

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



**VIEWPOINT**  
Dr. Tilak Rawal



**OPINION**  
Dipak Gyawali



**ARTICLE**  
Arup Rajouria

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June 20, 2025

FORTNIGHTLY

## 4<sup>th</sup> Prof. Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series



The Context of South  
and the Road Ahead

12 June 2025 | Ka

FOURTH PROFESSOR Y.N. KHANAL LECTURE

# Nepal-China Relations

## INSIDE



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Twenty Five Years Of Journey



**KOREAN RETURNEES**

Successful Integration



**MELAMCHI WATER SUPPLY**

No Interruption During Monsoon

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**Kathmandu DAO Regd. No.**

148/11/063/64

**Central Region Postal Regd.**

No. 36/067/068

**US Library of Congress Catalogue**

**No. 91-905060, ISSN : 2091-0711**

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

**Printing**

Megha Offset Printing Press P. Ltd.,

Dhapasi, Kathmandu

Tel. : 977-1-4363624

**Notes From The Editor**



Despite the two-point agreement signed with the main opposition party Maoist Center, the disruption in the House of Representatives remains unresolved. The Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) and Rastriya Swatantra Party are still obstructing the house, insisting on a high-level probe commission and the resignation of Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak. Despite these demands, the Speaker of the House of Representatives is proceeding with the sessions. It seems that these disagreements will continue to cause instability in the near future. Given the significance of various issues, we have chosen to focus on the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and China. As a close neighbor of Nepal, China has been providing significant development support to the country. Our cover story for this issue will highlight the fourth edition of the Professor Yadunath Khanal Lecture series, a flagship program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The theme of the series, "Nepal-China Relations in the Context of South Asia: Opportunities and Challenges," is highly relevant. We will cover the insights shared by two prominent scholars from Nepal and China during the lecture program.

Since establishing diplomatic relations five decades ago, Korea has been offering Nepal significant support by sharing technology, investing in industries and the power sector, and employing a considerable number of Nepalese workers. The Republic of Korea began its modernization efforts just over 60 years ago, and its support, including the opportunity for Nepalese workers to participate in the EPS program, has been crucial for Nepal.

**Keshab Poudel**

Editor

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# Reclaiming Nepal's Budget From Hidden Hands



BY: DR. PRABIN MANANDHAR

Nepal's 2025/26 national budget presents an ambitious roadmap for economic transformation, prioritizing education, healthcare, infrastructure, agriculture, and employment. These priorities are both timely and necessary. But bold numbers on paper mean little without effective delivery—and that hinges on governance. In this regard, Nepal's entrenched dalalpunjibad (broker capitalism) and bichaulia (intermediary culture) remain challenging obstacles.

Broker capitalism in Nepal operates not on competition, productivity, or value creation, but rather thrives on rent-seeking behavior, political patronage, and informal power networks. A defining characteristic of this system is its preference for trading over building. Instead of investing in local industries that generate employment and retain wealth domestically, broker capitalism favors importing goods through intermediaries who profit from commissions, licenses, and procurement influence. The outcome is a hollow economy that sidelines Nepal's domestic potential in favor of quick deals and entrenched vested interests.

This is particularly evident in sectors like cement, fertilizer, and pharmaceuticals. Despite abundant limestone reserves and capable domestic producers, large infrastructure projects often favor imported cement or politically connected contractors. In the case of fertilizer, Nepal has yet to establish domestic production, not because of technical or resource limitations, but because imports generate high profit margins for a few well-connected distributors. These intermediaries dominate the supply chain, resulting in inflated prices and persistent shortages that directly impact farmers. Such distortions erode Nepal's productive capacity and undermine the core intent of budget allocations aimed at fostering self-reliance and inclusive economic growth.

Young entrepreneurs trying to build agro-enterprises or tech startups often find themselves locked out by middlemen networks that monopolize access to markets, capital, and licenses. Instead of nurturing a new generation of innovators and job creators, the current system blocks them in favor of those with influence rather than ideas.

The intermediary culture extends beyond the economy into the heart of public administration. Middlemen often mediate political appointments, civil service transfers, and promotions, eroding meritocracy and institutional competence. Public procurement suffers from similar manipulation, with tenders awarded through informal negotiations rather than transparent competition. This leads to inflated project costs, poor-quality outcomes, and widespread public disillusionment.

Outside the formal economy, intermediaries also drive harmful practices such as visit visa-based human trafficking. In numerous instances, informal agents lure aspiring migrant workers with false promises, funneling them into exploitative networks abroad. These operations thrive on weak regulation, bureaucratic collusion, and political protection placing citizens at risk while enriching a select few.

Without addressing these governance bottlenecks, even the best-designed budget will struggle to deliver results. Allocations meant for infrastructure, agriculture, and employment are routinely captured by politically connected networks. Funds leak, implementation stalls, and public trust erodes.

To transform Nepal's economy, the country must move from broker capitalism to a builder's model. This requires transparent and accountable public procurement, democratized access to finance and markets for genuine entrepreneurs, and reforms in political financing to reduce reliance on vested interests. Additionally, the rooted intermediary culture must be uprooted by enforcing merit-based governance, strengthening bureaucracy, criminalizing informal brokerage, and implementing protections for whistleblowers alongside streamlined administrative processes to close loopholes exploited by middlemen.

The national budget provides a fiscal roadmap, but governance is the engine that drives it. Without dismantling the informal systems that hijack development, Nepal will continue to recycle grand promises into disappointing outcomes. To move forward, Nepal must dismantle both broker capitalism and intermediary culture, reclaiming governance from the shadows. The path to a productive, fair, and resilient economy lies in strengthening institutions rooted in transparency, merit, and accountability. The time to act is now before another budget cycle passes with ambitions unrealized.

*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

### US Assistance To The Millennium Challenge Corporation Nepal Will Likely To Continue

The US Embassy in Kathmandu expressing optimism for a positive outcome from the ongoing review of \$697 million (MCC)..



The review of MCC's global operations is still ongoing, and the outcome is pending. Following the decision by the Department of Government Expenditure (DOGE), the future of two infrastructure projects in Nepal is in question, leading to uncertainty within the government on how to proceed if MCC support is discontinued.

MCC is collaborating closely with the Ministry of Finance and MCA-Nepal to ensure that activities under the compact align with the priorities of both the US and Nepal governments, emphasizing transparency, good governance, effective delivery, and risk management, as stated by the US Embassy on Wednesday (June 5).

The US Embassy reiterated its commitment to the bilateral relationship with Nepal and supporting the Nepali people through initiatives that promote prosperity and long-term economic resilience.

In February 2025, the US Secretary of State granted a specific exception to the 90-day pause on US foreign assistance for the MCC Nepal Compact, as announced by the US Embassy in Kathmandu on Wednesday. The US government's review of US foreign assistance is ongoing.

MCC and the US Mission in Nepal are actively engaging with stakeholders to ensure a positive outcome of the review.

### National Startup Event on Empowering Her: Advancing Women's Economic And Political Leadership For Climate Resilient Communities

Oxfam in Nepal organized a one-day "Startup Event on Empowering Her: Advancing Women's Economic and Political Leadership for Climate Resilient Communities".

The event was organized to share Oxfam in Nepal's new initiative to promote women's leadership and support women-led green business/enterprises in Rautahat district of Madhesh Province and Kanchanpur district of Sudurpashchim Province scaling up and building on the Building Economic Resilience in Seasonal Migrant

Families (BERSMF), a pilot initiative.

"Empowering Her", a three-year initiative, is a KOICA public-private partnership. It will be implemented in collaboration and partnership by Oxfam in Nepal, National Environment and Equity



Development Society (NEEDS Nepal), and Rural Development Centre (RDC) Nepal.

Manoj Bhatta, Member Secretary, Social Welfare Council, was the Chief Guest for the event, Kong Moo Heon, Country Director, KOICA Nepal was the Special Guest, and Pralav Kayastha, Chief Administrative Officer, Rajdevi Municipality, Rautahat district was the Guest for the event.

The event commenced with welcome remarks from Tripti Rai, Country Director for Oxfam in Nepal. She shared, "It is with great pleasure I welcome everyone to the inaugural event for this incredible initiative. Oxfam is an organization working towards ending global inequality. Oxfam in Nepal's programs are designed to integrate our five interconnected thematic areas – Gender Justice, Climate Justice and Resilience, Water Governance and WASH, Economic Justice, and Humanitarian Response, focussed on ending inequality and injustice.

Kong Moo Heon, KOICA's Country Director and Special Guest for the event highlighted, "It is great to be here on behalf of KOICA for the launch of this new initiative. This new ambitious phase is built on our previous collaboration. The districts we have chosen are climate-based disaster-prone areas. When disaster strikes men migrate for work and women are doubly burdened. However, they are not involved in any kind of decision-making activities. This initiative is a holistic approach to meet KOICA's support in Nepal. The initiative aims to empower women. KOICA is immensely proud to be a partner on this journey. Congratulations to all involved in this."

### Japan Assists In Improving Gender-Responsive And Inclusive Learning Environment In Dhanusha District

Tamura Takahiro, Charge d'Affaires ad interim of Japan to Nepal, attended the inauguration ceremony of the new classroom building of Shree Rastriya Basic School took place in Dhanusha District, Madhesh Province.



The new classroom building has been constructed under the Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects supported by the Government of Japan.

The project is being implemented by Japanese NGO Plan International Japan, and is currently in the second year of a three-year project. The project aims to improve access to quality education and promote a gender-responsive and inclusive learning environment at basic education level in Dhanusha District, by constructing and improving school facilities, providing training to enhance teachers' capabilities, and encouraging community-led initiatives in education. The project has also been working on promoting gender mainstreaming in education policy.

On the occasion, Tamura congratulated and appreciated the efforts of all those involved in the project. He expressed his hope that the new school building and facilities will be properly managed and maintained, and that the learning environment in the school and in Dhanusha District will become an even more comfortable place to study, by utilizing the knowledge and capabilities gained through



the project.

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

### CoAS General Sigdel Honors Nepal-India Joint Kanchenjunga Mountaineering Team

Chief of Army Staff General Ashok Raj Sigdel has decorated 15 members of Nepal-India Joint Kanchenjunga Mountaineering team with the Chief of Army Staff Commendation Medal.



A total of 15 Nepali Army personals including 10 officers and 5 coordinators from the center and base camp, are participating in the mountain climbing under the Nepal-India Joint

Kanchenjunga Mountain Climbing-2025. The teams successfully climbed Kanchenjunga on 19 and 20 May..

The campaign was held on Chaitra 21, 2081, in New Delhi, India, with a Flag-Off Ceremony in the presence of the Indian Defense Minister.

### 2025 K-Beauty Festa Held In Kathmandu

2025 K-Beauty Festa took place in Kathmandu, showcasing the latest trends in Korean beauty products.

The 2025 K-Beauty Festa was hosted by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Nepal at Hotel Himalaya on Saturday, June 7, to celebrate the increasing popularity of Korean beauty and culture in Kathmandu, Nepal.

The event featured leading Korean cosmetics retailers in Nepal, such as Korean Beauty Point, Dream Skin Nepal, KPG-Beauty, and Prettyclick, who showcased a variety of popular Korean skincare and beauty brands. Attendees enthusiastically participated in special promotional offers and product demonstrations, highlighting the high demand for K-beauty products in Nepal.

A key aspect of the event was the K-Beauty Class, co-organized by the Embassy and the Sejong Culture Academy. Renowned Korean makeup artist and beauty YouTuber Mr. Hoseok Jung (shawn\_issure) led a hands-on session on "Korean Skincare," providing insights into current K-beauty trends, live demonstrations, and interactive training. Participants were eager to learn Korean skincare and makeup techniques, showing a positive response to the class.

In addition to the beauty segment, the event featured cultural activities such as the 2025 Korean Speech Contest on the theme of "Beauty" and a K-Culture Experience Zone showcasing traditional Korean attire (Hanbok), Korean cuisine (K-Food), and Korean Calligraphy.



During his opening remarks, Tae-young Park, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Ne-

pal, expressed gratitude to all participants and supporters of the event. He highlighted the increasing influence of Korean culture among Nepali youth through Korean language, K-Pop, dramas, and K-Beauty, emphasizing that this cultural exchange is essential for fostering deeper connections and mutual understanding between the two countries.

Ambassador Park stated, "Our Nepali friends who embrace K-culture are ambassadors of friendship between Korea and Nepal," affirming the Embassy's commitment to supporting and expanding cultural exchange and cooperation opportunities.

The 2025 K-Beauty Festa was a successful event that further strengthened the cultural partnership between Korea and Nepal, enhancing ties through beauty, tradition, and a shared appreciation of culture.

### Power Export To Bangladesh Resumes

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has resumed exporting 40 megawatts of electricity from Nepal to Bangladesh through the Indian transmission.

Power from Nepal to Bangladesh was exported for the first time for 12 hours on July 15 last year. It has resumed from June 15 (i.e. today) of this year.

A power sale agreement had been signed between NEA, Bangladesh Power Development Board and NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Limited of India last year, which led to export of electricity for only 12 hours last year.

Nepal has been exporting excess electricity during the rainy season to neighboring India for five months every year. This year, starting today, NEA will export electricity to Bangladesh for the next five months i.e. until November 15.

