today will send a positive message about the investment climate in Nepal.

He also raised concerns about potential negative impacts on the investment and business environment in the country due to issues surrounding the planned cable car project in Pathibhara.

Chairman Dhakal pointed out that the construction of the cable car in Pathibhara was initiated in response to the requests of the local community, the local government, and the provincial government. He assured that the project is being developed with consideration for cultural values and ecological balance, ensuring the participation and approval of all district residents.

Following the start of the project, there were immediate attempts to obstruct it from outside the district. Chairman Dhakal stressed the importance of the private sector and the state considering the future investment landscape and whether investors will be willing to invest further in such circumstances.

Chairman Dhakal expressed concerns about the challenges faced in infrastructure development, leading the private sector to question the message that the advancement of information technology will convey to global investors as it becomes more interconnected.

Given the decreasing foreign grants and aid in the changing global landscape, Chairman Dhakal emphasized the need to support domestic entrepreneurs, job creators, and revenue generators to utilize the abundant natural resources. He called for collective efforts towards prosperity.

Chairman Dhakal emphasized the need for political leaders and organizational heads to come together to promote infrastructure development, create jobs, provide services to the public, and establish a substantial revenue stream for the state. He stressed the importance of avoiding negative politics in these areas and highlighted the positive impact that improved infrastructure can have on living standards, employment opportunities, and revenue generation. Chairman Dhakal expressed optimism about the country's future prosperity.

He also pointed out the significance of the newly opened industry, noting that Nepal has long relied on imported paper products. The closure of Bhrikuti Paper Factory, a major player in the domestic paper production industry, has created a gap that the new industry aims to fill. While small artisanal paper industries contribute to handicrafts and local paper supply, they are not sufficient to meet the country's industrial-scale paper production needs.

At the event, Chairman Dhakal highlighted the IME Group's focus on investing in national priorities, sectors that directly benefit a large number of citizens, and sustainable businesses that cater to the population's needs.

This includes industries like remittance, banking, insurance, information technology, hydropower, and tourism infrastructure, which are in line with the group's priorities. The newly opened factory also falls within these priority areas.

Obstruction To The Pathibhara Cable Car Project Could Harm Investment And Business In Nepal

We are worried about the negative impact that the issues surrounding the Pathibhara cable car project may have on the investment and business climate in our country.



BY: CHANDRA PRASAD DHAKAL

I am thrilled to welcome you all to the inauguration of Nepal Pulp and Paper Industries Pvt. Ltd., marking a significant moment in our history. This venture not only marks IME Group's entry into the manufacturing sector but also signifies a new chapter in Nepal's industrial progress.

Our dedication to promoting self-reliance, economic growth, and sustainable industrial development in the country exemplifies the private sector's alignment with national development goals. IME Group's longstanding support for Nepal's commercial and industrial sectors has been instrumental in driving growth in key areas such as banking, insurance, remittances, tourism infrastructure, information technology, and hydropower.

By establishing new industries and reducing reliance on imports, we aim to create opportunities for our youth within the country, eliminating the need for them to seek employment in harsh conditions abroad. This initiative is a significant step towards fostering a proactive approach to industrial development.

Today marks a significant milestone as we unveil the cutting-edge pulp and paper industry that will tap into the vast opportunities for production, import substitution, and consumption in Nepal. Construction of this industry began in July 2078, and it is now operational, producing 75 metric tons of high-quality paper for writing and printing purposes daily.

The formal launch will take place after the inauguration by the Honorable Prime Minister today. Our efforts align with the government's goal of promoting local industries and achieving self-sufficiency in key sectors. For years, Nepal has relied on paper imports due to the closure of the Bhrikuti Paper Mill, one of the country's largest paper producers. This new industry will help fill the gap and support domestic production on an industrial scale.

However, the small and handmade paper industries play a significant role in supplying handicrafts and Nepali paper, reducing the need for expensive paper imports. Nepal has spent billions of rupees on importing paper due to price fluctuations in the international market. In the fiscal year 2080.81 alone, Nepal spent nearly 12 billion rupees on paper imports.

Nepal imports paper from countries such as India, China, Germany, America, Thailand, Indonesia, and Bangladesh, including paper rolls, sheets, paperboards of various sizes and weights, and even toilet paper.

Contrary to the traditional method of making paper from straw, hay, or wood, the paper industry in Nepal recycles old papers from homes and offices. These papers are collected by small business owners, processed to remove contaminants like pins, plastic, and ink, and then transformed into new paper products for the market.

