



VIEWPOINT Chandra Prasad Dhakal



TEACHERS ON STRIKE Students' Future in Jeopardy



ADB Nepal To Grow By 4.4 Percent

### "साना किसानको समृद्धि, कृषिको रुपान्तरण र उद्यमशिलताको विकास"

लघुवित्तको कार्यक्रम मार्फत ग्रामीण समुदायमा उद्यमिशलताको विकास गर्दै समुदायका हरेक सदस्यलाई आर्थिक समृद्धिको बाटोमा अगाडि बढाउन साना किसान लघुवित्त वित्तीय संस्था लि. ले अग्रणी भूमिका खेलिरहेको छ । ७९ प्रतिशत महिला सदस्यहरुको सहभागिता रहेका साभोदार संस्थाहरु मार्फत यस संस्थाको अगुवाईमा स्वरोजगार एवं रोजगारीका अवसर अभिवृद्धि गर्ने कार्य भईरहेको छ । देशको समग्र गरिबी निवारण गर्ने कार्यमा सघाउ पुऱ्याउने उद्देश्य लिएको यस वित्तीय संस्थाले देशभरी एघार (१२) वटा शाखा कार्यालय र केन्द्रीय कार्यालय मार्फत सेवा प्रवाह गरिरहेको छ ।

99 जिल्लाका १ हजार ६ सय ३२ वटा संस्थाहरु मार्फत २२ लाख परिवारका ८८ लाख सदस्यहरुमा थोक कर्जाका साथै क्षमता विकास, प्रविधिको हस्तान्तरण, युवा उद्यमशिलताका लागि पैरवी लगायका सेवाहरु समेत उपलब्ध गराउँदै आएको छ । यस लघुवित्तले नेपाल सरकार, अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय दातृ संघ/संस्थाहरुको सहकार्यमा समुदायमा आधारित सहकारी संस्थाहरु मार्फत सामाजिक तथा सामुदायिक कार्यक्रम संचालनमा समेत सहयोग पुऱ्याउँदै आएको छ ।

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केन्द्रीय कार्यालय बबरमहल, काठमाडौं । फोनं. ०१-५३२०९१३/५९०९६१२/४१९१८५

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### Notes From The Editor



Nepal has been passing through critical time likely to bring some kinds of political turmoil. At a time when several groups are protesting at the streets of capital and growing sectorial violence events outside, the coalition government led by CPN-UML is under stress. Teachers are demanding to new act with a provision to place education at federal level as in the past. Simiarly, victims of micro-finace and cooperatives pro-Monarchist, caders of ruling CPN-UML and main opposition Maoist center are in street. Not only from outside, the government is also facing pressure from within. Seveveral sernior leaders of Nepali Congress are recently critizing the governemtn against controversial decisions including appointments in key position and dimissal of Kul Man Ghising from managing director of Nepal Electricity Authority. For Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, challenges is multi-faced. Former president and CPN-UML leader Bidhya Bhandari is challenging his leadership. As there are several issues, our cover story of this week is on the future of the NC-UML Government and turmoil before it. We also cover the growing crisis of leadership in the CPN-UML. Apart from these political issue, we also cover the renovation work and progress made by 456 MW Upper Tamakoshi to generate electricity. As there is a upsurge of pro-monarchist agitation, we have also covered the message of former King Gyanendra given on Nepalese New Year 2082 and analysed the issues raised by the former monarch in the context.

Keshab Poudel

Editor

### **CONTENT**

F	0	R	U	M

Dr. Prabin Manandhar 3

NEWSNOTES 4

BUSINESS BRIEF 8

### **OPINION**

Bishnu D. Pant 12

### **ENVIRONMENT**

Batu Uprety 22

### **TEACHERS ON STRIKE**

Students' Future in Jeopardy 25

### **VIEWPOINT**

Chandra Prasad Dhakal 30

### **ADB**

Nepal To Grow By 4.4 Percent 34



COVERSTORY: NC-UML COALITION: In Turmoil

14



UML POLITCIS: Oli Vs Bhandari

40



FORMER KING GYANENDRA:Bating Constituional Monarchy

24

## From Nepal To Myanmar: Navigating Earthquake Response Lessons

Natural disasters like earthquakes starkly remind us of nature's immense power, shared vulnerability, and collective strength. The devastating earthquake that struck Nepal in 2015 and the recent 7.7 magnitude quake in Myanmar on March 28, 2025, resulted in significant human and material losses. These tragic events offer critical insights into disaster response and recovery efforts. With their deep-rooted cultural and historical ties, Nepal and Myanmar present valuable lessons in re-

pal and Myanmar present valuable lessons in resilience-building and improving future disaster preparedness. This article distills those lessons

into two categories: **What to Do** and **What Not to Do** offering a practical and compassionate roadmap for more effective disaster response.

#### What to Do

### **Empower Local Communities and First Responders**

In Nepal and Myanmar, local communities serve as the first line of defense in the aftermath of earthquakes, providing immediate assistance to affected individuals. Their intimate knowledge of the terrain and local customs enables them to deliver aid effectively. Supporting and training these local responders enhances the overall disaster response capacity, ensuring that aid reaches those in need promptly. For instance, in Nepal,

youth groups and community-based organizations played a pivotal role in search and rescue operations, demonstrating the effectiveness of local engagement.

### Utilize community-based mapping and technology

Nepal's Kathmandu Living Labs effectively employed open-source mapping tools like Open-StreetMap to create real-time maps of affected areas. This initiative enabled humanitarian agencies to identify and reach remote communities more efficiently. By integrating local knowledge with digital tools, the Labs facilitated targeted aid delivery and improved coordination among responders.

Implementing similar community-driven mapping initiatives in Myanmar can enhance situational awareness and resource allocation during disaster response.

#### Implement cash-based assistance programs

Cash assistance empowers survivors to address their immediate needs and supports local economies. In Nepal, cash-for-work programs engaged local laborers in debris removal and infrastructure repair, providing financial support and fostering community participation in recovery efforts. Similarly, in Myanmar, cash assistance programs enable affected individuals to prioritize their requirements and contribute to the revitalization of local markets. By injecting funds into local economies, these programs stimulate market activity, ensuring that essential goods and services remain accessible to all.

#### Adopt owner-driven reconstruction with technical support

In Nepal, the reconstruction strategy empowered homeowners to rebuild their houses with financial assistance and technical guidance. This approach not only accelerated the rebuilding process but also ensured that structures met safety standards. Training local masons and builders in earthquake-resistant construction techniques further strengthened community resilience. Encouraging owner-driven reconstruction in Myanmar, complemented by technical training programs, can promote safer building practices and community ownership of recovery efforts.

#### Implement transparent and data-driven aid distribution

Nepal's experience highlighted the importance of using data to guide aid distribution, minimizing the influence of nepotism, and ensuring that



assistance reached the most affected populations. Tools like interactive maps and needs assessments were instrumental in identifying priority areas for intervention. Leveraging data analytics and transparent criteria for aid allocation in Myanmar can enhance equity and effectiveness in disaster response.

#### Ensure coordination among stakeholders

BY: DR. PRABIN MANANDHAR

Effective coordination between government bodies, NGOs, and international agencies is

crucial for a cohesive response. In Nepal, the National Reconstruction Authority led reconstruction efforts, facilitating efficient resource allocation and rebuilding processes. In Myanmar, collaborative efforts among various stakeholders are essential in streamlining aid distribution and avoiding duplication of efforts, ensuring that resources are utilized efficiently and effectively.

#### What Not to Do

#### Avoid centralized control that delays aid

Excessive centralization can hinder timely aid delivery. In Nepal, delays in appointing leadership for the National Reconstruction Authority impeded relief efforts. In Myanmar, it's essential to ensure that aid distribu-

tion mechanisms are flexible and responsive to the needs of affected communities to avoid similar delays, enabling a swift and effective response to emergencies.

#### Do not overlook the importance of communication

Effective communication infrastructure is vital during disasters. In Nepal, the lack of timely information flow impeded relief efforts. In Myanmar, ensuring robust communication systems can facilitate accurate and timely information dissemination, aiding in efficient disaster response and ensuring that communities receive the support they need

without unnecessary delays.

#### Refrain from restricting access to affected areas

Limiting access for humanitarian organizations and frontline workers can impede relief and recovery efforts. In Nepal, facilitating entry and movement for aid workers ensured timely assistance to affected populations. In Myanmar, maintaining open access for humanitarian organizations and frontline workersis crucial to delivering essential services effectively, ensuring that aid reaches those who need it most without hindrance.

#### Conclusion

The experiences of Nepal and Myanmar highlight the importance of community engagement, adaptable aid mechanisms, and well-coordinated efforts in disaster response and recovery. Integrating these lessons into preparedness and response strategies can significantly enhance resilience and ensure more effective support for communities affected by natural disasters. Equally vital is fostering international collaboration and support to strengthen disaster management systems, particularly crucial for Myanmar at this critical moment.

Dr. Prabin Manandhar is an international development expert with experience across Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. He is the Country Director of Helvetas Myanmar, former Chair of the Association of International NGOs (AIN) Nepal, and former Convenor of ACT Alliance in Nepal and Iraq. He also teaches at Kathmandu University. The opinions expressed are his own. Contact: prabin.manandhar11@gmail.com

#### **NEWSNOTES**

### Korean Embassy Hosts FRIENDS OF KOREA 2025 Event In Kathmandu

Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Kathmandu organized FRIENDS OF KOREA 2025 in Kathmandu on Saturday-19th April for Nepalese scholars Alumni's reception.

South Korea's priorities in Nepal's development and the significance of reuniting South Korean university alumni. He discussed the achievements and future potential of Korea-Nepal relations, expressing gratitude for the continued interest of Korean scholars in strengthening bilateral ties.

### **Diplomatic Relations**



This year marks the 51st anniversary of diplomatic relations between Nepal and South Korea. The friendship between the two countries has deepened over the years, based on mutual respect and shared goals of peace, prosperity,

and development. Key areas of Nepal-Korea cooperation include:

#### Economic Cooperation

South Korea is a significant economic partner for Nepal, with Korean companies actively involved in infrastructure development, clean energy, road construction, vocational training, trade, and investment. Both countries are working together to ensure sustainable growth.

### **Employment and Capacity Building**

The Employment Permit System (EPS) has facilitated vocational training, technology transfer, and employment opportunities for Nepalese youth. Korean companies are hiring skilled Nepali workers, contributing to the economies of both countries.

### Development Cooperation

The Republic of Korea, through KOICA, has actively supported Nepal in key sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, education, e-governance, rural development, and vocational education through its ODA program. Several projects have been implemented across the country, enhancing agricultural productivity, strengthening the public health system, and building local capacity to respond to the challenges of sustainable development. This cooperation reflects the strong commitment of both countries to inclusive growth and prosperity for all.

#### People-to-People Exchanges

Scholarship programs, cultural events, and tourism have all played vital roles in enhancing the people-to-people ties between the two countries.

Korea and Nepal are reconnecting and working towards

becoming active partners in the journey forward. Alumni are not only recipients of Korea's education and culture but also serve as living bridges between our two countries.

Nepal and Korea aim to strengthen this alumni network not just for personal connections but also as a platform for policy dialogue, innovation partnerships, and future collaborations.

The attendees included the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Council of Ministers, the National Planning Commission, the Vice-Chancellor of Far Western University, professors from universities, researchers, graduates from Korean universities, and individuals from various sectors. More than 100 alumni members from several universities in South Korea participated in the event.

### Pakistani Embassy In Kathmandu Hosted A Reception On 85<sup>th</sup> National Day

Pakistan Embassy, Kathmandu hosted a reception today to commemorate the 85th National Day of Pakistan. Vice President Dr. Ram Sahay Prasad was the chief guest of the event.

The reception was attended by former prime ministers, justices of Supreme Court, senior servants, security officials and diplomats based in Kathmandu.