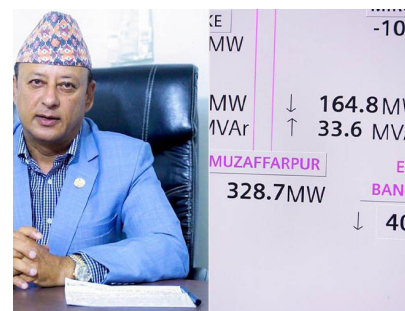
Subarna Sapkota, Deputy Manager of the NEA Electricity System Control Department, shared that 146.88 million units of electricity will be exported in five months. The government will earn Rs 1.29 billion in five months from the sale of the electricity. The selling rate of electricity exported under the agreement is 6.40 US cents per unit. The electricity will reach Bhermara Substation in Bangladesh via Muzaffarpur, Behrampur, India from Nepal's 400 KV Dhalkebar Substation.

Meanwhile, the NEA has continued its electricity exports to neighboring India. The NEA has also started exporting electricity to the Indian state of Haryana this year.

It had been exporting 185 MW of electricity since June 1, which increased to 200 MW from Saturday. As per the bilateral agreement between Nepal and India, the selling rate of this electricity export is 5.25 Indian rupees per unit.

Similarly, the NEA has also started exporting 80 MW of electricity to the Indian state of Bihar since 12:00 last night. In addition, additional electricity is being purchased and sold in the Indian market through the Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur 400 kV and 132 kV transmission lines.

As the electricity production in Nepal has increased with the onset of the rainy season the surplus electricity is being exported to India and Bangladesh.



## BUSINESS BRIEF

### President Dhakal Calls For Investment-Friendly Reforms And Global Partnerships At ILO Conference



President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), Chandra Prasad Dhakal, called for stable policies, private sector investment and stronger international partnerships.

During his address at the 113th session of the International

Labour Conference in Geneva on Monday, Dhakal emphasized the critical role of the private sector in creating decent work and driving inclusive economic growth.

Speaking to delegates from governments, workers' organizations and employer groups, he praised the ILO's tripartite model for fostering collaboration among key actors in the global labour market.

"We all have different roles but we share one common goal, to create an environment for businesses to grow and to make sure work is decent," he said. "This is why the ILO's model is so important, and we at FNCCI are proud to be a part of it."

President Dhakal welcomed the ILO Director-General's report for 2025, which focuses on linking job creation with rights and inclusive growth through investment-driven development.

He underscored the need for business-friendly and stable policy environments in developing countries like Nepal to attract long-term investment.

"In Nepal, we have worked closely with the government, proposing changes to 30 laws related to investment. These have been amended, and a new Bilateral Investment Agreement framework has been passed," he said, adding that such reforms not only support existing formal businesses but also encourage informal enterprises to register and join the mainstream economy.

As a result of these efforts, Nepal has been selected as one of four global "champion countries" for formalizing its economy.

Dhakal said this recognition reflects the country's commitment to labour standards and international obligations, as well as a readiness to welcome responsible foreign investment.

FNCCI President Dhakal also highlighted Nepal's vast economic potential from hydropower and tourism to agriculture and information technology backed by the country's

unique geography and strategic location between two major economies, India and China.

"Nepal offers investors access not only to the local market but also to the massive markets of China and India," he said. "Even after Nepal graduates from LDC status in 2026, duty-free access to these markets will remain, alongside trade preferences with Europe and America."

In addition to promoting private equity and venture capital, Dhakal stressed the need for climate financing for vulnerable nations like Nepal, which contributes minimally to global emissions but bears the brunt of climate impacts.

"To protect the 'roof of the world,' we need significant international support," he said, calling for special provisions for mountain and island countries in terms of market access and development assistance.

The FNCCI has also established an FDI support desk to facilitate international investments and has signed a memorandum of understanding with workers' organizations to strengthen public-private dialogue and partnerships.

"As Nepal prepares to exit LDC status, we are committed to creating decent jobs through higher economic growth," Dhakal concluded.

"We are ready to work with all of you to build a better, more inclusive future for Nepal and for the world."

The International Labour Conference, hosted annually by the International Labour Organization, brings together stakeholders from across the globe to shape labour standards, discuss global employment trends, and promote decent work for all.

### ADB Launches New 5-Year Strategy For Economic Transformation In Nepal

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) today unveiled its new Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for Nepal for 2025–2029, setting a comprehensive agenda to support the country's inclusive, resilient, green, and employment-intensive economic growth.

The strategy focuses on three strategic priorities: private sector-led, employment-intensive, green economic transformation; inclusive and quality human capital development and public services; and environmental sustainability and climate





resilience.

“As Nepal advances toward graduating from least developed country status, the CPS will support the country’s transition to a more sustainable and inclusive growth model,” said ADB Country Director for Nepal Arnaud Cauchois. “This model prioritizes productivity gains and job creation through domestic private investment and foreign direct investment, improved access to quality infrastructure, skills development, deeper integration with regional and global value chains and exports, while also strengthening resilience to disasters and climate change.”

The CPS is aligned with Nepal’s 16th Five-Year Plan, which seeks to promote good governance, social justice, and shared prosperity, and the government’s Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID) approach, which focuses on integrating environmental sustainability, climate resilience and social inclusion into development efforts. The strategy incorporates cross-cutting themes such as digital development, good governance, and capacity building for federalism, and empowerment of women and disadvantaged and vulnerable groups to ensure that development benefits reach all segments of society.

To maximize impact, ADB will ensure selectivity, integration, and synergies in its support by focusing on the primary objectives of private sector-led growth, youth employment, and resilience. Given the dynamic country context and global uncertainties, ADB’s country program will remain flexible. ADB’s investments will be delivered through investment projects, policy-lending, and sector development programs that combine policy reforms, institutional strengthening and investments.

The CPS was prepared through a joint strategic approach with the World Bank Group country partnership framework which creates opportunities for continuous deep collaborations between the two organizations. ADB and the World Bank Group—together accounting for around 70% of Nepal’s development financing—have been increasing collaboration through joint policy dialogues, portfolio reviews, knowledge sharing, and potential co-financing of projects, under the 2025 Full Mutual Reliance Framework.

A low-risk Group A developing member, Nepal will be eligible to access concessional ordinary capital resources (COL) and ADB expects to mobilize about \$2.3 billion (COL) between 2025 and 2029 and selective grants from the Asian Development Fund 14 which are allocated on a project basis for specific thematic priorities. Commitment of these funds is guided by government priorities, project readiness, and the country’s performance.

ADB will also support the mobilization of additional resources through cofinancing, innovative financing solutions, exploring mobilization of funds from green bonds and the issuance of thematic and local currency bonds (such as Nepalese rupee-linked bonds) to international investors.

## **Kulman Ghising Felicitated In Nijgadh For Serving People Ending Load-Shedding**

Kulman Ghising, out going Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority, has been felicitated in Nijgadh, Bara.

The Bright Nepal Campaign, Nijgadh, congratulated Ghising for his unprecedented efforts in the energy sector, while remaining dedicated to the welfare of the country and the people.

The campaign states that due to Ghising’s efficient management and visionary thinking, Nepal have not only ended the load shedding that people have been experiencing in the past, but have also



made significant progress in energy security for the body.

“Ghising’s hard work has brought about positive changes in the lifestyles of all Nepali people. This work is memorable,”

“It has given the message that if a capable person gets the opportunity to lead any organization, they can provide fruitful services for the benefit of the country and the people. Your work style has become an example as a source of inspiration for the Nepali youth,” the campaign stated.

At the event, Ghising said that he would use the social wealth he had earned for the development of the country. He expressed his commitment to continue working for the development of the country, regardless of his role.

## **Global IME Bank’s ‘Global Sky Club Card’ – A New Way to Fly Smarter**

Global IME Bank Limited, the largest commercial bank in Nepal that is known for its customer-friendly services and innovative offers, has recently introduced the Global Sky Club Card in collaboration with Yeti Airlines. This new card aims to make air travel more affordable and convenient for Nepali travelers, while also promoting digital banking.

The most attractive feature of this card is that it offers a free ticket on the first purchase. When customers use the Global Sky Club Card to buy their first



## BUSINESS BRIEF

ticket with Yeti Airlines, the bank gives them a full cash-back—essentially making the first flight free. After that, users can enjoy up to 10 per cent discount on ticket purchases, with a maximum discount of Rs. 500.

But the benefits don't stop there. Cardholders also get access to a range of premium services that make flying easier and more comfortable. These include priority check-in at the airport and an additional 5 kilograms of luggage allowance, which is especially useful for frequent travelers or those flying with extra baggage.

On the financial side, the card encourages digital transactions by offering 1 mileage point for every Rs. 100 spent through POS machines or online platforms. Cardholders also receive 100 bonus points when they first get the card, which can later be used for rewards, discounts, or other services.

Both Global IME Bank and Yeti Airlines believe this partnership will benefit their customers directly.

According to Surendra Raj Regmi, CEO of Global IME Bank, the scheme supports the growth of digital banking in Nepal and reflects the bank's commitment to offering timely and user-friendly services.

Subash Sapkota, CEO of Yeti Airlines, also expressed confidence that the collaboration will bring more value to the customers of both organizations.

Global IME Bank Limited is one of the most awarded and trusted banks in Nepal. It was recently recognized as the Best Bank in Nepal for 2024 by both Global Finance and Euromoney. With a strong network across all 77 districts of Nepal and services including international remittance from countries like the USA, UK, Australia, Japan, and the Gulf, the bank continues to grow its reputation.

Yeti Airlines, on the other hand, has been flying in Nepali skies for 26 years. With 7 fleets of ATR 72 aircrafts, the airline offers safe and reliable flights to major cities and remote areas alike. Its sister company, Tara Air, serves some of the most remote regions in Nepal, connecting people through air transport.

Overall, the Global Sky Club Card is a well-thought-out product for anyone who flies frequently within Nepal. It combines banking rewards with travel perks, offering real savings and smoother airport experiences. For customers of Global IME Bank and Yeti Airlines, this card is more than just a payment method—it's a gateway to smarter and more rewarding travel.

### Global IME Bank And Upper Mewa Khola Hydropower Signed A Financial Closure Agreement

A financial closure agreement has been signed for the Upper Mewa Khola Hydropower Project under the leadership of Global IME Bank Limited.

An agreement has been signed between the project promoter, Saurya Holding Pvt. Ltd., and the bank for financial management. According to the agreement, a consortium led by Global IME Bank and formed with the participation of Lakshmi Sunrise Bank will invest Rs 4.85 billion in this project.

In the presence of Surendra Raj Regmi, chief executive

officer of Global IME Bank, the agreement was signed by Kalyan Bikram Pandey, Chief Business Officer of Global IME Bank, Manish Raj Kunwar, Chief Business Officer of Lakshmi Sunrise Bank, and Mohan Bikram Karki, Managing Director of Saurya Holding Pvt. Ltd.

Global IME Bank Chief Executive Officer Surendra Raj Regmi expressed confidence that the project would be completed within the stipulated time frame, increasing the state's energy production and also helping in export promotion.

The estimated cost of this 31.92 MW hydroelectric project which will be built on the Upper Mewa River in Taplejung district, is Rs 6.37 billion.

As per the agreement, the bank will invest 75 percent and the remaining 25 percent will be invested by Saurya Holdings through the proceeds from the issue of rights shares.

This project will be completed within 3 years from the date of commencement of construction.

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

Global IME Bank has also 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 1,000 service centers, including 352 branch offices, 385 ATMs, 158 branchless banking services, 68 extension and revenue collection counters, and 3 overseas 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.



### NIMB Ace Capital Ltd. Facilitates Allotment of "NIFRA Green Energy Bond 6% – 2088/89" Amidst 3.8 Times Oversubscription

NIMB Ace Capital Ltd, a leading merchant banking institution, today announced that Nepal Infrastructure Bank Limited (NIFRA) has successfully completed the allotment of its "NIFRA Green Energy Bond 6% – 2088/89". The allotment event was held on the premises of NIMB Ace Capital, Lazimpat, Kathmandu, in the presence of representatives from NIMB Ace Capital Limited (the issue manager), NIFRA, regulatory authorities, and other stakeholders. The NPR 5 billion bond issue received an overwhelming response from investors, with total applications exceeding the offered amount by 3.8 times, reflecting strong market



confidence in NIFRA's green financing vision.

"For NIMB Ace Capital Ltd., this initiative is a natural extension of our legacy rooted in innovation and foresight," said Shivanth Bahadur Pande, CEO of NIMB Ace Capital Ltd. "By enabling Nepal's first ever Green Energy Bond issuance, we are showcasing our commitment to sustainability, and are building on our long-standing vision of pioneering topical and impactful financial solutions for Nepal's climate-resilient development."

The debenture was structured with 60% of the total issue allocated through private placement and the remaining 40% offered to the general public, which witnessed enthusiastic participation from institutional and retail investors alike.

With a fixed annual interest rate of 6% and a tenure of 7 years, this bond is designed to fund energy infrastructure projects, with a special emphasis on clean and renewable energy initiatives. The proceeds are expected to support hydropower and solar energy as the sustainable ventures align with NIFRA's commitment to Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Development (GRID).

The NIFRA Green Energy Bond marks a significant milestone in Nepal's capital markets history and underscores NIFRA's role as a frontrunner in mobilizing domestic capital for impactful, future-focused investments.



NIMB Ace Capital Ltd. is the pioneering merchant banking firm in Nepal's capital market sector, offering services across mutual funds, portfolio management, corporate advisory, merchant banking, and private

equity.

Distinguished by its commitment to innovation, diversification, and financial inclusion, the firm manages approximately 30% of Demat accounts in the country. In addition, the firm oversees NPR 11.9 billion in mutual funds, NPR 6 billion in portfolio management, and NPR 3 billion in private equity, targeting an expansion to NPR 10 billion. Also, managing 4.2 billion valued customers in merchant banking till date.