With this goal in mind, we have launched an initiative to manufacture paper locally. Our industry will have a significant impact on import substitution, offering Nepali consumers, businesses, and

industries domestically made paper at competitive prices. With an initial investment exceeding 2 billion rupees, our industry is currently focused on producing photocopy paper on an industrial scale. This type of paper is in high demand in educational, administrative, and various other sectors, meeting the needs of the local market.

Furthermore, this initiative will create opportunities for utilizing local products, such as Janak Shiksha Samagi Kendra, which prints school textbooks. I want to emphasize that our industry is not solely driven by production, sales, distribution, and profits.

We are also committed to environmental sustainability. Our industry has implemented several measures to reduce air and water pollution. By utilizing PCC plants, we are able to mitigate air pollution and produce precipitated calcium carbonate locally. This process involves extracting carbon from chimney emissions and combining it with limestone to create PCC chemicals.

The chemical is being recycled in the industry to improve paper quality. This will help reduce the need for importing calcium carbonate and also decrease environmental pollution by emitting less smoke. Additionally, efforts are underway to recycle and reuse water from industries post-treatment. This will help reduce groundwater depletion and water pollution.

It is important to note that industrial growth plays a crucial role in job creation. I am proud to announce that the Nepal Pulp and Paper Industry will generate employment opportunities for over 300 individuals directly and many more indirectly.

This will include engineers, technicians, factory workers, supply managers, retailers, and farmers. We are committed to offering opportunities to more than 50 percent of locals and women.

Our objective is for the industry to play a significant role in empowering women, particularly in the paper production sector. Our focus is not only on paper production but also on leading the way in fostering self-reliance, creating jobs, and promoting sustainable economic development.

Our business campaign has specific priorities. Firstly, we aim to invest in areas that are a priority for the country. Secondly, we focus on investing in sectors that will directly benefit the largest number of citizens.

Thirdly, we prioritize investing in areas that have the potential to become sustainable businesses for the country and cater to the needs of all. Our businesses in remittance, banking, insurance, information technology, hydropower, and tourism infrastructure are aligned with these priorities. We believe that this factory aligns with our priorities. As the President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, I would like to address a few additional points.

We faced economic challenges due to the Covid pandemic, the

Russia-Ukraine conflict, the Sri Lankan economic crisis, and internal factors. While many countries announced post-Covid recovery packages, we focused on revitalizing our economy.

We have collaborated with the private sector to implement state plans, which has led to some positive economic improvements, although we have not fully recovered.

As the current government focuses on enhancing the economy, we are optimistic and enthusiastic about the potential to drive the country's economic growth. Creating a conducive environment to attract both local and international investors is crucial, and we are committed to promoting Nepal's economic prospects.

The private sector is aligned with the Prime Minister's vision for a prosperous Nepal and happy Nepalis. We acknowledge the positive impact of recent government legislation in fostering an investor-friendly climate in Nepal and actively support these initiatives.

We appreciate the government's receptiveness to our recommendations in shaping policies and laws that will benefit the economy. Investors, both domestic and foreign, seek opportunities for growth and development. The initiation of new major projects within the year will signal a favorable investment climate in the country. Therefore, the launch of this project today sends a positive message about Nepal's investment environment.

Dear Prime Minister, We are worried about the negative impact that the issues surrounding the Pathibhara cable car project may have on the investment and business climate in our country. The construction of the cable car project in Pathibhara was initiated in response to the repeated requests of the local community, local government, and provincial government. This project has been a long-standing demand of the locals, known to all for approximately 7 years.

The project construction began with the full consent and involvement of the district residents, taking into consideration various aspects such as local demands, the cultural significance of the temple, and ecological considerations. However, external attempts were made to obstruct the progress of this important project once construction commenced.

Given the challenges faced during the implementation of this project, both the private sector and the government need to consider the implications for future investments and whether potential investors will be willing to engage in such circumstances. The obstacles encountered in infrastructure development raise concerns within the private sector about the message being sent to global investors, especially as advancements in information technology continue to connect the world more closely.

We have observed numerous wealthy and prosperous nations around the world. How did these countries achieve their wealth and prosperity? What role did businessmen and entrepreneurs play in their success? It seems that the risks taken by these individuals, as well as their hard work and dedication, are often overlooked. Entrepreneurs embark on ventures that involve significant risks.

Despite this, entrepreneurs continue to invest. Some may believe

that entrepreneurs are solely motivated by personal gain. However, the absence of businesses run by entrepreneurs would have a significant impact on society. What if there were no hotels, shops, buses, industries, hospitals, or schools operated by entrepreneurs in a particular area?