A large number of senior Nepalese political, civic and business leaders, Ambassadors, diplomats, Pakistani community, journalists, and civil society representatives attended the event. A photo exhibition under the theme "A

Glance at Pakistan" was also held showcasing diversity of Pakistan.

In his remarks, Ambassador of Pakistan to Nepal Abrar H Hashmi, underlined the historical importance of Pakistan Day-



Journey to Liberation from Colonial Subjugation to Forming Republic. He paid rich tribute to Pakistan's forefathers. He said Pakistan stands with international community in fulfilling its international obligations.

### COAS General Sigdel Decorated Medical Personal of Nepal Army Returned From Myanmar

Chief of Army Staff General Ashok Raj Sigdel,

decorated 23 Nepali Army personnel, including officers, enlisted men and other ranks, who returned home after serving in the medical treatment of those injured in the devastating earthquake in Myanmar with the Chief of Army



### **NEWSNOTES**

Staff's Commendation Medal at a program organized by Nepal Army.

In accordance with the decision of the Government of Nepal to provide immediate medical treatment to those injured in the earthquake in Myanmar, a team of Nepali Army medical, logistical support, and crew members departed for Myanmar on Chaitra 20, 2081 and returned home on Chaitra 29.

### COAS General Sigdel Presented Rank Insignia To Recently promoted Army Officers



Brigadier General Kiran K.C., who was promoted to the rank of Major General with effect from 25th Chaitra 2081, was presented with the rank insignia by the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Ashok Raj Sigdel, at a program organized at the military

headquarters.

On the same occasion, the Chief of Army Staff presented the rank insignia of Brigadier General to Mohan Chandra Gurung and Saroj Kumar Adhikari, who were promoted to the rank of Brigadier General from Colonel.

The program was attended by the Lieutenant General, Senior Army Generals Commander, the battalion commanders, officers, as well as the family members of the promoted battalion commanders.

### Yuri Gagarin Remembered In Kathmandu

On the eve of the International Day of Human Space flight and Cosmonautics Day in Russia, Ambassador of Russia to Nepal Alexey Novikov and the whole Embassy staff today offered traditional Nepali garland to the monument of Yuri Gagarin, Russian cosmonaut who was



the first man in the world history to go to space.

The staff of the Russian Embassy in Nepal, the Russian Centre of Science and Culture, Nepali alumni of Soviet and Russian universities, representatives of local authorities, as

well as students of the Embassy School gathered to honor the memory of the first human in space — Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin.

Flowers and traditional Nepali garlands were laid at his bust, located in the Central Park of Kathmandu, read a press note issued by the Russian Embassy in Nepal.

Ambassador of Russia to Nepal, Alexey Novikov, delivered a welcoming address, highlighting the heroism of Gagarin and the outstanding contributions of Soviet engineers and scientists who paved the way for humanity's journey into space. He emphasized the deep significance and pride in the fact that it was a Russian citizen who became the first human to venture into Earth's orbit.

### Senior Advocate Vijaya Prasad Mishra elected As Bar Association president

Senior Advocate Vijaya Prasad Mishra has been

elected as the President of the Bar Association.

Mishra received 5,052 votes, while his closest competitor, senior advocate Raman Shrestha, received



2,621 votes, resulting in a difference of 2,431 votes between them.

### Nepal Sends Relief Materials To Earthquake Affected Population In Myanmar

Foreign Minister Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba inspected the consignments of relief materials ready to be sent

to Myanmar on Wednesday.

With support of private sector, the Government of Nepal has sent food items, medicines, clothes, tents, kitchen utensils etc. as support to earthquake affected population in Myanmar.



The materials were sent through a special chartered plane of Nepal Airlines.

### Indian Agriculture Minister Chauhan Calls On PM Oli

The Indian Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shivraj Singh Chauhan, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.

Minister Chauhan, who is currently in Nepal to attend a meeting of agriculture ministers of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), called on PM Oli at the latter's official residence, Baluwatar.

### **NEWSNOTES**

Referring to dimensions of the traditional relations between Nepal and India, Minister Chauhan stressed the need for



bilateral cooperation to augment the modernization of agriculture, food security and economic development.

The bilateral agreements and joint working mechanism should be forwarded

and for which he was ready to work in a dynamic manner with equal concern on pressing issues.

He argued that the recent meeting between Nepali Prime Minister Oli and the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Bangkok, Thailand, was an opportunity to create a promising future for the two countries.

On the occasion, PM Oli expressed the view that the two neighbours should move forward together for economic development, including modernization of agricultural sector.

"We Are not pro-Beijing or pro-Delhi" PM Oli

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli said that Nepal will adopt neutral stance on regional and international issues, including the relations with India and China.

"We are not pro-Beijing or pro-Delhi but follow the philosophy of 'Friendship with all, enmity with none'. So, we should propagate peace in time of conflict between or among our neighbours," said PM Oli while addressing the inaugural session of the 'Himalayan Dialogue' organised by Foreign Affairs Media in Kathmandu on Monday.

Addressing a Himalayan Dialogue, he said that the neutrality is the best way and Nepal will not join any military alliance. PM Oli also stated that the geopolitical issues shouldn't be used to cover one's weakness.

"But we must not make any mistakes in geopolitical issues. Relevant issues should be raised at the relevant regional and global platforms in order to find solutions," he maintained. "It's a delicate element, so it must be handled carefully."

PM Oli stressed that in a world where ideals are weakening and selfish interests are taking precedence, Nepal must contribute from its side to global peace and humanitarian interests while keeping national interests in mind.

"We should not use geopolitics as an excuse to cover our own weaknesses and highlighted the need to move forward with national interest in mind while being geopolitically aware," he said. According to him, it doesn't mean abandoning just national interests and principles tied to international accountability. "We should not engage in flipflop politics aimed at favouring one neighbour more than another. We do not join any military alliances. We are on the side of peace," he said.

"Cooperation has gained importance instead of competition," said PM Oli while adding that the country needs to stand firmly on our policies of international engagement and affairs.

Speaking on the occasion, former Foreign Secretary and ambassador Madhu Raman Acharya said that Nepal must pursue multi-engagement strategies to seize opportunities. He emphasised that the country should not remain dependent on a limited number of nations. Rather than fearing geopolitical tensions, he argued, Nepal should shape its foreign policy according to its own interests.

### Nepal Army And Indian Army Is Climbing Kanchenjunga Mountain Jointly

The Flag-Off Ceremony of the Kanchenjunga Mountain Climbing Expedition to be held in April/May 2025 with the joint participation of the Nepali Army and the Indian Army was held today, Chaitra 21, 2081 at the Integrated HO.

MOD, South Block in New Delhi, India.

Indian Defense
Minister Rajnath
Singh jointly
handed over
the flag to the
Team Leaders of
both sides. The



Director General of Military Training, Lieutenant General Dhruv Prakash Shah, was present on behalf of the Nepali Army at the event.

The Flag-In Ceremony of this joint mountaineering expedition is scheduled to be held in Kathmandu.

The ceremony was attended by India's Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi, Nepal's Ambassador to India Dr. Shankar Prasad Sharma and military attachés.

### Summit Of Friendship: 75 Years Of Annapurna Ascent Opens At Alliance Française

The French Embassy in Nepal and the Alliance Française Katmandou are pleased to open the exhibition "Summit of Friendship: 75 Years of Annapurna Ascent" today, April 4, 2025. The exhibition will be on display at

the Alliance Française in Pulchowk until April 18, 2025. Curated by Mr. Swaraj Man Chitrakar, the exhibition looks back at the historic first successful ascent of Annapurna I (8,091m) on June 3, 1950, by a Franco-Nepali team. This achievement, the first human conquest of an 8,000-meter peak, marked an important chapter in mountaineering history and strengthened ties between Nepal and France.

During the opening ceremony, the French Ambassador to



Nepal emphasized the essential role played by Nepali Sherpas in the success the of 1950 ascent that their expertise and dedication have been crucial to mountaineering efforts ever since.

The exhibition also

highlights the contributions of Nepali climbers, the evolution of mountaineering, and key milestones over the years. It is part of a series of events planned by the Team France throughout 2025 to commemorate this historic 1950 ascent.

Thai Business Community Responded Positively To Invest In Nepal

During recent visit to Thailand Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli met with Thai businessmen in Bangkok.

In the meeting, which was also attended by a Nepali business delegation, Prime Minister Oli urged Thai businessmen to invest in Nepal, stating that Nepal is a fertile land for investment.

Similarly, Chandra Prasad Dhakal, President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, who was also a member of the delegation, said that Nepal has created an investment-friendly environment by reforming laws, that foreign exchange reserves are good, and that there is a conducive environment for investment.

He said that Thai businessmen can benefit from the opportunities offered by neighboring countries with large populations such as India and China for post-production markets when investing in Nepal.

He informed that Nepal has potential in tourism, energy, agriculture, information technology and construction industries. "Nepal is a country with ample potential for investment.

"The recent policy reforms made by the government are attracting foreign investment. On behalf of the private sector, I also urge Thai businessmen to invest," said Chairman Dhakal.

### Japan And UNFPA Partner To Strengthen Maternal And Child Health Services In Nepal

The Government of Japan and the United Nations

Population Fund (UNFPA) have signed an agreement to implement the "Project for Improvement of Maternal and Child Health Care Services and Adaptive Capacity in Nepal," a critical initiative to enhance healthcare resilience in the face of climate change and natural disasters.

Under this new partnership, the government of Japan under its subsidiary fund has provided USD 1.1 million to support the project, which will be implemented by UNFPA in close collaboration with the Government of Nepal.

The project will run for 12 months, starting in March 2025, focusing on two of Nepal's most climate vulnerable districts — Jajarkot in Karnali Province and Rautahat in Madhesh Province.

The project will focus on rehabilitating and retrofitting 10 maternal health facilities, equipping them with solar power, energy-efficient medical equipment, and upgraded water and waste management systems. In addition, healthcare workers will receive specialized training to deliver quality maternal care, including emergency obstetric and newborn care, in crisis situations.

A total of 47,898 women and newborns are expected to directly benefit from this initiative each year, gaining access to quality maternal health services that are resilient to the shocks of climate change and natural disasters. Maeda Toru, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, highlighted the significance of this collaboration. "As Nepal faces growing climate-related challenges, Japan is proud to stand beside Nepal and UNFPA to ensure that maternal and newborn health services are protected, especially in remote and disaster-prone communities,"

he remarked.

Speaking at the signing ceremony,

Young Hong,

U N F P A

Representative for Nepal, emphasized the project's alignment with



Nepal's broader climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction efforts. "This partnership underscores the urgent need to build resilient health systems that protect the most vulnerable—pregnant women and newborns—in the face of increasingly unpredictable crises," she said. "We are grateful for Japan's commitment to strengthening Nepal's health system and safeguarding women's health and rights."

### We Will Increase Investment In Tourism And Hydropower: FNCCI President Dhakal

Chandra Prasad Dhakal, president of Federation of Nepal Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), has said that investment in tourism and hydropower will be increased to increase youth employment. He said that the government has also initi-



ated an investment-friendly environment.

He also said that the government should create an environment as foreign investors are looking to invest in Nepal. He also

believes that Nepal can become self-reliant if investment in tourism, hydropower and agricultural sectors is increased.

At a greeting exchange program organized by the Dhorpatan Daily, published from Baglung, Dhakal said that employment could be increased if foreigners also increased their investment.

He also said that the path to an investment-friendly environment will be paved next year as the government has agreed to the agenda set by the third executive meeting of the federation held in the Dhorpatan Valley last year.

He believed that if the businessmen who invested could be respected, unemployment would also be eliminated. He said that the government has already started fulfilling its agenda, including reducing interest rates on banks and repealing the Black Market Act.