The firm has played a foundational role in shaping Nepal's financial ecosystem, having executed the country's first-ever initial public offering (IPO), launched the first open-ended mutual fund, and structured the landmark NPR 18 billion agricultural bond.

To date, NIMB Ace Capital has managed over 200 public offerings, mobilizing more than NPR 112 billion in capital, and maintaining NPR 30.9 billion in assets under management (AUM). We are also managing 58 RTS clients till date, which is the largest number of clientele in the merchant banking sector of Nepal.

## Nepal Ranks 145 In UNDP Human Development Report 2025

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released its 'Human Development Report, 2025' at a function held in the capital on Tuesday.

The report focuses on the impact that artificial intelligence (AI) can have on the multidimensional aspects of human development along with the potential that it carries. The report also highlights the potential for the use of AI to further strengthen human development, promote inclusion and establishing a just society.

According to the report, Nepal is in the list of countries with medium human development in the Human Development Index. Nepal is ranked 145th with an index of 0.622. The report also mentions that Nepal's Human Development Index has increased by 54 percent in the last 35 years.

At the report's launching event, Minister for Communications and Information Technology Prithvi Subba Gurung said that Nepal has been taking policy initiatives to promote artificial intelligence, digital economy, establish data centers and attract foreign direct investment.

A policy has been adopted to increase the use of AI in the research and development sector, while studies are being conducted on how AI can be effectively used in sectors such as education, health, and agriculture.

Minister Gurung said that the cold weather of the Himalayan region and the availability of cheap green energy (hydropower) have the potential to establish Nepal as an attractive destination for establishing a data center.

The government has planned to establish IT hubs in every province and initiatives are being taken to develop infrastructure for the same, said Minister Gurung. He expressed his belief that the 'Digital Nepal Framework', which Nepal has already implemented, will be further refined and implemented in a systematic manner, and that this will improve digitalization of government service, e-governance and digital access of citizens.

On the occasion, UNDP Nepal Resident Representative Kyoko Yokosuka said that the report focuses on how to benefit from the

use of artificial intelligence and what challenges it may come up with. In the case of Nepal, she said that the use of AI can be effective in areas such as inclusive service

delivery, improving the efficiency of local levels, disaster management and mitigating the impact of climate change, and data-based policymaking.



# Chaotic Nepal



BY: DR. TILAK RAWAL

Politics has remained highly instable since long in Nepal governed by Oli, Deuba and Prachanda. The current dispensation, constituted as a result of late night agreement between Nepali Congress's Deuba and UML's Oli ostensibly to achieve political stability for growth, has seemingly failed to attain the goal set.

Their then declaration that necessary amendments will be made soon to the constitution has become a laughing matter and must be embarrassing them now that their government is about to complete its twelve months. Growing number of people are seen taking to the streets of Kathmandu and elsewhere in the country, protesting misrule and wanting reinstatement of monarchy and Hindu religion. Corruption scandals involving heavyweight politicians are talked about and protested not only on the streets but also in the House. Finance minister Bishnu Poudyal barely got a chance to present the annual budget for the fiscal year (FY) 2025/26 on 29 May as provisioned in the constitution and the lawmakers thereafter stalled House proceedings demanding resignation of Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak accused of involvement in visit visa scandal, a scam in which the responsible immigration authorities are said to have been collecting millions of rupees every day from Nepalis leaving the country for employment outside.

People believe that this money minting business has been continuing in this country since very long involving many ministers in charge of home affairs, but Lekhak, who has done nothing new, has been unlucky enough to be accused by no other than dozens of lawmakers.

The country in recent times witnessed political convulsion emanating from the activities of pro-monarchists, which started with the unprecedented welcome accorded to king (ex) Gyanendra who was returning to Kathmandu from Pokhara. The huge welcome gathering not only encouraged the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), actively seeking restoration of monarchy since long, but also forced the otherwise silent king into responding to the call for his activation. Following this, the protest rally organized by royalists on 28 March 2025 turned violent and caused death of two innocent people including a journalist who was covering the protests in Tinkune of Kathmandu. Protest

leaders and the government are still blaming each other for turning the protest violent, which caused death of people and destruction of properties. RPP Senior Vice President Rabindra Mishra and General Secretary Dhawal Samsher were arrested on state crime charges. They were freed after thorough investigation but Durga

Prasi, the man said to have taken the lead in organizing the protest, is still languishing behind the bar. After the incident, the movement suffered a setback but it did not last long, unlike wished by those against the movement, which was amply demonstrated by increasing number of protesters in days ahead on streets in favor of monarchy and the religion (Hindu). Coming together on single platform of leaders like Rajendra Lingden, Keshar Bista, Kamal Thapa and Nava Raj Subedi and their pledge to jointly work to achieve the twin objective of restoration of monarchy and the religion, seems to have bolstered the confidence of people who are sick and tired of the way this country is ruled/ruined by

**One thing to be noted by our rulers is that it will be very difficult to brush aside this issue as increasing number of people are seen sympathetic to king (ex) Gyanendra who has of late begun to lend an ear to people's urging. The monarch must also be happy that he has now an educated grandson (Hirdayendra Shah) with an untarnished image ready to get into his shoes as and when required. People also believe that his soberness, intellect and desire to stay away from controversy will go a long way in mending the cracks that the institution (monarchy) is said to have suffered on account of Paras (ex crown prince) during his hey days.**

our rulers. Irrespective of who among the monarchists leads the movement, the agitation is not likely to die down. In the midst of news that people are getting suspicious about the desire and ability of political leaders to genuinely push the movement ahead, some observers and analysts see the possibility of movement leadership being taken over

by youths, with elderly politicians providing advisory inputs as and when demanded.

In addition to the monarchy-related movement that seems to have shaken the rulers, some other developments are also coming to the fore to show how badly Nepal has been governed in the last couple of decades. It may be noted that the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) has recently filed a corruption case against 93 individuals, including former Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal. They have been accused of letting the Patanjali Yogpeeth and Ayurveda purchase land above ceiling and letting it dispose the land over time. Meanwhile, the CPN (United Socialist), of which Mr. Nepal is the Chair, has accused the government led by Oli of conspiring against the party and its leadership since long and the latest indictment of Nepal was another conspiracy hatched by Oli. Opinion of people is seen divided on this recent indictment



involving a former head of government. Madhav Nepal is not considered one of the major rulers and is said to be less controversial. Many people feel that some other highly controversial leaders should have been charge sheeted prior to this action. At the same time, one can also easily come across people who feel that this action of the anti-graft body has opened the door for initiation of action against major rulers, too. Very disturbing incidents and the continuing noise both in the House and on the streets abundantly show that Nepal is still instable, politically. Nobody can say with certainty how long will this government stitched together by the Deubas will last.

Prominent leaders of NC like Gagan Thapa have begun to come down heavily on the government, accusing it of non-performance. Some NC leaders believe that their party has been discredited on account of inaction of the government. Influential NC leader Shekhar Koirala believes that the largest party in Parliament should make a move soon to lead the government. Without disagreeing much with him, people, however, would like to know who in NC would lead the next dispensation? May be Koirala is just impatient to see Deuba performing superbly in his sixth stint as prime minister of this country. Deuba, however, is said to have slowed down a bit after his trip to Bangkok (a major Southeast Asian city) towards the end of April where he is believed to have met influential and helping people from South Asia. Prachanda has also slowed down a bit lately, but he seems to be ready to join hands with anyone to oust Oli. Indeed, prominent rulers of this country are thinking day and night just about power politics, ignoring all other things including the ailing economy.

In the FY 2024/25 (2081/82), Nepal's economy is expected to grow by anything between 4 percent (International Monetary Fund) and 4.61 percent (Nepal government). For the next FY, a budget with a total outlay of Rs.1964 billion has been made public, which is 5.38 percent bigger than the earlier budget of Rs.1860 billion. While 60 percent of the outlay has been allocated for recurrent expenditure, capital expenditure accounts for 20.8 percent and financial management explains 19 percent of the total budgeted expenditure. The budget wishes to achieve 6 percent growth and inflation is expected to remain at 5.5 percent. Finance Minister Poudyal is likely to face problems in organizing resources, including revenue collection target of Rs. 1315 billion, to meet the expenditure. In view of the pace of revenue collection thus far (only Rs.1015 billion in 11 months), It may be difficult to meet even the revised revenue collection target of Rs.1267 billion. Flow of foreign grant has not been encouraging either. Considerable reliance, therefore, has been placed in the next budget on borrowing from internal source (Rs.362 billion) and external source (Rs.233.66 billion). On the expenditure front, unless given serious attention right from the beginning, government will have problem spending meaningfully Rs.400 billion kept under capital expenditure head. It is disappointing that in the 11 months of the current FY, only 40 percent of the money allocated under this head has been spent. Without

talking much about the budget in the current fluid situation, we can simply pray that Mr. Poudyal gets a chance to implement the budget written by him so that a moderate growth of around 5 percent could be achieved.

With different kinds of scams such as land scam, land donation scam, gold smuggling scam, Bhutanese refugee scam, and visit visa scam happening over time, one could be tempted to describe Nepal as a land of scams. Some have been arrested and punished but well identified political heavyweights linked to some scandals have remained untouched, much to the disappointment and frustration of commoners. This kind of inaction to save the culprits creates a situation where frustrated people attempt to take law in hand, which has been shown by the recent mistreatment by some individuals of judge Tharu of Birjung temporary bench of the High Court. Tharu is accused of unfairly acquitting Aftab Alam, a former NC lawmaker sentenced to life in prison by the District Court on charges of murder, overturning the verdict of the lower level court. Rulers of this country seem to be taking pride in the fact that nothing against their wish can happen here, probably not realizing how seriously their activities are fueling unrest. Unrest, be it related to monarchy or the religion, is likely to continue with ever increasing number of unemployed youths desperate to vent their frustration. In days ahead, rival rallies for and against major issues such as monarchy, religion and federalism are likely to be seen in increasing number in Kathmandu and elsewhere in the country. Irrespective of the level and genuineness of inputs coming from leaders like Rajendra Lingden, Kamal Thapa, etc., pro-monarchy movement is likely to gain momentum and continue with increasing participation of youths. It could take the shape of Bangladeshi movement where no political party was seen involved, let alone taking the lead. One thing to be noted by our rulers is that it will be very difficult to brush aside this issue as increasing number of people are seen sympathetic to king (ex) Gyanendra who has of late begun to lend an ear to people's urging. The monarch must also be happy that he has now an educated grandson (Hridayendra Shah) with an untarnished image ready to get into his shoes as and when required. People also believe that his soberness, intellect and desire to stay away from controversy will go a long way in mending the cracks that the institution (monarchy) is said to have suffered on account of Paras (ex crown prince) during his hay days. Situation is undoubtedly disturbing, which can be normalized if Deuba and Oli open the door for the creation of an interim government, consisting of honest people, that can be charged with the responsibility of rewriting the constitution, arresting deterioration of the economy, ruthlessly handling corruption and organizing elections under the redone constitution. This is how the much-desired peaceful change can happen in this country saved so far by Lord Pashupatinath.

***Dr. Rawal is a former governor of Nepal Rastra Bank***



## FOURTH PROFESSOR Y.N. KHANAL LECTURE Nepal-China Relations

*As Nepal and China mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Professor Jaya Raj Acharya and Chinese scholar Dr. Yang Chenxi shared their perspectives on the theme of Nepal-China Relations in the context of South Asia: opportunities, challenges, and the road ahead. Hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the two scholars discussed various issues in the fourth edition of the Professor Yadu Nath Khanal Lecture Series.*

By KESHAB POUDEL

With China's economic growth as the world's second-largest economy, it is increasingly influential in global trade and power dynamics. In this context, Nepal, which shares a border of over 1400 kilometers with China, finds itself in a crucial and complex position when formulating policies. Even though it was stated over 250 years ago, King Prithvi Narayan Shah's de-



scription of Nepal as the yam between two boulders remains highly relevant.

Nepal is situated between two major Asian powers, China to the north and India to the south, each with significant historical, cultural, and strategic interests in the country. The Pokhara International Airport is a prime example that highlights the complexities of these relationships. Despite being built with Chinese funding and expertise to enhance Ne-

pal's infrastructure, the airport is currently underutilized due to India's refusal to grant air route permissions for international flights through its airspace. This situation underscores the challenges of Chinese infrastructure initiatives that overlook India's security concerns in the region. However, through effective diplomacy and negotiation, these issues can be resolved for the mutual benefit of all parties involved. India has consistently emphasized that its security interests in Nepal are non-negotiable," stated Professor Jayaraj Acharya during his presen-

tation.

Given Nepal's shared civilization, religion, and cultural ties with India, as well as its geographical proximity, the country must carefully navigate its foreign policy to maintain a delicate balance.



Professor Acharya, a former Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, and Dr. Yang, a Chinese scholar, provided detailed insights on the opportunities, challenges, and future prospects for enhancing bilateral relations between Nepal and China.

Dr. Yang Chenxi serves as the Director of the Department of International and Strategic Studies at the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), a prestigious think tank affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Dr. Yang earned his PhD in International Politics from

Jilin University and has been a part of CIIS since 2013, holding key roles at the Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy Studies Centre and the Policy Planning Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His research focuses on Xi Jinping Thought on

Diplomacy, China's foreign policy, international strategic affairs, and regional diplomacy, particularly China's relations with neighboring countries.