The truth is that the private sector, which accounts for over 81 percent of the country's economy and more than 86 percent of employment, plays a crucial role in our society. Without the production and services provided by entrepreneurs and businessmen, our situation would be vastly different.

What is the state's biggest source of income, transportation, education, health, infrastructure, and employment situation? Another crucial aspect is that the innovations of these entrepreneurs have significantly improved the lives of many individuals. Their industries and businesses have generated job opportunities, and the state's infrastructure has been enhanced through the taxes and revenues contributed by these entrepreneurs. The state's operations are sustained by these contributions. The income earned by a businessperson is often reinvested, leading to job creation and additional tax revenues for the state.

The key distinction between an ordinary individual and an entrepreneur is that while a regular person may earn Rs. 200,000, an entrepreneur takes a risk of Rs. 100,000 to start another business. They may invest up to Rs. 1 million in equity by securing loans from banks and financial institutions and putting in Rs. 200,000 of their own. This is the essence of the private sector's role.

It is essential to acknowledge the relentless hard work, commitment, and physical and mental strain that entrepreneurs endure round the clock. We

often read about the biographies of successful entrepreneurs like Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and Larry Ellison, as well as discuss the achievements of business magnates like Tata, Ambani, and Adani.

However, there is a prevailing negative perception towards our entrepreneurs that needs to be addressed. This mindset must change in order to encourage increased investment, national development, and prosperity.

I urge the leaders of all political parties and organizations to come together for the advancement of infrastructure, job creation, public services, and state revenue. Failure to do so may result in future generations facing deprivation, poverty, and underdevelopment. Let us not politicize issues related to infrastructure, economic growth, and the well-being of the public.

Only by developing infrastructure can the living standards of citizens improve, creating employment, increasing revenue, and leading the country to prosperity. We are facing a changing world environment with decreasing foreign grants and aid, so it is essential to support indigenous entrepreneurs, job creators, and hardworking individuals who can generate revenue. Let us work together to harness the vast potential of nature and move towards prosperity.

Dhakal, President of FNCI, and chairperson of IME Group, made these remarks during the inauguration of Nepal Pulp and Paper Industries Pvt. Ltd.



MADHU KUMAR MARASINI

Person With Determination

After a distinguished career in the civil service spanning over 30 years, Madhu Kumar Marasini, known for his effective leadership as a secretary, retired, leaving behind a legacy of positive memories.

By A CORRESPONDENT

Life is often likened to a challenging exam, where many fail by trying to imitate others instead of recognizing their unique path. However, there are individuals who excel by staying true to themselves. Having served in various roles in Nepal's civil service for over three decades, Madhu Kumar Marasini retired recently as a secretary from the National Planning Commission, earning respect and admiration from colleagues, rivals, and competitors alike.

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli commended Secretary Marasini's contributions during a farewell meeting. Despite being transferred from the Ministry of Finance to the Vice-President Secretariat shortly after a change in government, PM Oli's praise holds significance.

During his farewell event, colleagues, vice chairpersons, and members lauded Secretary Marasini's leadership and ability to effectively manage the bureaucracy.

During his brief tenure at the NPC, Secretary Marasini worked diligently to ensure that all federal ministries implemented the 16th plan, with a particular focus on climate change adaptation and mitigation in a coordinated manner.

In the civil service, appointments, retirements, promotions, and transfers are routine processes that involve the

appointment of new cadres and the retirement of older ones.

However, only a few individuals leave a lasting impact on organizations through their work. Marasini, who

tralian National University, Marasini demonstrated his expertise during his time at the Ministry of Finance, where he led the International Economic Cooperation and Coordination Division



recently retired, is one such highly efficient and capable civil servant in Nepal.

He began his career as a section officer in the Postal Department and went on to serve in various government offices in the country, as well as representing Nepal at international organizations like the World Bank.

With a Master's degree from the Aus-

and served as Finance Secretary in two separate tenures.

During his tenure as head of Division, he led Nepal side in International Conference of Nepal's development partners following the earthquake 2015.

Following the conference in Kathmandu, Nepal's development partner committed to providing over \$4.1 billion, which was more than double the



expected amount. Additionally, he led the Nepali delegation in the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

In his role as finance secretary, Marasini successfully negotiated numerous agreements with multilateral and bilateral agencies. He played a crucial part in discussions with an IMF team, resulting in an agreement for a disbursement of approximately US\$ 396 million under the Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement. This support helped prevent a significant financial crisis in Nepal.

The moment of the agreement was signed in highly crucial time when there were rumor that Nepal was heading like economic crisis and uncertainty in Sri Lanka.