Dhakal said that he wanted to avoid the impact of the global economic crisis. He said that the investment-friendly environment was created because the banks and the government paid attention to the decisions of the federation's executive meeting held in the Dhorpatan Valley that year.

### Foreign Minister Dr. Deuba Praises Valuable Initiative Of Organizing Retreat For Kathmandu-Based Diplomats

MoFA organized a retreat trip to Nepal for foreign diplomats, according to Foreign Minister Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba. The diplomatic retreat program took place in Antu, Kanaya, and was praised as a valuable initiative to enhance dialogue and promote tourism in Nepal.

Foreign Minsiter Dr. Deuba shared her experience on social media, mentioning that she was in Kanyam for a retreat program with Ambassadors and Representatives of Diplomatic Missions and International Organizations in Nepal.

The program was organized by MOFA in partnership with Nepal Tourism Board and Suryodaya Municipality. Dr. Rana highlighted the importance of showcasing the tourism potential of the region during the visit, which is set to conclude.

At a reception program, she emphasized that tourism plays a crucial role in Nepal's development and prosperity. She described Nepal's culture, heritage, and natural beauty as key attractions for the world, serving as the foundation for the nation's growth and success.

FM Dr. Deuba commended Nepal for its rich cultural and ecological diversity, stunning landscapes, abundant greenery, diverse wildlife, historical sites, and majestic Himalayan peaks. She specifically lauded Ilam for its vast tea plantations, misty hills, and hospitable locals, urging all to savor the region's tea, pristine air, traditional customs, and unique way of life.

She called on the diplomats present to serve as advocates for Nepali tourism upon their return, stating,

"I humbly ask that you share the beauty of Ilam and Nepal with your home countries and help promote them wherever possible."



Dr. Deuba also highlight-

ed the promising opportunities

for foreign investment in Nepal, particularly in tourism and infrastructure, and extended an invitation to the international community to consider investing in these sectors.

Foreign Secretary Amrit Rai described the experience as unique for all the ambassadors, who gained insights into the cultivation and processing of tea. The tea leaves they picked were carefully collected, labeled with their names for identification.

Mayor of Suryodaya Municipality, Rana Bahadur Rai, mentioned that the tea picked by the ambassadors would be processed and sent to them as a souvenir to promote Ilam's tea.

Australian Ambassador to Nepal, Leann Johnston, expressed her delight at experiencing the tea-making process firsthand, stating that it was a memorable experience. She also expressed a commitment to help promote tea from Ilam on the global market.

To celebrate Nepali New Year 2082, ambassadors from 15 countries visited Suryodaya Municipality in Ilam on Sunday. The visit was jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the Nepal Tourism Board, with coordination from Suryodaya Municipality, and took place in Antu.

The delegation, led by Foreign Minister Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba and including Foreign Secretary Rai, officials from the ministry, and representatives from the Tourism Board, consisted of more than 45 high-ranking dignitaries.

Every year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) arranges trips to new tourist destinations for resident ambassadors in Nepal during the New Year. This time, the chosen destination was Antu and Kanyam in Suryodaya Municipality.

Foreign Secretary Rai mentioned that the ambassadors' visit would contribute to promoting tourism in Suryodaya. On Monday morning, the delegation also enjoyed the sunrise view from Antu hilltop.

As part of the retreat programs, diplomats were treated to a boat ride on the Antu Pond, a hill adorned with a tea garden. The ambassadors were accompanied by Foreign Secretary Amrit Bahadur Rai in all the activities.

Ambassadors from Egypt, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Thailand, Australia, France, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and ICIMOD took part in the event.

### BRI Will Help Nepal To Achieve Economic Prosperity: Sujata Koirala

Sujata Koirala, a former Deputy Prime Minister and leader of the Nepali Congress, emphasized the importance of Nepal maximizing the benefits of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), noting that all major political parties in the country support it. Koirala believes that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) will support Nepal in achieving economic prosperity.

During the launch of the Nepali version of the BRI White Paper titled "A Pillar for Shared Future of the Global Community," she highlighted the deepening and diverse partnership between China and Nepal, with collaboration across various sectors. Koirala expressed that the Nepali version of the book will provide valuable insights for Nepali citizens to better understand the broader scope of the BRI and the projects to be implemented under it.

She mentioned that this year commemorates the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Nepal, highlighting Nepali Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's recent trip to China.

During Oli's visit, the two nations signed a cooperation framework agreement to jointly promote the Belt and Road Initiative, committing to enhance practical collaboration in key areas such as the economy, finance, transportation, logistics, trade, and industrial investment. This development was widely viewed as a positive advancement in China-Nepal relations.

Kalyan Raj Sharma, General Secretary of the Friend of Silk Road Club Nepal, expressed concern that Nepal is missing out on economic benefits due to delays in BRI project im-



plementation. Dr. Sharma lamented the government's lack of action in this regard.

Dr. Sharma emphasized the importance of engaging policymakers, scholars, business leaders, and the general public in meaningful discussions about the contributions of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to global and regional prosperity, as well as its relevance to Nepal's development trajectory.

Dr. Xia Lu, an Associate Professor at Renmin University of China, highlighted the BRI as a transformative global development framework focused on enhancing connectivity, trade, and mutual cooperation.

Professor Xia emphasized the need for Nepal to begin implementing BRI projects to avoid further delays in geopolitics, noting that many countries around the world are already benefiting from such projects.

The event, organized by the Friend of Silk Road Club Nepal, featured Mahendra Subedi, a journalist from the National News Agency, who described the book

as providing a comprehensive analysis of the BRI's role in promoting economic integration, infrastructure development, and cultural exchange among nations. Subedi also pointed out the significant opportunities for Nepal to benefit from BRI-related investments.

### India Agrees To Recognize Certificates Of Origin Issued By Nepal

The ongoing talks between customs officials of the two countries, which have been ongoing since Thursday in Kathmandu, have concluded with a focus on making foreign trade between Nepal and India more convenient and simpler, as well as controlling illegal trade and revenue leakage.

Both sides have agreed to facilitate trade by making customs procedures paperless, reduce logistics costs, and cooperate in controlling unauthorized trade.

Mahesh Bhattarai, Director General of the Department of Customs, informed that India has agreed to recognize the Certificate of Origin issued through the Nepal National Single Window System.

Similarly, both sides have agreed to enter into an understanding for the exchange of advance information on import and export, to advance an agreement on mutual cooperation on customs, and to promote trade by building the necessary physical infrastructure in the border areas.



It has been agreed to expand quarantine facilities at the Nepal-India border, extend the Electronic Cargo Tracking System (ECTS), which is currently used in rail trade from third countries to

Nepal via India, to road (truck) as well, and reduce costs.

It is reported that discussions and agreements were reached on issues including the early construction and commissioning of the Integrated Checkpoints (ICPs) under construction in Bhairahawa and Chandni Dodhara, and the operation of rail cargo services in Biratnagar.

In the talks that began on March 11 and ended today, Nepal's negotiating team was led by Mahesh Bhattarai, Director General of the Department of Customs, while India's side was led by Abhay Kumar Srivastava, Director General of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence.

### Global IME Bank Cardholders Get Up To 10% Cashback At Salesberry

Global IME Bank Limited cardholders will get up to 10% cashback at Salesberry stores.

The memorandum of understanding in this regard was signed by Prakash Poudel, Head of Sales and Business of the Transaction Banking Department, on behalf of Global IME Bank, and Sushilman Pradhanang, Chief Executive Officer of Salesberry.

As per this agreement, Global IME Bank debit and credit cardholders will receive 10 percent cashback or a maximum of Rs. 200 every Friday on transactions made through Point of Sale (POS) machines at all 37 Salesforce stores across the country.

Global IME Bank was honored as the best bank in Nepal in two categories: Global Finance's **Best** Bank Award 2024 Euro and



Money Award for Excellence 2024.

Additionally, Global IME Bank has been honored in various categories by various national and international organizations.

Global IME Bank is the first private sector commercial bank with a branch network in all seventy-seven districts of the country.

The bank has been providing excellent service to its customers from more than 1,100 service centers, including 354 branch offices, 385 ATMs, 221 branchless banking services, 67 extension and revenue collection counters, and 3 foreign representative offices.

In addition to providing banking services to Nepali citizens, the bank has also been providing remittance services from various countries around the world.

### Himalaya Airlines Continues Its CSR Bonding With Prayas Nepal Children

Marking a decade of operations in the skies, Himalaya Airlines, continues to deepen its commitment to community through its long-standing Cor-



porate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, "Step Towards Education". As a part of its CSR initiative, the airline has once again extended its support for the upcoming

academic year for the children of Prayas Nepal with the yearlong educational supplies.

Himalaya Airlines handed over the educational supplies including coursebooks for various grade lev-

els, notebooks, registers, school shoes/tennis shoes, and other essentials on April 17, 2025. Recognizing the importance of overall well-being, this year Himalaya also added the bedsheets and bath towels for the children's comfort and hygiene.

During the handover program in presence of Vijay Shrestha, Vice President Administration of Himalaya Airlines, Ujjwala Dali, Head of Brand Department, shared "For the past eight years, I have had the privilege of visiting Prayas Nepal with this "Step Towards Education" initiative. Each year, I've watched these children grow into confident, capable young individuals with bright futures ahead. Many have already integrated into society and are independently forging their own paths. Witnessing this transformation is truly heartwarming—it reaffirms the purpose and value of every step we've taken together."



वित्तीय चेतनाको लागि नेपाल राष्ट्र बैंकको अनुरोध

- Online Betting, िकप्टोकरेन्सी वा त्यस्तै प्रकारका गैरकानुनी उपकरणमा लगानी नगरौं, यो गैरकानुनी कार्य भएकोले त्यस्ता कारोवार गर्नेलाई कानुनी कारवाही हुन्छ ।
- इन्टरनेट बैंकिङ्ग, मोवाइल बैकिङ्ग, मोवाइल वालेट, बैंक वा वित्तीय संस्थामा रजिष्टर गरिएका इमेलका साथै, आफ्ना उपकरणमा राखिएका पासवर्ड/पिनकोड आदि समय समयमा परिवर्तन गर्ने गरीं।
- फेसबुक वा अन्य सामाजिक सञ्जालमार्फत चिनजान र सम्बन्ध स्थापित गरी उपहार पठाइदिने जस्ता बहानामा तपाइको व्यक्तिगत विवरण, बैंक खाता नम्बर माग्ने, छिटो पैसा कमाउने तरिका सिकाउने जस्ता लिङ्क, म्यासेज एवम विज्ञापनहरु ठगीको उद्देश्यले सञ्चालन गरिएका हन, त्यसमा विश्वास नगरौं।
- तपाईलाई चिठ्ठा परको वा उपहार पाउनु हुने भयो भन्ने लोभ लालच देखाई फोन गर्ने वा मेसेज पठाइ करवापतको रकम कुनै खातामा पठाउन लगाउने, कुनै लिङ्कमा लाइक गर्न वा सेयर गर्न लगाई ठगी गर्ने वित्तीय ठगहरुसंग सतर्क रहौं, निकने को चिठठा कहिले पिन पर्देन।

### Why Political Change In Nepal Is Imminent



BY: BISHNU D. PANT

About nine months ago, when the UML and Nepali Congress formed a coalition government under the leadership of Mr. K.P. Sharma Oli, many—including myself—were optimistic. With a nearly two-thirds majority in Parliament, this alliance was expected to bring political stability and spearhead economic development. After years of political uncertainty since the promulgation of the republican constitution in 2072 BS, which saw 14 governments in just 18 years, the people were hoping for change.

Unfortunately, that hope has not materialized. Instead, the situation has deteriorated.

### **Economic Decline and Unemployment**

Despite expectations, the government has failed to curb rising unemployment or reduce corruption. Every day, 2,500 to 3,000 young Nepalis leave the country in search of work. Increasingly, even students who have just completed their secondary education are going abroad, driven by a declining quality of education and a bleak job market at home. These students are unlikely to return after graduation.