The recent high-level interaction on Nepal-Chi-

na relations in the context of South Asia, part of the fourth edition of the Prof. Yadu Nath Kanal Lecture series, holds great significance as Nepal and China celebrate 70 years of diplomatic ties.

The discussions at the Professor Yadu Nath Kanal Lecture Series primarily centered on Nepal's relations with its two neighbors, India and China.

Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba emphasized the strengthening of relations with various countries through traditions and dialogue. She highlighted the



## COVERSTORY

close collaboration between China and Nepal, focusing on mutual prosperity while respecting each other's sovereignty and the One-China Policy.

Rana noted China's significant role as a major source of foreign aid to Nepal and highlighted the potential benefits of the Belt and Road Initiative agreement signed between the two countries for Nepal's development.

The two countries have agreed to enhance air and people-to-people connections and strengthen cooperation in various other areas," she stated, highlighting China's impressive progress in poverty alleviation as a model for Nepal.

"Prof. Khanal's diplomatic practices and writings showcased his wisdom in guiding Nepal to pursue its crucial interests within the constraints of the time. He played a key role in expanding and diversifying Nepal's diplomatic relationships. His insights, drawn from extensive experience and keen observations of international politics, con-

tinued to inspire and guide subsequent generations of Nepali intellectuals and foreign policy practitioners," remarked acting Secretary Narayan Dhakal.

"His belief that Nepal must

to support Nepal in its economic development efforts and collaborate on economic growth initiatives.

This year, we have chosen Nepal-China relations as the theme, which is both timely and significant, especially as we mark the 70th anniversary of our diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China."

Initiated by Bharat Raj Paudyal, who is currently serv-

ing as ambassador to Canada, along with support from former chief secretary Shanker Das Bairagi, who also held the position of foreign secretary, the Lecture Series was established in honor of the late Professor Yadu Nath Khanal's remarkable contributions.

Jaya Raj Acharya stated, "At present, Nepal finds itself at a critical juncture in South Asian geopolitics, making it essential to discuss the evolving relationship between Nepal and the People's Republic of China. With China's increasing global influence, it is important to explore how both countries can benefit from their cooperation.



maintain clarity, consistency, credibility, and coherence in foreign policy remains as pertinent today as it was during Prof. Khanal's era."

Addressing the program's main theme, political scientist Dr. Acharya emphasized the importance of leveraging tactical diplomatic skills to benefit from China's increasing prosperity and global influence.

Likewise, Chinese foreign policy expert Professor Yang Chenqi, another keynote speaker, affirmed that Nepal's longstanding relationship with China has always been a priority. He expressed China's readiness



Additionally, we must carefully navigate the growing Chinese-Indian geopolitical rivalry and manage American strategic interests in the region.”

He said that their approach remains highly relevant to Nepal even in the 21st century. Professor Khanal was keenly aware of the challenge Nepal faced in maintaining a friendly balance between the two most populous nations in the world, India and China, with differing political ideologies. Acharya said this delicate balance was evident in the Sino-Indian border clash of 1962 and subsequent incidents. He emphasized the need for Nepal to remain vigilant and objectively assess the evolving power dynamics on both sides, as it has done in the past.

He said that Nepal has always prioritized its national interests when engaging with China and other countries. It firmly believes that fostering friendships with both India and China simultaneously is in its best

interest and benefits the broader regional community. Non-alignment principles advocate for promoting interdependence rather than confrontation among nations, and Nepal’s geographical location necessitates interdependence between India, China, and itself.

He said that Nepal has significant potential in these areas and could benefit from Chinese technology and investment. The country still faces a shortfall in meeting its current energy needs, and there will be increasing demand in the future from sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and industry. This demand could also extend to markets in India, Bangladesh, and the Tibetan region of China.

Professor Acharya said that Nepal and China could further enhance their relationship through educational and cultural exchanges to foster better understanding and stronger people-to-people connections. Additionally, Nepal could serve as a

gateway for Chinese tourists interested in spiritual or adventure tourism in Lumbini and the Himalayas.

“Due to open borders, deep cultural and religious connections, and economic ties, Nepal’s decisions are closely monitored by New Delhi. When Nepal joined the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), India expressed concerns about potential threats to its influence in the region. However, this may not necessarily be the case,” said Acharya.

The talk series, led by Kiran Shakya, a joint secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, included a question and answer session where participants sought clarification on various topics. The program highlighted the 70 years of Nepal-China relations and discussed the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

# Navigating An Uncharted, Unravelling World Order



BY: DIPAK GYAWALI

G7 is unravelling before our eyes: it dropped mentioning any support for Ukraine; there was disagreement about uniting for a “regime change” in Iran; no critical issues such as next week’s NATO summit to iron out conflicting agenda could be discussed; its foundational pillar, the US under Trump effectively declared that summit of the leaders of the Collective West a waste of time; and it could not even release a joint communique. Indeed, as Trump abandoned the meeting, he upended the decade-old G7 policies of kicking out Russia and excluding China from the outset by characterizing them as big mistakes that have led to the current world disorder. All this effectively diminished the remaining G6 as midgets on the world stage. It proves the prevalent view in the Global South, best articulated by former Sri Lankan president Ranil Wickremesinghe, that G7 is irrelevant and what really matters in the years ahead is G20 in a multipolar world where BRICS members are a majority both in numbers and economic prowess.

The subject of decline of great powers, indeed of civilizations, has been of interest to many scholars; and it might be useful to focus on the gist of what they had to say before using those insights to try and make sense of the here and now. The first to try and overturn a linear and hegemonic view of history upheld by dominant powers was Edward Gibbon in the last quartile of the 18th century, who studied the decline of the Roman Empire, concluding that it was the loss of its civic virtues that weakened it and allowed external forces to overwhelm it. Writing after the disastrous internecine European war called with Eurocentric myopia as the First World War a century and a quarter after Gibbon, Oswald Spengler saw the decline of the West in a money grubbing plutocracy that disguised itself in the garb of democracy. Writing about all different human civilizations across the globe during the period that saw the rise of Fascism in Europe and the carnage of the second World War, Arnold Toynbee perceptively noted that loss of spiritual legitimacy, an alienated internal and an aggrieved external

set of proletariats (those outside the elite’s core) were the primary contributing factors that led to the decline of civilizations.

Looking at the Collective West through their scholarly lenses, one can discern striking parallels. As the ruling elites degenerate (think ‘Epstein files’, Stormy Daniels or ‘cocaine in train from Ukraine’), they strive to maintain their power by force (military suppression inside and adventurism outside) or by graft-tinged blandishments both disguised by dubious legalistic means. Whether it is Seattle and LA riots in the US, race riots in UK, or those in Paris, what Bernie Sanders calls the 1% (ruling elites) are resorting to forceful suppression of discontent among the 99%. They are also trying monetary blandishments with ‘pork barrel’ budgets and social programs funded by printing money and borrowings. When elites give up on productive industrial capital and resort to using financial capital, both social and military decline are inevitable as the Italian political philosopher Giovanni Arrighi has noted.

This “living beyond one’s means” has resulted in the US drowning in a 37 trillion-dollar debt. Its interest payment is bigger than its defense budget which is bigger than the sum of that of the next top military powers in the world. It was unthinkable a decade or so back but is now openly speculated that the US might default on its debt, thus throwing the entire global financial world into turmoil. It is, as Arrighi and others predicted, the result of an elite shunning manufacturing (“exporting dirty manufacturing to under-polluted Third World countries” as US treasury secretary Larry Summers notoriously said) and relying on finance capital (and shoddy banking Ponzi schemes) to retain their hold. Unfortunately for them, with the outflow of manufacturing went the capacity to build weapons, which incidentally has shifted to countries sanctioned by the Collective West such as Russia, Iran, North Korea and China.



The entire edifice of Western global economic dominance is based on the post-World War-2 Bretton Woods arrangements that required the US dollar to be both the world's trading and reserve currency. The first nail in that coffin was hammered in 1971 when Richard Nixon delinked the dollar from gold and allowed it to float, thus enabling the US to print dollars to finance its consumption as well as the Vietnam War. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, the US began weaponizing the dollar and borrowing even more to sustain a burgeoning consumptive lifestyle.

Although it did lead to a successful revolt of oil supplying nations in the form of an OPEC counterweight, the damage to Western financial dominance was contained. However, subsequent weaponization of the dollar and the financial trading system by the Collective West with the failure of the US to fulfil its role as a custodian of that dollar has backfired: it led to a process of BRICS decoupling from the dollar and jeopardizing the US's ability to print money. The sanctioned countries have hit back by dumping US treasury bills, shifting to gold as reserve and trading in their own currencies.

While this collapsing old order was called Pax Americana (a successor to Pax Britannica that collapsed with the end of World War-2), it was primarily maintained by a balance of power between the Collective West and the Communist Block. However, despite the "peace" in the terminology, there were many wasteful wars initiated by the US (with its NATO allies in tow) to enforce or enlarge its hegemony: Korea (1950-53), Vietnam (1955-75), Iraq-Iran (1980-88), Yugoslavia (1990-2001), Afghanistan (2001-21), Kuwait (1990-91), Iraq (2003-11), and Libya (2011-20).

Currently other such wars are: the use of Ukraine as a proxy for war against Russia; the ousting of Assad in Syria and replacing him with a terrorist with a 10 million dollar bounty on his head; and the most recent Israeli genocide in Gaza and aggression against Iran. While earlier wars had a more dominant military narrative behind them, the latter ones are more overtly about resource capture. In Syria, it was for oil

in Kirkuk; in Libya, it was to prevent a gold dinar challenging US dollar supremacy; and in Ukraine it was for both control of Ukraine's agriculture land and rare minerals as well as dismemberment of Russia (also here) for its natural resources.

When old orders collapse, chaos ensues with repercussions far and wide. Accompanying the inability of the old hegemon to impose its will (and its definition of what "order" is) is the rise of hitherto suppressed tensions all around. On the surface, they may look like law-and-order or military

issues, but underneath roil tectonic forces of ancient rivalries. Behind the conflict in Ukraine (its eastern versus its western half), lies the split in Christianity in 1054AD into Roman Catholic and Eastern (including Russian) Orthodox Christianity. That is what prompted Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov to reject the offer of Pope

Leo XIV of Rome for mediation in the Vatican, saying two Orthodox Christian countries meeting in the seat of Catholicism would be most inappropriate.

The religious situation in West Asia is even more complicated. On the one hand there is the 1000-year old Shia-Sunni divide where rulers of many countries are mostly Sunni while a significant part of their population are Shia as in Iran. On the other is the rifts and unnatural coalitions (as between Zionists and US Evangelicals as well as the AI-PAC) within Abrahamic religions where "us versus them" gentile, unbeliever, kaffir divide underlies the seismic ruptures. Its most rabid form is Netanyahu using the Bible's Old Testament to justify his genocide in Gaza. As the Old World Order disintegrates, these ancient rifts will achieve increasing salience that will sorely tax the inclusive, ecumenical statesmanship of new leaders who would have to design a New World Order of the future.



## KOREAN RETURNEES

# Successful Integration

*Korean returnees who have found success in establishing businesses based on their experiences in Korea are sharing their stories of successful integration and entrepreneurship in Nepal.*

By KESHAB POUDEL

**S**uresh Bahadur Chhetri, a 37-year-old resident of Bareng Rural Municipality in Baglung district of Gandaki Province, had aspirations of becoming an entrepreneur. His eight-year stint as a migrant worker in South Korea proved to be instrumental in achieving this goal upon his return home.

Chhetri was selected under the EPS program in 2011 and spent seven years working in Korea before deciding to establish a tourism-based agriculture venture in his hometown. Shortly after coming back from Korea, he launched an organic agro-tourism business by opening a restaurant in Butwal that showcased local products. Despite facing challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Chhetri remained determined to pursue his entrepreneurial dreams.

Today, his restaurant offers a variety of cuisines made from locally sourced ingredients, with one of the standout dishes being meat from domesticated kalig pheasants. Chhetri emphasized that his experience in Korea not only helped him earn money but also equipped him with the skills and knowledge needed to run a successful business.

Similarly, Dharmaraj Joshi, a resident of Dhangadhi in Sudurpaschim Province, spent a decade working in Korea after being selected through the EPS program. His time in Korea enabled him to acquire the resources and expertise to establish his own business back home, creating job opportunities for others.

Joshi has made significant contributions to his community in Sudurpaschim by setting up a cooperative and operating a hardware store in Dhangadhi that features local products. Both Chhetri and Joshi exemplify how the EPS program not only provides employment opportunities but also fosters

development.

Despite the large number of Nepalese engaged in foreign employment, there are only a few books that document and share the experiences of returning migrants and their contributions.

The publication of this book and the sharing of success stories by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Nepal have been instrumental in inspiring other returning migrants.

Among the millions of returning migrants, those who came back from Korea have shown how to succeed in Nepal by applying the skills they acquired abroad.

Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Bishnu Prasad Poudel, along with Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Nepal Park

Tae-young, endorsed the contributions of returning migrant workers by launching the book titled “You can be the Boss’ Tapai Pani Malik Banna Saknuhuncha.”

The book showcases success stories of Nepali returnees from South Korea, highlighting their achievements in various sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, services, and education. These stories demonstrate the positive impact of their work in Korea through the Employment Permit System (EPS).

The book launch event, attended by media personnel and successful returnees, aimed to inspire Nepali youth to explore economic opportunities and make a cultural impact.



the development of human resources for individuals seeking to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors.

Over half a million people have returned home after working in foreign countries, but hundreds of people have gone missing. However, many individuals like Chhetri and Joshi, who returned from Korea, are making significant contributions to the national economy by utilizing their skills within the country.