“I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of Nepal for giving me the chance to serve in various high-ranking positions such as Finance Secretary, Secretary of Commerce Industries and Supplies, Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, Financial Comptroller General, and Member Secretary at the National Planning Commission.”

“I am also thankful for the opportunity to represent Nepal as the Consul

General in New York and to work as an Advisor at the World Bank HQ in Washington DC. I have been privileged to contribute to the development of my country from different roles, and I am thankful for the experiences that have shaped me. I am especially grateful to my seniors for their guidance, wisdom, and unwavering support throughout my career.”

To all my fellow secretaries and colleagues, I want to express my gratitude for the camaraderie, teamwork, and

dedication to public service that we have shared. To the next generation of civil servants, I urge you to view your work as more than just a job - it is a noble calling. Approach it with passion, integrity, and a clear sense of purpose, and you will find immense fulfillment.

As I embark on this new phase of my life, I carry with me the treasured memories, valuable experiences, and enduring relationships that I have cultivated over the years. While I may be retiring from my current role, my commitment to serving our nation remains steadfast.

In the words of US President Robert Kennedy Jr., “There were many years when I tried to fulfill others’ expectations, but you must follow your heart. Believe in your unique talents and abilities that will enable you to make a meaningful impact in an area that interests you. Dedicate yourself to that and strive to contribute to your community.”

Secretary Marasini has made significant strides in his career. Good people bring happiness, while the best people create lasting memories. Negative experiences teach us lessons, and it is now up to others to assess and judge.



Dr. PRABIN MANANDHAR

Person with Humility

Dr. Prabin Manandhar, known for his humility and humbleness, has completed a successful three-and-a-half-year tenure as the country director of Helvetas Nepal. He is now set to lead Helvetas Myanmar with enthusiasm and experience

By Keshab Poudel

Dr. Prabin Manandhar, known for his humility, has successfully completed his tenure as the country director of Helvetas Nepal. He is now moving on to lead Helvetas's South East Asia country.

Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu once said, "All streams flow to the ocean because it is lower than they are. Humility gives it its power." The words shared with this subscribe before leaving to Nepal showed his simplicity and humbleness.

"I am proud to work at Helvetas-Nepal alongside talented and dynamic colleagues, both young and senior, who bring decades of experience in the development sector in Nepal. I am grateful for their support and teamwork, which has led to significant progress at Helvetas Nepal over the



years," said Dr. Manandhar.

"The progress and achievements would not have been possible without the strong support provided by the President and other colleagues from headquarters during

my time in office."

"As I prepare to leave for Myanmar, I am confident in the leadership of my successor, Maneesh Pradhan, who is experienced and capable. I believe that Helvetas

will continue to thrive and grow under Maneesh's guidance and leadership," Dr. Manandhar expressed.

Dr. Manandhar, who has led various international organizations such as Helvetas Nepal, Lutheran World Federation Nepal and Iraq, Canadian Cooperation Office, and Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN), has always maintained a humble approach, which has empowered him. Before leaving Helvetas Nepal, he ensured a smooth transition by taking his successor, Maneesh Pradhan, to different sites for 15 days.

"Leadership involves reestablishing momentum during uncertain times. With experience leading impactful development projects in Nepal, I am now applying that knowledge to my work at Helvetas Myanmar, focusing on building resilience, adaptability, and driving meaningful change," said Dr. Manandhar.

"Taking on new opportunities requires bravery and foresight. Transitioning from Nepal to Myanmar has reinforced my dedication to working at the intersec-



tion of humanitarian aid, development, and peacebuilding, striving to create sustainable solutions in the face of complex challenges," added Dr. Manandhar.

As the country director of Helvetas Nepal, Dr. Manandhar has accumulated 70 years of experience in Nepal's development sector, enhancing his knowledge of development and its implementation.

Dr. David Seddon, a renowned

British international development expert and Dr. Manandhar's PhD supervisor, commends him as a modest and diligent individual. Dr. Seddon, who has written several books on Nepal with Nepali students, lauded Dr. Manandhar for his skill in simplifying intricate matters during his recent trip to Nepal.

During his three and a half years in the role, Dr. Manandhar dedicated 40 percent of his time to field visits, listening to concerns and working to address issues and improve project efficiency.

"Establishing robust systems and ensuring compliance are essential for creating lasting impact. My goal is to enhance governance, accountability, and efficiency to maintain transparency, effectiveness, and transformative outcomes in our projects for the benefit of the communities we serve," said Dr. Manandhar.

Having started his career as a civil engineer in Jumla district over 25 years ago, Dr. Manandhar has held various roles in Nepal's de-





velopment sector.