The economic indicators are discouraging. Remittances remain the only bright spot, while trade and industrial output have declined. Cement plants are operating at under 40% capacity, and the industrial sector contributed less than 6% to GDP last year. Investment in industry has stagnated due to persistent political instability and corruption.

The agricultural sector tells a similar story. Once a food surplus nation, Nepal is now a net food importer, spending over 30 billion rupees on rice imports last year alone. With much of the rural workforce gone, labor shortages have led to high wages, leaving 32% of arable land fallow and agricultural productivity stagnant.

#### Federalism: A Burden or a Benefit?

The adoption of a federal system in 2072 BS divided the country into national, provincial, and local governments, aiming to bring governance closer to the people. However, the results have been mixed. Most local governments have failed to deliver, while provincial governments have become another layer of costly bureaucracy.

The economic burden of the federal structure has grown untenable. With dwindling external aid and insufficient domestic revenue, Nepal now struggles to cover even basic administrative costs. Transparency International continues to rank Nepal among the most corrupt countries, and none of the governments formed since 2072—including the current one—have taken these challenges seriously.

### Public Disillusionment and Rising Monarchical Sentiment

Public dissatisfaction with both the political system and its leaders is growing. A significant segment of the population now believes that the former constitutional monarchy was more effective than the current republican structure. This is evident from the rising number of street protests demanding the restoration of a Hindu state and constitutional monarchy.

On 25th Falgun 2081, thousands welcomed the former king upon his return Pokhara to Kathmandu, chanting "Come Back King and Save the Nation." A few days later, on 15th Chaitra, a massive pro-monarchy demonstration was held in Kathmandu, resulting in the deaths of two demonstrators—including a journalist—and the arrest of over 100 political activists. More protests are being planned by Rastriya Prajatantra Party and other monarchist groups.

#### **Diplomatic Isolation**



The government's handling of foreign relations has also been lackluster. Our two major neighbors—India and China—appear discontented with the current administration. Prime Minister Oli has yet to be invited to India, breaking from diplomatic tradition. Notably, ambassadors from India, China, and the USA did not attend a recent diplomatic retreat organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ilam, a subtle yet clear sign of disapproval.

#### Constitutional Flaws and the Case for Reform

Nepal's federal constitution makes political stability nearly impossible. Provisions designed to ensure inclusiveness have led to fragmented politics, making it difficult for any single party to secure a clear majority. This has fostered weak and unstable governments—a major obstacle to development.

Nepal is one of the world's oldest nations with a rich cultural heritage. Our history, traditions, and values have long been intertwined with the monarchy and Hinduism. Despite the claims of 2062/63 revolutionaries, the abolition of the 2047 democratic constitution, constitutional monarchy, and Hindu state occurred without public referendum or wide-

spread demand. These sweeping changes were orchestrated by an unelected "extended parliament" dominated by Maoist appointees—a move that many now view as illegitimate.

#### The Path Forward

It is time for Nepal's leaders—both in government and opposition—to rethink the current political system. Given the increasing calls for change, the restoration of the 2047 democratic constitution, with appropriate revisions, may be the most viable path forward. This system provided a more stable framework while preserving Nepal's cultural and religious identity.

A poor country like Nepal cannot sustain an expensive and inefficient federal system indefinitely. For the sake of long-term stability, economic development, and national unity, our political representatives must revisit and correct the missteps of the past. The growing grassroots demand for a return to constitutional monarchy and a Hindu state cannot be ignored much longer

# NC-UML COALITION In Turmoil

With growing pressure from top brass of Nepali Congress, UML-NC coalition government has shaken badly. NC leaders are expressing anger over the one sided controversial decision taken by the government. Although Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and Nepali Congress leader Sher Bahadur Deuba, who are facing hostile scenario in internal politics, sat to narrow down the differences, hardnning stand of NC leaders put the government in uncertain course

By A CORRESPONDENT

he political heat has increased in the country. Differences are growing between parties within the government. As the differences grow, there is speculation that the government of UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli will collapse.

It has been a few months since the leader of the main ruling party, Nepali Congress, Dr. Shekhar Koirala, has been dissatisfied with the Oli-led government. Now, even the general secretaries Gagan Thapa and Bishwaprakash Sharma have started publicly criticizing the government.

The monarchist are on the streets.

showing their determination to overthrow the system in matter of few days. Similarly, the opposition parties, including the CPN-Maoist Center and the CPN-Unified Socialists, are on the streets against the government.

Teachers are in the street for almost two weeks paralising entire secondary education and higher secondary education. Teachers are demanding gurnatee of their job within central government. However, highe secondary schools are under the purview of local governments under new constution. Prime Minister Oli holds discussions with Deuba amid widespread criticism of the government's actions and activities, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has held discussions with ruling party Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba.

On Tuesday morning, Oli invited Speaker Deuba to Baluwatar to discuss the running of the government. According to Deuba's secretariat, the two leaders spoke for about a quarter of an hour.

Sources claim that during the meeting, the views expressed by the Con-



gress towards the government and the future of the alliance were discussed. The partner parties within the Congress have been expressing dissatisfaction day by day regarding the government's actions.

Leaders including Congress leader Shekhar Koirala and General Secretary Gagan Thapa are openly claiming that public anger has increased due to the government, that corruption and misgovernance have

increased, and that the government is trapped in the clutches of middlemen.

Thapa also expressed his complaint on Tuesday that the Prime Minister has moved forward unilaterally, ignoring a political mechanism comprising four leaders to run the government.

Oli spoke to Deuba while saying that the problem has arisen within the alliance as the Prime Minister has moved ahead against his commitment to form an alliance. The two leaders have agreed to reactivate the political machinery soon. A meeting of the mechanism is scheduled for 5 pm on Wednesday.

Thapa claimed on Tuesday that middlemen had access to the Prime Minister's bedside.

The rift between the Congress and UML is growing, and Thapa, who is also a member of the government

he tried to support the government.

At a program organized by the Intellectual Professionals Campaign, Thapa said that the government can now only be called Ram Ram.

He said, "The government has unnecessarily deployed employees in some places and forced people to come out on the streets. The way this is happening has created a situation where we are like, 'What can we do?'



machinery, has expressed dissatisfaction saying that the role of the main person is not right, even though After Thapa, who is in the political machinery, came out against the government, UML leaders have started saying that responsible people should not speak arbitrarily. Leader Rajan Bhattarai, targeting Thapa, said, "It is better for members of the

mechanism formed to assist in the running of the government to discuss their own issues."

### COVERSTORY



The power partnership between the Congress and the UML, which had pledged to cooperate until the next parliamentary elections, has been rift for nine months.

According to the seven-point agreement reached between the two parties in Ashar last year, it was agreed that UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli would serve as Prime Minister for one and a half years of the remaining term of parliament, and then Sher Bahadur Deuba would serve as Prime Minister until the general election. According to the agreement, Oli's term now has 11 months left.

However, as the nine-month period of government formation in Nepal has come to an end, the rift between the Congress and the UML has begun to grow. Even though they are still in government, leaders of the Congress, including Shekhar Koirala, have been publicly expressing dissatisfaction with the work of the Oli-led government since the first few months. Now, President Sher Bahadur Deuba has endorsed Koirala's dissatisfaction with the government from a public platform.

While addressing the general assembly of BP Smriti Community Cooperative Hospital in Tokha on Saturday, leader Shekhar Koirala expressed his dissatisfaction with the government, which has been suffo-

cated by his own party, as before.

He expressed the intention that the Congress, as a fellow traveler, should control Oli's activities and avoid the government's failure. Koirala said that the work of the UML-led government, as a fellow traveler, would put the Congress in trouble, so a timely warning should be issued.

Koirala said that the public's anger has increased due to the failure to review the constitution, maintain good governance, control corruption, and increase impunity day by day, as expressed during the coalition.

"We should keep alerting this government to see if it is doing anything wrong or lacking. If it does not do that, the Nepali Congress will be in trouble. This government has talked

about three things in particular: reviewing and amending the constitution. Let's not delay this anymore." The more there is delay, the more the streets become angry,' said Koirala.

Koirala had earlier said, 'Even if there is no good governance, it exists. Let us not be stingy in ensuring good governance. I am not talking about corruption, impunity has increased significantly. I believe we can control this and move forward.'

"The work is not being done at the pace we expect the government to work at," General Secretary Thapa said further. "The work of the Prime Minister is done by the Prime Minister and the work of the Minister is done by the Minister. The function of the mechanism is to strengthen the policy reforms taken by the government."

We are supporting the KP Oli-led government to do good work. But nothing is happening despite the heat. It should be done even if it is hot. We need to work quickly. But why is it not happening?

Major appointments such as the dismissal and new appointment of the Executive Director of the Electricity Authority, the resignation of the Vice Chancellor of Tribhuvan University, and the governor have also shaken the Congress-UML.



While influential leaders of the Nepali Congress are publicly expressing strong dissatisfaction with the Oli government, Maoist Center Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda has openly claimed that a new government will be formed in the new year.

While Deuba was endorsing Koirala's dissatisfaction with the government, Dahal, who reached Chitwan, commented that the Oli-led government would not go far. "I think the new year will bring some solution. The last time the events were new.

"I said it with some new experience. I think that's the direction the country is heading," Dahal said, urging him not to talk too much. "The situation is becoming such that it is also evident that it is not easy for this government to move forward."

Earlier, Prachanda had also said that the Congress should now be ready to lead the government as a large party.

The UML has refuted Dahal's statement in a secretariat meeting on Monday. After a meeting held at the party office in Chyasal, Deputy Secretary General Pradeep Gyawali called Dahal's statement a disappointment.

He said, "Since yesterday, Maoist



Center Chairman Prachanda has been making rumors of a change in government again. This reveals the same frustration and pain he feels while being outside the government. Right now, a change in government is neither possible nor relevant."

There is no justification for it.' Although the UML does not see the justification for the change of government, it is clear that dissatisfaction is growing within its ally, the Nepali Congress. The UML, which has opposed Dahal's statement, is acting as if it is unaware of the developments within the Congress.

The Nepali Congress has called a meeting of the Central Working Committee.

After hearing Koirala's statement towards the government, President Deuba approved it. This is probably the first time on Saturday that Deuba has publicly acknowledged his dissatisfaction with the Oli government.

He made a short but meaningful statement saying that major defamations are being committed by the government and that this should not happen again. He said, "Shekhar Koirala has already said that many major defamations are being committed in the name of the government now, and he has already said that this should not happen."

'Earlier on Thursday, General Secretary Gagan Thapa had also said that the ruling party's Congress party's statement did not give him a place in the government.

He complained that despite the formation of a political mechanism comprising leaders of the two parties, its suggestions were not implemented. He expressed dissatisfaction with the government not working as expected and Prime Minister Oli's working style.



### **UML POLITCIS**

### Oli Vs Bhandari

As Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli is facing major hostilities from ruling alliance Nepali Congress, foremer presient Bidhya Bhandari is challenging the leadership of Oli in CPN-UML. Who will win the battle in the UML will fix Nepali politics for future

By A CORRESPONDENT

s the political heat heats up, former President Bidya Devi Bhandari is also at the center of politics. Bhandari is once again in the news after former Vice President Nand Kishore Pun was nominated as the vice-chairman of the Maoist Center.

After former Vice President Pun was officially nominated to the party leadership by the Maoist Center office bearers' meeting held on Chaitra 2 and 3, the possibility of Bhandari's return to political leadership is also becoming stronger.

However, Pun is being criticized for saying that it is not appropriate for a person who has already become the head of state to return to party politics. Bhandari has also not been able to escape criticism for her activities that seem to indicate a return to party politics.

### Former President Bhandari's two years As Neutral

It has been two years since Bidya Devi Bhandari's term as president ended. She stepped down from the role on 28 Falgun 2079 after serving two terms as the country's president.