Authored by Shva Prasad Pokharel, a recently published book featuring the stories of 50 Nepali migrant workers who returned from Korea highlights the role of foreign employment in the country’s prosperity and economic de-



Organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Kathmandu, this is the second book featuring successful stories of returnee migrant workers from Korea.

During the event, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Bishnu Paudel stressed the importance of encouraging Nepali youth to seek opportunities within the country. He emphasized that Nepal has great potential but currently lacks individuals willing to build their future there.

Finance Minister Paudel highlighted Nepal's vast potential and emphasized the importance of utilizing its resources for prosperity. He also stressed the significance of using skills and capital acquired abroad to accelerate the country's development.

He acknowledged the abundant natural beauty, culture, history, and archaeology of Nepal, emphasizing the importance of utilizing domestic resources for the country's future. Minister Paudel recognized the interconnected nature of the modern world, where people often cross borders for education, work, or business opportunities.

Minister Paudel encouraged Nepalese youth to leverage the skills and knowledge they acquired in Korea for the betterment of Nepal, expressing optimism that their contributions would propel the nation towards prosperity. He also noted that their experiences could serve as inspiration for others to return home and contribute to Nepal's development.

Ambassador Park Tae-young of the Republic of Korea praised the positive impact of the EPS program, which has facilitated over 100,000 Nepalese workers to work in Korea under fair conditions since 2007. He stressed that the program has provided valuable opportunities for Nepalese youth to secure employment, return with dignity, and uplift their communities, highlighting that the EPS program is more than just a labor initiative—it is a partnership for human development.

He expressed pride in unveiling the second edition of this publication, which now features 50 success stories, nearly double the number from last year's collection of 26, all authored by Mr. Shiva Prasad Pokharel. These returning migrant workers have emerged as catalysts for progress in Nepal through their commitment, diligence, and aspirations.

This book is more than just a collection of individual experiences; it stands as a testament to the transformative impact of bilateral employment cooperation between Korea and Nepal under the Employment Permit System (EPS),



Ambassador P Park Tae-young emphasized.

Kong Moo Heon, the Country Director of KOICA and a special guest at the event, expressed, "I am honored to represent KOICA at the launch of this new book."

The stories shared by the two Korean returnee migrants who have successfully established industries in Nepal and the influence of Korean learning on their endeavors are highly relevant to policymakers currently working on reintegrating returnee migrant workers.

As Ambassador Park rightly noted, "Each individual featured in this book embarked on their journey with courage, leaving their homes to work in Korea, where they not only earned income but also gained skills, discipline, and a vision for their future. Upon returning to Nepal, they invested their earnings, both financially and experientially, in creating businesses, generating local

employment, and contributing to their communities. They are now part of a positive cycle of migration, reintegration, and national development."

"These 50 entrepreneurs exemplify what can be accomplished when opportunity meets ambition. They are not just success stories; they are role models, and their experiences illustrate that well-managed and mutually respectful temporary labor migration can bring sustainable benefits to both countries."

Ambassador Park also handed out letters of appreciation to the Korean returnee migrants at the event. These 50 entrepreneurs showcase the potential that arises when opportunity meets ambition. They are not just success stories, but also role models, demonstrating that well-managed and mutually respectful temporary labor migration can bring sustainable benefits to both countries.

This accomplishment is a reflection of the enduring friendship between our two nations. Over the past two decades, Korea and Nepal

have collaborated closely within the EPS framework. Since 2007, more than 100,000 Nepalese migrant workers have worked in Korea under the EPS program on equal footing with Koreans. This initiative has provided valuable opportunities for Nepalese youth to secure employment, return with dignity, and uplift their communities back home. The EPS is more than just a labor program—it is a partnership for human development.

To further enhance this partnership, the Korean government, through KOICA, has been implementing the "K-Hami" project, which offers support for reintegration at various stages from pre-departure to post-return. This support includes entrepreneurship training, business development guidance, and access to resources and tools to empower returning workers to establish their future in Nepal. The positive feedback we have received so far is truly inspiring.



# Korea And Nepal Have Cooperated Closely Under The EPS Framework



BY: PARK TAE-YOUNG

It is a great honor and pleasure to join you today at this meaningful occasion—the launching ceremony of a book that tells the inspiring stories of returnee migrant workers. Today, we are proud to present the second edition of this publication. This edition now features 50 success stories—nearly twice as last year’s collection of 26, written by Mr. Shiva Prasad Pokharel. Those returnee migrant workers have become drivers of progress in Nepal through their hard work, determination, and dreams.

This book is not merely a compilation of individual experience; it is a living record of the transformative power of bilateral employment cooperation between Korea and Nepal under the Employment Permit System (EPS). Each individual featured in this book began their journey with courage—leaving home to work in Korea, where they gained not only income but skills, discipline, and a vision for their future. Upon returning to Nepal, they invested what they had earned—both financially and experientially—into creating businesses, generating local jobs, and contributing to their communities. They are now part of a virtuous cycle of migration, reintegration, and national development.

These 50 entrepreneurs exemplify what is possible when opportunity is met with ambition. They are more than success stories—they are role models, and their journeys are proof that temporary labor migration, when well-managed and mutually respectful, can bring sustainable benefits to both countries.

This achievement is also a testament to our two countries’ enduring friendship. Over the last two decades, Korea and Nepal have cooperated closely under the EPS framework. Since 2007, over 100,000 Nepalese migrant workers have worked in Korea on equal terms with Koreans through the EPS program. It has created meaningful pathways for Nepalese youth to gain employment, return with dignity, and

uplift their home communities. The EPS is not just a labor program—it is a human development partnership.

To further strengthen this partnership, the Korean government, through KOICA, has been implementing the “K-Hammi” project, offering stage-wise reintegration support from pre-departure to post-return. It includes entrepreneurship training, business development mentoring, and access to tools and resources to empower returning workers to build their future here in Nepal. The positive response we have seen so far is deeply encouraging.

Nepal is a young and dynamic country. With the average age in the mid-20s, the potential of Nepalese youth is immense. By supporting their entrepreneurial journey, we are not just helping individuals—we are helping build the foundation of Nepal’s economic growth and resilience.

Last year marked 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties, and this year is the first year of the new chapter to further enhance that cooperation over the next 50 years. This publication is a timely and symbolic celebration

and highlights how our collaboration has evolved—from people-to-people exchanges to development partnership that touch real lives.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all the returnees who courageously shared their stories, and to all our Nepali partners who work tirelessly to make this cooperation fruitful.

Let us continue to walk together on this journey—supporting dreams, building opportunities, and forging a future where both our countries can prosper side by side.

Congratulations once again on the launch of this inspiring book. I look forward to reading the success stories of not just 50, but 100 and more Nepali returnees in the years to come.

*Park Tae-young is the current Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Nepal. Excerpts of his speech delivered during the release of the book You can be the Boss’ Tapai Pani Malik Banna Saknuhuncha written in Nepali by Shiva Prasad Pokharel.*



# Engaging With Local

## *Upper Trishuli-1 Hydropower Handed Over Ambulance To Project Affected Uttargaya Rural Municipality*

By A CORRESPONDENT

Fulfilling its Social Corporate Responsibility, The Nepal Water and Energy Development Company (NWEDC) has been providing support to local community in different sectors in remote Rasuwa district.

NWEDC, the developer of the 216 MW Upper Trishuli-1 Hydropower Project—sponsored by the Korean state-owned utility company KOEN as the main shareholder—has donated an ambulance to the project-affected rural municipalities in the district.

The key to the ambulance was handed over by Byeong Soo Min, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NWEDC, to Madhav Prasad Aryal, Chairperson of the Rural Municipality, during a ceremony held at the Rural Municipality Office in Ward No. 5, Khaltebagar, on June 16, 2025.

The ambulance will be operated by the local health post of the municipality. Provided under the project's Community Support Program (CSP), the ambulance is equipped with modern facilities and is intended to deliver humanitarian services such as emergency medical transport for disaster victims, accident casualties, critical patients, and maternity cases from the project-affected areas. Previously, the company had also donated an ambulance to another project-affected area, Aamachhodingmo Rural Municipality. That ambulance is currently being operated by the Haku Health Post, located in Ward No. 1, Haku.

At the ambulance handover ceremony, NWEDC's CEO, Mr. Byeong Soo Min, stated that the ambulance was provided with the aim of improving access to basic healthcare services for residents of the project-affected areas. Emphasizing that those affected by the project are the primary beneficiaries, he noted that the Community Support Program is being implemented with this focus in mind. He expressed confidence that the ambulance would serve as a milestone in ensuring timely access to healthcare for patients

in remote areas. He also urged the rural municipality and local residents to extend their support and cooperation for the timely completion of the project.

Chairperson of the Rural Municipality, Madhav Prasad Aryal, stated that the ambulance would help residents of remote and hard-to-reach areas gain access to modern healthcare services. He emphasized that all programs initiated by the project should be implemented in close

tion, healthcare, drinking water, road infrastructure, cultural preservation, relief distribution, livelihoods restoration, and income generation.

Led by Korean companies, the project is being developed through Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The headwork's are under construction in Haku, Ward No. 1 of Aamachhodingmo Rural Municipality, and the underground powerhouse and associated structures are being built in

Ward No. 1 of Uttargaya Rural Municipality, both located in Rasuwa District. The Upper Trishuli-1 project is the largest foreign FDI hydropower project under construction in Nepal intended for domestic electricity consumption.

The main construction works began in December 2021, and the project has achieved 63% overall physical progress as of now. Of the 9.5 km-long headrace tunnel, only 400 meters remain to be excavated. Of the approximately 1,000 workers currently employed on the project, 40% are from the affected areas of Rasuwa District.

The project is being implemented under an Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) model by the Korean company Doosan Enerbility. The developer, Nepal Water and Energy Development Company (NWEDC), includes equity investment from Korea South-East Power Co. Ltd. (KOEN), the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank Group, and others.

It is expected to generate approximately 1,456 GWh of electricity annually—38.75% during the winter season and 61.25% during the rainy season. Due to its proximity to the Kathmandu load center and its ability to supply 104 MW of power even during high-demand winter months, the project is considered highly attractive for Nepal's power system. It will provide a stable 104 MW of firm energy throughout the year. The construction is targeted for completion by December 2026.



coordination with the affected municipalities. The ambulance handover ceremony was attended by the Vice-Chairperson of the Rural Municipality, Ward Chairpersons, members of the rural executive body, the chief of the health center, officials from the Indigenous Nationalities Council, and local residents, among others.

The ambulance was procured in accordance with the standards outlined in the National Ambulance Directive of the Government of Nepal. The government also granted a customs duty exemption on its import. The ambulance, purchased under this tax exemption scheme, is valued at NPR 2.5 million.

The project has invested over NPR 170 million in the affected areas to date through its CSP, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP). It has been supporting these areas in key sectors such as educa-

# Power Sector Uncertainties

## Tracking Peril And Paradoxes



BY: PRABAL ADHIKARI

In addition to electricity import from India during the months of dry season, Nepal also buys fossil fuels in a substantial chunk of its energy needs. The energy mix of Nepal roughly consists of about 26 percent of the total energy consumed in a year. It's so embarrassing to state that even around 7 percent of grid electricity that the country is consuming comes partly from India which combats

its own problems to avoid mismatches between demand and supply after solar hours during Nepal's power deficit months. India's journey towards clean energy transition is, in itself, a huge challenge to grid stability owing to the intermittent nature of the variable energy sources and the requirement of the increasing ramping capability for system operation flexibility.

Private sector of Nepal continues its race in hydropower development relentlessly, but the Government policies associated with it flicker and shine less steadily, thereby diminishing the landscape of optimum outcome that could be. Nepal's internal weakness to develop reservoir-based hydropower projects, despite huge advocacies and political proclamations uttering the voices for energy security, may ultimately drive Nepal to embrace long power cuts in future, making life worse than ever before given that power import embraces technical or geopolitical hurdles.

The implications of this prognosis are that economic chaos will be rampant and waving any nationalist cards will not work at that time since the widely looming resentment caused by several factors including unemployment may spark public propensity to deliver a knockout blow to our entire political system. To avoid such perils for which soft sirens are already in progress, the Government needs to heed it without further delay, stop playing hypocrisy and be cautiously working out a pragmatic exit-strategy to secure energy future. With the national peak demand roughly in the range of 2,000-2,200 Megawatts and the total installed capacity of about 3,600 MW, Nepal is bound to combat two different situations: power surplus in wet season and power deficit in dry season, demanding the role of cross border power trading in both cases. However, the first one is relatively easy to resolve as Nepal and India have principally agreed that India will be importing Nepal's surplus power up to 10,000 MW in ten years on long-term basis. In this regard, Nepal needs to accomplish three major activities. The first one is building more and more hydropower projects of all types and generating power more than our domestic demand. The second one is developing robust transmission facilities for seamless power flow, and the third one is reaching out to the neighboring countries' markets along with coherent policies igniting and supporting accelerated power sector reform coupled with a strong regulatory regime.

Nepal is a vulnerable country from energy security perspective. However, there are bright aspects, too. Nepal should not

be scared of wet season surplus power, blaming Run-of-River (ROR) projects for this scenario. Yes, it is true that enough storage types of hydropower projects could overturn the case to some extent since we could have stored the water seasonally for dry season generation of electricity. However, we need to

stand up with the reality which simply means a very limited storage capacity to

the extent of 106 Megawatts from cascaded Kulekhani plants developed so far and one more project called Tanahu under construction with its installed capacity of 140 Megawatts. In fact, having considered this scenario, ROR and Peaking ROR hydropower projects being developed by various companies through long-term power purchase agreements with Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) have really played amazing roles for fulfilling the domestic power needs of the country, seasonal power export, employment creation and contribution to local and national economies. The development of these projects has also paved the way for incredible capacity building and today it will not be an exaggeration to say that Nepali citizens have developed their own expertise in designing hydropower projects and providing all associated consulting services including environmental studies without having to search for foreign consultants as in the earlier days.