He has consistently demonstrated compassion and humility towards all his colleagues while also maintaining self-confidence. He believes that self-confidence is important, but without compassion and humility, it can easily turn into arrogance.

Dr. Manandhar is known for his compassionate and humble approach, always treating his colleagues with respect and without bias. Some may view his humility as a weakness, but he sees it as a strength that he values in all situations.

“A cohesive team is the backbone of any organization. I am committed to fostering a culture of trust, collaboration, and shared goals, empowering teams in Myanmar to achieve greater impact together, as we successfully did in Nepal,” shared Dr. Manandhar.

Dr. Manandhar often advises his colleagues and students to be humble yet firm, emphasizing that humility and openness are essential for success without compromising one’s beliefs. He holds a

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Development Studies from the University of East Anglia, UK, where he was mentored by the renowned development expert Dr. David Seddon. Currently serving as a senior researcher and Visiting Faculty,

“Every obstacle presents an opportunity to lead with vision and determination. My transition from Nepal to Myanmar is driven by passion, optimism, and a steadfast belief in development that has the

power to change lives,” narrated Dr. Manandhar.

Dr. Manandhar has extensive experience in post-graduate teaching, development research, and PhD supervision. With a background in Public Administration and Civil Engineering, as well as professional training in International Cooperation, he has authored several publications and presented papers at national and international seminars.

Experiences

Dr. Manandhar, born and raised in the heart of Kathmandu known as Freak Street during the Hippy Era, has extensive experience in international development and international relations. He served as the chairperson of the Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN), always promoting the organization he leads with humility. Maneesh Pradhan,

with a background in civil society and leadership roles in prestigious INGOs, brings expertise in Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Gen-



der Equality, Results-Based Management, Conflict Management, and Climate Risk Management. He officially assumed the position on March 3. Maneesh shared on his LinkedIn wall, “I am pleased to announce that I have joined Helvetas Nepal as Country Director. It is a privilege to be part of an organization with a nearly seven-decade legacy of development partnership in Nepal.”

“I am thrilled to have the opportunity to learn from my colleagues at Helvetas and work together with communities, civil society organizations, the private sector, donors, and government agencies to amplify our impact. We will continue to build on the organization’s accomplishments to further sustainable development and social justice,” Pradhan shared in his LinkedIn post.

With a wealth of experience spanning 25 years in international development, human rights, and social justice, Pradhan has held key positions at organizations like ActionAid International and Amnesty International.



Dr. Manandhar has identified the ideal candidate to take over the role. A strong advocate for feminist leadership and team empowerment, Pradhan is dedicated to advancing sustainable development and social equity in Nepal.

Dr. Prabin is a dynamic individual who has a keen understanding of situations and contexts, and the ability to make the right decisions at the right time. I learned a lot from him during his time as a country director,” said Sandip

Poudel, Team Leader of InElam at Helvetas Nepal.

Dr. Manandhar assumed leadership at Helvetas Nepal in the wake of a challenging three-year period due to the COVID-19 pandemic, during which several projects were halted. Under his tenure, new projects were initiated, and the organization’s scope of work was expanded.

“Every challenge is an opportunity to lead with vision and determination. My journey from Nepal to Myanmar is fueled by passion, optimism, and a steadfast belief in development that transforms lives,” said Dr. Manandhar.

While some may perceive humility as a sign of weakness or insignificance, true humility is a potent force that can propel an individual towards purpose, vision, strength, and prosperity.



No Wonder, Its Mad March



BY: HEMANT ARJYAL

It was understandable that 10 May 2023, despite being a clear afternoon, aircraft opted not to land on runway '02' as they usually did, and the tailwind was beyond safe operational limit that day. Even narrow bodies chose to hold while some opted to divert sooner. One, wide-body was low on fuel and intended to divert after thirteenth laps. But it was worse this year with Qatari flight QTR646 having completed 25 laps attained second position on FR24's "unofficial "world holding ranking on 05 March. Unable to land it headed to Dhaka and returned the following afternoon. The unfavorable situation was the outcome of over 20 knots wind that blew from south to north or parallel to the runway orientation here. Since identifying Kathmandu airport runway ends (02/20) at times confuses even the professionals, I have taken the liberty to refer '02' as 'Se' (South-end) and '20' as 'Ne' (North-end) for the sake of understanding.