Bhandari, who spoke slowly, only when needed, and spoke less, was the vice-chairwoman of the UML before becoming president. After becoming president, her relationship with the party was severed. After becoming independent, she remained active in playing the role of guardian of the country for seven year



But her passion for party politics is still fresh, as confirmed by the party membership Bhandari took immediately after the end of her presidential term. Her term ended on 28 Falgun 2079. The next day, she left Sheetal Niwas.

Three months later, on Baisakh 1, Bhandari rejoined the UML party. This was her starting point for party politics again. Although there was debate in political circles that she should not join the party, Bhandari did not pay any attention to it.

Instead, she has been seen more active in political activities since joining the party. She was criticized after joining the party in April. I

Political analyst Dambar Khatiwada had said at the time, "Whether Vidya Bhandari will renew her UML membership or not is a matter of her personal choice." "Let him stand up for ward chairman on a party ticket, who can stop him? But why would someone who doesn't understand the dignity, customs, and culture of a democratic state, and who doesn't want to contribute to it, aspire to a position like the president, to take a job?"

While political criticism was happening on one side, she was also engaged in political activities on the other. It was even analyzed that she was preparing for party leadership when she joined the party. When she joined the party, a UML leader had said- "She didn't just join the party to stay a member. It has a big meaning."

Without saying anything, Bhandari made a statement that caused a stir in the UML three months after joining the party. In an interview broadcast on Himalayan Television on 13 Shrawan 2080, she said, "I

have not made any decision about becoming the UML president."

But mixed reactions are coming. My friends also tell me when I meet them. But I have not seen a lack of leadership in UML right now.'

She said that the leaders and cadres are looking for good leadership to strengthen the claim that the party is looking for an alternative to Chairman Oli.

"Who would be unhappy if everyone liked him (saying he should become the UML president)? I am happy too. They may also be discussing who would be a good leader," Bhandari said.

She is not just making public statements like this. She has been increasing her activism from east to west. After Bhandari's activism increased, it was revealed that UML Chairman Oli even met Bhandari.

Oli had to explain to the workers that the meeting between the two was not meant to be. "Another attempt has been made to see if any problems can be created within the party. Former President Bidya Bhandari is the former vice president of our party."

He is a respected figure of the party. It is not a big deal for anyone to



meet or talk to him,' he had said at a press conference held at the party office on 28 Shrawan 2080.

### Praise for Oli, respect for Bhandari

Increasing her political activism, Bhandari continued to participate in various programs, out of which two political programs remained in the news, one in which Bhandari praised Oli and the other in which Bhandari was honored by the UML.

Launching the book 'KP Sharma Oli in Parliament' in Kathmandu on 16 Shrawan 2080, Bhandari said that Oli is the most influential among contemporary leaders.

After this statement, Bhandari's statement became more popular than the book. Bhandari has now publicly stated that she is ready to become the party chairperson if the cadres want her. Bhandari is even being considered by a faction of the party as a future chairperson.

It is also being said that leaders are trying to create an atmosphere in her favor in Kathmandu and other districts to make her the chairperson. Bhandari currently has no responsibilities. In her own words, she is free. She is having fun.

"It's been really fun not having any responsibilities. I've been able to create my own routine. I don't have to follow someone else's calendar. The burden of responsibility has also reduced. I feel a sense of freedom," she said in an interview with Nepal Khabar a few days ago.

### Oli in doubt, Vidya steps forward

"Those who say they will finish UML and form UML without KP Oli will not succeed," UML chairman KP Sharma Oli, who is also the Prime Minister, had given a public warning on Chaitra 12.



At an awareness rally in Rupandehi, he had also urged people to wait 15-20 years if they wanted to form a UML without Oli. "Those who are campaigning without KP Oli should wait 15-20 years, and then they will see an UML without KP Oli," he said.

Who is running the campaign without Oli? Oli did not reveal it publicly. There was no talk of revealing it. However, recently, Oli is aware of the fact that his replacement is being sought and is fighting back.

On 23 Chaitra, he had said that his hair had started growing in

Pokhara, Kaski, and that he would come to the UML without Oli out of pity.

Addressing the o a t h - t a k i n g ceremony of those elected to the Kaski District Committee, Oli had said, "Last year, all my hair had fallen out."

"Now my hair is starting to grow.

It's not transplanted, it's starting to grow on its own. It's happening even when no one else expects it for 20 years."

It is clear from his own statements that Oli is eager to become the party president for the third time at the 11th general convention of the UML to be held in Mangsir, 2083.

The 74-year-old now wants to become the party president not just once, but repeatedly. That's why he is saying that it happens when no one hopes for the party leadership.

According to the party's statute,

a general convention is required every five years. If, as Oli has said, we have to wait 20 years, Oli is still trying to become the party president many times. Oli, driven by his ardent desire to become party chairman, has suspended the 70-year age limit passed by the party's 10th general convention for the time being.

A year ago, in Jestha, he lifted the age limit of 70 years to be a member of the central committee, opening the door for him to become the party president again.

### Oli's Suspicion



The UML had already permanently dismissed Bhim Rawal, who was seen as Oli's rival, from the party last December. The UML, which was about to expel Rawal and induct Bamdev Gautam into the party in Magh, left him stranded at the last minute by not inducting him into the party.

At the time when Gautam was preparing to join the CPN-UML, the UML had decided not to induct him into the party at the last minute, but only to cooperate as necessary. Since then, Gautam has been angry with the UML.

Madhav Nepal, Jhalanath Khanal, and Ghanshyam Bhusal have already left the party. They are in the Unified CPN. Oli is suspicious even though Madhav and Bhim Rawal are not in the party.

Oli is not a leader who likes those who speak against him. Oli had expelled Bhim Rawal, along with standing committee member Binda Pandey and central member Usha Kiran Timsena, for speaking against the decision to accept land donation from businessman Min Bahadur Gurung.

Not only at the center, but also district-level leaders who are

acting against Oli are being taken into action. Why is Oli, who has been taking down leaders from the center to the districts, now suspicious that his alternative is being sought?

### Bhandari Vs Oli

He is now afraid of Bidya Devi Bhandari.

Bhandari is a former president. She rejoined the UML party after her second presidential term ended. Since then, Bhandari has been on the run, which has made Oli suspicious.

Bhandari has repeatedly said that she is ready to take over the party leadership if necessary. The 64-year-old, 10 years younger than Oli, had warned Oli in an interview a few days ago that she was ready to become the party chair.

In an interview, Bhandari responded to a question about whether the issue of party leadership and its return to you would polarize the UML and that activists would face action from Oli, saying, "How can there be a threat from anyone when discussing the future leadership of the party?"

Bhandari's challenge to Oli from Morang Bidyadevi Bhandari has clearly challenged UML Chairman Oli from Morang. At a time when Oli is not allowing elections to be held in any of the party's sister organizations, elections were held at the party convention in Morang district.

In the 10th convention held in Falgun, the Bhandari-led candidate won the convention, defeating the Oli-led candidate. Here, Oli was seen in favor of not holding elections.

.At a time when Oli was not allowing elections in other sister organizations, including employees, Bhandari's panel won in Morang. Ajmbar Rai was elected as the president, Sagar Thapa as vice president, Somraj Thapa as secretary, and Santosh Bantawa Rai as deputy secretary. Morang is also Bhandari's home district.

### Siege on Oli intensifies

As the 11th UML general convention, which will be held in about a year, approaches, a debate has erupted about the party leadership. Even though Oli has said that he will not consider his

options for another 20 years, the siege on him has already begun.

Even leaders who were afraid to speak against Oli have now started speaking out. Even if it is from within, they have started a campaign against Oli. Standing Committee member Karna Bahadur Thapa criticized the leadership regarding Prasainka, Durga

whom Oli made a central member.

However, he has long been among the leaders who have questioned Oli's working style. Thapa raised questions about the leadership while addressing a general meeting held in Dhangadhi on Chaitra 31.

Putting the leadership, including General Secretary Shankar Pokharel, first, he criticized the leadership, asking who made Durga Prasai a central member. Prasai had been a central member of UML for some time on Oli's recommendation after the 10th general convention.

Later, he joined the royalists and started attacking the UML. On this issue, Thapa had said- 'Who is the leader of the royalists today, Durga





Prasai. Who made Durga Prasai a central member of the UML yesterday? Who is the one who is cursing the UML the most today? Durga Prasai.

It is said that UML Vice-Chairman Poudel recommended Bhandari while the search for the chief guest for the event was underway. A leader close to him said that although he, who is also the current Finance Minister of the government, does not appear to be against Oli externally, he is trying to create an atmosphere in Lumbini in favor of Bhandari internally.

It is said that Thapa is trying to create an atmosphere in favor of Bhandari in the Far West, Poudel in Lumbini, party Deputy General Secretary Prithvi Subba Gurung in Gandaki, another standing committee member Krishna Gopal Shrestha in Kathmandu, and Binod Dhakal in Morang.

### **Teaming Up Climate Change Negotiation**



BY: BATU UPRETY

Nepal is regularly attending the negotiating sessions before and after the adoption of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Kyoto Protocol (KP) and the Paris Agreement right from 1991. Over three decades of participation, experience and learning on climate change negotiation process demands for consideration of a permanent negotiating team to put, advocate and negotiate on mountain agendand benefits from several provisions of these legally binding instruments.

During the last 3 decades, Heads of the State of Nepal also attended the Conference of the Parties (CoPs) to the UNFC-CC in 2018 and 2024 in Poland and Azerbaijan respectively. The Heads of the Government attended CoPs in Denmark, United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates (Dubai) in 2009, 2021 and 2023 respectively. It clearly indicates the emerging threats of climate change in Nepal, and national response at political level as well to address climate change impacts. This resulted to the formulation of climate change policy, plans and programmes, inclusion of adaptation and mitigation provisions in laws, establishment of institutions and coordinating bodies, including implementation of climate adaptation and mitigation projects from the last one and half-decade.

Although Nepal is attending the CoPs and meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies (SBs) from the very beginning, knowledge-based team having negotiating capacity and 'dedication' or the will is yet to be in place. Willingness to attend the CoPs does not guarantee meaningful participation in the negotiation process. No doubt, Nepal has flagged the issues related to climate change impacts in the mountains from the beginning, mostly during the high-level segment through statements.

During the last 2-3 years, those attending CoPs have realised the need for a well-informed, politically, diplomatically and technically sound negotiating team to benefit from these climate change instruments.

Increase in awareness and interest in negotiations,new institutions are proposed, and existing organisations are

urged to strengthen and make active to advance climate change actions. For example, Nepal Law Commission drafted s separate Bill on Climate Change and proposed a National Climate Authority and a National Climate Council under the chair of the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister. Ideas are also floated to establish a Climate Change Research Centre as mentioned in the National Climate Change Policy (2019) or a separate Ministry of Environment and Climate Change as environment and climate change has experienced 'shade effect' from the last seven years. The government started climate change actions by establishing Climate Change Section in 2008 and Climate Change Management Division (CCMD)under the then Ministry of Environment in 2010and in the Ministry of Forests and Environment in 2018. The government has merged the Environment Protection Council established in 1993 and Climate Change Council constituted in 2009 into a National Council on Environment Protection and Climate Change Management in 2020 under the chair of the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister as per Section 32 of the Environment Protection Act (2019).

The Council provides guidance and ensures coordination and facilitation at the highest political level.

The Council at its second meeting on 15 September 2023 established a 9-member Task Force with representation from relevant ministries and experts to analyse policies, institutions, economic aspects, state of programme implementation and coordination, and suggest measures for improvement. The Task Force also realised the urgency of a permanent, smart and capable negotiating team to advocate and negotiate on issues of national priorities, interestsand welfare. It recognised a multi-stakeholder negotiating team formed for climate change negotiation purpose in 2011. It was discontinued after 2 years with frequent change in the composition of a team attending SBs meetings and CoPs. This might be one of the reasons for not raising and pushing climate risks in the mountains and supporting the position of the G77 & China, and LDCs where climate change impacts in the mountain might not be a priority.