While arriving at this juncture with some success and some failures, let us appreciate the role of Government as a policy maker and conducive environment creator, the role of private sector as hydropower developers and the role of NEA as the electricity buyer without undermining any of them as it's something like 'symbiosis' producing synergy for economic development spurred by hydropower production. Knowingly or unknowingly, a sort of feud sometimes unfolds, distancing the Government and the private sector from each other on some issues concerned with hydropower development. In fact, it should be avoided, corrected and aligned, if any. The course and contours sketched beyond coherence will be not be only injurious but also disastrous to the national economy in general and to the entire power sector in particular. As such, let us give the private sector a big hand for becoming a beam of hope in Nepal's electricity industry. The role given to it should be extended to transmission, distribution and trading of power, too, in the days to come, through proper legislations, policy setting and regulations.

With exceptions in the form of mid-term bilateral transactions with the entities of India and Bangladesh to some extent, Nepal has been mainly relying on India's power exchange to sell its seasonal surplus of hydropower. That is why the power export has not been considered resilient as it involves repeating the approval process every year on project wise basis and the transaction in the day-ahead and real time markets of power exchanges undergo high price uncertainties. As such, the major



chunk of exportable power should find commercial arrangements on long-term or medium-term bilateral basis, especially to avoid market uncertainties. As India is establishing more and more big data centers which are highly energy-intensive and require stable sources of 24/7 reliable energy, Nepal's surplus power can find a good market in India in the years to come to meet increasing power demands of such centers.

Besides the export portfolio available in the electricity value chain, the Government may pay special attention to explore other ways of consuming surplus 'green' energy in the form of hydropower within the country itself without further worries of consumption. Establishing data centers in Nepal by encouraging domestic and international investment may be one of them for channeling some of the surplus power to cushion its fiscal blow as the country can be an excellent choice attributable to its strategic location between the world's two largest economies favorable for data traffic routing and less expenses required in building cooling infrastructures. Data centers form 'clouds' which store and process data for generating information. Nepal can learn from the example of Bhutan how it has been utilizing its green power and reducing export to India by establishing and expanding highly energy-intensive crypto-currency industries. Bitcoin mining operations have changed the landscape of their electricity demand and supply without fully relying on the Indian market for the export of their wet season hydropower.

Worries about the future of power sector have flared in Nepal for long. Even after laws, policies, directives, roadmaps, executive orders and many others, Nepal's power sector is not free of paradoxes. It is conspicuously full of contradictions, leaving several issues and aspects unresolved. In this context, stakeholders have played up the need of the new electricity act which should be more liberal, more sector-friendly and more consistent with international trends in the present-day context. Despite skepticism, hopes are beaming for the parliamentary review and the earliest approval of its draft presented by the Government so that anomalies, if any, would be effectively dealt with, filtered and trashed to the extent required.

For now, here is how the prevailing paradoxes have been clipping the power sector's wings in Nepal's context.

Hydropower licenses are issued by the Department of Electricity, but reticulations and restrictions are occasionally exhibited by NEA for signing power purchase agreement (PPA), albeit both as Government wings.

There is only a single entity in the country to sign PPA, but the budget puts forward take-and-pay theory.

There are transmission constraints for seamless power flow to take place, but the transmission business is not open to the private sector.

We talk a lot about open access in transmission and distribution, but the associated infrastructures, albeit insufficient, are owned by an entity which is also the generator, transmitter, distributor and trader of power.

We are talking as if just the issuance of power trading licenses to the private sector would do wonders so that generators could sell power through them immediately. But we have not yet paid enough attention to power traders' issues like where to sell power and how to sell power through them in the context that neither transmission capacity is enough in the country nor open access can work without institutional reforms.

Further, Hydropower Development Policy 2001 provisions that power export licenses can be categorically issued only for the projects above 100 MW of installed capacity, thereby confining the trade and consumption of electricity generated from the projects up to 100 MW to domestic level only. A power trader, as such, cannot have choices for any distribution entities other than NEA to trade power in the current context.

Likewise, contradicting the provision of generation license for the term up to 50 years as per the Electricity Act 1992, the subsequent policy issued in 2001 restricted it to 35 years only in the case of a non-storage hydropower project supplying the internal demand and to a period further less by 5 years in the case of export-oriented non-storage ones. It is to be noted that Government of India's Guidelines regarding cross border power trading requires each generation project to obtain the government permission individually to export the power it generates and the eligibility criteria as per India's policy documents for power export from a project must be duly fulfilled.

Electricity Act 1992 does not mention power trading as a distinct licensed activity, but a power trading license has been issued to NEA-led power trading company and the private sector companies incorporated under the same company law for the same purpose are denied under the same Electricity Act.

Hydropower projects are generating surplus electricity in the wet season, and consequently Nepal has been earning significant revenue from its export, but there are advocacies among so-called nationalists that it should not happen.

Nepal is immensely rich in hydropower potential, but it has combatted the worst loadshedding in the past with the chances of its reoccurrence in future, still hovering, if not properly tackled in terms of increasing own generation and circumstantial failure for dry-season power import during deficit.

The consequences are clear. A big chunk of possibilities has gone amidst uncertainties. Nevertheless, we are not getting ready yet to embark on a promising journey in power sector without a fluster. Let us hope it will not be a long wait.

***The author is a Senior Energy Expert and the former Deputy Managing Director of Nepal Electricity Authority.***



## Glaciers Demand: Annapurna's Lesson



BY: ARUP RAJOURIA

When “ecotourism” is mentioned—a concept now advocated worldwide as a model for sustainable travel, conservation, and community empowerment—few realize that its true genesis lies in the rugged trails and picturesque village of Nepal’s Ghandruk in the Annapurna region and not from any fancy boardrooms or Ivy League classrooms. The Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), conceived and implemented under the aegis of the then King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC), now the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), and with the pivotal support of the Government of Nepal, deserves recognition for coining and practicing ecotourism long before it entered the lexicon of the travel trade and development agencies alike. More importantly, ACAP’s architecture was engineered by Nepalis, for Nepalis, and implemented by Nepalis—an out-of-the-box, homegrown solution embedded in the belief that only a locally led approach could deliver lasting conservation and prosperity for the region’s people, culture and landscapes.

ACAP’s story is one of indigenous innovation born from necessity. In the 1980s, as unmanaged trekking tourism began to threaten the fragile Himalayan environment and important watershed for major rivers, Nepal’s government and conservation leaders saw the need for a new approach. The old models—often exclusionary and top-down—were no longer fit for purpose. What emerged instead was a truly out-of-the-box vision: conservation and tourism could and should work hand in hand, with local communities as partners and beneficiaries. This approach put villagers at the heart of decision-making, ensured that trekking revenues funded education, health, and infrastructure, and made environmental education a core part of daily life. ACAP’s integrated model set new standards for responsible tourism and cultural preservation, changing the way the world thinks about the relationship between people and protected areas.

However, ACAP’s achievements were not possible in isolation. The Government of Nepal’s policy support legiti-

mized and enabled this pioneering experiment, ensuring it was mainstreamed into the national development agenda. ACAP also benefited from the dedicated support of global partners. Organizations like the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Netherlands’s SNV, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Global Environment Facility (GEF) and others all played important roles. These development partners provided the resources needed to scale up ACAP’s impact, making it an example for sustainable development across the Himalayas and beyond.



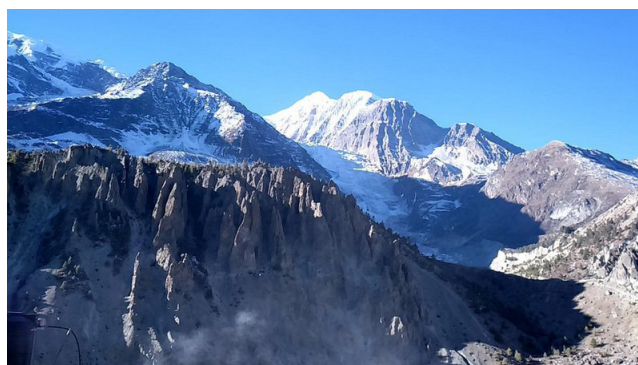
Yet as we celebrate this legacy on World Environment Day, we must also confront a sobering reality. The challenges facing mountain regions like Annapurna have evolved. Human induced climate change is driving the rapid retreat of Himalayan glaciers, melting the very ice that feeds rivers, sustains biodiversity, and supports billions of lives. In just 15 years, Annapurna’s glaciers have lost more than ten percent of their area. The Gangapurna Glacier in Manang alone has shrunk by over 900 meters since the 1960s. The

Hindu Kush Himalaya glaciers are projected to lose fifty percent of their glacier mass by 2050. As water supplies dwindle and new glacial lakes threaten catastrophic floods, the risks have become regional and global.

Here lies the inconvenient truth: today's institutions and traditional approaches are not equipped to address tomorrow's problems. Just as the old conservation models were inadequate for the challenges of the 1980s in Nepal's Annapurna, our current frameworks are too fragmented and reactive to meet the scale, speed, and complexity of glacier retreat. The world urgently needs a new kind of leadership and a new kind of institution—one that is willing to think out of the box, just as KMTNC once did.

This is why, I strongly believe, that the case for an International Center for Glaciers (ICG) could not be clearer or more urgent. Recent studies show that glaciers worldwide have lost about 5% of their total ice mass since 2000, with the rate of melting increasing by more than a third in the last decade alone. This is not just a matter of vanishing ice: it is a direct threat to the water security, food production, and disaster resilience of billions of people who depend on these frozen reservoirs. The United Nations' designation of 2025 as the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation and the establishment of the annual World Day for Glaciers are global acknowledgments that the fate of our glaciers is now a defining challenge for humanity.

Despite the urgency, our collective response remains fragmented and insufficient. While there are valuable efforts like the World Glacier Monitoring Service and the Global Terrestrial Network for Glaciers, major gaps persist in data coverage, technical capacity, and sustained funding—especially in the countries and regions where glaciers are most critical and most at risk. Many national monitoring programs are under-resourced or absent altogether, and international coordination is hampered by a lack of institutional focus and long-term vision. The result: decision-makers are flying blind, unable to anticipate or adapt to the cascading impacts of glacier loss on water supplies, agriculture, hydropower, and disaster risks that also threaten hundreds of billions of dollars invested in developing infrastructures



across the region.

The ICG would serve as the global hub for glacier science, monitoring, policy, and adaptation—filling the institutional void that currently undermines our resilience to glacier loss. It would unify and expand global monitoring networks, ensuring that data from even the most remote and vulnerable glaciers is collected, shared, and translated into actionable knowledge. It would drive capacity-building, training the next generation of glaciologists and equipping local communities and governments with the tools they need to respond to rapidly changing conditions. Critically, the ICG would foster international cooperation, bridging the persistent gaps between research, policy, and on-the-ground action, and ensuring that the lessons learned in one region are available to all.

Moreover, the ICG would be uniquely positioned to address the social, economic, and cultural dimensions of glacier loss. Glaciers are not just water towers—they are archives of climate history, sacred sites for Indigenous Peoples, and linchpins of regional economies and security. Their disappearance will reshape societies and landscapes in ways we are only beginning to understand. The ICG can bring together scientists, policymakers, civil society, and local communities to co-create adaptation strategies, preserve traditional knowledge, and advocate for policy reforms that recognize the true value of glaciers.

The science is clear: glaciers are melting faster than ever recorded, and the consequences are global and generational. Without a step-change in how we organize, fund, and coordinate glacier research and adaptation, we risk losing not only these ancient ice formations but also the stability, security, natural and cultural heritage they sustain. The International Center for Glaciers is not an option—it is an essential institution whose time has come. Safeguarding the world's glaciers is no longer just a local or regional challenge; it is a shared global responsibility that transcends countries and continents, demanding united action in the face of an uncertain future.



# Twenty Five Years Of Journey

*IME Group has achieved a remarkable milestone of a quarter-century journey, setting new records in Nepal's business landscape*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**F**ounder Chandra Prakash Dhakal and his brother, Co-founder Hem Ram Dhakal, have successfully transformed IME into a prominent business entity over the past 25 years. The emergence of IME, led by the Brahmin community, as a significant player in Nepal's business and industrial sectors is a noteworthy achievement.

Despite facing numerous challenges and obstacles, the Dhakal brothers have dedicated their time and efforts to establishing IME Group as a reputable brand in Nepal. Initially starting as a remittance company, IME Group has expanded its business ventures across various industries. The company has made significant strides in the hospitality and recreation sector, with the establishment of cable cars and resorts in five provinces. Additionally, their Global IME Bank is now the largest bank in Nepal. The group has also ventured into the paper industry and invested in the hydropower sector.

The journey of IME Group over the past 25 years exemplifies resilience, innovation, and success in the Nepalese business landscape.

IME Group marked its 25th anniversary with a lavish ceremony in Lalitpur on Friday, June 13. Founder Chair and President of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chandra Prasad Dhakal, attributed the company's success to three key principles: meeting public needs, aligning with national priorities, and prioritizing business sustainability over immedi-

ate profits.