Meteorologically, the prevailing upheaval signifies approaching summer with winter coming to its fag end. The period, termed by pilots as "mad March", is typically characterised by unpredictable strong surface wind with airlines passengers likely to face fair amount of flight turbulence. Kathmandu's image, which is already tarnished by perennial long holdings and poor facilities, was made worse by wind related hold ups compelling airlines to divert. Everyone hates diversion, it creates big hassle for both travellers, personally, and to the carriers. Airlines have to bear the costs of accommodation at both ends, besides pay various ancillary expenses for landing, parking and fuel. It becomes even more

taxing for airline staffs at the receiving end for having to bear with visibly angry travellers.

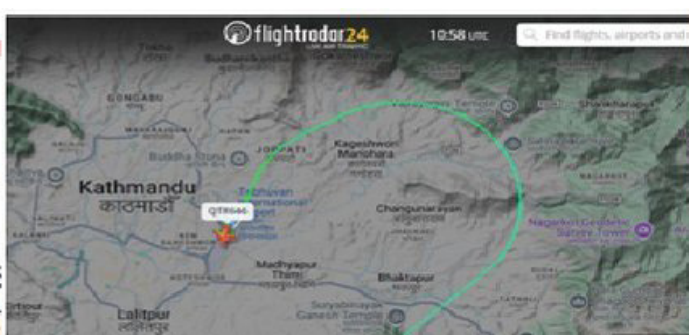
Ideally, aircraft land and take-off against the wind. But that is seldom possible and it is even more difficult for an airport with a single runway. Naturally, airports with more runways can cope better by switching runways. Strong tailwind is taken seriously as it, not just, increases the ground speed, but also, the rate of descent. Both are not good for landing. That beside, strong tailwind makes aircraft eat more runways and worse, can lead to serious runway excursion if the landing gets jinxed. The need for caution is quite apparent as the terrain, beyond the runway end 'Ne', slopes down steeply to Bagmati below.

Landing from 'Se' following terrain based VOR/DME approach is popular because of its "straight in" nature and quite a few airlines still follow it. The RNP for 'Se', on the other hand, comes with shallow turns, as it is channeled through the Bagmati gorge which offers lower flying. As such, Satellite based system is taken to be better and more reliable. As for landing from 'Ne', first, it had no nav aids to facilitate landings, and making visual approach was difficult because it involved making very tight 180° turn to align quickly with the fast approaching runway. No wonder, airlines waited for the tailwind to die down in such situation.

The RNP for 'Ne' was published on 19 May 2022, but no airline bothered to show any interest in it. It was on RA's interest and initiative that instrument arrival/departures was designed in 1972. And

it was again expected that RA would take the lead in adopting the new RNP ('Ne') too. Sadly, nothing of that sort happened, possibly because current RA management, presumably deep in the "morass of mismanagement" of all sorts, has no time for such "non-issues".

I had asked a compatriot pilot, who has been captaining wide-bodies since quite a few years with a renowned airline elsewhere, about the apparent disdain for the RNP ('Ne') among airlines. And this is what he said in reply: "Landing on 'Ne' is challenging, we used to do it with B757 during the day time. For wide-body it's not advisable. The crews of wide-body aircraft will need lot of training hours in the simulator. I have done it in the sim with B787.



For foreign carrier I wouldn't recommend landing there as they are not familiar with the terrain and procedures."

It is a common saying that one can take a horse to the water but can't make it drink. So the RNP approach for 'Ne' was a virgin until the 8th of March, when a Qatari Airways B787 made its first ever landing on runway 'Ne' following the RNP, surprising everyone beyond belief.

I happened to be watching accidentally at that instant, and had assumed that the flight was on its usual RNP ('Se') approach. But as it kept flying low and continued heading to the north-east sector of the valley than the usual, I assumed that the visibility was the issue and it was probably making a very "unusual" go around. But it was not doing anything of that sort, and continued descending lower until it appeared to have landed. Only after its speed slowed down to about 80 knots did I realised that it had indeed created the unthinkable by landing from

'Ne'. The B787 had not even reached the other end of the runway to turn around, I posted the screen shot in Tweeter with the news. While, oblivious to the importance of this landing, our media was still engrossed with the incident of nose wheel loss at Janakpur. Cannot blame them, as neither Qatar Airways, nor CAAN for that matter, issued any press release explaining the significance of landing from north.

As it could not be an impromptu action on impulse, Qatari was obviously making preparations quietly, especially as it was rumoured to have effectively

barred landing from north here. The pain and costs of having to endure inordinately long holding that was compounded by having to divert seem to have finally made the legendary horse thirsty. Now that the non-adaptability of RNP for 'Ne' is broken by a wide-body, we hope that others will also be bold enough to adopt it gradually. It will be a bigger shame if RA continues with its current folly. By this flip, the Qatari has effectively turned the tails wind of "disadvantage" to head wind of "advantage". That beside, use of both north and south runways will also help Kathmandu airport become more efficient now that works to connect both runway ends by taxiways is in full swing. Thanks are due to, not just, 'mad March' for its unpredictable winds, but also, to Qatar Airways for finally breaking the '20' myth.