Although number of members in the delegation team has

### **ENVIRONMENT**

increased substantially over the years, diversity in expertise and knowledge-based subject specialists is yet to maintain. Anybody securing fund may participate in SBs and CoPs in different capacities. National needs and issues under negotiation might not be a priority and active participation in several issues and/or take leadership on negotiation process may not happen. This requires at least, continuity in participation, understanding of the critical issues, linkages amongst issues under negotiation, blockers or breaking partners and so on. In Nepal, country representation even in negotiation processes is normally considered an 'incentive' than obligation.

Several parallel meetings are held during the SBs and CoPs. Negotiations in meetings of the SB for Implementation (SBI) and SB for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) help to draw conclusions. In CoPs, Parties make decisions, In meetings of ad hocbodies, several issues are discussed, and high-level session of the CoPs, coun-

try statements provide guidance and tips for negotiation. In addition, there are several negotiating blocs and Nepal participate in LDC Group and Group of 77 and China and represents in UNFC-CC, KP and PA constituted bodies from Asia and the LDCs.

About 5 years of engagement in climate negotiation between 2007 and 2011 motivated to develop a system for building country capacity on negotiation process by forming a team of at

least diplomat, subject specialists and legal officers having knowledge, understanding and drafting capacity.

In November 2011, CCMD in the then Ministry of Environment realised the need for extending the Nepalese delegation team by including academia, experts, and representation from NGOs and civil society with a view to effectively participate in the agenda-based meetings of the SBs and the CoPs. This concept emergedon the need for taking expert advice and inputs in critical issues under negotiation, during agenda-based submissions, implement the decisions of the Convention and the Protocol, and timely ensure reporting processes. The then Ministry also clarified the responsibilities of the members of the 'delegation team' with a binding clause to get approval from the head or deputy-head of delegation before putting concerns, ideas, concepts and suggestions in the meeting(s). The delegation

member was alerted not to speak against the national policy, participate in meeting of his/her expertise, respect fully the secrecy and code of conduct of the negotiation, provide meeting feedbacks within a week to the government, and participate in country-meetings, discussions and briefings, including other activities as per the instruction of the head or deputy-head of delegation.

As per the decision of the Government of Nepal (Hon. Minister level) on 9 November 2011, the delegation comprised of representation from the UN Mission at New York or Geneva as appropriate, government ministries, NGOs and the civil society, including subject specialists and the former negotiators.

Sometimes, it is difficult to understand the personal inter-



est of the members. In one of the meetings, a member of the Nepalese delegation supported the voice of a Latin American country on 'vulnerable country' which created sufficient confusion as 'vulnerable countries' were understood at that time the LDCs, Small Island Developing States, and African countries. Anyway, this concept worked well till the

adoption of the Paris Agreement in December 2015. After 4-5 years, this practice was discontinued. Discontinuation compelled few Nepalis to participate in the negotiation by representing other countries of Asia or Africa.

After a decade, a group of people having interest in climate change negotiations and/or attending CoPs have started raising the urgency of having a permanent negotiating team. Time is yet not late to re-start a knowledge-based, diplomatically and technically-sound team having the 'nation first' commitment and build new negotiators so as to put forward and effectively negotiate on national agenda to address the urgent needs of the climate vulnerable mountain communities through the climate negotiation processes.

### FORMER KING GYANENDRA

### **Bating Constituional Monarchy**

As the pro-monarchist are pressuring for the restoration of constitutional monarchy, former King Gyanendra expressed that he is for constitutional monarch

By A CORRESPONDENT

n the instructions of President Sher Bahadur Deuba, Chief Secretary Krishna Prasad Poudel has issued a notice to convene the meeting on Baisakh 4 at 1 pm.

The Central Working Committee meeting, which was called at a time when fellow Nepali Congress leaders are expressing dissatisfaction with the Oli-led government, is being viewed as meaningful.

Gyanendra Shah, who has changed his political message after removing the 'former' from the title and becoming 'Shri 5' for four years, has changed his political message

Nearly 17 years after leaving the Narayanhiti Palace, former King Gyanendra Shah, in his statement issued on New Year's Eve this year, has stated that his belief in the 'constitutional monarchy' remains intact.

While the government and pro-republican parties have been warning of action for increasing political activism in recent times, former King Shah has also put forward a proposal to 'change the overall structure of the country' in his congratulatory message. Republican parties have called for action against the former king, especially after a demonstration by pro-monarchy supporters turned violent last month, resulting in two deaths and incidents of arson, vandalism, and looting. The former king has expressed regret over the incident.

The Shah, who left the palace on Jestha 29, 2065 BS, had long identified himself as the former king. Shah, who had been sending New Year's greetings as the former king until four years ago, has removed the former and mentioned 'Shri 5 Maharajdhiraj' in his greetings message given on Baisakh 1, 2079 BS. However, on his behalf, he does not write His Majesty the King on the cards printed on Nepali paper and distributed every year on Dashain and New Year. The New Year card distributed this year reads, "Heartfelt wishes on the occasion of the beginning of the new year from Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shahdev and Komal

Rajyalakshmi Devi Shah."

In his congratulatory message, he mentioned that 'even though the methods, systems, words, and forms have changed, qualitative changes have not occurred' in the country.

He had said in his greetings message last year, concerned about the country's instability, "Now let's review everything, think seriously, let's all come together, let's not prohibit anyone, and let's move forward through correct thinking." Former king's statement in favor of the monarchy



Experts say that in his greeting messages, which he makes public on various occasions including Dashain-Tihar, Prithvi Jayanti, and Democracy Day, in addition to the New Year, the former king has been expressing his views on political discontent and changes in the system in recent years.

This time, the former king, who extended his New Year greetings via video message, has clearly shown himself in favor of the monarchy for the first time in his statement.

In his congratulatory message, he said, "We have always believed in the tradition of multi-party democracy and constitutional monarchy that is governed by the will of the people."

Mentioning the need to respect the changing will of the people, the former king conveyed the message that he is clear that "the people are the source of state power."

"The former king seems to be gradually developing the idea that he was removed

not by the people but by political parties," says a journalist. "The people are with me and even now, there is a desire to introduce a monarchy in the name of constitutional monarchy and rule in their own way."

The prime minister claims that the monarchy in Nepal ended because of Shah's attempt to take executive power into his own hands.

Another journalist says that the former king reiterated his commitment to constitutional monarchy in his message to dispel suspicions that the monarchy was being restored through the movement.

"I think he mentioned constitutional monarchy a little more explicitly in his latest statement because he felt he needed to send a clear message that what we want is a constitutional monarchy."

The former king has long been delivering a consistent message about nationalism, national unity, and social harmony, Tripathi says.

Both editors Pradhan and Tripathi claim that the former king was unable to bring back the monarchy through the movement. Many say that he does not see the possibility of restoring the monarchy through movement without the support of major political parties.

"The monarchy will not return just because of the king's will. The chances of restoring the monarchy without the consent of the political parties, especially the Congress and the UML, which are still in power, whether popular or unpopular among the people, seem very slim," he says.

In his latest New Year's greetings message, former King Gyanendra Shah also discussed the contribution of the monarchy in Nepal before proposing to make Prithvi Narayan Shah's divine sermon the "fundamental mantra" of the governance of the state.



### **TEACHERS ON STRIKE**

### Students' Future in Jeopardy

With no resolution in sight for the teachers' strike, the future of 550,000 students hangs in the balance.

By A CORRESPONDENT

s the protest by teachers in Kathmandu enters its second week, there are concerns about the implications for the upcoming final higher secondary exams.

The National Examination Board and Ministry of Education are calling on teachers to support the Grade 12 exams, but the Teachers' Federation is standing firm in their refusal to cooperate until their demands are addressed. The strike, which began peacefully on Magh 20, has escalated, putting the academic future of 550,000 students at risk. "

The government left us with no choice but to cancel the Grade 12 exams. Our peaceful protest fell on deaf ears," said Somnath Giri, president of the Nepal Teachers'

Association, leading the protest on behalf of the Teachers' Federation.

The National Examination Board has stressed that the Grade 12 exams cannot be conducted without the participation of community school teachers.

Mahashram Sharma, chairman of the National Examinations



Board, highlighted the significant impact on the future of approximately 550,000 students if there is a delay in the exams. There is a noticeable increase in the number of students in Nepal opting to pursue higher education abroad after completing Grade 12.

Officials are concerned that any delay in the Grade 12 exams could hinder students' admission to domestic and international universities that operate on fixed schedules.

Sharma emphasized the significance of timely completion ofschool-level exams, especially those related to university admissions."

Sharma, the Examination Board Chairman, expressed optimism that the Nepal government and the Teachers' Federation will come to an agreement, allowing the exams to proceed as scheduled. He emphasized the importance of not halting exams, even amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Sharma pointed out that previous

Grade 12 exams were disrupted in 2063 BS during the 'Second People's Movement', in 2072 BS due to the earthquake, and in 2077 BS because of the pandem-

ic.

The National Examination Board has emphasized the importance of community school teachers' participation in conducting the Grade 12 examination. According to

Sharma, the chairman of the examination board, a substantial number of teachers and staff, including supervisors and invigilators, are necessary for the successful administration of the Grade 12 exam. He stressed that the involvement of community school teachers is crucial for the exam to be conducted effectively.

Sharma highlighted the need for collaboration between teachers from both community and institutional schools, stating that it is a collective responsibility. He expressed concerns about solely relying on institutional schools for exam administration if community school teachers do not participate, emphasizing the importance of a joint effort.

The government is facing a challenge with the increasing number of students going abroad and the rising amount of money leaving the country. To address this issue, the government should implement measures to retain students within the country.

This could include improving the quality of education, offering more opportunities for higher education and skill development, and creating a conducive environment for students to pursue their academic and career goals domestically.

By investing in education and creating attractive opportunities for students, the government can help curb the trend of students going abroad.

Teachers are adamant that they will not return to school until the School Education Act is passed. Giri said that even if the new academic session begins, they will not return without the Act.



The Education Act bill, which teachers are demanding, has not been finalized by Parliament for the past 18 months.

"We will go if [Parliament] is called, if the government is to make a decision, if it is to be issued," he said. Teachers say they will not disrupt the exams.

"Rather than not allowing the exams to be held, we have called on all teachers and students to not participate in all educational activities and come to Kathmandu, so our support is non-existent. If the government does it through some means, it does not mean that we will not allow the exams to be held," says Giri.

What is the solution? Educationist Prof. Vidyanath Koirala believes that both the government and the examination board should work together to resolve the teachers' agitation.

"We should take the initiative to resolve the teachers' agitation and then tell them, 'These are the ones who will be conducting the examinations, these are the ones



who will be marking the copies.' Instead, we should say, 'Let us think about it,'" says Koirala.

According to him, there is a possibility that an agreement can be reached with some changes to the draft seven-point agreement recently prepared by the Ministry of Education.

"If there is an agreement to present the Education Act in the upcoming parliament, the teachers'

movement will end. After that, the teachers' demands will be met and the way will be paved for the passage of the Act," says Koirala.

Koirala suggests that former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who is also the leader of the opposition party, as well as Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba, and the current and former education ministers should make a commitment to the act and take the initiative to return the protesting teachers to school.

Teachers continuing their protest

The government on Tuesday decided to summon the session of the Federal Parliament for April 25, with the aim of passing the long-pending School Education Bill.

Considering the Kathmandu-centric protest of schoolteachers under the Nepal Teachers' Federation for a fortnight, the meeting of the Council of Ministers decided that the government would coordinate and facilitate the process to get the bill approved through



parliament.