During the event, Dhakal emphasized that IME's inception was driven by a commitment to providing essential services, supporting government initiatives, and establishing a sustainable business model rather than focusing solely on profits.

These fundamental values have allowed IME to diversify its operations from remittance services to banking, insurance, tourism, IT, hydropower, and other sectors, creating numerous job opportunities and making significant contributions to Nepal's economy. Co-founder and Chair of IME Group, Hem Raj Dhakal, reiterated the company's dedication to enhancing the social and economic well-being of its customers through reliable and expanded services.

He also urged Nepal Rastra Bank to facilitate the development of digital remittance infrastructure to enable young Nepalis participating in the global digital economy to easily remit their earnings back home.

Recognizing the financial challenges faced by youths seeking employment abroad, Hem Raj proposed offering small-scale loans through IME to help alleviate their financial burdens.

Dhakal expressed sincere thanks to all stakeholders, including service users, the Government of Nepal, Nepal Rastra Bank, regulatory bodies, business partners, employees, and well-wishers for their unwavering support throughout the 25-year journey. Diwakar Paudel, CEO of IME Limited, highlighted the company's commitment to collaboration, technological excellence,



ethical business practices, and shared values guiding its operations.

He stressed IME's focus on embracing technology and expanding services to better integrate into the daily lives of ordinary citizens.

During the event, Dr. Bishnu Prasad Paudel, Governor of Nepal Rastra Bank, encouraged IME Group to continue investing and fostering entrepreneurship, with the central bank pledging support for technological advancement and business growth.

Governor Paudel commended IME's entrepreneurial spirit during the challenging period of conflict when the company was founded, underscoring the importance of fostering similar risk-taking ventures today. The anniversary celebration featured award ceremonies recognizing winners of inter-company sports and competitions.

The event was attended by ministers, politicians, senior government officials, experts from various fields, and enthusiastic members of IME Limited and its affiliated companies.

Having established itself as a successful group over 25 years, IME Group, under the leadership of Chandra Prasad Dhakal and with the support of his brother Hem Raj Dhakal, will continue to shape the industrial and business landscape in Nepal.



# No Interruption During Monsoon

*Thanks to funding from the Asian Development Bank, Melamchi Water is now able to provide continuous water supply four years after the head works were severely damaged by flooding.*

By A CORRESPONDENT

There was concern about whether the water supply from Melamchi would be affected during the monsoon season, but Minister of Water Supply Pradeep Yadav's announcement that Melamchi water will be consistently supplied in Kathmandu during the upcoming monsoon has brought great relief to the residents of the valley. Following a field visit, Minister Yadav confirmed that Melamchi water will be supplied regularly to households in Kathmandu during this year's monsoon season.

The news is a significant development for the nearly 2 million residents of the Kathmandu valley who have been relying on water supplied through a 29-kilometer tunnel and have been burdened by high prices for tanker water.

Despite some criticism, Melamchi is a project that demonstrates remarkable technical achievements. The Asian Development Bank's financing of the project, which faced challenges such as damage from an unexpected glacier lake outburst, highlights the bank's commitment to development in Nepal.

After conducting an on-site inspection of the water tank at Ribarma Khola in Melamchi on Monday, Minister Yadav assured that clean drinking water would be consistently provided to the residents of Kathmandu, even during the rainy season.

He confirmed that the water tank at Ribarma Khola, intended for distribu-

tion in Kathmandu, has passed testing successfully. To address potential risks during the monsoon, arrangements have been made to supply water from Ribarma Khola to Kathmandu through the Melamchi tunnel as an alternative solution. Minister Yadav emphasized that by diverting water from Ribarma

mandu even in monsoon conditions.

After the inspection, Ratna Prasad Lamichhane, the Executive Director and Engineer of the Melamchi Water Supply Development Committee, stated that if Melamchi water cannot be supplied during the monsoon, there is a possibility of transferring 50 to 70 million liters of water daily from Ribarma through the Melamchi tunnel.

He confirmed that all necessary infrastructure for this transfer is now in place. The water from the river has been successfully tested for transfer through the tunnel to Kathmandu, ensuring continuous water supply even during the monsoon.

Executive Director Lamichhane highlighted

the past challenges of shutting down the Melamchi tunnel due to rain and flooding, emphasizing the improved technology and preparedness this time. The technical teams, security personnel, and supply units of the Melamchi project are working around the clock to strengthen and maintain the tunnel and distribution systems, focusing on mitigating flood, landslide, and other monsoon-related risks.

Since the flooding in 2021 damaged the Melamchi source, regular drinking water supply during the monsoon has been disrupted. With additional support from ADB, efforts are underway to relocate the current head works and bring water from Yangree and Larke to address the issue.



through the Melamchi tunnel in the rainy season, uninterrupted Melamchi water supply can now be maintained throughout the year for the people in the Kathmandu Valley. This initiative is expected to offer a lasting solution to the drinking water challenges faced by Valley residents.

Minister Yadav expressed confidence that the new arrangement will eliminate water shortages in Kathmandu during the monsoon, demonstrating the government's commitment to addressing the needs of the people. He highlighted that the successful testing of water from Ribarma marks the end of disruptions in Melamchi water distribution during the rainy season, ensuring regular water supply in Kath-

# Approval Of EIA-Related First And Last Reports At Once



BY: BATU UPRETY

Three decades of experience in enforcing environmental law in Nepal could not convince some of the politicians and the ‘so-called’ investors on the benefits of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. ‘Chicken-hearted’ investors consider EIA process a ‘barrier’ for project implementation, relating with approval of EIA and its associated reports. Investors are little concerned with the quality of such reports, considering that whatever they submit that should be approved. They advocate for sustainable development but forget the environment protection as one of the three pillars of sustainable development.

On 02 May 2025, the government policy and programme for 2025/26 stated to simplify the environmental study and assessment process. The policy and programme mentions to undertake airport construction and expansion only on the basis of economic, commercial, and environmental feasibility. This signifies the importance of the EIA process and EIA tool itself to make a project sustainable and environment-friendly.

On 29 May 2025, the Budget Speech informed to speed-up, simplify and facilitate the EIA process and make arrangement for the “approval of the Scoping Document and EIA Report at once” of the prescribed projects. Scoping is the first stage and the EIA report is the last stage of the EIA process to provide environmental clearance for project implementation. Hence, the approval issue as contained in the Speech is a ‘flaw’ technically, and this is against the national legal regime, national and international processes, and practices on the environmental assessment process.

The Budget Speech stated to implement the development projects within the national parks and protected areas, and forest areas without negatively af-

fecting the environment and biodiversity. It clearly indicates the government’s intention to use parts of the national parks and protected areas for project implementation. It challenges the national and international understanding on the EIA process and the parks.

Furthermore, the budget speech provisions to arrange for ‘not to conduct Supplementary EIA’ (SuEIA) after the approval of the EIA on the possible decline or increase of 10 percent of the trees before (tree) cutting as a part of site clearance. It also provisions to avoid re-counting and measurement of trees while issuing use right of the forest areas. The Budget Speech provisions to make arrangement to deposit only one percent allocated for land management and trees caring while utilising forest area for the development project. Regarding SuEIA, recounting and measurement of trees, and depositing only one percent can be simply understood government’s intention to facilitate socio-economic and infrastructure development in forest areas.

Let us recall the technical aspect, principle- and legal provisions-based EIA process, and national & international practices, experiences and learning on the application of EIA process, in brief, to make the development environment-friendly and sustainable.

**Step 1** Screening is conducted whether the proposal or project requires environmental assessment or not. If required, it informs the level of assessment required. In Nepal, Brief Environmental Study (BES) or Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) or EIA should be carried out for proposals as per Schedules 1, 2 or 3 of the Environment Protection Rules (EPR), 2020.

**Step 2** Scoping is required to determine the ‘scope of work’ for any level of study. Scope of work is



included in the Terms of Reference (ToR). Nepal requires to let the people know about the project by publishing a format-based 7-day public notice in a national newspaper and asks the people about the environmental issues. The proponent should prioritise issues from a list of identified and raised issues that must be considered during the environmental assessment. A format-based Scoping Document (SD) as per Schedule 5 of the EPR, 2020 is prepared and is submitted to the competent authority for approval.

**Step 3** Terms of Reference (ToR) is prepared in the format of EPR Schedules by including priority issues, as contained in the SD, for the EIA study. Nepal's environmental law provisions to submit both SD and ToR at once for necessary approval.

It clearly indicates the scoping a pre-requisite of the ToR to prioritise issues that streamlines EIA study. ToR is not approved without approving the SD technically and legally.

**Step 4** After approval of the SD and ToR, EIA report preparation

process starts. Once the EIA report is drafted as per the approved ToR and in the format contained in EPR Schedules, a public hearing is organised by informing the multi-stakeholders and local people through a format-based public notice to collect suggestions and inputs on the draft report. A project-specific EIA report is finalised by including suggestions of the public hearing. Then the proponent collects a format-based recommendation letter from the concerned local levels and concerned subject-related offices.

The proponent submits the final EIA report to the government authority for necessary approval by including legally required documents such as proofs of public notice, public hearing, and recommendation letter(s) of the local level (where the project is planned for implementation) etc. The approving agency may review the EIA report internally and through a committee, make the report public for 7 days by publishing a notice in the national news-

paper, and share through website as well, and approve it. After the approval of the EIA report, proponent can implement the project and should carry out self-monitoring. The government department(s) will be engaged in environmental monitoring, supervision, and auditing. Auditing marks the end of the EIA process. Hence, EIA process starts with screening and SD preparation and ends with environmental auditing.

Almost all countries have benefitted from the EIA process. I myself was engaged in internalising and institutionalising the EIA system in Nepal for about

**On 29 May 2025, the Budget Speech informed to speed-up, simplify and facilitate the EIA process and make arrangement for the “approval of the Scoping Document and EIA Report at once” of the prescribed projects. Scoping is the first stage and the EIA report is the last stage of the EIA process to provide environmental clearance for project implementation. Hence, the approval issue as contained in the Speech is a ‘flaw’ technically, and this is against the national legal regime, national and international processes, and practices on the environmental assessment process.**

two decades, and building human resources. I offered my service as an international EIA trainer in 3 African countries in 2013, 2017 and 2018, including a French-speaking country.

Key question is: if the government does not see the benefits of the EIA process to make the development environment-friendly and sustainable, it can repeal all legal provisions on EIA process and ‘de-gazette’ the National Parks for project(s) implementation.

Briefly, “approval of the Scoping Document and EIA Report at once” as contained in the Budget Speech is technically and legally incorrect. The government may wish to ‘de-gazette’ the National Parks to implement the projects by respecting the national and global value of such Parks. It is urged not to take ‘shameful’ initiatives on the EIA process and the National Parks to demoralise Nepal and Nepali conservation communities.

# The Outcomes Aligned With Our emPOWER Concept: Professor Tami Bond

***PROFESSOR TAMI BOND** holds the Walter Scott, Jr. Presidential Chair in Energy, Environment, and Health at the University of Colorado in the US. She has conducted extensive research on technologies, atmospheric chemicals, and climate, focusing on the relationship between technology and human choices. Her work ranges from studying particles at a microscopic level to analyzing national transportation systems to understand the interaction between humans, energy use, and the atmosphere and climate. Professor Bond recently visited Nepal and participated in a Knowledge Dissemination Workshop on Agency, Energy, Voices, and Power: A Knowledge Exchange organized by MinErgy and CHeRN. During her visit, Professor Bond discussed various energy-related issues and project with **NEW SPOTLIGHT**. Here are some excerpts:*

**The Nepal government aims to develop over 200 Municipal Energy Plans (MEPs) to achieve the country's commitment to zero emissions by 2045 through its Nationally Determined Contributions. How does your project support this effort and ensure the success and inclusivity of MEPs?**

I have been involved in Nepal's energy sector for over 15 years and have visited the country regularly. I have observed many initiatives that have been started but not completed. As a researcher, I have been trying to understand why so many projects remain unfinished. My analysis suggests that Nepal faces challenges in allocating sufficient resources to these initiatives, leading to their lack of progress. My colleagues at Menergy and other organizations are working to address this issue. One crucial aspect is ensuring that communities take ownership of the plans and interventions provided to them. By promoting community ownership, we aim to bring about positive change and improve the success rate of projects in Nepal. Our research findings can contribute to enhancing the current state of energy planning in Nepal.

**How do you approach your work?**

We follow a method of agency-based empowerment, which focuses on empowering individuals by helping them awaken to their own per-

spectives and understanding of themselves, their world, and their environment. When outsiders interact with individuals, they are responding based on their own perspectives. Our goal is to enable people to make choices that lead to long-lasting results. If a community does not choose a project for themselves and it is imposed by outsiders, it is likely to fail. In this case, our project aimed to make the Municipal Energy Plans (MEPs) of two Rural Municipalities in Doti and Dadeldhura inclusive and owned by the community. Despite the requirement for women and representatives from marginalized groups to be involved in the planning process, many participants did not speak up as they were unfamiliar with the agenda and lacked experience in expressing their opinions. Without their input, the community felt disconnected from the plan.

**What is the objective of the project?**

Our objective is to engage the community in the planning process and gather their input to demonstrate that the plan is for them and by them. We do not alter the energy planning process itself, but rather work with the community to ensure that they recognize their own capabilities and have a say in shaping the plan.