Hemant Arjyal can be reached at harjyal@yahoo.com

Remembering Contributions

Nepal celebrates Rudraraj Pande's 125nd Birth Anniversary, honoring his diverse contributions and facilitating scholar

By A CORRESPONDENT

The younger generation in Nepal is gradually losing awareness of the names and contributions of many distinguished figures in art, culture, literature, and history due to lack of support from the state.

Rudraraj Sahitya Sewa Prathisthan, chaired by Professor Dr. Gauri Shanker Lal Das and supported by three generations of the late Rudra Raj Pande's family, organizes annual programs to honor individuals with significant contributions in literature, education, history, and religion.

Unlike many prominent figures in Nepal, not all have siblings like late Rudra Raj Pande, a renowned literary figure and former vice chancellor of Tribhuvan University, to remember and honor the contributions of their earlier generations.

Under the guidance of his son Dr. Badri Raj Pande, grandson Dr. Neil Pande, a renowned dentist, and other family members residing in the United States, as well as grandsons from his daughter's side, including Dr. Radhesh Panta, an economist, have been organizing an annual program to honor the contributions of scholars.

Apart from a few individuals with specific political affiliations, notable historical, literary figures such as Balkrishna Sam, Bal Chandra Sharma, Surya Bikram Gyawali, Siddhi Chama Shrestha, Dhundi Raj Bhandari, Dharanidhar Koirala, Rishikesh Shah, Lain Singh Bangdel, Kedarman Byathit, and others are not prominently featured in the national narrative.

This year, Professor Dr. Gargi Sharma was honored with the Rudra Raj Samriti Award by Rudra Raj Sahitya Sewa Prathisthan for her valuable contributions to Nepali literature. Additionally, two outstanding students from Bhanu Bhakta Higher Secondary School, previously known as Durbar High School, were awarded scholarships. Late Pande held the position of headmaster at Durbar High School for an extended period.

Sardar Late Rudra Raj Pande made a substantial impact on Nepali society. Some of Pande's notable contributions to Nepalese literature include Rupamati (1935), Chapakazi (1937), Prayaschit (1939), and Prem (1949).

He was instrumental in the establishment

She expressed her pride in receiving the award for the second time in her career and highlighted Sardar late Rudra Raj Pande's contributions to education, history, literature, and spirituality. The chief guest, Prof Dr. Das, reflected on Sardar Rudra Raj Pande's contributions to various sectors of Nepalese society during the event.



Dr. Neil Pande, the secretary of the Pratisthan, welcomed the participants and provided an overview of the organization's activities. Dr. Badri Raj Pande delivered a vote of thanks. The Pratisthan annually honors national figures in the fields of education, literature, history, and spirituality on a rotating basis.

Given that a significant number of young Nepalis are unaware of the history and achievements of these great figures, the dedicated family members of the late Sardar Rudra Raj Pande, who made significant contributions to education, Nepali literature, religion, and history, are working diligently to raise awareness.

It is often said that a generation that neglects history has no past or future, emphasizing the importance of understanding and honoring the past as the foundation for the future. Without acknowledging the contributions of individuals like the late Pande, who played a crucial role in shaping Nepal's history, literature, education, culture, and religion, there is a risk of societal and national understanding being compromised. Failure to recognize their contributions leaves the country lacking in substance.

Each country honors individuals who have made significant contributions to literature, culture, and religion, thereby strengthening the nation's foundation.

This is why countries worldwide commemorate their national heroes in various fields such as politics, history, literature, and culture. Rudra Raj Sahitya Prathisthan fulfills this responsibility by organizing annual programs.

of the SLC examination board and the Department of Archaeology. Pande began his literary journey with poetry, with his first poem titled "Sandhya" published in Chandra magazine.

His poems were also featured in Shakti Sandhu magazine. He played a crucial role in founding the Nepali Bhasha Prakashini Samiti for publishing textbooks in Nepali after the establishment of the SLC Board in Nepal. His first novel, Rupamati, was published in 1935.

A felicitation ceremony was recently held in Kathmandu to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of Sardar Rudra Raj Pande. Professor Dr. Das was the chief guest at the ceremony.