However, despite the government's assurance and calls for cooperation, the teachers continued their protest for 15 consecutive days on Wednesday.

Since April 2, thousands of community school teachers from across the country have been staging street protests in Kathmandu, demanding endorsement of the School Education Bill and implementation of all the past agreements.

They have been staging the pro-

test by defying the govern-ment's instruction to begin students' enrollment for the new academic year starting from Tuesday.

However, Minister for Education Bidya Bhattarai

reiterated the government's commitment to addressing the legitimate demands raised by the Nepal Teachers' Federation through continued dialogue. Minister Bhattarai said that Tuesday's Cabinet meeting decided to address the demands of the agitating teachers.

"The government has agreed to summon the parliamentary session and coordinate and facilitate the smooth passage of the School Education Bill, in line with their demands," she said.

According to her, the School Edu-

cation Bill is under consideration at the Education, Health and Information Technology Committee of the Parliament. "The committee has been regularly holding discussions on the Bill."

"We are in regular discussions with the teachers, and the Ministry is working to form a facilitation committee to create a conducive environment for dialogue and resolve the issue," said Minister Bhattarai.

She also expressed concerns over the ongoing protest organised



during the time of student enrollment, and when the SEE answer sheets have to be evaluated. Again, the board exams of Grade 12 is beginning on April 24.

Despite the government's decision to convene the session of Parliament, the Federation remains skeptical.

They are uncertain whether the session will effectively resolve their demands and bring an end to the protests. Federation Chairman Laxmi Kishore Subedi said they were skeptical about the government's intention the gov-

ernment.

"Merely calling a House session will not resolve our issue. If it could, the four previous sessions of the Parliament would have passed the Bill. We are fed up with endless dialogues and meetings. Now, we want to sit down for talks with the officials who can address our concerns," he said.

Stating that the movement has reached a decisive phase, Federation chairman Subedi has called on all protestors across the coun-

> try to reach Kathmandu immediately.

> "We have not reached a decisive point. The state continues to show an indifferent attitude towards our demands. Therefore, we have no option but to push the movement forward with a greater commitment and participation," he said.

> "They were creating false narratives that we were avoiding

talks and dialogues. That was not the case. Now, we want talks at the Prime Ministerial level, with the involvement of the partner political parties," he said.

The government has urged all teachers to return to their work-place in the best interest of students and guardians.

The ministers and ruling party leaders have been claiming that the government is serious and sensitive regarding the concerns of the teachers and is ready to make appropriate decisions accordingly.

Stakeholders are worried that the continued disruption could delay crucial academic activities, including the Secondary Education Examination (SEE) results, the Grade 12 board examinations, and new student enrolments.

The Federation on Monday reaffirmed its call for school headmasters and teachers to abstain from all official duties. This includes exam paper evaluation, publishing results, new admis-

sions, training sessions and involvement in academic events such as seminars and educational tours.

The ongoing protest also casts uncertainty over the grade 12 board exams, scheduled to start on April 24. The Federation has instructed exam

centre chiefs and invigilators to withdraw from examination duties unless their demands are addressed.

While two rounds of talks have taken place with the Ministry of Education, the Federation accuses the government of lacking commitment to resolving their concerns, leading to the continued intensification of their protest.

The federation has been warning that it will escalate to stronger protests if the government fails to address their demands through peaceful demonstrations.

What are the demands of teach-

ers?

The agitating community school teachers have been demanding an increase in salary of Early Childhood Development facilitators, determination of the order of precedence for teachers, add provision of an inflation allowance to school employees.

Similarly, the teachers have been demanding assurance of medical allowances for temporary teachers and equal benefits to teachers as civil servants, including gratu-



ity or pension options for teachers' families after 15 years of service and removal of the mandatory 20-year service requirement for teachers to access these benefits.

Likewise, the federation has forwarded the demand for grade promotion terms for teachers and civil servants. They have been demanding that the teachers should receive a grade after 11 months and 16 days of permanent services similar to civil servants.

Currently, teachers must wait for an entire academic session to qualify for a grade. After few informal talks, the government has agreed to meet some demands of the Federation, including an increase in the salary of the Early Childhood Development Facilitators, determining the order of precedence for teachers, assurance of inflation allowance for school employees and medical allowance for temporary teachers.

However, the demand put forth

by the agitating teachers regarding the benefits in par with civil servants and grade promotion are left to be addressed. To address the issue, the Ministry of Education, Science and Tech-

nology has prepared a 7-point proposal and is calling agitating teachers for talks. However, the Nepal Teachers' Federation has expressed disagreement with the proposal and refused to sit for talks.

When asked about the agreement, Chairman Subedi refused that there we no such agreement reached between the government and the agitating groups. "We are unaware about the homework done by the ministry."

### Nepal Has A Significant Opportunity To Grow Through Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)



BY:CHANDRA PRASAD DHAKAL

I extend a warm welcome to all of you to the opening event of the 59th Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Industry and Commerce Day 2081. Today signifies the conclusion of the current Executive Committee's two-year term.

Today marks the completion of two years since the current Executive Committee of the Federation took office. During this time, we have worked to turn challenges into opportunities, seek out new possibilities, overcome setbacks, and achieve success in various areas. Our efforts to bring about reform are ongoing.

I would like to recall that two years ago, during the inaugural ceremony of the 57th Annual General Meeting of the Federation, there was much discussion about the risk of Nepal facing an economic crisis similar to that of Sri Lanka. While many speakers warned of the potential for Nepal to encounter foreign exchange issues like Sri Lanka if timely action was not taken by the government, I expressed my belief in my closing remarks that Nepal would not follow the same path as Sri Lanka.

There were valid reasons for this, such as Nepal opting for concessional loans, with the credit to GDP ratio being less than 40 percent. Additionally, foreign exchange reserves were adequate to cover over 6 months of imports of goods and services. However, we became overly cautious and implemented more measures than necessary, leading to a loss in revenue. This resulted in a shift from formal to informal trade channels, with informal imports becoming the norm, except for cars and motorcycles. The policy decisions made to control market demand have hindered market functionality to this day. Despite efforts, the economy only grew by 5 percent in the last quarter, as reported by the National Statistics Office. A survey conducted with approximately 240 organizations nationwide revealed that entrepreneur morale has not improved. We will release this report soon. Personally, I am an entrepreneur who seeks balance amidst challenges.

I aim to inspire hope, not despair. While there have been some improvements, they are not sufficient to meet the aspirations of our youth. Without the creation of quality, well-paying job opportunities within the country, despair will persist. The current sense of hopelessness stems from this issue. We understand that the government has limitations in job creation, and it has managed to provide employment to around half a million individuals.

The private sector, which employs 86 percent of the population, also plays a crucial role. However, Nepal's private sector lacks the capacity to absorb the approximately 500,000 young people entering the labor market annually. Consequently, many youths are seeking opportunities abroad for employment. The situation in Nepal and the economies that employ Nepalis were comparable in the past. In the 1960s, Nepal's per capita income was \$50, while South Korea's was around \$100.

Currently, Korea's per capita income stands at \$40,000, while Nepal's is at \$1,400. Over time, Korea's income has grown by 400 times, and Nepal's by 28 times. However, the purchasing power of \$40,000 and \$1,400 are not comparable. Progress has been made, but not to the extent that was hoped for.

Globalization has not only increased the needs and aspirations of ordinary people, but has also exposed the entire world to a standard of living and work that aligns with our capabilities. While we have been able to secure employment in larger economies, we have not been able to elevate our own economy to a similar scale.

Bangladesh's per capita income is twice that of Nepal, with total exports exceeding \$40 billion. Despite being on the verge of being upgraded from a least developed country status, Nepal has not yet reached this level of

income. Progress has been made in other areas, but in order to avoid regression, it is crucial to allow the private sector to operate freely. I would like to discuss what can be done, how it can be achieved, and the necessary support from stakeholders, including the government.

Dear Prime Minister, the primary goal of the current government is to create a prosperous Nepal and ensure the happiness of its citizens. Prosperity entails providing opportunities for all individuals, which requires investments in money, intelligence, wisdom, and skills. Initial financial investments are crucial, followed by the need

for labor and skills during the production process.

There are two main entities that provide funding for investments: the government and the private sector. The government typically generates investment funds from revenue collected from entrepreneurs, businesses, and the general public. The private sector, which is responsible for creating the majority of jobs, also serves as a significant source of income for the general public.

"निजी क्षेत्रको सम्मान: समृदिक नेपाल उद्योग वाणिज्य महासः । ५५औं वार्षिक साधारण सभा

A recent study conducted by the International Finance Corporation and the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry revealed that the private sector contributes 81 percent to the economy. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize the freedom of operation for the private sector in order to achieve the government's goal of prosperity.

A key factor in the well-being of individuals is access to sufficient employment and the resulting income. When individuals are able to meet the basic needs of their families, including education and healthcare, it contributes to their overall happiness. I call upon all stakeholders, including government entities, civil society, and the media, to recognize the importance of the private sector in achieving these goals.

Countries that have grasped this concept have experienced significant advancements. For instance, Bangladesh, Rwanda, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos, countries that were once similar to us, have now surpassed us in terms of progress. The private sector's increased

involvement has contributed to a 1.4 percent annual decrease in poverty in India. Over the past two decades, approximately 500 million individuals have been lifted out of poverty.

Bangladesh, a country similar to ours, has witnessed its exports increase from \$18 billion to \$40 billion since 2010. Rwanda, which endured the loss of 800,000 lives due to internal conflict in just 100 days three decades ago, has achieved an economic growth rate of 7.2 percent over the last 20 years. Cambodia, which became a member of the World Trade Organization at the same time as

us, has attracted ten times more foreign direct investment than Nepal. If these nations can achieve such progress, why can't we?

If others are making progress, why are we lagging behind? These issues must be addressed. Respected Prime Minister, Ministers, Chief Secretary, Secretaries, and esteemed guests, I want to emphasize that we have the potential to move forward. Let's focus on

foreign investment, which currently stands at only 0.2 percent of the GDP, approximately 8 billion rupees per year. We can easily increase this amount fivefold.

Our goal should be to attract one billion dollars in foreign investment annually by 2030. I have cited the example of Cambodia, a fellow member of the World Trade Organization, to illustrate the potential for growth. Over the past two years, we have organized four conferences in India, China, and the UAE, with over 150 local entrepreneurs participating in each event. They are keen to invest in Nepal. The current global economic landscape also favors Nepal, as the US has imposed lower customs tariffs on Nepali goods compared to its competitors, creating opportunities for increased investment. We must capitalize on this advantage. Our team is actively researching this opportunity.

In addition to promoting investor morale in the country, the Federation has launched a campaign to mobilize domestic capital, involving FNCCI, CNI, Chambers, District Chambers of Commerce and Industry, businessmen in commodity associations, non-resident Nepalis, and all other institutional and individual entrepreneurs, busi-

### **VIEWPOINT**

nessmen, and investors. As a result, the Nepal Development Company has been established. This company aims to create investment opportunities in large projects by aggregating small capital from all 77 districts of the country and abroad. Despite the current challenges, we believe that reform is achievable. We have successfully resolved significant internal conflicts and recovered from a devastating earthquake. By promulgating the constitution through consensus, we have taken steps towards stability. While facing challenges such as the Covid pandemic, we remain committed to addressing current

issues. Despite our economic challenges, we are resourceful entrepreneurs who prioritize economy. the It is crucial to ensure that entrepreneurs can operate without hindrance.

I reiterate that are capawe of achieving economic growth. If we do not take action,

who will? From 2073 to 2075, there was an average economic growth of over 7.5 percent due to political stability and its positive message. We urge all political parties to come to a common understanding on economic issues. A shared understanding among political parties on the economy, development, and prosperity is essential. Political leaders should refrain from actions that harm private sector businesses and the livelihoods of ordinary people.