**What is the objective of the MEP project?**

One of the key objectives of the MEP project is to promote ownership. It is crucial for individuals to feel a sense of ownership in the decision-making process and the implementation of projects in order for them to be sustainable. It is important for government bodies to be transparent and open in their implementation efforts and to listen to the voices of the people to ensure effectiveness. The process should encourage people to freely express their opinions and empower them to do so, with a focus on active listening. In our current practices, there is a tendency to push forward without truly listening, which is a common issue not limited to the energy sector in Nepal but seen in various institutions where communication is lacking.



## in Doti and Dadeldhura?

Yes, women are often more involved in tasks related to energy use. How can we ensure that the process is inclusive of those who are directly involved in the work and those who stand

## Why did you select two rural municipalities in Sudurpaschim, Nepal?

We selected Adarsha Rural Municipality and Jorayal Rural Municipality in Doti, Sudurpaschim Province because they lacked a plan for development. We also chose another nearby municipality with similar demographics and a plan for comparison, Nawadurga Rural Municipality in Dadeldhura. The Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPCC) has a nine-step planning process for MEP, to which we added three additional steps. By selecting municipalities with similar characteristics, we aim to have a more controlled and comparable process. This project also focuses on understanding the behavior of the people, which is a critical component for the successful implementation of projects.

**Women are essential stakeholders in the use, consumption, and collection of resources. Their involvement is crucial for the success of any initiative. What has been your experience**

to benefit from it? It is important to amplify their voices in order to achieve sustainable outcomes. This not only makes women's lives easier but also ensures that the chosen technology is accepted by the community.

## What are the differences in choices between men and women?

In my observation, when men are in charge of planning, there is a tendency to prioritize technology without considering women's preferences. This trend is evident in the two municipalities and is a common issue in other areas as well. The decision-making process should not be a simple binary of women versus men, but rather a recognition of the diverse needs of different groups. It is essential to understand how technology can meet the daily needs of the people who use it, which may not always align with the perspectives of those in power. For example, individuals in positions of authority may not ful-



## INTERVIEW

ly grasp the challenges of integrating energy use with tasks like fetching water, caring for animals, and irrigating land, which are essential for many others in the community.

### **As we wrap up this project after two years of work, what have we learned?**

One successful aspect, in my opinion, is that people are able to speak up through the exercises that the MinErgy team has implemented to amplify their voices. During these exercises, many individuals have spoken up, which has been a consistent theme not only over the past two years but over the past eight years of our collaboration with MinErgy. People have been able to voice their opinions and be heard when the time is right for openness. Even marginalized individuals have felt empowered to speak up. This is something that we need to continue working on - empowering people to speak up and understand the importance of their energy needs.

### **Human behavior plays a crucial role in the planning and implementation processes. Is it easy to manage?**

Since 2016, we have been working closely with Mnergy. During my first visit to Nepal, I focused on observing cooking stoves without measuring which one was better. My work at that time was centered around understanding technology and human behavior in the context of global stoves to find the best solution. What we discovered was that without understanding the behavior of the people who would be using these stoves, we could not make significant progress.

### **What is the reason behind people's preference for stoves?**

The liking for stoves varies among individuals and is based on personal choice. Some may prefer traditional stoves while others may not. Certain individuals may prioritize ener-

gy-efficient stoves for water pumping. When implementing the emPOWER\* Approach, it is essential to consider the alignment between people's preferences and the products offered. This ensures better outcomes and addresses technical and repair challenges effectively. Regarding the implementation of the emPOWER\* Approach in project areas, we have successfully integrated this approach. The agency-based empowerment strategy has demonstrated positive outcomes in the short term and has effectively reduced gender



biases. Sustainable and clean energy solutions are crucial for enhancing the quality of life in these regions. Empowering marginalized voices and promoting inclusivity are key aspects of our approach and motivation.

### **Did you also participate in the discussion on agency, energy, voices, and power at the Knowledge Exchange Dissemination Workshop? What are your thoughts on it?**

The workshop was held after the project was completed, and the discussions were engaging. The outcomes aligned with our emPOWER\* concept for community empowerment. The MinErgy team, led by Usha Maskey Manandhar, collaborated closely with the community to ensure the project's success. It was a collective effort from our team and the community that made the project successful.

# कृषिमा आधुनिकीकरण गरौं ।

- ❖ कृषिमा आधुनिक प्रविधिको प्रयोग गरौं,
- ❖ बैज्ञानिक खेती पद्धतीको विकास गरौं,
- ❖ उन्नत बीउ र जैविक मलको प्रयोग गरौं,
- ❖ सिँचाइ प्रणालीमा सुधार गरौं,
- ❖ सिँचाइ नभएको स्थानमा बोरिङ्ग र पम्पसेट प्रयोग गरी सिँचाइ गरौं,
- ❖ परम्परागत विषादीको प्रयोग गरी किराफट्याङ्ग्रा नियन्त्रण गरौं,
- ❖ बजार व्यवस्थापन प्रणालीको विकास गरौं,
- ❖ कृषक समूहमा आवद्ध भई ज्ञान आदान-प्रदान गरौं,
- ❖ कृषि प्राविधिकको सहयोग र सल्लाह लिने गरौं ।

**"कृषि क्षेत्रमा आत्मनिर्भर बनौं"**



नेपाल सरकार  
विज्ञापन बोर्ड

## NEPAL'S AIR POLLUTION

# A Growing Health Concern

*Air Pollution Remains the Top Health Risk Factor in Nepal*

By A CORRESPONDENT

**D**espite implementing regulatory and policy measures, Nepal's air pollution levels continue to worsen with no immediate signs of improvement.

According to a recent report by the World Bank, air pollution is the leading risk factor for death and disability in Nepal. Addressing air quality issues requires a comprehensive approach that goes beyond single-sector solutions. The World Bank emphasizes the need for public policy and investment to prioritize cost-effective solutions across various sectors to achieve cleaner air.

The report, *Towards Clean Air in Nepal: Benefits, Pollution Sources, and Solutions*, provides a comprehensive assessment of air pollution in Nepal, particularly in the Indo-Gangetic Plain and Himalayan Foothills (IGP-HF) air shed.

The Kathmandu Valley and the Terai region are identified as the main air pollution hotspots in Nepal, with no significant improvement observed over the past decade. Air pollution is estimated to reduce the average Nepali's life expectancy by 3.4 years and contribute to around 26,000 premature deaths annually. In addition to health impacts, poor air quality also affects labor productivity, tourism, and the aviation industry. The economic cost of air pollution amounts to over 6 per-

cent of Nepal's GDP each year.

Clean air and economic growth can coexist. The cost of not addressing pollution is higher than the cost of taking decisive action now," stated Ain Bahadur Shahi Thakuri, Minister for Forests and Environment. The government is dedicated to improving Nepal's air quality by implementing stricter industrial emission standards and promoting electric transportation.



Addressing air pollution requires a multi-sectoral and multi-regional approach. Electrifying vehicle fleets, enhancing vehicle inspection systems, and reducing road dust are crucial steps to combat vehicle emissions. Encouraging

cleaner technology and fuel use in industries, such as electric and pellet boilers, will promote cleaner industrial practices. Supporting households to switch to cleaner cooking stoves, preferably electric ones, can reduce household air pollution from biomass-fueled

stoves.

Preventing forest fires through fuel load reduction and awareness programs is essential. Developing effective response systems to extinguish fires promptly is also necessary to mitigate forest fire risks."

Transboundary pollution: Effective collaboration with neighboring countries is crucial. Pollutants are carried

across borders by transboundary airflows. The Indo-Gangetic Plain and Himalayan Foothills Region share an airshed, allowing pollutants to travel across borders and impact air quality in multiple countries. Nepal's unique geographical location, particularly the bowl-shaped Kathmandu Valley surrounded by mountains, worsens the situation.

David Sislen, World Bank Country Division Director for Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, stated, "

The World Bank is dedicated to assisting Nepal in enhancing its air quality improvement initiatives through financial and technical support and capacity-building. As a strong advocate for clean air for improved health and prosperity, the World Bank draws on its extensive global knowledge and experience to ensure that our efforts to promote cleaner air in Nepal are effective and sustainable."



# One Trick Ponies



BY: HEMANT ARJYAL

An excessive and persistent fear of something that poses little or no danger, often leading to significant distress and avoidance behaviours is termed as phobia. This write up is about the northern end of the runway at TIA, normally referred as 'RWY20' or '20', that has been shunned by jet aircraft for landings since quite long. And the issue was also briefly dealt in my previous piece titled "Putting Foot Down". In sum, airlines are seen to be showing extreme apathy toward its use, even if landing there would have been the right thing to do. As TIA has very limited options, being stubbornly stuck to one particular landing and take-off pattern does not bode well for airlines or even TIA.

Given the simplicity and convenience "straight in" landings tend to be the preferred choice at any airport. But when ground situation does not allow this, it gives rise to problem. It is, literally, like expecting to see a legendary "one trick pony" "to perform a different trick. Being only proficient in one area makes them less effective in situations that require a broader range of skills. Not using '20' for landing when '02' becomes unusable creates an identical situation. It is the airline, not the pilots, that should share the blame for prolong holdings as it can even, at times, lead to diversions.

As most arrivals at TIA tend to be from south, landing from '02' (south end) becomes ideal while landing from north-end (20) requires aircraft to reverse the direction of flight by making a semi-circle track to align with the runway before landing. This is termed as "circling approach" in aviation parlance.

On one afternoon of 6th June some five narrow bodies were stacked in the holding pattern all because the tailwind for '02' landing was said to be blowing well above the permissible limit. This is quite understandable as maintaining of flight safety is paramount. Nothing wrong there, but what was surprising is why did they not use the other end for landing? It would have been an ideal situation to land against the wind by making circling approach as described. It was probably because of each airlines standard operating procedures (SOP) barred landing from north at TIA. If so those airlines should review their SOPs in tune with the availability of better and accurate satellite based procedures at TIA, unlike earlier years.

But it was surreal to see a Qatari Airways B787, a wide-body at that, making the first ever landing on runway '20' following the, hitherto unused, RNP approach on 8 March. It is learnt that, after the said landing, the ATC on duty had asked the captain about his impression about the approach just made, he is said to have

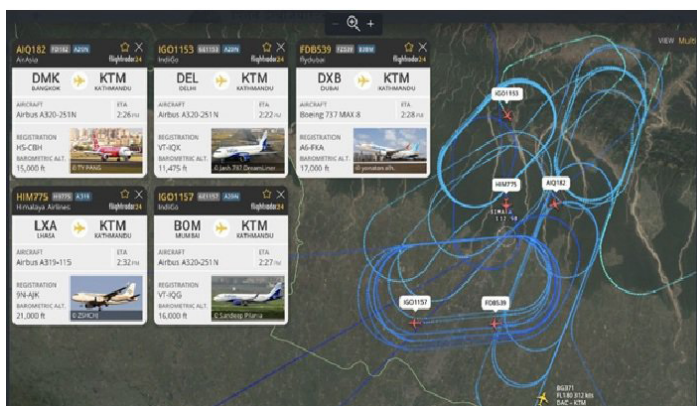
replied, in just one word, "beautiful". They should have recorded a more detailed interview, but, anyway, the opportunity was missed. With this, we can now question the attitude of airlines especially those running narrow-body flights to TIA. Obviously, if a wide-body can make a circling RNP approach successfully then it would be less problematic for narrow-bodies to do so.

Happen to read a past discussion paper on circling approach which claimed that runway aligned approaches (straight in only) were some 25 times safer than circling ones. It listed two major, commercial aircraft accidents in the preceding two years that had 304 fatalities in total. Be informed that it was a '2011' paper, or of the period before the satellite based navigation system termed "required navigation performance"

(RNP) was widely used or available. Making circling approach is much safer now given far reaching technological advancement made in navigation system.

It is, therefore, time to tell airlines, in no uncertain terms, that wanton long holding will not be tolerated at TIA any longer, if making a safe circling RNP approach is possible. Ask them to fly in ONLY IF they are capable of executing landings at both 02/20 ends, as the situation demands. It is not uncommon for airports to require crews to have specific trainings to fly in/out due to various site specific reasons. And as Kathmandu airport had long been labeled as a very "difficult" airport, makes it easier to impose such conditions. Aviation is not just about airline and pilots; we often disregard passenger psychology. Anyone who flies will surely desire an earliest exit from the claustrophobic tube. No use prolonging holdings for unjust reason like "unfavorable tailwind" "when a safe alternative is just a runway length away at the other end. It will be best to provide adequate training to pilots, not chicken out, and go for the other end and land safely. Happy landing.

*Hemant Arjyal can be reached at [harjyal@yahoo.com](mailto:harjyal@yahoo.com)*



# मानसिक स्वास्थ्य प्रति सचेत बनौं

- ❖ निराश हुनु,
- ❖ तनाव तथा चिन्तित महशुस हुनु,
- ❖ बेला बेलामा डर लाग्नु,
- ❖ पसिना आउनु,
- ❖ गहिरो निद्रा नपर्नु लगायत मानसिक रोगका लक्षण हुन सक्छन् ।

## मानसिक समस्या निदानको लागि:

- ❖ नियमित व्यायाम गरौं,
  - ❖ आफ्ना भावना खुल्ला रूपमा व्यक्त गरौं,
  - ❖ परिवार र साथीहरूसँग समय बिताऔं,
  - ❖ योग, ध्यान वा मनपर्ने गतिविधिमा संलग्न होऔं,
  - ❖ आवश्यक परेमा मानसिक स्वास्थ्य विशेषज्ञसँग परामर्श गरौं,
- "स्वस्थ मन, सुखी जीवन"**



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वातावरणमैत्री आयोजनामा  
लगानी गर्नेछ ।



\*शर्माका लागि दृष्टिकोण



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