Hiranya Kumari Pathak, the convener of the award nomination committee, commended Professor Dr. Sharma, the first female Professor at Tribhuvan University, for her notable contributions to literature. Professor Dr. Sharma, upon receiving the award, recognized the influential works of the late Rudra Raj Pande in the country.

Beyond Policy: The Unfinished Fight For Women's Empowerment In Nepal



BY: SUVA BC

As Nepal celebrates International Women's Day, the country looks back on a journey marked by achievements and ongoing challenges. Despite the introduction of laws and policies aimed at promoting gender equality, such as maternity leave, menstrual leave, and quotas for women in politics, there are still deep-seated cultural norms and inconsistent policy implementation that hinder women's progress. The focus should not only be on creating opportunities but also on ensuring that these opportunities are accessible to all women, regardless of their location.

Nepal has made significant legal advancements. Many workplaces, particularly in urban areas, now acknowledge the importance of menstrual and pregnancy leave, allowing women to prioritize their health while maintaining their careers. Women entrepreneurs are also making strides, venturing into sectors like technology and crafts with the support of loans and training programs. Politically, constitutional rules ensure that at least one-third of local and national representatives are women, signaling a move towards inclusivity. However, the implementation of these rights in rural areas, where the majority of Nepal's population resides, remains limited. Health clinics in these regions lack essential facilities, and informal workers, predominantly women, are often excluded from benefits like paid leave. Policies tailored for urban areas do not adequately address the complexities of rural life, leaving many women marginalized.

The increased representation of women in politics is a positive development, but it also highlights existing gaps. While more women now hold elected positions, their decision-making power remains constrained. Many women face pressure to conform to the directives of male colleagues or family members, relegating them to symbolic roles rather than active leadership. Women who speak out against injustices, such as unfair development projects or gender-based violence, often encounter criticism or threats, reflecting a society that struggles to accept women as equal leaders. Outdated practices like the "Chaupadi" system, which isolates menstruating women, persist in some regions despite being outlawed. Similarly, early marriage, though illegal, continues in many communities, depriving young girls of education and opportunities. Economic pressures and traditional beliefs often lead families to prioritize early marriage for their daughters over investing in their future.

Economic empowerment also comes with its own set of challenges. Despite the celebration of women's entrepreneurship,

many female-owned businesses struggle to grow due to limited access to funding and societal biases. Women working in the informal sector, such as domestic workers and farmers, often face low wages, job insecurity, and lack of social safety nets. Even though women play a significant role in Nepal's economy through unpaid labor at home, their contributions are often overlooked.

Government policies aimed at protecting workers frequently do not include these women, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. In sectors like the military and civil service, more women are entering the workforce, but few are able to advance to leadership positions due to hidden biases, lack of mentorship, and rigid workplace cultures. Without systemic changes, such as clear promotion criteria and support networks, women will continue to face barriers to their advancement.

To translate Nepal's legal commitments into reality, a collaborative effort is essential. Merely having laws in place is not enough to shift attitudes. Schools and media must challenge stereotypes that hinder girls' ambitions. Men should take on more household responsibilities to alleviate the burden on women. Local authorities require resources and accountability to enforce prohibitions on harmful practices such as chaupadi and child marriage. Businesses should offer fairer opportunities for women, including leadership positions and equal pay. Crucially, rural women, who are often the most marginalized, must be integrated into Nepal's development narrative through improved healthcare, education, and economic initiatives.

On this International Women's Day, Nepal finds itself at a pivotal moment. While the nation has demonstrated its ability to establish frameworks for equality, the real challenge lies in ensuring these frameworks benefit every woman, regardless of their location. It is not just about policies on paper but about individuals—mothers, students, workers, and leaders—advocating for and propelling change. The journey ahead may be arduous, but with sustained dedication and unity, Nepal can elevate its progress from a partial triumph to a lasting transformation.

Suva BC, a graduate with a Master's degree in Development Studies from Kathmandu University, is a committed development and humanitarian professional specializing in promoting human rights. Proficient in working in various development settings and executing strategic plans, she is actively involved in Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) projects while adhering to ethical standards. Suva is developing her skills in capacity building, partnership building, and governance to promote inclusive and lasting transformation. For further contact, please email suvabc1341@gmail.com.

खाना पकाउने ग्याँस प्रयोगमा सावधानी अपनाऔं ।

- सलाई, लाइटरजस्ता प्रज्वलनशील सामग्री बालबालिकाले भेट्ने गरी नराखौं,
- ग्याँस बालेर भान्साकोठा छाडेर नजाऔं,
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- कुनै खराबी वा टुटफूट भए तुरुन्त मर्मत गरौं ।



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