The private sector has the potential to generate capital amounting to Rs. 1.6 trillion annually, with the government only needing to invest Rs. 4 trillion. Achieving double-digit growth is feasible, and millions of jobs can be created each year. The key prerequisite for this is stability. These matters have been deliberated in the High-Level Reform Suggestion Commission established for economic reform. We have been analyzing and discussing the presented statistics and reform proposals for the past two years. On October 25, 2080, we held a significant economic conference advocating for a new phase of economic reforms and the establishment of a high-level commission for this purpose. With the commission now in place, we are finalizing our recommendations.

Another essential factor for implementing reforms that have a tangible impact on the general population is the

presence of good governance. The issue of good governance has been a significant challenge in the country for the past three decades. It is a shared concern for all of us. Nepalis are inherently a simple, content, sociable, and supportive community.

Their needs are modest. However, societal dynamics are gradually evolving, making it increasingly challenging to lead a simple and uncomplicated life. Failure to establish good governance could lead to not only economic challenges but also societal issues. Prime Minister,

> Ministers, Chief are and in this appre-Let's aspiring youth can easily find opportunities employentrepreneurs who invest in

Secretary, requests modest, your minor efforts regard will be greatly ciated. create an environment where पणिज्य दिवस−२०८१ for ment. Let's uplift the spirits of

> the country. Let's provide reassurance to individuals seeking security and encourage them to contribute to society. Let's offer words of appreciation to taxpayers and avoid undermining the private sector, which plays a crucial role in job creation.

> These are not major requests, but they have the potential to create a significant impact. Utilizing technology and implementing ethical policies effectively can lead to substantial changes. The development of artificial intelligence is poised to revolutionize the world. We are advocating for broad reforms, encompassing everything from business registration to citizen engagement through apps. It is crucial for the government to take the lead in this initiative, with potential involvement from the private sector and donor agencies.

> Another key aspect of improving governance is the promotion of ethics. The legal framework should be designed to foster good governance, as past laws have sometimes led to increased distrust. The policies, programs, and budget of the current fiscal year should serve as a foundation for reform efforts. There is a lot that can be achieved in this regard. Esteemed Prime Minister, distinguished guests, it is widely recognized that the private sector's challenges have had far-reaching effects, including on government revenue. It is time for the private sector to drive economic growth and development, reducing

competition for resources. Let us collaborate on a plan to move forward together.

Let's explore opportunities for collaboration with local and provincial governments. The role of donor agencies may not be the same as before. We need to analyze and discuss ways to enhance the effectiveness of our institutions from the central to the local level. Strategic plans have been developed, and it is essential to establish innovative thinking centers at all levels.

I encourage everyone to embrace the slogan of respecting the private sector, which is the cornerstone of prosperity. Despite providing 86 percent of employment, the private sector is often undervalued. It contributes over

80 percent of direct and indirect revenue but is frequently overlooked.

The private sector, responsible for 81 percent of investments, is consistently at risk. Despite accounting for 98 percent of exports, faces constant challenges and disrespect.

We take risks, invest

significantly, and contribute to revenue and employment, yet our morale suffers due to ongoing insecurity. This is why we have emphasized the importance of security, respect, and dignity. State investment is not the solution; rather, what is needed is harmony. I am pleased that the Honorable Prime Minister has shown a positive attitude towards addressing these issues.

We also recognize the importance of respecting others in order to earn respect ourselves. It is crucial to be mindful and accountable towards consumers and other stakeholders, and to show appreciation for those who work diligently in these areas. In response to our requests, the government, including the Honorable Prime Minister, has made amendments to approximately 35 laws. Additionally, a draft of a bilateral investment agreement has been prepared. The Ministry of Commerce has decided to transition the Certificate of Origin process to a fully online platform in response to our call for transparency and accountability.

We are actively promoting Nepal through programs organized abroad. A high-level commission has been established at our request to lay the groundwork for a new phase of economic reform. I extend my gratitude to the Honorable Prime Minister, Ministers, Chief Secretary,

Government, and all political parties and leadership for their support in these efforts.

I encourage members of the Federation to take ownership of and advocate for the ongoing reform initiatives, as they were initiated based on the Federation's suggestions and requests. Let us all work together to support these reforms at all levels, from the central government to local communities.

This reform involves changes in policy and regulations. It focuses on procedural improvements, behavioral changes, and shifts in work and thinking. It encompasses reforms at various levels of government, including the

नपाल उद्याग वााणाज्य महास्य

साधारण सभा एवं उद्योग वाणिज्य

center, state, municipality, and ward levels. The reform aims services such as education and health, as well as improve the conduct and practicis essential for the and future generabe engaged in en-

to enhance social es of businesses. It well-being of current tions. All levels of the federation must

hancing the policy-making process by considering local needs and global trends. It is imperative that we do not remain underdeveloped and mired in poverty and deprivation.

Finally, I extend a warm welcome to the Honorable Prime Minister, Honorable Ministers, Members of Parliament, Chief Secretary, Secretaries, and all the esteemed guests present at the 59th Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the 2081st Industry and Commerce Day. On behalf of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry and personally, I am delighted to have you here.

As we gather on the occasion of the New Year 2082, I send my sincere wishes for a prosperous and joyful year ahead for you and your loved ones. May the coming year bring success to our collective efforts to transform challenges into opportunities and despair into hope.

Dhakal serves as the president of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI). The following are excerpts from his address at the opening ceremony of the 59th Annual General Meeting held on April 10, 2025.



**ADB** 

### Nepal To Grow By 4.4 Percent

ADB predicts that Nepal's economy will grow by 4.4 percent in the fiscal year 2025

By A CORRESPONDENT

epal's economy is projected to strengthen in fiscal year 2025 and further improve in 2026, as per the Asian Development Outlook (ADO) April 2025 report by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The report forecasts a 4.4% growth in Nepal's economy for FY2025, up from the estimated 3.9% growth in FY2024. The enhanced growth outlook for Nepal is attributed to the gradual recovery of domestic demand, ongoing reforms in the private sector, and a boost in tourism and related services. Sectors like manufacturing and construction, which contracted in FY2024, are expected to expand in the current fiscal year.

This growth is supported by stable oil and raw material prices, increased liquidity, and declining interest rates, leading to improved credit availability for all production sectors. ADB Country Director for Nepal, Arnaud Cauchois, highlighted these positive developments in the country's economic outlook.

During the program, Jan Hansen, Principal Economist at ADB Resident Mission Kathmandu, emphasized the key issues outlined in the outlook and reiterated ADB's commitment to supporting Nepal's policies to address climate change.

Hansen also stated that the future global economic growth will be greatly affected by the tariff policies of the US.

Likewise, Manbir Khadka, an economist at ADB Resident Mission in Kathmandu, outlined the key points of the Nepal Economic



Outlook. He pointed out that economic growth picked up speed in FY2024 and is expected to continue to climb this fiscal year and the next, mainly driven by the services sector. Khadka also pointed out that the industry growth, boosted by increased electricity production, is expected to further rise with the upcoming hydroelectric projects.

Khadka stressed that the geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and Gulf regions will have a significant impact on Nepal's economy. He underscored the region's vital role in terms of remittances for Nepal.

The forecast for gross domestic product (GDP) growth in FY2026 is 5.1%, driven by government reforms to enhance capital budget execution, improvements in tourism and related services, and increased agricultural productivity through mechanization and better irrigation systems, dependent on a favorable monsoon. Inflation is predicted to decrease in FY2025 and FY2026,

staying within the central bank's limits, assuming a normal harvest and a slight decrease in inflation in India, a major source of imports.

Nepal's external sector stabilized in FY2024 with higher foreign exchange reserves and a cautious monetary policy. Despite increased imports in the latter part of FY2025, robust remittance inflows are expected to maintain a current account surplus of 0.1% of GDP. In FY2026, a deficit equivalent to 2.4% of GDP is anticipated as imports of goods and services rise.

There are downside risks to the outlook. Continued tariff increases could lead to a global economic downturn, impacting Nepal's tourism revenue and remittances, while reduced foreign aid could hinder growth as Nepal relies on it to fund development projects. Failure to fully implement the capital budget could also dampen growth

prospects.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has forecasted that e

conomies in developing Asia and the Pacific will grow by 4.9% this year, slightly lower than the 5.0% growth seen last year. This growth is supported by s

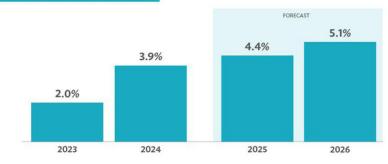
olid domestic demand and a strong global demand for semiconductors due to the artificial intelligence boom. However, the outlook is clouded by tariffs and trade uncertainty, which will pose challenges. The ADO April 2025 report, released today, predicts a further decline in regional growth to 4.7% next year. Inflation is expected to ease to 2.3% this year and 2.2% next year, driven by decreasing global food and energy prices. The growth forecasts were completed before the US administration's announcement of new tariffs on 2 April, so the projections only account for existing tariffs. Nonetheless, the

ADO April 2025 report includes an analysis of how higher tariffs could impact growth in Asia and the Pacific.

The report highlights that the economies in the region are strong, but there are risks due to potential rapid and significant changes in US trade and economic policies. The imposition of higher US tariffs, increased policy uncertainty, and

**NEPAL** 

### GDP GROWTH FORECAST



ASIAN DEVELOPMENT OUTLOOK APRIL 2025 www.adb.org/outlook

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retaliatory measures could have a negative impact on trade, investment, and growth.

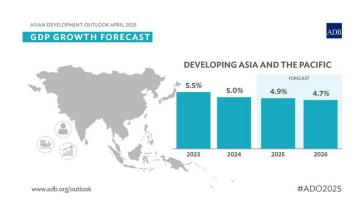
ADB Chief Economist Albert Park stated, "Developing Asia and the Pacific have solid fundamentals that are supporting their resilience in the face of global challenges. However, the rising tariffs, uncertainties surrounding US policies, and the potential for heightened geopolitical tensions are major concerns for the economic outlook. It is important for Asian economies to continue their commitment to open trade and investment, which have been key drivers of growth and resilience in the region."

Additionally, a decline in the property market in the People's Republic of China (PRC), the region's largest economy, could also hinder growth. ADB forecasts a 4.7% ex-

pansion for the PRC this year and 4.3% next year, down from 5.0% last year.

Stronger economic growth in South Asia and Southeast Asia, driven by domestic demand, along with a continued recovery in tourism in other parts of the region, will help offset the slowdown in China. India, the largest economy in South Asia, is expected to grow by 6.7% this year and 6.8% next year. Economies in Southeast Asia are projected to grow by 4.7% this year and next year.

Weak external demand is likely to dampen economic activity in Caucasus and Central Asia, with growth expected to decrease from 5.7% last year to 5.4% this year and 5.0% next year. In the Pacific region, growth will be supported by tourism but at a slower rate, with forecasts of 3.9% this year and 3.6% next year, compared to 4.2% last year.



# मौसमी फ्लु रोकथामका उपाय

- > बिरामी भएका व्यक्तिसँग भौतिक दुरी कायम राखौं,
- > खोक्दा, हाच्छिउँ गर्दा नाक मुख छोपौं,
- > पौष्टिक खाना खाओं, शारीरिक रुपमा सिक्रय बनों,
- > सम्भव भएसम्म बिरामी हुँदा घरमे बसौं,
- > बेलाबेलामा साबुनपानीले हात धोओं वा स्यानिटाइजरको प्रयोग गरौं,
- > प्रतिरोधात्मक क्षमता बढाउन योग, ध्यान र व्यायाम गरौं,
- > लक्षण देखिएमा चिकित्सकको सल्लाह लिऔं ।





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For Global IME Bank Customers (Natural Person) having eligible shares in own name.





# NIMB Green Future Savings Account

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